



Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England

Margaret Howell

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This is the first biography of Eleanor of Provence. As consort of Henry III, from 1236 to 1272, Queen Eleanor has been noticed almost entirely for her promotion of Savoyards in England, but the significance of her political role goes far beyond this. Her performance as regent, her determined resistance to baronial reform and her key part in bringing about the fall of Simon de Montfort's government invite new appraisal. The book draws on the rich sources available, to reveal the interaction of the private and public facets of the queen's life, the cultural and spiritual influences to which she responded and the character of her queenship. Eleanor's changing relationships with her husband and her eldest son, the future Edward I, are here explored in both their personal and political context. The author looks finally at the years of Eleanor's widowhood, her entry into Amesbury still in control of her dower, and her death and commemoration in 1291. Eleanor of Provence provides an unusually intimate and coherent picture of a woman who combined a remarkable aptitude for politics with a strong family commitment and warm friendships. The book will be welcomed by all those interested in the workings of medieval politics and court life, and in the public and private role of queens.

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