

## Queen's Gold and Intercession: The Case of Eleanor of Aquitaine

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**I**N 1347, Philippa of Hainault threw herself at the feet of her husband Edward III pleading for the lives of the burghers of Calais. The English had just conquered the city, and the king demanded the deaths of several prominent citizens in retribution for the city's obstinate resistance. Impervious to the entreaties of his councilors to be merciful to the condemned men, the king could only be moved by Philippa's pleas; her direct intercession saved the burghers' lives. Or so the chroniclers Froissart and Jean le Bel recorded. Whether Philippa actually interceded so dramatically on behalf of the burghers is immaterial, for the account still powerfully illustrates the importance of intercession in the construction of queenship. Even if Philippa did not behave in that exact way, she was supposed to behave that way, and chroniclers did not have a difficult time believing that she would.<sup>1</sup>

Historians of queenship continue to debate the nature of queenship in the central Middle Ages. An older narrative, heavily influenced by the work of Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple, contended that queens were slowly pushed out of royal governance by the growth of bureaucratic kingship.<sup>2</sup> Marion Facingier's scholarship is a classic example. She argued that Capetian queens lost their official, public status (based on their declining appearances in charters) and were reduced to private individuals

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able to exert influence only through their personal relationships with their husbands.<sup>3</sup> Facinger prioritized the queen as the king's wife, which Miriam Shadis has argued was only part of the story. Queenship was also a "type of motherhood" which allowed queens such as Blanche of Castile to exert public power. Shadis does not completely reject Facinger's work though; she agrees that medieval queens made fewer appearances in French royal charters, yet calls for Facinger's work to be reconsidered and revised in order to account for queenship as motherhood and to include the study of rituals.<sup>4</sup> Other scholars dispute, rather than revise, the claim of decline, with some arguments claiming queenship simply underwent an alteration in form and style (but not power) and others maintaining that queenship was necessary to complement and complete effective kingship.<sup>5</sup> While debate abounds, scholars who have focused on intercession usually depict the central Middle Ages as a time of decreasing formal powers for queens.<sup>6</sup> For these scholars, intercession took on an increasingly prominent role, remaining an acceptable avenue of queenly influence because it stressed the feminine roles of mother and wife.<sup>7</sup> Intercession was expected of queens, particularly since it played a variety of useful roles for the king. Intercession not only affirmed the gender hierarchy, it also allowed men to change their minds without appearing weak. In addition, female intercession could supply a "male lack" by exemplifying mercy in the face of a king's stern justice.<sup>8</sup> While intercession thus gave queens an acceptable avenue of power, it also promoted kings' power by emphasizing their masculine strength that could only be mitigated by womanly pleas.

Scholars studying the symbolism and power dynamics of intercession have emphasized its role as an act of informal power that still permitted the queen a small, but usually accepted, voice in government.<sup>9</sup> They have regarded intercession as a private and informal type of power, one that queens developed as they were excluded from the king's public authority. In England, though, intercession was also public and formal due to its connection with queen's gold. Queen's gold was a ten percent surcharge that the exchequer levied and collected on all voluntary fines made to the king. Since the exchequer was involved, queen's gold was every bit as public and formal as fines to the king, and both kinds of fines were important sources of revenue for the crown. Just as intercession allowed

the queen to supply a male lack, queen's gold permitted the king to supply a female lack. The queen did not have access to wealth beyond what her husband offered her; by setting up a surcharge on fines the king remedied the queen's lack, just as she did for him during intercession. Scholars have investigated the fiscal and administrative aspects of queen's gold but never its connection with intercession.<sup>10</sup> Among other things, the link between the two might explain the confusing origins of queen's gold.

This essay will consider basic questions about queen's gold and intercession. First it will address the mechanics of the levy and collection of queen's gold, beginning with fundamentals such as the nature of the levy and who paid. An investigation into the origins of queen's gold will follow. The experiences of Eleanor of Aquitaine and three of her successors will then be used to elucidate the connection between queen's gold and intercession. This paper focuses mainly on Eleanor of Aquitaine (queen 1154–1189, died 1204), wife of Henry II (r. 1154–1189) and mother of Richard I (r. 1189–1199) and John (r. 1199–1216), although the experiences of her successors will also be referenced. These successors are: Isabella of Angoulême (queen 1200–1216, died 1246), second wife of John; Eleanor of Provence (queen 1236–1272, died 1291), wife of Henry III (r. 1216–1272); and Eleanor of Castile (married 1254, died 1290), first wife of Edward I (r. 1272–1307).<sup>11</sup>

## **The Nature of Queen's Gold: What It Was, Who Paid It, and an Explanation of Fines**

According to the *Dialogus de Scaccario*, written by Richard Fitz Nigel during the reign of Henry II, those who owed voluntary fines (or reliefs on inheritance) to the king were also obligated to pay a fine to the queen, which was called queen's gold (Fig 1). This fine was automatic because debtors had to pay even if their obligation to the queen was not mentioned at the time of contracting the fine.<sup>12</sup> For queen's gold, the amount due was one mark of gold for every one hundred marks of silver owed to the king. One mark of gold equaled ten marks of silver, meaning that queen's gold was a ten percent levy.<sup>13</sup> Even if the king remitted his fine, queen's gold was still owed unless the queen also pardoned her

fine. When Fitz Nigel wrote, the clerks of the exchequer were unclear if fines of less than one hundred marks also owed queen's gold, and Fitz Nigel suggested that an ounce of gold might be due for a mere ten-mark fine.<sup>14</sup> Although Fitz Nigel never provided the verdict, the issue was resolved in a manner favorable to the queen. From the beginning of John's reign, the *Rotuli de Oblatis et Finibus in Turri Londinensi*, a roll recording fines paid to the king, indicates that clerks collected queen's gold on fines even lower than ten marks. In addition, the clerks tended to list the amount of queen's gold due as a straightforward ten percent of the payment to the king.<sup>15</sup> A few examples from the *Rotuli de Oblatis* illustrate the collection of lesser fines and the use of silver as payment. Notations such as "four marks or gold" and "two marks or gold" appear, as does another entry, from Staffordshire, reading "ten shillings or gold." The entries indicate that debtors owed payment on fines for forty marks, twenty marks, and five pounds respectively.<sup>16</sup> The Staffordshire entry suggests that collection of queen's gold had expanded to fines well below the level that Fitz Nigel had suggested.<sup>17</sup>

Nowhere did Fitz Nigel specify the categories of people who had to pay queen's gold. It would seem that anyone who paid a voluntary fine to the king was also indebted to the queen, although the nature of the fines suggests that most people who paid them were members of the landed elite. The tenants-in-chief certainly paid these fines and perhaps lesser landholders as well; however, Geoffrey de Luvers managed to have his queen's gold excused because he did not hold his land directly from the king.<sup>18</sup> Aside from the secular elites, burgesses and clerics also paid. The *Rotuli de Oblatis* records fines of queen's gold for the citizens of Lincoln, Oxford, London, and Worcester, among others, often due for charters confirming each city's liberties.<sup>19</sup> Clerics such as the abbot of Dore and the abbot and canons of Cirencester paid queen's gold as well in conjunction with grants or confirmations of land.<sup>20</sup> Women also owed queen's gold, as evidenced by Hawise de Curten, who repeatedly delayed paying, thus earning herself an entry in the pipe rolls (royal audit accounts made annually at the exchequer) year after year.<sup>21</sup> The variety of people paying queen's gold indicates that the type of fine mattered more than the circumstances of the individual paying. Hawise de Curten and the abbot of Cirencester paid for essentially the same reason, for the king

had favored both with confirmation of their land. Fitz Nigel thus had a reason not to specify who paid queen's gold: anyone who entered into a voluntary fine had to pay. It was the fine that mattered, not the payee.

Petitioners paid queen's gold on voluntary fines, which fell into three broad categories: those for grants and confirmations of liberties, those for legal proceedings, and those for miscellaneous favors. The first category often included grants confirming the liberties of cities or of landowners or to gain or maintain title to land. The second category consisted of a variety of fines to obtain justice, such as fines to receive a favorable settlement; obtain, expedite, or delay writs and pleas; and fines due on recovered debts. The final category was a bit of a catchall, including fines for marriage, seisin, acquittal, licenses, office holding, the king's favor, the king's aid and protection, and the king's mediation.<sup>22</sup> As can be seen, voluntary fines (also called oblations) were a broad category, liberally interpreted, which gave the queen the potential to raise a good deal of money.

Equally important, though, were the sources of royal income for which queens did not receive gold. On subsidies (rather like taxes) such as tenths, fifteenths, and twentieths, queens could not levy gold (not that they did not try).<sup>23</sup> These aids were usually approved by the magnates or the clergy, and the money was generally for a campaign (secular or a crusade). The king would propose the aid, and the magnates or bishops, or both depending on from whom the money was sought, would grant or reject the tax. Later, parliaments granted taxation, and they too might explicitly prevent the queen from collecting queen's gold. For instance, in 1340 and 1357, when Parliament granted ninth and a fifteenth respectively, both statutes stated that the money was not subject to queen's gold.<sup>24</sup> This type of payment appears to be a favor to the king, rather than the monarch granting a favor to a subject. Since those paying the tenths did not seek a specific favor from the king in return for their money, the queen's intercession was of little use. Her pleadings could not persuade the king to grant the petitioner's request or make the transaction more favorable to the payee because the king had technically petitioned for the aid. Without the need for intercession, the queen had no role to play in the granting of subsidies; her lack of symbolic involvement justified the decision of the peers (and later the Crown itself) to prevent queens from collecting gold on tenths, fifteenths, and twentieths.<sup>25</sup>

Fitz Nigel presented queen's gold as an automatic fine that the queen controlled, but evidence suggests that the queen consort did not always directly control this resource. The right to collect it, however, was not questioned. When debtors wished to avoid payment of queen's gold, they generally claimed their fine was not voluntary (and thus not subject to queen's gold) rather than criticizing the system.<sup>26</sup> Queen's gold was thus an accepted levy on fines in which the queen could intervene or influence the king's decision, but was resented if applied to any other source of income. Apparently, the queen needed to actually, or at least have the ability to, influence the decisions to which her gold was tied. Otherwise, clerics and laity alike protested the queen's rapaciousness.

### The Precursor to Queen's Gold

The roots of queen's gold were in the Anglo-Saxon period when elites paid the queen for her advocacy, which consisted of formal intercession in legal matters in the king's court. Ælfhryth, wife of Edgar (959–975), received payments of coin and moveables for her advocacy, a stark contrast with the land men usually received as advocacy payments. The abbot of Ramsey gave her five marks for advocating on his monastery's behalf, while litigants in a land dispute bequeathed the queen "an armlet of thirty mancuses of gold and, a stallion, for her advocacy that the will might stand."<sup>27</sup> Bishop Æthelwold of Winchester also paid the queen fifty mancuses of gold for her help securing the freedom of some church properties; in exchange for this favor, the bishop also gave King Edgar four times as much—two hundred mancuses and a silver cup.<sup>28</sup> Æthelwold's payments were similar to fines in post-Conquest England when many abbots and magnates paid the king to secure confirmation of their estates and rights pertaining thereto (such as the freedom to hold fairs). Although Ælfhryth's receipt of Æthelwold's gifts (and other such offerings) suggests that her payment was the result of direct intercession, it reveals that even before 1066 queens could expect that their intercession would be rewarded with gifts and gold.<sup>29</sup>

Edith, wife of Edward the Confessor, also received payment for her advocacy, again less than her husband. In return for a land transaction on behalf of St. Mary's in Evesham, Edith received one mancus of gold to

the king's six.<sup>30</sup> In this instance, Edith received a payment of somewhat less than Ælfthryth received from Bishop Æthelwold (seventeen percent vs. twenty-five percent). Despite this disparity these cases suggest that advocacy payments often exceeded the later rate of ten percent of the fine paid to the king. After 1066, if not before, though, the rate appears to have standardized at ten percent. Lois Huneycutt, in her biography of Matilda of Scotland, has identified an instance in which queen's gold was offered, but seemingly not paid. According to the chronicler Hugh the Chanter, the bishop of Durham offered Henry I one thousand marks of silver and Matilda one hundred to obtain a favorable resolution to the Canterbury-York primacy issue (which was concerned with whether York owed allegiance to Canterbury). Even more pertinent, the bishop offered Matilda the money to encourage her to use her influence with the king—in essence, to intercede for him.<sup>31</sup> These examples show that paying the queen for her services was not unheard of before the reign of Henry II, thus indicating that Eleanor of Aquitaine was probably not the first queen to receive payments of gold that were related to her intercession.<sup>32</sup> However, there is no evidence that these earlier queens had a right to queen's gold.<sup>33</sup> The Anglo-Saxon payments for intercession suggest the possibility, but it is not until Fitz Nigel's *Dialogue* that we have firm evidence of fixed concessions.

Domesday Book also sheds some light on the precursor of queen's gold. One entry, from Herefordshire, relates specifically to conditions before 1066. The reeve of the manor of Eardisland, previously held by Earl Morcar, would give his lady, when she came to the manor, "eighteen *oras* of pence" to make her "of happy mind" (*ipsa laeto animo*).<sup>34</sup> Although this payment was to a noblewoman and not to the queen, it suggests a widespread association of womanly favors with monetary payment. Presumably, the reeve would want his lady (and Domesday Book includes the word *sua*, emphasizing the relationship between the two people) to be happy so that he could win her favor. Because of her superior status and connection to his lord, the lady could be a powerful ally for the reeve, interceding with her husband on his behalf or otherwise favoring his endeavors. The behavior of the reeve of Eardisland not only suggests that queen's gold had a link with intercession but also that this link held true lower down the social scale.

Other manors offered payments specifically to the queen. In Warwickshire the revenue of the royal manors and county pleas paid 100 shillings yearly in fines to the queen.<sup>35</sup> The reason for these fines was not specified, but they might also have served to support the queen and obtain her favor. This payment to the queen appears to have originated after the Norman Conquest. The dues paid by the county, boroughs, and manors of Warwick before 1066 make no mention of gifts to the queen, focusing instead on the money and honey paid to the king. After 1066, the entry contains no mention of honey (or the involvement of the borough) but does provide money to the queen. The queen's due, however, was only 3.45 percent, for she was to receive a mere 100 shillings (equivalent to £5) to the king's £145.<sup>36</sup> Despite the rather small size of her payment in relation to the king's portion, having her money paid in conjunction with the king's bears a similarity to queen's gold, especially since it was a fine, just as queen's gold was. This suggests that the money was used to obtain favor or thank the queen for her (now hidden) action, particularly since some of it came from the court, rather than simply being from land.<sup>37</sup>

Queen's gold likely represents an expansion and codification of the earlier practice of compensating the queen for her advocacy and intercession. In this sense, queen's gold might have developed from customary gift-giving and counter-giving, exchanges that created or articulated bonds between giver and receiver. Queenly advocacy was a sort of gift which not only created an alliance between the queen and whomever she helped, but also emphasized the queen's greater power. In return for their advocacy, Anglo-Saxon queens received counter gifts, fulfilling the exchange.<sup>38</sup> Even before Eleanor of Aquitaine and the *Dialogue of the Exchequer* there was a clear connection between queenly intercession and payment.

## The Case of Eleanor of Aquitaine

Generally, only the queen consort could claim queen's gold because it was her due while she was married and under coverture.<sup>39</sup> Once widowed, dowager queens' right to queen's gold ended save only for the collecting of debts still owed to them from before the death of their husbands.<sup>40</sup>



Eleanor of Provence, wife of Henry III (a grandson of Eleanor of Aquitaine), did not receive any queen's gold for fines contracted with her son, Edward I.<sup>41</sup> Instead, Eleanor of Castile, Edward's wife and the new queen consort, received the money. This was also the case in the later Tudor period, when queen's gold was suspended during the reign of Edward VI. Queen's gold was not collected during this reign because there was no queen consort, Edward VI dying before he married.<sup>42</sup> Katherine Parr, the final queen of Henry VIII, did survive, for a short time, into Edward's reign, but queen's gold was not part of her dower. She might have collected arrears, but no new fines were levied.

Eleanor of Aquitaine was the first post-Conquest queen who clearly received queen's gold. In the third year of the reign of her husband Henry II, the Pipe Roll records Telarius of Oxford as owing one mark of queen's gold on a fine of six pounds, which is roughly ten percent.<sup>43</sup> Around 1163 Richard de Anesty, a nobleman, also gave the queen one mark of gold, while presenting Henry with one hundred silver marks. This transaction shows queen's gold in operation at the exact ratio (one mark gold to one hundred marks silver) specified in the *Dialogue of the Exchequer*. The dry accounts do not explain why Anesty offered a mark of gold to Eleanor, but they do reveal that he also paid all the men who had petitioned and interceded for him.<sup>44</sup> Anesty's gift to Henry was a straightforward payment for recognition of his seisin, but his other gifts recognized something else—that Eleanor and others had helped him to secure that recognition.

Those are the only extant examples of Eleanor receiving queen's gold during Henry's reign. According to Fitz Nigel's *Dialogue of the Exchequer*, she was supposed to receive this money on every voluntary fine, so scholars *could* assume that she did. Such an assumption cannot be confirmed, however, namely because of Fitz Nigel's evident confusion in composing the *Dialogue*. The *Dialogue* was likely written in two parts, one circa 1177 and another ten years later. H. G. Richardson has suggested that the section on queen's gold was a later addition written after a period of non-collection. A gap in the collection of queen's gold could help explain Fitz Nigel's uncertainty whether fines of fewer than one hundred marks also owed queen's gold.<sup>45</sup> Fitz Nigel's confusion over what fines to assess with the charge suggests, however, that queen's gold

was not completely codified by the latter part of Henry's reign.

Fitz Nigel's uncertainty might indicate that the section on queen's gold was written after the resumption of payments. In 1173 Eleanor was imprisoned, a punishment for her role in her sons' rebellion. During her captivity, Henry II might have suspended the collection of queen's gold or taken the money for himself. If the king permitted Eleanor to regain her resources after this interlude (perhaps in the mid-1180s, when she had more freedom), Fitz Nigel could have been unclear about all of the details of the process.<sup>46</sup> Although the entire argument is based on the uncertain dating of the *Dialogue*, it is a plausible suggestion. In her disgrace, Eleanor would have had few opportunities to intercede with Henry, and he would have had little reason to give formal recognition to her power.

The possibility that Eleanor of Aquitaine lost her queen's gold while in confinement is especially plausible given the later experience of Eleanor of Provence, wife of Henry III. In 1252 she briefly lost control over her queen's gold when she irritated her husband. Eleanor, apparently overstepping her rights, had presented a candidate to the living of Flamstead in Hertfordshire. Angered by this action, Henry seized for a few weeks all revenues from both Eleanor's queen's gold and the lands she held in custody.<sup>47</sup> While Eleanor was deprived for only a short time, the lesson was a sharp one: Henry had powerfully reminded her of her dependence on him.<sup>48</sup> As his action suggests, queen's gold was not a right but a gift of a king contented with his wife. Just as intercession was subject to the ups and downs of the relationship between king and queen, so was queen's gold. If the queen displeased the king, she was unable to obtain her gold.

While Eleanor of Aquitaine might have lost her right to queen's gold for part of Henry's reign, she received it during the reign of her son Richard I, despite being the queen dowager. This was unusual because subsequent queens only received queen's gold as wives. Eleanor of Aquitaine's atypical collection helps illustrate the connection between queen's gold and intercession: Eleanor received the gold because she was the intercessory female during Richard's reign.

The pipe rolls for Richard's reign are not helpful, but a chronicle from the Abbey of Bury St Edmunds provides clear evidence that Eleanor was

receiving new levies of queen's gold during Richard's reign. In 1189, the abbot of the monastery wanted to purchase the manor of Mildenhall, Suffolk, for which King Richard desired one thousand marks. This demand is followed by the comment that "when Queen Eleanor was owed one hundred marks, according to the custom of the kingdom, when the king received one thousand," she magnanimously accepted a golden cup, worth one hundred marks, instead of cash.<sup>49</sup> Since the amount due was exactly ten percent of the king's fine and a gold cup was substituted for gold coins, the custom to which the chronicle refers must be queen's gold. Nowhere is it suggested that the abbot had initially asked Henry II for this favor before the old king's death, so this was not an unpaid debt left over from Eleanor's days as a wife. It was, instead, a new levy of queen's gold from a fine due to her son.

That fine was probably not the only one. Eleanor clearly had a decent amount of revenue to receive, as she had a clerk appointed by Abbot Walter of Waltham to collect, along with her other clerks, her gold at the exchequer. The charter recording this transaction indicates that the appointment was from Richard's coronation in September 1189 until Christmas 1194. The charter does not specifically mention queen's gold, instead referring to what was collected as "our [Eleanor's] gold (*aurum nostrum*)."<sup>50</sup> Presumably the reference to gold would indicate queen's gold, although the charter still does not reveal whether Eleanor was receiving new payments or collecting arrears. It could take years to settle outstanding debts, as an entry from the pipe rolls illustrates. In 1208, the exchequer demanded payment from Jurnet, a Jew of Norwich, for queen's gold he owed Eleanor of Aquitaine. Jurnet, however, produced a charter from Eleanor stating that he had paid his debt, which dated from the reign of Henry II, around 1193.<sup>51</sup> Apparently, late payment was common, meaning Eleanor might have had many arrears. Given the evidence from Bury St Edmunds, though, Eleanor was also receiving new payments.

But why did Eleanor receive this money? H. G. Richardson and Nicholas Vincent have suggested that queen's gold was a part of Eleanor's widow's dower.<sup>52</sup> Unfortunately, references to Eleanor's dower fail to provide substantive details. According to two different chroniclers, Richard confirmed the widow's dower Henry II had granted Eleanor,

which was the same dower granted to the first wife of Henry I and Stephen's queen.<sup>53</sup> Both of these queens died before their husbands though, so their dowries were never activated and cannot be traced. In later centuries, queens ceased to receive new levies of queen's gold in their widowhood, so we have no evidence from either her predecessors or successors to suggest that Eleanor received queen's gold because it was part of her dower.

It is likely that the Abbey of Bury St. Edmunds' payment to Eleanor was related not to dower but to her influence with Richard. In 1189, Richard was unmarried, at the beginning of his reign, and still on the continent. Eleanor exerted a great deal of influence over her son and his new realm, so it would have been natural for her to play an intercessory role. Even after Richard married Berengaria of Navarre in 1191 the situation changed little. Berengaria never visited England, while Eleanor's power and influence waxed strong. Although Eleanor was never officially made regent, she exercised viceroy-like powers early in the reign and generally strove to uphold Richard's interests.<sup>54</sup> Berengaria never received any money from queen's gold, so presumably the money was going to Eleanor, who continued to fulfill queenly duties, even reconciling Richard to his brother John.<sup>55</sup> Eleanor was the primary intercessor, more visible and more powerful than Berengaria. Therefore, Eleanor likely received queen's gold because she was the one who was interceding with the king, the role to which queen's gold was linked. Since Eleanor was the intercessor, she kept the rewards.

Eleanor might even have continued to receive queen's gold during the reign of her younger son, John. The notes in the margins of the *Rotuli de Oblatis* indicate that clerks collected queen's gold from the beginning of the reign, in 1199, a year before John married Isabella of Angoulême. Who was receiving this gold? The obvious answer is John's mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine. Even after Isabella was on the scene, Eleanor might have continued to receive queen's gold until her death in 1204. The evidence is unclear, but the collection of queen's gold changed dramatically in 1207. On 22 November of that year, John informed the barons of the exchequer that the payment of queen's gold was returning to the exchequer, to be accounted for in the same way as other debts. Furthermore, John appointed a keeper for the queen's gold, Alexander

de Refham, described as his faithful servant or *fidelis*.<sup>56</sup> How the gold was accounted for before is not specified, but notes in the margin of the *Rotuli de Oblatis* suggest that queen's gold might have been paid at the Chancery earlier in John's reign. It seems telling that this move to separate accounting of queen's gold occurred shortly after the birth of John and Isabella's first child, the future Henry III. This action might have been a reward or acknowledgement of Isabella's fecundity, since, by separating queen's gold from other income, Isabella was gaining her own source of revenue. Perhaps John was rewarding his wife, acknowledging her importance as the mother of his heir, by granting her more financial independence.<sup>57</sup> Whatever happened, it is clear that the situation changed for Isabella after she had given birth to a male heir.

During these last years of her life, Eleanor might have been seen by petitioners as the more natural intercessor with her youngest son. Other queen mothers were also influential intercessors, and the clearest example comes from later in the thirteenth century, as studied by John Carmi Parsons. Eleanor of Castile, queen of Edward I from 1272 until her death in 1290, was not a prominent intercessor during the early part of her husband's reign. In fact, Edward's mother, Eleanor of Provence, was far more active as an intercessor than her daughter-in-law, suggesting that perhaps she was seen as a more natural intercessor. In addition, Eleanor of Castile had a rather negative image (she was seen as harsh and greedy and blamed for Edward's severity) making Eleanor of Provence seem like a gentler, more effective petitioner.<sup>58</sup> A similar dynamic could have occurred seventy years earlier, especially since Eleanor of Aquitaine had been so visible in Richard's reign.

Eleanor of Aquitaine's experience with queen's gold belies the idea that the levy was only for queen consorts. Wives could lose it, as Henry II's probable denial of queen's gold and Henry III's clear denial show, and mothers could gain it, as Richard's grant of it shows. The king had an important role to play, for queen's gold was seemingly in his gift. If the king wanted to deny his wife the revenue (as Henry II, Henry III, and Richard did), he could do so. By granting the revenues to his mother instead of his wife, Richard's action illustrates the link between queen's gold and kingly prerogatives. Granting the money to the more powerful queen shows that queen's gold was not just a financial expedient but a

symbol of the queen's influence over the reigning king, whether he was her husband or son.

### Epilogue:

#### The Cases of Eleanor of Provence and Eleanor of Castile

Despite the practices of Richard's reign, collecting queen's gold when the king was unmarried was not always deemed acceptable. On 23 December 1236, the year Henry III and Eleanor of Provence married, Henry pardoned the queen's gold owed by John de Balun. The reason: de Balun had contracted the fine before Henry had married Eleanor; thus no queen's gold was due.<sup>59</sup> While it initially seems inherently obvious that no queen's gold should be due when England lacked a queen consort, less than forty years before Eleanor of Aquitaine had collected queen's gold as a queen dowager. Furthermore, Henry's mother, Isabella, was still alive, albeit not living in England. Perhaps Isabella's residence in Angoulême helped de Balun argue his case for a reprieve, for her extended absence highlighted England's lack of a woman who could perform queenly duties of which intercession was one. Although intercession was not inherently feminine, the submissive nature of the act made it a suitable, even expected, role for women (especially wives) to fulfill.<sup>60</sup> Without a proper intercessor present, de Balun might have felt he was paying for a service that was not provided. The potential connection with intercessory services is especially prominent because Henry excused the fine after his marriage at a time when he had a queen who probably would have appreciated the income. Since Eleanor of Provence had done nothing to earn the fine (however nominal her actions might technically be), she was not to receive any payment. Clearly, the queen's influence at the time of the transaction mattered.

After the Lord Edward (the future Edward I) married Eleanor of Castile in 1254, provision needed to be made for two royal consorts. This resulted in a division of queen's gold. Just before the marriage, Henry III granted his son a substantial apanage, or landed settlement, which included both Gascony and Ireland (although Henry still retained ultimate sovereignty).<sup>61</sup> Since Edward was then Lord of Ireland, Henry III issued a special patent stating that Eleanor of Castile would receive

the queen's gold in Ireland, just as Eleanor of Provence did in England.<sup>62</sup> Although this patent was not issued until 1268, fourteen years after the marriage, it shows that queen's gold could also be collected by a consort apparent, albeit seemingly only at the gift of the reigning king. The act also indicates a connection between active lordship and queen's gold. Edward was directly ruling Ireland, rather than Henry, suggesting that Irish petitioners would have found it more expedient to appeal to Eleanor of Castile since her husband was now the one in charge. If Eleanor of Castile was the more natural intercessor, she was also the more natural recipient of Ireland's queen's gold.<sup>63</sup>

### Conclusion

With the passage of time, queen's gold became a standardized fine that was codified and strictly regulated. It became only loosely connected with the actions of the queen and the whims of the king. Queen's gold, in later centuries, seems largely to have been a fine, a financial expedient, and not a formal, symbolic recognition of the queen's intercessory influence over the king. By the late fifteenth century when, as Joanna Laynesmith relates, the importance of queenly intercession declined, queens received considerably less revenue from queen's gold than before.<sup>64</sup>

Nevertheless, queen's gold originated as a way to acknowledge and reward the queen's intercessory influence, which, in turn, helps explain (and perhaps justify) the very existence of the fine. Furthermore, even if the meaning of queen's gold changed over time, its original connections with intercession permit scholars to reevaluate the informal nature of intercession and think more deeply about the power of queens in the central Middle Ages.

Queen's gold therefore offers two lessons. First, it expands scholars' understanding of queens' formal powers. Queen's gold was formal and official because it was collected at the exchequer by salaried clerks. In essence, English queens made bureaucracy work for them instead of being marginalized by it. The links between intercession and queen's gold also imply that intercession was a formal power, not mere informal influence. Intercession was not merely a way for the queen to make her voice heard; it was an institutionalized activity for which she expected, and received, monetary compensation.

Second, the links between queen's gold and intercession provide support for scholars' reevaluation of the narrative of queens' marginalization in the central Middle Ages. As a formal power, the intercession recognized by queen's gold did not wane with the rise of bureaucratic kingship providing one instance of official queenly power that did not move in the downward trajectory outlined by Marion Fanger in 1968.<sup>65</sup> The king's bureaucrats did not "steal" the queen's role, but were instead put to work enforcing her prerogatives. The powers of queenship changed more than they disappeared.

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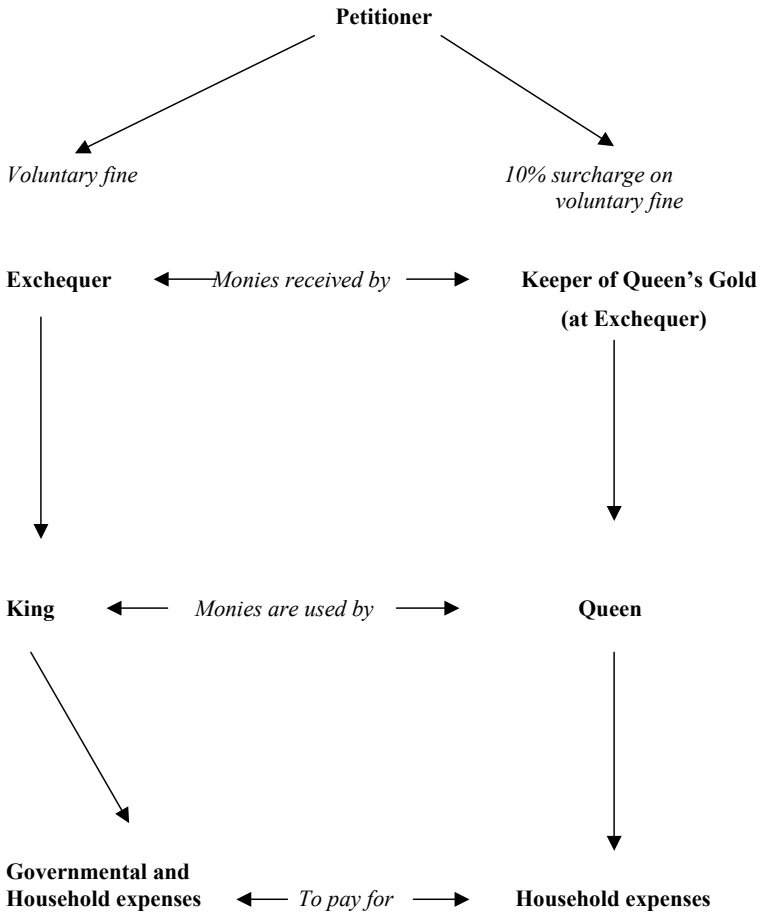
### Appendix: Queens of England

	BIRTH	MARRIAGE	REGENCIES	WIDOWED	DEATH
Eleanor of Aquitaine	ca. 1122	May 1152	*	1189	1204
Isabella of Angoulême	ca. 1188	24 August 1200	----	1216	1246
Eleanor of Provence	ca. 1223	14 January 1236	1253–1254	1272	1291
Eleanor of Castile	1241	1 November 1254	----	----	1290

\*Eleanor of Aquitaine was regent several times between 1154 and 1163 when Henry II was on the continent. She was given vice-regal powers by Richard I, which she exercised at various times until her retirement to Fontevrault in 1194.



**Figure 1: Ideal Circuit of Queen's Gold**



Sources: *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* [online edition];  
H. G. Richardson, "The Letters and Charters of Eleanor of Aquitaine,"  
*The English Historical Review* 74, no. 291 (April 1959), 196.

∞ END NOTES

1. Paul Strohm, "Queens as Intercessors," in *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 95-119, 99-102.

2. Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple, "The Power of Women through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500-1100," *Feminist Studies* 1 (1973): 126-42. Reprinted in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 83-101. I have focused on studies of English and French queenship for which even some recent work argues for decline. See Ralph Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Queen of France, Queen of England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). Lois Huneycutt's biography of Matilda of Scotland implies agreement (although it does not directly argue for or against decline) because she maintains that Matilda was queen during the "apogee of opportunity for women to exercise public authority." See Lois Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland: A Study in Medieval Queenship* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 148. Margaret Howell, *Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), argues against decline using Eleanor of Provence as a case study.

3. Marion Facinger, "A Study of Medieval Queenship: Capetian France, 987-1237," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 5 (1968): 3-48.

4. Miriam Shadis, "Blanche of Castile and Facinger's 'Medieval Queenship': Reassessing the Argument," in *Capetian Women*, ed. Kathleen Nolan (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 137-61, especially 149 (quote), 140, 153.

5. Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*; J. L. Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship 1445-1503* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004). Queens seemingly had even greater scope for action in Iberia; one example is the "office" of the queen-lieutenant in Aragon. The power of Spanish queens is not explored in this article because Spanish queenship was quite different from that of northern Europe. See *Queenship in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, ed. Theresa Earenfight (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), especially Earenfight's contributions "Partners in Politics," xiii-xxviii and "Absent Kings: Queens as Political Partners in the Medieval Crown of Aragon," 33-51.

6. For some examples, see Strohm, "Queens as Intercessors" and the work of John Carmi Parsons, such as Parsons, "The Queen's Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England," in *Power of the Weak: Studies on*

*Medieval Women*, ed. Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth Maclean (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 147-77; "The Intercessory Patronage of Queens Margaret and Isabella of France," *Thirteenth Century England 6* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995), 145-56; and "The Pregnant Queen as Counsellor and the Medieval Construction of Motherhood," in *Medieval Mothering*, ed. John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 39-61. Interpreting intercession as a substitute for lost official powers is not universal. Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker contends that mediation and intercession are expressions of "female princely power." See Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker, "Jeanne of Valois: The Power of a Consort," in *Capetian Women*, 253-69, 255.

7. Parsons, "The Queen's Intercession," 149; Strohm, "Queens as Intercessors," 95-96.

8. Strohm, "Queens as Intercessors," 102-6.

9. Parsons, "The Queen's Intercession," 147-51. For the link between intercession and the biblical Esther, see Lois L. Huneycutt, "Intercession and the High Medieval Queen: The Esther Topos," in *Power of the Weak*, 126-46.

10. Prynne noted the link between queen's gold and intercession in 1668 but no one has spoken of it since. See William Prynne, *Aurum reginae: or a compendious tractate and chronological collection of records concerning the queen's gold* (London, 1668), 4-5.

11. Please see the appendix for a table containing the important dates in the lives of these queens.

12. Richard Fitz Nigel [Richard Fitzneale], *The Course of the Exchequer*, trans. Charles Johnson (London: T. Nelson, 1950), 121-22. Fitz Nigel occasionally uses the term debtors, so I have used it here. Usually he uses more convoluted phrasing such as "those who voluntarily engage to pay coined money" (122).

13. Prynne, *Aurum reginae*, 2, suggests that one mark of gold equaled ten marks of silver maintaining the ten percent ratio.

14. Fitz Nigel, *Exchequer*, 121-23.

15. Thomas Duffy Hardy, ed., *Rotuli de Oblatis et Finibus in Turri Londinensi asservati* (London: G. Eyre and A. Spottiswoode, 1835), 1-31, 76-99. A clerk went through the fine roll for 1199-1200 and marked the amount of queen's gold due for each subject fine in the margin.

16. *Ibid.*, 4, 6.

17. *Ibid.*, 7.

18. Thomas Madox, *The History and Antiquities of the Exchequer* . . . (London, 1769; rpt. New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 1:350.
19. *Rotuli de Oblatis*, I, 8, II, 12.
20. *Ibid.*, 3, 22.
21. Patricia M. Barnes, ed., *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Sixteenth Year of the Reign of King John, Michaelmas 1214* (London: J. W. Ruddock & Sons Ltd, 1962), 142; E. Pauline Ebdon, ed., *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Second Year of the Reign of King Henry III, Michaelmas 1218* (London: J. W. Ruddock & Sons Ltd, 1972), 87; B. E. Harris, ed., *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Third Year of the Reign of King Henry III, Michaelmas 1219* (London: J. W. Ruddock & Sons Ltd, 1976), 21. Hawise died between Michaelmas 1219 and Michaelmas 1220 because in the 1220 pipe roll her son Robert was responsible for her debt, which concerned her manor of Okehampton.
22. *Rotuli de Oblatis*, preface, xviii-xxviii.
23. Hilda Johnstone, "The Queen's Household," in T. F. Tout, ed, *Chapters in the Administrative History of Mediaeval England: The Wardrobe, the Chamber, and the Small Seals*, vol. 5 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1930), 231-89, at 266-67; Margaret Howell, "The Resources of Eleanor of Provence as Queen Consort," *The English Historical Review* 102, no. 403 (April 1987): 372-93, 379.
24. Hilda Johnstone, "The Queen's Household," in *Central and Prerogative Administration*, ed. James F. Willard and William A. Morris, vol. 1 of *The English Government at Work, 1327-1336*, ed. James F. Willard (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1940), 250-99, 265 and 265n4, citing *Statutes of the Realm*, 2:298, 352.
25. Howell, "Resources," 379. Howell mentions that even the Crown rejected Eleanor of Provence's claims to queen's gold on these sources of income.
26. Johnstone, "The Queen's Household," *The English Government at Work*, 263-64.
27. Andrew Rabin, "Female Advocacy and Royal Protection in Tenth-Century England: The Legal Career of Queen Ælfthryth," *Speculum* 84, no. 2 (April 2009): 261-88, 278; Dorothy Whitelock, *Anglo-Saxon Wills* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), 27; Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), 181. A mancus was worth thirty pence.
28. Rabin, "Female Advocacy," 278; A. J. Robertson, *Anglo-Saxon Charters* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1939), #45, p. 95; Stafford, *Emma and Edith*, 181.

29. Rabin, "Female Advocacy," 278-79 discusses how male advocates would receive land while the queen received moveables. He suggests this was a function not only of who she represented but also of gendered forms of landholding. Perhaps there is also a link between gender and payment in coin for queen's gold.

30. Stafford, *Emma and Edith*, 181; P. H. Sawyer, *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography*, Royal Historical Society Guides and Handbooks; no. 8 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1968), #1026, p. 305. Stafford also mentions other payments made to Edith and some to Emma, but she does not provide any detail about these. Stafford discusses advocacy as being similar to intercession.

31. Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 59.

32. Eleanor might have been the first queen to receive these payments under the name queen's gold and under a regularized system.

33. H. G. Richardson, "The Letters and Charters of Eleanor of Aquitaine," *The English Historical Review* 74, no. 291 (April 1959): 193-213, 211n2.

34. *Domesday Book*, vol. 17: *Herefordshire*, ed. Frank and Caroline Thorn (Chichester: Phillimore, 1983), 179d. An *ora* is a Saxon coin worth between 16 and 20 pence.

35. *Domesday Book*, vol. 23: *Warwickshire*, ed. John Morris (Chichester: Phillimore, 1976), 238a. Although the translator has used "gifts," the Latin in *Domesday Book* is *gersuma* which can mean premium, fine, payment, or merchet. This implies the payment is somewhat more official than a gift. Since *gersuma* can also mean fine the queen might have been receiving an official precursor to queen's gold.

36. *Domesday Book: Warwickshire*, 238a.

37. There are also two examples from Bedfordshire which reveal the queen receiving money from the king's lands. However, no reason for this money is provided. *Domesday Book*, vol. 20: *Bedfordshire*, ed. John Morris (Chichester: Phillimore, 1977), 209b, 209b, c.

38. Åsa Dahlin Hauken, "Gift-exchange in Early Iron Age Norse Society," in *Social Approaches to Viking Studies*, ed. Ross Samson (Glasgow: Cruithne Press, 1991), 105-12, especially 106; Elisabeth Vestergaard, "Gift-giving, Hoarding, and Outdoings," *Social Approaches to Viking Studies*, 97-104, especially 98. For a political, rather than social, approach to gift giving, see Florin Curta, "Merovingian and Carolingian Gift Giving," *Speculum* 81, no. 3 (2006): 671-99. Gift giving also promoted stability and upheld the social

system of reciprocal relationships between those of different status. For more on this and Anglo-Saxon gift giving in general, see John M. Hill, "Beowulf and the Danish Succession: Gift Giving as an Occasion for Complex Gesture," *Medievalia et Humanistica*, n.s., no. 11 (1982), 177-97, especially 178-79; and John-Henry Wilson Clay, "Gift-giving and Books in the Letters of St Boniface and Lul," *Journal of Medieval History* 35 (2009): 313-25, especially 317-18.

39. William Prynne, *An Additional Appendix to Aurum Reginae* (London, 1668), 39. Under coverture, a woman had no independent legal identity. She was covered by her husband.

40. Prynne, *Aurum reginae*, 7 makes it clear that old debts could be collected by either the king or queen after the other's death.

41. *Ibid.*, 29. See also p. 32 for Margaret, widow of Edward I.

42. *Ibid.*, 4.

43. *The Great Rolls of the Pipe for the Second, Third, and Fourth Years of the Reign of King Henry the Second* (London: George E. Eyre and Andrew Spottiswoode, 1844), 83. Prynne, *Appendix*, 6 claimed there were no examples in the pipe rolls.

44. Francis Palgrave, *The Rise and Progress of the English Commonwealth*, Part 2 (London: John Murray, 1832), v-ix, xxiv.

45. Fitz Nigel, *Exchequer*, 121-23.

46. Richardson, "Letters and Charters," 209-10.

47. Howell, "Resources of Eleanor," 385-86, from *Close Rolls, 1251-53*, 273, 283; Matthew Paris, *Matthaei Parisiensis, monachi Sancti Albani. Chronica majora*, vol. 5, ed. Henry Richard Luard (London: Longman & Co., 1880), 298 (for preferment tale).

48. Howell, "Resources of Eleanor," 386.

49. Jocelyn de Brakeland, *Cronica in Memorials of St. Edmund's Abbey*, ed. Thomas Arnold, vol. 1 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1890), 250-51.

50. Rosalind Ransford, ed., *The Early Charters of the Augustinian Canons of Waltham Abbey, Essex, 1062-1230* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1989), 26.

51. Doris M. Stenton, ed., *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Tenth Year of the Reign of King John, Michaelmas 1208* (London: J. W. Ruddock & Sons Ltd, 1947), 15. The debt also might have been paid in 1194. The charter is dated fifteen days after the Pentecost nearest to the death of Henry de Cornhill. Cornhill died between Michaelmas 1192 and Michaelmas 1194. Eleanor's charter also refers to "auro nostro," suggesting that was her term for queen's gold.

52. Richardson, “Letters and Charters,” 211. Nicholas Vincent, “Isabella of Angoulême: John’s Jezebel,” in *King John: New Interpretations*, ed. S. D. Church (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1999), 165–219, 190–91, 88n agrees.

53. Roger of Hovedon, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, vol. 3, ed. William Stubbs (London: Longman & Co., 1870), 27 and Benedict of Peterborough, *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis*, vol. 2, ed. William Stubbs (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867), 99. Both chroniclers misname Stephen’s wife, calling her Alicia instead of Matilda, suggesting that one might have obtained the information from the other.

54. Jane Martindale, “Eleanor, suo jure duchess of Aquitaine (c.1122–1204),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2006, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8618>; doi:10.1093/ref:odnb/8618>. John Gillingham, *Richard I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), discusses Eleanor’s political actions but never suggests she had an official role in Richard’s government.

55. Richardson, “Letters and Charters,” 210.

56. Thomas Duffy Hardy, ed., *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum in Turri Londinensi*, vol. 1 (London: G. E. Eyre and A. Spottiswoode, 1833), 98.

57. Nicholas Vincent gives this action a negative cast, suggesting that John did this because, now that he had a legitimate heir, he no longer felt responsible for maintaining Isabella’s income or comfort. See Vincent, “Isabella of Angoulême,” 197.

58. Parsons, “The Intercessory Patronage of Queens Margaret and Isabella of France,” 149.

59. *Close Rolls of the Reign of Henry III (1234-1237)* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1908), 400.

60. Strohm, “Queens as Intercessors,” 105; Parsons, “The Intercessory Patronage,” 148.

61. Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, 124.

62. Prynne, *Aurum Reginae*, 18–19 (Latin patent on 18); *Calendar of Patent Rolls, 1266–1272* (London: Hereford Times Limited, 1913), 198.

63. This might seem to run counter to Eleanor of Castile’s lack of intercession, but queen’s gold was linked with the queen’s duty of intercession and was, by this time, not necessarily directly linked with its performance. Intercession was expected of queens (which was why Eleanor of Castile was criticized for Edward’s harshness—she was doing nothing to tame it), and queen’s gold eventually became a routine fine.

64. Laynesmith, *The Last Medieval Queens*, 95, 139, 239-40.  
65. Facinger, "A Study of Medieval Queenship."