QUEENSHIP AND POWER

Virtuous or Villainess? The Image of the Royal Mother from the Early Medieval to the Early Modern Era

Edited by Carey Fleiner
and Elena Woodacre

Queenship and Power

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Acknowledgments

This volume is the second part of a two-part collection on royal mothers, following on from *Royal Mothers and their Ruling Children*. The need for two volumes arose from the extremely enthusiastic response that we received when we put out a call for contributions at the Kings & Queens 3 conference in 2014. The numerous proposals that came in were so strong that we knew that one volume just would not be enough to do justice to the lives and legacy of royal mothers. Hence the idea to split the collection into two: one to explore the relationship between ruling children and their mothers and another to examine the image and long-term reputation of these royal mothers. We hope that these two volumes will shed new light on all of the women whose lives are featured in the collection and underline the importance and centrality of royal mothers within the framework of monarchy—across Europe and Asia and from the Antiquity through the Early Modern era.

Putting this collection together has been a fantastic experience due to the wonderful group of collaborators that we have worked with on both volumes. Their positive and professional attitude has made the production of these volumes go as smoothly as possible. Seeing this collection through from initial chats in the office about royal "bad mommas" to the production of two volumes has been a fantastic shared journey for us as co-editors, friends and colleagues. The editorial and production staff at Palgrave Macmillan have also been a delight as always to work with—special thanks to Michelle Smith, Kristin Purdy and of course to Carole Levin and Charles Beem, the amazing series editors.

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Contributors

Charles Beem is the author of *The Lioness Roared: the Problems of Female Rule in English History* (2006), and the editor of *The Royal Minorities of Medieval and Early Modern England* (2008), *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth* I (2011), *The Name of a Queen: William Fleetwood's Itinerarium ad Windsor* (2013), and *The Man Behind the Queen: Male Consorts in History* (2014). He is also, with Carole Levin, the editor of the book series Queenship and Power for publishers Palgrave Macmillan. He is currently at work on the monograph *Queenship in Early Modern Europe*.

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Carey Fleiner is a senior lecturer in classical and early medieval history at the University of Winchester where she is program leader for the classical studies course. She grew up in the United States and relocated to the UK last August although she spent prior time living and working in Britain for shorter periods for the last twenty or so years, including a short stint at the British Museum. Her areas of interest are Imperial Roman women as well as modern Classical reception, especially in popular culture (movies and TV, in particular comedies). She also writes on 1960s popular music in a social and cultural context (mainly on the Kinks) and has on occasion combined aspects of ancient and modern popular

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Manuela Santos Silva is a faculty member of the Department of History at the University of Lisbon where she presented her PhD on Medieval History in 1997 after her master thesis has been approved in the New University of Lisbon 10 years before. She specialized in Portuguese queenship and between 2011 and 2013 co-ordinated an 18-book collection of biographies of the Queens of Portugal. She has also published a number of works on Queen Philippa of Lancaster including her biography and recent papers in Portuguese, Spanish, and English. She has contributed to *The Rituals and Rhetoric of Queenship* (ed. Liz Oakley-Brown & Louise J. Wilkinson, Dublin, Four Courts Press, 2009, pp. 37–46), *Women and Wealth in Late Medieval Europe* (ed. Theresa Earenfight, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2010, pp. 209–228), and, with Ana Maria S.A. Rodrigues, wrote the chapter "Women's and Gender History" in *The Historiography of Medieval Portugal* (dir. José Mattoso, Lisboa, Instituto de Estudos Medievais, 2012, pp. 483–498).

Katherine Weikert holds degrees in history and archeology from the University of Evansville, University of York, and University of Winchester. Her research broadly analyzes the intersections of space, gender, and material culture in England and Normandy in the central middle ages, c. 900–1200. She is a lecturer in early medieval history at the University of Winchester, and has previously taught both subjects at Bath Spa University and Harlaxton College, University of Evansville.

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Elena Woodacre is a specialist in medieval and early modern queenship and a senior lecturer in early modern European history at the University of Winchester where she teaches modules on queenship, court studies, and Spanish, French, and Italian history in the Renaissance period and gender. Her recent monograph, *The Queens Regnant of Navarre; Succession, Politics and Partnership* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), examines female succession, matrimonial diplomacy and the power-sharing dynamic between the queens regnant of Navarre and their kings consort in the Late Middle Ages. She has also edited a recent collection, *Queenship*

in the Mediterranean (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013) and co-edited *The Image and Perception of Monarchy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge Scholars, 2014), which both aim to shed new light on the practice of both male and female rulership. She is currently researching the life of Joan of Navarre, Duchess of Brittany, and Queen consort of Henry IV for a planned monograph c. 2018. She is the organizer of the "Kings & Queens" conference series and the founder of the Royal Studies Network (www.royalstudiesnetwork.org), a resource which aims to bring together scholars who work on monarchical topics. She is also the editor-in-chief of the *Royal Studies Journal* (www.rsj.winchester.ac.uk or www.royalstudies-journal.com), an academic, peer-reviewed, multi-lingual, and fully open-access publication which was launched in 2014.

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Introduction

Carey Fleiner

Across all of the periods and cultures, motherhood was considered to be the definitive female role; indeed, it was one of the few roles available to women throughout history—if not as wives or whores and goddesses or saints, as Sarah Pomeroy noted in 1975 in her *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in Classical Antiquity*.[1] The popular image that emerges paints the historical mother broadly either as a sinner—ambitious, power-mad, neglectful of what ought to be instinctive duties—or as a saint, in hagiography or metaphorically against the Virgin Mother. Motherhood itself has been investigated in several excellent works, including, for example, Suzanne Dixon's *The Roman Mother* (1988) and other volumes focused on Medieval and Early Modern motherhood such as *Medieval Mothering* (1999), *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe* (2011) and *Maternal Measures: Figuring Caregiving in the Early Modern Period* (2000).[2] However, none of these works specifically address the critical issue of motherhood and political authority and agency.

This volume in tandem with its predecessor and partner, *Royal Mothers and their Ruling Children: Wielding Political Authority from Antiquity to the Early Modern Era*, complement each other by offering a fresh per-

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C. Fleiner, E. Woodacre (eds.), *Virtuous or Villainess? The Image of the Royal Mother from the Early Medieval to the Early Modern Era*,
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spective of the tremendous burden borne by these women as cogs in a royal machine. *Royal Mothers and their Ruling Children* examines the dynamic between royal mothers and their offspring, demonstrating how they worked as political partners with their spouses and especially their royal children. Established among these chapters is the first and foremost the role of the royal mother: to give birth to children who would ensure dynastic stability and continuity. Her success in her maternal role ensured her survival: first by producing heirs, and then, if widowed, acting as regent if not lifelong guide and helpmeet to her child as she had been for her spouse. The chapters in *Royal Mothers and their Ruling Children* explored the relationships between royal mothers and their offspring and include discussion of issues of power-sharing and regency. *Royal Mothers* included case studies which demonstrate both cooperation and conflict between mothers and their ruling children. It also highlighted the criticism of mothers who were perceived to be too close to the center of power and more ambitious for themselves than for their children. Therefore, Volume 1 established for this series the difficult balance maintained by these royal mothers—their role placed them in powerful and influential situations, and they were judged on how far they might take their influence, deliberately or not. On the one hand, the royal mother is expected to produce and nurture future heirs who will ensure dynastic and political security, but on the other, a woman who appeared to have too much influence was seen as meddling, overwhelming in her authority, and a threat to the stability of the realm.

The chapters in this volume complement and build on the themes of *Royal Mothers and their Ruling Children*. Here are the complexities and subtleties inherent in the role of royal mother and challenges these traditional stereotypes posed are explored—some mothers did abandon their own children in favor of their own ambition, but then there were royal sons endorsed completely their mother's political advice and rule as well as stepmothers who cared deeply for their offspring. The chapters in these volumes provide a fresh re-evaluation of women who struggled against contemporary chronicles and propaganda that perpetuated the stereotypes associated with "bad mothers." These particular images of wickedness, abandonment, and treachery toward their brood to advance their own career, especially in the behavior of surrogate and stepmothers, persist in modern culture—Disney has made an industry out of cruel maternal figures; one can buy a T-shirt emblazoned with Snow White's Wicked Queen/Stepmother, and while Cinderella's taunting stepmother and

stepsisters provide comedic value in both Disney films and pantomimes, no one knows Cinderella's birthmother's name.

Both volumes of this collection address aspects of motherhood across both the Medieval and Early Modern periods, the (in)famous and the not-so-famous royal mothers, and each author adds context and comparative depth case studies from earlier eras and how (and why) royal mothers of the past are depicted in modern popular culture. All of the chapters in this collection address the issue of sources, make use of multidisciplinary approaches, and in a number of cases, reverse the stereotype with a re-evaluation of older material—investigating their case studies within contemporary morals and customs on the one hand and modern reputation on the other.

The present volume is divided into two main sections: the first looks at examples of image and self-fashioning—the "good" mother, and "the bad." The second considers legacy and reputation, both contemporary and modern. The first three chapters consider the theme of the "good mother" and look to contemporary sources to consider the criteria which define the "good mother": her beauty and her faith, her bounty, and how she nurtured her children for the good of society and the state. These chapters also stress that royal mothers who were considered "good" were no less diligent and industrious than their "ambitious" sisters, and they worked hard to fashion a positive image and reputation for themselves. Mothers demonstrated their goodness by their religious devotion, their roles as helpmeets (first with their husbands, then their offspring), and as guides and mentors. The first chapter in this section is by Kriszta Kotsis and looks at the life of "Empress Theodora: A Holy Mother." Theodora (c. 815–after 867) was venerated as a saint as the wife of the last iconoclastic emperor of Byzantium, and she is credited with not only supporting her husband with her "bountiful motherhood" but also for restoring religious orthodoxy. Both her son and her husband included her image on their coins as a symbol of her good reputation and role as mother and Empress. Another theme Kotzis examines and is continued with the other two chapters in this section is that of establishing dynastic stability: here Theodora gets the job done by raising her own daughters to carry on the dynasty and to maintain peace through marriage alliances. So, too, did Mathilda of Flanders, as discussed in Laura Gathagan's chapter, "Mother of Heroes, Most Beautiful of Mothers: Mathilda of Flanders and Royal Motherhood in the Eleventh Century." Gathagan examines and re-evaluates two important sources for Mathilda's life, Orderic Vitalis's *Historia*

Ecclesiastica and Fulcoius of Beauvais's poem *Jephthah*. Mathilda (1031–1083), wife of William the Conqueror, is not only a good mother but also a good daughter: the sources tell us that she undoubtedly modeled her role as an able administrator and lynchpin in the royal family by following her own mother's model. Gathagan's study focuses on how the primary sources have shaped Mathilda's positive reputation as a nurturing mother, especially as she guided her daughters into religious life. The third chapter in this section on good mothers by Manuela Santos Silva looks at "A Mother and Her Illustrious Offspring: The Role of Philippa of Lancaster, Queen of Portugal, in her Children's Education (1387–1415)." Philippa fulfilled the role of a good royal mother not only by cementing a political alliance between Portugal and England, but nurturing and educating her children to foster their intelligence, but also to imbue them with "English values" which augmented their abilities as rulers and soldiers. So good royal mothers are lauded by contemporaries for being beautiful, playing the role of helpmeet for their ruler-husbands well, and by not only producing the heir(s) but seeing to the moral, religious, and, for want of a better word, patriotic education of their children. Dynasty and political stability were thus assured.

The next section of this volume takes the reader from the image of the ideal mother to her wicked counterpart. While *Royal Mothers and their Ruling Children* considered the "bad mother" as a wicked virago who was power-mad and ambitious, wishing to wrestle political authority away from her offspring, the theme associated with the bad royal mother in this volume is the combination of ambition with abandonment. In these three chapters, the authors look at and re-evaluate the reputation of royal women accused by contemporary sources of abandoning their children out of selfish motivation. These three chapters debate whether these women were more truly involved with their political career advancing their own position or whether they may not have had a choice in the matter of abandoning their children. First, Matilda of England makes the first of two appearances in this volume, as Charles Beem considers her career in "Greatest in Her Offspring: Motherhood and the Empress Matilda." Matilda (1102–1167), daughter of Henry I, was made infamous by contemporary sources for abandoning not only her sons but also her husband in order to lay claim to her father's throne in England (as his only surviving, legitimate heir). She nearly attained her goal to become the first queen of England, and sadly, in her case, the sources may well be right that her role as mother was always subordinate to her political and

dynastic ambitions. The next chapter on the theme of maternal abandonment is by Louise J. Wilkinson; she explores "Maternal Abandonment and Surrogate Caregivers: Isabella of Angoulême and Her Children by King John." Isabella's reputation took a beating by contemporary chronicler Matthew Paris, who not only condemns her own actions but finds Isabella a villain simply by association with King John, a reputation which has persisted into modern popular culture. Wilkinson examines closely Isabella's situation as the widowed queen of John of England (d. 1216): Isabella left behind in England her five young children to return to her own lands and ambitions in Poitevin France—only to entangle Henry III, her eldest son by John, in her schemes of power. Wilkinson takes a fresh look at royal records from the era which indicate that Isabella may have had little choice in the matter of her departure from England; she also considers the role of the English regents who found both men and women of good birth, experience, and character to serve as surrogate caregivers to the nine-year-old Henry III, and to raise him and his siblings to productive adult lives. The final chapter in this section by Elena Woodacre discusses "The Perils of Promotion: Maternal Ambition and Sacrifice in the Life of Joan of Navarre, Duchess of Brittany and Queen of England" (1370–1413). As a dowager duchess, Joan seized the opportunity to remarry and become Queen consort to Henry IV of England—but at a cost, leaving behind five of her seven children and earning the enmity of contemporary chroniclers as a woman who abandoned her children in pursuit of a royal crown. Joan has been accused of being greedy and avaricious, vilified for her choice to abandon her children for a queenly position. Woodacre looks here to evaluate Joan's maternal and political career and to assess her conflicted loyalties, and provides a better understanding of how Joan attempted to reconcile her roles of mother, stepmother, wife and queen, and perceptions of what her motivations were for creating for herself a new life without her children.

Having looked at the good mother and the bad mother, the second part of this volume looks at image and legacy. The first two chapters look at image in terms of self-fashioning, and how much control a royal mother had over the creation of her own reputation and how an ambitious woman might spin the expected conventions and expectations of a royal mother to her own advantage. First, Sally Fisher considers Margaret Beaufort (1443–1509), the mother of Henry VII. Margaret had no official power but excelled in ambiguous propaganda and in supporting her son's rise to power. Fisher examines Margaret's careful self-fashioning through texts,

focusing on themes of motherhood and nobility; a key component of the discussion examines how Margaret began, from 1499, to sign her letters enigmatically as "Margaret R"—did it stand for Margaret Richmond or Margaret Regina? Did she see herself as a quasi-queen alongside of her son? It is a chapter which considers how such careful self-fashioning created for a woman of power and authority—she never co-ruled with Henry in England, but she did have power and authority in other realms in Europe that could not be supported merely on her status as mother of the king. A second chapter in this section by Zita Rohr considers the intriguing Yolande of Aragon (1384–1442) who accused her rival of being a poor regent and gambled, through an elegantly written letter, that she herself was a far better surrogate mother for the young king in terms of promoting and protecting his authority, and thus secured for herself a strong political position at court. Rohr's intriguing study is framed throughout by a contextual consideration of the newly popular game of chess in the courts of Europe and looks at how Yolande, as intelligent a woman as the chessboard's queen is a powerful piece, acted as guardian, mentor, and champion of the teenaged dauphin Charles, and secured for him his place as Charles VII *le Victorieux* of France.

A second theme covered in this section on image and reputation includes two chapters which examine the use and abuse of the image of royal mother in contemporary and modern propaganda and popular culture. First is Katarzyna Kosior's discussion of Bona Sforza of Milan (c.1494–1557) whose image is re-evaluated not only to determine if she was truly a bad mother by contemporary standards (she was accused of being a poisoner, a power-hungry absolutist, and a terrible mother) but also how her life and career was used as part of communist propaganda and social satire in mid-twentieth-century Poland. Kosior provides historical context for Bona's bad reputation in contemporary sources: in addition to contemporaries judging her maternal skills, Bona also had to contend with being an outsider on two fronts: she was a foreigner to the court (always a source of suspicion, even though it was not uncommon for a king to marry to cement a foreign alliance, and Bona has been a highly sought-after prize) and she was the second wife to King Sigismund I, and thus was pressured to produce additional offspring for the old king. Having looked at the complex situation in which Bona found herself and the poor reputation she received in contemporary literature, Kosior also considers how reputation, shaped by sixteenth-century stereotypes, has currently informed not only twentieth-century propaganda but also the shape of modern scholar-

ship. The final chapter in this volume also considers the afterlife of a queen in modern popular culture, in this case, romance novels. The Empress Matilda makes her second appearance in Katherine Weikert's examination of the portrayal of the Empress and themes of Medieval motherhood in popular fiction of the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. This chapter reinforces one of the collection's key themes of how the many stereotypes associated with powerful royal mothers from Antiquity through to the Early Modern Period persist and shape the current perception not only of these women in a contemporary context but also of their modern counterparts among politically active women today.

Collectively these chapters, although diverse in terms of period and place, highlight common themes in the role of royal mothers as helpmeets to their spouses, producers, and nurturers of children, and the key to dynastic stability and success. As these two volumes have shown, royal motherhood placed a woman in a complicated situation indeed. The paradigm of the ideal mother frequently came from the pens of aristocratic men, secular or sacred, who saw ideal mothers as those who bore sons, gave them a good, moral training, then presented them to the world able and ready to serve their people. She stayed in the background; she managed the royal household and the royal family. Good mothers supported the domestic side of the political man, whether he is her husband or offspring, giving advice, providing a moral example, showing support, and, most important, staying out of the political public life. Where the complexities occur, as these chapters have shown is that in order for a royal woman successfully to guide her sons or to protect her royal offspring, she must lay down the spindle, come out of the chapel, and get actively involved in the affairs of state—in an unofficial capacity if not officially. This, of course, wreaks all sorts of havoc with the contemporary chroniclers who see a woman proactive in politics as the antithesis of the acceptable role model, and hence these active, intelligent, and, yes, sometimes ambitious women painted as wicked, aggressive, masculine, and, worst of all perhaps, unmotherly.

From Antiquity through to the Early Modern Period, royal women have had to be as hard and ruthless politically as their male counterparts, and they pay the consequences as in order to do so, they must clash with the image of the ideal, demure mother. So strong is the instinct to venerate one's mother on the one hand or to vilify the woman seen as so ambitious that she would put herself ahead of her children on the other persists strongly; the *nachleben* for some of these royal mothers persists as

part of modern national folklore or becomes the stuff of romance novels, television, and film. Both of these volumes on royal motherhood offer compelling studies of successful partnerships and disastrous relationships between royal mothers and their children—the authors have demonstrated that royal motherhood can be an incredible opportunity for power, influence, and authority, but only if she can successfully navigate the political landscape on the one hand and adhere to the powerful images expected culturally of the good mother.

Notes

1. New York: Schocken, 1975. The text has remained a seminal work, and has been revised and updated several times.
2. Originally published in 1988, Dixon's text has been reissued by Routledge: S. Dixon, *The Roman Mother* (London, 2015). The other texts are B. Wheeler, *Medieval Mothering* (London: Routledge, 1999); C. Leyser and L. Smith, eds., *Motherhood, Religion and Society in Medieval Europe* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2011); and N. J. Miller and N. Yavneh, eds., *Maternal Measures: Figuring Caregiving in the Early Modern Period* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2000).

PART I

Fashioning the Image of the "Good" and "Bad" Royal Mother

Empress Theodora: A Holy Mother

Kriszta Kotsis

Surviving sources attribute to Empress Theodora (r. 842–856) a multitude of roles: she was the daughter of a provincial military officer, winner of a bride show, loving wife of an emperor, mother of seven children, enterprising ship-owner, widow, regent, nun, saint, and crypto-iconophile turned champion of the icons.[1] Byzantine texts praise her most effusively for this latter role, as it was to be the pivotal achievement of her reign: she spearheaded the restoration of iconophile orthodoxy in 843 and concluded the protracted dispute over the use of religious images in devotion, the so-called Iconoclastic Controversy (726–843).[2] A mid-ninth-century *vita*, for example, remarks that she was "… the aptly named Theodora," because it was "she who was truly bestowed on the world by God as a divine gift of orthodoxy and who awarded total peace to the church…."[3] Theodora's motherhood, or more precisely her status as a widowed regent mother, undoubtedly facilitated her participation in the restoration of religious orthodoxy, and this chapter examines her role as a mother through a close examination of a handful of visual and textual representations.[4] These include effigies stamped on gold coins and monumental inscriptions inlaid into a bronze door of Hagia Sophia during her lifetime, and a multilayered narrative incorporated into her posthumous *vita*. Not intended as a com-

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prehensive survey of all visual and textual images of Theodora as a mother, this study demonstrates that these emphatic and highly public representations of Theodora's motherhood emerged as responses to lurking threats to the exercise of imperial authority, dynastic continuity, and the volatility of the kinship system developed in the ranks of the elite in the early ninth century. As a result, Theodora's representations helped to consolidate the authority of newly emerging dynasties in the ninth century, namely that of the Amorians (820–867) and the Macedonians (867–1056).

Theodora became empress when she married Theophilos (r. 829–842) in 830 after allegedly having been chosen in a bride show because of her exceptional beauty and comportment befitting an empress.[5] Regardless of whether her selection in a beauty pageant is fact or fiction, this marriage clearly fits among the sustained attempts to create a family network within the military elite in the first half of the ninth century.[6] Intricate kinship ties bound the families of Theophilos and Theodora to one another and to families of the elite. Theophilos' imperial predecessors, Michael I Rhangabe (r. 811–813), Leo V the Armenian (r. 813–820), and Michael II the Amorian (r. 820–829), did not come from imperial stock; their political rise is related to their service as military officers during the reign of Nikephoros I (r. 802–811) and to their complex kin network. Michael I was the son-in-law of Nikephoros, married to his daughter Prokopia at the time of his accession in 811. Michael I was deposed and followed by his own *synteknos* (godfather of one of his children) Leo V on the throne. Leo V was also godfather of Theophilos, the son of the next emperor, Michael II.[7] The wife of Leo V, Theodosia, was the daughter of an influential official, Arsaber, who was even elevated as emperor in an ill-fated coup against Nikephoros.[8] After the assassination of Leo V, his *synteknos* Michael II emerged as emperor. His first wife Thekla was the daughter of Bardanios Tourkos, another powerful general with imperial ambitions, who was allied with Leo and Michael.[9] Michael II's second wife was Euphrosyne, the daughter of Constantine VI (r. 780–797) and granddaughter of the Empress Irene (r. 797–802).[10] Theophilos, the son of Michael II and Thekla, became emperor upon the death of his father. Theophilos' wife, Theodora, was the paternal niece of Manouel, who served as *protostrator* (equestrian official accompanying the emperor) during the reign of Michael I, and was *strategos* (general) under Leo V, Michael II, and Theophilos. Theodora's father Marinos held the lower positions as *tourmarches* (military commander assisting the *strategos*) and *droungarios* (military rank below *tourmarches*) of Paphlagonia.[11] During

their 12-year marriage, Theodora and Theophilos had seven children: Constantine, Thekla, Anna, Anastasia, Maria, Pulcheria, and Michael.[12] Their first son, Constantine, died young, and four of their daughters never married.[13] After Theophilos' premature death in 842, Theodora ruled as regent mother from 842 to 856 because his designated heir, Michael III, was only two years old when his father died.[14] Clearly, the choice of Theodora as imperial bride was strongly motivated by the position of her family which included influential men of the military and bureaucracy, yet the bride show reported in several sources, including her *vita*, conceals the political reasons behind her selection.[15] Women were important links among the families of the elite and imperial dynasties. Wives for emperors were selected either because of their ability to link the current ruler to the lineage of the previous dynasty or because they created a connection between the emperor and a powerful man of the military or bureaucracy.

Wife, Mother, and Widow: Visual Images of Theodora from Her Lifetime

Visual images of Theodora are significant because between the fall of Irene in 802 and the rise of the Macedonian Dynasty in 867 the effigies of Theodora and her daughters on coins and seals offer the only extant visual depictions of Byzantine imperial women in any medium. Coins and seals epitomize what one may describe as official imagery issued by the authority of the emperor. Although it is not clear what procedures were followed in designing coin and seal types and legends, and to what degree emperors, imperial family members, and advisors participated in this process, one may assume that rulers or their representatives would have been involved in decisions regarding new coin or seal designs.[16] Theodora's coin and seal images follow the iconography established for the numismatic representation of empresses by her predecessor, Irene.[17] Yet, Theodora is never shown by herself on coins or seals: her images emphatically stress her roles as wife and mother.

The rare *solidus* of Theodora's husband Theophilos (Fig. 1) carries an extensive family portrait: Theophilos, Theodora, and their daughter Thekla appear on the obverse and the daughters Anna and Anastasia on the reverse.[18] Its iconography draws on coins minted by the Isaurian Dynasty (717–802) which often show multiple generations on a single coin, yet the selection of figures is unusual: imperial wives have not been

Fig. 1 Solidus of Theophilos, Constantinople, obverse: busts of Thekla, Theodora, Theophilos, reverse: busts of Anna, Anastasia (Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of Thomas Whittemore, 1951.31.4.1174, Photo: Imaging Department ©President and Fellows of Harvard College)

shown on Byzantine coins since the mid-seventh century and images of daughters were typically not included on the coinage.[19] It is difficult to contextualize this coin issue because the extant evidence does not permit a clear understanding of the order in which the children were born.[20] Since only three of the seven imperial children appear on this issue, most scholars agree that it was minted after the deaths of the first son Constantine and his sister Maria and before the birth of the second son Michael, thus between 838 and 840.[21] However, no scholarly consensus has been reached regarding the occasion that prompted the minting of these coins.[22] Irrespective of the specific occasion for the issue, its message is clear: it emphasizes the importance of Theophilos' family, celebrates Theodora's motherhood even in the absence of a son, and establishes a hierarchy between the daughters, with Thekla granted greatest prominence. Theophilos' crowded family portrait literally frames the emperor and his authority with women of his family: his wife and daughters cluster around his central figure.[23] Therefore, Theophilos' power is closely associated with his marriage, parenthood, and family: Theodora is presented as a fecund mother and the daughters are promoted as embodiments of dynastic stability and as potential carriers of the imperial bloodline through future marriages. The coins address concerns about dynastic stability

and succession and convey the image of a healthy, vigorous, and bountiful imperial family. Given the volatility of imperial power in the first two decades of the ninth century, when five emperors came and went in quick succession, it is clear that Theophilos sought to establish stable dynastic succession following the model of the Isaurian emperors and women were of key importance for this enterprise. Moreover, considering the ephemeral and disastrous nature of the spiritual kinship ties forged among his male imperial predecessors who were bound to one another as *synteknoi,* Theophilos emphasized the greater permanence of blood ties created by the women in his family. Theodora's fruitful motherhood, therefore, was cast as highly beneficial for the dynasty and was presented as a source of authority for herself and her husband. Although these coins were most likely not distributed widely, they probably circulated within the capital and among members of the imperial court and the elite who would have been aware of the upheavals in imperial succession in the previous decades.

Further evidence of Theodora's importance during the reign of Theophilos is attested by the monumental cruciform inscriptions inlaid with silver onto the so-called "Beautiful Door," the outer doors of the southwest vestibule leading into the inner narthex of the church of Hagia Sophia in Constantinople (Figs. 2 and 3).[24] The wooden door leaves covered by copper alloy plates are decorated with cast frames that combine richly detailed floral and geometric patterns. These borders frame vertical panels that display round cruciform inscriptions. The elegant inscriptions are laid out in four pairs and are read across the two door leaves. The top three pairs of roundels originally offered invocations on behalf of the imperial couple and the reigning patriarch, stating: "Lord help | the ruler [despot] Theophilos," "Mother of God help | the empress [augusta] Theodora," "Christ help | the patriarch John." The fourth pair of roundels contained the date: "the year from the creation | of the world 6347, indiction 2 [838/839]."[25] The southwest vestibule served as the main entrance for the emperor by the tenth century and it is possible that it was constructed and already used in this manner during the reign of Theophilos.[26] It is perhaps no coincidence that about the same time when Theophilos issued the previously discussed ceremonial coins, the "Beautiful Door" was also commissioned. The doors' inscriptions convey the cordial relations between the imperial and patriarchal office, and promote the harmonious partnership of the imperial couple. The doors' invocations addressed to Christ and the

Fig. 2 Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, "Beautiful Door," southwest vestibule, bronze door during de-installation (MS.BZ.004-L72-1664_EH, The Byzantine Institute and Dumbarton Oaks, Fieldwork Records and Papers, Photograph: Ernest Hawkins, Image Collection and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees of Harvard University, Washington, DC)

Mother of God may also suggest that Theophilos and Theodora, parents of several daughters and a dead son, were also seeking divine help in conceiving a second male child.[27] The "Beautiful Door" therefore

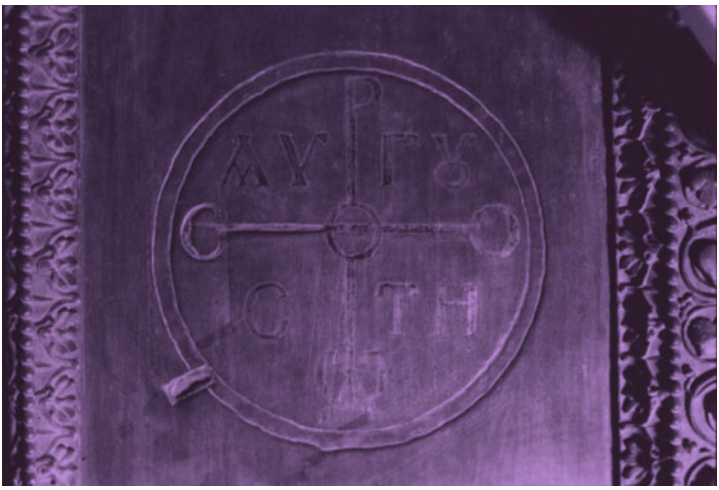

Fig. 3 Istanbul, Hagia Sophia, "Beautiful Door," southwest vestibule, eastern bronze door, upper panel, lower monogrammatic inscription: Theodora (MS. BZ.004-L64-173-CM, The Byzantine Institute and Dumbarton Oaks, Fieldwork Records and Papers, Photograph: Cyril Mango, Image Collection and Fieldwork Archives, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees of Harvard University, Washington, DC)

both celebrates Theodora as bountiful wife and mother and cultivates renewed aspirations for a healthy male heir. Moreover, the doors were placed at a highly frequented area of the church ensuring their visibility and publicity. The cruciform shapes of the inscriptions evoke numerous associations: they firmly link this commission with the tradition of imperial patronage, since similar imperial monograms combined with invocations commemorate the donation of Irene and Constantine VI to Hagia Sophia in Thessaloniki in the mosaics of the apse vault, but even closer at hand, cruciform monograms of Justinian's wife, Theodora (d. 548) grace numerous capitals of the very church to which the doors are affixed.[28] Furthermore, cruciform monograms combined with invocations are also frequently found on seals that secure and authenticate documents.[29] Thus, these inscriptions associate Theophilos and Theodora with revered imperial tradition and they may have also functioned as devices that seal and protect the Great Church of Byzantium. Further, the inscriptions not only perpetuated the memory of the patrons but also

activated the liminal space at the entrance to the cathedral by prompting visitors to decipher their rebus-like texts and then speak the inscribed prayers on behalf of the imperial family.[30]

The inscriptions on the "Beautiful Door" were altered shortly after their completion. The name and title of the patriarch were replaced with the words "despot Michael," the original date was changed to A.M. 6349, indiction 4 (840/841), and a further inscription was added to the tops of the door leaves stating: "Theophilos and Michael, victorious."[31] Scholars agree that the name of Michael III was inserted following his birth (January 9/10, 840) or coronation.[32] The replacement of the patriarch's name and title with those of Michael creates an indisputably dynastic inscription, showcasing the fruitful motherhood of Theodora and the now clear line of imperial succession. It is significant to note that the iconoclast Theophilos' name remained on the doors even after the defeat of Iconoclasm, most likely as a result of the vigorous propaganda campaign his widow Theodora initiated in rehabilitating and preserving his memory.[33] While the date inscribed on the doors would suggest that the alteration took place in relation to Michael's birth or coronation, one wonders how the patriarch would have felt about the removal of his name from the door of the patriarchal church while he was still in office. It is tempting to consider another possibility, namely that the inscriptions were changed after the restoration of icons and the removal of Patriarch John from office in 843. Given Theodora's efforts to rehabilitate the memory of her husband, it may have been prudent to couch the removal of the iconoclast patriarch's name from the "Beautiful Door" which also displayed her iconoclast husband's name as a gesture of dynastic record keeping.

After Theophilos' unexpected death in 842, Theodora became regent for her toddler son, Michael III, and immediately issued gold coins showing herself on the obverse framed by the legend, *Theodora despyna* (the female version of *despotes* favored by her husband) (Fig. 4). She is accompanied by Michael and his older sister Thekla on the reverse who are identified by their names only.[34] Theodora takes precedence due to her notable placement on the obverse alone and the inclusion of a title, yet her role as mother is underscored by the presence of the two children on the other side of the coin. Thekla's inclusion probably indicates that she was groomed as a potential transmitter of imperial lineage and authority in case Michael died before reaching adulthood.[35] Therefore, these coins announce the position of Theodora as regent for her under-aged son, and

Fig. 4 Solidus of Michael III, Constantinople, obverse: bust of Theodora, reverse: busts of Michael and Thekla (Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of Thomas Whittemore, 1951.31.4.1208, Photo: Imaging Department ©President and Fellows of Harvard College)

demonstrate the continuation of the dynasty through either the male or the female line. While the imagery communicates Theodora's importance, she is portrayed as a safeguard of dynastic succession, and her position is presented emphatically as that of a protective mother.[36]

The second gold issue of the regency was revolutionary: it reinstated the image of Christ onto Byzantine coinage reviving the numismatic iconography introduced by Justinian II of the late seventh century[37] (Fig. 5). The obverse displays a bust of Christ framed by the legend, *IhS½SX RISτOS*, while the reverse represents Michael and Theodora accompanied by the legend, *miXAHLSΘ½ OδORA*.[38] While the first gold issue articulates a clear dynastic agenda, the second conveys a more complex message: it proclaims a change in religious policy through the restoration of a venerable orthodox tradition and emphasizes the source of imperial power in visual terms: mother and son are emperors by the grace of God.

Theodora and her daughters acquired great import in representing the empire and the dynasty on public images produced during their lifetimes, yet the imagery carefully downplayed the significance of the empress as consort or regent in favor of the cohesion of the imperial family as a whole. Theodora was portrayed as a link rather than an independent imperial authority. She never appeared alone, always incorporated into a family portrait. Her surviving representations allow glimpses at how the

Fig. 5 Solidus of Michael III, Constantinople, obverse: bust of Christ, reverse: busts of Michael and Theodora (Harvard Art Museums/Arthur M. Sackler Museum, Bequest of Thomas Whittemore, 1951.31.4.1209, Photo: Imaging Department ©President and Fellows of Harvard College)

visual image of the empress mother embedded in a family portrait can help consolidate authority, negotiate dynastic uncertainty, and mitigate governmental and religio-political change.

Holy Mother: Posthumous Textual Images of Theodora

The Life of Theodora, written most likely a few decades after her death to celebrate her elevation to sainthood and structured as an imperial encomium, contains a multilayered narrative detailing Theodora's selection as Theophilos' wife in its third chapter.[39] This story draws attention to Theodora's impending bountiful maternity and foreshadows her elevation as a saint. In the remainder of this study, I examine how this section of the Life weaves together a complex tapestry of allusions to justify the elevation of this imperial "housewife" to sanctity and how the figure of Saint Theodora serves the political and dynastic ambitions of the second ruler of the Macedonian Dynasty, Leo VI.

The text reports that after Theophilos chose seven girls from those assembled for his bride show, he gave each an apple before sending them off to their rooms. The following day the girls returned for an audience, yet when the emperor asked for the apples back, only Theodora could return

the imperial gift: "… the blessed Theodora, who was standing behind the <other> six like a rose among thorns, cupped her hands like a lily and gave the emperor Theophilos a second apple in addition to the imperial one."[40] When the emperor asked what this meant, she replied, "[t]he first apple, my lord, the talent entrusted to me by God, I give back to you undamaged and intact: it is my virginity and chastity. The second one is like the denarius and <represents> the son I will bear for you: do not refuse it."[41] The astonished emperor inquired about the source of the prophecy and learned that on her way to Constantinople Theodora visited a holy man who gave her an apple, foretold her imperial future, and instructed her to return the apple she would receive from the emperor along with the one he just presented to her. Theodora's account is steeped in biblical references: she explains that "… a star shone upon me as of old on the Magi in Bethlehem making <me> feel worthy to pay homage to him [i.e., the holy man] there."[42] The holy man himself forecast her future in scriptural language, declaring: "… an angel of the glory of the Lord is crowning you empress of the Christians and *the hand of the Lord is upon* your head."[43] Moreover, the story of the seven girls is reminiscent of the parable of the wise and foolish virgins in Mt 25:1–13. Theodora, the only maiden who preserved the imperial apple, is identified with the wise virgins who carefully conserved their oil and thus were able to join the bridegroom at the wedding banquet and therefore are destined to attain the kingdom of heaven.[44] In addition to demonstrating Theodora's suitability as the imperial bride, this comparison also portends her elevation to sainthood.

The motif of the apple allows the author to weave together ritual, historical, mythological, as well as scriptural associations in order to suggest wide-ranging yet interlocking meanings. The symbolism of an apple-like fruit, the pomegranate, linked with fertility, rebirth, and marital concord, was utilized during imperial nuptials: on the third day following the wedding, the empress emerged from the baths in the company of female attendants who carried three porphyry pomegranates.[45] This ritual visually conferred fertility and marital concord onto the new imperial bride, and these associations familiar from court ceremonials were evoked by the text of the Life.

While an apple-like fruit connotes a positive view of sexuality, fertility, and marital concord during imperial wedding rituals, the apple motif can also conjure associations with sin and heresy. The anecdote of the apple bestowed by Theodosios II (r. 408–450) onto his wife Eudokia as a

token of love narrated in various Byzantine chronicles is such an example. The story relates that Eudokia gave the apple to her lover who in turn presented it to the emperor, thus exposing Eudokia's infidelity.[46] Roger Scott explains that this narrative originated within the context of the dogmatic rivalry of the fifth century, where the opposing sides used different versions of the story to vilify the imperial couples supporting the two sides: the monophysites developed the first version of the story to discredit the orthodox (Chalcedonian) rulers Marcian and Pulcheria through sexual slander, and in turn the orthodox party adapted the story to attack Theodosios II, a supporter of monophysitism, and his wife Eudokia.[47] Ultimately, the story of Eudokia's unfaithfulness became enshrined in Byzantine historical texts such as the Chronicle of Malalas (sixth c.), the Paschal Chronicle (seventh c.), and the Chronicle of Theophanes (ninth c.). The author of Theodora's Life was likely familiar with the strongly iconophile Chronicle of Theophanes, and possibly with the earlier texts as well.[48] The *vita*'s author exploits the motif of the apple as a love token adroitly: Theodora's ability to return and double the fruit emphatically counters the stories spread about Eudokia's infidelity; this demonstrates Theodora's chastity and fidelity and also dissociates her from imperial heresy, thus placing her squarely within the orthodox fold. Another negative association linked with the motif of the offering of the apple is the fall of mankind, yet Theodora's apple story forcefully rejects this connection and distances her from the sin of Eve.[49]

Additionally, the apple presented to Theodora also demonstrates her beauty, evoking the story of the Judgment of Paris. The popularity of this tale was likely reinforced by the survival of famous antique statues in Constantinople that showed the Judgment of Paris and Helen.[50] The historian Niketas Choniates (d. 1217) reports that the Judgment of Paris showed: "Paris Alexander, standing with Aphrodite and handing to her the golden apple of Discord…"[51] Clearly, the image highlighted the price of Paris' decision, namely the Trojan War. In the more extended passage about the statue of Helen, Choniates gives a full description of her sensual beauty and notes the devastation triggered by her "scandalous amours."[52] The writer of Theodora's Life is aware of these narratives, yet "improves" on the mythological story. Theodora receives the apple as a recognition of her incomparable beauty, and her return of the apple to the emperor twofold demonstrates that the Homeric comparison only applies in part: Theodora's apple is not of discord, but rather a complex symbol of beauty,

virginity, marital concord, conjugal fidelity, fecund maternity, and elevation to the throne.

The similes that describe Theodora as "a rose amongst thorns [*akanthon*]" and her hand as a lily [*krinon]* coupled with the motif of the apple also allude to the Song of Songs, where the bride is described as follows: "I am a blossom of the plain, | a lily [*krinon*] of the valleys. | As a lily [*krinon*] among thorns [*akanthon*], | so is my sister among the daughters. As an apple tree among the trees of the wood, | so is my kinsman among the sons. … Strengthen me with perfumes | Encompass me with apples, for I have been wounded by love."[53] Gregory of Nyssa, a fourth-century theologian, whose work remained influential in Byzantium, interprets the Song of Songs as an allegory of the ascent of the soul to the divine and Christ's communion with the Church; he identifies the lily as a symbol of self-control and of the purity of the soul, and understands the apple and the apple tree as the ultimate symbols of the bridegroom and the divine.[54] Reference to the highly sensual Song of Songs is appropriate in the context of nuptials, yet its well-known allegorical interpretations developed by Byzantine authors, such as Gregory of Nyssa, further enhance Theodora's spiritual praise and qualifications for sainthood.

The terms "talent" and "denarius" in Theodora's speech elucidate the meaning of the two apples through biblical allusions: the parable of the servants, who, with the exception of one, invested their master's money ("talent") during his absence profitably (Mt 25); and Christ's dictum to pay dues both to the emperor and God, where the term "denarius" is used leading up to the command (Mt 22:19-21). Martha Vinson notes that while these biblical references demonstrate Theodora's scriptural knowledge they are ill-suited in this context, yet this latter point may be disputed.[55] It is noteworthy, that both Mt 22 and Mt 25 contain references to nuptials. In Mt 22, the command to pay the imperial tax is sandwiched between the parable about the wedding banquet and the explication of marriage at the time of the resurrection. Mt 25 begins with the parable of the wise and foolish virgins presented through nuptial imagery and then moves onto the story of the faithful servants. The thematic connections of nuptials, the payment of taxes, and good stewardship of riches intertwine in the Mt chapters and allow the author of the Life to present Theodora through this network of associations which appears appropriate for a saint who lived a married imperial life before her monastic retirement and her eventual elevation to sainthood. Later chroniclers also note that when Theodora retired, she left behind a fuller treasury than what she

inherited from her husband, therefore her perception as good custodian of the imperial coffers may explain the use of these biblical passages in her Life.[56] Furthermore, the careful insertion of monetary terms (talent and denarius) into the text may also allude to another layer of meaning. These terms may have been intended as reminders of the iconographic revolution introduced onto Byzantine coinage during Theodora's regency, thereby also emphasizing her role in the reinstatement of iconophile orthodoxy. In addition, both Mt 22 and Mt 25 are also concerned with resurrection and the kingdom of heaven, which may have offered another impetus for the use of these biblical references in Theodora's Life, a text that is believed to have been composed to mark her elevation as a saint.

The assimilation of Theodora to the magi who adored the newborn Messiah offers further associations which underscore both her orthodoxy and future motherhood. Theodora likens herself to the magi and parallels her journey to the holy man to their visit to the Christ child. This comparison accentuates Theodora's piety and her innate wisdom to recognize the true Messiah and by extension true (i.e., iconophile) orthodoxy. Linking Theodora with the theophany experienced by the magi is also undergirded by the important connection between the incarnation and arguments in favor of icons; iconophile theologians contended that it is precisely because God assumed material form through the incarnation that images of Christ are permissible, thus Theodora's association with the magi highlights her iconophile credentials.[57] Further, the text also suggests an analogy between the Mother of God and Theodora, who herself will soon give birth to a son and imperial heir. The connection between an empress and the adoration of the magi is not unique to this text: Empress Helena is credited with commissioning the mosaic decoration of a church of the Virgin in Bethlehem, the *locus sanctus* of the magi's visit, in a late ninth- or tenth-century text, while another Theodora (wife of Justinian, r. 527–565) is represented in an imperial robe embroidered with the adoration of the magi at San Vitale in Ravenna.[58] The image of the magi on Theodora's garment has been connected with liturgical offerings, the conversion of Gentiles, pilgrimage, and imperial associations.[59] All of these connotations linked with the magi have relevance for the portrayal of our Theodora in the Life, bringing together her various achievements as a pilgrim, a donor of both material and spiritual goods, a converter of false believers, a mother, and an empress.

The story of the magi (Mt 2) and the command to pay imperial tax (Mt 22:21) woven into Theodora's *vita* are also found in Oration 19

of Gregory Nazianzos entitled, "On his sermons and the tax adjuster Julian."[60] Although it is unclear, whether this sermon was already included in the liturgy in the ninth century, it was read on December 21 by the eleventh century and possibly earlier.[61] Nonetheless, given the popularity of Gregory's sermons in Byzantium, this homily was likely known to the *vita*'s author.[62] Gregory's text emphasizes that through acts of charity, kindness, spiritual offerings, and sacrifices, one may be "transported from the flesh toward the spirit …" and may attain salvation.[63] He also exhorts the tax collector to assess the taxes justly, noting that "… even our Savior is born during a period of assessment."[64] Thus offerings, sacrifices, taxation, and the birth of the Messiah coalesce in Gregory's sermon, demonstrating that these seemingly disparate themes also found in Theodora's Life are in fact part of an established exegetical tradition.

Significantly, an illuminated manuscript of Gregory's sermons (Paris gr. 510) produced in 879–882 in Constantinople as a gift to the Emperor Basil I (r. 867–886) illustrates Oration 19 on f. 137r unusually with the infancy narrative of Christ (including the adoration of the magi, the massacre of the innocents, the flight of Elizabeth with John the Baptist, Zacharias' martyrdom, and the presentation of the Christ child in the temple).[65] Other manuscripts of Gregory's sermons typically illustrate Oration 19 with images of the tax collector at work or Gregory and the tax collector together.[66] The atypical illustration of Oration 19 in Paris gr. 510 joins the visual imagery of motherhood with Gregory's text focused on charity, sacrifices, and salvation, creating a similar constellation of motifs as noted in Theodora's Life.[67] Leo VI, the son and heir of Basil I, must have been familiar with this manuscript and the ideas behind its production as its patron was none other than his tutor, Patriarch Photios (a relative of Empress Theodora).[68] It has been noted that, Leo VI promoted Theodora, the champion of orthodoxy, in order to strengthen the religio-political legitimacy of his own dynasty, which rose to power when Basil I assassinated Theodora's son, Michael III.[69] Yet, it is also possible that Theodora's elevation to sainthood would have been fostered by Leo VI because of his own desperate attempts to produce a male heir.[70] Theodora would have been a particularly well-chosen holy protector for Leo because through her elevation as a saint, Leo could atone for his father's sin, associate his own rule with orthodoxy, and seek the intercession of a fecund and holy imperial mother to facilitate the birth of a male heir.[71]

The third chapter of Theodora's *vita* serves the narrative function of introducing her to the imperial court, yet, as Vinson has noted, it also char-

acterizes her nature and accomplishments following Menander's guidelines for the imperial encomium.[72] The carefully crafted text of Theodora's journey to Constantinople and the account of the bride show allow the author to demonstrate all necessary attributes for an imperial woman who is expected to become a faithful wife, a fertile mother, a successful female ruler, a champion of orthodoxy, and eventually a saint.[73] The promotion of such a saint would have aided the political and dynastic aims of Leo VI particularly effectively, and these observations strengthen Vinson's argument that the Life was produced during his reign.[74]

Conclusion

The representations of Theodora examined in this chapter emerge from similar contexts: the coins and bronze door are closely and directly linked with the imperial court, even allowing for the possibility of Theodora's own involvement in their production; while the text of her *vita* was likely authored within the court of Leo VI a few decades after her death. The representations of Theodora's motherhood function as attempts to stave off potential crises. Her portrayal in the company of her husband and daughters signals the health and vigor of the dynasty even in the absence of a male heir, and demonstrates an alternative view of the source of authority that promises greater permanence than the highly volatile spiritual kinship ties cultivated by men with imperial aspirations in the first quarter of the ninth century. The original inscriptions on the bronze doors of Hagia Sophia flaunted the security and concord of the imperial family and its strong relationship with the patriarch, yet the absence of a male child may have also lurked behind their commission. The doors' revised inscriptions broadcast the secure succession through the birth of a male child, yet they may have also served as instrument in Theodora's negotiation of her husband's pardon during the liquidation of Iconoclasm. The coins of the regency reiterate the strength of the family and present Theodora as a guardian, whose authority is derived from her bountiful motherhood and her role in the restoration of iconophile orthodoxy. The chapter from her *vita* condenses into a short narrative a plethora of allusions that demonstrate Theodora's qualifications as an empress, a mother, and a saint. Her luminous praise serves to mend the fences and cement ties between this holy mother and champion of orthodoxy and the Macedonian Dynasty that emerged after the killing of her long awaited son, Michael. Yet the

vita also reflects the dynastic aspirations of Leo VI who sought the intercession of this sainted imperial mother to secure the birth of his own son.

Notes

1. Judith Herrin, *Women in Purple, Rulers of Medieval Byzantium*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2001, 185–239; Lynda Garland, *Byzantine Empresses, Women and Power in Byzantium, AD 527–1204*, London, New York: Routledge, 1999, 95–108.
2. *ODB* II, 975–977. She is commemorated as a saint on February 11, the Feast of Orthodoxy, for her role in defeating Iconoclasm, see *ODB* III, 2038.
3. "Life of St. Ioannikos," intro. and trans. Denis F. Sullivan, *Byzantine Defenders of Images, Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation,* ed. Alice-Mary Talbot, Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998, 243–351, esp. 345; for its date: ibid., 247. The text emphasizes the literal meaning of "Theodora," namely gift of god.
4. Herrin, *Women in Purple*, 254.
5. Warren T. Treadgold, "The Problem of the Marriage of the Emperor Theophilus," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 16/1 (1975), 325–341. For the less convincing dating to 821, see E. W. Brooks, "The Marriage of the Emperor Theophilos," *Byzantinische Zeitschrift* 10 (1901), 540–545, and *PMBZ* #7286.
6. The historicity of the bride show has been debated. Warren Treadgold, "The Historicity of Imperial Bride-shows," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 54 (2004), 39–52 argues for their historicity, but provides references to differing scholarly views.
7. For Michael I, Leo V, and Michael II, see Mark Walter Herlong, *Kinship and Social Mobility in Byzantium, 717–959*, Ph. D. dissertation, The Catholic University of America, 1986, 50-57, 63–65; *ODB* II, pp. 1362, 1209–1210, 1363; *PMBZ* #4989, #4244, #4990; for Leo V and Michael II also see Warren Treadgold, *The Byzantine Revival, 780–842*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1988, 196–262.
8. It is unclear whether Leo V had one or two wives. Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*, 199, 415 n. 265 argues for two wives; Herlong, *Kinship and Social Mobility*, 56–57 and *PMBZ* #4244 suggest that his wife was known by two different names.
9. For Bardanios, see Herlong, *Kinship and Social Mobility*, 59–61. Some sources intimate that the wives of Michael II and Leo V were sisters, although scholars disagree on the veracity of this: Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*, 196 accepts these reports as historical, while Herrin, *Women in Purple,* 151, 280 n. 47 rejects them.

10. Herlong, *Kinship and Social Mobility*, 43–44, 65; Herrin, *Women in Purple*, 155–158; *PMBZ* #1705.
11. *PMBZ* #8167, #7286, #4707, #4812; Herlong, *Kinship and Social Mobility,* 64, 121–124, 131–134; for Theodora, also see Garland, *Byzantine Empresses,* 95–108; Herrin, *Women in Purple*, 185–239. For the titles, see *ODB* III, 1748–1749, 1964, 2100–2101, *ODB* I, 663.
12. *PMBZ* #3931, #7261, #460, #231, #6384, #4735, #4991; and Herlong, *Kinship and Social Mobility,* 67–73.
13. However, Maria was engaged or married to Alexios Musele, see Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*, 438, n. 395.
14. Theodora was removed from power by her own son with the assistance of her brother, Bardas, see Herrin, *Women in Purple*, 226–230. For her unwillingness to share power with her brothers during the regency, see ibid., 216.
15. For the bride show, see n. 6; for the *vita*, see n. 39.
16. Kriszta Kotsis, "Defining Female Authority in Eighth-Century Byzantium: The Numismatic Images of Empress Irene (r. 797–802)," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 5/1 (2012), 185–215, esp. 192.
17. For Irene's coinage, see Kotsis, "Defining Female Authority."
18. They are known from three specimens only, suggesting a small, ceremonial issue, see *DOC* III/1, 428. The abbreviated names ΘEK'ΘEOF'ΘE' appear on the obverse, and the full names AnnASAnSTASIA on the reverse. For a recent discussion, see Cecily Hennessy, "The Byzantine Child: Picturing Complex Family Dynamics," *Approaches to the Byzantine Family*, eds. Leslie Brubaker, Shaun Tougher, Farnham, UK, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013, 207–231, esp. 211–214.
19. Kotsis, "Defining Female Authority," 192; *DOC* III/1, 224–351.
20. *PMBZ* #3931, #7261, #460, #231, #6384, #4735, #4991.
21. *DOC*, III/1, 408–409, 415–16; Jannic Durand, ed., *Byzance: l'art byzantin dans les collections publiques françaises*, Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992, 203, no. 138. For a different view, see Gustave Schlumberger, "Un monnaie d'or byzantine inédite," *Mélanges d'archéologie Byzantine*, Paris: E. Leroux, 1895, 141–145.
22. The various views include: the commemoration of the princesses' coronation, in Treadgold, *Byzantine Revival*, 283, and Cécile Morrisson, "Théodora, impératrice, régente et sainte," *Le Club français de la médaille. Bulletin* 86/87 (1985), 162–65, esp. 164; celebrating Theophilos's sack of Zapetra or the birth of Michael III in Andreas Dikigoropoulos, "The Constantinapolitan Solidi of Theophilus," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 18 (1964), 353–361, esp. 361; responding to the fall of Amorion by projecting family strength, in Vassiliki Athanassopoulou-Pennas, *Byzantine Monetary Affairs during the 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th Centuries*, D. Phil. disser-

tation, Oxford University, 1991, 37–38; and the impossibility of establishing the reason for this issue, in *DOC* III/1, 415.

23. Katerina Nikolaou, "Hoi gynaikes sto vio kai ta erga tou Theophilou," *Symmeikta* 9/2 (1994), 137–51 emphasizes the role of women in Theophilos' life.
24. 4.35 m by 2.91 m when closed, Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850: A History*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011, 435; for a ground plan showing the doors' location, see ibid., p. 438. Also see, Leslie Brubaker and John Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680–850): The Sources, An Annotated Survey*, Aldershot, UK, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001, 109–111, with earlier bibliography; W. Eugene Kleinbauer, "A Byzantine Revival: The Inlaid Bronze Doors of Constantinople," *Archaeology* 29/1 (1976), 16–29.
25. Adapted from Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850*, 435.
26. Ibid., 435–439.
27. Invocations to the Mother of God for help in conceiving a child are widely attested in Byzantine sources, see Brigitte Pitarakis, "Female Piety in Context: Understanding Developments in Private Devotional Practices," *Images of the Mother of God, Perceptions of the Theotokos in Byzantium*, ed. Maria Vassilaki, Aldershot, UK, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005, 153–166.
28. For the mosaic in Thessaloniki, see Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era (ca 680–850): The Sources*, 23–24. For the monograms on Theodora's capitals, see Werner Seibt, "Monogramm," *Reallexikon zur byzantinischen Kunst*, ed. Klaus Wessell and Marcell Restle, Stuttgart: A. Hiersemann, vol. 6, 1997, 589–614, esp. 593.
29. Nicolas Oikonomides, *A Collection of Dated Byzantine Lead Seals*, Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1986.
30. For the multiple functions of inscriptions on buildings and artworks, see Andreas Rhoby, "The Meaning of Inscriptions for the Early and Middle Byzantine Culture. Remarks on the Interaction of Word, Image and Beholder," *Scrivere e leggere nell'alto medioevo*, Settimane di studio della Fondazione Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo LIX, Spoleto, 2012, 731–753. For the performative and oral potential of inscriptions, see Amy Papalexandrou, "Echoes of Orality in the Monumental Inscriptions of Byzantium," *Art and Text in Byzantine Culture*, ed. Liz James, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 161–187.
31. Brubaker and Haldon, *Byzantium in the Iconoclast Era c. 680–850*, 435.

32. Ibid. and Cyril Mango, "When Was Michael III Born?" *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 21 (1967), 253–258.
33. Patricia Karlin-Hayter, "Restoration of Orthodoxy, the Pardon of Theophilos and the *Acta Davidis, Symeonis et Georgii*," *Byzantine Style, Religion, and Civilization, In Honour of Sir Steven Runciman*, ed. Elizabeth M. Jeffreys, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006, 361–373; Athanasios Markopoulos, "The Rehabilitation of the Emperor Theophilos," *Byzantium in the Ninth Century: Dead or Alive?*, ed. Leslie Brubaker, Alershot, UK, Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 1998, 37–49.
34. *DOC* III/1, 457, 461–462. Aniconic silver coins were also minted during the regency, inscribed with the names Michael, Theodora, and Thekla, see ibid. 458, 464–465.
35. Herlong, "Kinship and Social Mobility," 22; *DOC* III/1, 454.
36. The duration of this issue is unclear. *DOC* III/1, 456–457 and Cécile Morrisson, *Catalogue des monnaies byzantines de la Bibliothèque nationale*, Paris, 1970, II, 517 date it to 842–843. Athanassopoulou-Pennas, *Byzantine Monetary Affairs*, 39–42 dates it to 842–853. Franz Füeg, *Corpus of the Nomismata from Anastasius II to John I in Constantinople 713–976*, Lancaster, PA, London, UK: Classical Numismatic Group, 2007, 74–75 proposes 842–850.
37. *DOC* III/1, 458. Christ's effigy appeared on Byzantine coins for the first time during the reigns of Justinian II (r. 685–695, 705–711), but this iconography was discontinued after his death, see *DOC*, II/2, 568–609, 644–663.
38. *DOC* III/1, 463 and Morrisson, *Catalogue des monnaies byzantines*, II, 517 date the beginning of this issue to 843. However, others date it more convincingly to a later period due to its small size. For dating to 853–856, see Athanassopoulou-Pennas, *Byzantine Monetary Affairs*, 40–42. For dating to ca. 850, see Cyril Mango, *The Brazen House. A Study of the Vestibule of the Imperial Palace of Constantinople*, Copenhagen: I komission hos Munksgaard, 1959, 130. For dating to 850–856, see Füeg, *Corpus of the Nomismata*, 76.
39. "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," intro. and trans. Martha P. Vinson, *Byzantine Defenders of Images, Eight Saints' Lives in English Translation,* ed. Alice-Mary Talbot, Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 1998, 353–382. Vinson dates the Life to the reigns of Basil I or Leo VI (867–912) and suggests that it was "authorized at the very highest level of political and religious establishment," ibid., 355–356. Also see, Martha Vinson, "The Life of Theodora and the Rhetoric of the Byzantine Bride Show," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 49 (1999), 31–60; however, in Martha Vinson, "Gender and Politics in the Post-Iconoclastic Period: The *Lives* of Anthony the

Younger, the Empress Theodora, and the Patriarch Ignatios," *Byzantion* 68 (1998), 469–515, she argues that the text was composed in the court of Leo VI (r. 886–912), ibid., 483.

40. "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," 364.
41. Ibid. Allusions to Mt 22:15–22, Mk 12:13–17, Lk 20:20–26 are noted ibid., n. 31.
42. Ibid., 365. Allusion to. Mt 2:1–12 is noted ibid., n.34.
43. Ibid. Vinson cites Acts 13:11 in association with the scriptural quotation, "the hand of the Lord is upon," ibid., n. 35, but other passages may also be found in Ezra 7:28, Ezekiel 1:3, 3:14, 3:22, etc.
44. For the eschatological meaning of this parable, see Beat Brenk, *Tradition und Neuerung in der christlichen Kunst des ersten Jahrtausends, Studien zur Geschichte des Weltgerichtsbildes*, Graz, Wien, Köln: Böhlau in Kommission, 1966, 51–54.
45. Constantine Porphyrogennetos, *The Book of Ceremonies: with the Greek edition of Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae (Bonn, 1829)*, trans. Ann Moffatt and Maxeme Tall, Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 2012, Chapter 41 (V50), I, 216. Moffatt and Tall date the chapter to 768 but note its modification in 944, ibid., 207; *ODB* I, 596 dates it to 768; Georg Ostrogosky and Ernst Stein "Die Kroenungsordnungen des Zeremonienbuches, Chronologische und verfassungsgeschichtliche Bemerkungen," *Byzantion* 7 (1932) 185–233, esp. 214, 233 date it to 933–934. For apples and pomegranates as symbols of marriage and *concordia*, see Ernst H. Kantorowicz, "On the Golden Marriage Belt and the Marriage Rings of the Dumbarton Oaks Collection," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 14 (1960) 1–16, esp. 6. For the use of the Greek term 'mēlon' (apple) both in the specific and generic sense (denoting various round fruits), see A. R. Littlewood, "The Symbolism of the Apple in Byzantine Literature," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 23 (1974), 33–59, esp. 34.
46. A. R. Littlewood, "The Symbolism of the Apple in Greek and Roman Literature," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 72 (1968), 147–181, esp. 154; Littlewood, "The Symbolism of the Apple in Byzantine Literature," 46–47.
47. Roger Scott, "From Propaganda to History to Literature: the Byzantine Stories of apostrophe in 'Theodosius' Apple and Marcian's Eagles," *History as Literature in Byzantium*, ed. Ruth Macrides, Farnham, UK, Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010, 115–131.
48. For the popularity of the Chronicle of Theophanes in the ninth and tenth centuries, see *The Chronicle of Theophanes Confessor, Byzantine and Near Eastern History AD 284–813*, trans. Cyril Mango and Roger Scott, Oxford: Clarendon Press, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997, xcvii–xcviii.

Although Theophanes used Malalas' work, he most likely did not draw on the Paschal Chronicle, see ibid. lxxx–lxxxi.

49. Interestingly, tenth-century narratives of the bride show link the selection through apple with both the fall of mankind through Eve and man's redemption through the Virgin Mary, see Warren T. Treadgold, "The Bride-shows of the Byzantine Emperors," *Byzantion* 49 (1979), 395–413; Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, 98.
50. Littlewood, "The Symbolism of the Apple in Byzantine Literature," 41–46.
51. *O city of Byzantium, Annals of Niketas Choniatēs*, trans. Harry J. Magoulias, Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1984, 648, 357.
52. Ibid., 652–653, 360–361.
53. Song of Songs 2:1-3, 5; for the Greek text and translation see Gregory of Nyssa*: Homilies on the Song of Songs,* trans. Richard A. Norris, Jr., Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2012, 110–111.
54. Ibid., 110–147.
55. "Life of St. Theodora the Empress," 364, n. 31; Vinson, "Life of Theodora and the Rhetoric," 36.
56. Herrin, *Women in Purple*, 219.
57. Kenneth Parry, *Depicting the Word: Byzantine Iconophile Thought of the Eighth and Ninth Centuries,* Leiden, New York, Köln: E. J. Brill, 1996, 70–80, 99–113.
58. Joseph A. Munitiz et al. eds., *The Letter of the Three Patriarchs to Emperor Theophilos and Related Texts*, Camberley, UK: Porphyrogenitus, 1997, 42–43; for its date, ibid., xiv, xviii.
59. Anne McClanan, *Representations of Early Byzantine Empresses, Image and Empire*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, 133–134; Reneé Justice Standley, "The Role of the Empress Theodora in the Imperial Panels at the Church of San Vitale in Ravenna," *Representations of the Feminine in the Middle Ages*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler, Dallas, TX: Academia, 1993, 161–174.
60. St. Gregory of Nazianzus: *Select Orations*, Fathers of the Church, vol. 107, trans. Martha Vinson, Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003, 95–106.
61. George Galavaris, *The Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies of Gregory Nazianzenus*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ, 1969, 9–11.
62. Leslie Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning in Ninth-Century Byzantium, Image as Exegesis in the Homilies of Gregory of Nazianzus*, Cambridge, New York, and Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 1.
63. *St. Gregory of Nazianzus: Select Orations*, 97.
64. Ibid., 102.
65. Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, fig. 18, 5–7, 62–71.
66. Galavaris, *Illustrations of the Liturgical Homilies*, 42–46.

67. Brubaker notes the importance of family ties, particularly of husband and wife and mother and son, in this illumination and in other illustrations of the manuscript, Brubaker, *Vision and Meaning*, 69–70, 403–408.
68. Ibid., 412–414; Shaun Tougher, *The Reign of Leo VI (886–912), Politics and People*, Leiden, New York, and Köln: Brill, 1997, 69.
69. Vinson, "Life of Theodora and the Rhetoric," 34–38.
70. Tougher, *Reign of Leo VI*, 133–163.
71. Vinson, "Gender and Politics," 483–485 notes that in the contemporary *vita* of Antony the Younger the motifs of remarriage and miraculous birth of a son express aspirations of Leo VI for a male heir.
72. Vinson, "Life of Theodora and the Rhetoric," 35–36.
73. For married female saints, see Stavroula Constantinou, *Female Corporeal Performances, Reading the Body in Byzantine Passions and Lives of Holy Women*, Uppsala: Uppsala University, 2005, esp. 162–192.
74. Vinson, "Gender and Politics," 483.

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"Mother of Heroes, Most Beautiful of Mothers": Mathilda of Flanders and Royal Motherhood in the Eleventh Century

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Mathilda of Flanders (1025–1083), duchess of Normandy and later Queen of England, performed the most important and basic task of every lay medieval noblewoman—she had children. Hers was not the desperate and poignant position of her immediate predecessor to the English throne, Edith Godwineson, whose barren state robbed her of the influence an heir might have accorded her at court. Edith provides a foil against which we can see the conquering Norman queen. Edith was left beholden to her natal family for support and, consequently, when they were out of favor so was she. Queen Edith was exiled twice during her reign, as a direct result of King Edward's anxiety about the power her birth family held and the uses to which they put such power.[1] At Edward's death, contemporary chroniclers transformed Edith's failure to provide an heir to the English throne into beatification for Edward, now called "the Confessor," but left a childless Edith at the mercy of fate. While Edith married a saint, Mathilda married a bastard; Edith's marriage bed resulted in an otherworldly sanctity

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for her husband, but Mathilda's provided an unstemmable fecundity, the result of which was a surfeit of heirs. Thus, Mathilda of Flanders stood in implicit contrast to Edith's childlessness for contemporary pro-Norman writers: she ruled England at the head of the new Norman aristocracy and the succession crisis of the English throne had been answered. Works that celebrate Mathilda's maternal successes also illuminate contemporary discomfort with the nature and tenor of her motherhood. Her relationship with two of her children, Robert Curthose and Cecelia, Abbess of La Trinité, reveals the contradictory reception of Mathilda of Flanders as a mother in eleventh- and twelfth-century sources, and these relationships will form the basis of this chapter's study of Mathilda as mother.

Mathilda in fact had so many children that despite the ducal and subsequently royal status of her offspring, chroniclers of her age could not quite decide how many there were. Neither could they agree on the identity of some of them. William of Jumièges, in the incomplete *Gesta Normannorum Ducum,* catalogues Mathilda's sons as Robert, William, Richard, and Henry; he mentions four daughters but neglects to name them.[2] Elsewhere, in Orderic Vitalis' interpolation of the text, the daughters are listed in order of their birth: Cecelia, Constance, Adeliza, and Adela.[3] Orderic was arguably the best narrative source for the eleventh century, and lists Mathilda's children in order of age in two separate places in his own work, the *Historia Ecclesia*. In Book III of the *Historia*, Orderic recounts:

> He (William) took as his wife the highly born Mathilda, daughter of Baldwin, count of Flanders, and niece of Henry king of France through his sister. The marriage was blessed with sons and daughters: Robert, Richard, William, and Henry; Adelaide, Constance, Cecelia and Adela.[4]

Orderic catalogues them again in Book IV:

> She (Mathilda) was a kinswoman of Phillip, the king of France, she sprang from the stock of the kings of Gaul and emperors of Germany and was renowned equally for nobility of blood and character. She bore her distinguished husband the offspring he desired, both sons and daughters: Robert and Richard, William Rufus and Henry, Agatha and Constance, Adelaide, Adela and Cecelia.[5]

The conflicting records leave historians puzzled over the possible existence of Agatha, who is missing both in William of Jumièges' and in Orderic's

first account of the royal children, but who appears in Orderic's second account. All of the eleventh-century narratives neglect to include daughter Mathilda, for whom there is solid evidence from the Domesday Book. She appears in the survey for Hampshire, where "Geoffrey, the chamberlain of the king's daughter, Mathilda, held land (from King William) for his service to her."[6]

Orderic's evidence demonstrates that contemporary expectations of Queen Mathilda as the bearer of royal children were clearly met if not exceeded. There are hints of the noble quality of largesse in Mathilda's bounty of children as Orderic claims that "Skillful historians could write a memorable history of the exploits of these men and women if they applied themselves with energy to the task of handing down their exploits for future generations."[7] But his inaccuracy about the number and identity of Mathilda's children does more than simply frustrate modern historians. It mirrors the contested nature of the "maternal Mathilda" found in eleventh-century sources and raises a rich set of questions about Mathilda's role as mother. When chroniclers and poets revealed Mathilda in her maternal role, she was a source of ambivalence and contestation. Like Orderic's inventory of her children, Mathilda's maternal character is problematic. Chroniclers' and poets' perception of Mathilda as mother is poly-vocal and inchoate. Two particular sources reveal the tug-of-war about Mathilda's maternal identity: the Mathildine speech found in Orderic's *Historia* and Fulcoius of Beauvais's Jephthah poem. Each of these addresses Mathilda's relationship to a particular child. Orderic's speech provides evidence for Mathilda's bond to her first-born son, Robert Curthose, the heir to the duchy. Fulcoius' poem was probably written to celebrate Cecelia's final vows as she was dedicated to Mathilda's monastic foundation. Like the recounting of Mathilda's children, both sources reveal a tension surrounding Mathilda as a mother and offer conflicting interpretations of her maternal character as it related, respectively, to Robert and Cecelia. Orderic's Mathilda is forceful, fierce, and uncompromising, while Fulcoius' Mathilda is absent, powerless, and pitiable.

Robert Curthose was born shortly after Mathilda's marriage to William, in about 1050.[8] As the eldest son and heir to the duchy, Robert's birth and early life commanded care and attention not only from his parents but from the duchy at large, as its future was linked to his success or failure. While there is little direct evidence of Robert's early life, it is probable that he spent much of his time in the company of his parents as they directed public policy. One way to measure Robert's participation in his

parent's court is through charter evidence at important events. Charter activity did more than just establish legal claims; it created a community of signators that were bound together by assent to a transaction. Further, it recognized and underscored a hierarchy of authority within the duchy. So it is indicative of his position as heir that in 1051, the one-year-old Robert, perhaps with Mathilda or William guiding his tiny hand, made the mark of a cross at the bottom of a piece of vellum next to the words "*Signum Robertis juvenis comitis.*"[9] Robert's first charter, signed alongside his mother and father, confirmed to the abbey of Saint-Wandrille the donation of a freehold estate called Gilcourt, which was originally given a few years earlier by William, the count of Arques. The original grant was made orally in 1047 or 1048, when its abbot, Gradulphus, was still alive. The written charter confirmed the previous work of William and Mathilda, before Robert's birth. One is tempted, in light of his later difficulties, to see a premonition in this act. Ascribing his support as a small child to something arranged by his parents, Robert's "affirmation" was simulated—concocted for public consumption. Robert would regularly sign charters with his mother and father as he matured, as did William Rufus, Richard, Cecelia, and Henry to a lesser degree. And while charter evidence offers little in the way of Mathilda's daily maternal activities and attitudes, it does suggest that Robert was with her at important moments in her career. Further, it demonstrates that Mathilda involved her son in the administrative life of the duchy, and later the kingdom.

Exposure to the workings of ducal and royal administration would have been the culmination of Mathilda's educational duties as a mother, and perhaps the premiere learning environment she herself provided for Robert firsthand. Contemporary theorists on education concurred that the role of a mother was to oversee her children's intellectual development at least until the age of seven.[10] Since Mathilda of Flanders played an active role in the administration of the Anglo-Norman realm, it is probable that she chose tutors for her children and left the daily responsibilities for hands-on education to their expertise. Robert's staff of tutors and teachers is known to us because of their inclusion in his charters as a young man. Raherius, "*consularius infantis*" and Tetboldus, "*gramaticus*" both appear in the same charter.[11] Ilger or Hilgerius, "*pedagogus*," witnessed legal documents with Robert well into his late teens. Ironically, the efforts of his parents to provide appropriate guidance and training for his future may have contributed to Robert's ultimate break with his father. The presence of these handlers eventually chaffed Robert as he attempted to leave behind his

minority and move into his own as a ruler.[12] The charter confirming the rights of the abbey of Marmoutier, for instance, includes precise language about Robert's status as an adult; "Roberti, filii sui faceret confirmari, quia scilicet majoris jam ille etatis ad prebendum spontaneum auctoramentum idoneus esset."[13] Yet, though he was "now of the age of majority," his tutor was still present at his side and signed with him.

Robert's impatience for genuine authority and an authentic role in governance reflected the expectations and frustrations of an eldest son in the eleventh century; he was no longer a youth, but he was not quite an independent lord.[14] Supporting his household knights and retainers was a matter of honor in the arena of medieval politics. The medieval ideal lord repaid his supporters' loyalty by largesse. Keeping his men well-supplied and, indeed, enriching them was his responsibility. Scholars have interpreted Robert's rage against his father as colored by his sense of dishonor in the public world of the Anglo-Norman court.[15] Moreover, preparations for the conquest of England could have allowed Robert new authority as William and most of the barons in Normandy readied for the invasion. Whether or not Robert desired to take part in the military incursion himself is unknown. He stayed in Normandy at Mathilda's side to govern with her in William's absence. The government of Normandy itself, however, was held in Mathilda's capable hands. Although Robert signed charters with his mother, it was clear from the outset that Mathilda would be standing at the head of the justiciarship of Normandy.[16]

After the initial invasion, William's military activities in England kept him from Normandy, and provided the ideal opportunity for Robert to finally take control of the duchy. England's pacification was incomplete; the uprisings in the north and in the Fenlands engaged his father's attention and resources across the Channel. Robert was formally invested with Normandy in the winter of 1067, as his father prepared to return to England.[17] William used this opportunity to divest himself of his obligations to the King of France, as the Duchy of Normandy was ostensibly held from Philip I. William escaped the resultant homage and obligation to Philip by allowing Robert to succeed him. It is clear, however, from charter evidence and chronicle narratives that while Robert was formally invested as the Duke of Normandy, William's authority was still in force. In fact, Robert's control of Normandy did not include resources or funds to maintain his own household and reward his followers.[18] William's strategy to maintain control of his son, and the duchy, was to withhold the funds necessary for his autonomy.[19] Robert's rage at his father's refusal to loosen

his grip on Normandy resulted at last in an enduring rift that would have a permanent effect on the dynasty and the Anglo-Norman realm.[20]

Robert Curthose' rebellion against William the Conqueror, late in 1077 or early 1078, revealed a fissure in a dynasty that seemed unstoppable. Both allies and enemies of the upstart Anglo-Norman dynasty watched with interest as their dysfunction unfolded on the public stage of eleventh-century international politics. Robert's disaffection also pulled in its wake the younger sons of the "Conquest generation" who were his colleagues and men-at-arms. They both encouraged him and followed his lead as he fled Normandy and sought support with Mathilda's family first in Flanders and then France.

Robert's rebellion was a seminal moment for the Norman ruling family, but for Mathilda it is particularly revelatory. It allows us to see for the first time her active role as a mother and the response of her contemporaries to her behavior. When forced to choose sides, Mathilda chose her son against her husband. Orderic's account exposes his ambivalence about her choice:

> Queen Mathilda, feeling a mother's affection for her son, often used to send him large sums of silver and gold and other valuables without the king's knowledge. On getting word of it, he ordered her, in a passion, never to do such a thing again. When she recklessly renewed her offense, the king exclaimed in anger, "How very true here and now is the maxim of a certain sage, 'A faithless wife brings ruin to the state'. After this, who in the world shall ever find a trustworthy helpmate? The wife of my bosom, whom I love as my own soul, whom I have set over my whole kingdom and entrusted with all authority and riches, this wife, I say, supports the enemies who plot against my life, enriches them with my money, zealously arms and succors and strengthens them to my grave peril." Whereat she replied, "O my lord, do not wonder that I love my firstborn child with tender affection. By the power of the Most High, if my son Robert were dead and buried seven feet deep in the earth, hid from the eyes of the living, and I could bring him back to life with my own blood, I would shed my life-blood for him and suffer more anguish for his sake than, weak woman that I am, I dare to promise. How do you imagine that I can find joy in possessing great wealth if I allow my son to be burdened by dire poverty? May I never be guilty of such hardness of heart; all your power gives you no right to demand this of me."[21]

Orderic's description is a study of incongruity. While William is enraged, Mathilda is unrepentant. Orderic has William berate her as unfaithful, but empowers Mathilda to fire back at him from the high ground of a

mother's moral obligation to her child. While Orderic uses the topos of a "weak woman," he then gives her a will of iron. Mathilda's support of her firstborn's rebellion against his father surely presents a different type of ideal mother than one might expect in an eleventh-century source. Orderic sets the competing demands of wife and mother in opposition within the family drama of the Anglo-Norman dynasty and it is unmistakable from his tone that motherhood has prevailed. While Orderic was not an eyewitness to William and Mathilda's confrontation, he had an excellent source for the contours of the confrontation, and takes pains to reveal it in the passage immediately following the confrontation:

> On hearing this, the stern duke grew pale with anger and, bursting with rage, he commanded one of the queen's messengers named Samson, a Breton, to be arrested and blinded. However, when Samson got wind through friends of the queen of the king's wrath, he speedily took refuge in the monastery of Saint-Évroul. There at the queen's plea, he was received by the Abbot Mainer, and prudently adopted the monastic way of life to save both body and soul. He was shrewd and eloquent and chaste; and he lived for twenty-six years under the monastic rule.[22]

Saint-Évroul was Orderic's home from the age of seven, when he became a child oblate there. His daily contact with Samson, both as a young man and later as an author, informed his *Historia* as Samson's firsthand experiences of Mathilda's household provided intimate glimpses of the activities of the ducal family. Samson's "eloquence" was a crucial characteristic, not just for Orderic's use while writing the *Historia*, but for his role as a covert operative for the queen. Medieval messengers carried letters, but for sensitive and confidential information they memorized and recited the wishes, instructions, and directives of the sender.[23] This was common practice as letters could be misplaced or intercepted. For instance, in Pope Gregory's letter to Mathilda in 1080, he closes his letter with the phrase, "your servant Hubert, who we both trust, will tell you the rest."[24]

William's attempted attack on Samson reveals his importance in Mathilda's underground network.[25] It also demonstrates that Mathilda herself was untouchable. William seeks an outlet for his rage by retribution against Mathilda's knights, not Mathilda herself. Orderic is clear that this scene was occasioned by a second offense; Mathilda's support of Robert had already been discovered. Whatever warning or threat had been made at the initial uncovering of Mathilda's secret, she had refused to heed.

She repeatedly defies him and denies his right to govern her behavior. She answered to the higher authority of motherhood.

In 1080, Robert's exile was ended and he returned home at the great Easter celebration at Fêcamp. Mathilda was instrumental in arranging the truce between William and Robert, enlisting the help of friends and churchmen to accomplish it. Simon of Crépy, a kinsman of Mathilda's and a great favorite of William's, was raised as a young man in their court. A powerful lay lord, Simon left behind his position and entered the monastic life. He was pulled out of contemplation and peace to lend his weight to Mathilda's arguments for reconciliation. Pope Gregory, as mentioned above, wrote letters to Mathilda, Robert, and William to assist in repairing the breach. Both of Gregory's letters are responses to lost missives from Mathilda. It is possible that she requested his help and pressed him to write in support of reconciliation. Gregory had awarded the pallium to William as the English invasion was planned. It was material, visible evidence of papal approval of the Conquest. William's promised reform of English churches, the lure that obtained Gregory's support, would be hampered by Robert's rebellion. From the papal perspective, William's uncontested authority was necessary to enact sweeping ecclesiastical reform in England. And yet the pope addresses Mathilda as his "dearest daughter" a term he uses very sparingly, even after she has acted to undermine William's control, dramatically and unapologetically.[26] Though it is impossible to ascertain whether Gregory was aware of the details of Mathilda's military support for Robert, he may have subtly indicated his knowledge of her position in his letter after the reconciliation. He praises her love for God and for her neighbor and suggests that "With these and similar weapons arm *your husband*, [emphasis mine] when God gives you the opportunity, and do not cease to do so."[27]

Mathilda's network of spies and arms suppliers had not been disbanded after its initial detection. William's inability to disrupt or neutralize her control and her resources is striking. Clearly, these were her agents and answered only to Mathilda. Their loyalty, even in the face of exposure, was to her. The location of Robert, safely tucked away in Flanders and then in France, contributed to her ability to reach him. Mathilda's financial support of her son in exile brings forward fascinating evidence for the shape and scope of Mathilda's maternal activities on his behalf and highlights important elements of her role as a medieval mother. First, she maintained an underground system of some sort that allowed funds to be funneled from her estates to Robert. This network included trusted accomplices

who would have been implicated in her treasonous activities. It is clear that Mathilda had her own chamberlains and confessors; she employed at least five chamberlains in England: Humphrey, Reginald, Gerard, Aubrey, and John.[28] There seems to have been a separate staff in Normandy, composed of at least William Le Flamand, or the Fleming, and Fulchold, both designated *camerarius regine* on Norman *acta* and Stephen, who served Mathilda before she was yet queen.[29] The two groups of financial agents never appeared together on documents leading to the speculation that one set of chamberlains handled her Continental wealth, its collection, and distribution, while the second group fulfilled the same function in England. Her English agents regularly funneled taxes and funds to Normandy for her use. During the period of Robert's exile, from the end of 1077 or beginning of 1078, Mathilda was chiefly in Normandy. Her location would have been made it easier to oversee the transport of money and valuables overland to Robert in the hands of Mathilda's servants and men based there. In the first part of Robert's exile, he found refuge with Robert the Frisian, Mathilda's younger brother. He had usurped the throne of Flanders from his nephew, Arnulf III, still a minor, on the death of his older brother Baldwin VI. Mathilda had sent troops to wage war against Robert the Frisian, and indeed one of her closest advisors, William FitzOsbern, led the expedition.[30] Mathilda's mother, Adela of Flanders, also supported Arnulf's claim, and both royal women provided money and troops to support him. Adela and Mathilda, Arnulf's grandmother and aunt, respectively, fulfilled their roles as noble medieval matrons through military support. Acting in concert, they also joined Arnulf's mother, Richilde of Hainaut, in seeking the support of Philip of France. William FitzOsbern was killed in the fighting at the Battle of Cassel, in which Robert the Frisian prevailed. Arnulf III was also killed, and Orderic claimed that Mathilda was terribly distraught by these losses, though she was eventually reconciled with her brother.[31]

It is clear from the events in both Flanders and Normandy that Mathilda's understanding of a mother's duty was, if not primarily martial, then substantially so. Her own mother Adela may have been the model for Mathilda's conception, in modern parlance, of a "mother of adult children." Adela had influenced Mathilda's father Baldwin, still a young heir and not yet reigning as Baldwin V, into armed rebellion against his father Baldwin IV, soon after they were married. Chroniclers blamed Adela's influence over Baldwin as the chief reason for his rebellion. William of Jumiéges portrays young Baldwin as intoxicated with his new status, an

alliance made possible by Adela, a princess of the French royal house. Although the attempt eventually failed, he gathered a large number of the Flemish nobility behind him in the insurgence. Baldwin's relationship with his father improved markedly afterward and he was recognized as an adult.[32] His nearly successful military coup woke his father to awareness of his son's maturity. Could Mathilda have been drawing connections from her own father's experience to her son's? Her sympathy for his position might lead one to that conclusion. Whatever the case, the complex network of power and militarism that led from mother to daughter then mother to son in Mathilda's family illustrates the poly-vocality of motherhood in the eleventh century. Mathilda's own experience of mother as military patron and financier may look more like lordship than maternity, but it is arguable that these roles were interconnected. When Robert was young, Mathilda oversaw his participation in the world of governance; he marked a charter as a toddler with his mother at his side. As he matured into an adult, Mathilda's provision for Robert was deeply influenced by her identity as a patron and overlord. In her confrontation with William, Orderic infused her response with the emotions of a protective mother; these emotions are interconnected with Mathilda's utilization of her resources and military personnel. Maternal support and compassion expressed through money and arms reflected the realities of militarism in the Anglo-Norman realm. Mathilda's support for her nephew Arnulf, and indeed her mother's parallel support as Arnulf's grandmother, provides further evidence of the explicit link between martial and matronly behavior, at least for some aristocratic women, in the eleventh century.

Despite Orderic's ambivalence about Mathilda's position as treasonous wife, he portrays her maternal activities favorably. He allows her morality as a mother to take precedence over William's demands as a husband. In fact, though William's *ira* at her behavior is justified, his rage when bent toward Samson reduces William to impotence. Samson escapes by the queens' arrangements and, at her request to the Abbot of Saint-Évroult, is saved "body and soul." Mathilda's maternal care for Samson echoes her assistance to Robert. Once again, Orderic tells us, Mathilda's contacts and networks are put to good use. Samson is blameless, "shrewd, eloquent and chaste"; by acting as his champion, Mathilda's salvific qualities are demonstrated. Orderic vilifies Robert as an "Absalom" in his *Historia*, but Mathilda shares no blame in his perfidious character.[33] She redeems her son and Samson, supports them both materially and martially, sees to their safety and activates her extensive system of loyal men-at-arms both

ecclesiastical and lay, on their behalf. For Robert, Mathilda as mother is a lioness: active, martial, authoritative, and fearless. Yet other eleventh-century voices tell a different story. Did Mathilda's other child, Cecelia, Abbess of La Trinité, experience a different sort of mother?

Fulcoius of Beauvais' Jephthah poem stands in contrast to Orderic's narrative, just as Fulcoius' himself lived in an alternative world from the monastery at Saint-Évroul. A secular cleric and poet in the classical mold, Fulcoius' skill at verse was utilized for numerous purposes throughout his career. Born in Beauvais circa 1030, he was a contemporary of Bruno of Cologne, with whom he had planned to join a monastery. But Fulcoius left to visit Rome instead and his appetite for the monastic life chilled.[34] He became the archdeacon of Meaux, a post that gave him financial security and access to important political players, 25 miles east of Paris.[35] His patron, Manasses I, bishop of Rheims, was a poet himself, and Fulcoius acted as Manasses' propagandist and supporter while pursuing his own artistic works. Manassas fell out of favor with the papacy and was later removed from office. Fulcoius wrote both Alexander II and Gregory VII in attempts to mitigate Manasses' sentence and to remind them of his patron's worth. His literate talent was used both to entertain and to affect political events and attitudes. Fulcoius was part of a generation of clerics who excelled in classical rhetoric and poetry, and found these gifts useful in advocacy and political support of their patrons.[36] Unlike Orderic, he was not bound by the strictures of monastic life. His poetry reveals an educated member of the elite secular clergy; married, delighted by luxury, and apt to forgive his fellow man the trifling sins of lust or adultery.[37] Arguably, his best works are his *Epistolae*, poems written about friends, enemies, and patrons in the form of letters, and it is from these that the reader can see most clearly Fulcoius and his society. He counsels his readers to avoid prostitutes whenever possible as they will put an end to one's peace.[38] Too much sexual activity can be damaging, he claims, but the love of women can bring great happiness.[39] His worldly attitude and love for classical examples of passion and its foibles brought him into conflict with the wave of reform headed by Gregory VII. His presentation of poetry to the papal court was not successful; Manasses' patronage demonstrates that the bishop of Rheims was of a less rigid and severe mind. It is in this context that Fulcoius appears in the Anglo-Norman world. Fulcoius' last known compositions were two epitaphs written in honor of Mathilda after her death: *Cere si fortes* and *Tempe qui nostra*.[40] His connections to the Norman royal family begin with the Jephthah

poem. Written in the form of a letter with the titulus *Willelmi Regis,* scholars concur it was probably written to celebrate Cecelia, Mathilda's oldest daughter.[41] Like Robert, Cecelia was born before the Conquest and grew up in the comital court surrounded by tutors. Contemporary sources identify Arnoul of Choques as Cecelia's tutor. Born in Flanders, Arnoul was educated under the intellectual giants of the day, Lanfranc and William Bona Anima.[42] But here her resemblance to her sibling diverges, for Cecelia was chosen for a very different destiny, though one no less crucial to the identity and focus of her family. On the threshold of the Conquest, as military preparations were underway to ensure the success of the Norman invasion, Cecelia's parents vowed to dedicate her to God as a nun should the invasion be successful. Mathilda's Benedictine foundation, La Trinité in Caen, was to be Cecelia's permanent home should William and his army win England. Her oblation to La Trinité is recorded in the foundation charter of the house, and closes the list of numerous grants and arrangements reflected there, most of them made or arranged by Mathilda herself. Cecelia represents the apex of Mathilda's support for her foundation, appearing as the finale in the account of Mathilda's gifts and countergifts. As the charter states,

> Moreover, the aforementioned most renowned count, and his wife together with their children, on the same day offered their daughter Cecilia to God in name, with the archbishop of Rouen being in agreement, as well as the other bishops, that in the same place—namely, that of the divine Trinity itself—she might perpetually serve in the cloth of religion, [and] by whose service they [the count and his wife] realize that they may possess both their child and other blessings.[43]

Though the vows to dedicate Cecelia as an oblate occur in 1066, her own acceptance of the monastic life came later in 1075.[44] At the high Easter celebration at Fêcamp, Cecelia took the veil from the Archbishop of Rouen, John, in the presence of all the great men and women of Normandy, and her family.[45] The Easter festal court would have regularly featured much pomp and circumstance, as it allowed for the royal/ducal family to reassert their position and authority. Bonds of dependence and loyalty were affirmed through crown-wearings, judicial activity, and grants and confirmations of land. The celebration of 1075 probably served as the occasion for the presentation, and perhaps performance, of Fulcoius' poetic interpretation of the Old Testament Jephthah story.

In Judges 11: 29–40 Jephthah, an Israelite general, faces the Ammonites:

> Then the Spirit of the Lord came on Jephthah. He crossed Gilead and Manasseh, passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from there he advanced against the Ammonites. And Jephthah made a vow to the Lord: "If you give the Ammonites into my hands, whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the Lord's, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering."

Jephthah is successful, but his homecoming becomes tragic, as his daughter is the first to come out of his house to greet him. In his horror, he communicates his oath to his daughter. Judges record her response thus:

> "My father," she replied, "you have given your word to the Lord. Do to me just as you promised, now that the Lord has avenged you of your enemies, the Ammonites. But grant me this one request," she said. "Give me two months to roam the hills and weep with my friends, because I will never marry."
>
> "You may go," he said. And he let her go for two months. She and her friends went into the hills and wept because she would never marry. After the two months, she returned to her father, and he did to her as he had vowed. And she was a virgin. From this comes the Israelite tradition that each year the young women of Israel go out for four days to commemorate the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite.

In the first century AD, pseudo-Philo wrote a compilation known as the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* which contained a planctus for Jephthah's daughter. It gives her a name which the biblical passage does not, Selia or "she who was demanded." As modern commentators Alexiou and Dronke translate the tale and the planctus, God is angry with Jephthah's unnecessary and capricious vow, but Selia is heroic—her death takes on Christological significance.[46] Like Isaac, Selia's death is a typology of Christ's sacrifice. Later sources make this explicit. In Methodius' *Symposium*, written in the early fourth century, St. Thecla sings a hymn, describing Jephthah's daughter as a sacrificial lamb. She then goes on to describe Selia's embrace of death just as Christ's:

> And she, nobly fulfilling a type of Thy Body, Blessed One, bravely cried out: "Chastely I live for Thee, and holding my lighted lamps, My Spouse, I go forth to meet Thee."[47]

The story of Jephthah presented challenges to biblical scholars. The human sacrifice of a daughter was simply too difficult to justify and Jephthah's monstrous oath resisted rationalization. Some never attempted to excuse Jephthah; his oath was frivolous, unnecessary, and capricious. God had not asked for it and, in many traditions including the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, God was angry at Jephthah for binding himself with such a spurious promise. Later writers, especially Jewish commentators, felt compelled to rework the tale so that Selia is sacrificed to the world through monastic oblation. The shift from human sacrifice to oblation became the choice for many commentators and artists as Jephthah's daughter was depicted throughout the Middle Ages.[48] Selia served as model for dedication to monastic life.

Fulcoius' choice of the Jephthah story was significant for many reasons. Of course, the most easily drawn connection is the virgin as sacrifice to her father's battle oath. But while Fulcoius retains the sorrow Jephthah feels as his daughter appears first to greet him, sealing her fate, he doesn't need to dwell on Jephthah's morality for his rewritten version of the story. Cecelia may be sacrificed, but only to the cloister.

The second noteworthy connection Fulcoius could draw upon was the rather fortuitous shared root of the heroines' names: Selia and Cecelia. It is likely, though certainly not assured, that Fulcoius was aware of the pseudo-Philo planctus that first gave Jephthah's daughter a name. According to Alexiou and Dronke's commentary on the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, there are over 20 extant manuscripts of the text. One (K) was at Fulda from the ninth century.[49] Rabinus Maurus utilized parts of the LAB and later it was used in the twelfth century, both by Albertus Magnus in Mainz and Abelard in Paris. While none of this evidence points directly to Fulcoius' use of the pseudo-Philo, it is a distinct possibility.

Another connection that links the Old Testament story of sacrifice to Cecelia's oblation is Jephthah's parentage. Like William, Jephthah was the product of an irregular union; Jephthah's mother was a prostitute. His half-brothers, born to his father Gilead and Gilead's legal wife, drove Jephthah out. The biblical passage states:

> Jephthah the Gileadite was a mighty warrior. His father was Gilead; his mother was a prostitute. Gilead's wife also bore him sons, and when they were grown up, they drove Jephthah away. "You are not going to get any inheritance in our family," they said, "because you are the son of another woman." So Jephthah fled from his brothers and settled in the land of Tob,

> where a gang of scoundrels gathered around him and followed him. They later elect him leader in the face of annihilation by the Ammonites.

Fulcoius makes an explicit reference to the connection to William's parentage by the verse "He was not an equal heir, since he was an unequal son," (see Appendix I) before addressing Jephthah's leadership in the crises and his worthiness. "First spurned, he was afterwards recalled." Like Jephthah, William had a difficult minority. Characterized by multiple assassination attempts, one of his adult guardians, Osbern, was even murdered as he was shielding William with his own body.[50] William's early life was surely no less perilous and dangerous than Jephthah's exile. Thus, his assumption of the Norman duchy, even in hindsight, must have seemed rather remarkable. How much more resonance must have been evident in 1075, in light of the successful conquest of England, with Jephthah's Old Testament "rags to riches" topos? Indeed, one can even see a nod to the Christology of the cornerstone that the builders rejected in both Jephthah's and William's preconquest experience.

The most notable change Fulcoius made, however, is the inclusion of Mathilda into the Jephthah story. The original biblical version made no mention of a mother. But Fulcoius inserts Mathilda into his design in two ways. In the opening lines, Fulcoius draws attention to her by the verse, "At this time a queen lived; from the south she came." This queen may not have been a reference to Mathilda herself, but to the Queen of Sheba, as the next few lines paraphrase a biblical scene in the Queen of Sheba visits Solomon.[51] Elizabeth Van Houts has suggested that Fulcoius inserted this section to underscore the magical properties of divination as Sheba was often linked to Sibyl, the prophetess, in the eleventh century.[52] Mathilda's recourse to a hermit visionary at least once in her life offers evidence that she may have been interested in prophecy, and Van Houts argues that many members of the Norman court were interested in the foretelling of the future, too. [53] Whatever the case, Fulcoius reference to a queen early in the work places Mathilda, at least referentially, into the poem at its beginning. More explicit references to Mathilda occur in the lines at the end of the poem. Jephthah's daughter closes it with the words, "I am the only daughter of my father and my wholly wretched mother, I came out first; I entered the vow that he vowed. Let him not consider anything of me, but let him pay the debt." References to Mathilda act as a frame for the poem; she is invoked at its beginning and at its end. The original biblical tale of Jephthah centers on a daughter's relationship to her father. There is

no mention of a mother at all; she is invisible and voiceless. Fulcoius finds ways to insert a mother, and a queen, into his rewrite for Cecelia's dedication. It seems the parallels of the biblical passage to Cecelia's dedication poem were simply too good to ignore for Fulcoius, yet he needed to find a way to make Mathilda present in his piece. That he does so speaks to her crucial role in the oblation of her daughter. But his representation of her as desolate and somewhat powerless, heartbroken at the loss of her daughter, jars with both Orderic's characterization of her and with what we know of Cecelia's life.

In light of Fulcoius' portrayal, the sacrifice of Cecelia to the monastic world demands close analysis. The most important element of this arrangement is the obvious connection between Mathilda's relationship with La Trinité as its foundress and her provision for Cecelia at the same abbey. As mentioned above, Mathilda's gifts and countergifts to La Trinité were the backbone of its foundation; they were also remarkable, even unprecedented, compared to other eleventh-century charters.[54] The pattern set by her early arrangements for her abbey would continue throughout her life. Unlike many Norman nobles who, enriched after the Conquest, founded abbeys on English soil, Mathilda never founded another monastic house. Instead, she funneled all the new wealth available to her into La Trinité. It was, without question, the richest female house in Normandy by the time of her death. The nuns, for instance, collected all the tax on cheese, animals, and bacon that came into Normandy, and numerous tolls and market fees. They owned salt pans and fishing rights up and down the coast of Normandy, the Channel Islands, and great estates in England. Mathilda's attention to detail regarding its financial arrangement is striking. Through her charters, Mathilda assigned rents and incomes to specific needs of La Trinité by name. For the lighting of the nun's dormitory, the tithe of the toll of Ecouché was assigned, for lighting the infirmary, 40 shillings from four tenants in Les Moutiers. The nun's food was paid for by tithe of coins and the whales from the holdings of William's abbey of Saint-Étienne at Bavent and on the Diveta, plus two ploughlands, ten acres of meadow, one and a half mills, the tithe of the malt and bread of the abbey of Caen, and the manors of Ouistreham, Barge, Chaffour, Foulbec, Escanneville, Capriquet, and Sallen. The sacristy received all the offerings made at the altar, gold and deluxe fabrics granted to the abbey, and the income of the churches in Falaise, except for the corn. For wood, and for the needs of the nuns' chambers, the income from three English estates was to be used: Felsted in Essex, Tarrant in Dorset, and Penbury in Gloucestershire.

In short, Mathilda bought land, mills, churches, vineyards, sheaves of tithe, and the services of peasants; she paid off reluctant landlords and fief holders, paid grants in exchange for donations, and redeemed lands and the services owed from lands, all so that La Trinité would prosper. She coerced, made deals and exchanges, applied pressure, and provided funds when necessary to allow for the growth and fiscal health of her abbey. Her donations to La Trinité, exclusive of English estates, add up to well in excess of a million dollars in modern monetary valuation. She was a profoundly resourceful, energetic, and powerful patron.

It is in this context that one must view Cecelia's new home. The recipient of enormous resources, the focus of Mathilda's time, energy and wealth, and the beneficiary of all her powers of persuasion and management, La Trinité was clearly Mathilda's passion. It also became her burial place. Her tomb still stands in the choir today. Cecelia's succession to the abbacy of La Trinité can be seen as the furtherance of her mother's vision. What better strategy to promote the health and status of her abbey than to install her royal daughter at its head? But La Trinité was also the ideal setting for a woman of letters and ambition. Cecelia became the abbess of La Trinité in 1113 and pursued her own agenda of administrative, financial, and architectural changes after the death of her mother in 1083. She arranged for and initiated a survey of all the lands and holdings of La Trinité, a process that would have involved significant resources, both human and financial, to arrange and carry out inquests in England and Normandy.[55] Cecelia also embarked on an architectural program that would result in some of the most remarkable Romanesque innovations of the time.[56] The great wealth and power of La Trinité allowed Cecelia to stamp the abbey with her own identity and to shape it into her image. The evidence of Cecelia's own life suggests that, in fact, La Trinité was Mathilda's gift to her daughter rather than the reverse. Moreover, in the eleventh and twelfth century, strict claustration was almost unheard of, especially for a princess. Her active participation in the aristocratic literary cultural of the eleventh and twelfth centuries is confirmed by her patronage of at least two poets, Baudri of Bourgueil and Hildebert of Le Mans. Both dedicated poetry to her, celebrating her as a goddess and a queen, praising her royal blood, her learning, and her beauty.[57] Her house continued to draw wealth and support from her royal brothers and family throughout her life and far beyond. Domesday evidence confirms that property in London was owned and maintained for the abbess's travels, so it is also evident that Cecelia traveled at least as far as London regularly. For medieval aristocratic women,

marriage and childbirth was undertaken in support of a family's interests and had its own risks and difficulties. As many historians have shown, life in the cloister had its benefits for medieval women, not the least of which was the opportunity for education and a life of the mind. Arguably then, in Cecelia's case, a career at La Trinité offered far more than just protection from the fatalities of childbirth or the demands of a family. Constructed with care and passion by her mother, oblation to La Trinité could have been a homecoming of sorts for Cecelia. The monastic nest her mother so assiduously feathered for her may have been an ideal setting for a life of wealth, influence, and, most of all, autonomy. Moreover, Mathilda's tomb at La Trinité allowed her presence in Cecelia's life even after her death. Thus, as the charter for La Trinité declared, "the count and his wife realize that they may possess both their child and other blessings."[58]

How do we interpret Fulcoius' image of Mathilda as a desolate mother, grieving the loss of her daughter in light of this evidence? And indeed, how can we square such a representation with Orderic's picture of a vigorous, martial mother defiant in the face of her husband? Fulcoius' rewriting of the Jephthah story allowed Mathilda a role that the original biblical passage never permitted. Fulcoius also invoked a queen, whose presence is outside the tale itself, and adds nothing to the trajectory of the narrative. One can only assume that Mathilda's role in Cecelia's future, as first oblate then abbess of La Trinité, was so central that Fulcoius could not afford to ignore it. This is more convincing if one imagines the poem being performed at the Easter court of 1075. The cadence and rhythm certainly have a lyricism that would suit an oral reading of the verses, and the refrain "Iam soboles Iepte non pretereatur inepte" occurring after each couplet gives the impression that it may indeed have been performed. If so, Mathilda's presence at the festal court would necessitate some acknowledgment of her part in Cecelia's oblation. Portraying Mathilda as a grieving mother, even if it employed artistic license, allowed Fulcoius to draw attention to her sacrifice. If William, as Jephthah, is "pitiable" and "rent his clothes as he remembers his promise" then Mathilda, as Selia's mother, must also grieve. If the sacrifice of the father lent him heroic status, despite the rashness of his vow, how much more heroic the mother is, whose suffering was blameless? Jephthah's daughter "badly makes a fool of her father" but her mother is irreproachable. Fulcoius used his Jephthah poem to emphasize Mathilda's piety and the morality of her sacrifice, notwithstanding the adjustments he had to make to cut out a space for her in the narrative. Likewise, he adjusted reality by ignoring

the benefits to both women of this arrangement and casting it, as writers before him had, as a kind of death for Cecelia. This portrayal of Mathilda as a mother was, arguably, modified and altered almost out of recognition. The wretched passive mother, helpless at her daughter's sacrifice, and powerless against her husband's oath, was a fiction crafted to suit Fulcoius' composition. Inserting a mother and a queen into his creation seems to have been imperative. Once done, granting her piety and the moral high ground was relatively effortless, but casting the "real" Mathilda into the Jephthah story would have beggared belief. The militaristic mother who supported Robert through arms and money against her own husband, the resourceful, relentless patron who through countergifts pressed her nobles and subjects to donate land to her monastic house, the administrator who arranged that the tithe of whales from William's seaside abbeys would support her nun's dinner fare was not the appropriate mother for Fulcoius' Jephthah story. But she was Mathilda of Flanders, mother of *both* Robert and Cecelia. Orderic and Fulcoius present a contested depiction of her. They contradict each other and taken together, render her inchoate. The poly-vocality of their interpretation demands careful reading to uncover Mathilda as a mother in the eleventh century. Administrative records of her activity tip the balance in Orderic's direction and reflect Mathilda's talent as an administrator, general, and patron. Out of these sources emerges her commitment to supporting her children materially and emotionally: through funds, land, arms, energy, determination, and implacability. While contemporary authors struggled to reconcile her involvement in her children's lives with the myths they constructed to describe the ruling family, historians can trace one central conflict that emerges; a sovereign militaristic mother, who is as much general as *genetrix*. Fulcoius' last known works were two epitaphs for Mathilda written at her death, and perhaps his genuine appraisal of her motherhood is found in his description of her there, "Mother of Heroes, Most Beautiful of Mothers."[59]

Notes

1. Many thanks to Elisabeth Van Houts for her comments and to my writing consortium colleagues Geoffrey Bender, Tyler Bradway, Laura Davies, David Franke, Andrea Harbin and Matt Lessig. For a full treatment of Edith, see Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001). For the reaction of Norman sources to Edith and their use of her, see especially 11–13.

2. William of Jumiéges, *Gesta normannorum ducum* ed. and trans. Elisabeth M. C. Van Houts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 130–1.
3. William of Jumiéges, *Gesta*, 260–261.
4. Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesia*, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall 6 vols, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) ii, 104–105.
5. Orderic, *Historia* ii, 224–225.
6. *Domesday-book; seu, Liber censualis Willelmi Primi regis Angliae* ed. John Morris. (Chichester: Phillimore, 1985) DB Hampshire, 1: 49b.
7. "De his ingentem hystoriam dicaces hystoriographi texere possunt si ocio remote studioque admoto uarios illustrium euentusposteris promulgare statagunt." Orderic, *Historia* ii, 104–5
8. For a full examination of the life of Robert Curthose, see William M. Aird, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy c. 1050–1134* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008).
9. *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie de 911 à 1066* ed. Marie Faroux, (Caen: Caron, 1961) no. 124, 293–4.
10. C.C. Swinton Bland, *The Autobiography of Guibert, Abbot of Nogent-sous-Coucy*, (London: George Routledge, 1925), Book I, Chapter 4. Michael Clanchy, "Did Mothers Teach Their Children to Read?" in *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe, 400–1400* eds. Conrad Leyser and Lesley Smith (Farnham: Ashgate, 2001), 129–153. On the education of children throughout the Middle Ages, see Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1990), especially 209–224.
11. *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de la Saint Trinité du Mont de Rouen*, ed. A. Deville (Rouen, 1840) no. 60.
12. Numerous eleventh-century chroniclers comment on this, including William of Jumiéges, *Gesta Normannorum ducum*, 194–5 and Orderic Vitalis, *Historia*, iii, 98–99.
13. Faroux, *Recueil*, no. 228, 437–8.
14. Aird, "Frustrated Masculinity," 43.
15. Aird, *Robert Curthose*, 73–76.
16. David Bates, "The Origins of Justiciarship," *Anglo Norman Studies* IV (1981):1–12.
17. William of Jumiéges, *Gesta* ii, 178–9.
18. Orderic, *Historia*, iii, 100–101.
19. Aird, *Robert Curthose*, 73–75.
20. Orderic, *Historia*, iii, 100–101.
21. Orderic, *Historia* iii, 104.
22. Orderic, *Historia* iii, 104–5.
23. Giles Constable, *The Letters of Peter the Venerable* 2 vols (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967) ii, 25–28.

24. "Cetera, que dimisimus, per Hubertum filium nostrum et fidelem communem mandamus" *Monumenta Germania Historia, Epistolae Selectae, Das Register Gregors VII*, ed. Erich Caspar (Berlin: Weidmann, 1920–23), 507 dated May 1080. Translated online at *Epistolae: Medieval Women's Latin Letters* http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/
25. Mathilda's later generosity to Saint-Évroul was doubtless in part because of their role in providing shelter and safety for Samson. Mathilda paid 100 Rouen pounds for a stone refectory at the abbey so "that all the monks could eat together." Near the end of her life, she paid a visit to the abbey to pray, and donated a chausable "decorated with gold and pearls" and left a mark of gold on the altar for the monks. She gave this in exchange for prayers both for herself and for her daughter Constance. Orderic claims she had promised to do more, but that her death prevented it. Orderic *Historia*, ii, 148–150 and also at iii, 240–241.
26. Gregory addressed her as *filia karissima*. Gregory used this appellation for only two other people; Mathilda of Tuscany and Beatrice of Lorraine. H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Register of Pope Gregory VII: An English Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
27. "His armis et aimilibus virum tuum armare, cum Deus tibi oportunitatem dederit, ne desistas." *MGH*, *Epistolae Selectae*, ep.7.26, p. 507. H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Register of Pope Gregory VII: An English Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 357.
28. Gerard held Kemerton in Gloucestershire, John held land at Twyning and Fairford in Gloucestershire. DB Gloucestershire 19, 2; DB Gloucestershire 1, 50. Aubrey, the "queen's chamberlain" was probably Aubrey de Vere, who held Carswell, Benham, and Curridge in Berkshire from Mathilda. DB Berkshire, 63.
29. *Les Actes de Guillaume le Conquérant et de la Reine Mathilde pour les Abbayes Caennaises,* ed. Lucien Musset (Caen: Memoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie, Archives du Calvados, 1967), 136–40. For Stephen, see Faroux, *Recueils*, 445.
30. Mathilda's ties to William FitzOsbern were of long standing. Mathilda's first charter as duchess was signed in confirmation of FitzOsbern's monastic foundation at Notre-Dame-sur-Lyre. He remained in Normandy during the Conquest as part of her governing coalition. See Chris P. Lewis, "The early earls of Norman England," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 13 (1991), 207–23; David C. Douglas, "The Ancestors of William Fitz Osborn," *English Historical Review* 59 (1944), 62–79.
31. Orderic, *Historia*, ii, 284–5. Orderic claims that the relations between Normandy and Flanders were strained from this time forward, not only because of the death of Mathilda's nephew but also because of William FitzOsbern's death.

32. William of Jumiéges, ii, 52–54. See also Christian Pfister, *Études sur le règne de Robert le Pieux, 996-1031*(Paris: F. Vieweg, 1885), 222. The reconciliation charter of young Baldwin V with his father can be found in *Opera Diplomatica et Historica*, ed. Aubert Le Mire, 4 vols, (Louvain: 1723–1748), i, 53.
33. Orderic, *Historia*, iii, 98–99.
34. Bruno of Cologne would go on to found the Carthusian Order. He was educated at Rheims. In his letter to Walter de Vert, a mutual friend, he bemoans Fulcoius' choice of the "false pleasures" of the world. Fulcoius of Beauvais "Epistolae" ed. Marvin L. Colker, *Traditio* 10 (1954), 191–273 at 192–3.
35. Marvin L. Colker, "Fulcoius of Beauvais: Poet and Propogandist" *Latin Culture in the Eleventh Century, 2 vols*, (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), i, 144–157, at 147.
36. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200* (Philadelphia: University of Penn Press, 2011), 158–9.
37. Fulcoius, "Epistolae" 10, 244. Fulcoius also makes the case that clerical marriage may not be ideal, but it is preferable to homosexuality.
38. Fulcoius, "Epistolae" 23, 264.
39. Fulcoius, "Epistolae" 10, 245.
40. Henri Omont, "Epitaphes metriques en l'honneur de differents personnages du XI siecle composees par Foulcoie de Beauvais archidiacre de Meaux," *Mélanges Julien Havet* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1895), 211–236, at 223–225.
41. Elizabeth Van Houts, *The Normans in Europe* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 132; L.J. Engels, *Dichters Over Willem De Veroeraar; Het Carmine de Hastingae prelio* (Gorningen, 1967), 6–7.
42. Raymonde Foreville, "L'Ecole de Caen au XIe siècle et les origines Normandes de l'Université d'Oxford," in *Etudes médiévales offertes à M. le Doyen Augustin Fliche* (Paris: Univeristé de Montpellier, 1952), 89; Elizabeth M. C. Van Houts, "Latin Poetry and the Anglo-Norman court, 1066–1135: the 'Carmen de Hastingae proelio,'" *Journal of Medieval History* 15:1 (1989): 39–62; André Boutmey, "Trois oeuvres inédites de Godefroid of Reims," *Revue de moyen âge latin* 3 (1947): 343.
43. "Preterea prefactus comes gloriosissimus et uxor ejus cum filiis suis, Deo eodem die obtulerunt filiam suam Cecelia nomine, favente archiepiscopo Rotomagense cum ceteris presulibus, quatinus in eodem loco deifice videlicet Trinitatis ipsi in habitu religionis perenniter servivet, cujus munere tam prolem quam cetera bona intelligunt se possidere." Faroux, *Recueils*, 422–446.
44. Faroux, *Recueils*, 442–446.
45. Orderic, *Historia*, iii, 8–11.
46. Margaret alexiou and Peter Dronke, "The Lament of Jephthah's Daughter: Themes, Traditions, Originality," *Studi Medievali* 12 (1971): 819–69.

47. Methodius, *The Symposium: a treatise on chastity*, trans. Herbert Musurillo. (Westminster, MD: Newman Press, 1958), 154–155. For a full treatment of Jephthah and Selia in art and literature, see Lois Drewer, "Jephthah and his Daughter in Medieval Art: Ambiguities of Heroism and Sacrifice," *Insights and Interpretations: Studies in Celebration of the Eighty-Fifth Anniversary of the Index of Christian Art*, ed. Colum Hourihane, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002), 35–59.
48. Drewer, "Jephthah," 42–45.
49. Jacobson, Howard, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum: With Latin Text and English Translation,* (Leiden: Brill, 1996).
50. Osbern the Senechal, was the father of William FitzOsbern, one of William and Mathilda's closest allies, and one of the wealthiest Domesday tenants-in-chief.
51. Fulcoius, "Epistolae," 245.
52. Elizabeth Van Houts, "The Echo of the Conquest in the Latin Sources: the Duchess Mathilda, her Daughters and the Enigma of the Golden Child," in *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History* ed. Pierre Bouet (Caen: Presses Universite de Caen, 2004), 135–155 at 148.
53. Orderic, *Historia*, iii, 104–8.
54. "Other donors to other churches occasionally indulged in the same practice, but the frequency with which Mathilda used it is unparalleled. If the difference is real, if La Trinité was not merely less reticent than other abbeys, it probably stemmed from Mathilda's desire to create a large endowment for her new nunnery as quickly as possible." Emily Zack Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law* (Chapel Hill, 1988), 115–7.
55. *Charters and Custumals of the Abbey of Holy Trinity, Caen: the English Estates* ed. Marjorie Chibnall (London: Oxford University Press, 1982), xxix–xxiii.
56. Maylis Bayle, *La Trinité de Caen: sa place dans l'histoire de l'Architecture et du Décor Romans* (Paris: Arts et Métiers Graphiques, 1979).
57. Elizabeth Van Houts, "Latin poetry and the Anglo-Norman Court, 1066–1138," *Journal of Medieval History* 15:1 (1989), 39–62.
58. Faroux, *Recueils*, 422–426.
59. "Heroum mater, matrum pulcherrima." Henri Omont, "Epitaphes," 223–4.

Appendix I

I came to see the wonders of which I had heard,
but more wonderful than those I had heard are the things I tell
At this time a queen lived; from the south she came:

Behold, two kings come again in this one king,
Father and son. Who? Solomon and David.
In whom? Pray tell? In King William. Who, pray?
That man is a David, "strong in hand," as the English bear witness,
the same a Solomon, "peacemaker," as the same bear witness.
He beats back, he withdraws, he heals where he wounds;
both peace and war obey him sympathetically.
they sing over again how much Jephthah's victory costs.
That is what William is doing, who does not know how to spare himself:
Jephthah would not spare his daughter, nor the king his life.
Let Jephthah's daughter not be passed over now improperly
Jephthah, about to wage battle, about to come back the victor, vowed that he would put on his dear altars
whatever he first met:
"Victory has vanquished the vow,"
he says. First of all there had gone out, lest anyone is looking for more sadness,
carrying cymbals, bring grief through her joy,
his only daughter. As she sings, the daughter badly makes a fool of her father.
("Let Jephthah's daughter not be passed over now improperly")
When her father saw her, the pitiable man rent his clothes:
as he remembers his promise, he plainly forgers his prize, repeating:
"Oh, oh me! Daughter, you trap yourself and me."
When she asks why the victor weeps, and he explains,
the maiden urged him not to act, but the pact is made,
and by her death she will let her people and her parent live.
("Let Jephthah's daughter not be passed over now improperly")
The only daughter begs "send me away for three months, a breathing space,"
So she can grieve for her virginity and her life.
She brought together fine examples with collected dances
and, if he could, he would have brought together a thousand, when maidenly dances were joined in lovely meadows:
she produces a lament; a hundred songs reply:
("Let Jephthah's daughter not be passed over now improperly")
Since Jephthah was cast out, he heartily arms his heart;
since Jephthah was cast out, he has been disposed to war.
He was not an equal heir, since he is an unequal son.
But the Ammonites and the Israelites are disturbed:

there is no one to lead the Jews and bring them back;
among the Hebrews there is no one worthy of triumphs except Jephthah.
(Let Jephthah's daughter not be passed over now improperly)
First spurned, Jephthah was afterwards recalled;
they grant a cohort to the one they would not grant a consort.
Jephthah knew when he entered the battle, that the first
to come out would leave as a victim.
"I am the only daughter of my father and my wholly wretched mother.
I came out first; I entered the vow that he vowed.
Let him not consider anything of me, but let him pay the debt."
("Let Jephthah's daughter not be passed over now improperly")
Translated by A. Orchard. Reprinted from Elisabeth Van Houts *The Normans in Europe*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 132–133. Original Latin text appears in M. Colker, "Fulcoii Belvacensis epistolae" *Traditio* 10 (1954) 245–6.

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A Mother and Her Illustrious Offspring: The Role of Philippa of Lancaster, Queen of Portugal, in Her Children's Education (1387–1415)

Manuela Santos Silva

Although twentieth-century Portuguese historiography has not paid serious attention to the part played by women in history, an exception was made for the role of Queen Philippa of Lancaster as educator of her six children, especially the work of historian Peter E. Russell. According to the author of *The English Intervention in Spain and Portugal in the Time of Edward III & Richard II* and *Prince Henry "the Navigator": A Life*, all of Philippa's sons had good libraries in their households and were models of religious and classic culture: this was a result of her educational influence and supervision.

Indeed, this 'illustrious generation,' as the sixteenth-century poet Luiz de Camões called them, stood for centuries as late medieval cultural icons. Philippa's eldest sons, Edward (Duarte) and Peter (Pedro), were the authors of several well-known books revealing both their classical background and their practice of chivalric culture. Furthermore, Pedro wrote accounts of his travels from Portugal to England and Flanders and

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thence to Germany and Hungary. The next son, known as Henry the Navigator, is normally credited as the founder of the Period of Portuguese Discoveries. Her fourth son, John (João), married into the wealthiest and most honored household in Portugal, and finally while her youngest (Fernando) died as a martyr in a failed military conquest in the North Africa, he was known as a very pious prince who promoted religious culture. Even Philippa's daughter Isabel, usually overlooked by historians, became a duchess in the splendid court of Burgundy—where there was a magnificent library with hundreds of volumes—and there acted as a patroness of the arts, having commissioned a good number of books, as has been shown by recent authors and especially by Monique Sommé. Philippa's husband, King João I of Portugal, was no less cultured, as a book on hunting has been attributed to his authorship. He had been brought up in ecclesiastic institutions and had been master of a military militia. It is Philippa, however, as representative of a different cultural civilization shared by England and France in the late fourteenth century, who has been acclaimed by both Portuguese and foreign historians as the main educational influence in their children's love of arts, literature, and religion.

Philippa's role in the educational program of her children has yet to be seriously explored, and this chapter seeks to re-evaluate her role in the education and cultural enlightenment of her children. Philippa was brought up in England at a wealthier and more cosmopolitan court than her children experienced. Was she able to transmit them all the values of her own education? And was their children's instruction concentrated in those "English values" imbued by their mother?

This chapter examines possible answers to these questions. With this aim, we will start by describing what is known about the infancy and youth of the only queen of Portugal of English origin, analyzing the specificities of her education. The second part of the chapter will look at Philippa's roles as a queen, a wife, and a mother in the Portuguese royal court, gathering evidence to demonstrate her influential position in her new home. Finally, in the third part, we will look at how her children's cultural production corresponded with and was a parellel to Philippa's own childhood and cultural experience.

Although there have been several nineteenth-century Portuguese authors that showed interest in understanding what roles and powers queens played in the past,[1] until recently this subject has not aroused the interest of the general public. Most scholarship and most academics

have focused on extreme case studies of royal queenship, and they either venerated a Portuguese queen who was famous for her sanctity,[2] infamous for her adultery,[3] or remarkable for her madness.[4] One exception to scholarly interest, however, has been the only English woman to become queen of Portugal—Philippa, the eldest daughter of the Duke of Lancaster, known as John of Gaunt—"Gaunt" being a corruption of "Ghent," the Flemish town where he was born in 1340. But even Philippa of Lancaster is best known only through the "testimonies of others" because "her husband, her [children], her household, testify her qualities; her profile is built through the family" as was highlighted by her first biographers.[5] Indeed, even in collected works on medieval queenship, it is difficult not to start by describing the familiar context within which queens operate.[6] As with any other women, queens were expected to act primarily within their family environment, and it was their social roles as wives and mothers that conceded them any relevance in or to be allowed to perform political roles.[7]

Contemporary chroniclers had nothing negative to say about Philippa of Lancaster herself; in the narratives about the reign of her husband, no special importance was given to her. One rare occasion in which she is discussed explicitly is in the chronicle of Gomes Eanes de Zurara; when narrating the years immediately before her death in 1415, he describes some episodes in which she interacts with her husband, her children, her ladies-in-waiting, and maidens. This one glimpse of Philippa's actions provides us with evidence for her profile as a pious, influential, and even a harsh woman, proud of her lineage and keen to leave a positive mark on her children's education.[8]

These particular qualities attributed to Philippa have been highlighted by other contemporary chroniclers and historians.[9] Modern historians also focus on this image of the English Queen of Portugal as a mother that tried to educate her children by transmitting to them her own educational values; these modern scholars follow especially the lead of Sir Peter E. Russell and his essays on the English intervention in the Iberian Peninsula during the Hundred Years' War.[10]

Philippa's six children left an important mark on late medieval aristocratic culture in Portugal. They possessed libraries, they exhibited a strong liturgical and classical culture, and they were skilled in the chivalric arts. This chapter will now consider the contemporary context for Philippa's cultural environment during her own childhood and youth in England at the court of John of Gaunt, and it will explore what we know about

Philippa and how her experiences were compared to her own children's education. It is arguable that Philippa's influence on her children's interests and cultural patronage was predominant; it may be evident through these rarely documented, yet well-defined items and episodes in their lives.

Philippa's Education in England

Philippa was born into a seigniorial household, a satellite to the royal court of England, as her father was the third surviving son of Edward III of England. She was a paternal granddaughter of King Edward III and Queen Philippa of Hainaut—from whom she inherited her name—and maternal granddaughter of the first Duke of Lancaster and his wife Isabelle. The Duchy of Lancaster's properties extended over much of England, and in many of them stood an imposing castle, sometimes of ancient Norman origins, but constantly renewed and improved so as to adapt to the increasing demands of convenience for the owners. Philippa grew up in a peripatetic court: seasonally, a part if not all the ducal household shifted to a different region, in search of a more agreeable climate, to hunt, to profit of the agricultural and forestry yields, and to inspect the management of land assets. On their way, they would be accommodated in other much smaller buildings and manors owned or sponsored by the ducal family; not all of them were suitable to lodge the numerous members of the ducal entourage for a long stay.[11] According to Simon Walker, the Duke's clientele consisted of 115 men, an entourage of 170 vassals, and still a larger number of servers. Added to this would be all the ladies and maidens who kept company and helped the Duchess of Lancaster in her motherly duties and household administration.[12]

Among the luggage transported from castle to castle, there may well have been some books. Anthony Goodman, one of the main biographers of Philippa's father John of Gaunt, does not consider the Duke of Lancaster a *litteratus* and found no evidence in the sources of him possessing a library.[13] Even if we do not know specifically which, or if any, books were available for reading in the Lancasters' household, however, some manuscripts might have been especially illustrated at the family's request. For example, Philippa's brother, Henry, married Mary of Bohun in 1381, and her family owned one of the most complete libraries of the time. For their wedding, the bridegroom's father gave them a Book of Psalms and a Book of Hours, commissioned especially for the occasion.[14]

Other evidence also suggests that the Lancasters patronized the literary arts: the family possessed an exceptional fortune and patrimony, and it was lavished on their court. This fortune attracted large numbers of artists, poets, and musicians who sometimes accumulated at functions as promoters of entertainment in court—these artists wrote on demand lyrical or dramatic poetry, lyrics, and music—on commission for bureaucratic or diplomatic functions, especially because of their skills in foreign languages. This was the case most famously of Geoffrey Chaucer, employee of the royal court, who was an expert in translating French texts into English, and certainly from Latin into English. As a poet, Chaucer accepted the patronage of the Dukes of Clarence, as well as of the Dukes of Lancaster, Blanche and John, Philippa's parents. At Blanche's request he translated *Le Pelégrinage de la Vie Humaine* by Guillaume Deguilevilles, dated from 1330,[15] and, after the untimely death of the Duchess, he dedicated to her a long poem, known as *The Book of the Duchess*, expressing his feelings through one of his characters:

I have of sorwe so great
That joye gete I never non,
Now that I see my lady bright,
Which I have loved with al my might
Is from me ded and ys agoon[16]

Another example of a working poet at court was Jean Froissart, Queen Philippa of Hainaut's secretary, who wrote works that mourned the death of both ladies, who perished within a short period of time of each other. He writes that their deaths had left his world poorer:

Aussi sa fille de Lancastre –
Haro! mettés moi une emplastre
Sus le coer, car, quant m'en souvient
Certes souspirer me convient
Tant sui plains de melancolie.
Elle morut jone et jolie
Environ de vingt et deux ans;
Gaie, lie, frich, esbatans;
Douce, simple, d'umble samblance
La bonne dame ot à nom Blanche.
J'ai trop perdu. En ces deux dames,
J'en tors mes pains, j'en bac mes palmes[17]

Both these writers are thus examples of recurrent visitors to the court of the Lancasters. Furthermore, some of Geoffrey Chaucer's production might have been produced under the patronage of John and Blanche of Lancaster.[18] He may also have been influential for the Duke to become patron of some of the most talented cultural poets of the time, for example, Sir Oton de Granson, a courtier who always wrote in French, Sir Florimont de Lesparre, Sir Lewis Clifford, and Sir John Clanvowe.[19]

It was certainly through the same Chaucer that Eustache Deschamps and Guillaume de Machaut, famous French poets, were known at the court of Lancaster. The circumstances of Deschamps' patronage are not entirely clear, but he can be linked to the potential matrimonial alliance between the Lancasters' firstborn daughter, that is, our Philippa, and the King of France, Charles VI. Deschamps composed this verse in honor of Philippa, a poem comparing her to a flower, fit for a King.[20]

Et qui vouldra avoir la congnoissance
Du tresdoulx nom que par oir congnoy
Et du pais ou est sa demourance
Voist en l'ille d'Albyon en recoy,
En Lancastre le trouvera, ce croy.
P.H. et E.L.I.P.P.E. trace
Assemble tout; ces .viii lettres compasse,
S'aras le nom de la fleur de valour,
Qui a gent corps, beaux yeux et douce face.
A droit jugier je me tien a la flour.
L'ENVOY
Royne d'amours, de douce contenance,
Qui tout passez en senz et en honnour,
Plus qu'a feuille vous faiz obeissance:
A droit jugier je me tien à la fleur.

In this hypothetical duel between flowers and leaves, Philippa of Lancaster was acknowledged as the ultimate symbol of the flower's qualities. This theme was later on transmitted to Richard II's royal court and can be found in Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women*, in John Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, and in John Clanvowe's *The Boke of Cupide*.[21]

One might surmise then, that living with so many artists and men of culture, the children of the House of Lancaster had a precocious academic and artistic training that was not generally accessible to others even within aristocratic circles. Of course, noble education contains other components

aside from book learning and the patronage of poets and minstrels: aristocratic youths and young ladies also learned to ride and hunt as part of their educational program, and the children would have had their own palfreys, hunting dogs, and falcons. For example, Henry, the male heir to the duchy, was considered an experienced rider in his youth and demonstrated special expertise in chivalry tournaments.[22] Thus, evidence suggests that Lancaster children were educated within courtly patterns that included the sorts of activities necessarily as part of the life of the feudal court, and that only the aristocracy with their great economic resources could afford. This included physical exercise as training for warfare, that is, hunting and sport, but also an exposure to art, literature, and religious fundamentals. More practical education would also include, useful models of household and estate management, so useful for future household ladies.

The advance of studies on subjects such as medieval children and wealthy households has shown that elementary learning was much more common than we used to acknowledge traditionally. According to Nicholas Orme, although mothers could often be the first teachers of their children, great households included one or more schoolmasters to teach the lord's children as well as other youngsters serving in them—as choristers, henchmen, or wards, for instance.[23] Girls from wealthy backgrounds also learnt to read "enough Latin to look at a prayer book and French and English to read romances or works of instructions."[24]

From the moment that girls were assigned a governess and boys a tutor, education diverged by gender. Religious devotion and principles were still highlighted in the boys' educational program, but most attention was given to physical exercise and the arts of war. As for the girls, some treatises on the education of girls remind us that the "education" of medieval maidens "had one ultimate aim: to produce women as the useful secondary sex."[25] Their governess was expected to teach them feminine virtues much valued by contemporary society: charity, modesty, humility, and prudence, together with skills such as sewing, embroidering, or weaving, and perhaps even singing, playing an instrument, or dancing.[26] And as Kim M. Phillips remarks, there was a "predominately oral nature of instruction."[27] Texts were frequently employed in group readings of a devotional nature or just to enjoy the latest literary romance, especially among women belonging to a female household.

Philippa's upbringing can certainly be seen as privileged in many aspects; in terms of her education, her exposure to a rich courtly milieu that her family patronized, and in terms of rank, status, and wealth. The

Duke of Lancaster's registers corresponding to the years between 1372 and 1383 show the extent of the Duke's fortune through his expenditure and the generosity that he demonstrated toward his dependants and family members. For example, on Christmas or New Year's Eve and other notable festivals, such as the first day of May, his legitimate daughters and son used to receive valuable gifts, as jewels and objects in gold and precious stones.[28] This wealthy lifestyle was somewhat counterbalanced by the teachings of clerics which, in the court of Lancaster as in all others, were in charge of mitigating their masters' faults through the practice of charity and confession, teaching the youngsters these principles through devotional books, showing good practices.

At the end of his life, the Duke of Lancaster became a special protector of the lower clergy and the Carmelites in particular. But he also supported the Abbey of Saint Albans, north of London, and many Marian institutions.[29] Before that, however, in the 1370s, the protection he had given to John Wycliffe had been highly criticized. For two years—between 1361 and 1362—this theologian had been chaplain to the king, but fell from favor when he began to criticize harshly papacy and other religious orders, including mendicants, as he desired that the Church return to its original remit of poverty. He recommended not only the end of the tax exemption for religious institutions but also the submission of the Church to the interests of the Kingdom; he defended, however, that clerics should not occupy any lay positions. Because of his ideas he was persecuted by the English high clergy, but he attracted, for several decades, an appreciable number of followers that were called the Lollards.[30] We do not know to what extent Philippa came into contact with and was receptive to the theological–political arguments of John Wycliffe. But we know that he was a visitor in the court of Lancaster and that under the patronage of his patron the Duke, he translated the Bible into English.[31] Within the wider framework of her religious instruction during her formative years, however, Philippa certainly may have been exposed to Lollard theological ideas, through her father's patronage of Wycliffe.

Philippa's Role as a Queen, a Wife, and a Mother

As queen, Philippa seems to have maintained the memory of her childhood's religious habits and instruction. The fifteenth-century Portuguese chronicler Fernão Lopes notes that the English queen had brought to the royal chapel of Portugal a liturgy originally composed at Old Sarum and

known as the Salisbury or Sarum Use: "She prayed every canonical hours according to Salisbury custom; and although this was not easy to learn, she was always attentive and ready to teach its proceedings to chaplains and other pious people."[32] Additionally, Frei João Álvares, chronicler of her younger son, Fernando, confirms that the English queen had taught her children to pray the canonical hours according to the Sarum Use:

> His [Fernando's] Chapel was very richly ornamented of many garments and other liturgical objects, according to the custom of Salesbury, and it was served by many priests and singer, who were authorized by the Pope to confesse and baptize and give communion and last rites without authority or license of the bishops in whose bishoprics they were.[33]

Duarte, Philippa and João's firstborn child and heir to the crown, authored a staggering number of services to be provided by the royal chaplains. Moreover he elaborated a document defining every detail—time of duration, number of officiants—to be taken into account in the masses and other religious offices taking place in his chapel. It only takes us a few examples—as *pro anima* rituals—to show how complex, complete, and long, he intended, every mass to be.[34] Incidentally, Duarte, as king of Portugal, composed the first written Regiment of the Royal Chapel. However, it was his brother Pedro, as regent, who legislated on the subject, demanding from the Dean of the English Chapel Royal, William Say, a true regulation—the *Liber Regie Capelle*. This document included the internal and external hierarchy of the Royal Chapel clergy description and an explanation of the various rituals practiced in England.[35]

The link between the Portuguese and the English royal chapels is thus clear. Philippa imposed on the royal chapel of Portugal the same rituals and liturgy she followed in her father's household. Following the model of the English queen, the Portuguese court maintained her English style of prayer in subsequent few generations, a result of her children's desire to perpetuating her legacy to Portugal in religious matters. Admittedly, however, these particularities seem limited only within the royal palaces and religious establishments protected by the royal family.

Throughout the Middle Ages, the Salisbury *scriptoria* produced many books which contained a detailed description of all religious services and respective liturgies, prayers, chants, and rituals, to be used by members of the clergy. It can be argued that at least through breviaries, these rituals and texts must have reached the Portuguese royal court via Philippa, establish-

ing within the Christian community of the royal court the religious services that required the lay people the recitation of various prayers and Psalms.[36]

Frei João Álvares, the aforementioned chronicler of the infante Fernando, was very well instructed in the Holy Scriptures because he was naturally skilled in liturgical subjects. In the words of Luis Miguel Duarte "all sons of King John I and Philippa exhibit a strong religious culture"[37] and they possessed devotional and even theological books in their libraries, in addition to the Bible that all of them knew well and quoted. Historian Peter Russell, who had no doubt that Philippa was responsible for planning and overseeing the education of their children, awarded her the responsibility for her children's interest in liturgical practices.[38] Indeed, she had a deeply religious nature that must have struck the Portuguese who had contact with her. A strong cultural tradition still considers Philippa to be a very pious queen in terms of devotional practice, even though there is little actual evidence of her foundation of religious establishments.

In addition to her emphasis on English devotional practices in her children's religious education, Philippa seems to have also promoted in her children a spirit of belonging to the Lancastrian clan and a certain devotion to "English" virtues. In his notebook that we know as *The Book of Charterhouse* or *Duarte's Counseling Book*, her eldest son Duarte makes use of examples that show how much he admired those same virtues of discipline and sense of responsibility that were attributed to his mother's lineage and the English people as a whole.[39] For example, like his mother, he never cut the links to his relatives in England with whom he corresponded.[40] Prince Pedro, Philippa's second son, traveled to England between 1425 and 1428, and he was received by his cousin Henry V, son of Henry IV, and became a Knight of the Garter.[41] Later, his father and all of his brothers would become members of the same order. Apparently, Philippa and her sister Elizabeth, as well as their stepmother Constanza of Castile, were members of the so-called Brotherhood of the Garter, the female wing of the order.[42] The hagiography of Prince Fernando also informs us that he had decided to leave Portugal after the death of his father and go live in England, being sure that his English relatives, especially the King, would welcome him there. However, due to the opposition shown by his eldest brother Duarte, he was forced to give up his intent.[43]

All of this evidence supports Peter Russell's argument that "signs of success of the queen in instilling in their children the pride in his Plantagenet ancestry."[44] Russell claims that her son Prince Henry the Navigator's "for-

mative years" were certainly very influenced "by his English mother and by the stories that she told them on the military victories and the remarkable achievements attained by their chivalric ancestors Plantagenets."[45] Indeed, the attachment of these princes to the family tradition of the Plantagenets was enough to dispel any doubts about the legitimacy of the fledgling Portuguese royal dynasty. For example, one of the innovations that might have helped to form the basis of this sense of dynastic legitimacy was the adoption of Norman mottos for their coats of arms. Each motto "was the symbolic and ideological expression of the will and aspiration of every individual," expressing itself in pictures and drawings as well.[46]

The connections between the two royal courts of England and Portugal, even in understandably difficult times, derives from the Portuguese translation of the poem—transmitted in rose form—the *Confessio Amantis* of John Gower. It was translated into Portuguese by Robert Payn, one of the private secretaries of the queen who was enlisted as a court member of Philippa's entourage by 1402/05.[47] This book, written in England and offered to Richard II, is famous for being one of the first literary works in English to be translated into another language.[48] It is also interesting to note that the collection of didactic and religious *exempla* known as *Horto do Esposo*—that also existed in the libraries of the Princes of Avis—includes what appears to be a Portuguese version of one of the Canterbury Tales of Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Tale of the Preacher*.[49] Curiously enough, Catalina, Queen of Castile, Philippa's half-sister, must have been the sponsor of the Castilian translation of the same book—from the Portuguese.

We can therefore conclude that, even if the circumstances under which Philippa of Lancaster and her children were educated were substantially different, there were visible influences of the English queen and her natal country in her children's mentality. All of them had exposure to a strong cultural environment and a solid religiosity and, as a result, a keen eye for discovery and knowledge. Her son Duarte, for instance, was known for his wide range of interests and for having a very precise and reflexive mind.[50]

Philippa of Lancaster's Offspring: An Anglo-Norman or an Iberian Education?

These conclusions, however, are not enough to credit the queen with *all* of the merits exhibited by her six children. The educational background of the queen seems to have been more influenced by a courtly ambience than

that of her children's. For example, some of the books produced in the Portuguese court, including the hunting book compiled by her husband, King João I—*Livro da Montaria*—and the *Treaty of Horseback Riding—O Livro da Ensinança de Bem Cavalgar Toda a Sela*—by her eldest son and heir Duarte, dealt with themes that were dear to the noble and courtier way of life. Other works such as *O Leal Conselheiro (The Loyal Counselor)* and *O Livro da Virtuosa Benfeitoria (The book of Virtuous Improvement)* by the eldest royal princes have Greek and Latin classical works as their influence,[51] although it is understood that these works were also based on other readings of various origins, probably suggested by the princes' confessors and other clerics of the Royal Chapel and of the private chapels.[52]

The most intriguing question concerns the absence of books written in French within the royal library of the kings of Portugal.[53] This was the written language used in the correspondence between Queen Philippa and her relatives in England.[54] King Duarte's library, presumably inherited from his parents, is categorized by books in Latin and by books translated into Portuguese, Castilian, and Aragonese.[55]

A final consideration in the discussion of the influence that Philippa had over her children's education is with regard to her only daughter Isabel, who was Philippa's successor as the head of the queen's household in the Portuguese royal court, and the future Duchess of Burgundy. Isabel was eighteen years old when her mother died. Gomes Eanes de Zurara reveals all the details of the queen's agony and how her daughter, left her mother's chamber in great emotional pain, praying on her behalf, together with other ladies of the household.[56] The queen's lady-in-waiting, Beatriz Gonçalves de Moura, reminded the debilitated Philippa that she should provide her daughter with the right means of maintenance. Her older sons agreed with their father that Isabel should be her mother's successor as the head of the queen's household, thus receiving the concession of the rights and jurisdiction upon the six towns that sustained it. The chronicler concludes the episode, describing how Isabel kissed her mother and father's hands in thankfulness, for the donation of the estates and jewels that belonged to Philippa.[57]

The princess received exactly the same rights and rents as her mother before her. And she also retained the towns' jurisdiction.[58] For thirteen years Isabel performed the role of first lady in the Portuguese royal court[59] and both this experience in management and in "queenship" must have been of major importance for her next task as Duchess of Burgundy. Her long life as the Duke's wife and the dowager-duchess are very well docu-

mented and show us her extreme capacity in managing her own property and the ducal court.[60] This should come as no surprise: her daughter was, no doubt, the major beneficiary of Philippa of Lancaster's experience in managing her household and family; in her youth she had learnt from her father the Duke to control the huge number of vassals that constituted his ducal household and to administrate the great amount of properties that maintained them and allowed him to sponsor the creation of scientists, artists, and poets—as Isabel and her husband would do in Burgundy.[61]

We can thus conclude that all of Philippa's offspring inherited from her qualities that she had obtained as she was a child and a young girl in England, at her father's court. In addition, her sons and daughter were also able to widen their educational background and acquire for themselves a different knowledge that allowed them to be remembered until present times as "the illustrious generation."

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"Greatest in Her Offspring": Motherhood and the Empress Matilda

Charles Beem

In September of 1139, the Empress Matilda set sail from Normandy for the Sussex coast to lay claim to her father's throne. For the next eight years, Matilda resided in England as an autonomous female feudal lord as she presided over the military operations and diplomatic efforts to recover her inheritance. Even within the structures of a militarized feudal society, this was no place for small children, who spent their early years under their mother's supervision, nor was it a common pursuit for noble women. At the time of her invasion, Matilda was 37 years old, the widow of Holy Roman Emperor Henry V and current wife of Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, as well as the mother of three young sons between the ages of six and three.

Twelve years previously, following the death of her first husband, Matilda's father Henry I of England had designated her, his only surviving legitimate issue, as his heir in England and Normandy, and had required his tenants-in-chief to swear oaths to uphold her candidacy.[1] A year later, she married Count Geoffrey. The marriage was initially stormy, she was 26 and he was 15 with sharp differences in temperament and status, but by 1133 Matilda had delivered the first of her three sons.[2] She had

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just become pregnant with the third when her father died in December 1135. Making no attempt to claim her father's throne at this time, perhaps because of the onset of pregnancy, Matilda's cousin Stephen of Blois, Count of Boulogne, a grandson of William the Conqueror, stepped into the vacuum by getting himself elected in London as king, partly by virtue of his close kinship relation to the Norman royal house.[3]

For the next four years, after she had completed her childbearing duties, Matilda assisted Geoffrey in his military campaign to recover the duchy of Normandy. But by 1139 they had made the decision, or Geoffrey simply acquiesced in Matilda's decision, to begin the effort to recover England as well. In doing so, Matilda effectively left her husband and her three sons in France while she set off to England to claim her father's throne. Matilda's experience as an active claimant for the English throne while simultaneously a wife and a mother was a singular experience for a woman in Anglo-Norman society. Marriage and motherhood were well-traveled avenues for women to wield power in feudal societies, but Matilda, at least for a time, reached for something much more transcendent, by pursuing power totally on her own terms as a capable and experienced woman with a superior dynastic claim.[4] In the first three years she resided in England, and especially during the spring and summer of 1141, when she nearly obtained her father's crown, Matilda downplayed her position as a wife and mother as she constructed a representational image of herself as a single woman.

Did this make her a bad mother? For a queen of the high middle ages in Western Europe, the role of mother was closely intertwined with that of wife, household manager, educator-in-chief, and marriage broker. For instance, Matilda's paternal grandmother, Matilda of Flanders (1031–1083), duchess and queen of William the Conqueror, was an efficient multitasker who played an active and engaged role as a mother who was also queen, bearing ten children total over a 20-year period.[5] When William invaded England in 1066, to take by force what he claimed by legitimate right, Matilda outfitted a vessel for his armada out of her own resources as her husband left her in Normandy in charge as regent, although she wielded this power officially in the name of her eldest son, Robert Curthose. After William became king of England, she continued frequently to serve as his regent in Normandy, something her namesake granddaughter would do for her son Henry II after he had become king of England. Matilda also closely supervised her children's upbringing and education, taking the side of her eldest son when he rebelled against his father in 1377.[6] Even so, Matilda of Flanders received high marks from

contemporaries as both a mother and as a wife whose husband apparently remained sexually faithful to her throughout their marriage.

Matilda of Flanders's daughter-in-law Edith/Matilda, the queen of Henry I, also received positive contemporary press for her efforts as a wife and mother.[7] Her marriage served her husband's dynastic interests, as a direct descendant of the Anglo-Saxon royal house of Wessex, they united the Saxon and Norman royal bloodlines.[8] It appears that the marriage was companionable one as well, always a plus in an arranged marriage, although Henry I did produce a plethora of illegitimate children. But Edith/Matilda bore the king's only legitimate heirs, Matilda, born in 1102, and William in 1103, which reinforced her own dynastic importance. Like Matilda of Flanders's, Edith/Matilda's was an active and engaged queenship.

For both of these Norman queens, there was no distinction between the private and public functions of queenship, marriage, and motherhood. In many ways, the feudal conception of government itself was the management of a private estate to be preserved, if not augmented, and passed onto the next dynastic generation. In this sense, supervising her children's education, serving as regent in England, negotiating her daughter's first marriage, building hospitals for lepers, caring for the poor, and filling her court with poets and musicians was all part and parcel of the job description of English queenship. At the same time, Edith/Matilda recognized the power of her personal piety and religious observances in the construction of her queenship. For all these efforts, she earned the enduring sobriquet, "the good queen."[9]

The Empress Matilda then, had a powerful body of precedent to draw upon during the first phase of her married career, when she was the consort of Holy Roman Emperor Henry V. Married at age 12 in 1114 in an ostentatious ceremony in Worms, for the next decade of her life Matilda gained widespread experience as an imperial consort, attesting charters, deciding court cases, and serving as intercessor between her husband and his subjects, affording her a comprehensive apprenticeship as a future female ruler.[10] The only missing element was motherhood. However, when the Emperor died in 1125, leaving Matilda a childless 23-year-old widow, the dynastic scene in England had changed dramatically.

More than anything else, Henry I was a dynast. His marriage had united the Anglo-Saxon and Norman dynasties, while he worked assiduously to derail the succession rights of his eldest brother Robert Curthose and his son William Clito, reflective of long-standing Anglo-Norman succession

patterns that privileged kinship, but not heredity or primogeniture, as a means of gaining the throne. But in addition to vanquishing the claims of his rivals, Henry I was also interested in importing some continental traditions to England, particularly getting his only legitimate son William recognized and crowned as his heir.[11] In 1116 in England and in 1118 in Normandy, Henry compelled his tenants-in-chief to recognize his son as heir and do homage to him, while in early 1120 William himself did homage to Louis VI of France, who recognized him as Duke of Normandy. Henry also arranged the marriage of his son with a daughter of Count Fulk of Anjou, gaining the county of Maine in the bargain, and allowing Henry to build up an expanded lordship on both sides of the English Channel for his heir.

As parents then, Henry I and his queen did a fine job of raising their children in terms of the quality of their education, the arrangement of advantageous dynastic marriages, and in the case of their son, to do everything possible to ensure his eventual succession. But none of Henry I's initial dynastic schemes panned out. Edith/Matilda died in 1118, followed by his son's tragic death at sea in 1120. While Henry I swiftly married Adeliza of Louvain following his son's death in an attempt to produce another legitimate male heir, his new queen had not yet conceived when the Emperor Henry V died in 1125.[12]

While Henry I had two capable but illegitimate sons, Robert, Earl of Gloucester, and Reginald of Dunstanville, as well as his nephew, Stephen of Blois, the son of his sister Adele, who could have conceivably been designated as his heir, by 1127 Henry had decided that Matilda would be his successor in England and Normandy, marching her through the same oath swearing ceremonies he had arranged for his son.[13] This was a first for a woman, in both England and Normandy. While Henry I undoubtedly appreciated his daughter's intelligence, learning, and experience, it was her potential as a *mothe*r that was equally as enticing.[14] In her biography of Matilda, Marjorie Chibnall doubts that she had ever conceived during her first marriage, but Henry I must have been reasonably assured of her fecundity because following the swearing of oaths in 1127, the match with Geoffrey of Anjou was swiftly arranged.[15]

The marriage was unpopular in England and especially in Normandy, where border skirmishes had created long-standing bitterness between Normans and Angevins.[16] Matilda also was reluctant, probably on account of the disparities in age and rank but personality also undoubtedly played a factor. The only facts we know are that they were married in 1128,

separated in 1129, and reconciled in 1131. The reconciliation allowed for the long delayed consummation of the marriage, with the arrival of son Henry in 1133. The next year Geoffrey was born, while in the summer of 1136 she gave birth to her third son William, after the death of her father in December of 1135.

For eight years, from their reconciliation in 1131 to her departure for England in 1139, Matilda and Geoffrey lived together as man and wife, although Matilda continued to signify herself in charters as *The Empress Matilda* and *daughter of King Henry* rather than Countess of Anjou. While we know that Geoffrey and Matilda's a marriage was initially stormy, we have no reason to assume they did not develop a business-like relationship for the duration of what turned out to be a rather unconventional aristocratic marriage. We can assume that once the original problems were worked out, they developed a collegial compatibility centered upon their role as *parents*, which for them meant securing, if not enlarging, the patrimony of their male heirs. Generally, the sons of Anglo-Norman nobility would remain under their mother's supervision until their sixth or seventh year, when they would begin the all-male bonding process of their knightly training.[17] Matilda undoubtedly performed this role for her eldest son Henry, who was six when she departed for England in 1139, but Henry I's death disturbed this normal chain of events for her two younger sons in the course of her motherhood.

The reasons why Matilda made no attempt to claim her father's throne immediately after his death have never been adequately explained by either contemporaries or subsequent historians, but it may have had much to do with her position as a wife and especially as a mother. Unfortunately, in the months prior to Henry I's death, Matilda was caught up in the animosity between her father and her husband, who was engaged in military operations to secure possession of Matilda's Norman dowry castles that her father had not yet relinquished to her. While there are conflicting accounts of Henry I's deathbed wishes, the oaths taken to Matilda were still in effect upon his death.[18] But the oaths themselves did not make Matilda her father's successor. Instead, an interregnum occurred that ended two weeks after Henry I's death when Stephen was elected and crowned in London.

But Matilda took no positive steps to advance her candidacy in England. Newly pregnant with her third child, Matilda's second pregnancy had nearly killed her.[19] Contemporary observers suggest that Matilda was not in a position to bolt to London. Robert of Torigny reported that Matilda

was with her husband and sons in Anjou when her father died, while William of Malmesbury stated that she was staying in France "for certain reasons." According to Orderic Vitalis, in the days following her father's death Matilda went to Normandy to take possession of her Norman dower castles, taking up residence in Argentan where she apparently stayed put until the birth of her third son the following summer.[20]

Considering her actions to reclaim her inheritance four years later, long after Stephen had been anointed, crowned, and become well-entrenched as king, Matilda's most favorable moment to secure her inheritance would have been right after her father's death, when a critical two week window of opportunity closed with Stephen's accession. While scholars have suggested that deep-seated opposition to female rule in England and Normandy may have dissuaded Matilda from pursuing her inheritance immediately following her father's death, no contemporary source makes this explicit at all, nor did it stop her from trying four years later.[21] Rather, in default of any evidence to the contrary, the most persuasive explanation for Matilda's abandonment of her English succession rights immediately following her father's death was that the onset of her third pregnancy, which may have physically immobilized her at this critical moment in time. As we shall see, when Matilda did make her play for the throne, she did so in the representational guise of a single woman, with no apparent need to remind anyone that she was a mother. Indeed, as the first woman to lay claim to the male gendered office and estate of *king*; Matilda may have recognized the representational difficulties of presenting herself as a candidate for her father's throne in a pregnant state, even assuming she was physically capable of traveling to London immediately after her father's death. Timing, rather than deep-seated opposition to female rule, served to work against Matilda in December 1135.[22]

If all these speculations were indeed true, Matilda's impending motherhood played a critical role in the success of Stephen's election as king. Without the resources to launch a counterclaim in England, Matilda and Geoffrey had little choice but to bide their time for the next four years, pressing their claims in Normandy while simultaneously raising their children. Chibnall suggests she spent most of this time in those areas of Normandy loyal to her, setting up shop as a female feudal lord. In this capacity, Matilda worked as a behind the scenes resource allocator while Geoffrey alternated between advancing the Angevin claims in Normandy and putting down rebellions back in Anjou and Maine, although Matilda herself occasionally got into the act of reducing her Norman vassals into

obedience.[23] Lacking any evidence to the contrary, we can assume that Matilda and Geoffrey played conventional parental roles in these years, sharing custody of their boys as their educations commenced.

But there was nothing conventional about Matilda's decision to invade England in 1139. The timing was propitious; four years into his reign, Stephen had failed to replicate Henry I's royal authority, as unauthorized castles sprung off all over England. Equally disconcerting was Stephen's attitude toward the Church, which was contrasted by Matilda's well-known piety, the traditional and conventional method to achieve female prestige. Additionally, Stephen's relations with the Church reached a breaking point after he ordered the arrests of a trio of bishops he suspected were ready to transfer their allegiance to Matilda, causing Stephen's brother, Henry, Bishop of Winchester and papal legate, to eventually switch his support to the Angevin cause.[24]

Yet even before 1139, the nature of Matilda's motherhood had changed. She had conceived her three sons like clockwork; the lack of further pregnancies after 1136 suggests a conscious decision to desist from further conceptions, as if she had decided that pursuing her English inheritance trumped continuing to share her husband's bed and producing further children. Thus, rather than continuing to enlarge their family, the dynamic of Matilda and Geoffrey's continuing role as parents was to secure their inheritance; for contemporaries of their class, this was an important function of parenthood. Indeed, for the Anglo-Norman nobility, the idea of a "hands on" approach to raising children was unknown; even the most loving of parents essentially farmed out their children to other noble households as they themselves brought in noble children to supervise. But Matilda's English invasion prevented her from engaging in these types of parental conventions. It also undoubtedly brought up the issue of custody. Invariably, it was decided that the boys should stay in Anjou and Normandy under their father's supervision as Matilda set off to England to displace Stephen.

In the context of her own times, did this make Matilda a bad mother? Undoubtedly, leading a concerted campaign to obtain a crown was a singular role for a woman. The examples that most closely fit those of Matilda, the Queens regnant Urraca of Castile-Leon and Melisende of Jerusalem, were also wives and mothers, whose queenships were originally intended to continue their father's dynasties through the female line.[25] Melisende, in fact, was Matilda's stepmother-in-law, as she had married Geoffrey's father Fulk soon after Matilda's own marriage. It was the

production of Melisende's son and heir, the future Baldwin III, which made her candidacy as heir most attractive to her father Baldwin II, who staged a coronation for mother, father, *and* son before his death, intending that Melisende and Fulk's reign would be a communal family affair that would eventually steer the succession back to his grandson. This was the kind of best case scenario that Henry I probably envisioned for the English succession as well.

But Melisende, like Matilda in England, had a much different idea concerning the form and function of her queenship. In the conceptual realm of feudal politics, in which the closest analogy to wearing a crown was to manage a feudal estate, Melisende's success in retaining control over the management of her queenship was as much a victory of the power of her personality as it was a win for dynastic legitimacy, but it was emasculating for her husband Fulk, who fought tenaciously during the early years of their "joint" reign to deny his wife effective political power. Urraca also endured a remarkably similar scenario as she successfully defended her crown from both her second husband and her son and heir, who had to wait until his mother's death to succeed to her crown.

In contrast, Matilda and Geoffrey managed to avoid much of the emasculating elements of Melisende and Urraca's marriages by dividing the pursuit of Matilda's inheritance into two distinct spheres of influence, Normandy and England. Once the custody issues were worked out, Matilda set sail for England. Barely a year and a half after she had arrived, in early 1141, King Stephen was captured by a renegade earl, Ranulf of Chester, who handed him over to Matilda's custody. With the king as her prisoner, Matilda laid plans for the coronation that would effectively depose Stephen and make her an anointed English ruling queen.

But Matilda never made it to her coronation, after failing to come to terms with the City of London, and being chased out of Westminster in late June 1141. The explanation for why these events occurred also has much to do with Matilda's position as a mother. Most of the monastic chroniclers who described the chain of events from Stephen's capture in February to the rout of Winchester in October, even those favorable to her cause, remarked on Matilda's flouting of gender conventions in the harshness and unlady-like demeanor she assumed after her recognition as *Domina Anglorum*, lady of the English, in early March 1141.[26] As I have suggested elsewhere, Matilda anticipated becoming England's first ruling queen, and made it clear to her contemporaries that she was capable of kingly decisiveness.[27] As Theresa Earenfight has argued, kingship

is actually a nexus of power relations, in which queens and children can function as representational softening agents for the harshness and rigor of essentially male gendered royal power.[28]

Matilda, however, over the course of the year 1141, was all by herself. Perhaps on account of the rapidity of events following Stephen's capture, or concerns about his safety, Matilda's eight-year-old son and heir did not come to England to be with his mother. For both Urraca and Melisende, the physical presence of their sons and heirs were powerful legitimizing agents for the rigor of the power that they wielded. This may help explain why Matilda, barking out orders in England without a husband or son by her side, was compared quite unfavorably with Stephen's queen, also named Matilda, who played it every bit as tough as her cousin the Empress. The difference was that the queen was acting on behalf of her husband and their son Eustace, the conventional route for a woman to exercise regal power. Queen Matilda in fact took charge of the royalist forces, leading to a showdown in Winchester in October 1141, in which the Empress Matilda's chief advisor and military strategist, her illegitimate half-brother Robert, Earl of Gloucester was captured.[29] In the negotiations that followed, Matilda traded Gloucester for Stephen, returning to the stalemate, or "The Anarchy" as it has often been termed, that characterized the reminder of Stephen's reign. Despite this reversal, Matilda still held sway over large swathes of the West Country and commanded the fealty of a number of powerful barons and clerics. At the same time, Geoffrey of Anjou had been making considerable progress in his efforts to subdue Normandy.

These developments caused a rethinking of Matilda and Geoffrey's custody arrangements for their sons. In the spring of 1142, the Earl of Gloucester went to France to meet Geoffrey, and came back to England with nine-year-old Henry, who entered the family business as Matilda's actively engaged male heir.[30] Chibnall has speculated that Henry had probably spent his earliest years in her custody in Normandy, but following her 1139 invasion he remained in Anjou where his education continued. Henry's journey to Bristol in 1142, residing in his uncle Gloucester's household, renowned for its learning, was very much in the contemporary tradition of noble sons being educated in other noble households.[31]

But Henry's physical presence in England also did for Matilda what Urraca's and Melisende's sons did for them, which was to enhance their own political legitimacy as women. Not surprisingly, Matilda began to integrate Henry into the workings of her administration, attesting charters

and grants with his mother that served as an additional, long-term guarantee to those tenants whose lands remained contested between Stephen and the Empress.[32] Whether Matilda took comfort in or enjoyed in her son's company we can never know, but Henry's presence in England did help to keep the Angevin cause alive. Henry remained in England until 1144, when he returned to his father's side in an effort to shore up his father's prospects at getting Louis VII to recognize him as Duke of Normandy, while Matilda remained in a holding pattern in England until 1147, when she returned to Normandy, bequeathing the struggle to a now 14-year-old Henry.

Thus it was an older and more experienced Matilda who returned to family life in Normandy, although she declined to assume the title Duchess of Normandy in her official representations, although after Geoffrey died in 1151 she assumed a significant portion of power and authority in the duchy as her son continued his operations in England.[33] By 1153, a now 20-year-old Henry, and recently married to Eleanor of Aquitaine, negotiated his recognition as Stephen's heir, and assumed his crown a year later. For the remainder of her life, Matilda served her son as an administrator, advisor, and diplomat in Normandy, without any accusations of unladylike behavior, although her advice could be as hard-boiled as any of her male contemporaries.[34]

As a mother, Matilda provided for her sons in the best way possible, by securing their inheritance. Since this involved the pursuit of both a crown and a ducal coronet on opposite sides of the English Channel, Matilda and her husband Geoffrey split this mission into two distinct spheres of influence. While Geoffrey had always considered subduing Normandy the top priority, he stood aside as Matilda launched her bid to reclaim England. This, of course, required a custody arrangement, with their sons remaining in Anjou and Normandy until the time arrived for Henry to be integrated into the process. As a good mother, Matilda gave way when her eldest son was old enough to take over the pursuit of their English inheritance as Geoffrey relinquished the duchy of Normandy to Henry as well in 1149. In contrast, Urraca's son Alfonso VII had to wait until his mother's death before succeeding to her throne, and Melisende had to be compelled to share power with her adult son Baldwin III.

Within this context, Matilda appears to have provided well, and made the appropriate sacrifices, for her eldest son and heir. While Matilda did endure a negative press while in England for her gender defying conduct as a *woman*, her role as a *mother* was much more conventional. While we can

never know, had she obtained her father's crown, whether Matilda would have relinquished it to Henry as Geoffrey had relinquished Normandy, or whether she would have held on to her throne for the rest of her life like Urraca, or allowed it to evolve into a power sharing arrangement as did Melisende and Baldwin III. What we do know is that Matilda's son Henry, King of England and Duke of Normandy, owed a considerable debt to his parent's efforts to secure his patrimony.

Notes

1. William of Malmesbury stated, "if he himself [Henry I] died without a male heir, they [the nobles of England] would immediately and without hesitation accept his daughter Matilda, formerly Empress, as their lady." *William of Malmesbury's Historia Novella* (afterward *Historia Novella*), ed. Edmund King, trans. K.R. Potter, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 6–7.
2. Gillingham, John. "Love, Marriage, and Politics in the Twelfth Century," *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 25, (1989), 292–303.
3. Chronicler John of Worcester called Stephen's elevation an "election." *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, trans. and ed. P. Mcgurk, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 3, 215.
4. McNamara, Jo Ann and Wemple, Suzanne. "The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe: 500–1100," *Clio's Consciousness Raised: New Perspectives on the History of Wome*n, Mary S. Hartman, Lois Banner, eds., (New York: Harper Colophon), 1974, 103–118.
5. See the chapter in this volume, Laura Gathagan (Courtland), "Mother of Heroes, Most Beautiful of Mothers": Mathilda of Flanders and Royal Motherhood in the Eleventh Century.
6. See W.M. Aird, "Frustrated Masculinity: The Relationship between William the Conqueror and his Eldest Son." *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. D.M. Hadley. (London: Longman, 1999), 39–55.
7. William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, R.A.B. Mynors, Rodney M. Thomson, Michael Winterbotton, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998–99), 754–58.
8. For a discussion of the dynastic importance of this marriage, see E. Searle, "Women and the Legitimization of Succession of the Norman Conquest," *Anglo-Norman Studies*, iii, Marjorie Chibnall, ed., (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1980), 159–170.
9. Robert Bartlett, *England Under the Norman and Angevin Kings 1075–1225* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 38.

10. For a larger discussion of Matilda's experience as Holy Roman Empress, see Marjorie Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 18–44.
11. Norman chronicler Robert of Torigny remarked that Hugh Capet associated his son Robert in his kingship. See *Gesta Normanorum Ducam of William Jumieges, Oderic Vitalis, and Robert of Torigni,* vol. 2, books v-viii, ed. Elisabeth M.C. Van Houts, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 245.
12. Karl Leyser, "The Anglo-Norman Succession, 1120–1125," *Anglo-Norman Studies*, xiii, Marjorie Chibnall, ed., (Woodridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1991), 227–235.
13. Hollister, C. Warren. "The Anglo-Norman Succession Debate of 1126: Prelude to Stephen's Anarchy," *Journal of Medieval History*, 1 (April 1975), 19–42.
14. In describing the reasoning for why Henry I first designated his daughter Matilda as his heir, William of Malmesbury emphasized the importance of her combined Anglo-Saxon and Norman bloodlines. See *William of Malmesbury's Chronicle of the Kings of England* (afterward *Malmesbury*), ed. J.A. Giles, (London: Henry Bohn, 1897), 482.
15. Chibnall, 40. Henry I's justiciar, Roger, Bishop of Salisbury, complained to Malmesbury that "no one had been involved in arranging that marriage, or had been aware that it would take place, except Robert, earl of Gloucester, Brian fitz Count, and the bishop of Lisiuex." *Historia Novella*, 11.
16. This is the view generally held by some Anglo-Norman scholars, see Henry Warren, *Henry II* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 7–12, Bartlett, 9, 145. Other scholars have minimized the extent of Angevin-Norman hostility, see C. Warren Hollister, *Henry I*, completed and edited by Amanda Clark Frost, (New Haven Conn.: Yale University Press, 2001), 323–325, Chibnall, 55.
17. Bartlett, 229–41, 535–546.
18. *Malmesbury,* 489. Malmesbury reported that Henry I, on his deathbed, reaffirmed Matilda as his heir, while voicing his displeasure with her husband, "as he had irritated him both with threats and by certain injuries," which suggests that Henry may well have envisioned Matilda ruling in her own right.
19. Robert of Torigny described Matilda's near fatal complications arising from her second pregnancy. See *Gesta Normannorum Ducam*, 246–47.
20. Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica,* vol. 6, ed. Marjorie Chibnall, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 455, *Gesta Normannorum Ducam*, 264–65. *Malmesbury*, 490.
21. See Warren, 12–13.
22. The pro-Stephen *Gesta Stephani* implied that Matilda's failure to claim her inheritance justified Stephen's accession, since there was "no one at hand

who could take the king's place and put an end to the great dangers threatening the kingdom except Stephen, who. . . had been brought to them by providence." *Gesta Stephani*, ed. K.R. Potter, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 6–7. For a discussion of the role the Londoners played in Stephen's accession see M. McKisack, "London and the Succession to the Crown During the Middle Ages," *Studies In Medieval History: Presented to Frederick Maurice Powicke*, ed. R.W. Hunt, W.A. Pantin, and R.W. Southern (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948), 76–89.

23. Orderic Vitalis reported that during Lent, 1138, the Countess's retainers captured Ralph of Esson, and handed him over to her. Matilda kept him in fetters "for a long time" until he relinquished his castles to her. Vitalis, 513–515.
24. As Henry of Huntington observed, Stephen had failed to keep any of the promises he had employed to gather support for his kingship, while these final acts "prepared the way for the eventual ruin of the house of Stephen." Henry of Huntington, *The Chronicle of Henry of Huntington*, ed. Thomas Forester. (London: H.G. Bohn, 1853), 272.
25. Bernard F. Reilly, *The Kingdom of Leon-Castilla Under Queen Uracca* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, *1982). See also Bernard Hamilton, "Women in the Crusader States: The Queens of Jerusalem 1100–90," Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Studies in Church History, Subsidia I, 1978), 143–174, and Sarah Lambert, "Queen or Consort: Rulership and Politics in the Latin East 1118–1128," *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe,* ed. Anne Duggan (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1997), 153–169.
26. Not surprisingly, the *Gesta Stephani* took the greatest exception; "She at once put on an extremely arrogant demeanor instead of the modest gait and bearing proper to the gentle sex," 119. But other more sympathetic chroniclers also joined this chorus of disapproval; Henry of Huntington described her as "elated with insufferable pride" while the Worcester chronicler noted her "hard heart" as she strove to consolidate her position. See *Henry of Huntington*, 280, *John of Worcester*, 297.
27. Charles Beem, *The Lioness Roared: The Problems of Female Rule in English History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 25–62.
28. Theresa Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1–20.
29. The *Gesta Stephani* lavished praise on that other Matilda, Stephen's consort, describing her as "a woman of subtlety and a man's resolution," who undertook military resistance to the empress. By stressing Queen Matilda's devotion to King Stephen, the *Gesta* justified her transgression of male gender roles, since her actions were performed on behalf of her husband, 123.

30. See A.L. Poole, "Henry Plantagenet's Early Visits to England," *English Historical Review*, vol. 47 (1910), 447–50.
31. Edmund King, *King Stephen* (New Haven, US: Yale University Press, 2010), 184.
32. By 1144, Matilda and Henry began to jointly issue charters, signifying themselves as *Anglorum domina* and *filius ducis Normannorum*. *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, vol. 3, ed. H.A. Cronne and R.H.C. Davis (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 15, n.43.
33. In a charter for the Abbey of Mortemer from October 1148 Geoffrey, now Duke of Normandy, spoke of the consent of his wife and sons. *Regesta*, 3, no. 599.
34. See Chibnall, 151–176.

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Maternal Abandonment and Surrogate Caregivers: Isabella of Angoulême and Her Children by King John

Louise J. Wilkinson

In 1217, Isabella of Angoulême, mother of the boy-king Henry III and his four younger siblings, left England, never to return.[1] Within three years, Isabella had reasserted her authority over her inherited county of Angoulême and usurped the place of her ten-year-old daughter Joan as the bride of Hugh (X) de Lusignan, count of La Marche.[2] When news of the queen dowager's second marriage reached England, it was greeted with unease. Although Henry III's chief ministers demanded Joan's return, Isabella and Hugh initially refused to comply with their wishes. In fact, the newlywed couple used Joan as a lever to try and secure an advantageous settlement with the English crown.[3] On September 25, 1220, Pope Honorius III wrote two separate letters, one to Isabella, instructing her to cease attacking her son's lands, and one to Hugh (X) de Lusignan, ordering him to return Joan and desist from vexing the English king upon pain of excommunication.[4]

It is not, therefore, altogether surprising that Isabella has been condemned by most modern biographers for her unscrupulous behavior and for apparently abandoning four of her five children by King John

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(reigned 1199–1216).[5] Yet, as this chapter argues, Isabella probably had little choice in the matter. Just as her involvement in English political life was strictly circumscribed under John, so too was Isabella excluded from English affairs in the early years of her son's reign. A royal minority and the queen's absence was not without consequence for those children whom Isabella left behind; they created a situation where Henry III's ministers needed to provide for the everyday safety, welfare, and maintenance of the young king and his siblings. Although Joan married a new husband, Alexander II of Scotland, in 1221, her sisters Isabella and Eleanor, and their brother Richard all remained in England. Peter des Roches, bishop of Winchester, and the other chief figures of Henry III's minority government were not insensitive to this state of affairs, ensuring that men and women who were loyal to the crown and of suitable birth, experience, and character served as surrogate caregivers for the royal children. This chapter begins by examining Isabella's relationship with King John and her offspring during her first marriage, before considering the difficulties that she encountered in England in 1216–17 and the impact of her return to Angoulême on the early lives of her sons and daughters.

King John's wife, Isabella of Angoulême, came from an influential and well-connected family of counts in south-western France, situated between Poitou and Gascony, the same strategically important region that King Richard I had been trying to subdue when a crossbow bolt injured his shoulder, fatally in 1199.[6] Isabella was the daughter and heiress of Adomar, count of Angoulême, by Alice de Courtenay, a daughter of the French lord of Montargis and Châteaurenard, and a cousin of Philip Augustus.[7] Through her Courtenay connections, Isabella also enjoyed kinship with the kings of Jerusalem and was a half-sister to Peter, count of Joigny, the child of one of her mother's earlier marriages.[8] Isabella's marriage to John on 24, August 1200 accorded well with Angevin interests south of the River Loire, promising increased stability across the border regions of Poitou and Gascony.[9] In marrying Isabella, John also decisively stepped in to prevent her union with another powerful Poitevin neighbor, Hugh (IX) de Lusignan, lord of Lusignan and count of La Marche, a union that threatened John's dominance within Aquitaine.[10] It was unfortunate, to say the least, for John that the offense that he caused Hugh (IX) led to this count's rebellion and an appeal to Philip Augustus's court. These events, in their turn, resulted in the French king declaring John's continental territories forfeit, thereby triggering the ultimately successful Capetian invasion of Normandy, Maine, Anjou, and Touraine, along with a significant slice of Poitou.[11]

Like her mother-in-law, the formidable Eleanor of Aquitaine, Isabella of Angoulême was a queen consort of England whose reputation suffered greatly at the hands of near-contemporary writers, nearly all of whom were male clerics whose accounts were colored by their knowledge of the disastrous events of King John's reign and his death in October 1216 during a bitter civil war. The St Albans chronicler Roger of Wendover, who wrote in the early years of King Henry III's reign, portrayed Isabella as a fitting consort for King John, whom he characterized as one of England's most cruel and unpleasant kings. Wendover painted Isabella as a bewitching seductress in whose company John delighted when he should, instead, have been defending Normandy from the conquering forces of the French king Philip Augustus in 1203.[12] Matthew Paris, Wendover's successor at St Albans, famously blackened Isabella's reputation further. In one apocryphal story that Paris included within his narrative, John sent emissaries to the emir of North Africa in the hope of seeking his assistance, only for Robert of London, one of John's agents, to reveal the king's true character to his Muslim host. In doing so, Robert also chose to divulge just how much Isabella hated her husband, before describing the queen herself in the most damning terms as an adulterous woman, whose lovers had been murdered on her husband's personal orders.[13] According to Paris, Isabella's worst character traits carried on into her later life in France, where her scandalous behavior, most notably her involvement in a plot to murder the French king, led the chronicler to claim that she was more deserving of the name of Jezebel, the Old Testament figure who had brought about the deaths of prophets and holy men, than Isabella.[14]

Despite the reputation Isabella gained from these chronicles, the English royal records of King John's reign indicate that, in fact, Isabella enjoyed a reasonably stable relationship with her husband. At a time when the French king Philip Augustus was unsuccessfully attempting to set aside his second wife, Ingeborg of Denmark, King John showed no sign of wishing to end his union with Isabella of Angoulême. This was in stark contrast to John's first marriage to Isabella of Gloucester, a woman to whom he was closely related and whom he had considered replacing with a new French bride just a few years after their marriage in 1189.[15] John's alliance with his cousin Isabella of Gloucester was annulled soon after John's accession to the throne in 1199.[16] If John's first foray into married life had not been particularly successful in personal terms, there were strong political reasons for setting Isabella of Gloucester aside when he became king. John was not the only claimant to the territories of the

Angevin Empire in 1199; his nephew Arthur of Brittany, the son of John's dead older brother, Geoffrey, had a stronger hereditary claim to Richard I's former dominions.[17] By taking a new bride, John could strengthen his position by marrying a woman who could bear him legitimate heirs as his wife and queen consort, rather than heirs born of a consanguineous union that was not recognized fully by the Church.[18] Unfortunately, the precise legal standing of Isabella of Angoulême's earlier union with Hugh (IX) de Lusignan meant that John's choice of bride was again potentially problematic.[19] This might help to explain why Isabella of Angoulême's status as John's wife was strengthened immediately after her marriage by her consecration as queen and her coronation alongside her husband at Westminster in 1200.[20] According to the liberate rolls, Eustace the chaplain and Ambrose, two royal clerks who chanted *Christus vincit* when Isabella was crowned within the abbey, received 25s for their services.[21] The princely sum of £74 19s 9d was spent on robes purchased specially for this ceremony, an outlay that conveys something of the pomp and visual splendor involved.[22] John and Isabella were both then crowned again at Canterbury in 1201, when the couple celebrated Easter with Archbishop Hubert Walter in the great church of the cathedral priory there.[23] These ceremonies ensured not only that Isabella was honored as John's consort, but also that her exalted new position as queen received spiritual backing at religious sites associated with two of the Angevin dynasty's most favored saints' cults, those of St Edward the Confessor at Westminster and St Thomas Becket at Canterbury.[24]

Isabella's young age at marriage—she was probably no more than 12 years old, while her new husband was already in his thirties[25]—possibly explains why the duties that she fulfilled within her husband's dominions were largely ceremonial. King John and his officials supported Isabella's household financially, both when the couple were in residence together and when they were apart. In late October 1200, for example, Hugh de Neville was ordered to provide supplies for the queen and those who were staying with her at Marlborough castle in Wiltshire.[26] In a similar fashion, the bailiffs of Southampton were instructed to convey a jar of the "better" wine of Anjou to Marlborough for the queen's enjoyment.[27] The king arranged for a range of fine cloths, furs, and wimples to be purchased and despatched to his wife, thereby ensuring that she was appropriately attired for a woman of her rank.[28] The queen's financial dependence on her husband persisted throughout their married life. In December 1203, for instance, the king ordered Hugh de Neville to meet the expenses of

the queen and her household when they visited Marlborough in Wiltshire and Woodstock in Oxfordshire.[29] Reginald of Cornhill, sheriff of Kent and a supplier of goods for the royal household, was frequently given the task of acquiring items for the queen and her damsels. In 1208, for example, Reginald accounted at the royal exchequer for cloths and cendals purchased for Isabella, along with various other items and robes for her damsels.[30] By keeping his wife on a tight financial rein, by denying her direct access to income from her dower lands in England or Normandy, from her inherited county of Angoulême, from Queen's Gold (a surcharge on voluntary offerings, Jewish amercements and sums owed by moneyers), or from profitable wardships during their marriage,[31] John thus prevented Isabella from exercising a similar degree of political influence to that of many of her twelfth-century predecessors as queens of England.[32]

Although the strength of King John's personal relationship with his young wife was, perhaps, undermined by his preference for royal mistresses[33] and by his continued financial maintenance of Isabella of Gloucester,[34] the king remained attentive to his duty to provide for Isabella of Angoulême in the long term. Hence King John's decision, shortly after Eleanor of Aquitaine died in the spring of 1204, to issue a charter on May 5 that was addressed to his "beloved" wife and increased Isabella's expected dower settlement by promising her those lands in England and Normandy which had formerly been held by her dead mother-in-law. The king's charter also generously included the proviso that if the Norman lands were lost to him (King Philip had entered Normandy just three days earlier), Isabella was to receive additional English properties in their place.[35] The warmth of relations between the royal couple, as well as the importance, perhaps, of Isabella's inherited lands in Poitou at a time when John's lands in northern France were falling to the Capetians, was also reflected in the wording of another charter that John issued just three days later to the cathedral church of Chichester for the express benefit of the king's soul and that of Isabella his wife, queen of England.[36]

The couple remained on sufficiently intimate terms in the years that followed for King John to visit the queen's bed and for Isabella to conceive a male heir. Isabella gave birth to her first living child when the future King Henry III was born at Winchester in 1207.[37] The pipe roll for Michaelmas 1207 lists 120 ells of linen cloth, 12 ells of hauberget dyed scarlet, and 3 furs of miniver, together with a further 100 ells of linen, that were acquired specially for the pregnant queen.[38] News of the impending birth of an heir after seven years of marriage might also

explain way Isabella was visited in England by a close member of her natal kin. In May 1207, King John issued letters of protection that allowed his "beloved" brother-in-law, Peter de Joigny, to come to England, so that he might see Isabella; these letters were prompted by a personal request from the queen to meet with Peter.[39] In the years that followed Henry's birth, Isabella of Angoulême successfully fulfilled her primary duty as a queen consort by bearing John no fewer than five children who survived the dangers of medieval childbirth and infancy: another son Richard was born at Winchester in January 1209[40]; a daughter Joan was born in July 1210, and presumably named after both her royal father and her paternal aunt, Joan, a former queen of Sicily and countess of Toulouse[41]; a second daughter Isabella was presumably named after her mother the queen and was born in 1214[42]; and finally, Eleanor, the youngest child, who might well have been born as late as 1216, and was presumably named for the king's dead mother.[43]

Soon after birth, Isabella's children by King John were placed in the care of wet nurses and other women in keeping with contemporary practice, thereby allowing Isabella to recover her fertility relatively quickly.[44] Royal letters patent, for example, indicate that Isabella and John's oldest daughter, Joan, was nursed in early infancy (*nutrita fuit*) within a particular chamber in Gloucester castle.[45] The number of nurses employed by the crown increased with the number of royal children. By Michaelmas 1214, the sheriffs of various counties were accounting for payments made to Elena, the nurse of the king's son (Henry, John's eldest male heir), Eva the nurse of Richard, the king's younger son, and Christiana, Joan's nurse.[46]

It is, however, surprising that there was apparently a four-year gap between the birth of Joan in 1210 and that of Isabella in 1214. Perhaps the queen suffered one or more miscarriages during these years, or simply failed to conceive. There were, after all, rumors reported by contemporary writers of temporary rifts between Isabella and John. According to Gervase, a monk at Christ Church cathedral priory in Canterbury, the king might have confined Isabella on two separate occasions, first at Corfe castle in 1208 (*Reginam quoque sponsam suam sub arta posuit custodia in castello de Corf*) and later at Devizes in 1209, the same year in which she gave birth to Richard (*Ricardus filius regis ex regina nascitur; regina apud Divisas includitur*).[47] It might simply have been that King John placed his queen at Corfe and Devizes in these years to ensure her safety. This was, after all, a time when the king was concerned about the impact of the

interdict and his excommunication on the loyalties of his lay subjects, a concern that was reflected in the oaths of fealty demanded from his subjects and from the Welsh princes.[48] Whatever the truth of the matter, John clearly still spent time in Isabella of Angoulême's company in the later years of his reign. The continued importance of her inherited French lands to the English king's foreign policy initiatives was clearly demonstrated by John's attempts to build alliances in the south of France in 1214. In this year, John campaigned on the continent, ultimately unsuccessfully, to recover those territories that he had lost to the French king Philip Augustus in 1204. John sensibly attempted to use Isabella's position as countess of Angoulême to his advantage in his dealings with the Poitevin nobles by ensuring that she accompanied him overseas.[49] It was also at around this time that the king attempted to heal old diplomatic wounds by ensuring that the couple's eldest daughter, Joan, was betrothed to Hugh, the eldest son and namesake of the lord of Lusignan and count of La Marche to whom Isabella herself had been promised before her marriage to John.[50] John also expected Isabella to play a supervisory role in their children's upbringings in accordance with the social conventions of their day.[51] Isabella certainly spent time with her older children; Richard traveled with the queen and Joan to Poitou in 1214, and she maintained contact with both of her sons, even after Henry entered the charge of the bishop of Winchester in 1211–12 and Richard entered that of Peter de Maulay in 1215.[52] In fact, Isabella's early association with her sons might help to explain why Henry III was so welcoming to the offspring of his mother's second marriage in the late 1240s.[53]

The high personal value that John placed on his wife ensured that the queen's security and that of their offspring became a matter of paramount importance, as his relationship fractured with the English barons in 1214–15. After the king and queen returned to England and visited Exeter in 1214, John placed Isabella under the armed protection of one of his most trusted servants, Terric the Teuton.[54] This was, once more, quite probably for the queen's personal safety as the political situation deteriorated.[55] In November 1214, Terric, the constable of Berkhamsted castle in Hertfordshire, a fortress named in 1204 as part of Isabella's dower, escorted the queen there on her husband's orders.[56] When, the king visited Corfe castle in December, he instructed Terric to convey the "lady queen" to, and keep her at Gloucester castle.[57] Isabella remained with Terric early in 1215, residing at Berkhamsted again and later Winchester, where she joined her eldest son Henry.[58] From Winchester, Isabella and

her son moved to Marlborough castle in May, the same month in which the rebel barons secured London.[59]

Had Isabella lost her husband's favor or had her relationship with him broken down irrevocably by this point, it is extremely unlikely that King John would have allowed his wife and Henry as his heir to be in one another's company at such a critical time for the future of his throne and his dynasty. John's concern for Isabella's welfare in the face of imminent civil war was made explicit on May 5, 1215. On this day at Portchester castle, King John issued a charter addressed to Isabella which again outlined and reconfirmed her dower. Within the document itself, which was clearly intended to bolster Isabella's personal authority within the kingdom, John referred to Isabella as his "beloved" wife and recalled how she had been crowned queen "with the common assent" and agreement of the archbishops, bishops, earls, barons, clergy, and the entire population of England.[60] So central was the queen's safety and that of their children to King John during the baronial rebellion that followed that he prioritized it in the negotiations that took place at Runnymede in June 1215. As a result, clause 61 of the 1215 Magna Carta expressly prohibited the 25 barons who were authorized to enforce the Charter's terms from harming the queen's person or the royal children.[61] The security of the queen and Henry, in particular, remained a key issue during the summer of 1215, with the renewal of civil war. It became vital that Isabella and Henry were not captured by the rebels. On John's orders, they moved to the great fortress at Corfe.[62] By the summer of 1216, the queen was housed at the port and royalist stronghold of Bristol, ready, should it be necessary, to flee overseas.[63]

King John's death at Newark during the night of October 18-19, 1216 deprived Isabella of Angoulême of a husband and her children of their father.[64] The new king of England was her nine-year-old son, Henry III. In view of her position as the king's mother, her time in Henry's company, and the precedent established by Eleanor of Aquitaine's involvement in English affairs during Richard I's reign, it is possible that Isabella intended to secure a similar role in Angevin government to that which her mother-in-law had assumed on Richard I's accession in 1189. Having endured a 16-year period of captivity at the hands of Henry II, Richard's reign had witnessed Eleanor's greatest period of political activity, when she helped to maintain her son's realm from internal and external threats in his absence, first on crusade and later in captivity at the hands of the Holy Roman Emperor.[65] With the example of her mother-in-law before her and

with the accession of her young son, might not Isabella have harbored similar ambitions for a more active role than she had hitherto enjoyed in royal government?

There were, however, some serious obstacles that stood in Isabella's way. Just as King John had excluded her from governing his realm in life, so too did he overlook her in death. When John became ill and realized he was dying in October 1216, he hurriedly put his affairs in order. Yet, John neither wrote to nor sent for his wife—or, at least, if he did, copies of his letters were not enrolled by the royal chancery and no original letters have survived.[66] According to the author of the *Histoire des ducs de Normandie*, Isabella was by this time pregnant again with a daughter, presumably her youngest child Eleanor.[67] Isabella's continued residence in the south and south-west meant that she was not present at John's deathbed, and was therefore unable to exert any direct influence over her husband's posthumous plans. Isabella's absence was also reflected in the letters that the king despatched to Pope Honorius III, when he was at Sleaford on October 15, in which John acknowledged the grave and incurable nature of his illness. In these communications, John placed his kingdom and his heir in the hands of the pope and the holy Roman Church, and urged the pope to safeguard and support Henry's succession as the next king. No mention was made of the queen.[68] Similarly, when John drew up his testament, he mentioned his sons, but again made no reference to his wife.[69] John clearly did not anticipate that Isabella might play a role in English government and in securing their children's inheritances after his death, hence her exclusion, as well, from the list of his executors.[70] This was in stark contrast to the will that John's own son, King Henry III, later drew up in 1253, ahead of his Gascon campaign of 1253–4. Henry III's will appointed his wife, Eleanor of Provence, as custodian of all the royal children, including his heir Edward, and of all the king's territories until Edward attained his legal age of majority.[71] Eleanor was also listed among her husband's executors; a role routinely assigned to aristocratic wives in the thirteenth and later centuries, including Isabella of Angoulême's youngest daughter.[72] Immediately after John's death, it was left to the papal legate Guala, William Marshal, earl of Pembroke, Silvester, bishop of Worcester, Ranulf, earl of Chester and Lincoln, William de Ferrers, earl of Derby, Walter de Lacy, and four other important lay magnates to see that the king was interred in Worcester cathedral; his preferred burial site at Beaulieu in Hampshire had been overrun by rebels.[73]

According to the Merton annalist, Isabella of Angoulême was, at least, present at her son's coronation as King Henry III at Gloucester on October 28, 1216, which was celebrated under the direction of the papal legate, Guala, and in the presence of William Marshal, earl of Pembroke, the man into whose care John had also entrusted his son.[74] According to a later chronicler Thomas Wykes, the young king Henry III used a chaplet as his crown, which Kate Norgate suggested, quite plausibly, was provided by his mother.[75] The *History of William Marshal*, a biography written in Anglo-Norman verse in the 1220s, provides one of the most detailed accounts of the power play that attended the young king's coronation. The *History* describes how, having buried the king at Worcester, "the high-ranking men" who had remained loyal to the crown traveled to Gloucester. Once there, "they took the decision, as was their duty, to send for the earl of Chester," one of the wealthiest magnates in England, and "for those barons they knew to be on the king's side."[76] Thomas of Sandford was then despatched to escort the young king from Devizes, whereupon Marshal rode out to meet Henry, who was attended by "his governor and guardian Ralph de Saint-Sanson," on the plain outside Malmesbury.[77] Upon meeting Marshal, the young king eloquently expressed his desire to be taken into Marshal's charge, so that Marshal might protect and manage his affairs for him with God's help.[78] Not wishing to delay matters any further, the loyalist lords pushed ahead with Henry's coronation, so that he was crowned and anointed as king by Guala.[79] At no point does the *History* suggest that Isabella of Angoulême was consulted about the future of her son and his realm. If the *History*'s account is to be trusted, she was omitted from these deliberations.

Yet, the interests of the king's mother were not overlooked entirely. As a result, perhaps, of Isabella's close personal proximity to her son during the first few days of his reign, one of the very first acts of Henry III's minority government was to assign Isabella her extensive dower in England. Letters close were issued on November 1, 1216, just four days after Henry III's coronation, which instructed the sheriff of Devon "that immediately and without delay" he should hand over to "Lady Isabella the queen, our mother" the city of Exeter and various other properties in Devon which had been assigned to her in dower.[80] Similar orders were issued with respect to the queen's other dower properties in Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Rutland, Somerset, Sussex, and Wiltshire.[81] The short space of time between John's death, her son's coronation, and the assignment of Isabella's dower, a much shorter space of time than the

40 days envisaged within clause 7 of the 1215 Magna Carta,[82] suggests that the queen mother moved at speed to secure her dower, and might still have hoped to establish a position of influence within her son's fledgling regime. If this was, indeed, the case, Isabella's ambitions were frustrated. Instead, the new queen dowager continued to find herself excluded from the regency council and from effective political influence within her son's kingdom.[83]

A sense of the uncertainty and insecurity of Isabella's personal situation was conveyed early in 1217 by a letter that Pope Honorius sent her. In this letter, Honorius expressed his dismay on learning that Isabella was "destitute of great comfort" in her "grief" for her dead husband, and placed the queen and her goods under his protection.[84] In such circumstances, it is not surprising that Isabella decided in 1217 to return to her inheritance in the south of France and preside over her own comital court in Angoulême. Viewed through the eyes of modern scholars, she has been criticized for taking "the earliest possible opportunity to abandon four of the five children [including the baby Eleanor] that she had born to John."[85] Yet peace was only established in England in September 1217 after two great royalist victories at Lincoln in May and near Sandwich in August.[86] In such circumstances, the English regency council was probably reluctant to allow Isabella to exercise any influence over her young children due to her lack of experience; Henry III's minority government was still very much populated by great lords who had witnessed, and participated in, Isabella's exclusion from political affairs in John's reign. Furthermore, her degree of political acumen and her political interests were unknown, raising the possibility that she might be a destabilizing force on the royalist side that the English crown could ill afford at a time when Henry III's supporters were fighting to preserve his throne. The blame that Roger of Wendover placed for the loss of Normandy on John's infatuation with Isabella might well have been based on popular perceptions of her relationship with her dead husband, perceptions that further militated against her being allowed any significant political role in England.[87]

The regency council's suspicions about Isabella and Isabella's own sense of political isolation in England were apparently confirmed by the queen dowager's subsequent decision to remain in Poitou and, eventually, in 1220 take the place of her daughter, Joan, as Hugh (X) de Lusignan's bride.[88] Yet, there is evidence that Isabella remained mindful before her departure of her commemorative responsibilities as a royal widow toward her dead husband, evidence that suggests that her departure might well

have been tinged with regret. For example, on March 1, 1217, when Isabella was at Taunton, she made a grant "for the salvation of the soul of our lord John, illustrious king of England" to the church of St Thomas of Acon of the hospital of St John the Baptist at Berkhamsted, as well as the tithes of her mills in Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead.[89] This was followed on May 29, 1217 by another grant for her own soul and "the soul of the lord John, of good memory, formerly king of England and our husband," this time to the priory of St Nicholas in Exeter of the city fair there.[90] The witness lists of these grants made plain Isabella's remoteness from central government—no men associated with the regency council witnessed Isabella's grants. Significantly, letters patent issued on April 5, 1217 also attempted to remedy the inadequate residence in which the king's mother was housed by assigning her better accommodation in Exeter castle.[91]

On returning to her native Angoulême, Isabella encountered a difficult and politically volatile situation, as she explained in letters addressed to her son in 1218–19, which expressed her frustration at the English government's failure to send her appropriate aid.[92] Her new marriage to the powerful Poitevin lord Hugh (X) de Lusignan allowed Isabella to protect her interests in the region.[93] Other scholars have, of course, discussed the reaction to Isabella's new marriage in England, and Isabella and Hugh's highly controversial use of the queen's daughter Joan as a political lever with Henry III's government.[94] Isabella's decision to leave England, and her continued absence from its shores had serious implications for her other offspring too, and effectively prevented her from playing any meaningful role in their childhoods.[95] The king, Richard, and her younger daughters Isabella and Eleanor were all placed in the guardianship of Peter des Roches and his close associates, thereby ensuring some continuity in their care from John's into Henry III's reign.[96] The expenses of the persons and households of Henry III, the eldest, and Eleanor, the youngest child, were met by des Roches, while Richard and his household stayed with Peter de Maulay at Corfe.[97] By the summer of 1220, the younger Isabella and her domestic establishment were apparently in the custody of Philip Mark, another of her dead father's loyal supporters and one whom cap. 50 of the 1215 Magna Carta had attempted to expel from the realm.[98] It was Mark who escorted her to York as a possible alternative royal bride for the Scottish king during the negotiations for the marriage of her sister, Joan, to Alexander II.[99] In the case of the youngest royal sister, Eleanor, however, her household subsequently passed into the charge of Robert de

Courtenay. It was Courtenay who was instructed in 1224 to send young Eleanor to William Marshal junior, earl of Pembroke, the man to whom she had been betrothed by the English royal government.[100] Courtenay was an interesting choice of guardian for Eleanor; not only was he the lord of Okehampton in Devon[101] but he was also, more significantly, a kinsman of the French lords of Courtenay from whom Eleanor's absentee mother, Isabella of Angoulême, claimed descent.[102] Robert had previously served the crown as sheriff of Devon, had received letters patent relating to the queen's residence at Exeter castle in April 1217, and had witnessed Isabella's gift in her husband's memory to St Nicholas priory, Exeter, in May 1217.[103] Courtenay's kinship with Eleanor might therefore have given him a personal concern for her welfare, as well as providing a distant link with a royal mother whom Eleanor is unlikely to have remembered personally.[104]

In practice, the day-to-day care of Isabella's two boys, Henry III and Richard rested with men of knightly status like Philip d'Aubigny, who had been King John's keeper of the Channel Islands and who instructed Henry III in riding, hunting, and warfare, especially as they grew older.[105] It also resided with tutors like Roger of Acaster, who served the younger Richard between 1217 and 1223, and who presumably educated him in letters and manners.[106] In the case of Isabella and Eleanor, both of whom were much younger than their brothers, entries on the earliest pipe rolls for Henry III's reign indicate that their daily needs continued to be met by women who were described as their nurses. The sheriff's account for Herefordshire included regular payments to Margaret, Isabella's nurse, of 60s 10d per annum, presumably in recognition of her services.[107] Meanwhile, the infant Eleanor's personal necessities and those of her nurses and other attendants were accounted for in the pipe rolls of her guardian, the bishop of Winchester.[108] *Magistrae* or "governesses" took charge of their upbringings and education as the two girls grew older. Isabella's governess, Margaret Biset, who was pious and could read both French and Latin, came from a family that was connected with the royal household as far back as the reign of King Henry II.[109] Cecily of Sandford, another woman who was "of noble blood, but with nobler manners," according to Matthew Paris, was appointed as Eleanor's governess.[110]

In conclusion, Isabella of Angoulême enjoyed a reasonably successful personal relationship with her husband, one that recognized the ceremonial importance of Isabella's position as queen consort and the dynastic significance of Isabella's maternity, but not one that translated into a

weighty governmental role within John's dominions. When John made arrangements for the future of his heir and his kingdom on his deathbed in October 1216, he did not foresee a place at the heart of English royal affairs for his wife and neither, significantly, did his closest allies and advisors, the very men who safeguarded the boy-king Henry III's throne. Squeezed out of English government during her son's minority and treated in ways that did not fully acknowledge the dignity due to her as the new king's mother, Isabella chose, instead, to return to Angoulême, hence the importance of des Roches and his associates for Henry III and his siblings. We should also not underestimate the central place occupied by figures such as Philip d'Aubigny, Roger of Acaster, Margaret Biset, and Cecily of Sandford, as well as the royal nurses, in their upbringings. Not only did they give the royal children a degree of stability during the politically unsettled years after Henry III's accession but they also, perhaps, offered them emotional succor. These arrangements ensured that the royal children were raised in accordance with the conventions of the day and in a manner appropriate to their elite status, in spite of their parents' absence. It was, undoubtedly, a reflection of the high personal esteem in which Henry III and Richard of Cornwall held the services rendered by their former nurses, Elena and Eva, that these women were remembered and remunerated long after these two siblings had reached adulthood.[111]

Notes

1. *Histoire des ducs de Normandie et des rois d'Angleterre*, ed. F. Michel (Paris: Jules Renouard, 1840), 206.
2. For Isabella's remarriage, see, for example, "Annales Monasterii de Waverleia," in *Annales Monastici*, ed. H. R. Luard, 5 vols (London: Rolls Series, 1864–9), ii, 291 (listed under 1218); "Annales Prioratus de Dunstaplia," in *Annales Monastici*, iii, 57 (1220); "Annales Prioratus de Wigornia," in *Annales Monastici*, iv, 412.
3. Isabella wrote to Henry III in early May 1220: *Royal and Other Historical Letters illustrative of the Reign of Henry III,* ed. W. W. Shirley, 2 vols (London: Rolls Series, 1862), i, 114–15 no. xcvi. In November 1220 Joan was finally surrendered to Henry III's representatives at La Rochelle: *ibid*., i, 157–8 no. cxxxv, 158–9 no. cxxxvi.
4. *Ibid*., i, appendix v, 536–7 nos 10–11.
5. N. Vincent, "Isabella of Angoulême: John's Jezebel," in *King John: New Interpretations*, ed. S. D. Church (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999), 198.

6. See, for example, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, ed. W. Stubbs, 4 vols (London: Rolls Series, 1868–71), iv, 82–3.
7. For Isabella, see also W. C. Jordan, "Isabelle d'Angoulême, By the Grace of God, Queen," *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire*, 69 (1991): 821–52; Vincent, "Isabella of Angoulême," 165–219.
8. Alice (d. after 1215) married: (1) Andrew of La Ferté-Gaucher in Champagne (d. c. 1177); (2) William of Joigny (marriage annulled in c. 1184); and (3) Adomar, Count of Angoulême (d. 1202): Vincent, "Isabella of Angoulême," 175–82.
9. A charter issued by John at Chinon a few days later granted Isabella, the "young queen," the cities of Saintes, Niort, Samur, La Flèche, Beaufort-en-Vallée, and Baugé in dower, together with Château-du-Loir and other property: *Rotuli Chartarum in Turri Londinensi asservati*, ed. T.D. Hardy, (London: Record Commission, 1837), i.i, 74b-5.
10. Vincent, "Isabella of Angoulême," 170–2.
11. *Ibid*., 172–3.
12. *Rogeri de Wendover Liber qui dicitur Flores Historiarum*, ed. H. G. Hewlett, 3 vols (London: Rolls Series, 1886–9), i, 317.
13. *Matthaei Parisiensis, Monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica Majora*, ed. H. R. Luard, 7 vols (London: Rolls Series, 1872–83), ii, 563.
14. *Chronica Majora*, iv, 253.
15. *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, iii, 6 (for John's marriage to Isabella in 1189), 203 (for the possibility of John marrying King Philip's sister Alice at Christmas 1192).
16. *Ibid*., iv, 119. See also *Dissolving Royal Marriages: A Documentary History, 860–1600*, ed. D. L. d'Avray (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), ch. 5.
17. See, for example, the English inheritance customs in *Glanvill: The Treatise on the Laws and Customs of England commonly called Glanvill*, ed. G. D. G. Hall, with M. T. Clanchy (Oxford: Oxford Medieval Texts, 1993), 75.
18. Archbishop Baldwin of Canterbury had opposed John's union with a kinswoman: *The Chronicle of the Reigns of Henry II and Richard I, 1169–1192, known commonly under the Name of Benedict of Peterborough*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols (Rolls Series, 1867), ii, 78.
19. A point made in Vincent, "Isabella of Angoulême," 173–4.
20. *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, iv, 139; *Memoriale Fratris Walteri de Coventria*, ed. W. Stubbs, 2 vols (London: Rolls Series, 1872–3), ii, 169; "Annales Monasterii de Wintonia," in *Annales Monastici*, ii, 74 (which has Canterbury mistakenly supplied by the editor); "Annales Prioratus de Dunstaplia," 28; "Annales Monasterii de Bermundeseia," in *Annales Monastici*, iii, 449; "Annales Prioratus de Wigornia," 390; "The Actus Pontificum," in *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury,* ed.

W. Stubbs, 2 vols (London: Rolls Series, 1879–80), ii, 410 (which notes their coronation in London).

21. *Rotuli de Liberate ac de Misis et Praestitis, Regnante Johanne*, ed. T. D. Hardy (London: George E. Eyre and Andrew Spottiswoode, 1844), 1.
22. *Ibid*., 4–5. To place this amount in context, baronial incomes in this period were often in the region of £200 per annum.
23. "Annales de Margan," in *Annales Monastici*, i, 25; "Annales de Burton," in *Annales Monastici*, i, 206; "The Actus Pontificum," in *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ii, 410.
24. On Angevin devotion to St Edward and St Thomas, see P. Webster, "Crown, Cathedral and Conflict: King John and Canterbury," in *Cathedrals, Communities and Conflict in the Anglo-Norman World*, ed. P. Dalton et al. (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2011), 203–209.
25. On Isabella's age, see Vincent, "Isabella of Angoulême," 174–5.
26. *Rotuli de Liberate*, 7.
27. *Ibid*., 7. See also *ibid*., 8.
28. *Ibid*., 9.
29. *Ibid*., 75. See also *ibid*., 79, 79–80, for other expenses of the queen. As well as Marlborough and Woodstock, Devizes and Ludgershall (Wiltshire), and Winchester (Hampshire) were among the residences that played host to Isabella: *ibid*., 149 (Devizes), 152 (Ludgershall), 167 (Woodstock). See also *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Ninth Year of the Reign of King John (Michaelmas 1207)*, ed. A. M. Kirkus (London: Pipe Roll Society, new series 22, 1946), 139, 143, 144. Hereafter all volumes published by The Pipe Roll Society (www.piperollsociety.co.uk) are cited as *Pipe Roll.*
30. *Pipe Roll 10 John (Michaelmas 1208)*, 96, 97. For examples of other robes, furs, and garlands or circlets bought for Isabella of Angoulême, see *Pipe Roll 7 John (Michaelmas 1205)*, 112, 113; *Pipe Roll 8 John (Michaelmas 1206)*, 48. For payments for the queen's expenses at Corfe castle and other places: TNA, E 101/349/2, mm. 6, 8, 9, 10.
31. Isabella's experiences in this respect stand in stark contrast to those of her future daughter-in-law and eventual successor as queen in England, Eleanor of Provence: M. Howell, *Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 262–4. When Isabella's father died in 1202, Isabella inherited the French county of Angoulême, a territory that remained central to John's continental interests and one that he controlled in his wife's name: "The Gesta Regum with its Continuation," in *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ii, 94–5.
32. See, for example, L. L. Huneycutt, "*Alianora Regina Anglorum*: Eleanor of Aquitaine and her Anglo-Norman predecessors as queens of England," in *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady*, ed. B. Wheeler and J. C. Parsons (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 115–32.

33. In 1212–13, for example, Wilekin, the valet of Philip Mark, sheriff of Nottinghamshire, was paid for escorting an unnamed female friend of the king: TNA, E 101/349/2, m. 11.
34. See, for example, *Pipe Roll 7 John (Michaelmas 1205)*, 113; *Pipe Roll 8 John (Michaelmas 1206)*, 47.
35. *Rotuli Chartarum*, i.i, 128.
36. *Ibid*., 129–129b.
37. "Annales Monasterii de Wintonia," 80; "Annales Monasterii de Waverleia," 259.
38. *Pipe Roll 9 John (Michaelmas 1207),* 30, 31.
39. *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium in Turri Londinensi asservati*, ed. T. D. Hardy (London: Record Commission, 1835), i.i, 71b.
40. "Annales Monasterii de Wintonia," 29; "Annales Monasterii de Waverleia," 264.
41. "Annales de Theokesberia," in *Annales Monastici*, i, 59; "Annales de Wigornia," 399.
42. For discussion of Isabella's birth and her naming, see L. J. Wilkinson, *Eleanor de Montfort: A Rebel Countess in Medieval England* (London: Continuum, 2012), 5.
43. See below p. 109.
44. On wet nurses, see W. F. MacLehose, "Nurturing danger: high medieval medicine and the problem(s) of the child," in *Medieval Mothering*, ed. J. C. Parsons and B. Wheeler (London: Garland Publishing, 1996), 12–13.
45. *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, i.i, 124b.
46. *Pipe Roll 16 John (Michaelmas 1214)*, 35, 54 (Elena); 1, 79 (Eva); 127 (Christiana).
47. "Gesta Regum," 102 (Corfe, 1208), 107 (Devizes). Gervase's reference to Isabella at Corfe follows on from this monk's description of the interdict and the king's tyranny, matters that were close to this author's heart as a monk whose community was expelled from Canterbury due to the dispute over Archbishop Hubert Walter's successor.
48. J. A. P. Jones, *King John and Magna Carta* (London: Longman, 1971), 39–40.
49. *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, i.i, 117; *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum in Turri Londinensi asservati*, ed. T. D. Hardy, 2 vols (London: Record Commission, 1833–4), i, 169b; Vincent, "Isabella of Angoulême," 195.
50. *Rotuli Chartarum*, i.i, 197b-198; W. L. Warren, *King John* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 219–21.
51. For the wider picture, see J. C. Parsons, "Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power: Some Plantagenet Evidence, 1150–1500," in *Medieval Queenship*, ed. J. C. Parsons (Stroud: Sutton, 1993), 68–75.

52. *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, i.i, 117; N. Vincent, *Peter des Roches: An Alien in English Politics, 1205–38* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 71. For the placing children from elite families in aristocratic or episcopal households, see S. Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London: Routledge, 1992), 216–20.
53. Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, 54–5. For Isabella's Lusignan offspring, see N. Kerignard, "Les mariages des enfants d'Isabelle d'Angoulême et d'Hugues X de Lusignan," *Isabelle d'Angoulême, comtesse-reine et son temps (1186-1246),* ed. R. Favreau, (Poitiers: Civilisation Médiévale 5, 1999), 47–55.
54. For Exeter, mentioned in later letters close, see *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, i, 433. See also *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, i.i, 143b (1215), 192b (1216).
55. Vincent, "Isabella of Angoulême," 195–6.
56. *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, i, 177. See also *ibid*., i, 154b; *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, i.i, 105b.
57. *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, i.i, 124b; *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, i, 180b; Wilkinson, *Eleanor de Montfort*, 4.
58. *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, i, 189b; *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, i.i, 136 (*x*2); Wilkinson, *Eleanor de Montfort*, 4–5.
59. *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, i.i, 136(*x*2); *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, i, 213b.
60. *Rotuli Chartarum*, i.i, 213b-214.
61. J. C. Holt, *Magna Carta*, second edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 470–1.
62. Peter de Maulay was in charge of Corfe: *Histoire des ducs*, 152; Vincent, *Peter des Roches*, 71.
63. *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, i, 275, 285; *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, i.i, 192b.
64. Warren, *King John,* 254.
65. In possession of her dower and inheritance, Eleanor supported her son's government, and negotiated his release after his capture on the way home from crusade: J. Martindale, "Eleanor of Aquitaine: the last years," in *King John: new interpretations*, 137–64; R. V. Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), ch. 10.
66. *Rotuli Litterarum Patentium*, i.i, 198–200; *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, i, 291.
67. *Histoire des ducs*, 180–1.
68. John had surrendered England into the hands of Honorius's predecessor, Pope Innocent III, at the end of the Interdict, hence this communication: *The Letters and Charters of Cardinal Guala Biccheri, Papal Legate in*

England, 1216–18, ed. N. Vincent (Woodbridge: The Canterbury and York Society, 1996), no. 140b.

69. S. D. Church, "King John's Testament and the Last Days of his Reign," *The English Historical Review* cxxv (2010): 516–18.
70. *Ibid*.; Warren, *King John*, 255.
71. *Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et Acta Publica*, ed. T. Rymer, new edn by A. Clark and F. Holbrooke (Record Commission, 1816), i.i, 496; Howell, *Eleanor of Provence*, 111.
72. For a testament drawn up by Simon de Montfort that appointed his wife, Eleanor, Isabella's youngest daughter, as his executor, see C. Bémont, *Simon de Montfort, Comte de Leicester* (Paris: Alphonse Picard, 1884), no. xxxi.
73. *Acta of the Legate Guala*, no. 138.
74. M. Tyson, "The Annals of Southwark and Merton," *Surrey Archaeological Collections* 36 (1925), 51. For a more detailed description of Henry III's coronation that does not mention the queen, see *Wendover*, ii, 197–9.
75. "Chronicon Vulgo Dictum Chronicon Thomae Wykes," in *Annales Monastici*, iv, 60; K. Norgate, *The Minority of Henry the Third* (London: Macmillan, 1912), 4–5.
76. *History of William Marshal*, ed. A. J. Holden and trans. S. Gregory, 3 vols (Anglo-Norman Text Society, 2004), ii, lines 15229–38.
77. *Ibid*., lines 15246–64.
78. *Ibid*., lines 15268–84.
79. After this, having taken counsel with his closest supporters, having heard the views of the newly arrived earl of Chester, and having consulted with the greatest magnates present, Marshal accepted the regency: *ibid*., lines 15372–61.
80. Similar orders were dispatched to Terric the Teuton and the sheriffs of Essex, Hampshire, Northamptonshire, Somerset, Sussex and Wiltshire: *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, i. 293. See also *Patent Rolls, 1216–25* (London: HMSO, 1906), 1. For Isabella in possession of her dower see *Pipe Roll 3 Henry III (Michaelmas 1219)*, 41, 20, 53, 74, 104, 136, 173.
81. *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, i, 293. For these and other properties which Isabella held in dower, see also *ibid*., 294, 302, 302b, 304b, 315, 328b, 349b, 389b.
82. Holt, *Magna Carta*, 452–3.
83. The royal letters patent that were issued during the early months of Henry III's reign were, for example, authorized by William Marshal: *Patent Rolls, 1216–25*, 1 ff.
84. "A Letter from Honorius III (1217)," *Epistolae: Medieval Women's Latin Letters*, accessed 01 June 2015, http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/459.html.

85. Vincent, "Isabella of Angoulême," 198.
86. D. Carpenter, *The Minority of Henry III* (London: Methuen, 1990), 44–9.
87. *Wendover*, i, 295, 314, esp. 317.
88. *Patent Rolls, 1216–25*, 113; Vincent, "Isabella of Angoulême," 198, 208.
89. Terric the Teuton headed the witnesses to this grant. For transcriptions of Isabella's charters, see "Isabella of Angoulême," Appendix, 216–19.
90. *Ibid*., 217–18. Isabella also remembered her dead husband in a grant to Malmesbury abbey: *ibid*., 218–19.
91. *Patent Rolls, 1216–25*, 53.
92. *Royal Letters*, i, 22–3 no. xvii, See also *ibid*., 32–4 no. xxvi.
93. "Annales de Dunstaplia," 57; Vincent, "Isabella of Angoulême," 208.
94. Carpenter, *Minority*, 193–4, 200, 221; Vincent, "Isabella of Angoulême," 208.
95. Soon after her return from France, Joan married Alexander II, king of Scots: *Wendover*, ii, 253.
96. Vincent, *Peter des Roches*, 153–4.
97. Vincent, *Peter des Roches*, 153. Royal children usually had their own households which sheltered them from the disruptive life style of the royal court: J. C. Parsons, "*Que nos in infancia lactauit*: The Impact of Childhood Care-givers on Plantagenet Family Relationships in the Thirteenth and Early Fourteenth Centuries," in *Women, Marriage and Family in Medieval Christendom: Essays in Memory of Michael M. Sheehan*, ed. C. M. Rousseau and J. T. Rosenthal (Kalamazoo, MI: Western Michigan University, 1998), 293–4. For the household of Eleanor, Isabella of Angoulême's youngest daughter, see Wilkinson, *Eleanor de Montfort*, 9.
98. Holt, *Magna Carta*, 464–5.
99. *Patent Rolls*, *1216–25*, 234. It was agreed that Isabella would marry Alexander if Joan failed to return from the south of France in time: *ibid*., 235; Carpenter, *Minority*, 196.
100. *Patent Rolls, 1216–25*, 426.
101. *Charters of the Redvers Family and the Earldom of Devon, 1090–1217*, ed. R. Bearman (Exeter: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, new series 37, 1994), 16, 172 no. 30.
102. Hence references to Robert de Courtenay as the king's "kinsman": *Patent Rolls, 1216–25*, 53.
103. *Charters of the Redvers*, 217–18 no. 2; *Patent Rolls, 1216–25*, 53. In January 1217, Robert had handed over Exeter castle to Isabella as her dower: *Patent Rolls, 1216–25*, 23(*x*2).
104. L. J. Wilkinson, *Eleanor de Montfort*, 28.
105. *Histoire des ducs*, 207; N. Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry: The Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy, 1066–1530* (London: Methuen, 1984), 19 n. 93; Vincent, *Peter des Roches*, 155; N. Vincent, "Aubigny,

Philip d' (d. 1236)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), available at http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/47227, accessed on 8 June 2015.

106. *Rotuli Litterarum Clausarum*, i, 325b, 481, 495, 576b; *Royal Letters*, i, 179–80 no. clvi; Carpenter, *Minority*, 241–2; Orme, *From Childhood to Chivalry*, 24.
107. See, for example, *Pipe Roll 3 Henry III (Michaelmas 1219)*, 165; *Pipe Roll 5 Henry III (Michaelmas 1221)*, 13; *Pipe Roll 7 Henry III (Michaelmas 1223)*, 186; *Pipe Roll 8 Henry III (Michaelmas 1224)*, 247.
108. Hampshire Record Office, 11 M59/B1/6, mm. 12, 12d; 11 M59/B1/7, mm. 10d, 11. See also 11 M59/B1/9, m. 5.
109. Parsons, "*Que nos in infancia lactauit*," 307. Paris noted Margaret's ability to read: *Chronica Majora*, iii, 497–8.
110. Cecily was the wife and widow of the Hertfordshire knight William de Gorham: *Chronica Majora*, v, 235.
111. See, for example, *The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Twenty-Sixth Year of the Reign of King Henry III (1241–42)*, ed. H. L. Cannon (New Haven: Yale, 1918), 129, 216, 281.

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The Perils of Promotion: Maternal Ambition and Sacrifice in the Life of Joan of Navarre, Duchess of Brittany, and Queen of England

Elena Woodacre

Paul Strohm has argued that Lancastrian women tend to be portrayed in "such superficially different incarnations as mother, mediatrix, sorceress, whore."[1] Joan of Navarre managed to fulfill all of these categories, save the last, during her long career as Infanta of Navarre, Duchess of Brittany, and finally as first as both a consort and dowager Queen of England.[2] Her first marriage to Jean IV, Duke of Brittany, in 1386 created an important alliance between two realms which were struggling to assert their independence and sovereignty from their French overlords. This marriage was also fruitful, with nine children born of the marriage. After Jean IV's death in 1399, Joan began negotiations for a second marriage almost immediately, this time to a king, Henry IV of England, whom she wed in early 1403. This marriage was potentially advantageous both to her Navarrese family and to Joan herself, moving from Dowager Duchess to consort Queen. However, her promotion came at a cost—Joan had to leave her four sons and her elder daughter behind, taking with her only her two youngest daughters, Marguerite and Blanche. In 1406, these two daughters were sent home to Brittany as well, leaving Joan without any of her offspring and her children as virtual orphans, separated from their mother. While

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she bore no children to her second husband, Henry IV, she served as stepmother to his six children, who had been motherless since Mary de Bohun died in 1394. After Henry's death in 1413, Joan spent twenty-four years as a dowager queen under the reign of her stepson Henry V and later under his son, Henry VI. During the reign of Henry V, she was famously named as a witch and kept under guard for nearly four years, though she was never tried for the offense. After her release, she was restored to her position as dowager queen and stepmother/grandmother to the royal family.

Joan's career was certainly unusual—few queens have been accused of witchcraft and she has the added distinction of an unorthodox path to the throne as the first widow since the Norman Conquest to become Queen of England.[3] Yet, Joan has attracted little academic or popular attention, and in the few studies of her life she has often received unsympathetic treatment from chroniclers and historians who have accused her of being greedy, avaricious, and ambitious due, in part at least, to her decision to abandon her children for a royal crown. This paper will evaluate perceptions of Joan's maternal career, as both a mother to her Breton brood and the as stepmother to English royals, drawing on sources from contemporary chronicles, through collective biographies from the nineteenth century up to recent scholarship in order to gain a long-term perspective of her maternal reputation. In order to get a balanced assessment of her life, both writers focused on Breton and English history will be consulted as well as biographers of her husbands, sons, and the Victorian queenly biographers Strickland, Howitt, Lancelott, and Lawrance whose works influenced both popular and academic opinions of Joan's life. This chapter will focus specifically on key episodes in her life which shed light on her relationship with her children and stepchildren and which have been used by chroniclers and historians to emphasize or criticize her maternal abilities. Ultimately, through an examination of these key moments of her maternal and political career and how they have been perceived over time, this study will seek to provide a better understanding of how Joan attempted to reconcile her roles of mother, wife, and queen and her motivation for creating a new life for herself, without her children.

Fulfilling Maternal Expectations as Duchess of Brittany

Joan came to Brittany in 1386 as the third wife of Jean IV of Brittany, who was nearly thirty years elder to her. Jean had been married twice previously, to two Englishwomen: first, to a daughter of Edward III, Mary (or possibly

Margaret) and secondly Joan Holland, stepdaughter of the Black Prince. While these wives were well connected, both died without producing surviving issue and Jean "longed for an heir."[4] Joan brought new and equally impressive connections as the daughter of the controversial Carlos II (or Charles "the Bad") of Navarre and a close relative of the Valois kings of France. Knowlson argues that while Jean IV and Joan appear to have been poorly matched due to their difference in age, Joan "seems to have been a good spouse to Jean, if one judges by the number of children she bore."[5] Indeed, Joan was very successful at the primary function of elite and royal spouses, producing nine children between 1387 and 1397—amply fulfilling the expectations of her role as the progenitor of future Dukes of Brittany. Joan began to fulfill her maternal function almost immediately after her marriage; although she bore a daughter (or possibly two) first, Joan produced the long-awaited heir, Pierre (later rechristened Jean and subsequently Duke Jean V of Brittany) on Christmas Eve or December 24, 1389.[6] After the heir's birth, Joan produced another three sons (Arthur, Gilles, and Richard) and three daughters (Marie, Blanche, and Marguerite).

The Victorian biographers demonstrate a keen interest in Joan's maternal career, in keeping with contemporary attitudes regarding the importance of motherhood in both a woman's life and society at large which Claudia Nelson describes as a "cult of maternity."[7] While Joan quickly became pregnant after her marriage to Jean IV, there appeared to be considerable disappointment that her first issue was a girl instead of the long-awaited son and heir. Lawrance claims that "the intelligence of the birth of a daughter was received by the duke with expressions of the utmost mortification."[8] As mentioned previously, sources disagree on whether Joan bore one or two daughters initially—however, whether she bore one or two daughters, both appear to have died young. The Victorian biographers paint Joan as "melancholy" and as an "unhappy young princess," stressing her grief for her lost daughter(s). Her rapid return to fecundity appeared to ease her sorrows and concern over the succession somewhat; Strickland claims that the very thought that she might be carrying the much-needed heir, made Jean IV willing to consider peace with France as his councilors urged "Your lady is now not far advanced in her pregnancy, and you should pay attention that she be not alarmed."[9] The Victorian sources argue that birth of a son began a more positive spell for Joan's maternal career; Howitt claims that Joan "was consoled for her losses by the satisfaction of giving birth to a son and heir to the house of Montfort; and subsequently she became the mother of a numerous family."[10] Indeed the Victorian biographers may have seen an echo of their own Queen Victoria's large brood in Joan's ample fecundity.

Joan's maternity gave her not only comfort and satisfaction but greater influence. Howitt argues that Joan's influence was both "beneficial" and "great," noting that "Joanna never failed to exert herself in the cause of justice and humanity, and more than once she had the satisfaction of rescuing her wilful husband from circumstances of extreme peril, into which his own rashness had led him."[11] The latter part of this comment is illustrated by an anecdote which is one of the most often repeated episodes from Joan's tenure as Duchess of Brittany and highlights two key aspects of a royal woman's role, maternity and intercession. Relations between Brittany and the French crown were frequently tense and in 1391, during a disastrous interview, Jean IV threatened to arrest the French ambassadors who had been dispatched to his court. Joan's brother, Pierre de Navarre, who was visiting Brittany, went to his sister to beg her to intervene in order to prevent a diplomatic rupture between Jean IV and his French overlord. Joan, keen to preserve the peace between her husband and her close cousin, the King of France, moved quickly to intercede and according to the chronicler of Saint Denis:

> She took her children in her arms, in spite of her encumbrance at the end of her term [of pregnancy] and went that night, unexpected, to the room of the duke, followed only by a few of her ladies. I have learned from a reliable source that she went down on her knees before the duke and in a voice broken by sobs she begged him to take pity on her and her children…she begged him to renounce his plans, so as not to alienate himself by an act of felony towards his king and the princes of the blood, who might after his [the duke's] death protect his children.[12]

This particular episode emphasizes Joan's maternity, as she used her children as the source of her appeal to the duke. The physical presence of her children in Joan's arms and the one whom she was heavily pregnant with made a compelling case and drove home her rationale for preventing a rupture with the French king—that their children may have to suffer for the broken relationship between Brittany and France. This episode also bears a striking similarity to Philippa of Hainault's often cited intercession for the burghers of Calais in Froissart's chronicles.[13] Both women were noted as being heavily pregnant at the time of their intercessions, with their "maternal self-abnegation" and visible fertility adding considerably to their appeal.[14] However, like Froissart's anecdote, which has been debunked by historians as unlikely to have occurred in the manner he described, Michael Jones notes that his intercessory incident has

been "embroidered by contemporary chronicles for dramatic emphasis."[15] Indeed, the eighteenth-century writer Lobineau injects an idea of haste and a sense of drama into his retelling of the situation; "she ran in all disorder, her children in her arms and threw herself at the feet of her husband, whom she convinced by her tears and by the innocent youth of these Princes, who would be exposed to great dangers, to break off his unhappy plans."[16]

Later, nineteenth-century queenly biographers also recounted this particular tale in their examinations of Joan's life. While Mary Howitt's account is truncated and omits her pregnancy, Hannah Lawrance and Francis Lancelott's account bear striking similarities to Lobineau's in terms of phrasing, though only Lawrance cites Lobineau as her source and like Howitt, omits mention of her pregnancy.[17] Agnes Strickland, in her chapter on Joan in her famous and influential series, *Lives of the Queens of England*, cites not Lobineau but the Chronicle of Saint-Denis, Morice, Mezerai, and the *Actes de Bretagne* and provides perhaps the most melodramatic version of events:

> Joanna, who was then in hourly expectation of the birth of her fourth child, immediately perceived the dreadful consequences that would result from such an unheard-of outrage. She took her infants in her arms, and flew to the duke's apartment, half-dressed as she was, with her hair loose and disheveled, and throwing herself at his feet, bathed in tears, conjured him "for the sake of those tender pledges of their mutual love, to abandon the rash design that passion had inspired, which if persisted in, must involve himself and all belonging to him in utter ruin."[18]

This incident has become one of the key moments which is recounted in association with the period of Joan's life as Duchess of Brittany and demonstrates the power that a royal mother can wield as an intercessor or in terms of influence due to her position as the bearer and protectrice of royal heirs. Joan's success at childbearing solidified her position in the Breton court and appeared to guarantee her long-term influence in the duchy as the mother of the next duke. Lawrance claimed that Joan "possessed no influence in public affairs" prior to the birth of an heir, but after this point "we find her beginning to exercise an influence which eventually qualified her for the government of the duchy."[19] After her husband died, Joan was named as regent and could have had considerable power during her son's minority, yet she threw this opportunity away in order to marry Henry IV of England.

Ambition or Sacrifice? Joan's Decision to Leave Brittany for England

This decision to leave Brittany in order to marry Henry IV of England is another area of Joan's life which has been closely scrutinized by historians and biographers. Joan's decision to abandon her children in Brittany for the sake of a crown has drawn considerable comment, as well as criticism, although she was hardly the only queen who left her children in order to make a second marriage. An excellent comparison, in the reverse sense, is Isabella d'Angoulême who left England with alacrity after the death of King John, abandoning her brood of royal children to make a second marriage back in her native France. Isabella too had garnered criticism for her decision to leave her young brood of English children behind; Nicolas Vincent argues that "after 1217, Isabella spared only a passing thought for her children in England…Isabella's maternal feelings may well have been reserved for her children by Hugh de Lusignan."[20] In this volume, Louise Wilkinson's chapter explores the impact of Isabella's departure on her children by King John further, while the maternal career of Isabella's first mother-in-law Eleanor of Aquitaine provides another example of a queen who had to leave the children of her first marriage behind when she remarried.

Somewhat surprisingly perhaps, there is little overt criticism of Joan's decision to remarry in the accounts of the Victorian queenly biographers, although they do note the rapid pace of the betrothal and controversial aspects of the union. Generally, however, Lawrance, Lancelott, and Strickland all paint a picture of a grieving widow, who made savvy decisions to ensure peace and stability in Brittany by reconciling with her husband's enemy Clisson and married Henry IV with a view to providing her children with a powerful protector.[21] Although not overtly stated, they appear to argue that Joan sacrificed her own maternal desires to stay with her children, in order to make a marriage which potentially offered them long-term protection through a valuable alliance.

Modern historians, however, have taken a mixed view of the motivations behind Joan's decision to leave Brittany. Hilton, in her work *Queens Consort,* a twenty-first century version of the collective queenly biographies of Strickland and her contemporaries, takes a similar line to the Victorians—that Joan was vulnerable as a young widow with a large brood of children, and sought protection for herself and her offspring by marry-

ing Henry IV.[22] Biographers of Henry IV have often been sympathetic to Joan and toward her decision to leave Brittany for England, emphasizing the notion of her sacrifice. Kirby notes that Henry himself was an attractive prospect as a husband: "For the Duchess marriage with a King still in the prime of life, strong, handsome and renowned for his skill in arms, must have appeared a triumph, but it was not achieved without great sacrifices. She was forced to abandon her family, and their duchy to come to Henry…"[23] Anne Crawford too juxtaposes the pros and cons of Joan's decision to marry Henry: "For Joan, the marriage to a king in the prime of life might appear a social triumph for a widow, but she had a pay a high price for it."[24] Ian Mortimer focused on the resistance to her marriage back in France and the tough terms laid out for Joan to make a second marriage: "To marry Henry, Joan would have to give up her sons (the youngest of whom was just seven), her friends, her title and her home for the past sixteen years. It cannot have been an easy decision."[25]

While the biographers focused on queens and Henry IV, looking at Joan's life from an English perspective, appear less critical, Breton-focused historians are perhaps less generous in their view of the situation. Given the fact that Joan deliberately chose to leave Brittany and her Breton children for England, it would be understandable for the Breton perspective to be more negative about her departure than the English were about her arrival. Indeed, Breton sources tend to be more negative about Joan's matrimonial alliance, portraying Henry IV as keen to control, not protect Joan's brood, particularly her son, Jean V. The Breton writer Lobineau claims that Henry IV "married her in order to make himself master of the children from her first bed."[26]

Michael Jones has opined that Joan would have been aware that her regency would have been brief and the continuing dissention among the Breton nobles might have created a "desire to seek a quieter and more companionable life."[27] In addition, Knowlson argues that Joan was not well suited to Brittany and thus may have been keen to leave once her husband died.[28] However, while Knowlson and Jones acknowledge these possible motivations for Joan to move to England after Jean IV's death, both agree on another key possibility—that Joan was motivated by ambition. Indeed, Knowlson goes so far as to claim that "Joan's ambition demanded nothing less than a royal crown."[29] Knowlson portrays Joan as a social climber, arguing that she would have preferred a French king, but as none were available, she set her cap for the widowed Henry IV instead. Paul

Strohm provides a contrast to the more sympathetic view of some English historians and biographers, by appearing to concur with the view that Joan was driven by ambition. Strohm's criticism focuses on the impact of her ambition on her children.

> Remarrying, and arranging to take the better part of her dower with her, and leaving her children in the guardianship of the Duke of Burgundy, Joanne became a "cruel mother" in the sense of deserting her children and in the literal sense of taking her dower with her.[30]

However, Strohm does also note that this criticism of Joan could be partially mitigated by "the counter-image of the victimized mother whose children are stripped away," which is in line with the previously discussed view of the Victorian biographers and the more sympathetic modern historians.[31]

Perhaps the most sympathetic, or indeed the most romanticized image of Joan as a widowed mother, is Henriette Lorimier's 1806 painting of Joan with her son Arthur at the tomb of Jean IV. This painting bears little relation to reality—although Joan did commission the tomb of Jean IV, it would not have been completed before her departure for England, thus this touching scene could only have taken place in Lorimier's imagination.[32] A contemporary account of the Salon of 1806 in Paris, where Lorimier's work was first displayed, describes the work as a "charming tableau" and lauds the painter for her depiction of Joan.[33] The writer calls Joan a "grieving mother, caring for her son" and attempts to draw out Joan's sentiments as portrayed in the painting:

> This sensitive mother, deplores the loss of a virtuous and beloved spouse, even as she takes consolation and delight in the education of her son, she retraces for him, sensitively, the trials and triumphs of his illustrious father, and sees, with a sweet satisfaction, the young child listen to her with interest and place his hands together to pray…[34]

Here, Joan becomes the ideal widowed mother, caring for her children, grieving with them and ensuring that they cherish the memory of her husband, Jean IV. Joan's departure for England is erased here—she is immortalized forever by Lorimier as the Dowager Duchess of Brittany and a doting mother.

Another aspect to consider with regard to her departure for England is whether or not Joan intended to leave her children behind. Although she may have realistically known that her eldest son would be unable to come with her to England as the new Duke of Brittany, Knowlson argues that Joan did intend to take him with her.[35] However, in the very next sentence, Knowlson asks whether Joan felt that the children of her first marriage were an encumbrance to her, implying that they were an obstacle to her ambition. Certainly it was considered highly undesirable by both the Breton nobility and the French crown for Joan to take her children, or at least her sons with her. John Bell Henneman notes the fear created at the French court when the news of her marriage reached Paris, arguing that the French were "was determined to prevent the young duke and his brothers from accompanying their mother to England and coming under the effective custody of their new stepfather."[36]

While Joan's sons were ultimately entrusted to the care of the Duke of Burgundy and her eldest daughter, Marie, was already contracted in marriage, Joan was allowed to take her youngest daughters with her.[37] The tender age of Joan's children—both those whom she left behind and her two daughters who accompanied her—is stressed in Victorian accounts. Strickland notes that "the younger princes [were] so small, that they could scarcely guide the horse on which they were mounted, one behind the other."[38] Interestingly, Lawrance makes a very similar comment about the daughters "the two younger children were too little to hold themselves on their horses, attendants were provided for that purpose, and thus did infants, who had scarcely left the cradle, perform a wearisome journey of more than two hundred miles."[39] While no overt criticism of Joan is made here, this commentary which emphasizes the vulnerable youth of Joan's children at the time of her departure could be interpreted in two ways. The more positive option is that it demonstrates Joan's desperation to keep her daughters with her, in spite of the long and difficult journey to England for the two young girls. The more negative implication is that her willingness to separate from her young sons and drag her "infant" daughters across the sea to England, demonstrates instead Joan's keen desire to marry again and gain a crown, whatever the cost or inconvenience to her children.

Moreover, it must be noted that Strickland and Lawrance's somewhat melodramatic portrayals of the extreme youth of Joan's children is very likely to be incorrect. Pere Anselme's *Histoire Généalogique* claims

that Joan's youngest son, Richard, was born in 1395 and notes that her youngest daughter was born in 1391.[40] The modern genealogical database, the Foundation for Medieval Genealogy (or FMG), gives an identical age for Richard but claims that the two daughters who accompanied her, Marguerite and Blanche, were born in 1392 and 1397, respectively.[41] Although the dating of her daughters' births is clearly disputed, Richard appears to have been seven years old and at the most generous estimate, the youngest daughter would have been aged five when Joan departed Brittany. Clearly, neither her sons nor her daughters were "babes in arms" when she left which places a different, and perhaps less harsh, light on her departure.

The Impact of Abandonment: Joan's Children in England

Joan's relocation to England did not sever all ties with her children—she kept in regular contact with her children across the Channel, sending them letters and gifts. While her daughters, Blanche and Marguerite, initially accompanied their mother to England, both returned to the Continent in 1406 in order to make advantageous marriages. Strickland dramatically imagined the maternal misery that Joan may have felt on their departure:

> to divide with those beloved little ones the powerful affection, with which the heart of the royal mother clung to her little ones, she could not for a time be prevailed upon to resign them, even when reminded that they were the property of Bretagne.[42]

Howitt also notes Joan's "deep regret" at the departure of her daughters arguing that "having no children by King Henry, she was the more strongly attached to these princesses."[43] Although Joan may well have felt sorrow at her daughters' departure, there is evidence that her sons Arthur and Gilles visited her in England on multiple occasions.[44] There is some disagreement regarding the fate of Gilles; Strickland claims he died in England while visiting his mother Joan in 1412, noting melodramatically that "The young prince only came to England to die."[45] While Jones appears to concur with this assessment, Lobineau states that Gilles died in 1412, not in England, but at Cosne-sur-Loire of an intestinal disorder, hinting that he may have even been poisoned by those who were jealous of him.[46] Lobineau notes that Gilles' body was taken to Nantes and bur-

ied in the cathedral next to his father, much mourned as a "prudent" and "generous" young man, of whom much was hoped in later life.

Arthur made an unplanned visit to his mother later in life, after he was captured by the forces of Joan's stepson, Henry V of England, at the famous battle of Agincourt. Arthur's reunion with his mother provides another of the most famous anecdotes connected with Joan's life, and one which appears to reflect poorly on her as a mother. This version of events, from a contemporary chronicle of Arthur's life, has been widely repeated, in spite of its doubtful veracity:

> A little later, when they were in London, the Queen, mother of the said count of Richmond [Arthur], demanded leave from the said King of England to see her son, who was prisoner, and the King agreed. And the guards of the said lord brought him to the queen his mother, who, when she knew he was coming, she put one of her ladies in her place, who would know how to speak and receive [him] properly, and put herself in rank with the other ladies and put two in front of her. And when the said lord of Richmond came, he went to the lady that acted as his mother and saluted her and made a reverence, and the lady entertained him awhile, then he said to her that he would like to kiss [greet] the other ladies. And when he came in front of the queen, her heart softened towards him*, and she said to him "Bad son, you did not know me" and both began to cry together, and then became very affectionate. And the queen his said mother gave him a thousand nobles for when he departed for his companion prisoners and for his guards, and also gave him clothing; and after speaking to her he did not dare visit her [again] as he wanted [to do].[47]

This episode has drawn considerable comment and analysis from Joan's biographers. Strickland cites a maternal motivation for Joan's ruse in this anecdote, worried that he might not recognize her since his last visit in 1404 but "fondly hoping that maternal instinct would lead him to his mother's arms."[48] Modern biographers, however, have been less generous to Joan in their analysis of this story, arguing that it demonstrates the impact of Joan's abandonment of her children. Ian Mortimer claims that at the moment that Arthur failed to recognize his mother "Joan saw just what she had lost when she had left France."[49] In a more critical vein, Hilton argues that "If this odd story is true, it figures Joanna as a callous mother, who torments her 'abandoned' child and then palms him off with gifts."[50] Strohm also notes that this story could be interpreted as a critique of Joan's motherhood: "Abandoned at an early age by a 'cruel

mother' who left seeking a crown and took her dowry with her, Arthur is slenderly equipped for recognition."[51] However, both Hilton and Strohm note that this story is based on a common recognition trope in contemporary romance literature and suggest that this passage may be alternatively a criticism of her queenship—or rather Henry IV's illegitimate kingship as a usurper—as Arthur cannot recognize Joan as the rightful queen, instead of the lady-in-waiting who was meant to deceive him.

Evaluating Joan as a Royal Stepmother

While Joan's first marriage demonstrated her ample fecundity, Joan bore no children during her second marriage to Henry IV. Walsingham's contemporary chronicle noted that "She had formerly been married to the noble John (IV) de Montfort, Duke of Brittany, to whom she had borne children of both sexes. But to Henry, king of England, whom she now married, she bore no children at all."[52] The lack of issue from this second marriage drew no criticism that Joan failed to produce a child, indeed as Anne Crawford notes "Henry did not need a queen to bear him sons, for the succession seemed more than assured."[53] Hannah Lawrance went further to suggest that it was a good thing that Joan did not bear children to Henry IV, as it would have complicated the succession and could have driven a wedge between Joan and her stepsons.[54]

In spite of the famous detention of Joan by her stepson Henry V on a trumped-up charge of witchcraft, many historians argue that Joan had an excellent relationship with her stepchildren, who treated her as their mother.[55] Crawford claims that "Joan appears to have had a very amicable relationship with her step-children" and notes that she was addressed during Henry V's reign not as merely "the queen" but as "the king's mother, the queen."[56] However, Knowlson disagrees, claiming that Henry V was an "obstacle" for Joan and that the appearance of good relations was superficial—Henry V did not want to make an enemy of Joan and she realized that it was in her best interests to maintain good relations with her stepson.[57] John Leland has also argued that Henry V feared that her natural sympathies lay with her own children, rather than her stepfamily, and thus he distrusted her.[58] Mortimer argues that his mentions of Joan and inclusion of her in royal events was "more out of duty than affection" but this is part of his broader argument that Henry was generally emotionally detached from women rather than an indication of a poor relationship with his stepmother.[59]

In contrast with these examples of modern historians who have questioned Joan's relationships with her stepchildren, her ability as a stepmother was particularly lauded by the Victorian biographers. Both Howitt and Lancelott argue that "the conduct of Joanna as stepmother was irreproachable."[60] Both Lancelott and Strickland argue that Joan was a force for reconciliation between Henry IV and his heir, whose conflicts have been immortalized in Shakespeare's famous plays on Henry IV's—though Joan, as Henry's queen and the stepmother of "Prince Hal" is completely omitted.[61] However, there is one line which Prince Hal utters in the play which might refer to Joan and potentially reveals Henry's perception of Joan as his virtual mother; "Give him as much as well make him a royal man and send him back again to my mother."[62]

Intriguingly, both Strickland and Lawrance discuss a somewhat opaque negotiation between Prince Henry and his stepmother, where evidence from the Issue Rolls at the start of Henry V's reign suggest that Joan received payment in return for her support for the marriage of the Earl of March. However, the two biographers come to completely different conclusions on the matter; while Strickland argues that this evidence demonstrates Joan's powerful influence on her husband, Lawrance cites it as an example of excellent relations between Joan and her stepson that they were engaged in "the most friendly and confidential negotiations."[63]

Joan also appears to have had amicable relations with her stepson John, Duke of Bedford—even though he was the one who, as Regent of England in Henry V's absence, signed the warrant for Joan's arrest on charge of witchcraft. One of Joan's surviving letters to Bedford does appear to demonstrate an affectionate relationship between the two. Joan repeatedly refers to him as "our dearest and best-beloved son"—while this may possibly be formulaic, throughout the letter the emphasis is on the maternal bond between herself and her stepson. Moreover, her effusive opening appears to indicate a close bond between the two:

> We thank you entirely, because we know well that you desire to know of our good estate. So be it known to you, dearest son, that at the making of these presents we were in good condition of our person, God be thanked, who ever grant you the same; and be good enough to certify us by all messengers of your health, of which we are equally desirous to know, for our consolation and joy, always when we can know good news of you.[64]

Given what appears to have been good relations between Joan and her stepchildren, Joan's arrest for witchcraft on October 1, 1419, appears surprising. Joan is often omitted by contemporary English chroniclers such as Thomas Walsingham or Adam Usk, bar a mention of her arrival, wedding and coronation in 1403, and important occasions where her presence is briefly noted. The childless nature of Joan's marriage to Henry IV may explain this, as childbirth is an event which is often noted in chronicles in connection with a queen. As a royal stepmother, rather than a progenitor of potential heirs, Joan would be expected perhaps to draw little comment. Outside of lifecycle events, such as births, deaths, or marriages, queens could be noted in chronicles for unexpected or scandalous behavior. Joan's arrest and that of her confessor "thruh the excytyng off the sayde Quene, by sorcerye and nygromancye fforto haue dystroyed the kyng" unsurprisingly, did draw the attention of many contemporary chronicles.[65] Interestingly, the sixteenth-century Holinshed Chronicles make an erroneous maternal connection to Henry V, incorrectly claiming that Joan was his mother-in-law instead of his stepmother, despite having noted immediately before that she was "late wife of king Henry the fourth."[66]

While a detailed examination of Joan's arrest and confinement is beyond the scope of this paper, this episode is important to reflect on with regard to what it might reveal about Joan's relationship with her children and stepchildren. Lawrance claims that Joan's arrest was driven by "ecclesiastical hostility," there is more of a consensus that it was driven more by a desire to seize her rich assets and did not necessarily indicate malice toward the dowager queen on the part of her stepchildren.[67] Indeed it is Henry V's reputation, rather than Joan's, which has suffered most in the portrayal of the incident—historians have argued that "Henry's treatment of his stepmother scarcely did him honour" and that the event demonstrated the young king's "ruthlessness," "greed," and the "hard, very unattractive side" of his personality.[68]

Myers' transcription of Joan's household accounts in the early years of her captivity, indicate that she was kept in considerable luxury, arguing that "Joan must have been leading a very comfortable life during this period."[69] She was also permitted to ride and received a number of important visitors, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Winchester, and her stepson, Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester.[70] Surely, if there was any rancor between Joan and her stepchildren, her captivity

would not have been so comfortable, nor would she have been receiving multiple visits from her stepson Humphrey.

While her confinement may have been comfortable, her Breton children were clearly not pleased about the situation. The Bishop of Nantes was sent on a diplomatic mission to negotiate Joan's release; however, Strickland argues that Jean V did not work hard enough to secure her freedom. Strickland brands Jean V as "feeble" noting his "remonstrance was offered, however, in the humble tone of a suppliant rather than the courageous spirit of a champion, ready to come forward to vindicate his mother's honor, according to the chivalric usage of the times, at swords' points with her accuser."[71]

Joan was ultimately released in July 1422, shortly before the death of Henry V, who appeared to have the imprisonment of his stepmother on his conscience.[72] In spite of her ill-treatment and accusation, Joan did not return to Brittany on her release, opting to stay with her stepfamily, rather than return to see her own children. Intriguingly, Joan is given particular mention in a treaty between the Duke of Burgundy and the Estates of Brittany regarding the need to secure Joan's "deliverance and return,"

> my lord [Jean V of Brittany], his brothers and sisters, as good, true and charitable children, see the pardon of their mother, who for such a long time has been far away from her children and they so want to see her, that there is nothing which could bring them comfort nor rejoicing until she can come here to see and visit them, and to be here in innocence and liberty.[73]

Clearly, her children still desired to see her and for her to return to Brittany, but Joan chose to stay in England—whether that indicates that she now felt closer to her stepfamily than her own children or was felt that she would be in a stronger position to negotiate the return of her English properties if she remained in England, is impossible to ascertain. However, her prolonged captivity did not appear to damage diplomatic relations between Brittany and England. The day before this treaty with Burgundy, which pleaded so eloquently for Joan to return, was signed, Jean V signed another treaty with John, Duke of Bedford—who had originally ordered Joan's confinement. In this treaty with Bedford, Joan's son and stepson promised that "we will live in good and true love, fraternity and union with one another and we will love, cherish and get along together as brothers, relatives and good friends."[74] Indeed, through their

shared relationship with Joan, the two men were virtually brothers though the vagaries of the Hundred Years' War had often seen Joan's children and stepchildren at odds. However, her step-grandson Henry VI and grandson Gilles appear to have created a personal bond and Gilles was able to visit his grandmother during his stay in England between 1432 and 1434, perhaps demonstrating some long-term benefit from the connection between the two houses that Joan's second marriage created.[75]

Conclusions: Evaluating Joan's Maternal Career

Joan's death provides the final opportunity to analyze perceptions of her maternal career. Knowlson, characteristically perhaps, argues that Joan's death had little impact on her eldest son, Jean V of Brittany, besides removing a lengthy and complicated dispute over her Breton dowry, as Jean had long ago "shrugged off his mother like an out-of-fashion garment."[76] Her death also appeared to have little impact on the reign of her grandson, Henry VI. Ralph Griffiths claimed that "Joan's death in July 1437 was not likely to affect the king's upbringing, except to the extent of removing one further member of an already small family of the blood royal."[77] Regarding her relationship with her royal step-grandson, opinions also diverge. While Victorian biographers point to gifts exchanged between the two as signs of a "friendly" relationship, Griffiths claims that "there is no sign that she [Joan] ever attracted the king's affection."[78] While these comments give the impression that she was an unloved mother and grandmother, Strickland sums up her life in a more positive fashion by recapping her successful marital and maternal career, surviving two husbands by thirty-eight and twenty-four years, respectively, and leaving behind four surviving children out of her original brood of nine.[79]

This paper has highlighted episodes of Joan's maternal career which have drawn the greatest comment from her contemporaries and later writers and historians. Joan's success at amply providing much needed heirs for the previously childless Jean IV garnered praise. Joan's fecundity in turn gave her influence, as demonstrated in her intercession on behalf of the French ambassadors—a tale which appeared to grow more dramatic with each subsequent retelling.

While her maternal ability gave her influence and a positive persona as Duchess of Brittany, her decision to leave her children in order to pursue a second marriage and a crown changed her reputation. The idea of maternal abandonment is reinforced both by her son Arthur's failure to recognize

his mother when she went to see him after his capture and by the plaintive plea of her children to return to Brittany in the treaty of 1423. Yet, Joan remained in England after the death of her husband and even after her stepsons Henry V and Bedford ordered her arrest of charges of witchcraft.

As Joan left no memoirs of her own experiences which might give us an insight into why she made the decision to leave her children behind in Brittany or why she decided to remain in England with her stepfamily, historians and writers have had to make assumptions in order to try to interpret her actions. While some English historians and writers cast Joan as a victim, who had to make the ultimate sacrifice of leaving her children in order to be with Henry IV, other writers, such as Knowlson, interpreted her actions as pure ambition and accordingly viewed her as a selfish and callous mother.

There is also a clear divide chronologically in terms of perceptions of Joan; while earlier writers including Joan's contemporaries and Victorian queenly biographers tend to be more sympathetic to Joan or less overtly critical, modern writers have been demonstrably more likely to analyze Joan's motivations to make a second marriage, critique her decision to leave her Breton children behind, and query her relationship with her stepchildren. However, this is perhaps understandable considering that for her contemporaries, Joan's maternal function was considered to be fundamental to her role as duchess and queen and for the nineteenth-century writers as Sally Shuttleworth argues "Motherhood was set at the ideological center of the Victorian bourgeois ideal."[80] Thus, these premodern writers may have interpreted Joan's actions perhaps more positively within the context of the perceived importance of motherhood. However, modern academics are imbued in a societal framework which is more critical of mothers and motherhood generally—with active public debates about the tension between motherhood and careers, the impact of non-nuclear parenting and, critiques of various parenting styles and methods. This context may understandably lead modern writers to probe Joan's motivation to leave her children behind in Brittany more intensely and to be more critical of her actions.

Given the centrality of maternity to the expectations of royal women and to Joan's life, her decisions and actions have often been remarked upon through the lens of motherhood, even though that lens might be different for modern and premodern writers. Joan is alternatively praised and criticized as both a mother and stepmother; a "good" mother for her fertility but a "bad" mother for abandoning her children for a potentially lucrative second marriage. Joan was perceived as a "good" stepmother for

reconciling her husband and her stepson but a "bad" stepmother when she was arrested for witchcraft. Fundamentally, Joan was a "good" mother when she satisfied expectations of motherhood—producing children and bringing harmony to her family and stepfamily, but when she is perceived to fall outside of these expectations of maternal duty and sacrifice by putting her own desires in front of the well-being of her children or when she was accused of attempting to harm her stepfamily through witchcraft, she drew criticism from contemporary writers and modern scholars. Ultimately, Joan's maternal career demonstrates the connection between fulfilling expectations of motherhood and maternal behavior and lasting image and reputation. Fitting into, or fulfilling those expectations yields praise and a positive image, while failing to conform can cause lasting damage to the reputation of a royal mother.

Notes

1. Paul Strohm, *England's Empty Throne: Usurpation and the Language of Legitimation 1399–1422* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 161.
2. Joan (b.1368-d.1437) is alternatively known as Joanna, Joanne, Jeanne de Navarre, or Juana de Navarra.
3. Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England from the Norman Conquest; with anecdotes of their courts*, Vol. III (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1848), 60.
4. Francis Lancelott, *The Queens of England and their times from Matilda, Queen of William the Conqueror to Adelaide, Queen of William the Fourth*, Volume 1 (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1859), 247. Mary Howitt also stresses this with regard to Joan's Breton marriage noting that this was the reason why Jean IV "earnestly desired his union with this princess." Mary Howitt, *Biographical Sketches of the Queens of Great Britain from the Norman Conquest to the Reign of Victoria or the Royal Book of Beauty* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1856), 159.
5. George Akenhead Knowlson, *Jean V, duc de Bretagne et l'Angleterre 1399–1442* (Cambridge: W. Heffer & Sons Ltd, 1964), 34. Original text is "*elle semble avoir été bonne épouse envers Jean IV, si l'on en juge par le nombre d'enfants qu'elle porta*."
6. There is a disagreement between the sources on the birth and death of Joan's first child. Although there is a general accord that she bore a girl first, some sources, such as Lobineau, Anselme, and the Foundation for Medieval Genealogy, argue that she bore two girls before her son's birth in 1389—indeed, Anselme says these two girls were in fact twins. It appears that Joan's first daughter, or indeed daughters, died in 1388—primary and secondary

sources concur on her daughter's burial on December 7, 1388. See Pere Anselme, *Histoire Généalogique et chronologique de la Maison Royale de France, des Grands Officiers de la Couronne et de la Maison du Roy* (Paris: Compagnie des Libraires, 1712), 219-220; Gui Alexis Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne, Composée sur les titres & les auteurs originaux* (Paris: François Muguet, 1707), 471; Michael Jones, "Between France and England: Jeanne de Navarre, duchess of Brittany and queen of England" in *Between France and England: Politics, Power and Society in Late Medieval Brittany* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 5 and the Foundation for Medieval Genealogy: http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/BRITTANY.htm. For an interesting discussion of the significance of the decoration of the tomb of Jeanne of Brittany (Joan's first daughter and namesake), see Jean-Yves Copy, 'Du nouveau sure la couronne ducale bretonne: le temoignage des tombeaux' *Memoires de la Societe d'Histoire et d'Archeologie de Bretagne LIX* (1982), 171-191 and Elizabeth Tingle, Elizabeth, "The Afterlives of Rulers: Power, Patronage and Purgatory in Ducal Brittany 1480-1600" in Sean McGlynn and Elena Woodacre (eds.), *The Image and Perception of Monarchy in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2014), 291.

7. Claudia Nelson, *Family ties in Victorian England* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 2007), 46.
8. Hannah Lawrance, *Historical Memoirs of the Queens of England, From the Commencement of the Twelfth Century*, Volume 2 (London, Edward Moxon, 1840), 280.
9. Strickland, *Lives*, 45.
10. Howitt, *Biographical Sketches,* 161.
11. Howitt, *Biographical Sketches,* 160.
12. M.L. Bellaguet (ed.), *Chronique du Religieux de Saint-Denys contenant le régne de Charles VI de 1380 a 1422,* Tome Premier (Paris: Imprimerie de Crapelet, 1839), 727. Note: my translation above from the French version of the printed text. All translations in this piece are my own unless otherwise noted.
13. See John Carmi Parsons' discussion of Philippa of Hainault's intervention in "The Pregnant Queen as Counsellor and the Medieval Construction of Motherhood" in John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler (eds.), *Medieval Mothering* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 39–61.
14. Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, 162.
15. Jones "Between France and England," 6.
16. Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 475.
17. Howitt, *Biographical Sketches,* 161; Lawrance, *Historical Memoirs*, 281; Lancelott, *Queens of England*, 247.
18. Strickland, *Lives*, 47.
19. Lawrance, *Historical Memoirs,* 280.

20. Nicholas Vincent, "Isabella of Angoulême: John's Jezabel" in S.D. Church (ed.), *King John: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1999), 210.
21. See Lancelott, *Queens of England,* 249–250; Lawrance, *Historical Memoirs,* 284–288 and Strickland, *Lives*, 53–57.
22. Lisa Hilton, *Queens Consort; England's Medieval Queens* (London: Phoenix, 2009), 359.
23. J.L. Kirby, *Henry IV of England* (London: Constable, 1970), 135.
24. Anne Crawford, "The King's Burden?—the Consequences of Royal Marriage in Fifteenth-Century England" in Ralph A. Griffiths (ed.), *Patronage, The Crown and The Provinces in Later Medieval England* (Gloucester: Alan Sutton, 1981), 35.
25. Ian Mortimer, *The Fears of Henry IV; The Life of England's Self-Made King* (London: Vintage Books, 2008), 259.
26. Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne,* 501. Note: Although I have translated this passage literally above, Lobineau's phrase "*de son premier lit"* could be more loosely translated to mean from her first marriage.
27. Jones, "Between France and England," 9.
28. Knowlson, *Jean V,* 92.
29. Jones, "Between France and England," 9–10; Knowlson, *Jean V,* 25.
30. Strohm, *England's Empty Throne*, 168.
31. Ibid.
32. Tingle, "Afterlives of Rulers," 291.
33. Anon., *Le Pausanias Français ou Description de Salon de 1806* (Paris : F. Buisson, 1808), 261.
34. Anon., *Le Pausanias Français,* 261–62.
35. Knowlson, *Jean V,* 37.
36. John Bell Henneman, *Olivier de Clisson and Political Society in France under Charles V and Charles VI* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 194.
37. See B.-A. Pocquet de Haut Jussé, "Les séjours de Philippe le Hardi, duc de Bourgogne, en Bretagne; La tutelle de Jean V," *Mémoires de la Société d'Histoire et d'Archéologie de Bretagne* XVI (1935), particularly 18–19 on Joan and her separation from her sons.
38. Strickland, *Lives*, 56. Strickland's source appears to be Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne,* 502.
39. Lawrance, *Historical Memoirs*, 288.
40. Anselme, *Histoire Généalogique*, 219–220.
41. FMG "Brittany," http://fmg.ac/Projects/MedLands/BRITTANY.htm
42. Strickland, *Lives,* 62.
43. Howitt, *Biographical Sketches,* 166.
44. Jones, "Between France and England," 17.
45. Strickland, *Lives,* 67.
46. Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne*, 523.

47. Guillaume Gruel, *Chronique d'Arthur de Richemont, Connetable de France, Duc de Bretagne (1393–1458),* Achille le Vavasseur (ed.) (Paris, Librairie Renouard, 1890), 19–20. Note on *: this passage "*le cuer luy tendrea*" is somewhat unclear and could be translated as his heart softening toward her, or alternatively *tendrea* could be seen in terms of affection or their hearts stretching out or extending to one another. Regardless of the various possibilities, it can be said that the passage gives a sense that there was a deep chord of recognition and reaction in the heart of mother and son.
48. Strickland, *Lives,* 72.
49. Ian, Mortimer, *1415: Henry V's Year of Glory* (London: Bodley Head, 2009), 491.
50. Hilton, *Queens Consort,* 367.
51. Strohm, *England's Empty Throne,* 169.
52. Thomas Walsingham, *The Chronica Maiora of Thomas Walsingham 1376–1422,* David Prest (trans) and James G. Clark (notes/intro), (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2005), 325.
53. Anne Crawford (ed.), *Letters of the Queens of England 1100–1547* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1997), 109.
54. Lawrance, *Historical Memoirs,* 298.
55. See Jones, "Between France and England," 9; Crawford, *Letters,* 109, 112, 115; Lawrance, *Historical Memoirs,* 302–303, 307; Hilton, *Queens Consort,* 364; Strohm, *England's Empty Throne,* 158, Kirby, *Henry IV,* 136 and A.R. Myers, "The Captivity of a Royal Witch: The Household Accounts of Queen Joan of Navarre, 1419–21" in *Crown, Household and Parliament in Fifteenth Century England* (London: Hambledon Press, 1985), 263–264.
56. Crawford, "King's Burden," 44.
57. Knowlson, *Jean V,* 79.
58. John Leland, "Witchcraft and the Woodvilles: A Standard Medieval Smear?" in Douglas L. Biggs, Sharon D. Michalove and Albert Compton Reeves (eds.), *Reputation and Representation in Fifteenth Century Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 279.
59. Mortimer, *1415*, 35.
60. Howitt, *Biographical Sketches,* 166 and Lancelott, *Queens of England,* 254. Both quotes are identical.
61. Strickland, *Lives,* 264 and Lancelott, *Queens of England,* 254–255.
62. See the annotation of David Scott Kastan on William Shakespeare, *Henry IV Part One,* (London: Arden Shakespeare/Thomson Learning, 2002), lines 281–282.
63. Strickland, *Lives,* 68 and Lawrance, *Historical Memoirs,* 299.
64. Printed in Crawford, *Letters,* 115; original provenance Cotton MS. Vespasian, F. III, art. 5, fol. 5.
65. Anon, *The Chronicles of London,* introduction and notes by Charles L. Kingsford (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), Julius B II version, 1417–1421, 73. See also Walsingham, *Chronica Maiora,* 434.

66. *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, 1587 edition, Volume 6, 568, accessed via The Holinshed Project http://www.english.ox.ac.uk/holinshed/index.php
67. Lawrance, *Historical Memoires,* 308.
68. See Harold F. Hutchison, *Henry V: A Biography* (London: Eyre & Spottiswode, 1967), 201; Keith Dockray, *Henry V* (Stroud: Tempus, 2004), 220 and John Matusiak, *Henry V* (London: Routledge, 2013), 197.
69. Myers, "Royal Witch," 268.
70. Ibid.
71. Strickland, *Lives*, 96. Note: this passage is in a later edition of Strickland's work published in London by Longmans in 1861 and does not occur in the previously cited 1848 edition.
72. Both Strickland and Lawrance emphasize the idea of Joan's imprisonment weighing on Henry V's conscience, following queue from the wording of the release document in the Parliamentary Rolls; Strickland, *Lives,* 77 and Lawrance, *Historical Memoirs,* 314–315.
73. "Traité d'Alliance entre le Duc de Bourgogne & les Etats de Bretagne," signed at Amiens, April 18, 1423 in Hyacinthe Morice (ed.) *Memoires pour servir de preuves a l'histoire ecclesiastique et civile de Bretagne*, Tome II (Paris: Charles Osmont, 1844), 1125–1126.
74. "Lettres d'alliance des Ducs de Bedfort & de Bretagne," signed April 17, 1423 at Amiens, in Morice, *Preuves,* 1135–1136.
75. Jones, "Between France and England," 22. Strickland claims that Gilles and Henry VI were educated together and that Gilles was "much beloved" by Henry; *Lives,* 78.
76. Knowlson, *Jean V,* 92 and 164.
77. Ralph Griffiths, *The Reign of King Henry VI: The Exercise of Royal Authority, 1422–1461* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1963), 63.
78. Ibid. See also Strickland, *Lives,* 79; Lawrance, *Historical Memoirs,* 316 and Lancelott, *Queens of England,* 259.
79. Strickland, *Lives,* 79.
80. Sally Shuttleworth, "Demonic mothers: Ideologies of bourgeois motherhood in the mid-Victorian era" in Linda M. Shires (ed.), *Rewriting the Victorians: Theory, History and the Politics of Gender* (London: Routledge, 2012), 31.

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PART II

The Legacy and Reputation of Royal Mothers-from Their Contemporaries to the Present Day

"Margaret R": Lady Margaret Beaufort's Self-fashioning and Female Ambition[1]

Sally Fisher

> My own sweet and most dear King and all my worldly joy, in as humble a manner as I can think, I recommend me to your Grace and most heartily beseech our Lord to bless you; …
>
> At Colyweston, the 14th day of January, by your faithful true bedewoman, and humble mother, Margaret R.[2]

These two short excerpts from a 1499 autograph letter sent by Lady Margaret Beaufort (1443–1509) to her only child, Henry VII, portray the relationship she enjoyed with her son. Lady Margaret's love and deference toward Henry VII are inscribed in the opening lines and, although the content of the letter concerns a claim of monies owed, it is rich in words of devotion throughout. The letter concludes by reinforcing the intensity of the relationship between mother and son, closing with the signature "Margaret R," a signature which is of particular interest as it can tell us much about Lady Margaret's ambitious self-fashioning.[3]

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Moving from a brief overview of the historiography of the signature to a reading of contemporary sources attributable to and concerning Lady Margaret, this chapter argues that the signature "Margaret R" is reflective of Lady Margaret's careful construction of an image of herself which celebrated her enduring position of authority yet was justifiable through both her status as mother of the king and her own nobility. Later representations of Lady Margaret stand testament to the possibilities enabled by her deliberate self-fashioning for others to shape her story within changing understandings of motherhood, ambition, and authority.

From the 1460s until 1499, Lady Margaret had used the signature "M Richmond."[4] In 1499 she altered it to "Margaret R," with the first known example in the letter cited above.[5] This changed signature could mean two things: Did it stand for "Margaret Richmond," referring to Margaret's status as Countess of Richmond, or "Margaret Regina," a formulation that claimed the position of quasi-queen? Scholars have noted this shift in signature, and they have expressed alternate views concerning the significance of the change. These views encompass, among other things, alternate readings of Lady Margaret's role in her son's life. Anne Crawford explains it as a move from the "common aristocratic style" which stresses the title to "the royal style using her Christian name, Margaret R." She sees it as a "lucky coincidence that her title began with the letter usually taken to mean reine, or queen."[6] Michael Jones and Malcolm Underwood, who have produced the most comprehensive modern biography of Lady Margaret to date, refer to the change as "unusual and quite striking," suggesting the reason for it might be found in Lady Margaret's "governmental role," as it was at this time that she established her own court at Collyweston, Northamptonshire.[7] Jones and Underwood draw attention to the regality of the signature, although acknowledging that whether the "R" "now stood for 'Richmond' or 'Regina', remains unclear."[8] The title "Regina" could appear to undermine, or even threaten, the position of Henry VII's wife, Elizabeth of York. Retha Warnicke, by contrast, dismisses any reference of the "R" to "Regina," claiming: "It stood for Richmond, of course, the premier earldom in the kingdom."[9] Other scholars have disagreed. Stephanie Morley claims "the signature is ambiguous, perhaps deliberately so as she had no technical right to the royal signature, but it is distinctly regal recalling Henry's 'HR' and Elizabeth's 'Elizabeth R.'"[10] Morley also refers to Rebecca Krug's work on Margaret Beaufort's literate practice, which suggests that: "The new signature echoed Henry's 'H. R.,' *Henrici Rex,* and

affirmed her royal authority."[11] Krug argues that Lady Margaret's shift in signature is an example of "women's growing awareness of the power of written documentation," and that she was "textualizing her relationship to the king in order to provide evidence of her royal authority."[12] More recently, Theresa Earenfight refers to the ambiguity of the signature, drawing attention to Lady Margaret's lack of deference to Henry VII's wife, Elizabeth of York, before concluding that "Elizabeth was always given precedence in formal accounts, suggesting that she shared power and that her interventions were uncontroversial and subtle."[13] Above all, such sustained scholarly attention recognizes the possible dual meanings of Lady Margaret's new signature, and affirms the significance of the change. I argue it was a deliberate act by Lady Margaret and was seen by her contemporaries in these terms. It was part of a wider and careful performance by Lady Margaret which recognized the importance of managing and justifying her ambition. She represented her aspirational behavior as being grounded in, and justified by, both her motherhood and her nobility. The result was the creation of an identity that was as open to dual readings as the signature "Margaret R" both in the fifteenth century and beyond.

The sources used in this chapter are some of the most oft-cited examples for studies of Lady Margaret, of which there are many.[14] The point of departure here in this chapter is in the drawing together of these sources to read for motherhood and ambition, and the use of her signature as a touchstone of Lady Margaret's careful crafting of her motherhood as one, but never the only, means of justifying her ambition. Such an approach offers a new perspective on Lady Margaret as a late-medieval mother while simultaneously highlighting her deliberate self-representation.[15] Confronting Lady Margaret's changing signature in this way facilitates an exploration of the act of self-fashioning on the page. The selected examples directly attributable to Lady Margaret are two letters to her son and her ordinances for mourning. Contextualizing these sources are her vow of chastity, a letter from Richard III to his chancellor, an oration at which both Lady Margaret and Henry VII were present, and a sermon following her death. Both the oration and the sermon were given by Lady Margaret's confessor, John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester. The oration and the sermon place Lady Margaret's aspirational behavior within wider societal expectations of appropriate female behavior. When read together, these examples are revealing of fifteenth-century understandings of motherhood and ambition.

Motherhood

Born in 1443, Margaret Beaufort was the daughter of Margaret Beauchamp of Bletsoe and John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, whose father, John Beaufort, earl of Somerset, was the first of the illegitimate children of Katherine Swynford and John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and a son of Edward III. The children of this union were given the surname Beaufort as a reflection of the illegitimacy of their birth. In 1397 both the pope and Richard II recognized the Beaufort children in an act of legitimation.[16] Thus, although Margaret was born into nobility, the Beaufort name was newly created as a necessity arising from an adulterous relationship. It was a name laden with rumor and allegedly ignoble behavior, but also signifying nobility and royal favor; it was a name open to opposing readings.

Margaret's value as an heiress was apparent from an early age. Following her father's death in 1444, Henry VI bestowed the rights to her wardship and marriage upon William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk, in consideration of "the notable services that oure Cousin therl of Suffolk hath doon unto us."[17] Despite the grant, Margaret's future remained conditional upon the king's wishes.[18] A child marriage, at age six, with John de la Pole, the seven-year-old son of William de la Pole, now Earl and Duke of Suffolk, was dissolved in 1453 after Henry VI's intervention. Jones and Underwood refer to Margaret's appearance at Henry VI's court in this same year, suggesting the visit "left a lasting impression," with Margaret being "struck" by the status of the women at court as expressed by Henry VI's wife, Margaret of Anjou, and the "attention and kindness shown by the king."[19] Margaret's visit to court can be read as the public display of an heiress of political value, but also as her introduction to the machinations of the royal realm. Such a visit, therefore, acts as a means of transmitting understandings of certain female behaviors across generations, through both display and observation.

During her lifetime and beyond, Margaret of Anjou was depicted as an ambitious woman whose desire for power reached beyond the bounds of acceptable female behavior.[20] In Caroline Halsted's 1839 biography of Margaret Beaufort, Margaret of Anjou is described as a princess:

> who possessed an ambition so inordinate, and a spirit so masculine and daring, that, stimulated as it was by the intriguing spirit of her favourite the Duke of Suffolk, (the early guardian of Margaret Beaufort,) it embroiled

> her husband in a constant succession of private quarrels and destructive warfare.[21]

Halsted reinforces fifteenth-century understandings of ambition as incompatible with female virtues, associating ambition with a "spirit so masculine and daring" and as a desire "stimulated" by the Duke of Suffolk. The sexual connotations are undeniable and are grounded in fifteenth-century propaganda which implied Margaret of Anjou was unfaithful to Henry VI.[22] Halsted subtly inserts Margaret of Anjou, also the mother of one child, a son, into her narrative, where she stands as a contrast to Margaret Beaufort. The contrast may also have been one which Lady Margaret herself cultivated. She would have been aware of depictions of Margaret of Anjou during the years of battle between the Lancastrian and York factions, and of her fate. Margaret of Anjou's son died at the battle of Tewkesbury in 1471, Henry VI died soon after, and Margaret was taken prisoner. In light of such loss and downfall, Margaret of Anjou could have served for Lady Margaret as an extreme example of the dangers of female ambition. When Lady Margaret took a vow of chastity in 1499, while still married to Thomas Stanley, Earl of Derby, and thus zealously cultivated a reputation for piety, she effectively prevented any accusations of the questionable sexual behaviors often associated with female ambition.[23]

Margaret Beaufort married Edmund Tudor, Earl of Richmond and half-brother of Henry VI in 1455, assuming the title of Countess of Richmond. Pregnant at 12, then widowed when Edmund died of plague, Lady Margaret gave birth to Henry, her only child, at Pembroke Castle on January 28, 1457.[24] Another marriage in 1458, to Sir Henry Stafford, lasted until his death in 1471, following injuries sustained at the battle of Barnet, where he fought on the side of the Yorkists. Very shortly afterwards, Lady Margaret married Thomas Stanley, Earl of Derby. In Henry VII's first parliament, Lady Margaret was declared a *femme sole*, meaning she had the power to act in all affairs as "sole persone not covert of anie husband."[25] Thomas, Earl of Derby, died in 1504 with Lady Margaret living out her final years as a widow.

In his 1507 Cambridge oration, Fisher describes the dangerous months Margaret endured before Henry's birth, and he suggests, too, that the birth was a difficult one.[26] The first 14 years of Henry's life were spent in Wales.[27] Following Edward IV's ascension to the throne in 1461 Henry was a prisoner for some of this time. During the brief period of Henry VI's readeption (1470–1471), Henry may have spent time with his mother,

but was then taken to Brittany by his uncle, Jasper Tudor, when Edward IV was returned to the throne in 1471. After an unsuccessful attempt to return to England in 1483, Henry ended his exile with a landing in Wales in 1485, before defeating Richard III at Bosworth in August of that year and taking the throne. Shortly afterwards, Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV and Elizabeth Woodville, were married, a result of negotiations between Lady Margaret and Elizabeth Woodville during Henry's exile.[28]

Despite limited contact between mother and son in the years preceding Henry's triumph, Lady Margaret's motherhood remained an important aspect of her identity, and it was outwardly expressed in her efforts to protect, provide for, and return her son to England.[29] The geographical separation experienced by Lady Margaret and Henry over these years meant that written correspondence was a necessary and important means of communication.[28] Krug refers to Crawford's suggestion that the relationship between the two was "sustained solely by letter" and posits, rather, that it was a relationship "at least in part produced by the letters."[31] While the separation of a mother and her son was by no means unique, it certainly informs a reading of Lady Margaret's correspondence. Her letters to her son bear the vestiges of years of separation even as she elaborates on standard epistolary practices to emphasize their close relationship.

As noted, the first example of Lady Margaret's new style of signature is found in a letter to her son, excerpts of which open this chapter. Written from Collyweston, it concerns the ransom she had inherited from her grandfather, John, Earl of Somerset.[32] Krug convincingly argues that "in Margaret's and Henry's letters financial obligation figures as an allegory in which mother and son can renegotiate their emotional bonds."[33]Although generally following standard epistolary practice, the text is overlaid with affectionate terms ("*my good heart*," "*my dear heart*").[34] Lady Margaret refers pointedly to her son's body, calling to mind its physical absence. She then extends this topos, providing an image of her body at work: "I will no more encumber your Grace with further writing."[35] It is, however, the body of the king, not her own, which ultimately takes precedence in the text: "And Our Lord give you as long good life, health and joy, as your most noble heart can desire, with as hearty blessings as our Lord hath given me the power to give you."[36] Tellingly, though, Lady Margaret's words of blessing can be read as an expression of her "power" over Henry VII. The closing lines "by your faithful true bedewoman, and humble

mother, Margaret R" are similarly complicated, suggesting a cloaked reference to her power that warrants further exploration.[37]

The main purpose of the letter is to move her son to resolve a long-running dispute. Writing to her child and her king, Lady Margaret also represents herself as a noblewoman of dual identities. Despite the maternal tone of the letter, her closing signature implies that her status is not clearly attributable to either her motherhood, or her position as a noble princess. The newly adopted "Margaret R" can be read as signifying her title "Countess of Richmond," reflecting the identity from which Henry VII draws his claim to kingship through his father, Edmund, Earl of Richmond. The importance of this filial connection increases after 1495, when Jasper Tudor, Edmund's brother, dies. By this reading, "R" highlights Lady Margaret's place as the king's mother and also as her son's sole living immediate connection to the Tudor family. The "R" could, as previously noted, also stand for "Regina," with Lady Margaret emphasizing her own noble birth through the Beaufort line, and fashioning her identity as queen-like. In its ambiguity, Lady Margaret protects herself against charges of ambition or usurpation, which is particularly important as the content of the letter lends itself to associations with the negative aspects of political aspiration, such as avarice.[38]

Another of Lady Margaret's letters to her son places her productive body firmly within the text, suggesting her desire to write the body as a repeating theme, and one which goes beyond the conventions of establishing a presence in absentia. On this occasion, it is not just that she is mother of Henry VII but mother to him alone (*"My dearest and only desired joy in this world"*) that is written so powerfully.[39] Dated January 28, 1501, the letter references Henry VII's birth: "this day of St Anne's, that I did bring into this world my good and gracious prince, king, and only beloved son."[40] The date of composition is surely no coincidence. Lady Margaret's words resonate beyond the letter, collapsing time and place as she recalls the birth of her son. Both letters celebrate Lady Margaret's body, as one which has borne a king and one through which noble blood flows; encapsulated in her signature "Margaret R."

There are two other significant events that occur around the same time as the first example of the shift in Lady Margaret's signature: her vow of chastity and her subsequent establishment of a household at Collyweston separate from her husband. The combination serves as a public display of the absence of a sexual relationship between husband and wife. Other scholars have suggested these two events are connected.[41] Morley notes,

too, that it was also at this time that the shift in Lady Margaret's signature was made.[42] The inter-relationship among all three is surely compelling.

Ambition can be understood as a desire stimulated by lust and pride. With her vow of chastity, Lady Margaret indicates a shift from a life where she might be susceptible to worldly vices to a quasi-religious one, ideally embodying all that is virtuous.[43] It was unusual, but not unique, for a wife to take such a vow while her husband was still alive. Mary C. Erler notes that the pledge was both oral and written.[44] While there is no extant record of Lady Margaret's vow there is an account of her confirmation of the vow after her husband's death, an excerpt of which reads:

> I Margaret Richmonde with full purpose and good delyberacion For the weall of my synfull sowle wyth all my herty promys from hencfforth the Chastite of my bodye. That is never to use my bodye having actuall knolege of man, after the common usage in matrimonye, The which thing I had before purpossed In my lorde my husbandes dayes.[45]

The importance Lady Margaret attaches to exerting control over her own body is undeniable. The vow and the accompanying physical separation, seen in setting up her household at Collyweston can be read in two seemingly opposing ways. Lady Margaret transforms Collyweston from a manor house to a palace, an act which would seem to contradict any desire to live a chaste and austere existence.[46] Her vow of chastity, though, goes some way toward tempering the transformation of Collyweston to a place which has been described by Fiona Kisby as "a centre of conspicuous consumption."[47] Rooms were set aside to accommodate her husband when he visited, an architectural reminder of Lady Margaret's chastity. Despite these seeming contradictions, at Collyweston, Lady Margaret established a physical site which displayed her own high degree and status as independent from her son and husband.[48] Such a place could prove invaluable if the positions of these men were threatened. Lady Margaret's new signature paralleled and reinforced an identity created through the renovation of Collyweston, a space which could be understood as grounded in her own noble birth—the Beaufort connection, rather than the Richmond one. The "R" of her signature is not identified as standing for "Regina" although Collyweston exhibited the trappings of a court. The signature raises the slightest possibility that Lady Margaret could have made a claim to be queen without actually threatening her son's reign or representing female ambition in such a way as it was attached to Margaret of Anjou.

Such a subtle reference could serve as insurance in the event of political upheaval but without immediately exposing herself to the dangers inherent in being a potential claimant to the throne. For a vowess to write a letter from Collyweston, which concludes with a new signature, is an event of considerable importance.

The changed signature flags an accompanying shift in Lady Margaret's self-fashioning. Her motherhood is openly acknowledged prior to the altered signature and there is no doubt that Lady Margaret's identity is anchored in her motherhood when she signs as "M Richmond." The shift to the signature "Margaret R" could suggest that a life spent bringing about the return of her son to England, and his subsequent assumption of the throne has now shifted in focus. Henry's ambitions of kingship are realized, as are those which Lady Margaret harbored for her son. Importantly, though, Lady Margaret has her own ambitions. These are actively pursued as she seeks to secure her high status. In these letters to her son, Lady Margaret's motherhood remains a powerful feature of her identity but it exists alongside her noble birth, as implied by her signature. With these two identities existing in tandem, combined with careful self-fashioning, Lady Margaret is able to represent female ambition as justifiable.

Ambition

Halsted's biography of Lady Margaret recognises her political activities as an important aspect of Lady Margaret's life and, in this respect, it expands upon on earlier works.[49] However, Halsted represents Lady Margaret's involvement in the political realm as finite, a representation which is a crucial departure point for this chapter. For example, Halsted identifies an intersection between motherhood, ambition, and authority:

> … she had no ambition to rule a kingdom, or to assume a show of authority over its king - that king too, was the son from whom she had so long been separated, too long to have maintained any power over his opinions or actions beyond that which emanated from his cherished remembrance of early days - but he was then a dependent child - he was now a reigning monarch.[50]

Drawing on Victorian ideals of motherhood, these words are also suggestive of more enduring understandings of the role of a mother, an assumption that kingship required a particular act of distancing by a mother.[51]

Halsted's removal of Lady Margaret from the wider political realm after her son becomes king is an assumption modern scholarship has worked to revise, and Jones and Underwood's biography is a defining contribution to the field.[52] Halsted depicts Lady Margaret as a woman who might be dearly remembered from Henry's childhood, but must now remain removed from the thoughts and deeds of her son as king. Such selflessness, often represented as a defining aspect of motherhood, would seem to override personal aspiration. For Halsted, whose study highlights Lady Margaret's virtues, any depiction of the desire for her own aggrandisement cannot be accommodated within such behaviors. By this reasoning, when Henry VII takes the throne, Lady Margaret's public role is ended. Halsted's work is a fine study, but Lady Margaret's political goals went beyond a mother's wish for her son to be king. Jones and Underwood confront Halsted's suggestion that Lady Margaret stepped back from political affairs upon her son's ascension to the throne and define the relationship between mother and son as "far more of an active partnership."[53] Although agreeing that Lady Margaret and her son were in "active partnership," this chapter also suggests that it was a partnership which Lady Margaret ensured was not the sole basis upon which her authority derived and, if severed, she would not be left with nothing.

An earlier reference to Henry's ambitious behavior, found in Richard III's 1485 letter to his chancellor to prepare a proclamation against Henry Tudor and his followers, could have prompted Lady Margaret to establish her identity as being grounded in more than her status as mother of Henry:

> …HENRY TIDDER son of Edmond Tidder son of Owen Tidder, which of his ambitious and insatiable covetise incrocheth and usurpeth upon hym the name and title of royal estate of this Roialme of England, whereunto he hath no maner interest, right, title, or colour, as every man wel knoweth; for he is descended of bastard blode both of the fader side and moder side; for the said Owen, the grandfader was a bastard borne, and his moder was doughter unto John Duc of Somerset, sone unto John Erle of Somerset, son unto dame Kateryne Swynford, and of her in double advoutrow goten; …[54]

The letter contains one of the few contemporary uses of the word "ambitious," regarded here as treasonous, encompassing all that is destructive and dangerous to society. It is also represented as connected with ignobility of birth. Richard III presents Henry Tudor's aspirations as entirely

unjustifiable, primarily because he is said to be of ignoble birth on both "the fader side and moder side."

Although the letter refers to Lady Margaret, using the words "moder side" and providing her lineage, she is not mentioned by name. In this instance, Lady Margaret narrowly escapes from having her name directly attached to ambitious behavior. I argue she was subsequently careful to prevent such an association from occurring thereafter. A signature which implies a shift in emphasis, from her status as king's mother to an identity which could be read as encompassing both king's mother and/or noble princess, enables a further stepping away from such a charge. Richard III's proclamation associates ambition with the body but, in this case, the ignoble body. The double adultery to which Richard III refers was, at least publicly, put to rest with the aforementioned legitimation of the Beaufort children. With her changed signature suggesting emphasis upon her own noble birth, Lady Margaret confronts such claims, negates them, and simultaneously establishes a counter to any subsequent charge which might be made against her if the political situation were to change and there was a return to the language of Richard III's letter.

The 1485 proclamation naming Henry Tudor a usurper was a powerful and openly public document. Without denying the power of her letters for providing an avenue through which she could represent her ambition as justifiable, Lady Margaret was also able to counter the language of Richard III"s letter by the creation and dissemination of her ordinances for mourning (1502–1503).[55] These ordinances openly and publicly recognized Lady Margaret's social position and spoke directly to noblewomen and gentlewomen as a group as they outlined the appropriate visual display of high status while also carefully delineating the gradations within this group.

These ordinances, probably written on the occasion of Elizabeth of York's death, stand as an example of Lady Margaret's crafting of the relationship between the female body and aspirational behavior beyond the genre of letter-writing. The objective of the ordinances was to outline the proper way for noblewomen and gentlewomen to dress in times of mourning. The ordinances mark the realization of Lady Margaret's own ambitions, as she now occupies a position of such power that she can determine how women should dress on an important occasion, with her own dress surpassing that of almost all others. Demonstrating an acute awareness of gradations of nobility and the importance of representing this through dress, the document is also a medium through which Lady Margaret

commits her high status to text beyond the form of letter-writing. Lady Margaret's role as creator of the ordinances is clear from the outset:

> The ordinance and reformacion of apparel for princessis and great astatis with other ladies and gentilwomen for the tyme of mornyng made by the Right his myghty and excellent princesse Margaret countesse of Richemond doughter and soule here of that noble prince John duc of Somersett and moder to our most drade soverain lord king henry the VIIth…[56]

Lady Margaret's intent would surely have been for the ordinances to circulate widely, and the survival of "numerous copies" suggests they did.[57] Beyond serving as rules for appropriate mourning dress, the transmission of the ordinances enabled Lady Margaret to circulate textual confirmation of her multi-faceted identity. This was an identity which justified both her ambitions and her elaborate dress as a noblewoman of exceptional status. Above all, the ordinances function as an expression of Lady Margaret's power and authority, both on the page and as enacted on public display.

The ordinances are rich in detail, listing titles of rank (queen, king's mother, king's daughter, and so forth) followed by a description of appropriate dress. These clear distinctions between sections meant that, for example, a countess need not refer to anything other than the section detailing her own dress. As such, the ordinances do not lend themselves to, or even require, a complete reading. This structure means that if Lady Margaret were to write her authorship and title at the close of the document, as in her letters, it could remain unread. Rather, the ordinances are attributed to Lady Margaret at the beginning of the document, where her name and title cannot be missed. Her title is lengthy, encompassing her many identities from Countess of Richmond, through her marriage, to daughter and mother. The reference to her father, "that noble prince John duc of Somersett" can be read as a rejoinder to the language of Richard III's letter. Lady Margaret's nobility is written in her connections through marriage, her birth and her status as king's mother. Crucial to justifying her ambitions, not one of Lady Margaret's identities is written as surpassing the others. The titles flow on from one another, in easy progression. Each title is important on its own but, when read together, the whole becomes stronger. If one element of Lady Margaret's identity is threatened the power of the remaining words should ensure continued justification for her aspirational behavior.

The dress to be worn by Lady Margaret, or any king's mother, is outlined under the section "my ladie the kings modir," which immediately follows the detailing of the queen's dress. At the time of writing there was probably no longer a queen, so Lady Margaret assumes the position of the noblewoman of highest status in the realm.[58] The dress for the king's mother is ordained as "in every thinge lyke to the qwene" but, as Warnicke has argued, "the Countess wore only a coronet and not a crown," thereby refuting the arguments of those who suggest Lady Margaret sought to surpass the queen in rank.[59] Warnicke's argument is compelling as the crown is a crucial marker of regality, but the ordinances do not mention headwear and, therefore, make no recognition of this distinction. For noblewomen and gentlewomen who might look to the ordinances as their descriptor of the dress of the queen and queen's mother, they become strangely similar. Much as Lady Margaret writes "R" rather than "Richmond," the decision not to write in an item which distinguishes the queen from the queen's mother results in a text from which it is equally difficult to draw conclusions. By neglecting to highlight a crucial distinction between the queen and the king's mother Lady Margaret can depict herself as equal to a queen, thus writing the visual display of ambitions realized.

In analyzing Lady Margaret's letters and ordinances for mourning, a picture emerges of a noblewoman who is deeply concerned with self-fashioning. Representing both her motherhood and her nobility of birth and marriage, these documents ensure her ambition is grounded in multiple identities; if one is threatened, the others remain. The way Lady Margaret represents her aspirational behavior, however, is different to the way it is represented by her confessor, John Fisher. Such differences in writing her ambition or, in the case of Fisher, denying her ambition and invoking fortune, are enlightening for what they say about contemporary understandings of female aspirational behavior. It is also testament to Lady Margaret's success in crafting an identity which enabled, retrospectively, her ambition to recede into the background in these depictions.

A visit to Cambridge by Henry VII, probably in August 1507, was commemorated by the delivery of a short oration by Fisher.[60] Henry VII was accompanied by his royal train, including Lady Margaret, and probably, too, the young prince Henry. J.B. Mullinger's description of the event states the oration was delivered in the open air.[61] A section of the oration focuses on Lady Margaret's body and, specifically, the birth of her son. Fisher notes that Lady Margaret was not yet 14 at the time of

the birth ("*quae tum annum non implevit quartum decimum*"), and of much smaller stature than the woman who now stood before the audience ("*non magnae staturae foemina est at multo tunc [ut asseritur] minoris fuit*").[62] He recounts a wondrous birth ("*mirabiliter natus*") in almost mythical language where, crucially, both of the subjects are present. With these words, Fisher ensures that the body of the king and of his mother are central to this public event. At the same time, the details of the birth are memorialized as part of the celebration of Henry VII's life.[63] Lady Margaret is not represented here as ambitious but as a woman whose productive body brought forth a king, despite the greatest of odds (*"et in illa corporis parvitate gnatum aliquem, maximè tam procerem, tam elegantem edidisse"*).[64] The language of the oration can be read as a precursor to Fisher's morning remembrance although on this occasion Lady Margaret and Henry VII reinforce and illustrate the oration by their physical presence.

These were, however, their final years. Lady Margaret died on June 29, 1509, just over two months after the death of her son, and only weeks after the coronation of her grandson, Henry VIII. Her self-fashioning does not, however, conclude with her death. Fisher's sermon preached at her mourning service on July 29, 1509, the text of which was published soon after, stands as an example of Lady Margaret's agency, demonstrated by her ability to influence her representation beyond death. The relationship between Lady Margaret and Fisher was an intimate one, built over a decade or so, and Lady Margaret probably presented herself in a particular way to her confessor.[65] Lady Margaret commissioned the publication of Fisher's funeral sermon for her son and it is likely that Lady Margaret foresaw, even requested, the delivery of a sermon by Fisher upon the occasion of her death, along with subsequent publication.[66] The remembrance can be read as a textual example quite different to her letters and ordinances but one in which she still played a role in shaping. The opening lines encapsulate her multi-faceted identity: "… the noble prynces Margarete countesse of Rychemonde & Darbye, moder vnto kynge Henry the .vii. & grandame to oure souerayne lorde…"[67] This was an identity which she had carefully cultivated throughout her life across a variety of forms, and one which celebrated her nobility of birth and marriage, and her motherhood. Through this self-fashioning, Lady Margaret's aspirations for herself, as well as for her son, were rendered justifiable. The remembrance, however, sees the beginning of a revision of Lady Margaret's ambition. Such revision, I argue, could only occur because Lady Margaret had crafted an

identity which, like her signature, was open to more than one reading. Although no longer physically present, her influence lingered, transmitted through Fisher's words which were in tune with how Lady Margaret represented herself throughout the years of their acquaintance.

The sermon also provides a perspective on one man's attempt to reconcile his patron's ambitions with contemporary understandings of appropriate female conduct. Drawing a comparison between Lady Margaret and the biblical story of Martha, Fisher refers to their shared noble lineage.[68] Noble birth, of course, is not enough to define nobility. Fisher identifies three other traits of nobleness: nobleness of manners, goodness of nature, and increased nobleness, which he describes as being achieved by marriage and affinity with other nobles.[69] He then turns to Lady Margaret, stating "In euery of these I suppose this countesse was noble," and presents evidence to this effect.[70] The sermon extols Lady Margaret's many virtues. Indeed, Fisher depicts a woman whose behavior can be read as the very opposite of ambitious. "Auaryce and couetyse she moost hated, And sorowed it ful moche in al persones, But specyally in ony *tha*t belonged vnto her."[71] This line can also be read as a comment that Henry VII, as one "that belonged unto her" did indulge in such behaviors.[72] With these words, Lady Margaret's behavior is distinguished from that of her son. The message of Fisher's sermon is clear: Henry VII might be ambitious, but Lady Margaret was not.

Conclusions: Virtuous or Villainous?

Despite Fisher's denial, this chapter argues that Lady Margaret was ambitious, for a position of enduring power and authority. She stands, however, as an example of a noblewoman who was able to justify her ambitions because of careful self-fashioning. Drawing on her position as mother of Henry VII and her own nobility, Lady Margaret created an image which encompassed, if not openly celebrated, her aspirational behavior. This image also results in a subject who can be read in a variety of ways, demonstrated by Fisher's oration and sermon and the enduring scholarly discussion of the signature "Margaret R."

Considering the sources directly attributable to Lady Margaret alongside other contemporary documents emphasizing different aspects of her identity, it has been possible to explore how Lady Margaret's identity was represented, and reshaped, in ways which sometimes downplayed her ambitions. It does not follow, though, that these texts then serve as

examples of ways in which Lady Margaret's authority was undermined or unrecognized. Rather, the very fact that Lady Margaret's identity could be reshaped by Fisher, Halsted, and others, is proof of Lady Margaret's successful self-fashioning.

In a volume devoted to the image of the royal mother and her relationship with her children, Lady Margaret's changed signature encourages an exploration of the relationship between a mother and her son in late-medieval England through the categories of motherhood and ambition. Most important, it recognizes Lady Margaret's deliberate creation of an identity open to a variety of readings. Lady Margaret offers an ideal case study of female ambition and the difficulties of justification or, more pertinently for this collection, how to encourage an emphasis upon "virtuous," rather than "villainous" behaviors, both in her own lifetime and beyond.

Notes

1. I thank Dr Megan Cassidy-Welch, Dr Carolyn James and Lisa Di Crescenzo for their comments on an earlier version of this chapter.
2. Anne Crawford, ed., *Letters of the Queens of England, 1100--1547* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1994), p. 149 (Cotton MS, Vespasian F XIII, fol. 60. Holograph. Ellis, *Original Letters vol. i, Letter xxii)*.
3. Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare,* 2005 edn (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1980; 2005).
4. Michael K. Jones and Malcolm G. Underwood, *The King's Mother: Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby,* 1995 edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992; 1995), p. 86, fn. 57. Jones and Underwood identify the first example as dating from November 1468 and the last from April 1497.
5. Ibid., fn. 57, citing Cooper, *Memoir of Margaret Countess of Richmond and Derby*, p. 64.
6. Crawford, ed., *Letters of the Queens of England,* p. 152.
7. Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother,* p. 86.
8. Ibid., p. 86.
9. Retha Warnicke, "The Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond: A Noblewoman of Independent Wealth and Status," *Fifteenth Century Studies,* 9 (1984), pp. 215–48, at p. 225.
10. Stephanie Morley, "Translating Lady Margaret Beaufort: A Case for Translating as Compensatory Power," in *Lost in Translation?,* eds. D. Renevey and C. Whitehead. *The Medieval Translator.* Vol. 12. (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2009), pp. 251–61, at p. 253.

11. Roberta Krug, *Reading Families: Women's Literate Practice in Late Medieval England* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 85. Krug links this with Lady Margaret's changed seal, as do Jones and Underwood. See *The King's Mother*, Appendix 5, p. 292.
12. Ibid., p. 85.
13. Theresa Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 218.
14. Susan Powell, "Lady Margaret Beaufort and Her Books," *The Library,* Sixth Series, Vol XX, No. 3, September (1998), pp. 197–240, at p. 197.
15. Cf. Barbara J. Harris, "Defining Themselves: English Aristocratic Women, 1450–1550," *Journal of British Studies,* 49 (2010), pp. 734–52. Although Harris does not refer to Lady Margaret in her article, her discussion of the ways in which aristocratic women represented themselves informs and supports my reading of Lady Margaret's self-representation.
16. Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother,* p. 24.
17. Samuel Bentley, ed., *Excerpta Historica: Or, Illustrations of English History* (London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1833), pp. 3–4: "Grant of the Wardship of Margaret, daughter and heiress of John Beaufort, Duke of Somerset, to William de la Pole, Earl of Suffolk. 1443." Cf. Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother,* pp. 35–6. Jones and Underwood date the grant at 1444.
18. Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother,* p. 36.
19. Ibid., p. 39.
20. Patricia-Ann Lee, "Reflections of Power: Margaret of Anjou and the Dark Side of Queenship." *Renaissance Quarterly,* 39 (1986): pp. 183–271.
21. Caroline Amelia Halsted, *Life of Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby* (London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1839), p. 55.
22. For example, William Marx, ed., *An English Chronicle, 1377–1461: A New Edition. Edited from Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales MS 21068 and Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Lyell 34, Medieval Chronicles* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), p. 78: "The queen was defamed and deslaundered that he that was called prince was nat hir sone but a bastard goten in avoutry."
23. On the vow, see Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 153–54.
24. Ibid., p. 40.
25. Ibid., p. 98, citing *Rotuli Parliamentorum,* ed. J. Strachey et al., 6 vols. (London, 1767–77), VI, 284. 311–12.
26. Ibid., p. 40, citing the oration made at Cambridge by Fisher in J. Lewis, *Life of Dr. John Fisher*, 2 vols, vol. 2 (London: Joseph Lilly, 1855), pp 263–72, at, p. 265.
27. S.B. Chrimes, *Henry VII* (London: Eyre Methuen, 1972), p. 15. Chrimes describes these years as "largely obscure."

28. For a summary of these negotiations see David Baldwin, *Elizabeth Woodville: Mother of the Princes in the Tower* (Stroud, Glouc.: The History Press, 2002), p. 102, citing *Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History*, ed. Sir H. Ellis (1844), pp 195–7.
29. Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother,* Chapter 2: The Wars of the Roses.
30. Krug, *Reading Families,* p. 84.
31. Ibid., citing Crawford, *Letters of the Queens of England,* p. 145.
32. Crawford, ed., *Letters of the Queens of England,* p. 148.
33. Krug, *Reading Families,* p. 87.
34. Barbara J. Harris, Property, Power and Personal Relations: Elite Mothers and Sons in Yorkist and Early Tudor England," *Signs,* 15 (1990), pp. 606–32, at p. 620. Harris, also referring to Lady Margaret's use of such terms, describes their relationship as "one of the best documented and warmest," before concluding "(n)o other mother's letters from the period compare to Lady Margaret's in their effusive, almost romantic, language."
35. Crawford, ed., *Letters of the Queens of England,* p. 149.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., pp. 150–1, at p. 151.
38. Cf. Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*. Jones and Underwood attach the word "avarice" to both Lady Margaret and Henry VII on four occasions (p. 11; p. 82; p. 108; p. 258).
39. Crawford, ed., *Letters of the Queens of England,* pp. 150–1, at p. 150.
40. Ibid., p. 151.
41. See, for example, Ibid., p. 146; Morley, "Translating Lady Margaret," p. 253.
42. Morley, "Translating Lady Margaret," p. 253.
43. Mary C. Erler, "English Vowed Women at the End of the Middle Ages," *Mediaeval Studies,* 57 (1995), pp. 155–203.
44. Ibid., p. 161.
45. *The Thin Red Book*, C7.11, fol. 47r (St John's College Cambridge). By permission of the Master and Fellows of St John's College, Cambridge. Cited by Susan Powell, "Lady Margaret Beaufort: 'Of Singuler Wysedome Ferre Passynge the Comyn Rate of Women,'" in *The Brown Book, Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford: A Commemorative Edition for the 500th Anniversary of the Death of Lady Margaret Beaufort,* ed. Carolyn Garr (High Wycombe: Resourceprint Management Ltd, 2009), pp. 4–18, at p. 6. Cf. Cooper, *The Lady Margaret*, pp. 97–8, transcribing MS. Cole XXIV 244 b. Cooper's transcription was invaluable in my transcription of C7.11, fol. 47r.
46. On the transformation see Michael Jones, "Collyweston—an Early Tudor Palace," in *England in the Fifteenth Century: Proceedings of the 1986*

Harlaxton Symposium, ed. Daniel Williams (Woodbridge, Suffolk, Wolfeboro, N.H., USA: Boydell Press, 1987), pp. 129–41.

47. Fiona Kisby, "A Mirror of Monarchy: Music and Musicians in the Household Chapel of Lady Margaret Beaufort, Mother of Henry VII," *Early Music History,* 16 (1997), pp. 203–34, at p. 211.
48. Warnicke, "The Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond," p. 221.
49. My discussion of the historiography on Lady Margaret Beaufort is informed by the summary provided by Jones and Underwood. See, Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, pp. 1–16, esp. p. 8: "Halsted, however, began with a wider interest than her predecessors in the general history of England. She was also the authoress of a biography of Richard III … . Historically alert, she was not content with pointing up Margaret's virtues and achievements as a patron of learning, but wished to investigate her impact on that 'dark period,' so the study inevitably had a major political dimension." For an earlier work, also cited by Jones and Underwood in their discussion of this historiography, see Edmund Lodge, *Portraits of Illustrious Personages of Great Britain* 8 vols, vol. 1 (London: William Smith, 1849), pp. 13–20. Identified as "Margaret of Lancaster, mother of King Henry the seventh," Lodge remarks (on p. 15): "The exaltation of her son to the throne seems to have been the signal for her retreat from all public concerns; but she did not abandon the Court." For a later nineteenth-century biography, see Charles Henry Cooper, *The Lady Margaret: A Memoir of Margaret Countess of Richmond and Derby, Ed. J. E. B. Mayor* (Cambridge: Deighton Bell and Co, 1874). Cooper's biography recognizes Lady Margaret's power and influence, although his primary interest is in Lady Margaret as part of the Cambridge community. On his focus see, too, Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 12.
50. Halsted, *Life of Margaret Beaufort,* pp. 163–4.
51. Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother,* p. 8, citing Halsted, *Life of Margaret Beaufort*, Preface, x: Jones and Underwood write that the presence of Queen Victoria, as a young queen "to whom the females of Britain look with duty and affection, with pride as women, with devotion as subjects" formed part of the inspiration for Halsted's work.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid., pp. 8–10.
54. Henry Ellis, ed., *Original Letters Illustrative of English History,* second series, 4 vols, vol. 1 (London: Harding and Lepard, 1827), pp. 162–166, at pp. 163–4.
55. BL Add MS. 45133, fol. 141v. I acknowledge the assistance of the Maps and Manuscripts Reference Team at the British Library in accessing this manuscript. See Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother,* p. 187, describing this as "the most authentic copy."

56. BL Add. MS. 45133, fol. 141v. The transcription is my own.
57. Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother,* p. 187.
58. BL Add. MS. 45133, fol. 141v.
59. Ibid., and Warnicke, "The Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond," p. 224: "Because of the ordinances permitting her, as the King's mother, to wear a surcoat, a hood, and other attire like that of the Queen, scholars, such as Charles Cooper, Pearl Hogrefe, and Linda Simon have charged that she attempted to challenge the social position of her daughter-in-law. In fact, the outfits of these two were never completely identical, for the Countess wore only a coronet and not a crown and seems to have assumed a status like that of queen dowagers, who were expected to maintain many of the privileges that they had exercised as queen consorts."
60. Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 91, citing John Lewis, *The Life of Dr. John Fisher* 2 vols., vol. 2 (London: Joseph Lilly, 1855), pp. 263–72: "Oratio habita coram illustrissimo Rege Henrico VII. Cantabrigie, A.D. 1506, a Joanne Fisher episcopo Roffensi et Cancellario Accademiae illius illustris," E. Cod. MS. Bodl. Archiv. B. 67.
61. J.B. Mullinger, *The University of Cambridge from the Earliest Times to the Royal Injunctions of 1535.* 2 vols, vol 1 (Cambridge: University Press, 1873), p. 449.
62. Lewis, *The Life of Dr. John Fisher,* "Oration," p. 265. Cf. Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother,* p. 40, citing *Oration*, p. 265. Jones and Underwood also refer to Fisher's indication that the birth was difficult and his reference to Margaret's age and stature.
63. Lewis, *The Life of Dr. John Fisher,* "Oration," p. 265.
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65. Jones and Underwood, *The King's Mother*, p. 205; Retha Warnicke, "The Lady Margaret, Countess of Richmond (D.1509), as Seen by Bishop Fisher and by Lord Morley," *Moreana,* XIX (1982), pp. 47–55.
66. Michael Jones and Malcolm G. Underwood, "Lady Margaret Beaufort," *History Today,* 1985), pp. 23–30, at p. 28. See too, Powell, "Lady Margaret Beaufort," p. 10: "I am assuming, perhaps cheekily, that she commissioned her own memorial sermon, as she commissioned her son's funeral sermon."
67. "Mornynge remembraunce had at the moneth mynde of the noble prynces Margarete countesse of Rychemonde & Derbye," enprynted by Wynkyn de Worde, in *The English Works of John Fisher, part I,* ed. John E. B. Mayor (London: Published for the Early English Text Society, by N. Trübner & Co., 1876), pp. 289–310, at p. 289.
68. Ibid., p. 290.
69. Ibid., pp. 290–92.
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Playing the Catalan: The Rise of the Chess Queen; Queenship and Political Motherhood in Late Medieval Aragon and France

Zita Rohr

The game of chess is crammed full of unexplored possibilities—possibilities that allow for a rich and ready metaphor to explore the power of elite women, queens and political mothers to circumvent accepted socio-political norms and act in what was largely a man's world. The development of the game of chess, and in particular the emergence of the chess

The title is taken from the Catalan play, a chess opening invented at the Barcelona tournament of 1929 by the "brilliant and humorous" Savielly Tartakower to whose strategy Nigel Davies dedicates a book. Nigel Davies, *Play the Catalan*, London: Everyman Chess, 2009. The Catalan opening is held to be sophisticated but "neither spectacular or simple to play and understand… [and] it doesn't lend itself to quick victories." Dennis Monokroussos, « Review », *The Chess Mind Blog*, December 28, 2009. http://www.thechessmind.net/blog/2009/12/28/a-review-of-nigel-davies-play-the-catalan.html; consulted May 28, 2015. Monokroussos's appreciation of the play should resonate with those of us involved in the study of effective and successful queenship.

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queen as the most powerful piece on the board, provides an alternative pitch for the study of the history to which Natalie Zemon Davis pithily refers as "women on top."[1]

For people of the medieval and early modern world, there was a clear link between the mastery of the game of chess and the development of a monarch's ability to govern a kingdom wisely. In Alfonso X of Castile's thirteenth-century opus, *Libros des ajedrez, dados y tablos* (The Book of Chess, Dice and Backgammon), three philosophers must posit the essential virtue for kingship: the first plumps for the primacy of reason, the second promotes daring, and the third insists upon a blend of intelligence and daring. For Jenny Adams, "Alfonso's treatise prioritizes the game [of chess] as superior, exemplary, and desirable, and his collection of [chess] problems emphasizes the importance of skilful play on the part of a king."[2] Both an avid spectator and keen participant of the game of chess, Alfonso bridged social boundaries welcoming all like-minded chess enthusiasts to his court—regardless of race, gender, class, or religion—and his *Libros* illustrates this rich diversity.

The influential thirteenth-century Franciscan scholar and chess player, John of Wales, might have held that "All the world's a chess-board" in his work the *Communiloquium, sive Summa collationum*.[3] It is included under the sub-heading, "A Comparison of the World to the Game of Chess" ("Comparatio mundi ad ludum schakarum").[4] It is not entirely certain whether this "chessboard" section was the work of John of Wales or whether it is an interpolation added by another chess enthusiast to a 1409 version of John's manuscript. The interpolation, however, is not particularly flattering to the queen or "fertz" (counsellor) chess piece: "The lady queen or so-called counsellor, captures as she moves obliquely since avarice is the genus of woman, whether she captures out of grace, spoils or injustice."[5] The interpolator might have reflected more deeply upon the need for a thirteenth-century medieval queen to move obliquely, shackled as she was for the most part to society's expectations of "normal" feminine/queenly behavior and the limitations imposed upon her overt freedom of movement. His near contemporary, Jacobus de Cessolis, sermonizing later in the thirteenth century had quite a different take upon the chess queen's restricted movement. He believed her to be inherently virtuous, "she stands on the king's left so she can guide him with her right hand," she should be "pure and chaste," "thereby a mirror and model for other women," and she "should rear her sons and daughters to be mannerly, virtuous and chaste."[6] Cessolis's queen "proceeds only to the neigh-

boring square on the diagonal, either forward or backward." She "moves to capture or retreat"[7] as is fitting to her role as helpmeet (and mother) to stand against evil and protect the king (and their children). He added that, "at home, accompanied by her entourage, the queen acts more freely; but among strangers her honor and reputation aren't as established, as they are among those she knows."[8] The chess queen had to wait until the sixteenth century to manifest the new freedom of movement and autonomy of her modern form—jumping any number of squares, in any direction forwards, backwards, and obliquely—coinciding with the reality of several centuries of queens-regnant, queens-consort and queens, and princesses-regent such as Marguerite of Anjou, Madeleine of France, Elizabeth Woodville, Blanca II of Navarre, Anne of France, Anne of Brittany, Isabel of Castile, Margarete of Austria, Mary I, Elizabeth I, Mary Stuart, Marguerite of Navarre, Catherine de' Medici—the better-known women of authority, power, agency, and influence who had appeared since Cessolis first posited his ideas.[9] With the notable exception of the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth I, and her childless predecessor, Mary I, such women were both proactive queens and effective political mothers, adept equally at "jumping any number of squares, in any direction forwards, backwards and obliquely" and, later, with full liberty of movement, agency, and access to power and authority.

H.J.R. Murray[10] examines minutely chess's voyage from its Indian and Persian roots via Islamic intermediaries to Western Europe. In its Persian, Indian, and Islamic manifestations, chess was clearly about the tactics of war. Chess broke into medieval European society from Iberia where it had enjoyed an avid following between the eighth and eleventh centuries. Iberia was a sophisticated cultural and intellectual crossroads where the coexistence of diverse religious and intellectual communities created a unique culture that incorporated Islamic and Christian elements, influenced further by Jewish erudition and traditions.[11] Iberia's cultural diversity allowed chess to take hold and become a permanent fixture in all levels of society. Chess was tremendously popular in medieval Europe and in the later Middle Ages, between about 1300 and 1500, the game had a currency and a following that has not been equalled before or since.[12] Adams tells us, 'the game articulated emerging notions of citizenship, power and political order that spread throughout the West over several centuries."[13] Princes and noblemen encouraged their children, boys and girls, to master the game of chess; its mastery was a lesson in strategy and skill, essential to any effective governor/manager. In a time of violence and the primacy

of physical force, the power residing within the game of chess was non-physical; it was psychologically coercive and hypothetically open to both genders. Accounts point to the fact that, during the Middle Ages and well into the Renaissance, women not only played chess but played it well, surviving literature supporting the idea that they demonstrated high-level analytical ability.[14] This runs contrary to the received notion held by some medieval writers and later commentators that "the female mind was more prone to be disordered by her fragile and unsteady temperament" as does the reality of an impressive sorority of effective queens and political mothers.[15] Murray observes that "at chess the sexes met on equal terms, and the freedom of intercourse which the game made possible was much valued."[16]

Iberia was both the door by which chess entered Western Europe and the place where the queen first attained her pre-eminent status on the chessboard. The metamorphosis of the queen from decorative extra into the most powerful piece on the board is perhaps the most interesting aspect of the game's development during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Well before Isabel of Castile clawed her way to the top of the dynastic heap to assume regnant queenship, any Iberian queen discharging her legitimate sanctioned political authority was recognized as "alter nos"[17] the king's other body; an essential component of the Iberian way of rulership. The chess queen made her first appearance during the twelfth century in Spain and, while she never made onto the field of play in the Muslim version of the game, she did make her way onto the Hebrew chessboard. A Spanish Hebrew chess text identifying the existence of an empowered chess queen, attributed to Bonsenior ibn Yehia, dating from about the twelfth century, describes the "king in his glory" and "the queen/*Shegal* at his right hand":

> She sits at the top of the high places above the city. She is restless and determined. She girds her loins with strength. Her feet stay not in her house. She moves in every direction and into every corner. Her evolutions are wonderful; her spirit untiring…there is no difference between them [the king and the queen] as they come towards you. They set out towards you along the same path, at the same pace and by the same route.[18]

This is an apposite description of the Aragonese-Catalan queens, Violant of Bar, María de Luna, and Yolande of Aragon—ambitious and self-aware mothers all—to be discussed briefly in this chapter. In lockstep with the rise of the chess queen, such queens adeptly (and sometimes obliquely)

deployed their advantages and minimized their weaknesses to ensure the survival of their dynasties.

The real-world partnership between a king and his queen merits a short digression to examine the virtual partnership of the chess king and his queen. The divide between the virtual world of chess and real world of Iberian rulership narrowed considerably toward the close of the fifteenth century. This too was the case across Europe throughout the later Middle Ages as queens found their feet in the superstructure of rapidly developing modern states.[19] Such developments further disprove the assertion proposed by Marion Facinger and others that, from the twelfth century onwards, royal women were essentially relegated to the domestic arena as a result of the development of primogeniture and the re-establishment of the dowry. It seems that they did not take into account sufficiently what a potentially powerful field of play the royal "domestic arena" could be when exploited by well-educated and ambitious royal wives and mothers.[20] The modern chess queen, an avatar in white (virtuousness) and black (villainy) of queenship and political motherhood, is the most powerful piece on the board because of her mobility; she is able to move any number of squares horizontally, vertically, or diagonally but at her origin she was an extra just above the status of the pawn.[21] The king, while the most important piece on the board,[22] is less powerful than his "modern" queen because of his lack of mobility. His possibilities are weakened by the checks upon his freedom of movement until the final phase of play known as the endgame[23] when he is strengthened, and able to be brought to the center of the board to be of use as an attacking piece. The queen is at her most powerful when the board is open, when the enemy king is not well defended or when there are loose (undefended) pieces in the enemy camp. Unlike her king, the queen is a long range, multidirectional piece and less restricted and more powerful in a closed position—suggestive of the political agency from within the "domestic" space of the household of the real-world pre-modern queen who relied upon carefully husbanded and diverse networks of power and influence. As the most valuable "geopolitical" piece, the queen is easily harassed by "men" seeking to eliminate her from play and, if she is brought out too early, she is vulnerable to attack by weaker "men." The chess queen should be considered both a (r)evolutionary artifact reaching back to her first manifestation around the tenth century and a metaphor for the possibilities and strategies of effective queen-consortship (and female rule) during the late medieval and

early modern period; this is supported by the fevered popularity of chess and the writings and illuminations of the period.[24]

The chess queen's transformation was first described in the late fifteenth century by Luis Ramírez de Lucena,[25] but the possibilities of an empowered chess queen had been posited much earlier by others such as the twelfth-thirteenth-century Benedictine troubadour, Gautier de Coincy in his *Miracles de Nostre-Dame*[26] and by the fifteenth-century ecclesiastic, diplomat, and poet Martin Le Franc in his *Champion des Dames.*[27] Gautier's use of chess terminology and its tactics in the Marian songs of his *Miracles* was a true innovation; previously, other writers and theorists[28] had been content to use chess as a realistic background activity or as a metaphor to tease out unrelated themes and variations.[29] While Lucena addresses his *Arte de axedrez* to the powerful Isabel of Castile to butter her up sufficiently to secure him a post in her son's household, and displaying no small degree of masculine anxiety,[30] Gautier praises his celestial patroness using chess imagery, consciously subverting the popular culture of the period for his own literary and spiritual ends.[31]

Several medieval treatises and *specula* such as Jacobus de Cessolis's widely read late-thirteenth-century work mentioned earlier, *Liber de Ludo scachorum*, examined theories of secular power, public and private morality employing chess as a rich and effective *toile de fond*. Cessolis uses chess as an organizing principle or metaphor to discuss a new way of approaching the framework of civic communities, defining a basis of government which rests upon disinterested contracts rather than the ties of kin: "a vision of secular order organized around contractual agreements rather than one organized around a centralized authority and sustained exclusively by kinship ties."[32] This is a congruous reflection for the age that witnessed the rise of the professional man; university trained and worldly rather than the product of scriptoria and cloisters. The age of the exclusivity of kinship ties as a source of authority and power was coming to an end. The canniest of players understood instinctively that both kinship networks and bonds of patronage had to be exploited in newly strategic and pragmatic ways.

Enter the Queen

"Do not bring your queen out too early." (Francesco Bernardino Caldogno, *De ludo scachorum*)[33]

The piece we now refer to as the queen metamorphosed from the Arabic piece *Firz, Firzan*—the wise man and counsellor (to the king). This appel-

lation and the piece's function and moves were adopted in Spain, France, and England viz. *alfferza* (Spain); *fersa* (Provence); *fierce/fierge* (O.F.); *fers* (M.E.), *ferzia* (Lat.) and in Italian chess problem books, *ferce*.[34] Murray holds that the appellation, "queen" was a European innovation and probably evolved due to the position of the piece on the board and the natural symmetry of pairing the two principal pieces[35] as the "king" and his "queen"—his "natural" closest advisor and "helpmeet."[36]

The mother and daughter queenly players of Aragon I discussed here, Violant of Bar and her daughter, Yolande of Aragon, were skilled politicians and practised diplomats, thoroughly schooled in subtleties of chess. Catalonia, part of the natal kingdom of Yolande of Aragon, benefited and flourished due to its proximity to Cordoba, a lively center of knowledge and exchange built upon thriving merchant traffic from the East to its Mediterranean shores.[37] Yolande of Aragon's father, Joan I, king of Aragon (known variously as the Hunter, the troubadour-king, *l'Amador de la Gentilesa*, lover of culture and pre-humanist ideas and learning), ordered a chess-set in 1390 for his Valencia residence.[38] Joan's request specified a board to play at tables and chess, furnished with all the necessary pieces and accoutrements.[39] The order was made a month after Yolande's ninth birthday and coincides exactly with her elder half-sister Joana's fifteenth birthday.[40] The chess-set in question was ordered on the occasion of Joana's fifteenth birthday as part of their education as royal princesses. Yolande's mother, Violant of Bar, the daughter of duke Robert of Bar and Marie of France, was molded likewise by the house of Valois's passion for chess.[41] Violant was raised (from the age of seven with Christine de Pizan and a brace of precocious little girls, including Marie de Coucy, niece of Edward III of England) at the court of her uncle, Charles V, under the cultured and lettered tutelage of his queen, Jeanne of Bourbon, and her formidable mother, Isabelle de Valois, *Madame de Bourbon la Grande*, dowager duchess of Bourbon.[42]

Exit the King

In the closing stages of Joan's reign his troubles increased; he was under constant fire, harried by claims of misgovernment, alleging that court favorites were mismanaging the royal estate. Barcelona and Valencia believed that their franchises were being undermined, and Joan sank deeper into debt, disinclined to confront his hostile *cortes* for the necessary financial assistance. Barcelona city councilors accused members of

both the king and queen's households of assembling foreign mercenaries near Avignon. The allegations "were irrefutably confirmed on May 17, 1396 when news arrived that troops were massing near Avignon. With this news, the magnitude of the crisis facing the Crown became dramatically apparent."[43] There had been a persistent perception that the royal couple and their familiars were extravagant and wasteful. Councilors of all of the kingdom's largest cities had repeatedly complained about "the suspicious and corrupt behavior of their royal advisors, whom they accused of compromising royal authority, contravening the laws of the land, squandering, misappropriating and embezzling the funds of the royal patrimony."[44]

Joan and Violant went into defensive mode, adopting what is in chess terms, a fortress strategy. Fortress chess is an endgame drawing technique whereby the side behind in assets sets up a zone of protection around its king, designed not to be penetrated by the opponent; it is often achieved by a sacrifice or gambit. In a positional draw a material advantage is often balanced by a positional advantage: while Joan was alive, he and Violant were still the ruling monarchs. King and queen determined to travel to Catalonia to calm their Catalan subjects. Their fortress play, however, did not come off. On May 19, 1396, having left Torroella de Montgrí (22 km east of Girona) en route to Girona, Joan the Hunter chased down his last stag. The official story is that Joan, the enthusiastic sportsman, in hot pursuit of his quarry, galloped away from his small travelling party into thick forest. Alone, he fell from his horse, possibly as a result of a stroke or heart attack.[45] There were no witnesses present and Joan did not receive extreme unction.[46]

Violant of Bar: Queen (Mother)'s Gambit Declined

Fortress is an endgame strategy but a queen's gambit is an opening move. With the death of Joan, Violant lost her material and positional advantages and, with political power, fortune, and prestige running through her fingers, she initiated a new game. Violant's Catalan play was an audacious gambit; she declared that she was pregnant with the late king's child. This might have been a distinct possibility: at the time of Joan's death Violant was 31 years of age and had been pregnant on a semi-permanent basis from the time of her marriage at the age of fifteen.[47] Toward the end of Joan's unhappy rule, when his authority was being called increasingly into question, the pattern of her pregnancies became compressed. If Violant produced a posthumous legitimate male heir, as regent, she would retain

her power, influence, and relevance. A powerful regent-dowager had a certain liberty of movement and independence of resources. Without a regency Violant could only aspire to live in the twilight zone between anonymous ineffectuality and opulent influence.[48] She played for regency.

Violant's opposing queen-elect, María de Luna, countered, declaring herself queen in the absence of Martí. The *cortes*, the magnates (with whom she was connected through familial ties), and the councilors of Barcelona backed María. Violant went on the attack, declaring that the new king and his consort should not be recognized until she had given birth.[49] María's position was vulnerable; she was on the verge of financial ruin owing to the costs of Martí's ongoing Sicilian defense. She was cornered and had no choice but to attack and seize the throne for the good of *her* dynastic "commonwealth"—any hesitation on her part would have been fatal play.[50] Ships were dispatched to fetch Martí home from Sicily and the Council acted in accordance with local law and custom. Violant's play had complicated the succession, disrupting María for it called her legitimate regency into question. If Violant's gambit were accepted (if she managed to produce a legitimate male heir), she could look forward to a proactive and fulfilling existence as regent at the apex of royal authority, with María and Martí financially ruined and politically sidelined.

By opening with her gambit, Violant had bought herself valuable time—she was, after all, a seasoned and proactive political player. Her skill had been demonstrated amply throughout her time as co-ruler with her husband Joan of Aragon, first as duchess of Girona and later as queen of Aragon, and her opponents knew this only too well. Violant's Catalan play, however, was not a winning strategy. Since the chess opening had yet to be invented, Violant could not have understood that it was in essence "neither spectacular nor simple to play and understand…[and did not] lend itself to quick victories." Despite her strong links with France, Violant had no strong family ties within the network of the crown of Aragon, and the allegations against her familiars and those of Joan had cast a pall over her pretensions (most notably the fall-out from the all too recent "mercenary" affair). María had the material advantage but she could not decisively remove Violant from her momentary positional advantage; her insistent claim that she was carrying the heir to the throne.

At midnight, on May 27, 1396, María assembled her regency council to formulate a considered response to Violant's play. It convoked a parliamentary commission the following day to question Violant's personal servants. Some denied the widowed queen was pregnant but Violant did not

make a backward move, she stood resolute and unyielding. María found herself forced into stalemate; she could do nothing to dislodge her sister-in-law from her position until the pregnancy issue was resolved one way or another. The Council put Violant under surveillance both to establish her condition and to check the possibility of any subsequent pregnancy.[51] María moved to isolate her opponent, arresting all of Violant's closest familiars removing them from the widowed queen's reach. María's most trusted officials and servants put Violant under close watch. On August 2, 1396, Maria initiated legal proceedings against members of the former queen and king's households and chanceries, some of whom were people of considerable prestige and influence.[52]

Violant found herself cornered in hostile territory, surrounded by and under the 24-hour watch of four handpicked highborn "widows-pawn" of impeccable reputation whose interests relied heavily upon María's good-will. Their vigil continued for more than five months until they were called off in November 1396.[53] María's play was decisive. Violant was turned out of her home and not permitted to ponder this development for very long: María added insult to injury by sending her the horse that Joan had been riding at the time of his death.[54] María cast herself as the virtuous home-grown "white" queen of Aragon, holding a mirror to Violant's perceived "foreign" excesses. No legitimate male heir forthcoming, María de Luna, "white" Queen-elect of Aragon, defended the Crown until Martí's safe return on May 27, 1397; the new queen had declined her opposing "black" Queen Violant's gambit.

"Absent" the Kings

When Louis II, duke of Anjou, king of Sicily, died on April 29, 1417, his queen, Yolande of Aragon, was well prepared for widowhood. Louis had been chronically ill since at least 1414, and with his death Yolande inherited responsibility for the government of Angevin territories and aspirations; the tutelage of their five young children; and, the guardianship of the recently proclaimed dauphin of France, Charles of Ponthieu (betrothed to her elder daughter, Marie). Yolande assumed the odious political dysfunction that was the kingdom of France due to the "absences" of its king, Charles VI, with the dauphin Charles, for the most part, a stranger to the "disordered" household of his biological mother, the "black" queen of France, the "neglectful" Isabeau of Bavaria. Much in the vein of her aunt, María de Luna, Yolande, likewise impeccably self-aware, fashioned herself

into her son-in-law's, *Bonne-mère*, his "white" queen, for the good of her dynastic "commonwealth" and for France upon whose fortunes her House depended.

Captain-general of the city of Paris from mid-June 1416 and a member of the royal council since September 3, 1416,[55] the 14-year-old heir to the uneasy kingdom of France soon held authority as lieutenant-general in the "absences" of his father. Charles of Ponthieu was elevated to the dauphinate while he was residing with his mother, Isabeau of Bavaria, in the fortified castle of Vincennes of which he was lieutenant. His father-in-law and political mentor, Louis II of Anjou, had placed him there to move him closer to the inner circle of authority. The king, in a brief moment of lucidity, was fetched to Vincennes by the provost of Paris, Tanneguy du Châtel. This Angevin loyalist sent both king and dauphin back to Paris. Isabeau was sidelined and isolated in Vincennes; she was moved to Blois on the orders of Châtel issued in the name of the king, and later sent to Tours and into effective exile by the king's constable, Bernard VII of Armagnac.[56] Isabeau sought assistance from a willing Burgundy, and in return she guaranteed his return from the political wilderness.

Yolande of Aragon: Queen's Gambit Accepted

Following the death of Louis II of Anjou on April 29, 1417, the newly proclaimed dauphin Charles, made a brief visit to Paris to be invested with the duchy of Berry and the county of Poitou. Yolande accompanied her teenaged son-in-law, returning him to the safety of Anjou at the first opportunity. She needed to remove him from the influence of her nominal ally, the constable of France, Bernard VII of Armagnac, who was violent, unstable, and generally precipitous. Yolande was well aware of the difficulties her "ally" might cause her; Armagnac had been a consistent thorn in the side of her parents in the early part of their reign over his brother Jean's alleged rights to Mallorca, making incursions into their county of Roussillon.[57] She also needed to keep Charles away from his refractory mother, "black" Queen Isabeau, who was isolated, embittered, and easy prey for the politically opportunistic duke of Burgundy.

Yolande had a delicate balancing act to perform. She had to ensure that Charles maintained personal contact with his unfortunate father and his court, participating in deliberations of the royal council, while at the same time trying to quarantine him from negative influences and keep

him physically safe. With Louis II out of the picture, and with Charles (in the words of Monstrelet) very much weakened in terms of guidance and help on the royal council, Charles's *Bonne-mère* had to tread very carefully indeed.[58] The king being declared "mad" by an ordinance dated June 11, 1417, Charles was made president of the royal council in the continuing "absences" of his father. Charles having attained his legal majority,[59] the king, in a fleeting moment of lucidity, invested him with the lieutenant-generalcy of the kingdom revoking all previous lieutenancies—specifically Isabeau's.[60] There are some indications that she had been working toward re-inserting Burgundy into the circle of authority from at least January 1417.[61] This time frame coincides with the rapidly deteriorating health of Louis II of Anjou and Burgundy's ramped-up campaign to re-enter Paris with the then dauphin Jean.

In 1418, Burgundy usurped the dauphin Charles's authority and upset the balance of power on the royal council. Burgundian forces sacked Paris on May 29, 1418, where both the dauphin Charles and Yolande's daughter, the dauphine Marie, were in residence.[62] Charles was smuggled out of the city and onwards to Bourges by Angevin loyalists, leaving the dauphine in the thick of a rapidly developing situation. The Angevins returned to Paris to mount a counter-offensive. The priority was to buttress the authority of the dauphin and "capture" the king. This sharp play was a strategy designed to block the advance of Burgundy and Isabeau and, if circumstances allowed, regain control of Paris. Burgundy countered the strategy by moving the king, Isabeau and Catherine of France to a fortified defensive position in Troyes. Yolande's ally, Jean V, duke of Brittany, "qui estoit fort [Burgundy's] amy"[63] secured the dauphine Marie's release. From the point of view of Isabeau and Burgundy, her release was conditional upon the return of the dauphin to Paris, "afin que ledit dauphin fût plus enclin de venir à paix et retourner avec le roi son père" (so that the said dauphin would be more inclined to come to peace, and return to the king, his father).[64]

By the summer of 1418, the political situation deteriorated dangerously—Paris was sucked into a maelstrom of violence, and the ship of state had foundered on treacherous reefs. With Burgundy in attacking mode, Yolande could not move Charles to a fortified position within king's now hostile court. Yolande played her "white" queen's gambit; the queen of Jerusalem-Sicily, Aragon, Valencia, and Mallorca, refused to accede to Isabeau and Burgundy's demands to return Charles to his birthmother, the "black" queen, and his compromised father, the king. A text attributed to

Jehan Bourdigné[65] frames well what might have been going on in Yolande's mind:

> To a woman endowed with a lover, [who] has no need for a child. He [Charles] has not been nurtured in this place [the court of Anjou] to this point to allow him to pass away like his brothers [Louis and Jean, successive dauphins], or to be rendered mad like his father, or at the very least to be made English[66] like you. I shall keep him mine, come and take him if you dare.[67]

Fighting words; that such a *lettre de défi* was dispatched by Yolande to Isabeau is moot because Yolande and Charles's actions at this time support the idea of a queen-(mother)'s gambit in play. Charles did not go back to his father's court and, awaiting the imminent return of the dauphine, 15-year-old Charles, under Yolande's watchful eye and guidance, redeclared himself "lieutenant du roy son père" on June 29, 1418. Yolande of Aragon, queen of Jerusalem and Sicily, moved to establish an alternative government, a *parlement de Paris* in exile, based in Poitiers,[68] setting up a *chambre des comptes* in Bourges.[69] Charles's letters dated September 21, 1418, cite Burgundy's treachery in the 1418 uprising.

The incapacitated king and his son Charles not only symbolized the idea of kingship; they were its physical embodiment and its source of authority—irrespective of their personal capacities to govern. The *Songe du Vergier* and Jean Gerson's sermons hold that king and dauphin are one and the same; "Le filz est une mesme personne avesque le pere et le represente" (The son is of the same person with his father and represents him) and, "le filz est une mesme personne avesque le roi"(the son is the same person with his father).[70] Both sides in this game of tactics needed their physical presence within their respective ranks to legitimize their pretensions to royal authority. It was on Burgundy's instructions that Isabeau had called for the dauphin's return.

Yolande's gambit was a decisive play; she needed to keep control of her "son," the dauphin, to ensure their joint futures. Charles was the prize for both queen-mothers, and Isabeau had no choice but to accept Yolande's gambit, with Burgundy attempting other strategies to unwind her opposing queen-mother's power and influence. The match continued unabated for another 17 years, and it took a significant pawn sacrifice—Joan of Arc—for Charles to regain the strategic advantage to call checkmate to his opposing king, his nephew Henry VI.

Concluding Remarks

"*La beauté d'un coup aux échecs n'est pas dans l'apparence, mais dans la pensée qu'il contient.*" (The beauty of a chess move lies not in its outward show but in its [underlying] thinking.) [71]

Our chess queen-mothers, Violant and Yolande, deployed strategic queens' gambits to open their respective plays. Although Violant's worthy adversary, María de Luna, declined her gambit, Violant did manage to buy herself time and space to contemplate her next moves. Indeed, Violant still had quite a few moves left in her—she was a woman of rare stamina and acute political sensibility. Rather than fade into "anonymous obscurity" Violant remained active and involved in the politics of Aragon and beyond, lobbying her brother-in-law, Martí to "adopt" her grandson, Louis III of Anjou, as his heir once his own son died on July 20, 1409. Upon Martí's death without legitimate issue on January 20, 1410, Violant made another play for the succession in favor of Louis III—again unsuccessfully. This did not keep her down for very long; her political nerve re-activated in 1420,[72] Violant again supported her grandson's cause, this time involving herself in his struggle for sovereignty over peninsular Sicily (Naples).[73] Violant had met her match with María de Luna in 1396, and in any case her gambit was more in the nature of a stalling technique combined with wishful thinking. Once Violant's claims to pregnancy were disproved, she was out of that particular game.

Yolande of Aragon's queen's gambit paid off, she kept the dauphin Charles close by her and made sure that he was able to transform himself from the *soi-disant dauphin* and *petit roi de Bourges* of 1420 into Charles VII of France *le Victorieux, Roi des rois, le Bien Servi* of 1435 and beyond. Yolande's circumstances were very different from those of her mother; she had a material advantage, a legitimate male heir in her keeping. All she had to do was to maintain her guardianship of him, fortify his defenses, and underwrite his fragile positional advantage. Her opponent, Isabeau of Bavaria, was not of her caliber. While reportedly a keen chess player, Isabeau was less skilled—she was too malleable and too changeable—her tactics were erratic and she had lacked a clear unified strategy of attack and defense.[74]

Violant of Bar, María de Luna, and Yolande of Aragon were extremely determined and talented political mothers. Like the stateswomen-queens who had preceded them, and their worthy contemporaries and successors, they rang in the transformation of the chess queen, anticipating the

powerful female sovereigns who would govern with full executive powers in the realms of Spain, England, Scandinavia, Navarre, Austria-Hungary, and Russia. Queens-lieutenant rather than regnant queens, Violant of Bar, María de Luna, and Yolande of Aragon were the subtle and consummate chess queens envisaged by Bonsenior ibn Yehia, born into or acclimatized to the clear light of Iberian queen-lieutenancy, "sitting at the top of the high places above the city, restless and determined, [whose] feet stayed not within [their] own house."

Notes

1. Natalie Zemon Davis, "Women on Top" in N. Z. Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays by Natalie Zemon Davis*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1975, 124–151.
2. Jenny Adams, *Power Play: The Literature and Politics of Chess in the Late Middle Ages*, Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2006, 3–4.
3. It is a vast handbook for preachers and includes guidelines for a regimen of health. Baillol College (Oxford) Ms. 274, fol. 55 v°, col. 1—col. 2, cited by Lynn Thorndike, "All the World's a Chess-Board," *Speculum*, Vol. 6, N° 3 (Jul., 1931), 461–465.
4. The passage in question is to be found in the tenth distinction of the first part of the work dealing with the laboring classes, the seventh chapter of this distinction tackles the subject theatrical entertainments (fol. 54 v°, col. 2—folio 56 v°, col. 2), Thorndike, "All the World's" 463.
5. Ibid., 424.
6. Jacob de Cessolis, H. L. Williams, ed. and trans., *The Book of Chess*, New York: Italica Press, 2008, 17, 18, 22. Cf. Jacobus de Cessolis, *Solitiu[m] ludi schacor[um]Jacobus de Cessolis*, Utrecht: Nicolaus Ketelaer and Gerardus de Leempt, 1477; and Jacques de Cessoles, Alain Collet ed. and Jean Ferron trans., *Le Jeu des eschaz moralisé*, Paris: Honoré Champion, 1999.
7. Cessolis, *The Book*, 109.
8. Ibid.
9. Cf. Mark N. Taylor, "How Did the Queen Go Mad?," in Daniel E. O'Sullivan ed., *Chess in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Age: A Fundamental Thought Paradigm of the Premodern World*, Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2012, 169–183.
10. H. J. R. Murray, *A History of Chess*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1913.
11. Hillary Svoboda, "The Chess Queen" (Term Paper), Towson University, Maryland, 2010, 10. http://pages.towson.edu/rcostago/images/

objects/HillarySvobodafinal.pdf; and http://medievalbaltimore.net/the-chess-queen/

12. Murray, *A History of Chess*, 428.
13. Adams, *Power Play*, 9.
14. Murray, *A History of Chess*, 435.
15. Davis, "Women on Top," 125.
16. Murray, *A History of Chess*, 436.
17. Theresa Earenfight, *The King's Other Body: María of Castile and the Crown of Aragon*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011, (Chapter one) 1–18. Earenfight has excavated meticulously the subject of Iberian queen-lieutenancy and queenship viz. "Absent Kings: Queens as Political Partners in the Medieval Crown of Aragon," in *Queenship and Political Power in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, Theresa Earenfight (ed.), Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005, 33–51; "María of Castile. Ruler or Figurehead? A Preliminary Study in Aragonese Queenship," *Mediterranean Studies* 4, (1994), 45–61; "Political Culture and Political Discourse in the Letters of Queen María of Castile," *La Corónica* 32, I (Fall 2003), 135–52; "Two Bodies, One Spirit; Isabel and Fernando's Construction of Monarchical Partnership," in *Queen Isabel I of Castile: Power, Patronage*, Barbara Weissberger (ed.), Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008, 3–18; "Without the Persona of the Prince: Kings, Queens and the Idea of Monarchy in Late Medieval Europe," *Gender and History* 19, I (April 2007), 1–21; and "Trastámara Kings, Queens and the Gender Dynamics of Monarchy," *The Emergence of León-Castile c.1065–1500. Essays Presented to J.F. O'Callaghan*, James Todesca (ed.) Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Press, 2015, 141–160.
18. Victor Keats, *Chess in Jewish History and Hebrew Literature*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1995, 77–78, cited by Marilyn Yalom, *Birth of the Chess Queen*, New York: Harper Collins, 2005, 54–55.
19. Cf. Fanny Cosandey, "De lance en quenouille. La place de la reine dans l'Etat moderne (XIVe-XVIIe siècles)," *Annales. Histoire, Science Sociales*, 52e année, n° 4 (1997), 799–820, http://www.persee.fr/web/revues/home/prescript/article/ahess_0395-2649_1997_num_52_4_279602 consulted May 28, 2015; iterum "De la loi salique à la régence, le parcours singulier du pouvoir des reines," *In assenza del re. Le reggenti dal XIV al XVII secolo (Piemonte ed. Europa*, Franca Varallo (ed.), Florence: Olschki, 2008, 183–197.
20. Such as Georges Duby in his *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest : The Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France,* Barbara Bray, (trans.), New York : Pantheon Books, 1983, and Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple in their article, "The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe : 500–1100," *Feminist Studies*, 1, 3–4, (1973), 126–141. Marion F. Facinger, "A Study of Medieval Queenship: Capetian France,

987–1237, *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 5, (1968), 3–48. Cf. Judith M. Bennett & Ruth Mazo Karras (eds), *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2013, esp. 4–5.

21. The queen was limited originally to a one square diagonal move. By the thirteenth century, she had managed to increase her moves to two squares diagonally, the same as the bishop.
22. The object of the game is to trap the opposing king so that escape is not possible (checkmate).
23. This is the final phase of play when there are very few pieces left on the board.
24. Cf. Cécile Quentel-Touche, « Charles V's Visual Definition of the Queen's Virtues », in Karen Green & Constant Mews (eds), *Virtue Ethics for Women 1250–1500*, 53–80; esp. the section « Presenting the Educated Queen : Jacques de Cessoles's *Jeu des échecs moralisés* and Jean de Meun's *Li Livres de confort de Philosophie* » 69–80.
25. He was the ambitious scholar son of a respected humanist, ambassador and prothonotary apostolic in the court of Isabel of Castile, Juan Ramírez de Lucena. The lavish volume intended for Isabel and her son Juan, *infant* of Asturias [d. aged 19 on October 4, 1497 in Salamanca] by Luis de Lucena was *Repetición de amores y Arte de axedrez* re-edited as Luis de Lucena, José María de Cossío (ed.), Madrid: Joyas Bibliográficas, 1953; and Luis de Lucena, *El incunable de Lucena: Primer Arte de ajedrez moderno*, Joaquín Pérez de Arriaga Polifemo, 1997.
26. This collection of poems in praise of Mary, set to popular songs and melodies, was conceived essentially for Gautier's own congregation to express a humanistic, gentler spirituality—a counterpoint to the more rigid scholastic view evinced by the nearby cathedral-chapter of Beauvais.
27. Jean-Marie Lhôte, "Martin Le Franc et la dame enragée," *Board Game Studies 5—International Journal for the Study of Board Games*, (2002), 105–110.
28. *Le Conte de Floire et Blancheflor*, Jean-Luc Leclanche (ed.), Paris: Honoré Champion, 1980; Evrart de Conty, *Le Livre des eschez amoureux moralisés*, Françoise Guichard-Tesson & Bruno Roy (eds), Montreal: Editions CERES, 1993; Penninc & Pieter Vostaert, *Roman van Walewein*, David F. Johnson (trans. & ed.), New York: Garland Publications, 1992; *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, in *The Complete Works of the Pearl Poet*, Casey Finch (trans.), Malcolm Andrew, Ronald Waldron & Clifford Peterson (eds), Berkley: University of California Press, 1993, 206–322; *The Avowing of King Arthur*, Roger Dahood (ed.), New York: Garland: 1984; *The Tale of Beryn, with a Prologue of the Merry Adventure of the Pardoner with a Tapster at Canterbury*, F.J. Furnivall and W.G. Stone, London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Trübner, 1909; Thomas Hoccleve, *The*

Regiment of Princes, Charles R. Blyth, Kalamazoo, MI: Medieval Institute Publications, 1999. Cited by Adams in *Power Play*.

29. Steven M. Taylor, "God's Queen: Chess Imagery in the Poetry of Gautier de Coinci" in *Fifteenth-Century Studies* vol. 17 (1990), 403–419, 403. By the beginning of the fifteenth century, the exaltation of the feminine as expressed in poetry, song and literature was firmly entrenched in France where Pierre de Hauteville, Charles VI's cup-bearer, imagined a *cour amoureuese* taking for himself the appellation, *prince d'Amours*.
30. Cf. Barbara F. Weissberger, *Isabel Rules: Constructing Queenship, Wielding Power*, Minneapolis & London: University of Minnesota Press, 2004, ch. 1 "Anxious Masculinity," 1–27.
31. Ibid, 404.
32. Ibid, 3.
33. Francesco Bernardino Caldogno, *Il gioco degli scacchi: poemetto latino inedito*, Luigi Paletto (ed.), Milano: L'Italia scacchistica, 1974. Murray appears to have consulted the single extant manuscript version of the poem in the Bertoliana Library, Vicenza. It is contained in manuscript collection ms. 1861–167, Francisci Bernardini Calidonii, *De ludo scachorum* (Vicenza, Biblioteca civica Bertoliana), H.J.R. Murray, *A History of Chess*, 789–790, 793.
34. Ibid, 423.
35. Ibid.
36. Genesis 2:18, "And the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an helpmeet for him.'"
37. Betty Mayfield, *Gerbert d'Aurillac and the March of Spain: A Convergence of Cultures', The Mathematical Association of America Mathematical Sciences Digital Library*, http://www.maa.org/publications/periodicals/convergence/gerbert-daurillac-and-the-march-of-spain-a-convergence-of-cultures-introduction consulted May 28, 2015.
38. Ricardo Calvo posits that Valencia Spain was the "cradle" of European chess.
    Richard Calvo, "Valencia Spain: The Cradle of European Chess," paper given at CCI (Chess Collectors International) conference held in May 1998 in Vienna, http://history.chess.free.fr/papers/Calvo%201998.pdf retrieved May 28, 2015.
39. José y Brunet y Bellet, *El Ajedrez, investigaciones sobre su origen por D. José Brunet y Bellet*, Barcelona: "L'Aveno," 1890, 226. At that time, of four live births (Violant b. 1381; Jaume b. 1384 d. 1388; Carlos b. 1386 d. 1386 & Ferran b. 1389 d. 1389), to the partnership of Violant and Joan only their eldest, Violant (Yolande), survived, and her half-sister, Joana, was the only surviving child of Joan's earlier marriage to Mata de Armagnac.

40. It was an order made to the bailiff of Valencia on October 10, 1390, ACA Reg. 1973, folio 38 v°. Joana de Daroca was born on October 10, 1375 and Yolande celebrated her ninth birthday on August 11, 1390. Joseph Maria Roca, *Johan I D'Aragó*, Barcelona: Institució Patxot, 1929, 80.
41. Murray, *A History of Chess*, 429.
42. Cf. Jean-Michel Mehl, *Les Jeux au royaume de France du 13e siècle au début du 16e siècle*, Paris : Fayard, 1998 & *Des Jeux et des hommes dans la société médiévale*, Paris : Honoré Champion, 2010; and Quentel-Touche, "Charles V's Visual Definition of the Queen's Virtues," 69–71.
43. Núria Silleras-Fernández, "Widowhood and Deception: Ambiguities of Queenship in [the] Late Medieval Crown of Aragon," in Mark Crane, Richard Raiswell & Margaret Reeves (eds), *Shell Games: Studies in Scams, Frauds and Deceits (1300–1650)*, Toronto: Centre for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2004, 189.
44. Ibid.
45. Rafael Tasis i Marca, *Joan I, El Rei Caçador I Músic*, Barcelona: Editorial Aedos, 1959, 281.
46. Silleras-Fernández, "Widowhood and Deception," 189.
47. Of seven live births, only the eldest, Violant (Yolande), survived. [Violant b. 1381; Jaume b. 1384 d. 1388; Carlos b. 1386 d. 1386 & Ferran b. 1389 d. 1389; Antònia b. 1392 d. 1393; Elionor b. & d. 1393; Pere b. & d. 1394 and Joana b. January 12, 1396, d. March/April 1396.] 1396 was truly an *annus horribilis* for Violant of Bar; her youngest child Joana de Perpiña died in the early spring, her husband, the king, died in May and her beloved younger brothers, Philippe and Henri of Bar, both perished as a result of Nicopolis Crusade of 1396. Philippe died in the Battle of Nicopolis on September 25, 1396 and Henri taken prisoner, later ransomed, died in 1397 on his way home in a crusaders' camp in Trevisio, having caught the plague in Venice.
48. Silleras-Fernández, "Widowhood and Deception," 186 & 187.
49. Silleras-Fernández, *Power, Piety and Patronage*, 43.
50. Ibid, 41.
51. Silleras-Fernández, "Widowhood and Deception," 193.
52. Ibid,192.
53. Ibid,194.
54. Ibid.
55. Charles replaced Jean, duke of Berry, who died on March 15, 1416. Louis II of Anjou was concerned to place his son-in-law Charles in as strategic a position as possible. The dauphin Louis died of dysentery on December 18, 1415, and his brother Jean succeeded him as dauphin. Louis II of Anjou, president of the king's council in his absence, managed to keep the dauphin Jean away from Paris due to the refusal of Burgundy to allow the

dauphin to return if he himself were to be excluded. Louis, as president of the royal council, seconded Charles to serve as a member on September 3, 1416. The dauphin Jean died of an aural fistula in Compiègne on April 4 or 5, 1417, never having re-entered Paris. Patrick van Kerrebouck, Christophe Brun, Christian de Mérindol, *Nouvelle Histoire généalogique de l'auguste maison de France: Volume III, Les Valois*, Villeneuve d'Ascq: Patrick van Kerrebrouk, 1990, 129–130.

56. Isabeau requested the aid of Louis II and Yolande on April 17, 1417, but by then Louis was terminally ill, and the dauphin Charles was back in Anjou to wait out his father-in-law's final hours.
57. Cf. Zita Eva Rohr, *Yolande of Aragon (1381–1442) Family and Power: The Reverse of the Tapestry*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016.
58. Enguerran de Monstrelet, Louis Douët-d'Arcq (ed.), *La Chronique d'Enguerran de Monstrelet en deux livres, avec pieces justicatives: 1400–1444*, 6 vols., Paris: J. Renouard, 1857–1862, Tome I. Bk. I, Ch. CLXXVII, 403.
59. Cf. Cosandey, "De lance en quenouille," regarding Charles V's judicial reform fixing the legal majority of young kings.
60. This occurred on November 6, 1417: "(…) appelé alors 'Charles filz du roy de France, daulphin de Viennoiz, duc de Berry, de Touraine, & conte de Poitou, lieutenant general de Monseigneur par tout son royaume." This deliberation was made with the consent of the royal council, in the presence of the princes of the blood, *parlement*, the University and the bourgeois of Paris. It was a counter-move to ordinances (dated January 6 and 7, 1417) made in the 'absence' of the king by Isabeau where she named Burgundy administrator of public affairs. The king had already removed Isabeau's blanket authority by an ordinance dated June 16, 1417; the November ordinance (made by the king himself and not merely proclaimed in his name) reinforced this earlier decree. Kerrebrouk, *Nouvelle Histoire généalogique*, 129–130 & 135, n. 9,. Cf. Cosandey, "De lance en quenouille."
61. Jules Michelet, *Histoire de France*, 5 Vols, Paris: L. Hachette, 1833–41, IV, 330; Jean Le Févre, François Morand (ed.), *Chronique de Jean Le Févre, seigneur de Saint-Rémy*, 2 Vols, Paris: Renouard, 1876–1881, I, 292–3.
62. During the siege, Marie was moved to the relative safety of the residence of the duke of Bourbon. The Berry Herald, Le Bouvier (Gilles-Jacques) dit Berry, *Les Chroniques du Roy Charles VII par Gilles Le Bouvier dit le Hérault Berry*, Henri Courteault, Léonce Celier & Marie-Hélène Jullien de Pommerol (eds), Paris: Librairie C. Klincksiek, 1979, 88. Jean of Bourbon was an Agincourt prisoner of the English in London, his wife, Marie of Berry, acted as his regent. Marie of Berry was Yolande of Aragon's cousin.

63. The Berry Herald, 89.
64. 'Monstrelet, *Chronique*, T. I, Bk. I, Ch. CCVI, 444.
65. "A femme pourvue d'amant, point n'est besoin d'enfant. N'ay point nourri et élévé iceluy jusques icy, pour que le laissiez trépasser comme ses frères, ou le rendiez fol comme son père, à moins que le faissiez Anlois comme vous. Le garde mien, venez le prendre si l'osez." I have been unable to locate this citation in Bourdigné to date, it could be a pseudo-citation or an apocryphal statement contained in an as yet undiscovered archive. Jehanne d'Orliac (Anne Marie Jeanne LaPorte) wrote her biography in 1933, and there was considerable archival loss during World War II. Jehanne d'Orliac, *Yolande d'Anjou: La Reine des quatre royaumes*, Paris: Librairie Plon, 1933. I hope to excavate Orliac's personal archive of manuscripts, letters, unpublished writings and documents to attempt to determine her sources and her thinking. She bequeathed them in 1975 to the Archives Départementales D'Indre-et-Loire, Sous-série 75J Fonds Jehanne d'Orliac.
66. Burgundy was a passive ally of/proactively neutral toward Henry V of England and had been for some considerable time.
67. Orliac, *Yolande d'Anjou*, 56.
68. Kerrebrouck, *Nouvelle Histoire généalogique*,135, n. 9. Cf. Gaston Du Fresne de Beaucourt, *Histoire de Charles VII par G. Du Fresne de Beaucourt*, 6 vols, Paris: Librairie de la Société Bibliographique, A. Picard, 1881–1891, T. I, 98.
69. *Ordonnances des Rois de France de la Troisième Race,* Louis-Guillaume de Vilevault & Louis-Georges Oudard Feudrix de Bréquigny (eds), Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1782, T. X, 477.
70. Nicole Pons, "Intellectual Patterns and Affective Reactions in Defence of the Dauphin Charles, 1419–1422," Christopher Allmand (ed.), *War, Government and Power in Late Medieval France*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 59 & n.18.
71. Aron Nimzowitsch (Russian born Danish unofficial chess master and influential writer on chess b. 1886 d. 1935) cited by Jean-Michel Mehl, *Les Jeux au royaume de France du XIIIe au debut du XVIe siècle*, Paris: Fayard, 1990, 11.
72. Dawn Bratsch-Prince, *La vida y espistolario de Violante de Bar (1365–1431) dusquesa de Gerona y reina de Aragón* (unpublished translation notes), 15. Cf. Dawn Bratsch-Prince, *Violante de Bar 1365–1431)*, Madrid: Ediciones del Orto, 2000, 41–42.
73. On May 6, 1421, Violant, dowager queen of Aragon wrote to María of Castile, queen of Aragon and lieutenant-general for her absent husband, Alfons V, to remind her that it is a queen's duty to intercede with her king to establish peace and reconciliation. Violant explains the role of a queen

to María and asks for her intervention to establish peace between Aragon and Anjou over the disputed territory of Naples-Sicily. Arxiu de la Corona d'Aragó, reg. 2052, fol. 106r. Louis III of Anjou died defending his rights in Consenza on November 12, 1434.

74. Isabeau ordered bone and ivory chess pieces in 1396, and commissioned and owned other sumptuous chess sets. Arie Van der Stoep, *A History of Draughts : With a Diachronic Study of Words for Draughts, Chess, Backgammon and Morris*, The Netherlands : Rockanje, 1984, 34–5; Kathleen Wilson-Chevalier, "Art Patronage and Women (including Hapsburgs) in the orbit of King Francis I," *Renaissance Studies*, Vol. 16, N° 4, (2002), 474–523, 476.

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Outlander, Baby Killer, Poisoner? Rethinking Bona Sforza's Black Legend

Katarzyna Kosior

Bona Sforza (b. 1494–d. 1557), the wife of King Sigismund I the Old of Poland, was an absolutist, a poisoner, and a bad mother to her five children, including the future king Sigismund II August. She was the culprit behind the downfall of the Jagiellonian dynasty as well as a danger to the Polish-Lithuanian elective monarchy and "noble democracy." This overwhelming impression emerges from the popular culture and some of the scholarship concerning Poland's sixteenth-century Italian queen. One of Bona's most vigorous critics remains Antoni Dantysz, whose vitriolic monograph (1915) about Sigismund August's upbringing remains the authority on Bona's role as a royal mother.[1] His vision was recently revived in the biographies of Sigismund August by Anna Sucheni-Grabowska and Alicja Dybkowska.[2] While Bona's modern biographers including Maria Bogucka, Marek Werde, and Władysław Pociecha have largely redeemed her political role and agency, her image as a mother remains tarnished.[3]

This chapter, the first publication devoted to Bona in the English language since 1904, will challenge the negative representations of her moth-

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erhood and will argue that the nobility attacked her on these grounds to emphasize her less-than-queenly behavior.[4] She disregarded the rules of sixteenth-century gender politics by publicly taking control of the affairs of state rather than achieving her aims by discreet manipulation expected from a queen consort. The nobility deemed it unacceptable that Bona introduced a foreign element to the Polish politics and to their king's upbringing, which they felt was lacking in the Polish masculine values. However, another reason behind the attack was to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with Sigismund the Old's governance of the realm. Their self-fashioning as the guardians of Sigismund August's education legitimized that particular means of attacking the royal couple, while the close connection between Bona's role as a mother and queen consort made it an especially potent way of incapacitating her politically. The queen's eventual downfall demonstrates that accusations concerning her motherhood could break a queen's political career just as an unblemished image of maternal perfection could help make it.

This chapter takes a twofold approach to looking at Bona's reputation as a mother and queen: first, it will explore the sixteenth-century events that were the genesis of Bona's black legend and argue that the historical evidence does not support the negative vision of Bona as a careless and cold mother represented by Dantysz as well as the more recent biographies. However, it suggests complex reasons behind Bona's infamy. Then, the chapter will investigate the afterlife of the original accusations made against the Italian queen and examine the ways in which her reputation as a bad mother has been influenced by the political and cultural forces that formed modern Poland. Finally, it will also reflect on the relationship between the popular culture and the historiography produced in the twentieth century. Thus, Bona's case highlights the universally complex connection between queenship, motherhood, politics, and the judgments made by posterity.

The Genesis

Bona Sforza arrived in Poland on April 11, 1518, having already made a positive impression on Polish ambassadors, if the flattery contained in diplomatic dispatches is to be believed. The daughter of Duke Gian Galeazzo Sforza of Milan and Isabella of the Neapolitan Aragons, Bona was represented as intelligent, beautiful, resolute, and exemplifying the virtues of the Renaissance education provided by her parents.[5] According to the description by the Polish ambassadors sent to Naples to contract the marriage, Bona "has the most beautiful golden hair, and at the same time black eyebrows and eye-

lashes, her eyes are more angelic than human, […] her cheeks rosy, as though decorated with a natural blush of timidity."[6] Then they turned to praising her education: "We heard her speaking Latin without a preparation beforehand, and we take God as our witness that she said nothing that would not be eloquent either with regards to metaphor or speaking in the most elegant manner."[7] The marriage contracted between 24-year-old Bona and Sigismund the Old, who was over twice his bride's age, cemented the alliance between the Jagiellonians and the Habsburgs, since Bona was Emperor Maximilian I's niece by his marriage to Bianca Sforza (Gian Galeazzo's sister).[8]

The later disappointment in Bona's motherhood was affected by the nobility's tremendous expectation about her performance as a mother from the moment she set foot in Cracow. When the bride met her husband for the first time on April 15 in Łobzów, the speeches prepared by the Polish nobles were brimming with excitement and desire to instruct the Italian queen in the ways of Polish motherhood.[9] Among the usual platitudes expressing happiness to have a queen from such an illustrious family, Stanisław Łaski, the archbishop of Gniezno, declared that Sigismund, who was already a son, brother, and nephew to kings, should father sons to imitate him in virtue.[10] The pressure was on both the king and the queen to continue the Jagiellonian legitimacy. Wedding poetry written by some of the most prominent Polish and German writers expressed similar notions. The song composed by Andrzej Krzycki, a notorious debauchee who became Bona's secretary and eventually the archbishop of Gniezno, is especially interesting as it has never been analyzed in detail before. Władysław Pociecha, who otherwise provides summaries of the wedding poetry, merely mentions that "there is a wedding song entitled *Hymenaeus,* which was intended to be sung during the wedding celebrations."[11] It was probably because when Pociecha's work was published in 1949, it was still considered indecent even to print a translation from the song's original Latin.

The text of this saucy poem bluntly demonstrates the importance of procreation and fertility as the core of a queen consort's power. European ceremonies usually expressed this in a highly metaphorical way symbolized by, for example, a flowing fountain in France or entwined branches in England.[12] Krzycki employed no such subtlety in combining what Marian Filar called "the Renaissance natural sexuality" and the traditionally Polish form of playful wedding songs.[13] He indicates that "absent from the chorus is Vesta, the protector of chaste life and Diana the guardian of pure virgins." However, Venus, the goddess of conjugal life, is very much present together with Apollo and his Muses to set the romantic mood for the

royal couple. Then follow the instructions for the king to abandon chastity and remove his belt, so that he may remove "his wife's blossom." The poet gives voice to the anxiety surrounding the marriage and reminds the audience that the wedding night was supposed to "quickly" make Sigismund into a parent of "offspring, who would capture the people's hope and your [Sigismund's] glory." Krzycki also addresses Bona: "Virgin, do not resist your husband, with whom you are firmly united by love." He advises her not to cry and lectures her: "You were named the Queen of a mighty kingdom, and your greatest glory [comes] from your offspring."[14] This last passage refers to her coronation which took place the day before the wedding night, on April 18. The coronation book specifies that first the marriage ceremony was performed and then followed the queen's unction, the ritual consecrating her ability to bear children. After Bona was anointed, her loose hair, the symbol of her virginity, was braided by two matrons in a uniquely Polish ritual.[15] The ceremony marked Bona as a wife and prospective mother even as she was being crowned the queen of Poland, rendering the link between these three roles unbreakable.[16]

European coronation ceremonies by nature emphasized the importance of queenly motherhood, but royal fertility was usually framed by the paradox of Marian queenship which emphasized purity to moderate the sexual aspect of a consort's role. This is demonstrated, for example, by Gordon Kipling and Alice Hunt with regards to Anne Boleyn's coronation pageants.[17] However, *Hymenaeus,* combined with the symbolic geometry of Bona's coronation ritual, delivers a remarkably strong message about gender roles in a royal marriage. Purity disappears from the equation to leave Bona as a submissive wife who patiently suffers the pains of procreation and takes pride solely in raising her sons to be the spitting image of their father—a dominant and controlling figure.

This explicit image of a queen as "a collection of organs" (to borrow Hilary Mantel's phrase) clearly stands out even among other sixteenth-century Polish wedding poetry.[18] Such bluntness was compelled by the need to save the Jagiellonian dynasty and the largest composite monarchy on the continent.[19] Poland had become an elective monarchy when the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Władysław Jagiełło, married the Polish queen regnant, Jadwiga I, in 1386; the monarchy's electiveness was formally recognized in 1434.[20] This event also established the personal union between the vast lands of Poland and Lithuania leading to the subsequent elections of Jagiełło's sons and grandchildren to the Polish throne. The hereditary rulers of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania were to govern Poland

as elective kings for the following 200 years; in 1569, the realms were linked permanently by a constitutional union at the Lublin parliament.[21] In 1518, however, this complex political union was precarious, because Sigismund was the last of his line and his first marriage to Hungarian Barbara Zapolya had produced only daughters. Since the union was so dependent on the Jagiellonian blood, Bona's womb was expected to remedy the danger to the dynasty and Poland-Lithuania.

But the survival of the dynasty was not the only factor driving the wedding pageantry. When Łaski and Krzycki declared that the king's sons should imitate him in virtue and capture his glory, they also implied that they were to exemplify their father's Polish masculinity.[22] This was linked to the early modern self-representation of the nobility as the warrior caste, their prowess based on their descent from the legendary Sarmatians whose skill at war was unparalleled.[23] Bona's Polishness was crucial to her success as a consort and mother because she could expect to be supervised by the nobility whose strong position was facilitated by the unique system of parliamentary rule. Polish kings had been deprived of legislative powers ever since the *Nihil novi* act was adopted by Aleksander I Jagiellon at the parliament of 1505, stating that "nothing new should be enacted into the common law and public liberty by ourselves and our successors without the common consent of our councilors and the envoys of the counties."[24] The Polish parliament, or *sejm*, consisted of the senate and the chamber of representatives. The *Nihil novi* act provided basis for the idea of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, imitating the Roman Republic, where all noblemen were equal and politically involved regardless of their financial status—this political system is often termed a "noble democracy."[25] The statements about Bona's expected submissiveness, maternal pride, and Polish motherhood were not just platitudes she could eventually exploit to build her political image as Catherine de Medici did in France.[26] They were demands that could be publicly enforced within the extraordinary Polish parliamentary culture.

Grounded in the Polish ritual and the expectations of the nobility, Bona's motherhood would always be considered less than perfect by the nobility. It made her vulnerable to political attacks, especially after her first "failure"—the delivery of Princess Isabella exactly nine months after the wedding night. Although Dantysz acknowledges that "nature did not deny Bona fertility and easy delivery of children," he emphasizes Sigismund's disappointment at the news of his daughter's birth.[27] However, in rejoicing at the health of his child and expressing hope that the next one would be a boy, Sigismund merely repeated the usual mantra

of kings presented with daughters instead of sons.[28] The long-expected heir, Sigismund August, followed in 1520, and his birth was celebrated with extravagant festivities in Poland, Hungary, and Italy.[29] Having fulfilled her duty, Bona then gave birth to three princesses, Sophie, Anne, and Catherine.[30]

The relationship between Bona and her three youngest daughters is a building block in her reputation as a bad mother. Even though Maria Bogucka represents a positive image of the Italian queen, she argues that

> Bona's coldness towards her younger children, especially in comparison to the love she bestowed upon Isabella and Sigismund, is interesting even in the period when the idea of parental affection was not as developed as in the nineteenth and twentieth century. In that detachment and indifference, it is possible to sense Bona's resentment that the awaited children turned out to be merely girls.[31]

No specific piece of evidence is given to support this argument, making it one of the statements that maligned Bona for posterity. It was first printed in Bogucka's biography in 1989, and, by 1990, Edward Rudzki gave the remark even more strength when he published his collection of short biographies of Polish queens. Aiming at a general audience, Rudzki wrote that Bona "loved them [the younger daughters] less than Isabella and Sigismund," reinforcing the queen's bad press in the public imagination.[32]

Bogucka claims that Bona demonstrated indifference toward her younger daughters by neglecting to arrange appropriate marriages for them. This argument loses potency in the European context because some princesses were not expected to marry but to join convents or become companions for their mothers instead.[33] This sort of delay did not make Bona into a bad mother but a royal one who was looking after the best interests of her younger daughters. For example, she might have been following in the footsteps of her own mother, Duchess Isabella, who waited until her daughter was 24 in order to find the most advantageous match possible for her.[34] Bogucka also neglects to connect the letter sent by Sigismund August to Mikołaj "the Black" Radziwiłł in 1552 to Bona's active interest in the marriages of her daughters.[35] In it the king describes how she pleaded with him to find husbands for Catherine and Anne (who eventually became queens of Sweden and Poland). Bona may have been politically defeated in the conflict with her son over his second marriage and about to leave Poland for her Italian lands never to return, but evidence shows that she was reluctant to

leave her daughters unmarried and vulnerable, certainly signs of concern if not affection toward them.[36]

Further evidence supports a more complex version of Bona's relationship with the princesses than that portrayed by her modern biographers. For example, when Sigismund August's secret marriage to Barbara Radziwiłł was revealed in 1548, the three daughters followed their mother into a voluntary exile to Masovia in a united front in disapproval. Their loyalty is especially evident in a laconic and slightly rude reply sent by Sophie, Catherine, and Anne to their brother's Christmas wishes in 1548, saying that they prayed for him during the holidays as he had "ordered" them to do.[37] Bona was also an affectionate stepmother to Sigismund the Old's daughters from his first marriage, Anne and Jadwiga. Ludwik Jost Decjusz, the main chronicler for Sigismund the Old's early reign, reports that during the couple's wedding feast "the queen dressed the king's daughters beautifully according to custom; all the while she kept them close, embracing the older one at her side in a display of a particularly maternal gentleness and kindness as if driven by most pious virtues."[38] This description could be attributed to propaganda as the official chronicler would certainly wish to represent the perfect image of a royal family for posterity, but Bona's affection is further demonstrated by Sigismund the Old's letter sent following the death of Princess Anne in 1519. He mourns his daughter but also writes: "We thank Your Royal Highness for bestowing on her your affectionate maternal care, resulting from duty consistent with your virtue and our mutual love."[39] The three letters and Decjusz's description of the wedding celebrations contribute to our understanding of the family dynamic of the last Jagiellonians with Bona at its center as a caring mother to her children.

Despite this evidence, certain modern historians still portray Bona as careless concerning the futures of her daughters and reckless regarding the continuation of the dynasty. In 1527, she was five months pregnant again, but as Bogucka pointedly observes, "she could not deny herself her favorite diversion which was the hunt."[40] Marcin Bielski reports in his contemporary chronicle that the king and queen traveled to Niepołomice (the royal countryside residence) in order to hunt bear; the beast had been brought in a crate especially from the Lithuanian forests. Having already unsaddled and wounded several men, the bear charged at Bona who was thrown off her horse when the animal tripped in an attempt to flee. As the result she miscarried a boy who was hastily christened Albert and buried on the same day.[41]

Because Bona would never have children again, Paweł Jasienica rather dramatically talks about the miscarriage as the "catastrophe" that ended the dynasty, while Bogucka observes that the fate of the Jagiellonians was decided on that afternoon.[42] The Polish historians clearly have a strong opinion that pregnant Bona should not have been riding, but it was not unusual in the sixteenth century for expectant queens to participate in vigorous public activities ranging from hunts to accompanying their husbands on campaign—Isabella of Castile in full panoply leading troops into battle pregnant being the most extreme example.[43] Bona's action in itself was not wrong, but it is judged as reckless by its dynastic implications. Had there been no accident or had the baby been a girl, it seems likely the incident would be mentioned as no more than an anecdote. The readiness of modern historians to blame Bona—who, remember, had given birth to five healthy children—is fascinating not least since Sigismund August's three wives collectively failed to produce even one heir. It becomes even more significant when one notes that this severe judgment is not reflected in Bielski's contemporary chronicle. He mentions the miscarriage in passing and continues on to report the hilarious retort given by the king's jester when his unhorsing was ridiculed.[44] The key point then is not that Bona was viewed as a bad mother from a contemporary standpoint, but that her motherhood is judged based on revisionist "what if" arguments made in modern scholarship and popular culture.

Bona thus becomes the culprit behind the dynasty's downfall and subsequently a bad mother because her stereotypical representation is based on the slanderous remarks made by her political enemies. Maria Bogucka indicates that these were part of a political campaign against Bona, but again she neglects to provide evidence or further explanation of the pivotal argument in challenging the queen's black legend.[45] The rumors about Bona's motherhood gained strength after 1529; the year her nine-year-old son was elected to the Polish throne as the *rex iunior* while his father was still alive. The unprecedented election *vivente rege* might have been Bona's attempt to retain power, if her elderly husband died before her son reached maturity, but Marek Werde is right to argue that her intention was instead to strengthen and stabilize the dynasty's position.[46]

The unconstitutional election facilitated the nobility's self-fashioning as the *rex iunior*'s guardians, which was another means of exercising political control. Dantysz claims that this started with the speech delivered by Andrzej Krzycki as the representative of the nobility immediately

after the election, expressing their trust in the royal couple's abilities as parents. However, the manuscript containing the speech could not be found under the reference provided by Dantysz or otherwise.[47] If such a speech was indeed delivered by the same poet who wrote *Hymenaeus*, it was the nobility's way of reminding Bona that she was raising a king rather than a mere candidate in a future election.

By 1530, the queen's political power seemed impregnable. Bona conducted wide-ranging economic reforms in Lithuania, influenced appointments to the most important offices in the kingdom and directed Poland's foreign policy by supporting the Hungarian national party against Habsburg expansion.[48] Striving to fortify the dynasty, she started to buy out the crown lands taken for royal debts. Rather than returning them to the possession of the crown, however, she converted them into private property of the Jagiellonians, which was seen by the nobility as an attempt to construct an economic base for absolutism.[49] These political operations and the election *vivente rege* were in conflict with the interests of the Polish nobility, who deemed that Bona and Sigismund were attacking the electiveness of the monarchy as well as their political liberties.[50]

Bona's enemies started voicing concerns about her growing political power by 1532. Ercole Daissoli, the secretary of Hieronim Łaski, a prominent Polish diplomat, wrote that "the queen has become all-powerful and deprived the king and his council of all authority so that now she plays a similar role to the French queen regent [Louise of Savoy]."[51] The foreign gender politics represented by the queen were unacceptable in Poland. Considering that Bona's operations were always co-signed by her husband, Daissoli's words were a jab at Sigismund's failure to control her as much as at her for emasculating him.[52] The nobility finally resorted to using their position as the *rex iunior*'s self-appointed guardians to chastise the royal couple, who, in their opinion, were failing miserably at performing the expected gender roles defined by their wedding *Hymenaeus.* The nobles' allegations were first disseminated via letters exchanged between the members of Bona's rival faction: Piotr Tomicki (the vice-chancellor of the crown), Stanisław Borek (a canon from Cracow), and Samuel Maciejowski (the bishop of Chełm) in 1535. The dispatches refer to a meeting where the young king's education was discussed, and they indicate that the queen's rivals were already considering using it to discredit her. Sigismund August's Renaissance education was very well conducted, but the queen was still vulnerable because her future political influence

was based on her proximity to the boy.[53] Criticizing the king's education could provide a way to replace the teachers chosen by Bona and effectively separate mother and son.

The first public accusation against Bona was made following the Cracow parliament of 1537, when the Polish nobility gathered near Lviv to prepare for war with Wallachia.[54] The assembly quickly turned into a *rokosz*, defined by Stanisław Cynarski as a parliamentary gathering of the entire equestrian estate, held without the king and potentially with rebellious intentions.[55] The closest Poland-Lithuania came to civil war in the early sixteenth century, the Lviv *rokosz* passed into history as the Chicken War, named after the casualties devoured in the conflict. A more significant victim of the *rokosz* was Bona's reputation as a mother. Instead of launching an armed rebellion, the nobility presented Sigismund the Old with a list of demands cited by Stanisław Górski in his account of the events.[56] Piotr Zborowski, the castellan of Małogoszcz, was the first to express dissatisfaction at the upbringing and education of Sigismund August. His speech is one of the crowning pieces of evidence in Dantysz's monograph. Zborowski claimed that the young king should have a separate court rather than being a part of his mother's establishment and be taught to enjoy manly entertainments instead of spending time in the company of women.[57] The nobility judged that Bona's failure as a Polish mother was demonstrated by Sigismund's lack of the Polish masculine virtues.

Bona's motherhood was on the agenda, but the accusations served the greater purpose of imposing other political demands by reminding the royal couple who their son's custodians were. Dantysz, however, neglects to mention that the *rokosz* aimed to chastise Bona for her other political activities, first and foremost her acquisition of the crown lands. The attack on his consort also forced the issue of Sigismund the Old's unsatisfactory performance as the king. This was part of the "executionist movement"; its objective being the enforcement of the nobility's liberties including granting offices by the parliament instead of the king as well as the abolition of church taxes and restricting the Senate's power.[58] Polish historians agree that, even though a good military commander, Sigismund was an indecisive and weak ruler.[59] It seems that Sigismund August was not the only one found lacking in the Polish masculinity. Rather than being about Bona's bad motherhood, the issue was that she was emasculating not one but two Polish kings at the same time. The nobility revoked the earlier statements of trust and questioned her

suitability as the queen, Sigismund's suitability as the king, and the *rex iunior*'s very raison d'être.

The queen's power base was shaken and her abilities as a mother would continue to be questioned until she died in Italy on November 19, 1557, poisoned by her closest confidants. Following the *rokosz*, the queen's foreign policy began to unravel, starting with her Hungarian agenda and failure to prevent the marriage between her son and Elizabeth of Austria in 1543.[60] This not only destroyed her plans for a French alliance but also constituted another blow to her reputation as a mother. The sources represent Elizabeth as sweet and innocent in contrast to her tormentor, Bona, who strived to separate the young queen from her husband.[61] The conflict escalated to such an extent that Ferdinand Habsburg dispatched a special ambassador to defend his daughter against the old queen's deliberate attacks. The latter were motivated by Bona's concern for her eldest child, Isabella, the Hungarian queen dowager, who was striving to defend her infant son's realm against Elizabeth father's expansion. Elizabeth's untimely death in 1545 also started a series of rumors that Bona had poisoned her.[62]

From that moment onwards, the opinions on Bona's motherhood were divided. Some claimed alongside Bona's critics from the *rokosz* that she pampered Sigismund August to be her "mummy's boy," while others, including some modern historians, repeat that he was deadly terrified of his mother as Giovanni Masurpino had reported back to Vienna in 1543.[63] Too strict or too affectionate, a queen's motherhood was always vulnerable to extreme perception. Given that these opinions were disseminated by Bona's staunchest enemies, both represent the queen's motherhood in a distorted light.[64] Dantysz, usually more concerned with gossip and slander rather than facts, illogically suggests that both of these mutually precluding representations were accurate.[65]

The queen's motherhood was politically charged because she had to be incorporated into either her husband's or her son's body politic in order to exercise power. Regina Schulte argues that the female nature of a queen's body requires the proximity of a male body even if the latter is weak, and this was the case in sixteenth-century Poland-Lithuania as well as England.[66] Even though seemingly fortified by her financial provisions and factions, Bona's position was precarious and dependent on her family relationships. That is the reason why the direct cause of her downfall was the conflict with Sigismund August over his marriage to Barbara Radziwiłł. Following Bona's exodus to Masovia, he was convinced to

believe not only the most preposterous rumors, such as Bona's reputation as a poisoner, but also that she was a bad mother to him.[67] In a letter to Mikołaj "the Red" Radziwiłł, Barbara's brother, from 1552, Sigismund reveals that his mother often deserted him as a child and was not missed.[68] The aim of the nobles was finally achieved; the relationship between the queen and her son was broken to her political ruin.

The Afterlife

In the 1980s television series on Bona's life, directed by Jan Majewski, there is no indication of the young bride's charms so blatantly praised by the sixteenth-century sources. Twenty-four-year-old Bona is played by Aleksandra Śląska, a 55-year-old actress whose age was emphasized rather than hidden by the generosity of her makeup artist. In fact, very little is represented of the initial good impression made by Bona at the Polish court. She is portrayed from the very beginning as manipulative and authoritarian, her favorite word being Italian *"presto!"* indicating how her orders were to be carried out. Nine years prior to the first publication of Maria Bogucka's biography, the television series constructed the vision of Bona's motherhood using some tropes already mentioned in this chapter. In the very first scene, the old queen and Sigismund August express their concerns over the end of the Jagiellonian dynasty. It is linked to Bona's recklessness as a mother by her own words: "I cried for the first time in Niepołomice when I killed Albert with my carelessness."[69] This statement sets the tone for the entire series which then also portrays Bona's disappointment at the birth of her four daughters, when she refuses to hold them after the delivery.[70] And yet, the program is deceptively accurate with the characters quoting historical sources. One could be forgiven for thinking that the representation of Bona's motherhood in Bogucka's biography was suggested by television, especially since earlier publications on the subject were influenced by cultural and political trends.

Bona's Italian birth had a significant impact on the twentieth-century perception of her as a mother, shaped by the partition of Poland in the late eighteenth century and the birth of Polish nationalism.[71] Rogers Brubaker argues that while the old Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth was "a loosely integrated polity whose great ethnolinguistic heterogeneity was not seen as problematic," during the partition, Polish nationhood was "redefined in ethnolinguistic terms," leading to a "social deepening" and "ethnic narrowing."[72] Having been deprived of territorial borders, the Polish nation

became characterized by its ethnicity and in xenophobic opposition to other nations.

It was Bona's fate to be defined in contrast and opposition to everything that was considered Polish. Bogucka, in her article about Barbara Radziwiłł, Sigismund August's second wife, suggests that the partitions of the old Commonwealth necessitated the birth of a comforting legend on a national scale. She focuses on how Barbara naturally became such a phenomenon through representations in literature and on stage as the Polish Cinderella.[73] Even though the marriage was fiercely opposed in the sixteenth century and Barbara denounced as a whore and schemer, the nineteenth-century image of her was as an innocent beauty and "mother of a nation."[74]

Barbara's beatification as the martyr saint served as a metaphor for Poland as a martyred nation and was related to the foreign mother-in-law's original opposition to the marriage. Based on Sigismund August's original fears, the legend claiming that Bona poisoned Barbara developed between the sixteenth and the twentieth centuries. Colorful details were added, for example, by Stefan Wiechecki. Called the "Homer of Warsaw's streets," he was the author of popular satirical feuilletons about Polish kings and queens written in the Warsaw dialect and published in 1948.[75] He claimed that the old queen used rat poison and Polish dumplings or *pierogi* for her wicked purpose.[76] Bona's image as a mother is defined by national stereotypes rather than her actions as substantiated by historical evidence. Historians read much into her close relationship with her aunt Lucrezia Borgia, a notorious poisoner, and never fail to point out that poison is a typically Italian weapon.[77] Nikodem Bończa Tomaszewski argues that in creation of national heroes, "the historical individual is less important than the cultural ideas he or she embodied."[78] The same could be argued about national villains—the unappreciated figures that stand in contrast to virgin saints and valiant knights. Polish nationalism required Bona to be an Italian villainess in opposition to Barbara, and her alien motherhood was an already established means to creating that image.

It seems significant that one in a succession of theatrical representations of Barbara's legend premiered in 1914, the year before Dantysz published his monograph condemning Bona's motherhood.[79] Whether he was inspired by the play or not, his text is so infused with early twentieth-century nationalist sentiments that it should be treated as a primary source and not the leading piece of literature on Bona's motherhood. Rather than based in historical evidence, his arguments are constructed on xenophobic claims such as that "Bona exploited her high status in Poland to advance

her personal agenda; she never became attached to the country and nation in which she lived."[80] Another fundament of his analysis is the contrast between the old and proper Polish values personified by Sigismund the Old and Bona's Italian demoralization of the Polish court as well as her son. Dantysz writes in his opening statements that "Sigismund I was above all honorable and would never compromise his conscience. In that respect, he differed considerably from his wife whose conscience was not characterized by such sensitivity."[81] As an example of Bona's detrimental influence on the morality of the Polish court, he notes her lack of devotion to the Polish Catholic traditions. He blamed her upbringing for the fact that Bona's son later considered making Poland a Protestant kingdom, evoking another tenet of Polish nationalism as Catholicism was a crucial element in its construction.[82] Sigismund the Old's Polishness is set in opposition to Bona's morally dubious Italian ways with regards to their son's education. Bona's influence, Dantysz argues, made it "un-Polish and emasculating," expanding on the accusations from the *rokosz*.[83] The king's masculinity was important in the twentieth century as a symbol of the old-fashioned Polish values. Dantysz notes that any influence Sigismund the Old had on the boy "could only be of the best sort" exemplifying "kindness, justice, diligence and nobility."[84]

Following World War II, Polish nationalism was augmented by the problematic relationship between Poland and Germany as well as a general anti-West attitude fueled by the communist propaganda.[85] This complex cultural prejudice was perpetuated by what Maria Janion called the "Polish post-colonial attitude," manifesting in

> a sense that Poland and its history are unimportant and peripheral. This rather popular feeling of inferiority to the "West" is countered within the same paradigm by the messianic pride taking the shape of narratives about our unique suffering and merit, our greatness and superiority over the "immoral" West, as well as our mission in the East.[86]

In this political climate, the cosmopolitan Italian queen, who contributed to dissemination of European Renaissance trends in Poland was bound to receive bad press. For example, Paweł Jasienica denounces Bona as the "Emperor's choice," in a time when criticizing Germany in any and all historical periods was favored by the communist censorship.[87] The television program emphasizes Bona's foreign origin through the use of Italian language, by highlighting her granting offices to other Italians as

well as the queen's contempt for Polish cuisine, alcohol, furniture, and even Princess Jadwiga's difficult-to-pronounce name.[88]

Western loose morals were the basis for Stefan Wiechecki's representation of Bona's motherhood in 1948.[89] While the chapter on her is one of the most linguistically clever and entertaining pieces in the collection, it also mercilessly ridicules the queen. According to Wiechecki, she was originally a governess hired to teach the royal children foreign languages. He alludes to her immoral ways in writing "the children were running wild all day dirty and snotty while the king flirted with Bona as he went down every night to get a glass of water from the kitchen where she slept on a camp bed."[90] Wiechecki deprives Bona of motherhood altogether, but it does not stop him from pointing out her carelessness in dealing with children—another familiar trope. However serious or mocking they were, the jabs at Bona's motherhood made by popular culture echo throughout the twentieth-century historiography regarding the queen.

Bona's case reveals the complexity of factors behind judgments made on historical figures. Fact mixed with myth, revisionism, and the forces of history shape our understanding of their actions as well as their representations in popular culture and historiography. Disentangling the stereotypes surrounding royal motherhood is especially problematic as it is emotionally charged not least because of its dynastic implications. Bona's black legend was built on layers of variously motivated emotive statements and claims rather than on critical analysis of the sixteenth-century source material. The issue was not that she was a bad mother, but rather that she refused to become a truly Polish one. Her unabashed outlandishness was always connected to the way she was perceived in politics. She remained an outsider who held a mirror to Polish politics and found them in need of improvement, a grievous offense to the nobility's eyes, necessitating an attack on her relationship with her son, the core of the queenly power. The discussion about the Commonwealth's most controversial queen will no doubt continue, but the reasons why she was maligned by history remain unchanged—gender, politics, and Poland's turbulent past.

Notes

1. A. Dantysz, *O wychowaniu Zygmunta Augusta* (Cracow: Akademia Umiejętności, 1915).

2. A. Sucheni-Grabowska, *Zygmunt August: Król Polski i Wielki Książę Litewski* (Warsaw: Krupski i S-ka, 1996) p. 21; A. Dybkowska, *Zygmunt August* (Lublin: Test, 2003) pp. 19–20.
3. M. Bogucka, *Bona Sforza* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1989/2009); M. Werde, *Królowa Bona: między Włochami a Polską* (Warsaw: Zamek Królewski w Warszawie, 1992); W. Pociecha, *Królowa Bona (1494–1557): czasy i ludzie Odrodzenia*, vols 1–4 (Poznań: Poznańskie Towarzystwo Nauk, 1949).
4. A. Darowski, *Bona Sforza* (Rome: Tipografia del Senato, 1904).
5. Bona's education: W. Pociecha, *Królowa Bona*…, vol. 1, pp. 157–162.
6. *Acta Tomiciana: Tomus Quartus Epistolarum. Legationum. Responsorum. Actionum et Rerum Gestarum*, S. Górski (ed.) (Kórnik: Biblioteka Kórnicka, 1855) no 301. Henceforth AT IV.
7. ibid.
8. Habsburg-Jagiellonian relationship: H. Łowmiański, *Polityka Jagiellonów* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2006) p. 319.
9. Łobzów was the traditional place for the Jagiellonian kings to meet their brides. K. Turska, "Stroje Jagiellonów podczas ceremoniału witania narzeczonych," in M. Markiewicz and R. Skowron (eds.), *Theatrum ceremoniale na dworze książąt i królów polskich* (Cracow: Zamek Królewski na Wawelu, 1999) pp. 101–102.
10. AT IV, p. 307.
11. Pociecha, vol. 1, p. 253.
12. P. Gringore, *Les entrées royales à Paris de Marie d'Angleterre (1514) et Claude de France (1517)*, C. J. Brown (ed.) (Geneva: Droz, 2005) p. 49; J. Johnson, "Elizabeth of York: mother of the Tudor dynasty," in L. Oakley-Brown and L. J. Wilkinson (ed.) *The Rituals and Rhetoric of Queenship: Medieval to Early Modern* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2009) pp. 52–3.
13. M. Filar, "Liberalizm i rygoryzm seksualny w różnych kulturach. Zarys historyczny," in K. Imieliński (ed.) *Seksuologia kulturowa* (Warsaw: PWN, 1984) pp. 246–7; K. Mroczek, *Epitalamium staropolskie: między tradycją literacką a obrzędem weselnym* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1989) p. 60.
14. AT IV, pp. 290–1.
15. "Ordinato caerimoniarum in coronantionibus reginarum Poloniae observandum," in O. M. Balzer (ed.) *Corpus Iuris Polonici. Sectionis I. Privilegia, statuta, constitutiones, edicta, decreta, mandata regnum Poloniae spectantia comprehendentis. Vol. 3, Annos 1506–1522 contientis* (Cracow: Sumptibus Academiae Litterarum, 1906) p. 211; N. Menin, *A Description of the Coronation of the Kings and Queens of France* (London: S. Hooper, 1775) p. 161.

16. A very cursory discussion of Polish queens' coronations was included in: M. Rożek, *Polskie koronacje i korony* (Cracow: Krajowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1987) pp. 57–8. An article on Bona Sforza's wedding and coronation by Jan Rzońca lacks a critical approach to the sources. J. Rzońca, "Ceremoniał zaślubin i koronacji Bony Sforzy," in H. Suchojad (ed.) *Wesela, chrzciny i pogrzeby w XVI-XVIII wieku . Kultura życia i śmierci* (Warsaw: Semper, 2001) pp. 75–89; On the Polish wedding songs: J. Nowak-Dłużewski, *Okolicznościowa poezja polityczna w Polsce: czasy Zygmuntowskie* (Warsaw: Instytut Wydawniczy Pax, 1966) pp. 69–83.
17. G. Kipling, "He That Saw It Would Not Believe It": Anne Boleyn's Royal Entry into London, in A. F. Johnson and W. Hüsken (eds.) *Civic Ritual and Drama* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997) p. 52; A. Hunt, *The Drama of Coronation: Medieval Ceremony in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008) p. 62.
18. H. Mantel, Royal Bodies, in *London Review of Books*, Vol. 35, No. 4 (21 February 2013) [accessed at http://www.lrb.co.uk/v35/n04/hilary-mantel/royal-bodies on 06/05/2015].
19. K. Friedrich, Preface, in J.R. Mulryne, H. Watanabe-O'Kelly and M. Shewing (eds.) *Europa Triumphans: court and civic festivals in early modern Europe*, vol. 1 (Aldershot: MHRA and Ashgate, 2004) p. 373.
20. J. Bardach, B. Lesnodorski and M. Pietrzak, *Historia państwa i prawa polskiego* (Warsaw: PWN, 1987) pp. 62–3; 102–3; N. Nowakowska, *Church, State and Dynasty in Renaissance Poland: The Career of Cardinal Fryderyk Jagiellon (1468–1503)* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007) pp. 33.
21. D. Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State, 1386–1795* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 2001) pp. 3–51.
22. AT IV, p. 307; AT IV, pp. 290–1.
23. A. Walicki, *Naród, Nacjonalizm, Patriotyzm* (Cracow: Uniwersitas, 2009) pp. 434–436.
24. Cited in: J. Lukowski, *Disorderly Liberty: the political culture of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the eighteenth century* (London: Continuum, 2010) p. 91.
25. N. Nowakowska, *Church, State and Dynasty*..., p. 32.
26. J. Poirier, "Catherine de Medicis and the Performance of Political Motherhood," *The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 31, no. 3 (Autumn 2000) pp. 643–673; K. Crawford, *Perilous Performances: Gender and Regency in Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004).
27. Dantysz, p. 9.
28. Sigismund to Duchess Isabella: AT V, p. 5; Sigismund to bishops and senators: AT V, p. 6. Henry VIII's on Mary's birth. J. Guy, *The Children of Henry VIII* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) p.19.
29. Pociecha, vol. 2, pp. 109–111.

30. 13 August 1522, 18 October 1523 and 1 November 1526.
31. Bogucka, pp. 137–8.
32. E. Rudzki, *Polskie królowe: żony Piastów i Jagiellonów* (Warsaw: Instytut Pracy i Wydawnictw "Novum," 1990) p. 223.
33. Such as Archduchess Margaret of Austria: V. de Cruz Medina, "In Service to My Lady, The Empress, As I Have Done Every Other Day of My Life": Margarita of Cardona, Baroness of Dietrichstein and Lady-in-Waiting of Maria of Austria, in N. Akkerman and B. Houben (eds.) *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-waiting Across Early Modern Europe* (London: Brill, 2013) p. 114.
34. On Bona's relationship with her mother: M. Werde, *Królowa Bona*…, p. 34–6, Pociecha, vol. 1, pp. 149–179. Bogucka, p. 137. Pociecha, vol. 2, p. 95.
35. S. A. Lachowicz, *Listy orginalne Zygmunta Augusta do Mikołaja Radziwiłła Czarnego* (Vilnius: T. Glucksberg, 1842) pp. 17–22.
36. Bogucka, p. 137; A. Brzezińska, "Female Control of Dynastic Politics in Sixteenth-Century Poland," in B. Nagy and M. Sebok (eds.) …*The Man of Many Devices Who Wandered Full Many Ways… Festschrift in Honor of Janos M. Bak* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 1999) p. 191.
37. A. Przeździecki, *Jagiellonki polskie w XVI w.*, vol. 1 (Cracow: Drukarnia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 1868) p. 214.
38. L. J. Decjusz, *Descriptio Diarii in nuptiis Serenissime Bone, Regine Polonie*, in AT IV, p. 324.
39. Cited in Pociecha, vol. 2, p. 108.
40. Bogucka, p. 138.
41. M. Bielski, *Kronika Polska nowo przez Ioach. Bielskiego syna iego wydana* (Cracow: Jakob Sibeneicher, 1597) p. 569.
42. P. Jasienica, *Polska Piastów i Jagiellonów* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1986) p. 335; Bogucka, p. 139.
43. N. Rubin, *Isabella of Castile: The First Renaissance Queen* (Lincoln: ASJA Press, 1991/2004) p. 138.
44. M. Bielski, *Kronika Polska*…, p. 569.
45. Bogucka, p. 139.
46. Werde, pp. 45–8.
47. Dantysz, p. 20–1. His reference: Czartoryski Library, MS 44, p. 409.
48. Pociecha's volume explaining Bona's political activities: Pociecha, vol. 4, p. 177.
49. Lands held by Bona: A. Sucheni-Grabowska, *Odbudowa domeny królewskiej w Polsce 1504–1548* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich i Wydawnictwo Polski Akademii Nauk, 1967) p. 119.

50. A. Bues, "The Formation of the Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy in the Sixteenth Century," in R. Butterwick (ed.) *The Polish-Lithuanian Monarchy in European Context* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) pp. 62–3.
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55. S. Cynarski, *Zygmunt August* (Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, 1988) p. 33.
56. S. Górski, "Conciones in maximo totius regni Poloniae conventu apud Leopolim de republica habitae A. D. MDXXXVII," W. Kętrzyński (ed.), in J. Szujski (ed.) *Archiwum Komisyi Historycznej*, vol. 1 (Cracow: Akademia Umiejętności and Drukarnia Wł. L. Anczyca i Spółki, 1878) pp. 8–12.
57. Górski, p. 24.
58. Cynarski, p. 33; D. Stone, *The Polish-Lithuanian State*… pp. 40–41, 99.
59. Pociecha, vol. 4, p. 177; Bogucka, p. 46; Cynarski, p. 15.
60. Pociecha, pp. 161, 288.
61. Przeździecki, vol. 1, pp. 121–2, 172.
62. Bogucka, p. 143.
63. S. Orzechowski, *Stanisława Okszyca Orzechowskiego Kroniki polskie od zgonu Zygmunta Igo*, T. Mostowski (ed.) (Warsaw: Drukarnia Nr 646 przy Nowolipiu, 1805) p. 11; Masurpino writes that Bona literally put a 'curb' on her son. Masurpino's letter: J. I. Kraszewski, *Wizerunki książąt i królów polskic* (Warsaw: Gebethner and Wolff, 1888) p. 251 and in Przeździecki, vol. 1, p. 121.
64. Cynarski, p. 29.
65. Dantysz, pp. 18–9.
66. R. Schulte, "Introduction: Conceptual Approaches to the Queen's Body," in R. Schulte (ed.) *The Body of the Queen: Gender and Rule in the Courtly World 1500–2000* (Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2006) pp. 1–2.
67. Sigismund August shared his fears about Bona poisoning Barbara in his letter to Mikołaj "the Red" Radziwiłł in 1548: Przeździecki, vol. 1, p. 208.
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70. *Królowa Bona*, 1980–1981, episode 3.
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73. M. Bogucka, "Barbara Radziwiłłówna," in Z. Stefanowska and J. Tazbir (eds.) *Życiorysy historyczne, literackie i legendarne, seria 1* (Warsaw: PWN, 1985) p. 77.
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75. T. Wittlin, *Nad szarej Wisły brzegiem…* (London: Polska Fundacja Kulturalna, 1990) p. 205.
76. S. Wiechecki, *Helena w stroju niedbałem, czyli królewskie opowieści pana Piecyka* (Warsaw: Gebethner and Wolff, 1948/1949) pp. 35.
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78. N. Bończa Tomaszewski, *Źródła Narodowości: powstanie i rozwój polskiej świadomości narodowej w II połowie XIX i na początku XX wieku* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2006) p. 148.
79. It was an adaptation of Lucjan Rydel's *Złote Więzy*, a biography of Sigismund August. Bogucka, "Barbara Radziwiłłówna," p. 83.
80. Dantysz, p. 16; Bogucka argues that "It is a paradox of history that Bona, a foreigner, became the representative of the Polish national political interests against many of the greatest native Polish nobles," Bogucka, pp. 111–112.
81. Dantysz, p. 14.
82. Dantysz, p. 65; S. Bilenky, *Romantic Nationalism…* pp. 106–111.
83. Dantysz, p. 41.
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86. M. Janion, *Niesamowita słowiańszczyzna. Fantazmaty literatury.* (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2006) p. 12; S. Jagielski, "(Melo)dramaty polskości. Naród i płeć w polskim filmie patriotycznym. in T. Lubelski and M. Stroiński, *Kino polskie jako kino narodowe* (Cracow: Halart, 2009) p. 59–61.
87. P. Jasienica, *Polska*… p. 222.
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89. Bona's reputation for loose morals was started in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries prose and poetry. See: M. Bogucka, "Życie po życiu. Raz jeszcze o królowej Bonie," in F. Leśniak (ed.) *Podróże po historii. Studia z dziejów kultury i polityki europejskiej ofiarowane Profesorowi Stanisławowi Grzybowskiemu* (Cracow: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Akademii Pedagogicznej, 2000) pp. 83–88
90. S. Wiechecki, *Helena*… pp. 34–5.

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The Empress Matilda and Motherhood in Popular Fiction, 1970s to the Present

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The Empress Matilda, Lady of the English, is a well-known entity to scholars and historians. The daughter of the English King Henry I, Matilda was married at a young age to the Holy Roman Emperor Heinrich V. After the deaths of her only legitimate brother and her husband, she was called back to England by her father, named his heir, and married again to the young Geoffrey, Count of Anjou. Nevertheless, on her father's death in 1135, her first cousin Stephen took the throne, pulling England and Normandy into nearly 20 years of civil war between Stephen's and Matilda's factions. The unrest was effectively ended in 1153 with Stephen declaring Matilda's son Henry his heir. Henry took the throne upon Stephen's death in 1154 and ruled for 35 years as Henry II. Matilda, from her "retirement" in Normandy, provided political and diplomatic support to Henry until her death in 1167.

With such an impressive resume—Empress of the Holy Roman Empire, Countess of Anjou, Lady of the English, her pre-coronation title, to say nothing of her roles as an administrator, diplomat, courtier, and skilled governor—Matilda also received due attention by historians in her time in both positive and negative ways. She appears in the *Gesta Stephani*, a work clearly not in her favor. The contemporary Wace also did not like

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her much. This is in contrast to Robert of Torigni's more favorable take on Matilda. Geoffrey of Monmouth can be read as smoothing the way for her future queenship, while the slightly later Matthew Paris relegates her to gender-appropriate sidelines.[1] But despite a rich historiographical tradition, the bare bones of which are above, Matilda comes down to modern popular culture as a forgotten queen and one who needs to get written back into history. I would argue that Paris' sidelining Matilda into roles more gender-normative for thirteenth-century western Europe, alongside Agnes Strickland's *The Lives of the Queens of England*[2] in the Victorian period and a crucial translation of the anti-Matildan *Gesta Stephani* in the pre-second-wave feminist 1950s,[3] have collectively done more damage to Matilda's modern, popular reputation and reclamation than any other factor. Indeed, Potter's use of the word "haughty" in his translation of the *Gesta Stephani* has come to have a great impact on modern perceptions of Matilda, despite more recent revisionist and feminist-influenced studies that more favorably reassess Matilda's role as a ruler.[4] The survival of around 100 of her charters from Germany, Normandy, and the bulk from England 1141–1154[5] has made possible a reevaluation of Matilda as a woman with a significant and active concern in governing. These charters provided a crucial contrast to the chroniclers in order to reconsider Matilda as a skilled diplomat who was trained for medieval leadership and had the potential for doing so.

However, a historiographic tradition that placed Matilda into a sidelined category at best gave rise to the concept that the historic Matilda was "forgotten," or overlooked in contemporary as well as modern times. Indeed, this has not been the case. And much in the same way that scholars of a pre-feminism time, including those in the medieval, felt the need to compress Matilda into a gender-normative category that was accepted in their time—or flout her flouting of accepted gender norms as something inherently wrong—without a full understanding of the historiographic tradition of Matilda in the post-feminism[6] period, modern fiction writers find a Matilda ready for reception into a feminist norm that best suited contemporary popular feminism.

One place where this compression into feminist ideals becomes obvious is in the attitudes of the fictive Matilda toward motherhood. Being and becoming a mother, providing an heir to either of the two ruling families she belonged, would have been a primary concern to the historical Matilda. But this does not overshadow modern fiction writers expressing modern attitudes about motherhood by overlaying it on the fictive

Matilda. As Kate Ellie has pointed out, "The shift backward in time [in historical fiction] is…a [means by] which present behavior is given history and validity."[7] By placing current practice and ideas into a long-distant past, a veritable dark ages for the modern world, post-feminist writing solidified current stances on motherhood by seeking its mirror in the past. By doing this via the persona of a fictive Matilda, the writing overlays modern ideals on a woman who tends to be seen via Victorian ideas of Matilda's life such as Strickland's and that crucial 1950 translation of the *Gesta Stephani*. But just as these historical writers placed Matilda into the positions they saw most appropriate for their times, in compressing Matilda into feminist-specific norms, does modern fiction ultimately do any better or worse than Paris and Strickland in insisting on a Matilda that fits the paradigm best for their time?

There are surprisingly few modern fiction novels featuring Matilda as the heroine, and this particularly in comparison to other historical figures who have been heavily appropriated for modern, feminist popular fiction; here, I need only say "Eleanor of Aquitaine" or "Anne Boleyn." This may be a matter of sources and reputation; Eleanor, even in her own time, had a colorful reputation, and there is an embarrassment of sources available for writers of the Tudor period as opposed to twelfth-century England. By contrast to these later queens, Matilda appears in only a handful of novels as protagonist. Of these, I have identified only three that reached any sort of wide readership, which were selected for study: Jean Plaidy's *The Passionate Enemies*; [8] Sharon Penman's *When Christ and His Saints Slept*; [9] and Elizabeth Chadwick's *Lady of the English*.[10] These three novels fortuitously cover a range from the mid-1970s to 2011, providing a canvas upon which second- and third-wave feminism paints Matilda and motherhood.[11] Indeed, in this range of novels, we see a clear representation of Matilda as a feminist stalwart, and thus a fictive character who reflects modern attitudes and concerns about motherhood through the voice of an appropriated woman to whom motherhood would have played a certain part of her own career.

The first post-feminism Matilda to hit the bookshelves was Plaidy's *The Passionate Enemies* in 1976. The choice of Matilda was perhaps an axiomatic one for Plaidy, who liked to focus on "women of integrity and strong character" who were also "struggling for liberation, fighting for their own survival."[12] Allison Wright has written about Tudor women in historical fiction in the 1970s, saying, "Advancement, achievement, public power and private satisfaction: these are women who have it all, the prototypes,

perhaps of the 1980s Women of Substance,"[13] though this is equally true of Plaidy's Matilda. This Matilda is cold, manipulative, capable of recognizing love but more excited by power, and often conflates her own power with her desire for her rival, Stephen. She not only enjoys sex, but actively uses it to manipulate Stephen in power plays.

Matilda's attitudes toward children and indeed motherhood run along the same lines throughout the novel: children are another tool to be used in her quest for power, despite later admittances of love for her sons. At the start of the novel, she is pleased that she never had a son by her husband, the Holy Roman Emperor, who is portrayed as weak, feeble, and old—someone who is clearly no match for Matilda.[14] Her intentions are to leave Germany for England as soon as her elderly husband has died. She has no use for the Empire, and having children by Heinrich V would have only tied her to a place where she did not want to be. She is portrayed as stuck with her senile husband and actively longs for her stepmother to remain barren in order for Matilda herself to gain the inheritance of the throne of England.[15] Children, in this moment, are anathema to Matilda in two ways and by two people: if she bears a child by her husband, the emperor, she would be stuck to the Empire as regent for a young son rather than returned to England, where her ambitions lie. However, this desire is also contingent on her stepmother Adelicia remaining childless by Henry I, Matilda's father. All of Matilda's wishes, at this point, are for childless marriages for the both of them.

Matilda's attitude does not soon change, though her circumstance does. Following her husband's death, and her father declaring her the heir to the English throne, her duties are made perfectly clear: "You are now heir to the throne," Henry I tells her, "and your first duty as such will be to provide the heirs the country needs."[16] Matilda's marriage to Geoffrey of Anjou is not the solution Matilda had wished, desiring Stephen as she does, and nor does her affair with Stephen progress as she wish. At this point in the novel, by Matilda's return to the Anglo-Norman realm, she has already spotted Stephen as a future sparring partner, metaphorically speaking, with each remembering their immense attraction to the other in their youth. They move in that direction, though all does not go smoothly. In fact, when Stephen is kept from a tryst with Matilda due to the illness and ultimate death of his son, Matilda ruminates how nothing goes in her favor: her sexual conquest was more important than the health and life of a child.[17] At this time, she further considers the consequences of the impending affair with Stephen: should she become pregnant by him, she would have to give

her husband a love potion to make him sleep with her, as their marriage was as yet unconsummated due to their immense hatred of each other.[18]

This circumstance too rapidly changes. Henry threatens to disinherit her if she does not start bearing children. For a woman as ambitious as Matilda, this is an unacceptable circumstance although she recognizes firstly that she would be giving birth for her father's sake, not her own, and secondly, that her only desire to become a mother would be with Stephen's child. She becomes determined to become pregnant as quickly as possible, to ease her father's anger and insure her own inheritance.[19] She becomes suddenly amiable with Geoffrey: she takes his hand and leads him to bed, stating calmly, "Come now, we must have a child."[20] This, of course, makes the potential complications of the forthcoming tryst with Stephen less knotty. Indeed, within a page of Matilda bedding Geoffrey, she and Stephen do so as well. Matilda finds it exciting that a child born of she and Stephen will be king of England and realizes that having sex with Stephen made bearable having sex with Geoffrey. "Does Stephen's seed live within me? Shall it be his son or Geoffrey's who inherits the throne?" she asks herself in a reflective, post-coital moment.[21]

Indeed Matilda is soon pregnant, though her pregnancy and the birth of her son, the future Henry II, is told entirely away from her point of view. In fact, the pregnancy and birth is told through the eyes of her father, to whom the heir is of utmost importance.[22] Matilda's second pregnancy and childbirth is also told through Henry's eyes, even though this second birth nearly kills her in the process.[23] Highlighting the layers of ambition and love between Matilda and her own father, Henry prays for the weak and ill Matilda "not for love of her but for his grandson and the need to preserve the country he loved."[24] Children are as the means to the ends. In this way as well, the entirety of the process of Matilda becoming a mother is pointed out to be less important to her and more important to her father. Taking these scenes away from Matilda's point of view compounds the idea that to Matilda, motherhood and children are tools for her own ends. Indeed, it is only shortly after the birth of her second son that pregnancy stops being a mere tool to Matilda and actively becomes a hindrance. When she learns that her cousin and lover Stephen has usurped her English throne, she flies into a rage not only because of this but also because she is again pregnant, a "handicap" to her campaigns and driving her to further rely on her hated husband.[25] She decides she is having no more children: she has given her husband and father three sons and will now only focus on the crown.[26]

Despite this, there is a certain amount of time spent after the birth of her first son on rumination that motherhood made Matilda loveable.[27] This too is through the eyes of her father, who is portrayed as a doting and indulgent grandfather. Matilda, it was noted, was proud of her children but "there was little of the softness of a mother about her."[28] The children, again, are means to an end, and although Henry seems to soften his stance on the importance of heirs, allowing himself to love and indulge his grandsons, Matilda rests on pride in her sons and heirs as a part of her strategy to appease her father and retain her own inheritance. Indeed, she and Geoffrey plan to manipulate Henry I to hand over castles as his grandson's inheritance, and do so while he is "in the nursery drooling over Henry…we shall ask him, since he is always saying how much he loves the boy, to show his affection in a more practical form."[29] Castles given to the young Henry would bolster his own position in the inheritance scheme, but in the short term, Matilda and Geoffrey holding these castles on young Henry's behalf was the more immediate goal.

Toward the end of the novel, the young Henry again is used as a tool by his mother, taking another tack: when manipulating her way out of Arundel Castle, she not only uses sex with Stephen as a part of her plans but also drops the hint that her eldest son might be Stephen's, not Geoffrey's.[30] This, combined with the overwhelming nature of their sexual encounters, helps persuade Stephen to release Matilda from Arundel and grant her safe passage to her supporters in Bristol. This tactic proves ultimately to be an unerring success on Matilda's part: throughout the rest of the novel, when faced with challenges in regards to the young Henry, Stephen constantly has in the back of his head the idea that the boy could be his. When young Henry is stranded without means to return to Anjou, Stephen actually sends him money to assist him on the basis that if he must be helped, then a father should be helpful.[31] When a decisive and no doubt destructive battle is about to take place between the King's forces and those of the young Henry, Matilda appears to Stephen—disguised as a peasant no less—and plays the son card once again: "I love you and I love my son…your son,"[32] she tells him in order to save both lives, though at this point her sincerity must certainly be doubted by the reader.

Children or at least the concept of children in *The Passionate Enemies* is a constant strand in the narrative and character development, and despite Matilda's coldness, her power-hungry attitude plays into the overall feeling of her as a 1970s career-oriented woman, one who does not let motherhood or children get in the way of her ambitions. This can partly be time

and place of the writing. It has been shown that the period between 1968 and 1973 was the only time when feminist writing produced relatively negative assessments of motherhood.[33] Alongside this, in the mid-1970s, women had unprecedented control over their reproductive rights. The pill had been made available through the National Health Service in Britain in 1961 and had been approved by the Food and Drug Administration in the USA in 1960. The impact of this alongside Roe v. Wade[34] in the US and the UK Abortion Act[35] should not be understated: women were moving, for the first time, into a world where better health-care access and procedures would give them control of the time they would become mothers, if at all. The tension between the perception of a medieval mother and heir to a throne, to whom childbearing would have conventionally been paramount, and the 1970s ideas of reproduction health plays on the field of this fictional Matilda: she had to be a mother, as historical fact and conventional wisdom dictated, but she didn't have to like it. The fictitious Matilda of *The Passionate Enemies* implicitly pointed out to her readers that there were new options about motherhood in the modern world and reminded the modern reader that these were not a choice in the twelfth century.

The next outing of Matilda in the 1990s show a woman drastically changed from the woman of the 1970s. The Matilda of Sharon Penman's *When Christ and His Saints Slept* is a victim, a woman whose reputation for arrogance and control is explained by spousal abuse and inner turmoil. This is a Matilda whose arrogance is no longer acceptable as rote fact but explained away by personal tragedy and abuse. We are introduced to her feelings about motherhood quickly in the 1000-page novel: in the course of an argument with Geoffrey, we are told of her son by her first husband, the emperor, who died as a baby, and she trembles and cries at the thought of this lost child.[36] She wishes for more children but not by Geoffrey, instigating a violent fight between the two, though shortly thereafter Matilda begs Geoffrey for reconciliation on the basis that they both need an heir.[37] Children to this Matilda are not only a dynastic necessity but also something she actively and emotionally desires.

Indeed, within a number of pages, we find Matilda pregnant, ruminating on her own previous and tragic experience with childbirth and discussing her pregnancy with her future rival, Stephen. Matilda is concerned about being a good mother; she does not want to be distant as her own mother was; she wants only sons as she does not want her daughters being pawns as she was.[38] Soon enough Matilda is pregnant

a second time, but as the political situation in England has transpired against her, she ruminates that being pregnant is bad timing as men would not trust a woman ruler with a swollen belly, and she further compares being pregnant—eating for two—with going to war on behalf of her son—fighting for two.[39] Matilda's own power and rulership, in these early days of struggle and fighting, is already intimately tied up in her own motherhood and protection of her beloved son Henry. The concept of fighting on her own behalf, for her own throne, is only a part of her ambitions and mostly for the power to be free of her abuse rather than to hold power for its own sake.

This Matilda interestingly tends to strongly express a concern about what we, in modern parlance, would call a work/life balance. She is extraordinarily concerned about her relationship with her sons while she is leading the struggle in England; her young sons, of course, have remained behind in Anjou. This would not have been an unusual experience in the Middle Ages: elite motherhood, though not necessarily emotionally disengaged, involved a certain amount of physical distance.[40] In the novel, Matilda's struggle with her distance from her sons starts to be expressed around the age that her oldest son, the future Henry II, would have been around seven: Matilda receives a letter from him that causes sadness about her inability to be with her sons. "I've not seen my sons for more than a year…If this war drags on long enough, I'll not even know them upon my return. They'll be strangers…" she sighs to her trusted friend Brien fitz Count.[41] Brien, being an understanding modern man in the guise of a twelfth-century nobleman, sympathizes that "she'd never get back the time she'd lost with her sons."[42] At several points, Matilda conflates her impending rule with her own sense of being a mother. When waiting for her coronation at London, Matilda attributes her well-known ire for the Londoners to their causing the delay of her coronation and thus her reunion with her son: "…That is four more months away from my sons…I wanted [Henry] to be here for my coronation, to watch the Archbishop set upon my head the crown that will one day be his. But the Londoners have denied me that. And yet you wonder…why I love them not? Just put that question to my eight-year-old son if you truly need an answer!"[43] Her status as mother to a son and her status as contender for the throne are not even: her motherhood is a certainty while her throne is not. In the framework of a woman steeped in third-wave feminism, Matilda's concerns and complaints echo that of modern working mothers, worried about the time spent at work to support children versus the time actually spent with those

children. Matilda actively places her status as a mother over her status as a potential queen.

The ties between young Henry and Matilda's struggles are often also made explicit, in contrast to notions of Matilda fighting for her own patrimony. Her desire to rule, early in the book, is connected specifically to her desire to be free of a controlling father and an abusive husband,[44] but upon the birth of her eldest son, these reasons rapidly become replaced with her realization that Henry was as important to the fight for the crown, if not more, than she was. Henry himself also connects these dots: as a boy, in a fight with his younger brother, Henry instructs him that the crown was "Mama's and mine."[45] At one point, Matilda ruminates, "Sometimes I wonder where I will be in five years. Will I still be at Gloucester or Bristol, clinging to my shredded hopes whilst Stephen clings to his stolen crown? All I know for [certain] is that in five years, Henry will be almost thirteen."[46] At several points, Matilda also directly legitimizes the destruction the war is wreaking by linking its righteousness to the future rule of her son. Fighting for her son made justifiable the ruin of cities like Winchester and the death and destruction that the war has caused.[47] Nearly halfway through the early battles, Matilda realizes that her own brother, Robert of Gloucester, has been fighting all along for Henry, not for her sake.[48] But in fact, this is also the crucial moment when she realizes, despite her own association between her crown and her son, that she too is fighting for Henry, not for herself. This is early in the historical narrative: 1141, after her loss in London and the destruction of Winchester. But from this point, Henry is twined with the crown to the degree that, in several points toward the end of the narrative, he is not even referred to by name, but becomes "Maude's son."[49] Choosing to refer to Henry this way reminds the reader of his maternal identity, the close association with his mother's power and his mother's willingness to risk all for his power, but also powerfully ties Matilda's struggle to be for Henry, not herself.

Motherhood, in several points, is also displayed as a competition to Matilda in her relationship with her husband Geoffrey of Anjou. Geoffrey is hardly a romantic medieval hero in Penman: we learn in the first parts of the novel that he cruelly beats and rapes Matilda, leaving her with bruises and split lips, with a face "swollen like a melon"[50] and needing "powder to cover her wounds"[51] before being seen by others. Though their tension is never reconciled, it is once again motherhood that provides a balm to their relationship; their first child is noted as bringing Matilda and Geoffrey closer.[52] But this temporary closeness becomes competition

for the children's affection. Geoffrey proves to be an attentive father and "a real rival for the affection of their sons…and of all the wrongs he'd done her, that was the greatest wrong of all."[53] When Matilda is successful at Lincoln, her immediate thought is not only of bringing her sons to England but also that she would never have to step foot in Anjou again; presumably, this indicates her intention to raise her sons in England, away from Anjou and Geoffrey, who is not invited to join her in England.[54] This is a tension and a competition that does not go unnoticed by other characters. When Geoffrey dies, the adult Henry holds the funeral too quickly for Matilda to be able to attend. She realizes in rapid order that he was afraid she would have refused to come but assures Henry that would not have been true, though she knows herself that she would have only attended for Henry's sake, not her husband's.[55] Ultimately, this too causes Matilda to consider her parental competition: the "final victory had been Geoffrey's. She knew that her sons loved and respected her…But she doubted that they'd have grieved as much for her as they now grieved for Geoffrey."[56] Despite her years of fighting on behalf of her eldest, Matilda ultimately feels a failure at motherhood for having lost the competition to her husband for her children's affection.

The Matilda of Penman rejects notions of 1970s and 1980s career-oriented ethos of feminism, the concept of power-above-all seen in the Plaidy, for a softer Matilda to whom a work/life balance is a problem. This is a Matilda as well who does not reflect a greater third-wave plurality; it is largely considered, of course, that the ability to work outside the home and the stresses alongside this reflect the white, middle-class feminism of the post-1950s.[57] However, this is also a Matilda who reflects an increase of feminist writing on motherhood in the late 1970s and 1980s and particularly reflects the partnership of women's health activists, counterculture, and cultural feminism to promote motherhood in positive terms.[58] In feminist writing in this time, motherhood became a unifying issue between refractive concepts of feminism.[59] Motherhood to this Matilda is less a practical means-to-end and more something emotive, something that becomes the *raison d'etre* for Matilda's own political fight. In rejecting the ideas of the importance of her own autonomous authority, this Matilda becomes a mouthpiece for the importance of a close relationship with one's children, the imperative notion that employment should not interfere with being a mother.

The last Matilda is the most recent one: from Elizabeth Chadwick's 2011 novel *Lady of the English*. This novel distinguishes itself firstly in its

very approach and presentation: as opposed to a singular focus on Matilda herself, this novel approaches its narrative through the dual personalities of Matilda and her stepmother, Adeliza of Louvain. Traditional motherhood itself plays a small role in the novel though concepts and representations of mothers, motherhood, and fertility are imbedded throughout the novel.

Adeliza is the first to introduce motherhood to the narrative, and this is unsurprising: as the second wife of Henry I, her entire role as queen was to bear a male heir. Adeliza first appears within the opening pages of the novel, with Henry atop of her as she waits through sex patiently but not pleasurably. Adeliza thinks about Henry's "slippery seed" as she hopes to become pregnant this time.[60] Throughout the duration of Adeliza's marriage to Henry, her lack of conception is paramount to her. Adeliza thinks of her failure to conceive as punishment from God.[61] When Adeliza receives a letter from Matilda announcing her pregnancy, Adeliza is overjoyed at the news even as it reminds her that she herself cannot achieve this task.[62] When Adeliza remarries after Henry's death, to William d'Albini, a loyal supporter of Stephen's, she not only finds sex enjoyable—and orgasms for what is likely the first time[63]—but also almost immediately becomes pregnant, a prime example of the romance novel trope of the Mighty Wang "restor[ing] the heroine to orgasm or fertility, or possibly both."[64]

Adeliza's joy in motherhood is evident in her unorthodox approach to it, as she insists on breastfeeding her firstborn at least until her churching.[65] Her child, she states, is worth more than any earthly crown[66]; her ability to be a mother means more to her than her previous fixation on being a queen and dowager queen. And in this, Adeliza believes she can set an example for the unhappy-in-marriage Matilda: that Adeliza has managed to marry, bear children, and be happy should be an example to Matilda.[67] In the end, Adeliza makes the ultimate sacrifice for her children: suffering from an unnamed wasting disease, she makes the decision to withdraw to the abbey of Affligem so that her children do not have to see her go through the process of withering away and dying.[68] At every turn, Adeliza is the Madonna-like mother, both in her sacrifices for her children as well as her approach to Matilda, her stepdaughter; she is the modern picture of the perfect medieval mother even while transgressing medieval social norms, such as her desire to breastfeed.

Given the constant contrast in the personalities of the women, Matilda's approach to motherhood is unsurprisingly somewhat different. Her relationship with her first husband, Heinrich V, is represented as loving and respectful. Matilda assisted with governance, was respected by the court

and people, and had even borne Heinrich a child though the son was "deformed" and died almost immediately.[69] These memories bring her to tears in her new life married to Geoffrey of Anjou.[70] Appalled by her marriage to someone much younger than her, Matilda learns a trick involving moss and vinegar to prevent conception in the hopes that without a pregnancy, an annulment would come.[71] However, when Geoffrey discovers her ruse and Matilda becomes pregnant, she changes tactic almost immediately: her child would be her heir and she would protect him, comparing it to going into battle for her unborn child.[72] It is surprising, considering the time and consideration that Matilda gave to preventing pregnancy, that she does not then turn to finding ways to terminate the pregnancy, and this gives us one of the tensions of historical fiction: Matilda historically had sons by Geoffrey, so fiction cannot take that away, and that perhaps then governs what character development would take place in a nonhistorical fictional character. When fictional women find themselves with unwanted pregnancies by abusive husbands, perhaps narrative would demand at least a consideration of abortion, but with a historical fiction character who is known to have borne children, that option does not exist. Regardless, when Matilda's first son by Geoffrey, the future Henry II, is born, she does not feel some rush of maternal love but the satisfaction of a job well done and gladness that this son is fully formed.[73] Again she thinks of motherhood as a battlefield: Matilda has ostensibly had little control over her life, but the field of battle had changed as now she had a son to fight for.[74]

From the birth of Henry, the struggle for Matilda's crown takes a backseat to note that it is now a struggle for Henry's inheritance. Even though Matilda works for others to acknowledge that Henry's right came through her,[75] the role of future ruler quickly becomes Henry's. At a very early age, Henry is seen by Matilda as a future king: he is intelligent and focused, capable of playing chess with his half-brother—and winning—while keeping a steady eye on the activity of the room around him.[76] He is displaying characteristics not likely of an average six-year-old but is instead set above the other children to be seen as a young king. Matilda knows that only she can give Henry the chance to be the king he already is.[77] At a later point she ruminates, but only for a moment, on the time she has to spend away from her children in order to secure the throne.[78] This is not nearly as overt a work/life balance crisis as seen in the Penman, but still a recognition of the cost of fighting for Henry's future right to rule. It is only late in the novel that we see Matilda reacting emotionally to her son: Henry appears unexpectedly at her court and she is overwhelmed

with emotion, excusing herself from the room so that no one would see her weep.[79] This also opens a rift between Henry and his mother as Henry finds it embarrassing that his mother was overwhelmed with emotions. Henry thinks that he too had felt emotions on the reunion with his mother but had not felt the need to cry, because there was nothing to cry about. Henry here sets himself above his mother; even though she had been fighting for his rule, Henry dismisses her as a mere woman because of both her crying and her inability to gain the throne: she had done what she could but she was "only a woman." Henry himself already sees himself as the uncrowned king of England, setting himself above his mother as both a man and a ruler.[80]

One very interesting, albeit brief, mention of motherhood comes from a moment actually dealing with a character peripheral to the main narrative. Stephen's wife Maheut, who is frequently described as dumpy but with her teeth in the throne like a terrier, is considered as a motherly character, and thus one that men would respect and follow, in contrast to Matilda's lack of motherliness:

> [Maheut] was utterly loyal to Stephen, and her brisk, motherly manner engendered loyalty in others. When with Stephen in public, she kept her eyes lowered and her mouth closed, cultivating the persona of a modest, submissive wife…
>
> The Empress had no such maternal image to temper her own abrasive nature. If she thought a man was a fool, she said so to his face in front of others and gave no quarter. She was tall, slender, beautiful, desirable—like a mistress, and while few men would ever strike their mothers [many] would take a fist to a mistress…[81]

In this, we can immediately read a Madonna/whore dichotomy in which Matilda, the beautiful upstart, is the mistress in contrast to Maheut's motherliness. Even worse, this dichotomy is taken to violent extremes, justifying men's violence against Matilda, especially that from her husband Geoffrey. Matilda's lack of motherliness does not inspire at the very least respect from her men, with the implication that all men, with their respect for their own mothers, treat motherly women with that same respect. The Madonna/whore dichotomy is problematic enough, especially given that Maheut is a shadowy, two-dimensional secondary character; having a male character ruminate that Matilda's lack of motherliness justifies men not following her or even striking her becomes disturbing.

Through all this, it is in Adeliza's relationship with Matilda where we see another portrayal of not only motherhood but female friendship, and perhaps the most important relationship of the novel. Their first embrace upon Matilda's return from Germany reminds Matilda that her own mother was not soft and motherly, and she nearly cries at Adeliza's touch.[82] In their friendship, each supports the other, primarily through letters as they do not physically spend a great deal of time together, and their relationship transcends what we might think of as a stereotypical step-relationship to that of a mother–daughter relationship at times, and more like sisters at others. They are portrayed with two entirely different personalities, but their bond is represented as one borne of affection, friendship, and kinship. When Matilda is broken and literally beaten, leaving Geoffrey and staying with Adeliza, Adeliza sends for Matilda's imperial crowns so that Matilda does not forget who she is: "This is what you are. And no one can take that away from you—ever."[83] Adeliza further works to fix Matilda's image of power to strengthen Matilda: when Stephen usurps the throne, Adeliza, at great risk, again retrieves the imperial crowns and again sends them to Matilda, reminding Matilda that she is the rightful heir and that no one else should have her crowns.[84] Although at several points Adeliza struggles with her conflicting vows; though William d'Albini, her second husband, is a supporter of Stephen's, she steadfastly believes that her first oath was to Henry and thus to Henry's daughter, her stepdaughter.[85] The mother–daughter bond between Matilda and Adeliza comes to play politically as well. During several points of crucial political and narrative tension, William d'Albini decides to respect the mother–daughter bond of his wife and step-stepdaughter rather than his political affiliation to Stephen.[86] When Matilda and Adeliza both retire from England, Matilda to return to Normandy and carry on governance there and Adeliza to her abbey to waste away and die, Matilda returns the support her stepmother has given her over the years by entreating her to be strong in front of her children as they depart. As they sail away with William and her children being left behind on the pier, Matilda keeps Adeliza from collapse by appealing to her motherhood and her status: "Do not let their last view be of you collapsed and weeping. You were my father's Queen and you are still your husband's. Do not fail him. Never forget that there is still a crown on your head, do you hear me? Never!"[87] Matilda tends to Adeliza after her children are out of site and she has collapsed in weakness and grief, and she ponders about what both of them had achieved and lost in their lives in their "journey from young womanhood to these middle years of supposed

wisdom."[88] Their struggles as women and queens have become journeys of personal emancipation and growth.[89] But now the tables have turned, and Matilda takes care of her friend, her sister, her stepmother in her time of need.

The bond between Matilda and Adeliza is presented as the most convincing and the most important bond between women, that of a combination of motherhood and daughterhood, sisterhood, and friendship. In fact, it is this relationship, not between the women and their husbands or children, which is represented as one of the driving forces in their lives; more so for Adeliza than Matilda, perhaps, though Matilda learns to respect her stepmother, as different as a person Adeliza is from Matilda.

Throughout Chadwick's novel, we see another kind of Matilda and again a Matilda that is representative of early 2000s feminism. This is a Matilda who is still concerned, albeit lightly, about her work/life balance but brand new features are apparent in the twenty-first-century Matilda. The very concept of preventing conception, not previously seen despite the sea changes made in the mid-twentieth century, are seen here for the first time; some 50 years after oral contraception is available, an audience is deemed ready for a medieval woman actively working to prevent conception. The twenty-first-century Matilda, also in a reflection of current feminism, also works with a notion that her friendships and female relationships are more important than those of the men around her. No longer is Matilda governed by her relationship with her father, husband, or (male) children as seen in the Plaidy and Penman. In this, the novel subverts the expectations that, as a medieval queen, her own motherhood would be paramount and instead Matilda becomes the daughter and the relationship with her stepmother is in the spotlight. This alters the traditional power structure one expects in a fictionalized medieval novel with two women's friendship holding the crux of the plot. This is a Matilda whose relationships have been strongly appropriated by contemporary feminism: no longer is the emphasis on her relationship with the men around her but to the woman with whom she's closest: her stepmother.

Forty years of feminist fiction on the Empress Matilda closely aligns with the feminism at the time of writing, and one place where this is strongly evident is in Matilda's depiction with motherhood. From the emphasis on female power in the 1970s, with motherhood a means to that end, to the distressed and stressed mother of the 1990s, worried about having it all, to the adult mother–daughter relationship of the 2010s, with a good mother character recognized as more important than any man, feminist repainting

of the Empress Matilda via fiction imposes a modern ideas of the medieval woman into wide readership. These impressions grow out of the widely available secondary literature but more importantly present a medieval woman who is broadly palatable to modern readers. Part of this is an explicit desire on the part of many modern authors to reinsert this woman into history or to rewrite the "known" history of Matilda.[90] This is something that is relatively viable and part of a strong second-wave critique of the academy, though remember this is not a woman who is somehow "lost" to history or historians.[91] But in seeking to reinsert Matilda into modern popular historical knowledge, most authors paint a Matilda who is appropriate for their time. More so these depictions of a modern "medieval" woman give an audience an inauthentic idea of validating their current concerns by seeing it in a far-distant past. A medieval woman expressing the same concerns as her readers gives the modern reader a comfortable image of the past that confirms their concerns and images of the present, whichever that present may be. [92] The last few decades of fiction on the Empress Matilda closely aligns with the feminism at the time of writing, and one place where this is strongly evident is in Matilda's depiction with motherhood, making Matilda a modern mother for modern readers.

Notes

1. Fiona Tolhurst, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Translation of Female Kingship* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 16.
2. Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1841), accessed 16 December 2014, https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=rPYPAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false
3. K.R. Potter, ed. and trans., *Gesta Stephani* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950, reprinted 1976, 2004.)
4. Cf. Charles Beem, *The Lionness Roared: The Problems of Female Rule in English History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); Marjorie Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English* (Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers, 1991); Tolhurst 2013.
5. Marjorie Chibnall, "The Charters of the Empress Matilda," in *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy*, ed. George Garnett and John Hudson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 276.
6. In this piece, the term "post-feminist" or "post-feminism" is used to indicate the world after the second-wave feminist movement, not to imply the sometimes-suggested current phase of "post-feminism."

7. Kate Ellie, "Gimme Shelter: Feminism, Fantasy and Women's Popular Fiction," in *American Media and Mass Culture: Left Perspectives*, ed. Donald Lazere (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), 225.
8. Jean Plaidy, *The Passionate Enemies* (London: Pan, 1976).
9. Sharon Penman, *When Christ and His Saints Slept* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1995).
10. Elizabeth Chadwick, *Lady of the English* (Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks/Landmark, 2011).
11. This leaves out two other novels featuring Matilda as a protagonist. The first is Ellen Jones' *The Fatal Crown*, published in 1991 by Simon & Schuster with a paperback reprint from Avon Books, and rather more firmly in the realm of historical romance (the author, perhaps unsurprisingly, credits Nesta Pain's popular biography of Matilda from 1978 as "having particularly stimulated my imagination," 556). Although the book had an initial print run of 100,000 (Reed Business Information Review 1990 via Amazon, http://www.amazon.com/The-Fatal-Crown-Ellen-Jones/dp/0380717077, accessed February 23, 2015), it does not seem to have found wide readership although its recent reissue as an e-book might warrant a new audience. The second is Haley Elizabeth Garwood's *The Forgotten Queen*, published in 1998 by the small press The Writer's Block (West Virginia, US). This, via a small press with a small print run, also did not find a wider audience. However, both novels carry on with Jean Plaidy's fictional devise of Matilda and Stephen having a sexual relationship resulting in Henry II, thus providing a narratively satisfying ending of the child of the two combatants eventually receiving the throne of England. While outside the broader scope of this paper, these two novels alongside Plaidy's may warrant further attention in the exploration of this narrative trope in admittedly small body of Matildan fiction.
    This chapter is also focusing on novels with Matilda as the protagonist, declining to study novels where she appears as a secondary character such as Ken Follet's *Pillars of the Earth* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1989) and E.L. Konigsburg's *A Fine Taste for Scarlet and Miniver* (1973).
12. Bruce Lambert, "Eleanor Hibbert, Novelist Known as Victoria Holt and Jean Plaidy," *The New York Times*, January 21, 1993, accessed 16 December 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/1993/01/21/books/eleanor-hibbert-novelist-known-as-victoria-holt-and-jean-plaidy.html
13. Allison Light, "'Young Bess': Historical Novels and Growing Up," *Feminist Review* 33 (Autumn 1989), 61.
14. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 29–30.
15. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies,* 80, 82.
16. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 109.

17. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 135.
18. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 135.
19. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 140.
20. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 141.
21. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 142.
22. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 147.
23. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 153–5.
24. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 155.
25. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 179.
26. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 196.
27. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 149.
28. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 149.
29. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 157.
30. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 228.
31. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 303.
32. Plaidy, *Passionate Enemies*, 312.
33. Lauri Umansky, *Motherhood Reconceived: Feminism and the Legacies of the Sixties*, (New York: New York University Press, 1996), 11.
34. Roe v. Wade, 410 U.S. 113 (1973).
35. Abortion Act 1967.
36. Penman, *Slept*, 60.
37. Penman, *Slept*, 40–2.
38. Penman, *Slept*, 58–9.
39. Penman, *Slept*, 98, 136.
40. Nicholas Orme, *Medieval Children* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 55–6; Tracy Adams, "Medieval Mothers and their Children: The Case of Isabeau of Bavaria," *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2005), 272.
41. Penman, *Slept*, 240.
42. Penman, *Slept*, 240.
43. Penman, *Slept*, 316–17.
44. Penman, *Slept*, 99.
45. Penman, *Slept*, 295.
46. Penman, *Slept*, 295.
47. Penman, *Slept*, 418.
48. Penman, *Slept*, 421.
49. Penman, *Slept*, 850, 858, 870.
50. Penman, *Slept*, 37.
51. Penman, *Slept*, 34.
52. Penman, *Slept*, 61–2.
53. Penman, *Slept*, 173.
54. Penman, *Slept*, 279.

55. Penman, *Slept*, 737.
56. Penman, *Slept*, 740.
57. R. Clare Snyder-Hall, "Third-Wave Feminism and the Defense of 'Choice,'" *Perspectives on Politics* 8(1) (2010): 259.
58. Umansky, *Motherhood*, 132; 159–60.
59. Umansky, *Motherhood*, 160.
60. Chadwick, *Lady*, 8.
61. Chadwick, *Lady*, 32.
62. Chadwick, *Lady*, 146.
63. Chadwick, *Lady*, 260–3.
64. Sarah Wendell, "The Bitchery Glossary," *Smart Bitches Trashy Books*, November 11, 2011. http://smartbitchestrashybooks.com/2011/11/the-bitchery-glossary/
65. Chadwick, *Lady*, 272–3.
66. Chadwick, *Lady*, 274.
67. Chadwick, *Lady*, 281.
68. Chadwick, *Lady*, 502.
69. Chadwick, *Lady*, 1–4, 15, 140, 143–4.
70. Chadwick, *Lady*, 143–4.
71. Chadwick, *Lady*, 88–9, 91.
72. Chadwick, *Lady*, 147.
73. Chadwick, *Lady*, 149.
74. Chadwick, *Lady*, 150.
75. Chadwick, *Lady*, 186.
76. Chadwick, *Lady*, 284.
77. Chadwick, *Lady*, 285.
78. Chadwick, *Lady*, 375.
79. Chadwick, *Lady*, 428–9.
80. Chadwick, *Lady*, 430–1.
81. Chadwick, *Lady*, 327.
82. Chadwick, *Lady*, 25–6.
83. Chadwick, *Lady*, 114.
84. Chadwick, *Lady*, 192.
85. Chadwick, *Lady*, 257.
86. Chadwick, *Lady*, 280–2, 415–18.
87. Chadwick, *Lady*, 510.
88. Chadwick, *Lady*, 511.
89. Ealasaid Munro, "Feminism: A Fourth Wave?" *Political Insight* 4(2) (September 2013): 22–25. http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/2041-9066.12021/full Accessed 26 Feb 2015.
90. Lambert, "Eleanor Hibbert"; Garwood, *Forgotten Queen*, vii-viii; Penman, *Christ*, 909; Chadwick, *Lady*, 522.

91. Chadwick also expressed a desire to write the "forgotten or at best marginalized" Adeliza: "Adeliza of Louvain. Lady of the English. The Forgotten Queen," *Elizabeth Chadwick: Living the History*, January 31, 2010. Accessed February 23, 2015. http://livingthehistoryelizabethchadwick.blogspot.co.uk/2010/01/adeliza-of-louvain-lady-of-english.html; "A Few Questions with Elizabeth Chadwick for the Release of *Lady of the English*," *The Medieval Bookworm,* June 2, 2011. Accessed February 23, 2015.http://medievalbookworm.com/author-interview/a-few-questions-with-elizabeth-chadwick-for-the-release-of-lady-of-the-english/
92. Ellie, "Gimme Shelter."

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