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Introduction -- 1. Agnès Sorel: The First Official Royal Mistress -- 2. Anne of Brittany: The Limits and Prospects of a Queen -- 3. The Women of the Court of Francis I: Wives and Mistresses, Sister and Mother -- 4. Diane de Poitiers An Idealized Mistress -- 5. Catherine de Medici King in All but Name -- 6. Marguerite de Valois Scandalous Queen, Femme Savante -- 7. Gabrielle d'Estrées Nearly a Queen -- Conclusion -- Notes -- Index

Sommario/riassunto

This book tells the history of the French Renaissance through the lives of its most prominent queens and mistresses, beginning with Agnès Sorel, the first officially recognized royal mistress in 1444; including Anne of Brittany, Catherine de Medici, Anne Pisseleu, Diane de Poitiers, and Marguerite de Valois, among others; and concluding with Gabrielle d'Estrées, Henry IV's powerful mistress during the 1590s. Wellman shows that women in both roles-queen and mistress-enjoyed great influence over French politics and culture, not to mention over the powerful men with whom they were involved. The book also addresses the enduring mythology surrounding these women, relating captivating tales that uncover much about Renaissance modes of argument, symbols, and values, as well as our own modern preoccupations.
