

Medieval Art in Motion: The Inventory and Gift-Giving of Queen Clémence of Hungary, by Mariah Proctor-Tiffany. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019. Pp. xiii+216. ISBN: 9780271081120.

Medieval Art in Motion is a study of the fourteenth-century queen consort, Clémence of Hungary, wife of Louis X of France, and the objects in her collection as delineated in her will and testament. Mariah Proctor-Tiffany brings together queenship studies with her own background as an art historian—this combination delivers an enriched understanding of the queen’s life, her slippery position as a foreign dowager in the French court after the rapid demise of her husband and infant son in quick succession, and her impressive collection of objects. This thoroughly academic yet engaging and accessible work has a great deal to offer to students and scholars of several fields with regard to medieval history, gender studies, art history, and queenship studies. It is richly illustrated with both color and black and white plates, maps, tables, and charts which bring Clémence’s collection to life and demonstrate its considerable scale, value, and importance to both the queen herself and her contemporaries. Clémence’s connections to a pan-European network of dynastic members, courtiers, royals, and ecclesiastics are highlighted through a discussion of her life’s journey and the movement of her objects both before and after her death in 1328.

The book is divided into seven main chapters. The first, “The Life, Times, and Art of an International Queen,” offers a helpful contextual overview of Clémence’s life from her childhood in Naples to her brief period as queen consort and her challenging widowhood. Proctor-Tiffany emphasizes that Clémence was left in a difficult position as a childless dowager who had little time to establish herself at the French court before her husband died in 1316. The queen was then caught up in struggles for the succession and conflict with the new king, Philippe V, which led to financial precarity and deep debt to the Bardi banking family that hampered her ability to assert her queenly status through the projection of majesty. These themes—Clémence’s precarious status, her financial difficulties, and her efforts to maintain her social status and standing, are neatly threaded through the remaining chapters.

The following three chapters shift focus from the queen’s life to her collection of objects. The second chapter, “Systems of Exchange: Moving Art and Material Culture,” focuses on the compilation of Clémence’s collection and its distribution after her death via both her bequests and an estate sale. Proctor-Tiffany notes that the combination of a richly detailed testament and inventory of the queen’s objects, which includes a list of buyers, gives us an

excellent opportunity not only to learn about Clémence and her networks, but also about the material culture of the period and its cultural and monetary value. Chapter 3, “The Body, the Altar, and the Table: Possessions and Sites of Identity Proclamation,” continues the exploration of Clémence’s collection with a discussion of several types of objects including jewelry, clothing and textiles, devotional items, and luxury tableware as well as decorative items and even her horses and carriages. Proctor-Tiffany notes the inherent tension for Clémence between the vital importance of rich queenly display to reinforce her shaky royal status and keeping within the more restrained parameters considered to be appropriate for her dowager position. The following chapter, “The Queen’s Manuscripts and Identity,” continues the exploration of the connection between the queen’s possessions and her identity through an examination of three surviving examples of the forty-four books that Clémence once owned. Once again, the movement of these manuscripts is a key focus—Proctor-Tiffany traces the trajectory of the Peterborough Psalter from the Abbot of Peterborough to Pope John XXII, who gave it to Clémence, with whom he had a personal as well as political connection. After the queen’s death the Psalter, along with many of her books and possessions, was purchased by the new Valois king Philippe VI; the book later featured in the inventories of Charles V and later Philippe le Bon, duke of Burgundy.

Further discussion of the movements of the queen’s objects can be seen in chapter 5, “Gift Giving in the Gothic World,” the first of three chapters that focus on different aspects of gifting. This brief chapter discusses the wider context of gift-giving in medieval courtly society and notes that Clémence used generous gifts as yet another means of maintaining her royal status. A different form of gift giving is highlighted in the next chapter, “The Queen and Ritual Gift Giving,” which deeply examines an episode of religious ceremonial in which Clémence featured. Shortly after her widowhood on Sunday, 9 July 1318, the queen led a pre-dawn procession through the streets of Paris to the altar of Saint Magloire, to transfer the arm and head relics of the saint to a new reliquary. This public performance of piety was an important opportunity for Clémence to affirm her status by following in the footsteps of previous queens in religious rituals and in leaving suitably rich gifts at the altar, even though in her severely constrained financial circumstances, she could scarcely afford to do so. The final chapter, “Gifts to Individuals, Near and Far,” highlights the dynastic connections for her gifts and bequests on several levels. One aspect is gifting within the dynasty both to maintain connections between dispersed family members and to ensure that financially and emotionally valuable items remained within

the kinship group. Another is gifting items with dynastic connections to make a political message—for example, gifting a statue of the Angevin saint Louis of Toulouse to Phillippe VI of France to encourage him to treat Naples well.

The conclusion places this microhistory of Clémence and her collection in a wider context of current and future research in the field. Proctor-Tiffany notes the link between this study and the recently published collection on medieval women and their transnational collections which she edited with Tracy Chapman Hamilton, *Moving Women Moving Objects (400–1500)* (Leiden: Brill, 2019). An exciting plan to join this research on Clémence to a wider project, “Mapping the Medieval Woman,” to include geospatial mapping of the residences, burial sites, commissions, marriage sites, and processions of more fourteenth-century French royal women is also discussed. Finally, Proctor-Tiffany notes ongoing work at *Institut de Recherche et d’histoire des textes* to build a database of testaments and inventories. The book concludes with three useful appendices: a reprint of the eighteenth-century transcription of Clémence’s testament and Douët d’Arcq’s transcription of her inventory as well as a glossary. In sum, this beautifully illustrated and informative work brings together Proctor-Tiffany’s extensive research and publications on this fascinating queen. In doing so, the author increases our understanding of medieval material culture as well as the short but fascinating life of a little-known queen which highlights the vital role that the collection, display and distribution of worldly goods can play in affirming and preserving one’s royal identity and elevated social status.

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