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**EMBODYING POWER:
GENDER AND AUTHORITY IN THE QUEENSHIP OF MATHILDA OF
FLANDERS**

by

LAURA L. GATHAGAN

**A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York**

2002

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Abstract**EMBODYING POWER:
GENDER AND AUTHORITY IN THE QUEENSHIP OF MATHILDA OF
FLANDERS****by****Laura Gathagan****Advisor: Professor Pamela Sheingorn**

Mathilda of Flanders, the first Norman queen of England, consort of Duke William of Normandy, King of England, called “the Conqueror,” has been virtually ignored by historians. The daughter of Baldwin V of Flanders and Adela, sister of the King of France, Mathilda brought her royal blood to the famous Bastard of Normandy. The most important figure in William’s administration, and the appointed regent of Normandy in his absence, Mathilda witnessed and signed literally dozens of charters, meted out justice, and received the homage of her subjects. After 1066, Mathilda was enthroned over a newly conquered England, and oversaw the installation of her own Norman kin as the reigning, foreign, upper class and the disinheritance of England’s entire nobility. Hers was a necessary part of the Norman Conquest of England; she provided military support and operated the administrative machine at the core of ducal holdings in Normandy. She adjudicated law cases, granted lands to her dependants in exchange for service, and was a generous patron of monastic houses both in Normandy and in England, including her foundation of La Trinité in Caen.

“Mathilda of Flanders and the Conquest of England” analyzes Mathilda in light of

her kinship ties, her administrative position, and her influence as queen, lord, patron, and judge, utilizing the rich collection of Anglo-Saxon and Latin charters, chronicles and letters in which she appears. Mathilda of Flanders, active partner and participant in the conquest of a new realm, shared in the royal power and responsibility of managing and subduing additional territories while maintaining old ones. A singular member of the ruling class, her undisputed position in the innermost circle of power was buttressed by her own innate ability. As the most powerful female in a radically new aristocracy, Mathilda was a measure for contemporary attitudes toward gender and power, which affected all women, regardless of rank or wealth.

**To my parents,
Henry and Carole Gathagan**

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Introduction

The last twenty-five years of feminist scholarship have introduced theories and constructs through which medieval women have been heard, seen, and discovered. The public role of medieval women has been one of the most recent areas of women's history to receive scholarly attention. Recent works that examine the power of aristocratic women and their roles in the administration of government and family landholding have changed the traditional view of women's public life in this period. There is evidence to support a revision of the assumption that medieval women, if and when they held authority, held it nominally, in a position purely derivative from their husbands or fathers. French aristocratic women had been particularly well represented by Theodore Evergates, Kimberly LoPrete, and Amy Livingstone.¹ Karen Nicholas and Ellen Kittell have analyzed the noblewomen of Flanders.² Patricia Skinner has examined the noble Italian women of the eleventh century.³ Each historian has discovered noblewomen active in the aristocratic pursuits of landholding, the inheritance of property and titles, and lordship. Historians have begun to chip away at the conventional portrait of the eleventh century, and of the Anglo-Norman period in

¹ Theodore Evergates, "Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne," in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia, 1999), 74-110; Amy Livingstone, "Kith and Kin: Kinship and Family Structure in the Nobility of Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Blois-Chartres," *French Historical Studies* 20:2 (1995): 76-99; Kimberly LoPrete, *Adela of Blois, Countess and Lord* (Dublin, 2001).

² Karen S. Nicholas, "Countesses As Rulers in Flanders," in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, ed. Theodore Evergates, (Philadelphia, 1999), 111-137; Ellen E. Kittell, "Guardianship over Women in Medieval Flanders: A Reappraisal," *Journal of Social History* 31:4 (1998): 897-930.

³ Patricia Skinner, *Women in Medieval Italian Society, 500-1200* (London, 2001).

particular, with regard to women and their public position. Royal women, though perhaps operating on a grander scale, have also been seen as restrained by the same limitations once assumed for all noblewomen. A queen's dower was commanded by her husband, her household was an annex to the king's, and her funds dependent on his largesse; her position, though stronger than many of her contemporaries, ultimately rested on his favor. The study of queenship, however, has begun to modify these assumptions by re-reading and re-evaluating sources and documents that have been long used as bodies of evidence because of their legal or constitutional nature, but never as evidence for the study of women. Long assumed to have little or nothing to do with gender, charters, liturgies, and law codes have begun to serve as evidence for the role of queens in medieval politics and administration. Pauline Stafford, Janet L. Nelson, Louise Olga Fradenburg, John Carmi Parsons, and Lois Huneycutt have all used such documents to examine queens and their office.⁴

My treatment of Mathilda of Flanders also draws on these sources, but in addition, utilizes the Domesday Book to uncover a figure of authority, directing public policy in the arena of Anglo-Norman governance. Mathilda of Flanders appeared in charters, chronicles, liturgies, writs, and records of legal disputes as a queen, patron, judge, and lord. The Anglo-Norman queen, no doubt more powerful than many of her

⁴ Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford, 1997); idem, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1983); Janet L. Nelson, "Early Medieval Rites of Queen-Making and the Shaping of Medieval Queenship," in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge, 1997); Louise Olga Fradenburg, ed. *Women and Sovereignty* (Edinburgh, 1992); John Carmi Parsons, *Medieval Queenship* [New York, 1993]; Lois Huneycutt, "Intercession and the High-Medieval Queen: the Esther Topos," in *The Power of the Weak*, ed. Jennifer Carpenter and Sally Beth MacLean (Urbana, 1995).

female peers, was subject to the typical restrictions of operating in a political world designed solely for men. There were, however, circumstances under which noblewomen ruled with as much independence and self-determination as noblemen.⁵ I demonstrate here that these circumstances applied to Mathilda, even though the conventional wisdom concerning her period has been that possibilities for women's self-determination were shrinking.

The eleventh century has long been associated with narrowing opportunities and limited power for women, especially in contrast to the tenth century; this theory of change is supported by two particular arguments. First, Georges Duby's seminal research on the Mâconnais led him to posit the transformation of kinship structures in the eleventh century, redefining the kingroup in favor of a restricted male line of descent. This involved affirming the primacy of male heirs, especially the eldest son, to the exclusion of both younger sons and daughters. This change reconfigured the family to a kin group rarely wider than three generations, around the family patrimonial lands, which were its major source of wealth. The push to maintain this property indivisible included a shift from large horizontal groups of maternal and paternal kin to a streamlined, vertical structure that stressed the agnatic line of descent from father to eldest son.⁶ Though Duby made his arguments for France, the influence of his theory has spread to continental European-wide studies, linking these alleged transformations

⁵ Evergates, "Aristocratic Women," 73.

⁶ This theory was most eloquently delineated in "Lignage, Noblesse et Chevalerie au XIIe Siècle dans le Région Mâconnais: une Revision," in *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* 27:4 (1972): 803-23.

to the changing nature of public power.⁷ In the ninth century, strong royal power brought with it the capacity for patronage, and noble families allied themselves with a wider array of agnatic and cognatic kin supposedly to best exploit their position *vis à vis* that royal benefactor. As this royal power base fragmented and declined, families regrouped around the patrilineal model for more protection in an unstable political landscape, though why a smaller kingroup would offer more stability than a larger one has never been satisfactorily explained. These changes, many historians have claimed, had a particularly devastating effect on women. Strategies of inheritance now restricted a daughter's portion of the patrimony and encouraged the shift from dower to dowry.⁸ A widow's dower right to alienate her property was converted into mere usufruct for her lifetime.⁹ The issue of maintaining the integrity of family land also encouraged joint property holding by husband and wife, in which the former administered the entirety.¹⁰ These ostensible changes restricted the rights of women as free landholders - the basis for power and patronage in the eleventh century. This narrative relies on the early work

⁷ See Karl Schmid, "Zur Problematik von Familie, Sippe und Geschlecht, Haus und Dynastic beim Mittelalterlichen Adel. Vortragen zum Thema: Adel und Herrschaft im Mittelalter," *Gebetsgedenken und Adliges Selbstverständnis im Mittelalter* (Sigmaringen, 1983), 183-239; Martin Aurell di Cardona, "Les Avatars de la Viduité Princiére: Ermessende, Comtesse de Barcelona," in *Veuves et Veuvage dans le Haut Moyen Age*, ed. Michel Parisse (Paris, 1993), 201-232.

⁸ Diane Owen Hughes, "From Brideprice to Dowry in Mediterranean Europe," *Journal of Family History* 3 (1978): 193-212.

⁹ See also Régine Le Jan-Hennebicque, "Aux Origines du Douaire Médiéval, VI-X Siècles," in *Veuves et Veuvage*, 107-122; Martin Aurell di Cardonna, "La Détérioration du Statut de la Femme Aristocratique en Provence, Xe - XIIe Siècles," *Le Moyen Age* 91 (1985): 5-32.

¹⁰ Jean Verdon, "La Femme et La Famille en France aux IXe-XIe siècles," *Travaux et Memoires de L'Université de Limoges, Coll. Histoire* 2 (Dec. 1977), 63-83.

of Tellenbach and Bloch, though its formation over the years has been the work of many historians.

The second theory is also of long standing and stems from what historians have viewed as the natural consequence of the ideals of the Gregorian reform, which flowered in the eleventh century. The consequences of these reforms, for both men and women, lay and clerical, have been much discussed. The reform movement and the papal initiatives toward clerical celibacy and away from lay dominion over investiture have been held accountable for women's shrinking opportunities. In the "The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500-1100," Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple traced the trajectory of women's power residing in their primacy within the family. They concluded that by the late eleventh century, the "imposition of celibacy and the prohibition of lay investiture restricted the power of the family, and therefore, women."¹¹ This basic dynamic has not been successfully challenged since the article's publication in 1988. The exclusion of queens from public power as well is linked to the development of an "impersonal machinery of government," a model of administration probably aped from the papal court. Both of these narratives, the eleventh century narrowing of kinship and inheritance patterns and the obviation of women through Gregorian reform, have dominated women's history. There is much to be said for the dual effect of these theories. They appear to work together seamlessly to give the historian a tidy picture of the eleventh century transformation of women from

¹¹ Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple, "The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500-1100," in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Maryanne Kowaleski and Mary Erler (Athens, GA, 1988), 83-101, at 95.

the “femme libre” of the ninth and tenth century to the hemmed-in and restricted female of a century later.

Recently, however historians have become uneasy with this analysis, particularly with the idea that a dramatic change that moved in one direction occurred in this period. Karl Leyser, Constance Bouchard, and Stephen White have all cautioned that kinship claims survived side by side with agnatic ones, depending on the circumstances surrounding them.¹² Cognatic and agnatic bias often were used to express family inheritance strategies that fluctuated dramatically from one given set of circumstances to the next. Duby himself voiced concern over his dower records from Cluny, observing that perhaps they demonstrated less of a social change and more of an increase in what Cluny was recording.¹³ Indeed, the rise of Cluny itself changed the nature of inheritance in that region; the monastic community provided support for women’s dower claims when they sought to donate lands to the foundation, or perhaps even exerted pressure on a woman to alienate. Pauline Stafford has likened Cluny to a “Father Christmas in reverse,” appearing in the Mâconnais to consume land. Cluny itself became the instrument that recorded gifts. The choice of who was included and excluded in the consents drawn up by the beneficiary is far from neutral.

¹² Karl Leyser, “The German Aristocracy from the Ninth Century to the Early Twelfth: a Historical and Cultural Sketch,” *Past and Present* 41 (1968): 25-35; Stephen White, *Custom, Kingship and Gifts to Saints: the Laudatio Parentum in Western France, 1050-1150* (Chapel Hill: 1988); Constance Bouchard “Family Structure and Family Consciousness among the Aristocracy in the Ninth to Eleventh Century,” *Francia* 14 (1986): 639-58.

¹³ Georges Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest: the Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France* (New York, 1983), 93.

Just as historians have voiced concerns about the shift from women's free use to mere usufruct in Duby's argument, there has also been a demand for a more nuanced reading of the damage done by Gregorian reform to women's status and position. In examining this movement, historians have shown that reform had grass roots beginnings, such as the Peace of God movement, which only later spread to the papal administration, then flowed out again in the form of papal directives to answer the need raised by the localities.¹⁴ Papal initiative, vilified as pushing for women's exclusion from both monastic communities and secular power, was not powerful enough to accomplish either.

New evidence, or rather, newly read evidence, has shown that during the very period in which papal reform was supposedly indifferent or overtly hostile to female monastic communities, England and France in particular evidenced an enormous surge in the growth and new foundation of religious houses for women. Bruce Venarde, in his study of nunneries in France and England, tracks this explosion statistically. In the years between 1000 and 1300, the very years in which reform took hold, female monastic houses multiplied almost ten-fold. 310 new houses were founded between 1101 and 1175.¹⁵ This figure does not take into account the existing houses that experienced new growth and donations. How has this evidence been so completely ignored, when historians have initiated theories about female opportunities in the shadow of the reform papacy? One answer is that the nature of these houses and their

¹⁴ H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085* (Oxford, 1998).

¹⁵ Bruce Venarde, *Women's Monasticism in Medieval Society: Nunneries in France and England, 890-1215* (Ithaca, 1997).

founding changed systemically. Instead of royal donations or grants from the highest nobility, the overwhelming majority of the new nunneries in this period were founded through the cooperation of local lesser nobility and local bishops.¹⁶ They were founded for wives, mothers, daughters, and other holy women in the community who wanted to live by a rule. One family might donate the property with the approval of their overlord, while another might add a mill to the new holding, and the local bishop would provide spiritual support and even obtain papal approval for the house. Many of the new foundations were the result of the spiritual dynamics of the itinerant preaching movement of the mendicants, and charismatic hermits, unconnected to a particular monastic order. Like the Peace of God movement mentioned above, local foundations of women's monastic communities followed the contours of local piety.

The second factor that made this trend less visible was the autonomy of the foundations. In the period between 1101 and 1175, Venarde showed that the majority, up to 78%, had no affiliation with any male-centered monastic movement. The lack of affiliation has made these foundations much harder to trace, but no less a fundamental trend of the period. Women who had a religious calling and made self-determined decisions about their own future were largely accommodated by their communities and families. Those who had to go outside their kin for support, like the famous Christina of Markyate, found help and sustenance through other bishops and abbots, though in Christina's case this process was an extremely difficult one. Taking into account the women that were forced to enter religious houses against their will, the growth in the population of these houses is, nonetheless, evidence that reform spirituality influenced

¹⁶ Venarde, *Women's Monasticism*, 55-57.

women to make decisions about their future, decisions for which the local ecclesiastical and lay powers around them provided support. Rather than indifference or hostility, the reactions of the papacy had all the characteristics of an institution scrambling to react to a wave of reform not of its making. Only when petitioned or prompted did the papacy issue bulls and send directives. Meanwhile, the support and initiative of local ecclesiastic leaders spurred on the expansion of female monastic piety.

In this same vein are Jocelyn Wogan-Browne's findings about the culture of these female houses. Though their access to the Latin scholastic learning of their brothers was limited, a new theological and philosophical flowering was taking place in female houses of Francophone tradition in the vernacular.¹⁷ Wogan-Browne examines Clemence of Barking, in particular, to find evidence for a female monastic scholar, composing subtle and adept theological philosophy in Anglo-Norman, for her house and for the lay world at large beyond her door. These works, including acrostics and poems on debates such as the Trinity and man's fallen nature, were copied into male monastic texts for their benefit as well. They enjoyed popularity in the literate circles of Henry II and his court, and may have even been used to solicit donations from him. Her works, and many others from female houses of this period, show that a female authoritative voice could be welcome and respected.

Politically, opportunities for active participation were undoubtedly narrower. But, here too, in Anglo-Saxon England, we find traces of queenly authority that

¹⁷ Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "Women, World History and Academic Debate: Texts and Reader in Post-Conquest England," in *Cambridge History of Writings in Medieval England* ed. David Wallace (Cambridge, 1999), 92-121; idem, "Consuming the Apple: Bible Reading, the Vernacular and Women's Literary Culture in Anglo-Norman England," Paper presented at the Medieval Club of New York, April 7, 2000. My thanks to Professor Wogan-Browne for her helpful comments on this topic.

Mathilda could have used as patterns for her activity there. Before the arrival of the Normans, Anglo-Saxon monasteries established numerous cults of royal saints. This trend had started as far back as Bede, with his example of pious queens whose efforts converted their royal spouses, and thus, the entire nation.¹⁸ The power of these women through piety manifested itself politically, as the culture of early Germanic peoples was introduced to a new religion, though perhaps less dramatically than Bede's account would have the reader believe. Susan Ridyard has outlined the rather surprising development of saintly cults for many of the princesses and queens of the Anglo-Saxon royal lines, before the development of strict canonization procedures.¹⁹ One of the earliest Anglo-Saxon royal saints was Aethelrith who, according to Bede, was a saint because of her virginity. Though she married twice, she somehow avoided the conjugal bed. As a royal wife and queen she can certainly be perceived as rather a failure, but her sanctity, Bede tells us, was all the more laudable because she kept herself pure in the face of her husband's legitimate desire. Her saintly status, far from inherent in her royal status and role, was actually inconsistent with it.²⁰

It is on this model that later tenth- and eleventh- century hagiographers approach their royal saints as well, even if these patterns turn out to be remarkably ill fitting.

¹⁸ Joan Nicholson, "Feminae Gloriosae: Women in the Age of Bede," in *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford, 1978), 17.

¹⁹ Susan J. Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1988).

²⁰ Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, 82-83.

St. Edberga, a royal virgin daughter of King Edward of the West Saxons, for instance, enjoyed the only royal cult at Westminster. The *Vita Edburge* by Osbert of Clare recounts that virginity and humility were the reasons for her fame, but the details that slipped into her narrative reveal where the real source of her power and sainthood lay. Though she supposedly “renounced the world” for a life of sanctity, she still received regular visits from members of the West Saxon royal house, especially her father. She used her royal status to intercede on behalf of her house for funds and land, and she also retained her personal wealth. This, Osbert made clear, was the reason she was “blessed”; she caused Nunnaminster to increase in land and revenue to the glory of God.²¹ Her saintliness was not found in renunciation, but in her willingness to use her status to further the proper ends, in this case, her nunnery. Her story was one of royal patronage and obligation. Immediately after the Conquest, her cult was well known and respected, locally and across England. The abbey church at Nunnaminster was rededicated to her in 1108, illustrating her continued popularity.²²

The cult of St. Edith, another West Saxon royal daughter, was an even clearer example of the involvement of Anglo-Saxon royal saints in politics. Her mother Wulfthryth was either the wife or concubine of King Egbert. Wulfthryth was later made abbess of Wilton, possibly because Edgar wanted her political assistance in the

²¹ Ridyard reproduces the account Osbert gave of one of Edburga’s visits to her father’s court. After the king repeatedly requests a song from her, she reluctantly gives in, after she is promised a gift. Osbert gives her high praise, for when her song is done, she asks for a piece of land that two of her father’s nobles had forfeited, on account of a brawl. Despite her seclusion, both Edberga (and obviously her superiors) know enough court scuttlebutt to be informed about the parcel of property in question, its suitability and its availability. Edward, of course, relinquished the property, and the nuns at Nunnaminster had it ever after (Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, 102).

²² Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, 129.

early days of monastic reform. Whatever the case, Edgar fully supported both her and her daughter Edith, and they retained their prodigious personal resources. Wilton was located close by an important royal residence, and though Edith never married and supposedly forsook a worldly role, visiting foreign dignitaries and local nobility would stream to her door to give her gifts and letters and to plead their causes, hoping for her intercession with her father.²³ In fact, when she was dedicated to the abbey, the public ceremony resembled a coronation; huge group of princes, clergy, and members of the court were in attendance. The benefits she gained for her secular protégés, educators and artists among them, were also judicial. “She tempered the stern decrees of the laws and the judges; she overcame by tears, prayers and offerings the furious hosts; she snatched the prey from the very jaws of death.”²⁴ Edith bought relics for the house with her personal wealth and, as a final act, engaged in an ambitious building program for an *oratorium* dedicated to St. Denis, which she financed and finished immediately before her death. Even in death, Edith was chiefly a landowner saint, striking blind and harrying those who would seize land or steal possessions from the abbey at Wilton. Goscelin told of a certain Agamund, who made off with one of these estates, and as he lay dying, his mourners saw him rise from his bed and beseech them to make arrangements to return the land to the nuns, because Edith had threatened him with eternal torment.²⁵

²⁴ Ridyard quotes the *Vitae Edithe*, 64-65.

²⁵ Ridyard, *Royal Saints*, 149.

It is tempting to view the existence of these royal saints' cults as another operative circumstance through which Mathilda's active political career might be viewed. If sainted royal females were allowed active administrative roles in the world of eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon England, would it be so difficult to imagine that Mathilda's path might already be cut out for her? The eleventh-century life of St. Edith by Goscelin was dedicated to Lanfranc, one of Mathilda's closest advisors and supporters. St. Edberga was the only royal saint at Winchester, where Mathilda and William's coronations took place, and where an enlarged royal palace was built for their annual Easter courts. Her knowledge of both these saints' cults can surely be assumed. One hesitates, however, to put too much stock in the examples of these royal Anglo-Saxon women. Both Queen Emma and Queen Edith were also well aware of these royal saints. Emma was actually one of Agamund's mourners when he quailed in fright at the thought of dying without returning St. Edith's land. Queen Edith replaced the saint's wood church at Wilton with a new stone structure in thanks for her education. According to the *Life of Edward the Confessor*, Edith claimed to have learned the virtues and duties of queenship from St. Edith's example.²⁶ Yet, the careers of these two last Anglo-Saxon queens did not reflect the examples of Edberga or Edith, both adept at juggling pious and political aims. Queen Emma and Queen Edith experienced turbulent political fortunes, and their careers were fraught with banishment and charges of adultery. Emma had to prove her virtue by walking over flaming ploughshares, and

²⁶ *The Life of King Edward the Confessor*, ed. Frank Barlow (London, 1962), 46-47.

Edith barely escaped repudiation.²⁷ By the late eleventh century, the saints Edberga and Edith had chiefly taken on the unthreatening characteristics of piety and humility. The administrative nature of their relationships to their monastic houses and to their royal families was undoubtedly more difficult to tease out.

Mathilda's own sense of her authority may have come from a tradition markedly different than that of the English. In fact, the roots of Mathilda's active role may come from more obvious models on the Continent. Excepting the Capetian house, whose strategies both kept them safe from dynastic upheaval and obviated female authority, the powerful counts of Normandy, Flanders, Tuscany, and Lombardy wielded authority on the Continent. Here, I believe is where the historian can look for a strong tradition of female authority that heavily influenced Mathilda's reign and her conception of how women should operate in the administrative arena. If what I theorize is correct, the true foundation of Anglo-Norman queenship lay in the comital traditions of the northern Continent. Though these noblewomen did not benefit from a coronation, their activities in government and monastic patronage may have been the model for Mathilda's reign.

Mathilda's mother, Adela, was active in the government of her husband, Baldwin V of Flanders, and later her son, Robert the Frisian. She appeared on charters, and founded her own abbey, Messen in Flanders.²⁸ Mathilda's aunt, Judith of Flanders, was a collector of relics and an active patron of religious houses. The stepsister of Mathilda's father, Baldwin V, Judith was married to Tostig, Queen Edith's brother. In

²⁷ Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh Century England* (Oxford, 1997), 21-22.

²⁸ Maxime de Montrand, *Dictionnaire des abbayes et monasteries, ou histoire des établissements religieux* (Paris, 1856), 523.

England, Judith's patronage and devotion to local saints became well known. After her husband's death at Stamford bridge, she married again, to Welf, the Duke of Bavaria. Her relations with the local monastic house of Weingarten produced gifts of land and the famous "Judith Gospels," beautiful Gospel books that contain her portrait.²⁹

Mathilda's early life included many of these examples of active patronage and must have shaped her conception of a woman's role in the public world. Women in Mathilda's tradition were not only patronesses, but also energetic lords. Ruling women such as Beatrice of Lorraine, mother of Mathilda of Tuscany, and Scigelgaita of Lombardy held sway as military leaders and commanders. Beatrice of Lorraine spent her rule in itinerant military camps on active campaign. Mathilda of Tuscany, a direct contemporary of Mathilda of Flanders, was the leading military power behind Gregory VII from 1074 until his death. Gregory's papacy, far from dampening the opportunities for noblewomen, was heavily reliant on noble female military leaders for support. His command to Mathilda of Tuscany to make war on the Emperor Henry IV "for the remission of your sins" was hardly designed to limit female activity in the sphere of public administrative power.³⁰ Likewise, Adelaide, Margravine of Turin, and Beatrice of Lorraine were encouraged and, in fact, entreated to protect Gregory through whatever lordly means were available to them. When the Empress Agnes, wife of Henry III, reigned after him as regent for Henry IV, Gregory wrote to remind the German princes

²⁹ Dagmar Óriain-Raedel, "Edith, Judith, Matilda: the Role of Royal Ladies in the Propagation of the Continental Cult," in *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, ed. Clare Stancliffe and Eric Cambridge (Stanford, 1995), 210-29.

³⁰ Sigebert de Gembloux, "Leodiensium Epistola Adversus Paschalem Papam," MGH LL 2 (Hannover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1892), 464.

of their oaths to uphold her authority in case young Henry should die.³¹ In the meantime, she held the “supreme administration of all affairs,” issuing all diplomas of the period and choosing each and every appointee to episcopal office.³²

Though clerics like Humbert of Silva Candida composed *Against the Simoniacs*, denouncing “lay women, who are neither permitted to speak in church, nor to rule over men...invest(ing) clerks with bishoprics and abbacies by means of pastoral staffs and rings,” he did not get a very thorough hearing.³³ Evidence from this period has shown that the papacy’s stand on lay investiture was more subtle than Humbert’s, centering chiefly on the qualifications of the clerics nominated.³⁴

In the years before Henry IV’s final break with Gregory, the pope suggested an expedition to Jerusalem to defend the Christians there, which would include both Mathilda of Tuscany and Empress Agnes. Gregory VII suggested that Mathilda and Agnes undertake further military activity outside what was necessary to merely defend papal authority and position. In fact, he was in favor of the two women furthering their military activity to include crusade. We can be reasonably sure that the pope did not regard women’s roles in administrative leadership simply as a necessary evil.

³¹ MGH II, 245.

³² Lampert of Hersfeld, “Annales,” in MGH SS 38: 69.

³³ Humbert of Silva Candida, “Libri III, Adversus Simoniacos,” PL 143: 29-31.

³⁴ “Critics of lay investiture in the 1060s and early 1070s were not concerned with the legality of the practice but with the qualifications of the candidates.” I. S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany, 1056-1106* (Oxford, 1999), 115-116

In constructing a context for Mathilda's life, we have established a social and religious milieu in which female authority, through such various manifestations as landholding, self-determination and spiritual instruction could and did exist without institutional censure, and indeed, with the active support of the medieval community. For Mathilda, the conditions of her regnancy allowed her real dominion. These conditions were multivalent. The theories stated above help to trace a general outline that displays the fecund possibilities for female authority in the eleventh century. Some of these circumstances were inherent in medieval society at large. Others were particular to the Norman world.

For the Normans, family ties outweighed gender considerations; an aspect of Norman administration which would have reverberations throughout the High Middle Ages.³⁵ Mathilda of Flanders had the good fortune to be born at a time of dynastic upheaval, both for the Normans, whose aspirations encouraged them to use whatever tools were at hand, and the English. Secondly, she held her position before the professionalization of administrative offices that would do such damage to the dominion of queens after the High Middle Ages.³⁶ As the niece of the King of France, Henry I, Mathilda carried the royal blood that would help make William the Bastard's dynasty legitimate, and thus she retained an enormous amount of influence throughout their marriage. Heavily involved in the political machinations of her husband early in their married lives, Mathilda was first empowered as regent only a year after their

³⁵ Eleanor Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 860 - 1066* (Berkeley, 1988).

³⁶ Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple, "The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500-1100" in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Maryanne Kowaleski and Mary Erler (Athens, GA, 1988), 83-97.

union. As plans for the conquest loomed closer, Mathilda's role in her family's government burgeoned. Her authority as a medieval lord and patron transformed into sacral power, invested by a public liturgy of coronation and anointing. The authority that resulted from her inhabitation of the throne intensified her influence, as it gave her an innumerably greater financial base from which to operate, while granting her a quasi-spiritual, incontrovertible authority. As one of the greatest and wealthiest lords in Domesday, Mathilda kept her own household and alienated and granted land to her servants by way of reward. She adjudicated court cases, granted monastic charters, and traveled the country in support of her political agenda. She was regent either in Normandy or in England for most of her adult life, and her authority survived handily even her repeated defiance of her royal husband. Her decision to support her son in rebellion against his father, though it seemed to cause a serious personal breach, never threatened her public status or official position. Her life was spent in defense and support of Norman policies in England and abroad, and her grueling administrative itinerary continued until her death in 1083.

Whatever medieval clerical literature and theory endorsed in the abstract, the reality of a ruling female under particular circumstances was not condemned but supported. In Mathilda's case, the men in the best position to circumscribe her activity were in the midst of working toward Norman hegemony in a period of upheaval, the outcome of which was not at all assured. The lawyers, bureaucrats, professional administrators and high bishops who would later act either consciously or unconsciously to obviate queenly authority were not sufficiently organized or powerful to question her; the rise of professional bureaucrats to administrative office was chiefly

a twelfth-century development. Engrossed in efforts to retain a hold on their possessions or gain new ones in the fallout of the Conquest, the fortunes of these churchmen and their monastic settlements were linked too tightly to the throne to dispute Mathilda's authority.³⁷ In addition, with the increasing power of the crown, the status of these men became more dependent on being closely identified with it.³⁸ Subsequent to the invasion, the bishops and greater abbots of England were all continental men; no Englishmen were appointed to high ecclesiastical office after 1066. By 1070, more than half the sees were vacant, and the rest held Norman supporters.³⁹

Papal attitudes toward Mathilda were also helpful in cementing her status. After her marriage was finally confirmed and ratified by Alexander II, her personal relationship with his famous successor was amicable indeed. Gregory's letters to Mathilda revealed his active support of their status in England. As the only royal pair in Europe whose marriage reflected his own immediate concerns with fidelity and legitimacy, their family was the paradigmatic ruling house. Though Gregory was not always fully satisfied with their behavior, especially concerning elections, he enjoined his legates to treat them with special care and respect because they never despoiled or sold churches, and they required their priests to remain celibate and their nobles to give

³⁷ Prelates, bishops and archbishops throughout England and Normandy were heavily reliant on royal favor for their status. In fact, the papacy of Gregory VII saw not even one visit from an archbishop or bishop throughout England or Normandy, despite repeated threats and reminders by Gregory himself. Though Gregory's relationship with both William and Mathilda was quite cordial, his authority in England and Normandy was limited. Lanfranc's rather desultory attitude toward the Gregory is an example of the restrictions of papal influence (Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 466-467).

³⁸ See below, Chapter 2.

³⁹ Brian Golding, *Conquest and Colonization, The Normans in Britain, 1066-1100* (New York, 1994), 158-161.

tithes.⁴⁰ Sensitive to Mathilda as the bearer of royal lineage, his letters to her pointedly drew attention to her noble blood in his attempt to acknowledge William's rights.⁴¹

Mathilda's life shows convincing evidence that lordship and justice, patronage and sacral rulership not only included some women, but that the authors of societal mores, far from criticizing this activity, seem unconcerned by this inclusion. Her life reveals a stark contrast to the contemporary attitudes historians of this period have come to expect. Mathilda of Flanders presents a challenge to post-modern expectations concerning eleventh-century women and their role in the community and that is, ultimately, the reason her life merits examination.

⁴⁰ *Monumenta Gregoriana*, ed. Philippe Jaffé (Berlin, 1865) II: 505.

⁴¹ See below, Chapter One.

Chapter One

Mathilda of Flanders

Historians have studied the Norman Conquest of England exhaustively for hundreds of years and from a myriad of angles. The economic and social effects of the Conquest on the native English population have been considered, as well as the relative continuity it preserved and the changes it wrought.⁴² The involvement of the Church and the Pope in the Conquest has been examined,⁴³ and scholars have studied both those who directed the Norman victory⁴⁴ and those who suffered the English defeat.⁴⁵ William the Conqueror, certainly, has been the subject of numerous biographies, both

⁴² H. R. Loyn, *Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest*, 2nd edition (London, 1991); Peter Sawyer, "1066-1086: A Tenurial Revolution?" in *Domesday Book: A Reassessment*, ed. Peter Sawyer (London, 1985), 71-85; R. Allen Brown, *The Norman Conquest* (London, 1984); William E. Knapton, *The Norman Conquest of the North: The Region and its Transformation, 1000-1135* (Chapel Hill, 1979); Edward Miller and John Hatcher, *Medieval England: Rural Society and Economic Change, 1086-1348* (London, 1978); Dorothy Whitelock, *The Norman Conquest, its setting and impact* (New York, 1966); Frank Barlow, *The Feudal Kingdom of England, 1042-1216* (London, 1955); Edward A. Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England, its Causes and its Results* (Oxford, 1879).

⁴³ Marjorie Chibnall, "Ecclesiastical Patronage and the Growth of Feudal Estates at the Time of the Norman Conquest," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 8 (1985), 103-118; David S. Spear, "The Norman Empire and the Secular Clergy, 1066-1204," *Journal of British Studies* 21 (1982), 1-10; Frank Barlow, *The English Church, 1066-1154: A History of the Anglo-Norman Church* (London, 1979).

⁴⁴ Robin Fleming, *Kings and Lords in Conquest England* (New York, 1991); Jim Bradbury, "Battles in England and Normandy, 1066-1154," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 6 (1983), 1-12; J. O. Prestwich, "The Military Household of the Norman Kings" *English Historical Review* 96: 378 (1981), 1-37; John Le Patourel, "The Norman Conquest, 1066, 1106, 1154?" *Anglo-Norman Studies* 1 (1978), 103-120.

⁴⁵ Ann Williams, *The English and the Norman Conquest* (New York, 1995); Pauline Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: A Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London, 1989); J.F.C. Harrison, *The English Common People: A Social History from the Norman Conquest to the Present* (London, 1984); Michael Swanton, *Three Lives of the Last Englishmen* (New York, 1984).

scholarly and popular.⁴⁶ In fact, every male member of his household who lived to maturity has merited at least one monograph: Robert Curthose,⁴⁷ William Rufus,⁴⁸ Henry I.⁴⁹ William's daughters have not been ignored either: Adela of Blois has been the subject of a book and a group of articles,⁵⁰ and even Cecelia, the child oblate *cum* abbess, has enjoyed scholarly attention.⁵¹ It is therefore surprising that England's conquering queen, Mathilda of Flanders, has escaped scrutiny. In each of the works mentioned above, Mathilda is scarcely more than a footnote. She is viewed simply as a wife and mother, albeit a wife and mother of kings, a woman whose limited importance derives from her intimacy with those who wielded power. If one looks at eleventh-century sources, however, the Mathilda of Flanders who appears in these records looks nothing like the woman whom modern historians have discounted. Her appearance changes when viewed through contemporary documents; though she is indeed a wife and mother, she is foremost a lord, a judge, and a patron. Some of the documents that

⁴⁶ George Slocombe, *William the Conqueror* (London, 1959); David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (Berkeley, 1964); Frank M. Stenton, *William the Conqueror and the Rule of the Normans* (New York, 1967).

⁴⁷ Charles Wendell David, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy* (Cambridge, MA, 1920).

⁴⁸ Michael Field, *The Father's Tragedy. William Rufus. Loyalty or Love?* (London, 1884); George Slocombe, *Sons of the Conqueror: Robert Curthose, William Rufus, Henry Beauclerc and the Grandson, Stephen* (London, 1960); Frank Barlow, *William Rufus* (Berkeley, 1983).

⁴⁹ Warren Hollister, *Henry I, Yale Monarch Series* (New Haven, 2001).

⁵⁰ Kimberly LoPrete, *Adela of Blois, Countess and Lord* (Dublin, 2001); idem, "The Anglo-Norman card of Adela de Blois," *Albion* 22:4 (1990), 569-89; idem "Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship," in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France* ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia, 1999), 7-43.

⁵¹ John Walmsley, "The Early Abbesses, Nuns and Female Tenants of the Abbey of the Holy Trinity, Caen," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 48:3 (1997), 425-44.

record her activity have been available to scholars for decades, such as Domesday Book, and the chronicles of major abbeys like Abingdon and Cluny. Mathilda can be seen regularly, not only in these records, but also in eleventh-century narratives: those of Orderic Vitalis, William of Poitiers, and Robert of Torigny. It seems surprising, in light of the multiplicity of sources in which she is mentioned, that historians have remained silent about her. Even though the study of queens and the office of queenship have enjoyed scholarly interest in the last ten years, but Mathilda has been overlooked.⁵² Yet, her life spanned one of the most turbulent periods of Northern European history, and she herself helped shape the world her daughters and successors would inherit. By taking a full share in the events that brought Norman rule to England, Mathilda insured that her descendants would also be allowed the same opportunities, whether they chose to make use of them or not. Anglo-Norman queens have been considered by specialists as the most powerful in Western Europe and as illustrative of the apex of medieval queenship before increased bureaucratization changed the nature and dominion of medieval queens.⁵³ Mathilda, as the first Norman queen, established a culture of queenly authority while political roles in England were inchoate. Her method of queenship at times resembled an amplification of continental models of lordship;

⁵² See especially *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh, 1992); *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe: Proceedings of a Conference Held at King's College London*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge, 1997); *The Power of the Weak*, ed. Jennifer Carpenter and Sally Beth MacLean (Urbana, 1995); *Medieval Queenship*, ed. John Carmi Parsons (New York, 1993); *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, ed. June Hall McCash, (Athens, GA, 1996); Peggy McCracken, *The Romance of Adultery: Queenship and Sexual Transgression in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia, 1998); Pauline Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: the King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1983); idem, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-century England* (Oxford, 1997); *Queens, Regents and Potentates*, ed. Theresa M. Vann (Woodbridge, 1993).

⁵³ John Carmi Parsons, "Ritual and Symbol in the English Medieval Queenship to 1500," in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh, 1992), 60-77.

perhaps this was her natal heritage from the sophisticated court of Flanders.⁵⁴ Whatever the origin of her concept of queenship, she participated in the administration of England to a degree that was unprecedented in eleventh-century English royal traditions, and in doing so, she invented a new tradition of her own. The contours of her actions, moreover, define Anglo-Norman queenship.

Like many medieval women and men, little is known about Mathilda's early life. The only daughter of Baldwin V of Flanders and Adela, the sister of Henry I, the king of France, she had two brothers, Baldwin and Robert, both her elders. She was probably born sometime between 1031 and 1034; Adela was brought to Flanders *in cunis* and married in 1028.⁵⁵ Allowing for the births of her older brothers, Mathilda could not have been born earlier than 1031. The family court was usually held in Bruges, the comital center, but the count and countess also spent time in Ghent, Lille, and Thérouanne. Mathilda's mother Adela was the beneficiary of a good education by the monks at St. Peter's in Ghent, and Mathilda probably received the same level of attention.⁵⁶ Mathilda was described as learned by her contemporaries; Orderic claimed she had a "cultivated mind."⁵⁷ Moreover, she was careful to educate her own

⁵⁴ See Chapter Three.

⁵⁵ Christian Pfister, *Études sur le règne de Robert le Pieux, 996-1031*, Bibliothèque de L'École des hautes études, sciences, philologiques et historique (Paris, 1885), 222.

⁵⁶ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 52-3.

⁵⁷ "litterarum scientia" (*The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols. [Oxford, 1969-1980], 2: 224-5).

daughters.⁵⁸ Mathilda was probably named for her father's German kindred; Mathilda Billung, daughter of Duke Hermann Billung of Saxony (d. 973), was Baldwin's grandmother. Though the name was not used in Flanders or in France at the time of Mathilda's birth, in Ottonian, Saxon, and Salian houses, noblewomen named Mathilda figured prominently.⁵⁹ The first was Queen Mathilda, wife of Henry the Fowler, who was immortalized by two Lives: *Vita Mahthildis antiquior*, written for Otto II, and *Vita Mahthildis posterior*, dedicated to King Henry II. The Ottonian and Salian Mathildas were a learned and powerful group. They were politically active and the literary keepers of history; Queen Mathilda gave her granddaughter, Abbess Mathilda of Quedlinberg, the documents for a family history that the abbey produced under her headship. The *Annales Quedlinburgensis* was a major work written by learned nuns to keep the history of the Ottonians alive.⁶⁰ There is evidence that Mathilda Billung had contact with Mathilda of Quedlinberg, and her other German female relations, including Abbess

⁵⁸ Cecilia was educated by Arnoul of Choques, a Flemish-born priest who was educated under Lanfranc and William Bona Anima. Arnoul served the ducal family as a tutor for years, probably educating all of the princesses, until he became Robert Curthose's chaplain and chancellor around 1080. Adela could sight-read Latin and was known for her literary skill not only as a patron, but as a poet (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 de l'Institut* [Paris, 1952], 89; Elizabeth M. C. Van Houts, "Latin Poetry and the Anglo-Norman court, 1066-1135: the 'Carmen de Hastings proelio'," *Journal of Medieval History* 15:1 [1989], 39-62; André Boutmey, ed. "Trois oeuvres inédites de Godefroid of Reims," *Revue de moyen âge latin* 3 [1947], 343).

⁵⁹ The male lines of both German houses had unimpressive lineages, but married women who bore the blood of Charlemagne. Queen Mathilda (895-968), Henry the Fowler's wife, Abbess Mathilda of Quedlinberg (966-999), the daughter of Otto II, and Abbess Mathilda of Essen (d. 1101), the daughter of Liudolf, Duke of Swabia (Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Those of My Blood* [Philadelphia, 2001], 32-4).

⁶⁰ Elisabeth Van Houts, "Women and the Writing of History in the Early Middle Ages: the Case of Mathilda of Essen and Aethelward," *Early Medieval Europe* 1:1 (1992), 53-68.

Mathilda of Essen, throughout her life.⁶¹ Therefore, the name Mathilda echoed the power of these German females, and highlighted Baldwin's imperial relations.

Though chronicle sources say almost nothing about Mathilda's early life, what we know of her natal family, and the court culture in Flanders at the time of her youth, is revealing. Out of the reach of both the French and German kings, the Low Countries produced powerful nobles whose regional authority extended without royal interference. The counts of Flanders had been particularly active and, by the tenth century, had expanded south to Amiens on the Somme river, where they were checked by Normandy's borders. Expansion eastward was the only option, though movement in this direction intruded into the territory of the German Emperors.⁶² Baldwin IV of Flanders, after a difficult minority, captured Aalst and the islands of Zeeland in the Scheldt estuary. Though these were relatively small gains, they involved Flanders in the power struggles of the Empire, and the warfare over these territories was quite fierce. In 1056 Emperor Henry III died, and Baldwin V finally received recognition, through papal intervention, of his right to all of the Scheldt march as a fief of the Empire. The treaty was very favorable to Baldwin, and the result was a split in the formal vassalage of the Flemish counts between the French and Imperial thrones. The new arrangement gave the counts of Flanders political options where none had existed before; by favoring first the Empire, then France, playing both rulers against one another, the counts enhanced their own position. Baldwin secured the hand of Countess

⁶¹ Van Houts, "Women," 66-7.

⁶² Baldwin IV's expansion eastward may also have been influenced by his friendly relationship with Hugh Capet, who was Baldwin IV's guardian during his minority (Dunbabin, *France in the Making*, 208).

Richilde of Hainault for his son, Baldwin VI, and improved Flanders' position further. By the eleventh century, Flanders was the only fully developed political unit in the Low Countries.⁶³ Baldwin V played an important role in the domestic expansion of comital power by building on his father's successes. He divided his territory into castellanies that were led by the older families of the region who controlled the judicial system and collected profits. Each castellan appointed a receiver to forward the appropriate percentage of these revenues to Baldwin.⁶⁴ By the end of the eleventh century, he had introduced a network of *prévôtes* who collected rents and taxes, furthering the control and revenue of the comital house. The system would appear elsewhere by the twelfth century, but it adapted more quickly to the condensed, geographically concentrated Flemish demesne.⁶⁵ Though the system owed revenue and loyalty to Baldwin, he was content to accept the obligations and military service of the local nobles of the region and otherwise leave them to their own devices. The lords of Boulogne and Guînes both maintained this loose relationship with Baldwin. Even the lordships that were created in the vacuum produced by Baldwin IV's minority were allowed to remain; Béthune and d'Aubigny in Artois, and Bouchin in Ostrevant were held in fee, but retained rights to justice. The land reclamation of the so-called "Merciless Forest," the barren interior of Flanders, was begun under Mathilda's father, and the Flemish count reaped the financial reward of additional tillable land. After about 1042, Baldwin took the lead in the

⁶³ Dunbabin, *France in the Making*, 207.

⁶⁴ M. M. Postan, *The Medieval Economy and Society* (London, 1972), 210.

⁶⁵ Dunbabin, *France in the Making*, 225.

reclamation of the polderland in the northwest. These areas were coastal regions below sea level that were converted by the count to meadowlands, a process involving desalination, and extensive draining and diking. The reclaimed territory, originally comital, Baldwin donated to abbeys and churches with the understanding that it would be used for grazing and for agriculture.⁶⁶

Medieval Flanders was not only forward in political and agricultural development, but also precocious in matters of economic expansion and trade.⁶⁷ The author of the *Encomium Emmae* declared of the comital center, Bruges, "It enjoys great fame for the number of its merchants and for its affluence in all things upon which mankind sets the highest value."⁶⁸ Baldwin was highly involved in promoting city life and built roads and canals leading to Ypres and Lille that stimulated urban growth. He arranged a grant of exemption to the cities of Aire and Gerardsbergen in about 1065, in exchange for revenue. During his reign, Arras, St. Omer, Ypres, and Ghent all began to import wool from Spain and England and to produce cloth that sold throughout Europe. The looms of Flanders were unusually large, so that they had to be housed in workshops instead of private homes. The workshop organization Flanders favored had wide repercussions for urban development. Flemish towns now drew population from the outlying countryside and fostered urban centers that were second only to Italian cities.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Nichols, *Medieval Flanders*, 98.

⁶⁷ Postan, *The Medieval Economy*, 213.

⁶⁸ *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, ed. Alistair Campbell (London, 1998), 47.

⁶⁹ J. C. H. Blom and E. Lamberts, eds. *History of the Low Countries* (New York, 1999), 36-8.

In addition, one of the favored routes of merchants and pilgrims passing into southern and eastern France led through St. Omer.⁷⁰ Baldwin and his predecessors were shrewd enough to understand the importance of protection for merchants; those who brought raw wool from overseas, as well as those who came to buy, were encouraged, and the comital treasury was enriched by their tolls and customs.⁷¹ The counts of Flanders were the natural arbitrators of town and merchant conflicts, and as a result their influence grew through their juridical activity.⁷² The economic stimulus Baldwin and his forefathers advanced led to an unusually wealthy comital house. Baldwin could command about a thousand knights by the end of his reign, and he had the wherewithal to buy mercenaries if needed. As its population grew, Flanders supplied large numbers of mercenaries to the rest of Europe.⁷³

Part of the mentalité of eleventh-century Flanders was the religious movement that resulted in the Peace of God councils, which were begun by Baldwin IV in 1024, with the assistance of bishop Gerard of Cambrai.⁷⁴ In 1030, Baldwin called another Peace Assembly and presided over it himself. Baldwin V, in turn, established the Peace

⁷⁰ *Miracula s. Bertini*, MGH SS 15: 511.

⁷¹ Blom, *History of the Low Countries*, 37.

⁷² Dubabin, *France in the Making*, 210-11.

⁷³ Dunbabin, *France in the Making*, 232.

⁷⁴ Geoffrey G. Koziol, "Monks, Feuds and the Making of Peace in Eleventh-Century Flanders," *Historical Reflections* 14 (1987), 531-49.

in Théroutanne.⁷⁵ Baldwin's relationship with the church had always been one of mutual cooperation. Both he and his father made strict provisions for the advocates and guardians of monasteries by issuing charters that closely defined their duties and restricted exploitation of monastic lands. In addition, Flanders had early been the center for monastic reform, and in the tenth century had heavily influenced English monastic traditions.⁷⁶ The Peace of God movement, however, was an altogether different component in the religious life of Flanders, combining as it did lay piety, monastic reform, and the powerfully suggestive influence of holy relics. The endemic warfare between Baldwin and Henry III had led to a degree of lawlessness in the Flemish nobility, damaged much of Flanders and Hainault, and affected both lay non-combatants and monks. The monastery of Lobbes especially was beggared by the conflict, and the members of that house conducted a tour, or *delatio*, through the county of Flanders with the relics of St. Ursmer, the abbey's patron saint.⁷⁷ Baldwin and Adela both supported the movement, and Baldwin restored Lobbes's property and took the monks under his personal protection. He probably spoke at the assembly in Bergues

⁷⁵ Geoffrey Koziol, "The Miracles of St. Ursmer on his Journey through Flanders," in *Medieval Hagiography. An Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head (New York, 2000), 341-58.

⁷⁶ In 889, Grimbald, a monk of St. Bertin's, helped King Alfred translate Gregory's *Pastoral Care*. In 956, St. Dunstan was exiled and fled to St. Peter's, Ghent; in 965, Ethelred was still donating goods and lands to St. Peter's, Ghent as a result (Grierson, "The Relationship between England and Flanders," 89-93; James Campbell, "England, France, Flanders and Germany in the Reign of Ethelred II: Some Comparisons and Connections," in *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History*, ed. James Campbell [London, 1986], 191-207).

⁷⁷ Koziol, "Miracles of St. Ursmer," 342.

and encouraged his nobles to make peace.⁷⁸ Adela herself made arrangements for the monks' lodging in town.⁷⁹

Adela played an active part in the administration of Flanders. Betrothed to Baldwin as a child, she was raised and educated at the Flemish court. The *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* suggested that Baldwin V's marriage to her caused him to rebel against his father. Her status and connections were of such import that Baldwin V concluded that he no longer needed to be loyal to his father.⁸⁰ Though he was unsuccessful in the conflict that followed, and reconciled with his father, terms were reached only after the younger Baldwin was installed as co-ruler with his father. Adela received the abbey of Corbie, a wealthy and prestigious monastic house, for her dowry.⁸¹ She appeared in more than half of Baldwin's charters, where she was often styled as the "sister of the king of France."⁸² Like her daughter, she also received a letter from Gregory VII, asking her to forbid clergy who had concubines, or refused to abandon their wives, to celebrate Mass. Gregory went on to request that she take away their benefices and replace them with obedient priests from "wherever she could find

⁷⁸ Koziol, "Monks," 536.

⁷⁹ Adela arranged for the monks to stay with the castellan of Veurne, because his young son was blind. The monks healed the child. (Koziol, "Miracles of St. Ursmer," 349).

⁸⁰ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, pp.52-3.

⁸¹ Nichols, *Medieval Flanders*, 52.

⁸² Adela appears in 67 percent of the charters issued by Baldwin V and in exactly half of those issued by her son, Robert the Frisian (Penelope Adair, "Ego et Uxor Mea: Countess Clemence and Her Role in the Comital Family and in Flanders," Ph D dissertation, University of Santa Barbara, 1995).

them.”⁸³ After the death of her husband, the county of Flanders passed to Baldwin VI, but he died shortly thereafter, leaving his young son Arnulf as count. Adela’s second son, Robert the Frisian, invaded Flanders, and Arnulf was slain. Though contemporaries saw this as unusually brutal, Philip I of France eventually accepted Robert’s rule, and so did Adela. She remained a very important figure at Robert’s court, far outshining Robert’s own wife, Gertrude of Holland. If we use Gertrude’s charter activity as representative of her administrative involvement, we find that she appeared in only one out of twelve of Robert’s charters, a mere fraction of her powerful stepmother’s signatures.

The Flanders of Mathilda’s childhood was politically cohesive, economically advanced, spiritually vibrant, and a sophisticated center for trade. Her mother provided an active model of female lordship and often made use of her royal status in administrative documents. But the comital court in Flanders had another aspect that made it even more fascinating and worldly. It was the temporary home and refuge of choice for exiles from all over Europe. During Mathilda’s lifetime, English and Norman refugees, especially, moved in and out of the Flemish court. Emma of Normandy, exiled by Harold Harefoot, lived for two years at a palace established for her in Bruges by Baldwin and Adela. Her son Harthacanute joined her in 1038 in Bruges, where he was greeted warmly by the Flemish comital family.⁸⁴ He spent the winter collecting ships for an invasion that never took place; in March of 1038, Harold

⁸³ *Das Register Gregors VII*, MGH ESeI. 2/ 4:10.

⁸⁴ In 1036, Emma’s unfortunate son Alfred passed through Flanders on his way to England to meet with his mother. Baldwin offered him an escort, but Alfred, perhaps foolishly, declined and was blinded and killed in England. (*Encomium Emmae*, 44-7).

Harefoot died and Emma and Harthacanute returned triumphantly to England.⁸⁵ After the death of Harthacanute and the accession of Edward the Confessor, a veritable flood of English refugees converged upon Flanders, many of them Cnut and Emma's relations. Gunhild, the niece of Cnut, with her two sons, Hemming and Thurkil, were established at Bruges in 1045. Constable Osgod Clapa, head of the Danish faction, probably arrived the next year. Swegen, son of Earl Godwine, after seducing the abbess of Leominster, likewise wintered in Flanders between 1046 and 1047 before making his way to Denmark. He would return to the haven of Flanders again in 1049, after murdering his brother.⁸⁶ Even Vikings were welcome at the Flemish court. Chiefs Lothen and Yrling plundered and raided the coast at Kent, Essex, and the Isle of Wight, then docked at Flanders to unload their spoils, to the enrichment of Baldwin's thriving merchant community.⁸⁷ They sailed back home in safety, much to Edward the Confessor's dismay.⁸⁸ In 1050, Baldwin's step-sister Judith became the wife of Earl Godwine's third son, Tostig. Only a year later, in September 1051, Edward the Confessor banished the entire Godwine clan. As one might expect, Judith and all of her marital family fled to Bruges: Earl Godwine and his whole house, his sons, Swegen and Tostig, and their families. Baldwin hosted the group there, while attempting to

⁸⁵ *Encomium Emmae*, 46-9.

⁸⁶ Grierson, "The Relationship between England and Flanders," 97.

⁸⁷ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 164-7.

⁸⁸ Edward retaliated soon afterward. In 1049, Edward assisted Emperor Henry III as he was battling Baldwin V, by amassing his English ships in the Channel to intimidate Baldwin until he came to terms (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 166-7).

negotiate a reconciliation with Edward.⁸⁹ Baldwin supposedly helped collect a fleet for Godwine, and after one failed attempt, the Earl reached England and his family was restored to favor in 1052.⁹⁰ Judith would return to Flanders after Tostig's death, before Baldwin helped arrange her marriage to Welf of Bavaria. After Earl Harold's death, Harold Godwineson remained on good terms with Baldwin; he was actually at Saint-Omer where he witnessed Baldwin's charter to St. Peter's of Ghent.⁹¹

English nobles were not the only foreigners who made Flanders an interim residence. Normans escaped to the Flemish court, too. Emma of Normandy could have returned to her home after she was exiled, but instead chose Flanders. In the midst of William's minority, Flanders may have looked like a more stable option. The *Encomium Emmae* was written in Flanders by a monk of St. Bertin who had met Cnut on his way to Rome and became acquainted with Emma during the three years of her exile in Bruges.⁹² An even more interesting pair of Norman refugees arrived in Bruges in the early months of 1041. Gilbert of Brionne was one of the guardians assigned to the child-duke William the Bastard after his father left on Crusade.⁹³ After Gilbert was

⁸⁹ *Vita Edwardi*, ed. Frank Barlow, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1992), 405.

⁹⁰ All except the felonious Swegen, who had set out on pilgrimage from Bruges, and died returning from Constantinople (*Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 182).

⁹¹ Auguste van Lokeren, *Chartres et documents de l'Abbaye de Saint-Pierre au Mont Blandin* (Ghent, 1868), 95-6.

⁹² *Encomium Emmae*, xiii-xxii.

⁹³ Gilbert of Brionne was the son of Godfrey, one of Duke Robert of Normandy's illegitimate sons (*Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 60-1, 92-3).

murdered by assassins when he was out riding, his two sons, Richard and Baldwin, immediately fled to the court of Flanders in fear for their lives.⁹⁴ Like Gilbert of Brionne, Duke William's tutor, Turolde, was also assassinated soon afterward, and Osbern the Steward was murdered after a fight in the young duke's bedroom.⁹⁵ Richard and Baldwin would have been acquainted with Mathilda in Flanders, where they were guests in the ducal residence. In 1040, Richard and Baldwin were young men with stories to tell; they were eye-witnesses to the young duke's adventures and mishaps. To William's Flemish neighbors, this information was no doubt in demand, as the vicissitudes of his minority were not only interesting gossip, but would have a direct impact on the balance of power in Francia. One would expect that Mathilda would hear at least some of the tales the Brionne brothers recounted, and she was perhaps engaged as a young girl by the precarious fortunes of the Norman duke, so close to her in age, if not in circumstance. The two brothers spent ten years in Flanders, only returning to Normandy about the time of Mathilda and William's marriage, and they would remain Mathilda's friends throughout her life. Both participated in the battle at Hastings and were rewarded handsomely.⁹⁶ Mathilda herself gave Baldwin, later called Baldwin of Meules, thirty acres of her land in Shalford.⁹⁷ He married

⁹⁴ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 92-5, 110-1. See also J. C. Ward, "Royal Service and Reward: the Clare Family and the Crown, 1066-1154," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 11 (1989), 261-5.

⁹⁵ Osbern, the murdered steward, was the father of William FitzOsbern, one of William and Mathilda's closest allies, and one of the wealthiest Domesday tenants-in-chief (*Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 95).

⁹⁶ Richard FitzGilbert would receive lands in excess of £750, and Baldwin between £200 and £400 (Judith Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* [Cambridge, UK, 1997], 28-30).

⁹⁷ DB Essex, ii, 3b.

Emma, a kinswoman of William's, and she appears in charters for Mathilda's abbey of La Trinité, including its foundation charter.⁹⁸ Emma donated the tithes of all the churches in the forest of the Avranchin, with two hundred acres of land, and in exchange Mathilda gave her thirty *livres*.⁹⁹

Baldwin of Flanders would continue to welcome English and Norman refugees, even after his daughter's successful invasion; displaced English nobles and courtiers, now fleeing the wrath of Mathilda and William, still landed in Flanders. Baldwin seemed to pride himself on his political neutrality. This high level of tolerance for guests with divergent political interests was very unusual. As a result of the dispassionate climate of her father's court, and probably its wealth, sophistication, and urbanity, Mathilda came into contact with a veritable stream of aliens whom her parents heartily welcomed. Palaces and comfortable residences were procured for visiting royalty and nobility, often for a span of years. Her upbringing and education surely were influenced by the scope of her acquaintances and experiences as the only daughter of the comital house. Unlike William, who relied on Anglo-Saxon interpreters, and even Lanfranc, who claimed no knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon tongue, Mathilda's exposure to English exiles familiarized her with the language of her future kingdom.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 270-1.

⁹⁹ *Les Actes de Guillaume le Conquérant et de la reine Mathilde pour les abbayes Caennaises*, ed. Lucien Mussét, (Caen, 1967), 52-7.

¹⁰⁰ According to Domesday, William had two interpreters on his staff, Hugolin and Richard (DB Somerset, 45, 9 and 45, 14). For Lanfranc, see Chapter Five, n. 128.

Mathilda begins to appear in contemporary chronicles about the time of her famous marriage. William the Bastard of Normandy, a loyal vassal of Mathilda's uncle, the King of France, had recently surfaced from a dangerous and difficult minority with a decisive victory at Val-es-dunnes.¹⁰¹ Though his fortune was rising at the time of their marriage, William has traditionally been seen as an unexpected choice for an heiress of Mathilda's rank.¹⁰² However, Mathilda was at least nineteen, and perhaps as old as twenty-three, by the time she and William married. As an adult, it is possible that she had a voice in the matter of a marriage partner and was in favor of William. Moreover, it is important to note that William's relations with Henry of France were very friendly at this time and he was of marriageable age, in fact, probably two or three years younger than Mathilda. These factors made him a reasonable choice. The issue of his birth and his need for legitimation may have actually been an inducement to Mathilda; historians have discovered that noblewomen often held a more favorable position in a marriage of slightly unequal partners.¹⁰³ On William's side, the match may have seemed the answer to many a difficult issue. His barons were already raising the question of marriage, which inevitably meant an alliance, ideally with a power much greater than his.¹⁰⁴ Mathilda's father was an incredibly wealthy and powerful baron; Flanders was one of the few counties on the eleventh-century Continent that was

¹⁰¹ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 88-9, 120-3; *The Gesta Gvilelmi of William of Poitiers*, ed. and trans. R.H.C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (New York, 1998), 10-1, 80.

¹⁰² Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 78.

¹⁰³ Bouchard, *Those of My Blood*, 30-9; Loprete, "The Anglo-Norman Card," 569-89.

¹⁰⁴ Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 77.

actually cash rich.¹⁰⁵ Perhaps even more important, Mathilda's bloodlines were unimpeachable; she was related to the emperors of Germany through her father and the kings of France through her mother. Legitimation was certainly in the front of William's mind. Though the nobility of Europe were more forgiving than they would be even fifty years later, there was evidence that more than one noble condescended to William because of his illegitimacy.¹⁰⁶ Until his coronation, he was regularly referred to in contemporary sources as "William the Bastard." The match may have been discussed in May 1048, when Baldwin V and William attested a royal charter together at Senlis.¹⁰⁷

Whatever circumstances caused Mathilda and her family to look upon the connection with favor, the papacy did not. On the grounds of consanguinity, Mathilda and William's union was not approved.¹⁰⁸ As a result, according to the *Vita Lanfranci*, there was a contingent in Rouen who openly opposed the marriage.¹⁰⁹ Yet William and Mathilda married anyway, probably between 1049 and 1051, at William's newly won castle of Eu on the border of Ponthieu.¹¹⁰ As William's position in his duchy was still

¹⁰⁵ David Nichols, *Medieval Flanders* (London, 1992), 110-3.

¹⁰⁶ Orderic, *Historiae*, 1: 433.

¹⁰⁷ Marie Faroux, ed., *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie de 911 à 1066* (Caen, 1961), 127-9.

¹⁰⁸ *Histoiae dedicationis ecclesiae s. Remegii*, PL 142: 1424-38.

¹⁰⁹ Milo Crispin *Vita Lanfranci*, PL 150: 19-98.

¹¹⁰ William of Eu had rebelled against William the Bastard and had lost Eu to him. (*Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 2: 128-30).

quite vulnerable, a papal impediment might be expected to nullify the betrothal, but neither Mathilda nor William cavailed. Both families seemed to ignore any underlying discomfort, and the Norman sources are silent concerning the issue. The ceremony was held with great pomp. William was surrounded by his knights and members of his maternal family, and Mathilda's parents escorted her to Ponthieu themselves *cum munierbus immensis*.¹¹¹ William's mother, Herleva, was in attendance with Herluin of Conteville, her second husband. According to William of Poitiers, Mathilda was received into Rouen after the marriage with great celebration, as "the whole city gave itself up to rejoicing."¹¹² Mathilda received a dowry from William, though no source mentioned exactly what this entailed. We know she held in dower various lands in Maintru, Bures, and Osmoy, because she later alienated these to the abbey in Saint-Amand.¹¹³ The Saint-Amand charter clearly states that this land was only a part of what Mathilda received in dower lands, but the rest of the territory remains unknown.¹¹⁴

The *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* stressed the legality of the marriage, but because of the papal position on the match it is impossible to know what clergy were present, if any. The archbishop of Rouen, William's uncle, Mauger, would have been an obvious choice to perform the ceremony; however, there was no mention of his presence at the event. He would be deposed in 1054 or 1055 and exiled. William of

¹¹¹ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 2: 128.

¹¹² "Introductioni huius sponsae ciuitas Rotomagensis uacabat iocundans" (*Gesta Gvillelmi*, 32).

¹¹³ Faroux, *Recueils des actes*, 26.

¹¹⁴ David Bates, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I, 1066-1087* (Oxford, 1998), 737.

Malmesbury posited that opposition to Mathilda and William's marriage may have been one cause of Mauger's fall from William's favor, though his deposition at Lisieux concerned simony.¹¹⁵ His loyalty, too, had become suspect because his brother, William of Arques, led the revolt against William in 1054.¹¹⁶ In any case, the marriage took place with or without clerical assistance, and its legality was never called into question. The couple, moreover, gained a peerless advocate in Lanfranc of Bec; his appearance on their behalf before Pope Alexander II eventually led to formal recognition of the union in 1059.¹¹⁷ Lanfranc's assistance would establish a lifelong friendship with the duke and duchess, who were alert to every opportunity for his advancement.¹¹⁸ Alexander II stipulated that Mathilda and William each agree to found monasteries as a token of their repentance for ignoring papal opinion. Mathilda's abbey of La Trinité, founded in 1066, housed a female order, and William's foundation at Saint-Étienne, completed in about 1071, housed a male one.

The works of authors and chroniclers in the thirteenth century illustrate the underlying discomfort that such an uneven match might produce. Stories rose up

¹¹⁵ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 2 vols. ed. R. A. B. Mynors et al (Oxford, 1998), 2: 327; for Mauger's deposition, see *Concilia Rotomagensis Provinciae*, ed. G. Bessin (Rouen, 1717), 46-7.

¹¹⁶ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* 2: 102-3.

¹¹⁷ Lanfranc's relations with the ducal house had a checkered history. Guy of Burgundy was the overlord of Bec, and Lanfranc owed him allegiance; Guy joined an alliance against Duke William based in lower Normandy in 1047. After winning at Val-ès-dunes, the duke despoiled some of Bec's holdings and exiled Lanfranc himself. According to Lanfranc's biographer, William met Lanfranc on the road out of Bec and inquired as to why he was not moving any faster. Lanfranc supposedly replied that he could if he had a decent horse. William, amused, sent him back to his monastery. (*Vita Lanfranci*, PL 150: 29-58).

¹¹⁸ Lanfranc became abbot of St. Stephen's at Caen, 1063-1070, and eventually Archbishop of Canterbury, 1070-1089. For more on Lanfranc's relations with William and Mathilda, see Chapter Four.

surrounding William's courtship, according to which she refused him for his illegitimate birth numerous times, before a scorned William, enraged by his ill treatment, rode into Bruges, found Mathilda with her attendants on the way to church, and beat and kicked her into the dust. Upon returning home, Mathilda took to her bed, and refused to marry anyone but William after such a display of mastery. The Bishop of Tournay, writing from 1274 to 1283, seems to be the first to record the fable. It was frequently repeated until the nineteenth century, when the tale was consigned to the realm of fiction.¹¹⁹ The appearance of the narrative may owe something to medieval anxiety regarding legitimacy of heirs. As early as the twelfth century, Robert of Gloucester, an illegitimate son of Henry I, though far more popular than his half-sister, the Empress Mathilda, was barred from the throne by his status.¹²⁰ The courtship story also highlights a certain barbarity that thirteenth-century audiences might have ascribed to their ancestors two hundred years distant. These two factors may have worked together to make the story almost a cautionary tale: unlike their barbarous ancestors, thirteenth-century Europeans should know better than to match nobility to illegitimacy. Soon after their marriage, Mathilda became active as a patron, donating land and churches to traditional Norman monasteries.¹²¹

¹¹⁹ See W. H. Blaaup, "Remarks on Matilda, Queen of William the Conqueror, and her Daughter Gundrada," *Archaeologia* 32 (1847), 108-25.

¹²⁰ See W. L. Warren, *Henry II* (Berkeley, 1973), 13-17.

¹²¹ See Chapter Five, "Mathilda As Patron."

By 1053 or 1054, Mathilda's first child, Robert Curthose, was born. She probably had at least five children before 1066: Robert, Richard, Cecilia, William Rufus, and Constance.¹²² The births of her sons have been reasonably well documented, as they were either dukes of Normandy, kings of England, or both. The exception was Richard, who was crushed by a falling tree while learning to hunt in the forest.¹²³ Two facts shed light on his age. First, he died before being knighted by his father, an event that generally took place at about age twenty-two.¹²⁴ Second, Richard was old enough in 1068 to sign a confirmation of Mathilda's grant to Saint-Martin-le-Grand in Winchester, immediately after her coronation.¹²⁵ His birth was generally placed in 1058 or 1059. Two of Mathilda's children, Henry and Adela, were certainly born after the Conquest. Adela and Henry are both repeatedly described in the sources as born of two royal parents. There is only one date around which to construct these two births, however, and that is Henry's birth date in the winter of 1069, recorded by Selby Abbey where he was born. In order to allow enough time for both births, Adela had to have been born soon after Mathilda's coronation, in May of 1068. She could have been conceived any time before December of 1067, when William returned to England, leaving Mathilda regent in Normandy. Since Mathilda would presumably

¹²² William of Malmesbury claimed that Constance had died in 1090, before she was thirty. (*Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 1: 495).

¹²³ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 217.

¹²⁴ The age of knighting was, however, variable. Robert Curthose was knighted in 1076, when he was invested with the county of Maine. He was between twelve and thirteen years old (Charles W. David, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy* [Cambridge, MA, 1920], 6-8).

¹²⁵ Bates, *Regesta Regum*, 599.

have had difficulty crossing the Channel if she was in her last few months of pregnancy, Adela was likely conceived in November or December of 1067. The result would be a six-month pregnant Mathilda crossing to England, and being crowned. Thus Adela would have been born in August or September of 1068. This date allows four or five months between Adela's birth and Henry's conception in March or April of 1069, when both William and Mathilda were in Winchester. His birth could then occur between November and December of 1069, as the charter from Selby indicates. Selby, located in the north of England, was en route to William's encampment in York, where he had been conducting military activity since January of 1070, or thereabouts. These dates indicate that either immediately before or after Mathilda had visited her husband's camp during the famous "Harrying of the North," she was delivered of her last and most successful son. In honor of Henry's birth, Mathilda and William founded their only English Benedictine abbey, the abbey of Saint Mary and Saint Germanus.

There is little evidence for the birth dates of Mathilda's remaining two children. Orderic listed all of Mathilda's progeny, male and female separately, in three different volumes of his *Historiae*; and each list comprises different names. In Orderic's first account of Mathilda and William's offspring, he lists Robert, Richard, William, Henry, Adeliza, Constance, Cecily, and Adela. In his second attempt in Book IV, probably written in 1125, Orderic added Agatha to his list, but additional evidence for her existence has not surfaced.¹²⁶ In Orderic's third effort in Book V, written after 1127, Agatha remains but Cecily has disappeared. William of Malmesbury, writing in the

¹²⁶ Barlow, *William Rufus*, 441-3.

twelfth century, names the princesses in order of birth: Cecily, abbess of Caen; Constance, who married Alan of Brittany, but was poisoned by her subjects who found her too severe; and Adela. He allowed that there were two other daughters whom he had forgotten; one daughter was betrothed to Harold of Wessex, but died before reaching marriageable age, and one was promised to Alfonso, the king of Galicia, but died a virgin as well.¹²⁷ The *Gesta Regum* does not shed light, then, on the problem of Agatha. William of Poitiers would have been in a good position to know intimate details about Mathilda's daughters; his sister was the abbess of Saint-Léger, the original monastery that supplied Queen Mathilda's first abbess for Lá Trinite, and his father was a tenant of the Beaumont family. His history, unfortunately, does not name the princesses, though he informed his readers that a daughter was betrothed to Herbert, Count of Maine, before his break with William in 1062, and Earl Harold of Wessex before 1066, and one of two Spanish royal brothers.¹²⁸ His account remains unclear as to whether or not he is describing the fortunes of one daughter or three different women. Orderic, in his interpolation of William of Jumièges, claimed that Adeliza was the daughter whom William betrothed to Harold, but in his *Historiae*, Book V, he changed his mind, claiming that the daughter was Agatha, and she was promised both to Harold and a Spanish prince. Orderic further described Agatha's love for Harold; after his death, her marriage to the king of Galicia was never consummated, as God spared her virgin body to be sent back to Normandy for burial. And, as for Adeliza, he claimed she died a nun under the protection of Roger of Beaumont. The life of St. Simon de Crepy, the count

¹²⁷ *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 1:504.

¹²⁸ *Gesta Gvillelmi*, 156-7.

of Amiens-Valois-Vexin, also mentions that William had offered a royal daughter to Simon, who was being sought by the king of the Spanish. Simon refused her, his hagiographer claimed, on the grounds that he and Mathilda were related, though he had already decided to become a monk.¹²⁹ An added complication to all of the chroniclers' descriptions of the royal princesses is a legitimate daughter of the marriage and namesake of her mother, Mathilda, whom neither Orderic, William of Poitiers, or William of Malmesbury ever mentioned. She, however, was well attested, appearing in Domesday Book in Hampshire, where Geoffrey, the chamberlain of the king's daughter, Mathilda, held land from William for his service to her.¹³⁰ In addition, when Cecily constructed an obituary notice for La Trinité's first abbess, she also asked for prayers for her deceased mother and sisters; Princess Mathilda was mentioned between Adeliza and Constance in the mortuary roll as one of Queen Mathilda's daughters.¹³¹ The confusion surrounding the most basic questions of Mathilda's family life is frustrating, but it underscores the difficulty of uncovering the lives of even the most renowned medieval women. Mathilda's male children were always recognized, but records of her daughters were subject to carelessness or confusion. Allowing for charter evidence and death rolls, a register of Mathilda's children could reasonably be Robert (1053-1134), Richard (1055-1069/74), Adeliza (1057-?), Cecily (1058/9-1127), William Rufus

¹²⁹ *Vita Beati Simonis*, PL 156: 1215-6.

¹³⁰ DB Hampshire, 1: 49b.

¹³¹ *Rouleaux des Morts du IXe au XVe siècle*, ed. Léopold Delisle (Paris, 1886), 181-2.

(1060-1100), Mathilda (1061-before 1086), Constance (1062-90), Adela (1067-1138), and Henry (1069-1135).

William and Mathilda seem to have enjoyed an unusual degree of contentment in their marriage. Mathilda's feelings for her husband are, of course, impossible to access, but a small clue might be found in a charter drafted at Cherbourg, when William was very ill. The document claims that "Comitissa vero que sparsis capillis super altare posuit comitis vagium"¹³² Was Mathilda's hair disheveled because she was worried about her husband's illness? Had she sat up with him through the night, and given no thought to her appearance the next day, when the charter was presented for her approval? Sources are unanimous in asserting that they were devoted to one another, but perhaps more convincing evidence lies in the unusual absence of natural children.¹³³ William had no offspring out of wedlock, although his father and his sons certainly did.¹³⁴ Papal attitudes toward William and Mathilda marked theirs as the model of medieval European marriage: monogamous, indissoluble, and vigorous in support of the Church.¹³⁵ The probity of their marriage was highlighted by the marital scandals that

¹³² Faroux, *Recueils des actes*, 432.

¹³³ Orderic, *Historiae* 4:94-5; *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 503.

¹³⁴ William's great-grandfather Richard I recognized two illegitimate sons. Evidence is unavailable for William Rufus, but Henry I sired perhaps as many as twenty-four illegitimate children (Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 25-6; Orderic, *Historiae*, 6:98; *Gesta Stephani*, ed. K. R. Potter and R. H. C. Davis [London, 1976], 26; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. Diana Greenway [Oxford, 1996], 225-6).

¹³⁵ H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085* (Oxford, 1998), 461-5.

enveloped both Philip I of France and Henry IV of Germany; Gregory VII applied himself to advising both men of their conjugal responsibility, but he failed.¹³⁶

The schedule of Mathilda's childbearing seems breathtaking: at the very least, evidence exists for her traveling over both land and water in advanced stages of pregnancy without incident. Moreover, throughout her career as duchess, Mathilda maintained a high profile. She may have acted as regent for William as early as 1051, when, according to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, William made a brief voyage to England to accept Edward the Confessor's designation as heir to England.¹³⁷ The idea that William should leave Normandy that year, when Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, was actively campaigning against him, has given rise to some debate.¹³⁸ However, even if William did not leave Normandy in 1051, he was engaged in military activity for much of the time. The situation in Normandy demanded a high level of lordly activity from Mathilda, who attested to the charters of both William and her subjects and worked vigorously toward the construction and foundation of her abbey.

An added complication for the ducal marriage was the breakdown of William's relations with Mathilda's uncle, Henry of France. William remained on good terms with King Henry throughout 1051, coming to his aid against Geoffrey of Anjou to take the fortresses of Domfront and Alençon. But as the aggression between Geoffrey and

¹³⁶ Cowdrey, *Gregory VII*, 85-6, 334.

¹³⁷ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a Revised Translation*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock, David C. Douglas and Susie I. Tucker (New Brunswick, NJ, 1961), 120-1.

¹³⁸ See David C. Douglas, "Edward the Confessor, Duke William of Normandy and the English Succession," *English Historical Review* 118 (1953), 526-45; but see also T. J. Oleson, "Edward the Confessors' Promise of the Throne to Duke William of Normandy," *English Historical Review* 122 (1957), 221-8.

Henry wore on, the French king seemed to undergo a change of will, and he soon treated with Geoffrey. They were together and in harmony by August of 1052.¹³⁹ William apparently hurried to the French court to obstruct the sudden concord, but with poor results. Henry's friendly relations with William's aggressive neighbor Anjou did not bode well for William. Until this time, he had been dependent on Henry for support, and even after Henry's new Angevin alliance had been formed, William seemed averse to acknowledging the change in their relationship.¹⁴⁰ In 1052, when William of Arques revolted against the Norman duke, Henry left all doubt behind as to his new policy toward Normandy, and he rushed to the aid of the rebel faction.¹⁴¹ From this time on, Henry and William would continually be at war, and Mathilda's new husband, albeit hesitantly, took up arms against her uncle. The one factor that had made her marriage to William reasonable, at least in the opinion of modern historians, had now been reversed. The blame for the breakdown of his bond with Henry was not laid on William; contemporary sources were unanimous in their picture of a bewildered William, horrified at Henry's inexplicable reversal, and trying desperately not to conflict with his suzerain.¹⁴² It is impossible to know how this affected Mathilda or her relationship with her natal family. Her father Baldwin of Flanders was studiously neutral, but had still maintained Henry's favor on the death of the French king, as

¹³⁹ *Recueil des Historiens de Gaul et de la France*, 24 vols. ed. Dom Bouquet (Paris, 1869-1904), 6: 590.

¹⁴⁰ *Gesta Gvillelmi*, 26; *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 1: 289.

¹⁴¹ Orderic, *Historiae*, 1:184.

¹⁴² *Gesta Gvillelmi*, 26; *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 1: 289.

Baldwin was made the guardian of young Philip I.¹⁴³ This change in relations with the French crown also dictated the dynamics of Mathilda's life. William's enemies threatened Normandy and encouraged his nobles to rebel. The Count of Arques, forsaken by King Henry, was brought into submission relatively quickly, but two months after the fall of Arques, Henry implemented a two-pronged invasion on Normandy.¹⁴⁴ The king led a force west to Évreux, while Guy of Ponthieu attacked from the East to trap William between the two divisions. For the first time, William rallied his vassals to a defense of Normandy, without any hope of reinforcements from his overlord. This was perhaps the most perilous situation Mathilda and William would ever face. They were cut off from familial support, and were alone against France, Ponthieu, Anjou, and a group of Norman rebels who followed the king.¹⁴⁵ William was able to prevail at the Battle of Mortemer, with help from his vassals to the east: Robert, the new count of Eu, Hugh of Gournay, Walter Giffard, Gilbert of Valenciennes (also called D'Auffey), and William of Warenne. These men were to become the backbone of Mathilda and William's new aristocracy in Normandy. After the Battle of Mortemer, politics inside Normandy shifted substantially. Although threats from outside still endangered them, William and Mathilda's hold over the duchy was established, enhanced by the lands now held by their loyal supporters in the general redistribution after the conflict. Both Warenne and Giffard increased their estates, absorbing property

¹⁴³ M. Prou, ed., *Recueil des actes de Philippe Ier, Roi de France* (Paris, 1908), xxviii.

¹⁴⁴ *Gesta Gvillelmi*, 62-5; *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 1: 434-5; Orderic *Historiae*, 3: 234-8.

¹⁴⁵ Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 68-9, 137.

that had belonged to William of Arques. William of Warenne married Gundreda, a Flemish kinswoman of Mathilda, and Gilbert of Valenciennes married Beatrice, Mathilda's cousin.¹⁴⁶ All would eventually take part in the Conquest and become some of the wealthiest landholders in England.

William and Mathilda spent the next six years attending to the administration of the duchy while battling incursions by Henry of France and Geoffrey of Anjou.¹⁴⁷ In 1060, however, their most difficult obstacles dissolved with the deaths of both their primary foes. Henry of France died in 1060, bestowing on Mathilda's father the guardianship of his heir, Philip I of France, a minor. This change affected dramatically the fortunes of the ducal pair. In addition, only four months later, Geoffrey of Anjou also died, and the duchy of Normandy, at least for a time, was free from the threat of aggression.¹⁴⁸ Indeed, 1060 saw an increase in the patronage activity and ecclesiastical involvement of both William and Mathilda.¹⁴⁹ The death of Geoffrey of Maine also brought into play a longstanding betrothal: Robert Curthose to the sister of Herbert of Maine, the childless successor of Geoffrey.¹⁵⁰ William took Maine, in the name of

¹⁴⁶ Influenced by his wife, Gilbert replaced the secular canons, whose college he founded at Auffay, with monks in about 1077. Saint-Evroul was chosen to supply the monastic personnel, through the persuasion of Gilbert's nephew, Drogo, who had taken the habit there. Drogo was part of a group of young knights who had been fostered with the Earl Hugh of Chester, and all took the habit at Saint-Evroul (Orderic, *Historiae* 3: xix-xx).

¹⁴⁷ Orderic, *Historiae*, 1: 435-437; *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* 2: 150-1.

¹⁴⁸ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* 2: 153; Prou, *Recueil des actes*, xxviii.

¹⁴⁹ See Chapter Five.

¹⁵⁰ Orderic, *Historiae*, 2: 117.

Robert Curthose, in 1064. The balance of power in France had now transformed to allow Norman ascendance.

Harold Godwinson's visit to Normandy, his oaths to uphold William's claim to England, and his seizure of the English crown, all culminated in a flurry of activity for Mathilda in and around 1066. Her natal family was also very involved in the question of the English succession. Judith of Flanders, Mathilda's aunt, was the wife of Tostig of England, and like William, he made claims to the English throne. Baldwin of Flanders, related to both men, found himself in a perplexing position. His ward, Philip I, whose eventual interests would be profoundly hampered by a Norman king of England, further complicated his policy on the matter. Baldwin seemed to have allowed both Tostig and William to recruit willing men of Flanders to assist in their expeditions, but he was careful to personally give aid to no one.¹⁵¹ Baldwin's approach to his sons-in-law highlights an interesting aspect of high medieval marriage. Mathilda and Judith's marriage alliances were not foolproof; neither guaranteed the support of a father-in-law, in the case of Baldwin, or of natal family, in the case of Henry of France. The advantages of marital alliances, that is, connections to other noble houses that could lend legitimacy or support, are frequently given by modern historians to explain the success or failure of medieval women and men. This argument holds special weight for medieval women, whose relations variously to husband or natal family, are often

¹⁵¹ Robert H. George, "The Contribution of Flanders to the Conquest of England," *Revue Belge* 5 (1926), 81-99; Philip Grierson, "England and Flanders before the Norman Conquest," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 23 (1941), 71-111; Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, 188.

considered their only coin.¹⁵² The closest example for our purposes is Pauline Stafford's discussion of the marriages of Queen Emma and Queen Edith. Stafford relates Edith's situation, especially, as completely enmeshed with her family's position, or lack thereof, with Edward the Confessor. Edward married Edith, Stafford claims, because she was Earl Godwine's daughter, and it followed that when Edward banished the Godwine family, Edith was repudiated.¹⁵³ Likewise, when her family was back in Edward's court, she was restored; Stafford points out that Edith's reinstatement said more about her family's influence than her own relationship with Edward. Edith, unlike Mathilda, was unable to form bonds strong enough to withstand her natal family's betrayal. She did not enlarge on the initial opportunity her blood allowed her by establishing her own connections with her husband and his court that could have withstood her family's fall from favor. Flanders offers another excellent example of how alliances made by marital bonds were often of limited use. Both couples, Judith and Tostig, William and Mathilda, had the benefit of Baldwin's neutrality and his guardianship of Philip I; but the marriages they made did not guarantee success or failure. It is suggestive that though marriages were made for political or familial gain, it remained the task of the couple to use this capital wisely. William and Mathilda could both come to their marriage expecting a benefit: legitimacy and an alliance with Flanders for William, and a loyal French vassal for Mathilda. Both stood to be disappointed. Though unquestionably gaining royal blood for his children, William's

¹⁵² "A woman's own life-cycle and family situation interpreted those factors (landholding and land-based power) even as those factors open or closed opportunities for her." (Pauline Stafford, "Women and the Norman Conquest," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6, 4 [1994], 221-49).

¹⁵³ Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p 73.

father-in-law was not emphatically pro-Norman. Likewise, Mathilda's union to a French vassal thrust her into the unexpected circumstance of taking up arms against her mother's family. These factors merely illustrate that eleventh-century women, though influenced greatly by their connections, could succeed or fail despite them. Judith and Tostig failed in their bid for England, as Tostig fell in battle. Judith, however, retained English relics and goods to take back to Flanders with her and into her next marriage, and she seized the opportunity to become the premiere donor at Weingarten.¹⁵⁴ Mathilda's husband may have become an enemy of her royal uncle, but her able administration of Normandy enabled the success of the duchy and the English expedition. Without Baldwin's active assistance, by the efforts of the nobles they had gathered around them and rewarded, Mathilda and William prevailed in their bid for England. Mathilda participated in a raft of charter activity that underscored her authority as duchess as William prepared to embark for England.¹⁵⁵ She had a ship built for William, and christened it the *Mora*. The Latin meaning of the word was "hesitation," perhaps the only extant expression of Mathilda's opinion of the expedition.¹⁵⁶ She acted as regent during his absence and saw to the uninterrupted

¹⁵⁴ Dagmar Óriain-Raedel, "Edith, Judith, Matilda: the Role of Royal Ladies in the Propagation of the Continental Cult," in *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, ed. Clare Stancliffe and Eric Cambridge (Stanford, 1995), 210-29.

¹⁵⁵ See Chapter Three.

¹⁵⁶ D. C. Douglas and G. W. Greenway, "The Bayeux Tapestry," in *English Historical Documents*, 2 vols. ed., London, 1953), 2: 260 Plate XLIII.

business of the duchy, while grooming her eldest son to do the same.¹⁵⁷ After William's victory in 1066, Mathilda remained in Normandy until 1068, when she crossed to England for her coronation. This ceremony was a uniquely lavish event, orchestrated to promote her new power and position, and to underscore the legitimacy of Norman rule. Her authority was now sanctioned by the church and by God.

Mathilda's new status brought with it new roles. Though she had always been involved in the administration of the duchy, her activity in the arenas of jurisprudence and lordship brought additional opportunities for ascendancy. At her coronation, Mathilda received the ring of the Church.¹⁵⁸ Modeled after a bishop's ring, its significance in relation to ecclesiastical practice was not explicit, but, after her coronation, Mathilda presided over provincial synods in both Rouen and Canterbury.¹⁵⁹ The synods in Rouen held during William and Mathilda's reign were unlike any others in Europe. They were called exclusively by William himself and were closed to visiting bishops or bishops outside of Rouen. Contrary to papal dictates, the ecclesiastical synods of Rouen rarely involved a papal legate. Of the twenty synods convened during William's reign, only four involved legatine attendance, and these four synods were all concerned with either deposing, electing, or translating an archbishop.¹⁶⁰ Records of

¹⁵⁷ *Gesta Gvillelmi*, 179; Orderic, *Historiae*, 2: 208-10; David Bates, "The Origins of Justiciarship," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 4 (1981), 1-12.

¹⁵⁸ Sir Joseph Ayloff, "The Body of King Edward I," *Archeologia* 3 (1770), 391. See also, Chapter Two.

¹⁵⁹ See Chapter Two.

¹⁶⁰ Raymonde Foreville, "The Synod of the Province of Rouen in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," in *Church and Government on the Middle Ages*, ed. C. N. L. Brooke, D. E. Luscombe, G. S. Martin and Dorothy Owen (London, 1976), 19-39.

synods are a problematic source; the occurrences of synods were recorded by chroniclers, sometimes only in passing. They rarely resulted in signed charters, and even when proceedings were issued, as they were at the great councils of Lillebonne and Canterbury, the attendees rarely inscribed signatures to them.¹⁶¹ There are extant charters for two such ecclesiastical synods, and Mathilda presided with William over both: the Rouen synod held at Bellême between 1070 and 1079, and the great Primacy synod held in Canterbury in 1072. It may be noteworthy that both synods had a juridical element: the Bellême synod involved a case of wrongful excommunication; the Canterbury gathering decided on the archiepiscopal primacy in England. In each case, Mathilda was recorded as presiding next to William, and she affixed her signature on the proceeds, preceding everyone except William.

The primacy synod, especially, was an enormously important event and was recorded in two related documents.¹⁶² The debate regarded two issues: whether the see of York or Canterbury had primacy, and which was responsible for investing the bishops of three contested dioceses. Alexander II, refusing to rule on a question so foundational to England's organization, requested that the subject be examined by William and his advisors. Subsequently, a private conference seems to have been held, including only William, Mathilda, Hubert the papal legate, Lanfranc of Canterbury, Thomas the archbishop of York, and the three bishops of the disputed dioceses. This small group heard arguments and discussion in William's chapel at Winchester Castle

¹⁶¹ Foreville, "Synod of the Province of Rouen," 21.

¹⁶² For a full description of both charters, see Bates, *Regesta Regum*, 307-14.

and came to an agreement in favor of Canterbury.¹⁶³ A document that seems to have resulted from this meeting was autographed by the eight participants. William and Mathilda placed their signatures directly below the text of the diploma, and the episcopal participants arranged their signatures in two columns beneath.¹⁶⁴

The second charter from the primacy debate was produced at Windsor Castle and was a formalization of the first, including a long list of attestors arranged in non-autograph columns of thirteen lines. William, Mathilda, and the papal legate all signed in one line under the text, above the columns of witnesses.¹⁶⁵ The document was then sealed and disseminated throughout England. In fact, there remain many printed texts of this document, and facsimiles, and drawings of the seal in English archives, supporting the notion that it was carefully and thoroughly promulgated. The organization of the primacy debate, and the documents it produced, provide convincing evidence for Mathilda's active participation in synodal congresses, and indeed, in crucial acts of government in general. It seems that not only did Mathilda participate in the symbolic act of signing and promulgating an official, public decree regarding ecclesiastical organization, but she was intimately involved in the very architecture of the primacy agreement itself. Within the confines of the earlier meeting, she was the only female participant, and as the document expanded to something much more public

¹⁶³ Thomas, the archbishop of York, was excused from fealty to Lanfranc for his lifetime, but subsequent archbishops were not. (Margaret Gibson, *Lanfranc of Bec* [Oxford, 1978], 167-71).

¹⁶⁴ Bates, *Regesta Regum*, 307-8.

¹⁶⁵ Bates, *Regesta Regum*, 311

and elaborate, she continued to maintain that position as the charter made its way all over her kingdom.

The primacy debate, the concord of which first was secured in private and then broadcast in public, is illustrative of Mathilda's power and influence in both "spheres" of society, though any real separation of the two in the eleventh century is dubious.¹⁶⁶ The primacy decision was arguably the most important ecclesiastical action taken in the eleventh century, and it would affect the realm and its spiritual organization indefinitely. Viewing the evidence from another angle, it is evident that William was fully aware of the benefit of Mathilda's legitimacy and availed himself of her support whenever possible. Indeed, one of William's most fervent objections to being crowned after the Conquest was that Mathilda could not be there to support him.¹⁶⁷ His twice-royal wife spent her adult life, moreover, adding her superior prestige to further their aims. David Bates, in examining William's charters, makes reference not only to "the sheer number of her attestations," but to the consistency with which she appears in virtually all the important charters issued during his reign.¹⁶⁸ Throughout the collection, she hears property disputes and plea reports, acts as a witness to transactions, actively

¹⁶⁶ On this classical distinction, especially in regard to women, see A. Saxonhouse, "Introduction - Public and Private: The Paradigm's Power," in *Stereotypes of Women in Power: Historical Perspectives and Revisionist Views*, ed. B. Garlick, S. Dixon and P. Allen (New York, 1992), pp 1-9; T. Hillard, "On the Stage, Behind the Curtain: Images of Politically Active Women in the Late Roman Republic," in *Stereotypes of Women in Power: Historical Perspectives and Revisionist Views*, ed. B. Garlick, S. Dixon and P. Allen (New York, 1992), 37-64; J. B. Elshtain, *Public Man, Private Woman: Women in Social and Political Thought* (Princeton, 1981).

¹⁶⁷ *Gesta Gvillelmi*, 148-9.

¹⁶⁸ Bates, *Regesta Regum*, 93.

buys and sells land, and is mentioned on the same level as William in *laudatio* clauses.¹⁶⁹

Mathilda's relationship with the papacy also provided additional confirmation of her unusual status in the eyes of the world around her. Her association with Gregory VII was a sympathetic one, judging from their exchange of letters. Her half of the correspondence has not survived, but two of Gregory's letters were preserved. The first came soon after his ascension to the papal throne in 1073, and was dated April 4, 1074; his letter mentions communication from Mathilda that Gregory had already received, perhaps in acknowledgement of his new position.

I, Bishop Gregory, servant of the servants of God, send good wishes and my apostolic benediction to Mathilda queen of the English. Once I heard the letters of Your Nobility read, beloved daughter, I realized that Your Liberality is devoted to love and humility. From these I happily received a sign and a certain hope of your salvation. Indeed I do not think there can be doubt about the salvation of her who preserves in her heart humility and love, in which the law completely consists. I await these and similar gifts from you; no, I want with all my heart to receive them! That you, who are noble by bloodline, live more nobly in character, in the manner of the saints. Urge on your husband. Do not stop suggesting things useful for his soul. For it is certain: if a husband lacking faith is saved through the faith of his wife, as the apostle says, then a man who has

¹⁶⁹ English charters rarely include *laudatio* clauses. The distinction between the public character of English charters and the more informal Norman documents, which included a higher emphasis on kindred, is examined in David Bates, "The Prosopographical Study of Anglo-Norman Royal Charters," in *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics*, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Woodbridge, 1997), 89-102.

faith is changed even more for the better by the faith of his wife. Given at Rome, on the 18th of April, during the 12th indiction.¹⁷⁰

Gregory speaks of Mathilda's well-known dedication to God and her service to the poor. He is careful to note her royal blood, and he encourages her to live nobly, as is fitting for someone of her station. Referring to her as his dear daughter, Gregory's tone is affectionate and personal: he is less a Roman pontiff than a pastoral advisor. In fact, he uses imperative language in his letter to her only once. "*Insta virgo tuo,*" Gregory demands, referring to William rather baldly. He counsels Mathilda to push her husband to greater devotion, noting that if an unfaithful man was saved by his faithful wife, a husband committed to God becomes even more improved with such a spouse.

Gregory's assumptions concerning Mathilda's influence over William are revealing. Moreover, unlike Gregory's deferent acknowledgement of Mathilda's birth, his choice of vocabulary reflects none of the same courtesy in reference to William. According to H. E. J. Cowdrey, Gregory's awareness of William's birth was highlighted in the Pope's communication to William in 1080.¹⁷¹ After reminding William of his humble origins ("*ex servo peccati misero et pauperculo*"), Gregory suggested that,

¹⁷⁰ "Gregorius episcopus servus servorum Dei Mathildi regine Anglorum salutem et apostolis benedictionem. Auditis nobilitatis tuae litteris, liberalitatem tuam, filia dilecta, dilectioni et humilitati invigilare intelleximus; ex quibus tuae salutis indicium et spem certam hilariter accepimus. Non quippe dubitandum de eius salute fore credimus, quae humilitati et dilectioni, in qua lex ex toto continetur, ex corde inservire dinoscitur. Munera haec et similia a te expectamus, immo toto mentis desiderio accipere cupimus; ut, quae nobilis es sanguine, nobilior vivas, sanctorum more, honestate. *Insta viro tuo; animae eius utilia suggerere ne desinas. Certum enim est, si vir infidelis per mulierum fidelem, ut ait apostolus, salvatur, vir etiam fidelis per mulierum fidelem in melius augmentatur. Data Romae 2 Nonas Aprilis, indictione 12.*" (*Monumenta Gregoriana* ed. Philippe Jaffé [Berlin, 1865], 91).

¹⁷¹ Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 269.

despite them, God had made him the most powerful of kings.¹⁷² Gregory assumed that Mathilda's sanctity could be instructive, and could act as a spur for William's spiritual maturity. In this context, the connection between Gregory and Mathilda resembled that of two other medieval female rulers. Beatrice of Lorraine and Mathilda of Tuscany come immediately to mind as women whom Gregory charged with the spiritual health, at least for a time, of Henry IV. Henry's mother, the Empress Agnes, was unsuccessful in repairing papal relations with her recalcitrant son. After her death, Gregory urged Henry's kinswomen, Beatrice of Lorraine and later Mathilda, to recall Henry to repentance and devotion to the church.¹⁷³ Though their intervention would ultimately prove unsuccessful, Gregory continued to rely upon Beatrice and Mathilda as his relations with Henry became increasingly militant. Likewise, in Mathilda's case, Gregory seemed to view her as capable of increasing her husband's spiritual potential by her influence. The letter made assumptions about Mathilda's power, both in regard to William and in her responsibility to her kingdom. The disposition of the correspondence allows us to glimpse how far her authority stretched, or at least how it seemed to, when viewed from the papal throne.

Gregory's second letter to Mathilda gives the immediate impression of even greater warmth and intimacy. Written after a reunion between her husband and her son Robert Curthose, Gregory empathizes with the queen, hoping that she can occasionally

¹⁷² *Monumenta Gregoriana*, 414-15.

¹⁷³ Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 296-9.

find relief from her family difficulties.¹⁷⁴ He addressed her as *filia karissima*, a designation Gregory used sparingly. In fact, Gregory employed this appellation for only two other people; Mathilda of Tuscany and Beatrice of Lorraine. He speaks of Mathilda's faithfulness as greater than any treasure.

I, Bishop Gregory, servant of the servants of God, send my good wishes and benediction to Mathilda, queen of the English. Having read the letters of your Esteemed Ladyship, I realized how you obey God with a faithful mind and with how much charity you cling to God's faithful. From the promises of your bountifulness I also perceived how you keep me in your mind, by these promises you have made it plain that whatever I wanted from you, as long as I made it known to you, would be carried out without delay. You should know, most beloved daughter, with what love I accepted this task and which duties I desire of you. For what gold, what jewels, what precious things of this world should I expect from you apart from a chaste life, the giving of your money to the poor, and the love of God and your neighbor? We desire these and similar duties of you, that you might esteem your complete and natural nobility, I entreat, beloved, that on esteeming it, you might sometimes hold fast to it, that on holding it, you might sometimes leave it behind. Never desist in arming your husband with these and similar weapons, since God has given you the opportunity. I commit the

¹⁷⁴ Pier Andrea Maccarini, "William the Conqueror and the Church of Rome (from the *Epistolae*)," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 6 (1987), 173-87.

rest of the message I am sending to you to Hubert, our common and faithful son. Given in Rome on 8 May, during the third indiction.¹⁷⁵

The two letters contain similar themes. In both, Gregory makes note of Mathilda's noble birth, and her responsibility to act in accordance with the status it confers on her. Furthermore, Gregory makes repeated reference to Mathilda's responsibility for her husband's spiritual well-being. He uses martial analogies of armor and action when instructing Mathilda in how best to help animate William's spiritual potential. From Gregory's second letter, we have evidence that Mathilda had offered whatever fiscal assistance he might have needed, and that she certainly felt capable of fulfilling any request he might have made. Though we have no evidence that Mathilda of Flanders ever sent funds to Gregory VII, her side of the correspondence is no longer extant and, it is feasible, given Gregory's difficulties throughout the latter days of his papacy, that she could have assisted him.

Gregory's second letter to Mathilda was written while the royal family was beginning to unravel. The only serious disagreement recorded between William and Mathilda arose concerning the guidance of their eldest son, Robert Curthose. Robert had been designated as heir to Normandy as early as 1063, and he appeared in charters

¹⁷⁵ "Gregorius episcopus servus servorum Dei Mathildi regine Anglorum salutem et apostolis benedictionem. Ingenuitatis vestrae lectis litteris, quam fideli mente Deo oboedias, quanta dilectione fidelibus suis adhereas, intelleximus. Nos quoque quomodo mentis tuae memoria praesentes contineat, ex amplitudinis tuae promissionibus non minus percipimus; quibus designastis: ut, quicquid de vestris vellemus, si notum vobis fieret, sine mora susciperemus. Quod, filia karissima, qua suscepimus dilectione et quae munera a te obtamus, sic intelligas. Quod enim aurum, quae gemmae, quae mundi huius preciosa mihi a te magis sunt expectanda, quam vita casta, rerum tuarum in pauperes distributio, Dei et proximi dilectio? Haec et his similia a te munera obtamus. Ut integra et simplici diligas nobilitatem tuam precamur, dilecta obtineas, habita nonnunquam derelinquas. His armis et similibus virum tuum armare, cum Deus tibi oportunitatem dederit, ne desistas. Caetera, quae dimisimus, per Hubertum filium et fidelem communem mandamus. Data Rome 8 Idus Maii, indictione 3" (*Monumenta Gregoriana*, 420).

alongside his parents regularly. His attestations were more frequent than those of his other brothers, forty-nine in all, most of which took place in Normandy, and all but two before 1077.¹⁷⁶ Until this date, Robert's relationship with his father and mother seems to have been comfortable, even though Robert was very much a political pawn of his family. In his early years, probably at about age ten, Robert was betrothed to Margaret, the infant sister of Herbert II of Maine, which allowed William to invade the county in Robert's name when Herbert died childless. By 1063, William had invested Robert with the county of Maine, though in name only. Margaret had come to live at the Norman court, but had also died before the proposed marriage could take place.¹⁷⁷ Before the Conquest, Robert was also invested with the lordship of Normandy, and the baronage was required to pledge their loyalty when William lay very ill at Cherbourg.¹⁷⁸ Immediately before the invasion of England, William required the same pledge again.¹⁷⁹ There was no doubt, then, that Robert would inherit Normandy at his father's death. Real power and, perhaps more importantly, real wealth was much slower in coming. By the time Robert was twenty, he felt ready to take over of at least some of the rights and responsibilities of his inheritance, and he brought the proposal to his father. William, after some consideration, refused Robert's request and according to Orderic,

¹⁷⁶ William Rufus attested to thirty-nine of the Conqueror's charters, and Henry fifteen (Bates, *Regesta Regum*, 93-4).

¹⁷⁷ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 88-9, 150-1, 190-1.

¹⁷⁸ See Chapter Five.

¹⁷⁹ Orderic, *Historiae*, 4: 92-3.

tried to reason with his son. Normandy was William's by hereditary right, and he would retain it until his death. At that time, Robert would come into all of this inheritance, but he should be patient.¹⁸⁰ Though there was no immediate break, Robert determined that he would no longer act as a dependent of his father. Orderic related that his brothers resented his pretensions and found a childish way to puncture his ego. Robert was staying with Roger of Caux during preparation for one of his father's military campaigns. His brothers visited and, after playing a game of dice upstairs, decided to douse their brother with water as he was standing below with his friends. The antic resulted in a scuffle, which King William broke up on his sudden appearance. That night, still smarting from his brother's behavior as well as his father's disdain, Robert rode to Rouen and attempted to take the castle there by force. The attempt failed, and a furious William exiled some of the participants and confiscated their property. William's enemies throughout France did not overlook the opportunity. Philip of France immediately came to Robert's defense, as did other barons beyond the frontier of Normandy.¹⁸¹ Robert withdrew into France with his rebel force and was received by Philip and later by Mathilda's brother, Robert the Frisian, with promises of support. Traditionally, historians have judged Robert Curthose rather harshly; spoiled and irresponsible, he had luxurious tastes that he indulged to excess, he listened to flatterers, and he was easily made resentful of his indigent state by the influence of his

¹⁸⁰ Orderic, *Historiae*, 3: 99-100.

¹⁸¹ Hugh of Châteauneuf-sur-Thymerais offered refuge to Robert and his followers and gave the castles of Châteauneuf, Sorel, and Rémalard to them as a temporary base of operations (Orderic, *Historiae*, 3: 100-4).

greedy entourage.¹⁸² Much of this information comes from Orderic, whose portrait of Robert is the most detailed of contemporary writers.¹⁸³ More recently, historians have interpreted Robert's desire for his independence as nothing less than a desire to be considered a man. For William Aird, creating and maintaining an independent household was a component of medieval noble adulthood.¹⁸⁴ In patriarchal Anglo-Norman military society, Robert remained a subordinate to the *paterfamilias*, whose authority also subjugated Robert's social inferiors.¹⁸⁵ Aird argued that the tension between father and son was exacerbated by William's perception of his firstborn as a threat to the hegemony of his authority.¹⁸⁶

At least one other member of the royal household, however, took Robert's part. Mathilda began to send large sums of money and valuables secretly to her exiled oldest son, probably soon after his first rebellion against his father. It is clear that Mathilda had her own funds; by this time her dowry had been enlarged by her extensive English lands, and her resources were vast.¹⁸⁷ Mathilda's treasonous activity was certainly

¹⁸² E. A. Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1879), 3: 111; Charles Homer Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (Cambridge, MA, 1918), 62; Warren Hollister, "The Anglo-Norman Civil War, 1101," in *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions*, ed. Warren Hollister (London, 1986), 84-5).

¹⁸³ Orderic, *Historiae*, 3: 300-2.

¹⁸⁴ William M. Aird, "Frustrated Masculinity: The Relationship between William the Conqueror and his Eldest Son," in *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. Dawn Hadley (New York, 1998), 39-55.

¹⁸⁵ Aird, "Frustrated Masculinity," 47.

¹⁸⁶ Aird, "Frustrated Masculinity," 50-1.

¹⁸⁷ Orderic, *Historiae* 2: 174.

simplified by Robert's choice of guardians; it was probably not difficult to send messages, including money, to her kinsmen in France or Flanders. From the evidence of her correspondence with the papacy, one can assume that Gregory was not the only recipient of Mathilda's letters. When William uncovered Mathilda's illicit activity, he forbade her to continue, Orderic claimed, with threats. After discovering that the queen had disregarded him completely and continued to send funds to the rebel, William was furious. Orderic's account of the incident was certainly embroidered, but he had good reason to know many of the intimate details of the encounter. Samson, one of the queen's messengers, was apparently witness to the scene. Enraged, William commanded that the messenger's eyes be put out, but Mathilda arranged to have the hapless servant sent to the abbey of Saint-Évroult and he was admitted at her command. Saint-Évroult, of course, was Orderic's house, and here Samson spent the rest of his life, a "shrewd, well-spoken" monk for the next twenty-six years.¹⁸⁸ Orderic entered Saint-Évroult himself in about 1085, as a boy of ten, and would have had every opportunity to quiz Samson about the exchange over the years.¹⁸⁹ There can be no doubt that Orderic took some poetic license in the argument between William and Mathilda concerning their son, but the speeches he gave to them perhaps can tell us something about the characters themselves. Notably, in exclaiming over Mathilda's treachery, William used an old quotation, "A faithless wife is an enemy of the state." William claimed that whereas he had entrusted Mathilda with all of his treasures and

¹⁸⁸ Orderic, *Historiae* 3: 104.

¹⁸⁹ Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis: Norman Monks and Norman Knights* (Woodbridge, 1984), 14.

jurisdiction throughout all of his dominions, she had betrayed him by enriching his enemies and supplying them with arms to attack him.¹⁹⁰ In her response, Orderic allowed Mathilda no repentance, and had her exclaim with asperity that were her first-born son dead and buried, she would happily shed her own blood to bring him back to life. She refused to enjoy her wealth while Robert might be in need and defied William to attempt to lay such an injunction on her.¹⁹¹ There are a few interesting points to consider in Orderic's arrangement of the scene. First, William's speech validates what we have discovered about Mathilda's position; that is, she had access to all the royal and ducal assets and she held authority over both Normandy and England, second only to William. The origin of the proverb he used is unclear, but it gives the reader to understand that Mathilda's position was made dangerous by her power. Second, she was in no way repentant of her behavior and her answer held a certain amount of contempt. Third, the threatened repercussions for her actions never materialized. After 1077, Mathilda continued to hold the same high degree of influence as she had previously. Unlike her immediate predecessors, Emma and Edith, she was not banished or imprisoned, nor did she suffer any diminution of authority. In fact, she continued to urge William to be reconciled with his son and played a necessary part in their eventual

¹⁹⁰ "Vera est cuiusdam sapientis nimiumque michi probabilis assertio, 'Naufragium rerum est mulier malefido marito.' Quis ulterius in hoc mundo fidam sibi et utilem sociam repperiet? En collateralis mea quam uelut animam meam diligo, quam omnibus gazis et potestatibus in toto prefeci regno meo inimicos meos insidiantes uitae meae sustenant, opibus meis summo opere ditat et contra salutem meam studiose armat, consolatur ac roborat" (Orderic, *Historiae*, 3: 102).

¹⁹¹ "Ad haec illa respondit, 'Ne mireris domine mi obsecro si ego primogenitam prolem meam tenere diligo. Per uirtutem Altissimi si Rodbertus filius meus mortuus esset, et in imo terrae septem pedibus ab oculis uiuentium absconditus esset, meoque sanguine uiuificari posset cruorem meum pro illo effunderem, et plusquam feminea imbecillitas spondere audet paterer anxietatem. Quanam putas ratione, ut me delectet diuitiis abundare, filiumque meum nimia patiar opprimi egestate? Procul absit a corde meo tanta duricia nec uestra debet hoc michi iubere potentia.'" (Orderic, *Historiae*, 3: 102-4).

reunion.¹⁹² Orderic's portrayal of Mathilda's response to William may hold a clue to the nature of their relationship. Mathilda's status at her marriage easily eclipsed William's, which accounts for the unusually high degree of authority and governmental activity she enjoyed. The papal letters she received from Gregory VII also point up the difference in their status, even after both of them had been crowned in England. Likewise, her charter attestations make clear that she participated in virtually every major governmental and synodal event the Norman royal family experienced. Though Orderic set the scene and wrote the script for Mathilda and William's volatile encounter over Robert Curthose, he may have given us a very good understanding of the balance of power in Mathilda and William's marriage, gleaned from an eyewitness account.

Mathilda's died on November 2, 1083 in Normandy. Though Orderic claimed she had a prolonged illness, she was still signing charters in July of 1083, concerning the rights of La Trinité to expand their holdings. In the year before her death, though the specific date is unknown, Mathilda willed her crown, scepter, mantle, and her horse's harness to her monastic foundation. After she died, she was buried between the choir and the altar of La Trinité with great ceremony. Her tomb was ornamented with gold and jewels, with an epitaph engraved in gold:

The lofty structure of this splendid tomb
Hides great Mathilda, sprung from royal stem;
Child of a Flemish duke; her mother was
Adela, daughter of a king of France,

¹⁹² Orderic, *Historiae*, 3:112-3.

Sister of Henry, Robert's royal son.

Married to William, most illustrious king,

She gave this site and raised this noble house,

With many lands and many goods endowed,

Given by her, or by her toil procured;

Comforter of the needy, duty's friend;

Her wealth enriched the poor, left her in need.

At daybreak on November's second day

She won her share of everlasting joy.¹⁹³

Fulcoius, archdeacon of Beauvais, was born at Meaux in approximately 1020 and lived until 1090.¹⁹⁴ The famous poet and author of *De nuptiis Christi et ecclesiae*, he was an exact contemporary of Mathilda of Flanders and had some of the same acquaintances; Fulcoius personally presented a copy of *De nuptiis* to Gregory VII at Rome.¹⁹⁵ Fulcoius wrote two epigrams in Mathilda's honor, *Certe si fortis* and *Tempore quae nostro*, within a few years after her death. Though certainly the work of

¹⁹³ "Egregie pulchri tegit hec structura sepulcri / Moribus insigne germen regale Matildem
Dux Flandrita pater huic extitit Adala mater / Francor gentis Rotberti filia regis
Et Soror Henrici regali sede potiti / Regi magnifico Willelmo juncta marito
Presentem sedem presente fecit et edem / Tam multis terris quam multis rebus honestis
A se ditatem se procurante dictatem / Hec consolatrix inopum pietatis amatrix
Gazis dispersis pauper sibi dives egenis / Sic infinite petit consortia vite
In prima mensis post primam luce Novembris." (Orderic, *Historiae*, 4: 44-5).

¹⁹⁴ A. S. J. Poncelet, "Vita sancti Blandini saeculi VII anachoretae Brigensis auctore Fulcoio Bellovacensi subdiacono Meldensis," *Analecta Bollandiana* 7 (1888), 143-63.

¹⁹⁵ *Fulcoii Belvacensis utrisque de Nuptis Christi et ecclesiae libri septum* ed. Mary Rousseau (Washington, DC, 1960), 5.

a poet, Fulcoius's writings provide an important contemporary source; they are the only surviving poetic works written about Mathilda by someone who lived during her reign.

Indeed if ever there was a courageous, prudent, sober, and just woman,
it is Mathilda, who lived prudently, courageously, soberly, and justly.

The common people, the rich, every gender and age,
the whole clergy, every tongue, every class confesses this.

If wealth, beauty, a husband, or noble birth and offspring
were each reasons by themselves to write a poem for any queen,
then how much more are noble birth and offspring--
combined with wealth, beauty, and a noble husband--
reason for writing a poem to Queen Mathilda.

Mother of heroes, most beautiful of mothers, blessed
with rulership, born from a king who had no equal,
she was nurtured on both bodily and spiritual blessings.

If she could be brought back from death through tears,
money, fair or foul means, then rest assured
there would be an abundance of these things,
and they would certainly be efficacious once present.

But because nature has decreed
that the body can perish but not the soul
and that the body should not be redeemed from death, the lady warrior,
on the contrary, brought salvation to her body and redeemed it.

Devoting herself to the salvation and welfare of her soul,

she thus is in abundant possession,
 and liberally dispenses the blessing she has received.
 Therefore, you clergy and you churches,
 from far and wide and for many years to come
 bring forth generous prayers for a generous cause.
 Let this be the inscription [on her tomb]:
 "Mathilda, queen of the English
 known for her twofold honor, ruled over the Normans,
 but here rests entombed in a good state,
 blessed in her title that nature cannot revoke from her.
 O twofold light of November, it is a little plot,
 a small pile of ash, but nevertheless a source of glory and grace."¹⁹⁶

Certe si fortis mentions Mathilda's noble blood, but emphasizes her specific character: *fortis, prudens, sobria, justa*. The poet calls her *virago*, and highlights her active role in her own salvation, makes note of her offspring, and calls her *Heroum mater*. The poem is suffused with a sense of Mathilda's own heroic and arduous

¹⁹⁶ "Certe si fortis, si prudens, sobria, justa /Femina si qua fuit, si presens, si qua futura,
 Mathildis prudens et fortis, sobria, justa /Vixit, quod plebs, quod locuples (Locuplebs), quod sexus et etas /
 Omnis, quod clerus, quod lingua, quod ordo fatetur. /Si res, si species, si vir, si partus et ortus /Carmen
 reginae cuiquam, vel sola dedere, /Cum re, cum specie, cum conjuge partus et ortus /Debent reginae carmen
 collata Mathildi. /Heroum mater, matrum pulcherrima, felix /Regno, rege viro nulli pare regibus orta,
 /Corporeis animaeque bonis formatur utrisque. /Per lacrimas, per opes, per leta, per aspera rerum /A mortis
 redimi si posset conditione, /Nec lacrimae, nec opes, nec leta, nec aspera rerum /Deficerent, nec deficere quod
 adesset adessent. /Sed quia decrevit corpus natura perire, /Non animam, corpus redimi non posse, virago / E
 contra salvat, redimit sic corpus et illam. / Corporis invigilans studiis animaeque saluti, Sic abundanter
 possedit, distribuit rem. Ergo referte preces longe lateque quotannis, Clerus et ecclesiae, largas pro munere
 largo. / Sit tituli finis, quod honoribus inclita binis / Anglorum regina, Mathildis, haec dominata
 Normannis, hic fine bono tumulata quiescit, / Felix et titulo, ne quid natura negaret.
 Es locus fundate locus, lux bina novembris, / Terminus, exiguus cinis est, decus et decor altus."
 (*Mélanges Julien Havet; Recueil de Travaux D'Érudition dédiés à la mémoire de Julien Havet, 1853-1893*
 ed. M. L. Delisle [1895; repr. Geneva, 1972], 223-4).

undertakings. Indeed, the poet's last line almost allows Mathilda to defeat her own mortality. Fulcoius's description of Mathilda as powerful, just, and generous to the church could be considered sycophantic and meaningless, if the evidence surrounding Mathilda's life did not, in fact, support his portrayal. But, as I will show in the following chapters, extant sources that describe Mathilda's activity bear out Fulcoius's description. The second poem written for Mathilda, *Tempore quae nostro*, is not as lengthy as *Certe si fortis*, but still offers some novel insights.

In our time, she who could be seen dressed in queenly purple, in a prosperous condition, with scepter and crown, Mathilda queen of the English, lies resting on the throne of two honors because of her blameless life. As a mother she resembled Martha in her solicitous care, and she was made equal to blessed Mary in her virtue. Both aspects were seen in tandem in one life. She dies and is wept for by the English and the Normans for many years. She has perished, and her death represents tragedy for both the clergy and the common folk. Thus there were two days in November reserved for a memorable funeral. Let places, stars, times, days be as one; let the sun be one with the moon, and let daytime be one with nighttime. Let all these things be in unity rather than there be no unity.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁷ "Tempore quae nostro spectari posset in ostro, /Conditione bona, cum sceptro cumque corona, /His jacet Anglorum regina, Mathildis, honorum /Pro meritis morum solio subnixa duorum. /Sollicita cura quae mater Martha futura, /Partis ad eximiae precium par facta Mariae, /In simili vita fuit altera visa tabita. /Anglis, Normannis moritur lugenda quotannis; /Interiit, bina cleri plebisque ruina. /Quis sic complexset lux bina Novembris, ut esset / Terminus illarum memorabilis exequiarum. /Sint loca, sit sidus, sint tempora cuncta, sit idus, /Sit sol cum luna, lux et nox omnis ut una, /Omnis in hac una potius sit nulla quod una." (*Mélanges Julien Havet*, 224-5).

In *Tempore quae nostro* Fulcoius strikes a softer, more fluid note. He emphasizes Mathilda's beauty and grace, and focuses on her relationship to her children. Though the popular Biblical paradigm of Mary and Martha was a typical literary convention, it was not usually used to portray motherhood. But Fulcoius's Martha gives us evidence for Mathilda's active part in her children's lives. Fulcoius also provides the only evidence that Mathilda's funeral was celebrated for two days. He supplies confirmation of her wealth at the time of her death, and that she carried a scepter, a fact established by her last charter to La Trinité, but almost unheard of for medieval English queens.¹⁹⁸

Mathilda's scepter is a suitable symbol for her career as queen; she was able to acquire and retain authority when her predecessors could not. My examination of her childhood environment showed that it may have done much to encourage her success. As mentioned above, Mathilda was relatively mature when she married. Her singular status in her father's court could have contributed to the innate sense of preeminence that allowed her to rule England and Normandy as she did. Flanders and its unique atmosphere highlighted Mathilda's status and may have made her especially aware of her place in relation to the aristocracy that surrounded her. Among sophisticated and regal aliens, she was the young mistress of her father's palaces, and no doubt the awareness of her peerless place remained with her as she became Duchess of Normandy and was crowned Queen of England. Mathilda was very cognizant of the elite status her ancestry conferred on her; it is mentioned in her diplomas and on her tomb. The most

¹⁹⁸ John Carmi Parsons, "English Medieval Queenship," in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh, 1992), 62-3.

elaborate description was written in a charter for La Trinité “...coniuxque sua reginarum nobilissima, Baldoini incliti ac strenuissimi Flandrensium comitis filia regisque Francorum Henrici neptis clarissima.”¹⁹⁹ Whatever the source of Mathilda’s royal consciousness, the activities and policies she pursued exemplify her comfort with the exercise of highest authority. Lord, judge, and patron, Mathilda assumed these roles repeatedly with competence and success throughout her life, for the furtherance of her own and her family’s power.

¹⁹⁹ Bates, *Regesta Regum*, 292-5.

Chapter Two:

Coronation and Ritual; Mathilda of Flanders, Queen of England

The ceremonies, rituals, objects, and liturgies that dressed power in the Middle Ages grew slowly more cohesive as rulers began to make claims about themselves and the origins of their authority, and as churchmen, for reasons of their own, made claims about secular rulers. Ecclesiastical activity in regional synods across Visigothic Spain, West and East Francia, and England resulted in new liturgies that were introduced to ornament and buttress secular power.²⁰⁰ One of the major preoccupations of these ecclesiastical synods was royal function in the church. Promoting a strong king was very much in the interests of the clergy. The episcopacy viewed the monarch as a defense against encroachment on the privileges of the Church, both of property and authority, and increasing the prestige of the king through such innovative rites as royal anointing resulted in a strong king who could carry out these duties. But churchmen were understandably concerned that the king maintain a proper relationship with the Church, that he not use his authority to exploit church lands, or more subtly, attempt to control church personnel as another arm of his emerging government. Bishops especially, the high ritualists of the Middle Ages, were sensitive to these possibilities, and concocted and staged liturgies that would emphasize that the king was chosen by

²⁰⁰ Janet Nelson, "National Synods, Kingship as Office, and Royal Anointing: An Early Medieval Syndrome," in *Councils and Assemblies*, ed. G. J. Cuming and Derek Baker, *Studies in Church History* Volume 7 (Cambridge, 1971), 41-59. Nelson's theories about ecclesiastical synodal activity resulting in new king-making rituals have been generally accepted. Though anointing first comes into view in the middle of the eighth century, it is not until the coronation of Charles the Bald in 869 that both crowning and anointing are utilized together for the first time. (Richard A. Jackson, *Ordines Coronationis Franciae* [Philadelphia, 1995]).

God, yet made capable (because he was not naturally so) of fulfilling this office only through God's grace.²⁰¹

Hence, the medieval coronation rite became a liturgical anomaly. Holy sacraments and highly politicized events, coronations, originally a pagan tradition with both Roman and Germanic roots, began to be sacralized by the Franks in the eighth century, when they were combined with Christian blessings.²⁰² Eventually, monarchs were anointed with holy chrism by a member of the high clergy.²⁰³ It has long been assumed that this rite had its origins in the anointing central to a bishop's investiture, but it could also have stemmed from Old Testament precedence, or more mundanely from baptism.²⁰⁴ Whatever the case, the first recorded occasion of anointing occurred in 751, at the coronation of Pepin the Short.²⁰⁵ Anointing appeared in England soon after, in 785, when King Offa's son Ecgferth received the *ordinatio* or *consecratio* by

²⁰¹ Janet Nelson "National Synods," 56. For bishops as the authors of liturgical rites, also see Jackson, *Ordines Coronationis Franciae*, 1-4; Percy Ernst Schramm, *A History of the English Coronation* trans. Leopold G. Wickham Legg (Oxford, 1937), 21, 38-40, 57-9. Janet L. Nelson "Hincmar of Rheims on King-making: the Evidence of the 'Annals of St. Berlin,' 861-882," in *Coronations: Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual*, ed. Janos M. Bak (Berkeley, 1990), 16-34.

²⁰² Schramm, *English Coronation*, 10; H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Anglo-Norman Laudes Regiae," *Viator* 12 (1981), 37-78.

²⁰³ In 781, Charles the Great arranged for his sons to be anointed by the pope (Schramm, *English Coronation*, 15).

²⁰⁴ Schramm, *English Coronation*, 8, 15; Ernst Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Medieval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley, 1946), 35; Nelson, "National Synods," 51-2, Jackson, *Ordines Coronationis Franciae*, 27.

²⁰⁵ Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, 30.

clerical hands.²⁰⁶ By at least 856, queen's rites of coronation were developed, namely those of Judith in 856 and Ermentrude in 866, both compiled by Hincmar of Rheims.²⁰⁷ Janet Nelson has made a strong case that the oldest surviving *ordo*, the "Leofric" *ordo*, was actually an English rite, reconfigured to fit the coronation of Judith by Hincmar. Her evidence is supported by Hincmar himself who writes of Judith's *ordo* that she was crowned because it was the custom in England.²⁰⁸

Secular elections and purely political transmissions of authority no longer belonged in a society that was Christianized. The liturgy of the anointing was "a ritual expression of a social reality."²⁰⁹ The rite made a distinction between the anointed and those who did the anointing. The *sacerdos* was the channel through whom God's grace flowed. The clergy's desire to make firm the secondary role of secular authority in ecclesiastical matters instigated the introduction of a liturgical rite by which a king's actions were conditioned and, when necessary, controlled. At the same time, the anointing acknowledged the interdependence of the two hierarchies; secular and clerical.

Coronations and anointings were rituals, and as such, the ambiguity of their symbols allowed them to mean different things to different audiences, and to be used

²⁰⁶ "consecrationis meae quam ab eo (archieUulfredo) eodem die per Dei gratiam accepi." *Cartularium Saxonicum* ed. Walter de Gray Birch, Vol. 1 (London, 1885), 370.

²⁰⁷ Jackson, *Ordines Coronationis Franciae*, 73.

²⁰⁸ The Leofric *ordo* allowed for anointing, but not crowning (Janet L. Nelson. "The Earliest Surviving Ordo," in *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* [London, 1986], 344).

²⁰⁹ Janet Nelson "National Synods," 56.

for various ends.²¹⁰ Hincmar of Rheims made clear in his final synod that the power of bishops outranked that of kings because kings are consecrated to their kingship by bishops, but bishops could not be consecrated by their kings.²¹¹ But though he used the ritual of anointing to make his point, the inverse nature of power that was a particular feature of a Christian society could defeat his purpose, resulting in an illustration that could be used as a symbol of royal or imperial exaltation through humility.

At all levels of authority, from Theodosius, to Louis the Pious, to Fulk Nerra, ritual humility and subjugation could be used as a symbol for a ruler's Christ-like authority. In a Christian culture, where scriptural models were used for secular kings, one need look no further than Christ's baptism by John the Baptist for referents that inverted sacred authority through ritual.

Medieval kings and their apologists did use these rites to promote their authority over their own churches. The Anglo-Norman Anonymous, in one of the surviving political tracts of the period, makes plain that the king's sacrality through anointing made him superior to a bishop.²¹² This is certainly reflected in the royal ordines of the period, which make reference to the "Christ-like" nature of the monarch.²¹³ His

²¹⁰ According to anthropologists, the ambiguity of ritual is a defining characteristic that contributes to its strength (Gilbert Lewis *A Day of Shining Red: An Essay on Understanding Ritual* [Cambridge, 1980], 3).

²¹¹ "quia reges in culmen regium sacrantur a pontificibus, pontifices autem a regibus consecrari non possunt.." PL 125: 1071.

²¹² MGH LL 1/3:69.

²¹³ "Henceforth, by virtue of his unction, the King was not merely a layman as before, but what Lyndwood calls a *persona mixta*, for he partakes of the character of a clerk as well as a layman." (Schramm, *English Coronations*, 138. Schramm takes this reference from William Lyndwood, *Provinciale seu Constitutiones Anglie* [Paris, 1501], 3:126).

“persona-mixta” accorded him a status that was at once priest and king: *rex et sacerdos*. Much has been made of the dual nature of kingship and the development of its sacred status. By the eleventh century, the political and theological theory of Christ-centered kingship was generally accepted in Western Europe to the extent that ruling by the grace of God was widely understood as a sacred mission.²¹⁴ Certainly Ernst Kantorowicz’s study *The King’s Two Bodies* makes this point clear. As a result, there were at least two competing schools claiming “ownership” of the coronation rite. The clergy, who designed the rite and instigated its use, claimed the higher authority of Christ’s representatives, and the king and his apologists did the same.²¹⁵ Mirroring the inherent ambiguity of the rite itself, studies of the coronation rite have also served many competing causes. They have been put to use by such varied interests as the preservation of High Church Anglicanism by the Henry Bradshaw Society, and the Second German Reich by Georg Waitz and the Göttingen Academy.²¹⁶ More recently, Percy Schramm has used coronations to trace out the “symbolology” of kingship, Walter Ullman, medieval political and legal theory, and Kantorowicz “political theology,” and the changing nature of kingship.²¹⁷ These scholars and later historians such as Bloch,

²¹⁴ Ernst Kantorowicz *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), 42-78.

²¹⁶ Georg Waitz, “Die Formeln der deutschen Königs und der römischen Kaiserkrönung vom 10. bis zum 12. Jahrhundert,” *Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen*, 18 (1873). For an examination of the foundation of the Henry Bradshaw Society, see David J. Sturdy, “‘Continuity’ vs. ‘Change’: Historians and English Coronations of the Medieval and Early Modern Periods,” in Janos M. Bak, *Coronations* (Berkeley, 1990), 228-234.

²¹⁷ Percy Ernst Schramm, *English Coronation*; Walter Ullman, *Medieval Papalism: the Political Theories of the Medieval Canonists* (London, 1949); Ernst Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, and later *The King’s Two Bodies*.

Erdmann, Bouwman, and Ladner, have transformed the study of royal ceremony and liturgy from an interesting, if slightly trivial, footnote of medieval political narrative, to paradigmatic.²¹⁸ The liturgical and ceremonial components of a coronation have become an essential tool of investigation into medieval and early modern politics or statecraft. Like traditional medieval political history, the vitality of these studies underwent a decline with the growing popularity of social history. But their popularity has revived somewhat dramatically as historians such as Richard Jackson, Janet Nelson, H. E. J. Cowdrey, Sarah Hanley, and Janos Bak have all contributed to the examination of coronations and their accompanying rites.²¹⁹ The contrast between the conclusions of the earlier studies and those of this next generation is marked, as more recent scholarship is less apt to draw a direct relation between liturgical form and reality, and is even more reserved about assigning specific, singular meaning to such events. One topic common to both groups of historians is the debate about what coronations meant both to their participants and to the audience.

What is it about the ritual of coronation that continues to make it such a desirable and useful tool? Part of the answer can be found through analysis of ritual in

²¹⁸ Marc Bloch *The Royal Touch; Sacred Kingship and Scrofula in England and France* (London, 1973); Cornelius Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning* (Groningen, 1957); Gerhart Ladner, *Die Papstbildnisse des Altertums und des Mittelalters* (Vatican City, 1941). Carl Erdmann's works are reprinted posthumously in *Ottonische Studien* ed. Helmut Beumann (Darmstadt: 1968).

²¹⁹ Jackson, *Ordines, Coronationis Franciae*, Nelson "Hincmar of Rheims,"; idem, "The Lord's Anointed and the People's Choice: Carolingian Royal Ritual," in *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*, David Cannadine and Simon Price, eds. (Cambridge, 1987); idem, *Politics and Ritual in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1986); idem, "The Rites of the Conqueror," in *Anglo-Norman Studies* 4 (1981): 117-132; Cowdrey, "Anglo-Norman Laudes Regiae"; Sarah Hanley, *The Lit de Justice of the Kings of France: Constitutional Ideology in Legend, Ritual and Discourse* (Princeton, 1983); Janos M. Bak *Coronations*.

general and its political uses. Anthropologists have defined ritual as standard, repetitive, formal action using symbols.²²⁰ Ritual action is repetitive, but this very repetition serves as an important means of “channeling emotion, guiding cognition and organizing social groups.”²²¹ Rituals are also highly artificial and almost self-consciously unreal. The symbols they use are ambiguous and multivocal, combining a variety of different meanings. Various people in a multitude of ways, depending on their social positions, their ambitions, and their personal histories, may define the same symbol. This ambiguity is especially important in the use of ritual to build political solidarity in the absence of consensus.²²² The cohesive faculty of ritual is perhaps the most important for the purposes of this study. Ritual, as opposed to ecclesiastical synods, royal councils, or court cases, assumes unanimity where there is none. It matters little if the concurrence is forced and seemingly artificial. J. G. A. Pocock in “Ritual, Language and Power” stated, “since rituals are non-verbal, they have no contraries. They can, therefore, be used to produce harmony of wills and actions without provoking recalcitrance; if a man finds himself playing his appointed part in (ritual) and thus already - as it were *de facto* - in harmony with others, it no more occurs to him than it occurs to a dancer to move to a different rhythm than that being played by the orchestra.”²²³

²²⁰ David I. Kertzer, *Ritual, Politics and Power* (New Haven, 1988), 9.

²²¹ Edmund Leach, “Ritualization in Man in relation to Conceptual and Social Development,” *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* 251(1966), 403-8.

²²² Victor Turner, *The Forest of Symbols* (Ithaca, 1967), 50.

²²³ J. G. A. Pocock, “Ritual, Language and Power,” *Political Science* 16: 3-3.

Rituals instruct. Political rituals can attempt to erase as much history from a societal memory as they inscribe.²²⁴ Far from simply reflecting existing power relations, rituals are often used to do the opposite, that is, foster beliefs about the political universe that systematically misrepresent the lived reality of a given set of circumstances. As Roberto Da Matta theorized, “rituals hide and reveal; they can both delude and clarify.”²²⁵ Instead of projecting the existing political order onto symbolism, ritual propagates a particular view of that order.²²⁶

In addition, dramatized rituals not only established who had authority and who did not; they also defined the degrees of relative authority among the politically influential. In a society that was largely non-literate, there was no way to express such a power hierarchy except through ceremony and related symbolic behavior. In the absence of writing, ritual defined power relations.²²⁷

Successful ritual made a message uncontestable because it was framed in such a way as to appear inherent. It presents a picture of the world so compelling as to be incontestable. It is a form of rhetoric, the propagation of a message through a complex symbolic performance. Rites followed certain culturally prescribed forms whose

²²⁴ James E. Young, “Memory and Monument,” in *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, ed. Geoffrey Hartman (Bloomington, 1986), 105.

²²⁵ Roberto Da Matta, “Constraint and License: A Preliminary Study of Two Brazilian National Rituals,” in *Secular Ritual*, ed. Sally F. Moore and Barbara G. Meyerhoff (Assen, 1977), 259.

²²⁶ Maurice Bloch, “Ritual Symbolism and the Non-Representation of Society,” in *Symbol As Sense*, ed. Mary L. Foster and Stanley H. Brandes (New York, 1980), 216.

²²⁷ Lawrence M. Bryant, “ ‘Parlementaire’ Political Theory in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 7 (1976), 15-24.

internal logic made the course of the argument predictable at the same time that it lent credence to the political program advanced.²²⁸

But this does not mean that ritual was an inherently conservative force. Rituals did change in form, in symbolic meaning, and in social effects; new rituals, such as anointing arose, and older secular rituals faded away. These changes came through the individual creation of bishops and their staff. It is because rituals are created and altered that they are such powerful tools of political action.²²⁹

Rites have an innovatory potential, because not only do rituals have a cognitive effect on people's definition of political reality, they also have an important emotional impact.²³⁰ Monarchs and their supporters attempted to design and employ rituals that aroused popular emotions in support of their legitimacy, and to drum up popular enthusiasm for their policies. The efficacy of a ritual's instruction depended heavily on the power of the liturgy to place the individual in a receptive frame of mind. Sensory devices such as rhythmic chanting, singing, and the tolling of bells affect one's emotional state.²³¹ Kenneth Burke describes this as the "attitude of collective

²²⁸ Bryant, "Parlementaire," 101.

²²⁹ Nancy Munn, "Symbolism in Ritual Context: Aspects of Symbolic Action," *Handbook of Social and Cultural Anthropology*, ed. John J. Honigmann (Chicago, 1973), 592.

²³⁰ Kertzer, *Ritual*, 14.

²³¹ Kertzer, *Ritual*, 99.

expectancy” that these formal patterns elicit from its audience. The very form of the presentation leads us to believe in the message put forth.²³²

But the persistent ambiguity of liturgies and rites allowed them to take on a life of their own. Pocock’s analysis is incomplete, because it fails to address rituals as spaces that can be disrupted, and violently. An opposing force, presenting an alternative political solution, addressing grievances, and mobilizing people for revolt, could also use the powerful emotions that are elicited by ritual. Consequently, while rituals could give form and substance to the emotions of loyalty or faith, and reflect a reassuring hierarchical order believed to be created and endorsed by God, they might also release less positive elements of confusion and fury, and be the impetus of threatening behavior.

The height of emotions expressed during liturgical forms can also be seen in the assemblies of the Peace of God movement in the tenth and eleventh centuries. The kiss of peace, the central rite of these assemblies, compelled members of opposing social and moral categories that were at violent odds to accept an imposed unity that joined the sacred kiss of the mass with the secular kiss of *amicitia*. The fusion between elements, that were normally in opposition incited an emotional response in the attending crowd, who screamed out “Peace, peace, peace!” in response to the presiding bishop.²³³

The coronation ritual inverted the political power order by directing the ruling king to kneel in order to be crowned. This mirrored the inherent contradiction in royal

²³² Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (New York, 1950), 58.

²³³ Richard Landes, “Between Aristocracy and Heresy: Popular Participation in the Limousin Peace of God (994-1033),” in *The Peace of God: Religion and Violence in Tenth and Eleventh Century France*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca, 1992), 184-218.

authority; that rulers had the power to strike men down or raise them up, but this authority was in turn given by God, who could punish a ruler who did not uphold his laws. The intense emotion created by the coronation could also spring from the expectation that something momentous was about to happen. Whether the rite followed the careful machinations of the bishop in charge, or served as an expression for rebellion, or even treason, the event stood at the intersection of secular and ecclesiastical power, and the audience held its collective breath to see what would come of it. Even in the unlikely event that the words of the liturgy had no significance to the gathering crowd, the excitement and agitation made the event extraordinary.

The reality was that ritual ceremony often occurred after open hostility, armed conflict, and feud. In ecclesiastical circles, the ritual investiture of a bishop, likewise, could take place after insults, denunciations, and excommunications.

The fact that rituals often were most effective when making latent conflict visible did not obviate their purpose. The tension and unpredictability of these events proves their effect. In Geoffrey Koziol's words, "far from overcoming or excising social contradictions, these rituals concentrated them and that was the source of their power."²³⁴ They dramatized a struggle for authority whose outcome was far from assured, revealing tensions and bringing contradictions into sharp relief. But rituals were not just a means of stylizing and presenting the outcome of political battles that had already been fought and won. They themselves were the arena for these battles.

²³⁴ Geoffrey Koziol, *Begging Pardon and Favor: Ritual and Political Order in Early Medieval France* (Ithaca, 1992), 316.

Because of this, coronations and crown-wearings alike became tests of a monarch's strength.

The royal ritual could confer precious political victories for those whose administration lacked popular support, and could deal a defeating blow to those who formerly held a monopoly of the symbols of legitimacy. Never was the reversal more potent than when it involved the symbols of royal dominion.

Many royal spectacles can be judged failures, if one assumes their purpose was to display power and the cohesiveness of the political community. In Anglo-Norman England, particularly, coronations and festal coronations became one of the fields on which archbishops battled for the primacy of their respective sees.²³⁵ At the coronation of Henry I, the bishop of London and the archbishop of York fell into an waspish dispute over which had the right to crown him. It continued right into the festival after the coronation, as the two prelates argued over the best seat at the Christmas feast.²³⁶

In 1121, Eadmer reported that in the middle of Henry's wedding mass, the archbishop of Canterbury saw that the king was already wearing his crown. The archbishop dropped his stole and brought a halt to the liturgy. Henry was forced to remove his crown, so that the archbishop could perform the coronation himself.²³⁷

²³⁵ Geoffrey Koziol offers evidence that the disruption of rites and liturgies was, in fact, an almost purely English phenomenon, in contrast to the stately ceremonies of French kings. "Something in Anglo-Norman experience of politics tended to desacrilize political authority, rendering it fit for parody and resistance, while in France something made it possible to adapt the old typologies that held political authority sacred" (Geoffrey Koziol, "England and France and the Problem of Sacrality in Twelfth-Century Ritual," in *Cultures of Power: Lordship Status and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Thomas N. Bisson [Philadelphia, 1995], 141).

²³⁶ Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, ed. Martin Rule, Rolls Series 81 (London, 1884), 4: 212.

²³⁷ Eadmer, 4: 292, 127.

Bishops and prelates were not alone. The nobility disrupted royal liturgies to make statements about their own legitimacy. William of Tancarville, fallen out of favor with Henry II, used ritual as a stage to symbolically air his grievances. As chamberlain, William's duty at the Caen Christmas festival was to wash Henry's hands. Having been denied entry into the king's presence for weeks, William surprised the court by marching in, backed by armed soldiers, and simply crashed the feast. He snatched the silver basin from the attendant, who was about to usurp his office, and began to wash the king's hands himself. Afterward, he sat down. Henry was speechless, robbed of the active role in his own Christmas rite.²³⁸ Indeed, court rituals became the preferred platform from which the nobility made public their efforts to gain sympathy or status.²³⁹ Even the most sacred of ceremonies, such as the translation of holy relics, was not immune. In 1247, when Henry acquired a vial of Christ's blood, members of his court loudly debated, during the liturgy, the relic's authenticity. A ritual designed to highlight Henry's sacral function instead simply made him look credulous.²⁴⁰ Years later, as triumphal entries began to be designed for monarchs, these rituals were also used as a disruptive force, allowing symbolic representation to stand in for conduct normally considered treasonous. When Mary, Queen of Scots, came to England, her household had little influence over the design of her triumphal entry. Consequently, the ceremony

²³⁸ Gualteri Mapes, *De Nugis Curialium Distinctiones Quinque* (London, 1850) 6: 488-95.

²³⁹ Koziol, "Problem of Sacrality," 148. See also Schramm, *English Coronation*, 66-8, 71; W. L. Warren, *Governance of Norman and Angevin England* (London, 1987), 49-52; Robin Frame, *The Political Development of the British Isles* (New York, 1990), 55, 61-2, 64-5.

²⁴⁰ Koziol, "Problem of Sacrality," 139. Koziol cites Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora* ed. H. R. Luard, Rolls Series (London, 1872), 4: 640-45.

designed for her, but only marginally controlled by her, was an opportunity for contentious expression. The first half of the ceremony outlined Mary's royal heritage and God's favor, but the second half of Mary's triumph represented a fiery judgment and a hellish *adventus*, including a burning dragon on a scaffold, perhaps as a model of the Beast of the Apocalypse. The pageant further illustrated the fate of heretics, as three wooden effigies of Korah, Dathan and Abiram were ritually burned.²⁴¹ Mary's civic ritual threatened her with eternal damnation if she remained a Catholic. The ritual space of the pageant, however, allowed these sentiments to be aired in symbols that were thinly veiled, but ambiguous. Was Mary the heretic, or were her English subjects? The viewer defined the meaning of the symbol. Nevertheless, the ceremony of triumphal entry, celebrating queenly status, had clearly gone out of established royal control, and represented an alternative political conviction.

William the Conqueror's coronation was an ideal example of a ritual that failed spectacularly. Taking place within the context of conquest and upheaval, the ideal ritual for the Normans would legitimate their authority, make the justice of their acquisition seem indisputable and, through ceremony, paper over the rebellions that were bursting up around them. But at the point in the liturgy where the acclamation was pronounced, and the shouts of William's supporters could be heard even outside the cathedral, William's own soldiers set fire to the surrounding houses, laboring under the mistaken notion that their leader was being assaulted. The incident could not have come at a less opportune time, as the coronation had yet to reach the stage where the diadem

²⁴¹ Gordon Kipling, *Enter the King: Theatre, Liturgy and Ritual in the Medieval Civic Triumph* (Oxford, 1998), 352-5.

was placed on William's head, and he had not yet been anointed. Orderic Vitalis related that the coronation went on as planned, but almost all of the audience had fled the church in the confusion, some of them to help put out the fire, but others to use the chaos to rob the surrounding residences.²⁴² Only a few of the clergy, and the two archbishops responsible for directing the liturgy, were left in the chapel to proceed with the rite. William himself trembled with fear throughout the rest of the ceremony.²⁴³ Very few of the nobles and community members who had congregated were actually on hand to see William crowned or anointed; thus the most significant moments of the rite were obviated, because they were almost completely unobserved. The effect of the rite, to present William to his new kingdom as the anointed, chosen of God, was nullified.

The soldiers posted around the minster had set diversionary fires, a typical response, considering William's best generals and fighting men were already inside. Robert Gusicard, when rescuing Gregory VII from his besieged position inside Rome, used the same tactic. That this sentry force reacted so quickly and violently to the perceived threat is illustrative of the tenuous nature of the Norman position in 1066. William's military were expecting trouble. William's rite came hard on the heels of London's forced surrender and was hastily thrown together amid the grumblings and misgivings of at least some of the Norman nobility.²⁴⁴ If the purpose of the ritual was to display the power of the new administration, the cohesiveness of its political policies,

²⁴² Orderic, *Historiae*, 1:491.

²⁴³ "Trepidantes super regem vehementer tremementem officium vix peregerunt" (*Gesta Gvillelmi*, 179).

²⁴⁴ David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (Berkeley, CA, 1964), 248; *Gesta Gvillelmi*, 215-16.

and its inherent legitimacy, it could only be counted a miserable failure. It contained all the negative portents imaginable, lacking only a comet.

Rituals cannot create emotions where there are none. They can only serve as an avenue by which to express them, and a stage on which they can be acted. These actions and attitudes are not always consensual and certainly do not always fulfill expectations, especially of those in charge of constructing a particular rite. The ambiguity of ritual allows meanings to shift and move, demonstrating the suppleness that is their strength. The audience, then, plays a crucial role not merely as receptors to whom propaganda is played, but as the eventual jury for the ritual's meaning. It is against this political and cultural backdrop that we examine the coronation of Mathilda of Flanders.

Coronations for queens are some of the earliest liturgies extant, and are not unusual, but the English coronation of Mathilda of Flanders, in May of 1068 at Winchester, was to prove unique. The component parts developed for her rite were never again combined. The coronation was to prove a watershed event for Norman power. The features utilized in the event reflected the particular circumstances of the Conquest and the situation of the Normans, especially of William, producing an innovative liturgy. Two years in the making, the rite was an opportunity to portray symbolically the physical symbols of God-granted power, as they rested squarely in Norman hands. William's botched coronation could not be repaired, but it would not be repeated. The Normans, a foreign group that had previously been mistrusted, even loathed by some, would be placed in a new symbolic nexus by ritual. Through Mathilda's coronation, they hoped to be viewed now as fair and benevolent rather than

threatening, and to shore up popular perception of a new administrative order that, at this time, had very little other than symbolic basis.

According to William of Poitiers, the Conqueror had evinced an unwillingness to be crowned two years earlier; not only out of humility and because of the difficult political terrain, but also out of desire to have Mathilda consecrated next to him.²⁴⁵ This wish was not merely sentimental. It is important to remember that Mathilda's royal bloodline, as the niece of the king of France, was the ultimate consideration in their union. William's dubious heritage made the faultless lineage of his duchess, and later queen, all the more necessary. Milo Crispin's *Vita Lanfranci* recounts the famous incident of yet another rite gone badly wrong, at an important festival crown-wearing. William's jester, seeing William bedecked in his royal garb, called out with exaggerated reverence, "Behold, I see God! Behold, I see God!"²⁴⁶ Even the saintly Lanfranc was so horrified, he demanded that William have the man flogged. Here was another example of ritual careening out of control, but further, the incident hints at a sentiment that must have run quite commonly in the ranks of both Normans and English. "As William's jester so indelicately reminded him, he was not born a king, not even born into a royal dynasty or into a people ruled by kings. He was king, not by the grace of God, but by conquest. . . ."²⁴⁷

²⁴⁵ "Res adhuc turbidas esse; rebellare nonnullos; se potius regni quietem quam coronam cupere. Praeterea, si Deus ipsi hunc concedit honorem, secum velle conjugem suam coronari" (*Gesta Guillelmi*, 148-9).

²⁴⁶ *Vita Lanfranci* PL 150:53-54.

²⁴⁷ Koziol, "Problem of Sacrality," 135.

Mathilda, by contrast, was born of royal blood. Her mother was a member of the reigning French dynasty, and her father traced his parentage to Charlemagne. No doubt this was the reason William would have liked nothing better than to be crowned beside this woman, connected to him by the sacred rite of matrimony. Her royal blood was insurance that the throne of England was not an honor of which he was undeserving. The reaction of William's soldiers in their haste to address, or at least divert the anticipated trouble, as well as William's own trepidation at his liturgy, speak pointedly of his uneasiness.

The importance of his connection to Mathilda was illustrated by William's absolute refusal to acknowledge any impediment to it, even though the papacy refused to endorse the legitimacy of the match for years. Despite the prohibition, which could have done enormous damage to his position within his own realm, the pair flew in the face of papal censure until such a time as it could be resolved.²⁴⁸ The risk inherent in William's marital situation was exceedingly high, especially when one considers that at the time of its celebration, his duchy was still in some turmoil.

The tenor of his queen's liturgy was a testament to her blood, but also to the frustrated hopes of William's coronation, and the hopes for the Normans' ultimate success in England, which was still by no means assured. Though much had been done since William's coronation, the very winter after Mathilda was crowned, William would face rebellions on the Welsh border and at Exeter. Throughout 1068–1070, both the northern parts of the country, scarcely pacified, and the coastal regions, vulnerable to invasion, demanded William's attention. The uncertainty of the latter phase of the

²⁴⁸ See above, Chapter I.

Conquest undoubtedly influenced the preparations for the liturgy of 1068. The queen's coronation was the requisite occasion to glorify Norman achievements and illustrate the legitimacy of Norman claims, this time, to an audience.

The *ordo* for Mathilda's coronation itself is no longer extant. Until recently, historians have assumed that the coronation of William the Conqueror survived as the Second English *Ordo*, whose section on queenly coronation was quite innovative. The *ordo* stated that the English people are to rejoice that they are governed by the ability and virtue of the queen, whom God had placed above them; she, whom God wished to participate in the royal power.²⁴⁹ Like the king, she was anointed with sacred unguent oil, with equal dignity and honor.²⁵⁰ These new phrases, it has been conventionally held, reflect the increased status of Anglo-Norman queens.

Recently, Janet L. Nelson has argued that the Third English *Ordo* was William's coronation rite. Found in the Pontifical of Magdalen College, the structure of the rite, with the acclamation placed first, complements Orderic's account of the violent interruption of William's coronation by his own soldiers after hearing the shout. This liturgy also has a queen's rite attached, which compares the queen to Esther, "a partner in royal power."²⁵¹ In the blessing of the crown, the manuscript indicates the feminine

²⁴⁹ "laetetur gens Anglica domini imperio regenda et reginae virtutis providentia gubernanda," "qui regalis imperii te voluit esse participatem," "Quique eam sua miseratione reginam constituit in populo" (Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, 61).

²⁵⁰ "quam sequitur consecratio reginae, que propter honorificentiam ab episcopo sacri unguinis oleo super uerticem perfundenda est. et in ecclesia coram optimatibus cum codigno honore" (Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, 63).

²⁵¹ "...ut sicut reginam hester causa iudaice salutis de capitiuitatis sue compede sloatum ad regis assueri thalmmum regnique sui consortium transire fecisti..." (Wilson, *The Pontifical of Magdalene College*, 96-8).

pronouns above the masculine ones, perhaps a clue that the two coronations took place separately, as did those of William and Mathilda. But it may be that Mathilda's coronation was modeled on a conflation of both. Unfortunately, there are at least six extant queen's rites the date and origin of which make them possible matches for the coronation of 1068. They are variously from the imperial court, the French court, or have Anglo-Saxon origin. However, none of them fits her circumstances particularly. The Anglo-Saxon *ordo*, the best conjecture considering questions of continuity, has no designation of a scepter, because none of Mathilda's successors in England received one, whereas she most certainly did.²⁵² The *ordines* from the continent which contain scepters were not as readily available, but may have been transmitted through a number of channels. The following rites were available in 1068 either in England, in France, or in Germany. The continental *ordos* are, in chronological order, the *Ordo* of Judith, by Hincmar (856), the *Ordo* of Ermentrude (866), the Erdmann *Ordo* (c. 900), the *Ordo* of the Eleven Forms (c. 900-950), the Ratold *Ordo* (980), and the Royal *Ordo* in Cologne Dombibliothek 141 (c. 1000-1050). The English *Ordos* are the *Consecratio Anglo-Saxonici* (c. 700), the Second English *Ordo* (c. 900), and the Third English *Ordo* (c. 1000-1070).²⁵³ The transmission of each of these is largely unknown, but two central churchmen may have been involved in concocting Mathilda's ceremony. Ældred of York, the bishop who actually crowned Mathilda, spent time in the courts of Cologne

²⁵² See below, n. 74.

²⁵³ The continental *ordos* all follow the dating and naming conventions of Jackson, *Ordines Coronationis Franciae* and the English *ordos* follow the conventions of Janet Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, 378.

learning about ecclesiastical observance specifically with an eye to bringing these customs to England, during a time when King Edward could have been thinking about who would succeed him. Nelson has hypothesized that Ældred probably worked on Mathilda's coronation.²⁵⁴ Cowdrey, on the other hand, favored Bishop Ermenfrid of Sion who, as the confidante of German princes, certainly had access to their rituals, and may have visited Normandy in 1067 soon after William's liturgical debacle.²⁵⁵

Whatever the case, it will be useful to examine those elements of the coronation of which we can be sure, those that provided the shape for Mathilda's rite. The result was a liturgy that was as unique as it was elaborate, instituting for the first time on English soil dramatic changes in both the physical accoutrements of English queenly coronation and the office itself. One of these innovations would remain an integral part of coronations Europe-wide throughout the Middle Ages: an acclamation known to the Normans as the *Christus vincit* and to the modern historian as the *laudes regiae*.

Historically, the *laudes* were a classical acclamation for a new ruler, with roots that date to antiquity.²⁵⁶ Eventually, this tradition was Christianized and later became a divine office.²⁵⁷ Connected to the litany of the saints, in which heavenly benefactors are invoked by name to aid those on earth, they gradually took the form of a catalog of

²⁵⁴ Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe*, 390-91.

²⁵⁵ Cowdrey, "Laudes Regiae," 40.

²⁵⁶ Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, 65.

²⁵⁷ Cowdrey, "Laudes Regiae," 44.

intercessors. As the character of these acclamations developed, intercessory saints were chosen who were suited to their earthly counterparts by virtue of their heavenly status.

During the Carolingian period, the liturgical nature of imperial acclamations developed, as the emperor was acclaimed in sacred language, with the tricolon refrain of *Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat* that came to identify the *laudes*. This section of the liturgy was further distinguished at the end of the eighth century when it was separated from the coronation proper. Though the acclamation had a long history, in the eleventh century it enjoyed a new vogue in the courts of the German emperors, and renewed popularity in France.²⁵⁸ What truly distinguished the *laudes regiae*, however, was not just their long and illustrious history. They were the sole rite in which a victorious, kingly Christ was figured, not to invoke penitential feeling, but to support and endorse the victorious and kingly on earth. In fact, the Gregorian reform, and the tension surrounding the justifications for earthly versus heavenly power, did much to affect the history of these acclamations. By the time Gregory VII was in open conflict with Henry IV, separate *laudes* had developed for the pope and the emperor, changing forever the nature of the acclamation.

An examination of the *laudes* reveals its hierarchical character, as heavenly authorities are invoked for each corresponding earthly figure, in an order suggested by Christian doctrine. Appendix A is an early Frankish *laudes* of the ninth century from Cologne. Though the tricolon was used, it was done rather frugally, and the refrain of the sole phrase *Christus vincit* has been favored. The intercessory saints are presented

²⁵⁸ Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, 83.

immediately after their earthly counterparts. For instance, the pope was paired with Christ as *Salvator mundi*, the emperor with the Virgin Mary.

As the *laudes* developed further, the saintly host came to present more fully one's status in accordance with the temporal hierarchy. Appendix B, for instance, is an eleventh-century *laudes* text which illustrates that while the intercessor for the pope remains Christ as *Salvator mundi*, the king is now aided by Christ as *Redemptor mundi*. Cowdrey has noted that these two positions, at least to some degree, achieved complementary status in the hierarchy through the use of Christ in two different roles, though the pontiff retained the premier position.²⁵⁹

Proceeding downward on the earthly scale, the queen appeared next, usually mirrored by female martyred saints such as Perpetua and Felicitas. Appendix C is a Norman *laudes* from the late eleventh century, showing the typical position of queenly personages in the liturgy, and their accompanying intercessors. Subsequently the clergy was mentioned, sometimes followed by the army. Though the *laudes* were originally connected to a litany of as many as twelve or thirteen saints for each earthly social rank, by the eleventh century three or four names sufficed.²⁶⁰

When the *laudes* are taken together, it becomes clear that the Anglo-Norman acclamations were innovative in a number of ways, as opposed to their early Frankish counterparts. The positioning of the acclamation, replacing the antiphon at the end of the coronation instead of within the mass where it had traditionally belonged, was one

²⁵⁹ Cowdrey, "Laudes Regiae," 44.

²⁶⁰ Cowdrey, "Laudes Regiae," 44.

such Norman permutation. Another was the extravagant use of the tricolon, *Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat*, heightening the dramatic rhythm of the chant.

The Anglo-Normans used the *laudes* to great effect. Combining as they did a grand and solemn sacred tradition with an illustrative, liturgical “who’s who” of the medieval world, they could not have failed to appeal to the new conquering class, and especially to the royal couple. Mathilda may have already been familiar with the *laudes*. In the eleventh century the counts of Flanders were ceremonially received by monks and clerics, who greet them with relics and incense while singing the *Te Deum*. *Adventus* chants were also sung as they presided over Peace assemblies, surrounded by the relics of saints, where they enforced decrees that protected the poor and unarmed against marauding knights and castellans.²⁶¹

A sacred office of great weight, the nature and character of this rite, then, made it a useful tool for propaganda in much the same way that coronations themselves were opportunities for displaying power and cementing authority. It was for these purposes that they had also been performed as an *adventus*, or entry chant, for William as duke of Normandy. On his triumphant return after the Conquest, the *laudes* were probably sung first at his entry into Rouen, then later at the Easter crown-wearing at Fécamp, a ducal monastery in 1067. This *laudes* for William is printed in Appendix D. The Norman version used on this occasion was careful to acclaim the French king first, only then mentioning William in his proper secondary place.

Kantorowicz described the *laudes* as having a constitutive character; the solemn assent of the church was given concerning the legitimacy of the crowned and the power

²⁶¹ *Les annales de Saint-Pierre de Gand et de Saint-Amand*, ed. Philip Grierson (Brussels, 1937), 89.

of the crown itself.²⁶² Given the use of the *laudes*, its long history and its liturgical significance, it is perhaps not surprising that Mathilda of Flanders's coronation should provide an ideal occasion for its use. Moreover, the *laudes* had never before been heard in England. Its inclusion guaranteed that Mathilda's coronation would be distinct from any other. While it was imperative that William's coronation reference by imitation his predecessor's to underscore the legitimacy of his claim, Mathilda's was to impress the audience with a novelty that was sophisticatedly Continental, influenced by both the papal and princely courts of Germany.

Appendix E shows the *laudes* used for Mathilda's liturgy. At first glance, it is reminiscent of William's ducal *laudes* originating at Fécamp. The intercessory saints, however, bear examination. The first telling change occurs in the intercessory triad for the pope; instead of Christ alone, all three members of the Trinity are invoked. Moving down the hierarchy, one might be tempted to assume that, likewise, William would also merit a somewhat inflated intercessory grouping. Yet, he retains the traditional archangels shown in the Fécamp *laudes* of Appendix D. As one looks further to Mathilda's intercessors, another striking change appears. Rather than the traditional saints such as Perpetua and Felicitas, the queen's four intercessors are all apostles, and they are all male. No attempt has been made to relate her to virgin females; not even the Virgin Mary is mentioned. Ernst Kantorowicz noted that Mathilda's *laudes* did not survive beyond this period and seems to have disappeared without influencing any other rite. In fact, the highly original and propagandist nature of the *laudes regiae* of 1068 is

²⁶² Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, 65.

made manifest when one traces the fortunes of the form later in England. The next available example is the *laudes regiae* appearing in Christ Church, Canterbury, manuscript C, probably a festal form of the *laudes*. Historians have generally placed it in the reign of William Rufus for a few good reasons.²⁶³ The most important factor for our purposes is that the order of the acclamation ran from pope to king, to archbishop and clergy, and only then named the queen, followed by the army. There is little doubt that dynastic concerns would never have allowed a reigning queen to take her place so late in the litany. Furthermore, the queen was mentioned without any honorific whatsoever, and simply referred to rather baldly as “*regine Anglorum salus et vita*.” Yet, the *laudes* are unmistakably Norman; for instance, the use of *principes* to refer to lay magnates follows the form of Fécamp in Appendix D. In addition, its date almost necessarily post-dates the 1079 decision by Lanfranc that St. Alphege, who was used to represent him in the *laudes*, could rightly be considered a martyr. William Rufus was the only King of England without a reigning queen in the period in question, consequently the queen’s portion of the *laudes* was simply formulaic. The Canterbury C manuscript, then, tells us little about Mathilda’s status comparative to other queens.

The Canterbury C manuscript remains important to the study of Anglo-Norman *laudes*, however, because it formed a basis for the only extant *laudes* of the twelfth century and almost certainly acted as a pattern for it. Cambridge, Trinity College MS B.11.10, fols 108v-109, or the Cambridge *laudes*, was placed for the first time into the actual coronation *ordo* itself, between the *sta et retinue* prayer for the king, and the

²⁶³ Cowdrey posits that the neumes are of a Norman rather than English formation consisting of *virga*, *punctum*, *pes*, *pes flexus*, *pes liquescens*, *clivis*, *clivis cephalicus*, *scandicus*, *oriscus*. The archbishop’s acclamation is in the accusative case, not the dative, which could point to a less than professional, or at least desultory, compilation (Cowdrey, “*Laudes Regiae*,” 64).

Deus qui solus habes immortalitatem, a convenient position for use during the ceremony.

The Cambridge *laudes* virtually duplicates Canterbury C in its form, but is filled out to suit a coronation service. It changes the order of Canterbury C in regard to the queen's place, pointing to the necessity to rework C because a reigning queen was present. She was once again accorded a place immediately after the king. The saints invoked in the Cambridge *laudes* are in keeping with the C manuscript, that is, St. Felicitas, St. Perpetua and the Virgin Mary.

The date of this text is rather problematic. It is certainly a derivative of Canterbury C, and as such takes place after William Rufus's reign. Theoretically, this text could have been used for Eleanor of Aquitaine, queen of Henry II, but there is some debate over whether Eleanor was ever crowned in England. She most certainly was crowned in France, and because of the sacramental nature of the rite, it is quite possible that another coronation was not considered appropriate.²⁶⁴ The only source that places her in the coronation ceremony was Gervase of Canterbury, writing in about 1200. Henry of Huntingdon, though he spoke of her crossing with Henry into England, makes no mention of her at the actual crowning, even though he speaks of Henry's accession to the throne as the apex of his *Historia Anglorum*.²⁶⁵ In addition, Robert de Torigny, when describing the event, includes a long list of attendees, but Eleanor was not

²⁶⁴ This argument has been used in regard to the Empress Mathilda, because of her imperial coronation and its status. Perhaps, however, it is more likely that had she held authority in London for any length of time, she would have succumbed to the temptation of an all-important public ceremony.

²⁶⁵ Henry of Huntingdon *Historia Anglorum*, ed. Diana Greenway (Oxford, 1996), 775.

included. Schramm and others contend that Gervase is assuming knowledge of something that, in fact, never happened.²⁶⁶ His chronicle is generally believed to have been intensely derivative, borrowing as he did from John of Salisbury, Alan of Tewkesbury, and Herbert of Bosham. It is also certain that he himself did not attend the coronation, as he did not enter Christ Church, Canterbury, as a monk until 1163, and then as a very young man.²⁶⁷ Though W. L. Warren assumed that Henry and Eleanor were indeed crowned together in 1154, the sources he cited, namely Robert de Torigny and Henry of Huntingdon, do not support him.²⁶⁸

In addition to these evidentiary difficulties, one must not overlook the fact that another queen, Matilda II, consort of Henry I, was crowned in 1100, years before Eleanor would appear on the English horizon. It is very probable that the Cambridge *laudes* was actually used for Matilda II, the daughter of Malcolm of Scotland, dating the text within the period of 1100-1135. This, after all, would be the earliest occasion for which the *laudes* would need to be revised for a reigning queen. In fact, both Mathilda II and Eleanor could have used this *laudes*.

The next available examples are two texts from Worcester (Worcester, Cathedral Library MS F. 160, fols.100v-101 and 351-352). They both listed Thomas of Canterbury as a substitute saint in the place of Augustine, and added Edward the

²⁶⁶ "The Chronicle of Robert de Torigny," in *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, ed. Richard Howlett (London, 1889), 18.

²⁶⁷ Stubbs remarked clearly in the introduction to his edition that Gervase relied on the accounts of others for his narrative, even for those events at which he could have been present (William Stubbs, *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury* [London, 1880], xiii).

²⁶⁸ Howlett, "Robert de Torigny," 182.

Confessor to the king's list of intercessors. These changes do more than merely emphasize the English-ness of the two later *laudes*, they also assist in dating them; Thomas died in 1170 and Edward the Confessor was canonized in 1161. Therefore, neither Queen Mathilda II, nor Eleanor, who acceded in 1100 and 1154 respectively, could have used these later models.

The close examination of these facts and dates leads to a rather simple conclusion. The 1068 Norman *laudes* was prepared for Mathilda of Flanders, and was subsequently allowed to fall out of use. It had no lasting effect on other *laudes*, as shown by the extant versions of the Canterbury C, Cambridge, or the two Worcester manuscripts. It was not used as a model for any of these liturgical forms, precisely because the circumstances of Mathilda's coronation did not occur again.

In his well-known study of Venetian ducal custom, Edward Muir describes the ritual of symbolic public processions in much the same way as I am attempting to do with Mathilda's *laudes*. The ducal processions concretized hierarchies of authority. "In effect, the ducal procession was the constitution...position was everything."²⁶⁹ Muir's statements about Venetian procession fit with Kantorowicz's comments about the *laudes* written almost fifty years earlier; certain public rituals are constitutive in nature. This element can be ambiguous and difficult to grasp, but public acclamation of the type that followed Mathilda's coronation has Germanic roots that give it an elective character. Both the coronation and the *laudes* performed for Mathilda, with their constitutional nature, ensured that the Norman and English nobles in attendance on May

²⁶⁹ Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, 1981), 189-90.

11, 1068, understood and gave tacit support to her position. This was, no doubt, the motive behind the very self-conscious choices made for the surrounding audience at Mathilda's rite. The pageantry and novelty of her ceremony served to elucidate and embellish her concrete power; a power legitimized by the Church.

The powerful position Mathilda was given in the *laudes* of 1068 reflected a desire on the part of the Norman administration to use whatever means were at hand to cement their authority. Her coronation as the first Norman queen allowed the administration to highlight her authority in complement to William's. Though the future of Norman dominion over England remained a risky proposition at this juncture, there could have been no doubt Mathilda would pursue an active and dynamic career in promoting Norman administrative policy. The military bid for England had already provided Mathilda with a regency and would certainly do so again; the reality of Mathilda's jurisdiction was no doubt an assumed part of her queenly duties from the beginning, just as they had been for her as duchess.²⁷⁰ The new divided nature of William's holdings necessitated the political involvement of his entire family; that the hallmark of Norman administration was domination through immediate relation only served to accentuate this practice.

The unique particulars surrounding Mathilda's coronation ceremony, especially the use of the *laudes*, were not constructed in a vacuum. In fact, a statement was being made through the queen's rite to provide her with the "manly" authority necessary to rule Normandy in William's absence. Through sacred liturgy and through propaganda,

²⁷⁰ Orderic, *Historia*, 2: 208, 210, 222; see also David Bates, "The Origins of Justiciarship" in *Anglo-Norman Studies* 4 (1981): 1-12.

Mathilda was masculinized, the better to support her command in Normandy, and ultimately the better to serve the program of the Norman pacification of England. The *laudes* provided a sacred and quasi-constitutional platform from which to proclaim Mathilda's fitness as an administrator.

It is no small feat that during William's activity in England, under Mathilda's regency, Normandy experienced complete political stability. Contemporary sources made particular note that in a region recently thoroughly war-torn, there was no hint of aggression or conflict. Mathilda's success as regent now received sacred justification through holy office, transforming her earthly authority into a divine institution.

The physical attributes of Mathilda's coronation also served to underscore this same point. The consecration of a king was modeled on the consecration of a bishop. Both followed the same formulae: first a litany, then the *Veni creator*, the laying on of hands, a series of collects, a consecratory preface and then the anointing. Afterward, the implements of office were accorded to the participant: for the bishop, a mitre, crosier and ring, for the king, a crown, scepter, and ring. Thus the king had now, like a bishop, become "persona mixta."²⁷¹ By virtue of the laying on of hands and anointing, or unction, the king now stood above mere earthly power, operating within the prerogatives of a sacred office.

Though very little has been written about the sacred nature of queenship, the same arguments can be used to speak of queenly sacral power, especially if it was manifest in the same accoutrements of office. In the case of Anglo-Saxon queens, we have no hard evidence of these equipages; they probably did not receive a scepter,

²⁷¹ *Wilhelmi Lyndewood, Provinciale seu constitutiones Angliae*, 3:126.

though they most certainly had crowns.²⁷² In the particular case of Mathilda, however, we are fortunate to find evidence for all the ornaments of her sacral status.

The *actes* of the Abbey of the Holy Trinity at Caen, which Mathilda herself founded on the occasion of her marriage, contain a grant from the queen upon her death, of her royal ornaments, including her crown and scepter, to the Abbey and its community.²⁷³ None of the extant coronation rites made specific provision for the queen to accept a scepter, so we cannot know whether the object was blessed, like her crown and ring, or merely handed to her. John Carmi Parsons has argued that this was an important distinction; the lack of prayer or blessing equated a lack of investiture, relegating the queen's scepter to mere decoration, without official power. There is no extant evidence either way, but one can be reasonably sure that even without investiture, the novel appearance of a scepter made an impression on the attending aristocracy.²⁷⁴ The coronation ring was actually found on Mathilda's body when it was exhumed in 1562; it was an "episcopal sapphire," set in gold, just as tradition dictated for the accoutrements for bishops.²⁷⁵

²⁷² John Carmi Parsons, "English Medieval Queenship," in *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. Louise Olga Fradenburg (Edinburgh, 1992), 62-3.

²⁷³ "La reine Mathilde donne à la Trinité de Caen ... sa couronne et son sceptre, un calice et un vêtement faits en Angleterre, le tout avec le consentement du roi" (*Les actes de Guillaume le Conquérant et de la Reine Mathilde pour les abbayes Caennaises*, ed. Lucien Musset, [Caen, 1967], 112).

²⁷⁴ Parsons "English Medieval Queenship, 62-3.

²⁷⁵ Ayloff, "The Body of King Edward I," 391; Legg, *English Coronations*, xlviii-xlix; Schramm, *History of the English Coronation*, 84. For later examples see also J. Wickham Legg, "The Queen's Coronation Ring," *Archeological Journal* 54 (1897), 1-9.

Consequently, what can be inferred concerning Mathilda's royal status in comparison to William's? If the unction, the ring, and the laying on of hands are the acts that conferred upon him a "mixed personhood" unlike any other man, how can we hold that a queen's coronation, by virtue of the duplication of this rite, did not do the same?

The nature of the authority wielded by Mathilda was reliant on the religious sanctions that were invoked through her coronation. It is my argument that Mathilda's position was, in fact, a sacral and thus irrevocable one, with all of the attendant ideological symbolism and real dominion enjoyed by William. The reality of her power was reflected in the contours of her political career; as later chapters indicate, she was a powerful lord and held extensive lands in England and Normandy; she adjudicated cases, handed down judgments, and provided military backing for her family and supporters.

The record of Mathilda's *laudes* and the surrounding evidence shed light on Mathilda's unique political situation. As a result of the circumstances in England in the years immediately following the Conquest and the tension concerning Norman power, Mathilda's coronation was a liturgy unlike any other conducted for a queen. Its express purpose was to exploit Mathilda's royal blood and her legitimacy on behalf of William, their offspring, and their own program for Norman supremacy.

The role she was able to carve out for herself in eleventh-century Anglo-Norman political policy was rooted not only in her relationship to William, but in the institutional authority gained by the sacred liturgy of coronation. The ceremony was a

necessary springboard to her career. Subsequent to the events of May 1068, Mathilda's administrative obligations, privileges, and jurisdiction would increase dramatically.

How can we compare Mathilda's coronation and *laudes* with other queens across Europe? The Capetian monarchs of Mathilda's day were famous for their inheritance strategies. These were carried out by a two-pronged approach to succession. Primarily, the monarchs of France were careful to crown heirs before their deaths, and secondarily, allow themselves the loophole of repudiation if their brides proved childless. This factor was evident in the queen's rites used in eleventh-century France. Philip I, whose adoptive relationship with Baldwin V of Flanders allowed for a close tie to Mathilda herself, repudiated his first wife, Bertha of Holland, then married Bertrade de Montfort. These events caused Philip to come under severe ecclesiastical censure and actually impinged on his right to invest bishops.²⁷⁶ Neither queen was politically active, and queenship rites in Capetian France remained a corollary liturgy, only performed when dynastic concerns deemed them necessary.²⁷⁷

In the case of the two Anglo-Saxon queens who preceded her, Queen Emma and Queen Edith, both were crowned and anointed, but neither received scepters to illustrate their secular authority, nor is there proof that they received rings as symbols of their rights and duties toward the Church.²⁷⁸ The *Anglo-Saxonici* does not make reference to either of these accoutrements. The changes in the Anglo-Saxon rite mentioned above,

²⁷⁶ Dunbabin *France in the Making*, 166.

²⁷⁷ Elizabeth McCartney, "Ceremonies and Privileges of Office: Queenship in Late Medieval France," in *The Power of the Weak*, ed. Jennifer Carpenter and Sally Beth MacLean (Urbana, 1995), 178-220.

²⁷⁸ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, 168-9.

the increased role of the queen as the king's partner, may well have been introduced for Emma's consecration with Cnut, her second husband, in 1017.²⁷⁹ We know very little of Edith's life, and even less about her coronation, except that she was consecrated in 1045, after her marriage to Edward the Confessor.²⁸⁰ We can be virtually certain that neither of them received *laudes* as acclamations.

Before the arrival of the Normans, however, the Anglo-Saxon royal houses established numerous cults of royal saints that bear examination as a possible barometer for the strength of queenly power. A cult for Ælfgifu, a saintly Anglo-Saxon queen, was established in Shaftesbury and flourished in and around Winchester, the typical dower lands of early English queens. The late tenth and early eleventh centuries also saw the development of cults for both the half-sister and grandmother of Æthelred.²⁸¹ In addition, the cult of Mary as queen in eleventh-century England was flourishing. Instead of images of Mary as mother, those displaying Mary as *Regina* were emphasized. The visual arts most often depicted Mary as the Queen of Heaven with symbols of power; in the Bury St. Edmund psalter she was enthroned, and carried a palm branch and a scepter.²⁸² These elements of Anglo-Saxon culture could point to an increase in status for Anglo-Saxon queens.

²⁷⁹ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, 176.

²⁸⁰ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: a Revised Translation*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock, David C. Douglas, and Susie I. Tucker (London, 1965), anno 1050.

²⁸¹ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, 172.

²⁸² Mary Clayton. *The Cult of the Virgin Mary in Anglo-Saxon England* (New York, 1990), 169.

Despite the popularity of these regal saints, their royal cults did not seem to materially improve the actual status of the two queens. If one follows the vagaries of the careers of Emma and Edith, both women were injured by rumors of adultery, suffered deprivations of property, and were temporarily banished from court. In Emma's case, her first marriage to Æthelred was compromised by at least one previous union on his part, perhaps even two. Upon her marriage, she changed her name from the Norman "Emma" to the English "Ælfgifu," taking on an English identity. After Æthelred's death, her marriage to Cnut was likewise impoverished by his first marriage to an English noblewoman, yet another Ælfgifu, whose relationship with Cnut may have continued even after his union with Emma.²⁸³ Emma's difficulties after the death of Cnut and the turmoil surrounding her sons and their claims to the throne robbed her of her power, position, and land, necessitating her flight to Flanders. But even before Cnut's death, her status and influence were not constant. Eventually, rumors that she had been adulterous may have caused her to undertake an ordeal to clear herself.²⁸⁴ Queen Edith was threatened with repudiation and sent from court in 1051, deprived of her lands and much of her moveable wealth. The misbehavior of her powerful family resulted in her dispossession, though she was in no way implicated in their actions. Only after her family's return to power was Edith reinstated.

Because Edith and Emma were Mathilda's immediate predecessors, the comparison between them is too important to ignore. Mathilda never suffered a loss of land or position, nor was she banished from court, even after repeatedly rebelling

²⁸³ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, 3.

²⁸⁴ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, 19-20.

against her husband. Neither Edith and nor Emma, though certainly powerful religious patrons, attained much in the way of political clout. Edith's marriage was vulnerable to repeated attempts to annul it, through charges of adultery and barrenness, and she relied heavily on her family's connections and military strength to keep her throne.²⁸⁵

Emma's position was made tenuous by the prior marriages and connections of both her husbands, and was the locus of suspicion and ill-feeling both as the wife of a Danish conqueror, and the scheming mother of multiple claimants to the English throne. The fortunes of both queens were adversely affected by pre-Gregorian marriage patterns common in pre-Conquest England. Concubinage and multiple marriages, though technically frowned upon, were still very much a part of the political landscape of Mathilda's immediate forerunners. Stepsons and multiple heirs provided the occasion for tension and violence in accession debates.²⁸⁶

Mathilda's career proved a sharp contrast to that of her Anglo-Saxon and French counterparts. Many factors contributed to her increased authority. Her royal lineage in the face of William's lower birth, the circumstances surrounding the legitimization of the Conquest, the needs and exigencies of the continuing pacification of England, and the cross-Channel nature of Mathilda and William's new holdings all contributed to her enhanced dominion. There was no absolute relation between the liturgy of a queen and

²⁸⁵ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, 73.

²⁸⁶ Pauline Stafford, "Sons, Mothers and Family Politics in the Early Middle Ages," in *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker, Studies in Church History I, (Oxford, 1978), 79-100.

her political involvement, but the coronation and *laudes* arranged to institutionalize Mathilda's authority prepared her for an extraordinary life of public administration.

Chapter Three

Mathilda As Lord:

Court, Land and the Royal Household

The royal court of Mathilda and William comprised their most trusted and intimate friends. Allowed an uncommon opportunity, the ability to construct a new nobility from a void, they granted their most able advisors and supporters great rewards. The enormous land holdings given to their allies were only one facet of these benefits. A close knit band of nobles, they were, with a few exceptions, almost continually in the company of the royal pair. Characterized as “a proud, intelligent, masterful, ruthless and cohesive band” and “the most remarkable secular aristocracy produced in the eleventh century,” the first Anglo-Norman court was highly unusual, not only because of its power, but also because of its amity.²⁸⁷ Those who regularly accompanied the royal couple were dependable baronial and episcopal advisors, as well as royal household officials and staff. The court was also surrounded by a more mutable group of temporary court followers and locals. Whether in Normandy or England, the royal court was a magnet, drawing people of disparate circumstances into the royal circle. The attractions of Mathilda and William’s court included, first and foremost, royal friendship and favor. This acceptance could translate into royal offices and privileges, land, or advantageous marriages to a royal ward from one of the great baronies. The Tancarville family, who served as royal chamberlains, is often cited as one that rose

²⁸⁷C. Warren Hollister, “Magnates and Curiales in Early Norman England,” in Warren Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions in Anglo-Norman England* (London, 1986), 97-115; David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (Berkeley, 1964), 104

from modest origins to become one of Normandy's most powerful houses. Their service to the throne resulted in brilliant marriages for both Ralph de Tancarville and his son, William.²⁸⁸ They were not alone; court members who appear in charters simply as *pincerna* or *buticularis* were often powerful nobles in their own right. *Hugh pincerna* was actually Hugh d'Ivry, who held extensive lands before and after the Conquest, but continued to hold the position of butler in Normandy until his death. William FitzOsbern was the son of Osbern the steward who, like Gilbert of Brionne, was assassinated while protecting young Duke William. FitzOsbern, a great landholder in England, nevertheless served as steward in Normandy. These offices were made more prestigious by the courtiers who held them, prefiguring by almost a generation the same development in the Capetian court.²⁸⁹ Osbern's father was the brother of Duchess Gunnor, wife of Duke Richard of Normandy, thus William FitzOsbern and William the Bastard were cousins. Osbern the Steward was also Osbern, count of Breteuil, through his marriage to Emma of Breteuil, and lord of large estates neighboring Rouen. These important posts, held in the Conqueror's reign by men whose fathers had died protecting him, eventually became professional bureaucratic posts in the reign of Henry I. In this way, Henry tried to ensure the same unswerving loyalty in his household, by enriching "new men" who owed their status, not to their history and their blood connections to the ducal house, but to him personally. Direct benefits for a favored

²⁸⁸ C. Warren Hollister "The Greater Domesday Tenants in Chief," in *Domesday Studies*, ed. J. C. Holt (Woodbridge, 1987), 246.

²⁸⁹ Only after the death of Philip I did landed nobles act as Capetian stewards and butlers (Augustin Fliche, *Le règne de Philippe Ier, roi de France* [Paris, 1912], 115).

courtier could also touch the courtier's friends and dependants. Stephanie Mooers calls this connection "secondary patronage," and she gives the example of Henry I forgiving the debt of Geoffrey Manduit "for love of the Earl of Warenne."²⁹⁰

The inner core of William and Mathilda's court, however, did not include such secondary personages. It was a small group consisting of William, Mathilda, their aristocratic companions in the conquest of England, and a handful of church reformers and other ecclesiastics from Normandy who had been elevated into wealthy bishoprics. Some of these churchmen were also blood relations, including William's half-brother, Odo, bishop of Bayeux, and Hugh, bishop of Lisieux, a second cousin. Despite Mathilda and William's respect for and support of the church, Norman family interests came first; both Hugh and Odo were appointed to their bishoprics while they were under canonical age.²⁹¹ The royal entourage made up the small core that was almost always in the king and queen's presence, in both ordinary travels and duties, and at the huge festal crown-wearings held at Christmas or Easter festivals. Like any early medieval court, Mathilda and William's was itinerant. Perambulating from fortress to fortress, they dispensed justice, suppressed rebellion by military force when necessary, granted privileges, and received diplomatic envoys. They executed innumerable Channel crossings with their courtiers: a small, grim, loyal band.

Hollister analyzed the royal court using charter evidence and attestations to compile a list of the most faithful and powerful barons.²⁹² However, his method has

²⁹⁰ Stephanie Mooers, "Patronage in the Pipe Roll of 1130," *Speculum* 59 (1984), 282-307.

²⁹¹ David R. Bates, "The Character and Career of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux," *Speculum* 50 (1975), 1-20.

²⁹² Hollister, "Magnates and Curiales," 97-115.

come under recent criticism by Bates, who argued that not only are some charters forgeries, but that many are unreliable because of an open running list of diploma attestations. Some beneficiaries elongated the list of signators of royal charters by continually adding new *signa* over the years. Whenever a high-ranking royal advisor or important courtier was available, he would be asked to attest the charter. Consequently, a diploma might carry the autograph of Hugh, bishop of Lisieux, and further down the list, the autograph of his successor, Gilbert, who was made bishop after Hugh's death. Thus, any analysis of charter attestations in order to propose the actual attendance of a particular courtier must be done cautiously. Another difficulty is presented by the differences in form between Norman and English diplomas, and Norman and English writs. Generally speaking, Norman diplomas have far fewer attestations than their English counterparts, while Norman writs have witnesses, and English writs very often have none at all.²⁹³ An awareness of diplomatic form is necessary for a meaningful discussion of those who were included and who were not on any given diploma or writ. Thus if we exclude acknowledged forgeries, charters in which only Mathilda, William, and their children were signators, and exclude English writs, the most frequent attestors to William and Mathilda's charters can provide an indicator, though not a perfect one, for their intimacy with William and Mathilda. Eight men rank as the most frequent charter signators: Odo of Bayeux, Robert of Mortain, Roger of Montgomery, Geoffrey of Coutances, Alan of Brittany, Earl Hugh of Chester, Richard FitzGilbert, and William of Warenne. These men were eight of the ten wealthiest landowners in England. The

²⁹³ David R. Bates, "The Prosopographical Study of Anglo-Norman Royal Charters," in *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics*, ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, (Woodbridge, 1997) 95-7.

terra regis, which was held directly by the crown, made up about 17% of England.

After this, the leading magnates received enormous portions. The three “super-magnates,” Odo of Bayeux, Robert of Mortain and Roger of Montgomery, each held lands in excess of £2,000: Odo held about 3,000, Robert and Roger 2,100 apiece. The top ten magnates together held about 20% of England. Two remaining great landowners, Eustace of Boulogne and Geoffrey of Mandeville, are the exceptions, appearing on relatively few charters. Eustace had responsibilities at his own court and was frequently in Boulogne, and Geoffrey de Mandeville’s duties as sheriff of several counties often prevented his participation, though he was the addressee of several royal charters.

Orderic’s description of Mathilda and William’s courtiers is reverent. “Wise and eloquent men,” these sober lords compared very favorably with those of later courts.²⁹⁴ These lords provided not only homage, but companionship as well. Nearly all had served William and Mathilda since the early, troubled days of their duchy, and some even before their marriage. Mathilda and William knew the two sons of Gilbert of Brionne, Richard FitzGilbert and Baldwin of Meules, in their youth. Richard later held the honor of Clare, an enormous estate, and was active during the reigns of William Rufus and Henry I. Baldwin became Sheriff of Devon and held extensive lands in that county. Like Geoffrey de Mandeville, his duties prevented his regular attendance at court, though he still attested to charters at festival courts. These brothers, especially Richard, were among the most familiar associates of Mathilda and William’s court. In

²⁹⁴ Orderic, *Historia*, 2: 190.

this group of lords, Mathilda of Flanders had her own intimate connections, familial relations and favorites; though they all belonged to the joint court of the king and queen, some courtiers were particularly associated with her. Of the 150 charters she signed or approved in the presence of her court, after William, Roger of Montgomery and Roger de Beaumont figured most prominently. Both men forfeited their place at Hastings in 1066 to stay behind and serve the duchess in Normandy.²⁹⁵

The Montgomery family's relations with the ducal house had not always been friendly, though the Montgomerys were related to the ducal house through Gunnor, the wife of Duke Richard I (942-96). Gunnor's sister Joscelina had married Hugh of Montgomery, Roger's grandfather; Roger was William the Conqueror's cousin. Through Joscelina, the family traced itself back to its unapologetically Norse roots - "ex nobilissima Danorum prosapia."²⁹⁶ The family continued to prosper through the tenth century, acquiring the *vicomte* of Hiémois and establishing a relationship with the abbey of Bernay. Until the young duke's minority, Roger I of Montgomery and his sons, Hugh, Robert, Roger II, William, and Gilbert, enjoyed growing influence with Duke Robert I, William's father. As conditions in the duchy became unstable after William's ascension, the Montgomerys turned against the young duke and his guardians. Roger I took up arms against Duke William and was exiled, never to return. Roger's son William, probably in response, assassinated Osbern, Duke William's steward, the father of William FitzOsbern. At this point, the Montgomery family began to dissolve;

²⁹⁵ Orderic *Historia* 2: 210.

²⁹⁶ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 68

William Montgomery was himself slain by Barno of Glos in revenge for the murder of Osbern, Hugh was also killed during the anarchy, and Robert, too, must have perished. By 1060, when Orderic was writing his *Historiae*, only Roger II and Gilbert still lived. After the convulsions of William's minority, Roger II, the oldest surviving Montgomery son, changed his family's fortune by repeatedly proving his loyalty to the duke. Though no record survives of Robert's participation in his family's rebellion, his experiences during William's minority may have convinced him of the need for a strong ducal house. It is possible that he was allowed an opportunity for reconciliation because of his family's deeply entrenched presence in Normandy; perhaps William could not afford to completely ignore the Montgomerys.²⁹⁷ From his family estates in Calvados, close to the Brionne lands of Richard FitzGilbert and Baldwin of Meules, he provided considerable support to Mathilda and William after their marriage, fighting at both Domfront and against King Henry's invasion of the duchy. The *vicomte* of Hiémois, lost by Roger's father, was restored to him after he helped put Henry of France to flight in 1054. Roger II of Montgomery's connection with Mathilda, then, began in the formative years of her reign in Normandy. In him, Mathilda found a like-minded monastic patron; he converted a house of canons in Troarn into a substantial Benedictine monastery. Troarn was the subject of a group of donation charters, and Mathilda of Flanders attested to all of them. Moreover, Roger of Montgomery and Hugh of Chester were the only two Conquest lords to found English monastic houses from scratch. Montgomery founded Shrewsbury, on the advice of Orderic Vitalis's

²⁹⁷ Kathleen Thompson, "The Norman Aristocracy before 1066: the Example of the Montgomerys," *Historical Research* 143 (1987), 260.

father, Odelerius, and endowed it with a generous sum of £34.²⁹⁸ He joined the brotherhood in his final illness, and was buried there.²⁹⁹ Roger of Montgomery was no stranger to strong women; his wife was the infamous Mabel, sole heiress of Bellême.³⁰⁰ Roger's marriage to Mabel furthered William and Mathilda's position within their duchy, by securing the Bellême patrimony, which held the southern line of their territory. Roger's close ties to Mathilda are not only evidenced in charter activity; he named his first daughter after Mathilda, and married her to Robert the Count of Mortain, William's half-brother.

Roger de Beaumont's *signa* occurs with striking regularity in Mathilda's charters, but less so in William the Conqueror's. He spent very little time in England, and allowed his sons, Robert count of Meulan and Henry earl of Warwick, to maintain the English estates of the family. This was fitting, as Roger had sent Robert as a very young man along on the campaign to invade England, while staying behind to serve the duchess.³⁰¹ Roger de Beaumont's links to the ducal house were also of long standing. As a young man, he fought the rebellious Roger of Tosny, who, according to William of

²⁹⁸ Orderic, *Historiae*, 3: 143-50.

²⁹⁹ Orderic, *Historiae*, 3: 148.

³⁰⁰ Mabel was implicated in numerous deaths by poison; one such went badly awry, killing Roger de Montgomery's only surviving brother, Gilbert. Eventually she was murdered by her former vassal, Hugh d'Ige, whom she had deprived of his patrimony at La Roche Mabilie; he and his brothers attacked her after her bath and cut off her head. Orderic's monastery at St. Evroult was a rival house of the Montgomery's abbey at Troarn. He reported that Mabel rode across the countryside leading a retinue of a hundred heavily armed men, and purposefully exploited the hospitality St. Evroul was required to extend. She responded to the complaints of Mainard, the abbot, by threatening to visit with an even larger group of retainers for them to feed (Orderic, *Historiae*, 2:52-3 and 2:411-432).

³⁰¹ William of Poitiers, *The Gesta Gvillelmi of William of Poitiers*, ed. and trans. R.H.C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall (New York, 1998), 192.

Poitiers, refused to accept William as duke of Normandy because he was a bastard.³⁰²

He married Adeline, daughter of Walern I, the count of Meulan; she was heiress to the county of Meulan. Roger de Beaumont's father Humphrey had founded the monasteries of Notre-Dame and Saint-Léger in Préaux, where Mathilda found her first abbess for her foundation at Caen.³⁰³ He was the special guardian of Mathilda's daughter Adeliza, who became a nun at his family foundation of Saint-Léger.³⁰⁴

Odo, bishop of Bayeux, and Robert, count of Mortain, both Mathilda's brothers by marriage, follow Roger of Montgomery and Roger de Beaumont in precedence throughout Mathilda's attestations. The careers of these two powerful men have been carefully examined, but special attention has been given to the colorful Odo of Bayeux.³⁰⁵ His unaccountable fall from favor and imprisonment in 1082, a year before Mathilda's death, have made his life the subject of much speculation. The only contemporary source to comment on the event was the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, which tersely noted "in this year, the king arrested bishop Odo." Only after thirty years had passed was there any attempt to explain the circumstances behind William's sudden

³⁰² William of Poitiers, *Gesta Gvillelmi*, 192-3.

³⁰³ Lucien Musset, ed., *Les Actes de Guillaume le Conquérant et de la reine Mathilde pour les abbayes Caennaises* (Caen, 1967), 14.

³⁰⁴ *Rouleaux des Morts du IXe au Xve siècle*, ed. Léopold Delisle (Paris, 1886), 207, 289; William of Poitiers, *Gesta Gvillelmi*, 262.

³⁰⁵ V. Bourrienne, *Odon de Conteville, évêque de Bayeux* (Évreux, 1900); S. E. Gleason, *An Ecclesiastical Barony of the Middle Ages. The Bishopric of Bayeux* (Cambridge, MA, 1936); R. Herval, "Un frère de Guillaume le Conquérant inhumé dans la cathédrale de Palerme," in *Studi Medievali in Onore di Antonio de Stefani* (Palermo, 1956), 281-7; David R. Bates, "The Character and Career of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux," *Speculum* 50 (1975), 1-20.

action against his erstwhile loyal brother: the incredible report given by Orderic that Odo had tried to buy himself the papacy. He had massed troops at the Isle of Wight in preparation for his expedition when William captured and imprisoned him.³⁰⁶ This version of events was also recorded in two independent sources: William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum* and the *Liber monasterii de Hyda*.³⁰⁷ Thus, the story must have some credibility. Certainly Odo, vastly wealthy and ambitious, was not the first claimant to attempt to buy the papacy; according to Guibert of Nogent, both Gregory VI and Benedict X had been elected through a potent mixture of cash and violence.³⁰⁸ Moreover, Gregory VII was vulnerable in the years surrounding 1082. The royal family was embroiled in its own struggles during this period, and perhaps the future of the realm in Robert Curthose's hands may have not seemed stable. In any event, Odo was tried, convicted, and imprisoned. Lanfranc seems to have been the originator of an unusual legal precedent that enabled William to prosecute Odo outside clerical jurisdiction; Lanfranc separated Odo as bishop from Odo as lord, making way for him to be tried as a secular noble.³⁰⁹ Odo was imprisoned until William's death in 1087.

³⁰⁶ Orderic, *Historiae*, 4: 40-4.

³⁰⁷ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 2 vols. ed. R. A. B. Mynors et al (Oxford, 1998), 2: 334; *Liber monasterii de Hyda*, ed. E. Edwards, Rolls Series, (London, 1866), 296.

³⁰⁸ Guibert of Nogent, *De vita sua* trans. J. F. Benton in J. F. Benton, *Self and Society in Medieval France: the Memoirs of Abbot Guibert of Nogent* (Toronto, 1984), 223.

³⁰⁹ Odo's almost immediate attack on Lanfranc's estates after his release substantiates this claim (Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, 2: 360-1).

Robert of Mortain has proved less attractive as a subject for historians.³¹⁰ Loyal, dependable, and a good soldier, he was rather dull and slow, according to Malmesbury.³¹¹ Nonetheless, he was an able administrator of his estates; he inherited his father's lands in Conteville and held in England land valued at £2100 a year in England. Unlike Odo, who often acted as regent in William's absence, Robert rarely left the king's side. While Odo poured funds, elaborate gifts, and precious things into his cathedral at Bayeux, Robert's gifts were more commonplace.³¹² Like his father's estates, Robert assumed patronage of his father's monastic foundation of Notre-Dame at Grestain, but founded no other monastic house.³¹³ He seems to have been able, through his steadiness of character, to calm William's formidable temper; he interceded with an enraged William on behalf of a minor landowner, Ralph Cardon, whose evident relief found expression in a donation to the abbey of Grestain.³¹⁴ He married Mathilda, the daughter of Robert of Montgomery and Mabel of Bellême, and namesake of Mathilda of Flanders.³¹⁵ He seemed to hold her in some affection. After her death, the land she

³¹⁰ Brian Golding, "Robert of Mortain," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 13 (1990), 119-144.

³¹¹ Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, 2: 506-7.

³¹² A letter from Marbod of Rennes to Samson, bishop of Worcester, was less than flattering about Odo's excess and remarked that the wealth of Bayeux could support numerous bishops (PL 171: 1658).

³¹³ Robert's giving was less than spectacular, according to Golding, who reported that none of the estates Robert granted to religious houses was more valuable than the ones he kept for himself (Golding, "Robert of Mortain," 144).

³¹⁴ David Bates, ed., *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, The Acta of William I, 1066-1087* (New York, 1998), 517-8.

³¹⁵ William of Poitiers, *Gesta Gvillelmi*, 126-7.

held from William was given to the priory of Mortain, which she and Robert had founded; the charter stated that William and Robert, “were very sad, for she was very dear to them.”³¹⁶ He was adept at expanding his commercial interests, and often took over fairs and tolls in regions under his lordship to exploit them himself. He was the greatest holder of coastal salt refineries in Domesday, even above the throne.³¹⁷ Unlike the volatile Odo, Robert of Mortain never rebelled against his brother, but was a loyal general in the vulnerable areas of Pevensey and Yorkshire.

William FitzOsbern, though he died only three years after the Conquest in 1070, was a recurrent participant in Mathilda’s charter activity. Like her other familiar advisors, William’s service stretched back to Mathilda’s early career as duchess. He was the architect of the reunion between William, Mathilda, and Lanfranc that resulted in the recognition of their marriage.³¹⁸ Related on both sides to the ducal house, he supported Mathilda and William at Domfront, and against Henry of France. Mathilda’s first extant *signa* appears on behalf of William and his wife Adeliza, the daughter of Robert de Tosny; it attests to a donation of land given to found FitzOsbern’s new monastic house, Notre-Dame de Lyre.³¹⁹ Moreover, William FitzOsbern’s death in 1070 occurred while he was in Mathilda’s home country of Flanders, specifically at her

³¹⁶ *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France 911-1026*, ed. J. Horace Round (London, 1899) 435.

³¹⁷ Golding, “Robert of Mortain,” 133-5.

³¹⁸ *Vita Herluini*, 27.

³¹⁹ M. Faroux, ed., *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie de 911 à 1066* (Caen, 1961), 284-6; *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 132-3 and 146-7.

request. Mathilda's father, Baldwin V of Flanders, died in 1067, leaving two sons. The elder, Baldwin VI, received the county of Flanders, while Robert ruled Frisia on behalf of his wife, Gertrude of Saxony.³²⁰ Baldwin VI died suddenly on July 16, 1070, leaving behind Richildis of Hainault, his wife, and their two young sons, Arnulf and Baldwin. Young Arnulf received Flanders, while the county of Hainault devolved to Baldwin through his mother. Robert the Frisian, aware of the instability of such a minority, and Richildis's vulnerability as a foreigner, invaded Flanders. On Mathilda's request, William FitzOsbern traveled to Flanders to support Mathilda's mother, Adela, whose family was torn by warfare, and her young nephew, Arnulf. Philip I of France, who moved quickly to protect Richildis and her young sons, his vassals, joined FitzOsbern there. Orderic bemoaned William's departure for Flanders with only ten men, "as if to a game."³²¹ At the Battle of Cassel on February 20, 1070, Philip of France was put to flight and both Mathilda's young nephew Arnulf, and her friend William FitzOsbern were killed in battle. Orderic reported that Mathilda was "plunged into deepest affliction," not only for the death of her young nephew and the grief of her mother, but for love of her friend, William FitzOsbern, who died defending her family.³²² In fact, relations with Flanders broke down after the battle of Cassel, and were not reinstated until William Rufus's reign.

³²⁰ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, 224-5.

³²¹ Orderic, *Historia* 2: 282-3.

³²² Orderic, *Historia*, 2: 284-5.

Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances, was an exceptional figure among Mathilda's regular supporters. He was not related to either Mathilda or William, and though his signature occurred on a few early ducal charters, he is difficult to trace until 1066.³²³ Though his later reputation styled him a "warrior bishop," his chief skills were not military, but administrative in nature.³²⁴ In 1049, his brother Roger of Montbray purchased his office, but he avoided a charge of simony by swearing he had been forced into the bishopric against his will.³²⁵ Whatever the case, once he had gained the position, he acted with great enthusiasm and skill. The bishopric was so impoverished that, for generations, the bishops of Coutances had lived in more salubrious quarters; first in Rouen, then in Saint-Lô. Geoffrey moved into the still-pagan region, to a church "rude, unlearned and feeble, with only five canons, deprived of Bibles and other canonical books and nearly destitute of ornaments."³²⁶ According to the chronicle of the cathedral of Coutances, Geoffrey immediately began a building and reorganization program. Confronted with a shortage of funds, he traveled to Apulia and Calabria to petition Robert Guiscard, whose successes had become notable. Guiscard's family originated in Hauteville, only ten miles south of Coutances, and he proved more than

³²³ No direct links between Geoffrey and the ducal house have been found, though he seems to have been related to Robert of Guiscard (see below, p. 127).

³²⁴ Geoffrey only led men into battle once, to relieve the siege of Montacute in 1069. Rebels from Somerset and Dorset attacked it, while William was facing simultaneous uprisings in the North (Orderic, *Historiae*, 2: 193).

³²⁵ John H. LePatourel, "Geoffrey of Montbray, Bishop of Coutances, 1049-1093," *English Historical Review* 59 (1944), 129-161.

³²⁶ "De statu hujus Constantiensis ecclesiae ab anno 836 ad 193," *Gallia Christiana*, 6, Instrumenta, col. 218.

generous to Geoffrey, who seemed to have some distant claim of relation.³²⁷ The bishop came back, via Rome, laden with enormous amounts of plunder: precious gems, gold, and silver. His cathedral building began in earnest, and it was soon thereafter that Geoffrey seems to have come to the attention of the ducal house; his first attestation of a ducal charter occurred in 1054. Soon after, in 1056, the cathedral of Coutances was dedicated with both William and Mathilda in attendance. Eventually, through Geoffrey's efforts, the modest burgh of Saint-Lô increased in revenue from £15 to £225 during his tenure.³²⁸ According to Le Patourel, Geoffrey joined the English expedition ten years later, much in the way of a chaplain, and did not participate militarily. He played an important part in William's coronation and seems to have accompanied the court back to Normandy in triumph.³²⁹ His later career was that of a jurist; he served as the chief justice in the lawsuits involving the abbey of Ely, and in the Penenden Heath trial between Odo of Bayeux and Lanfranc. His landed estates were especially extensive in the west counties, where Mathilda also held large manors: Somerset, Devon, Gloucestershire, and Wiltshire. His English lands provided further funds to furnish his cathedral in Coutances; like many first-generation Anglo-Norman lords, his English revenues were diverted almost exclusively to his Norman interests. Later, he served

³²⁷ LePatourel, "Geoffrey of Montbray," 136-7.

³²⁸ "De statu," col. 218.

³²⁹ Le Patourel, "Geoffrey of Mowbray," 150.

William as a Domesday jurist before retiring to his bishopric to supervise further improvements after an earthquake had damaged his handiwork.³³⁰

All of Mathilda's closest advisors and supporters, Roger of Montgomery, Roger de Beaumont, Odo, bishop of Bayeux, Robert of Mortain, William FitzOsbern, and Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances, were among the top ten wealthiest magnates in England. After Mathilda's death, every one of her former intimates supported her favorite son, Robert Curthose, not only as duke of Normandy, but in his failed bid for the English throne against William Rufus. Some of them were disinherited, some were forgiven, but all suffered a diminution of some kind in land, influence, or wealth. What were the ties that kept these wealthy lords in attendance on Mathilda, proving loyal even after her death, when they had great estates to administer and responsibilities of their own to manage? The ties of dependency in the eleventh century, according to Ganshof, had two components: the "real," that is, the actual land involved, and the "personal," or the interdependent relationship between two people. Ganshof wrote of these as older concepts that were once known separately as "benefice (or fief)" and "vassalage." However, the union of these two legal terms in the Carolingian period, he asserted, would provide the legal and social structure of the next three hundred years.³³¹ Ganshof proposed a "body of institutions creating and regulating the obligations of obedience and service - mainly military service - on the part of a free man (the vassal) towards another free man (the lord), and the obligations of protection and maintenance on the

³³⁰ LePatourel, "Geoffrey of Montbray," 157-8.

³³¹ F. L. Ganshof, *Feudalism*, trans. Philip Grierson (New York, 1964), xv-xviii.

part of the lord in regard to his vassal.”³³² More recent studies of the lord/vassal relationship, however, have led historians to modify Ganshof's theories fundamentally. Emily Zack Tabuteau has shown that the charter evidence available for the eleventh century rarely reveals the exact nature of service required, or its extent, making attempts to measure and quantify it impossible, at least until the twelfth century. The eleventh century was characterized by ambiguity concerning the specific nature of the bonds linking lord to vassal. In reality, the relationship between lord and dependant often involved non-combatants, who fulfilled either role.

Once it is clear that non-combatants could act as lords or dependants, we can come to understand what medieval evidence has shown since the compilation of Domesday: women acted as lords and dependants in the same way as men. Lay women, abbesses, and abbots, were very often lords. For example, when Herbert, son of Framengerius, married Godehelis, sister of Hamelin of la Hue, he gave to her as a marriage portion, “a fief of five knights, the fief of Hamerici de Piaceio, just as he held it from Herbert his lord, and the fief of Warin Bugnon.” Her brother also gave her a dowry of “a fief of ten knights, and two pieces of land at la Hune.” Godehelis, with this transaction, became a lord who could command the service of seventeen knights. Taking the charter involving Godehelis as an example, though the land involved could support seventeen knights, the document reveals nothing of their terms of service or what it might entail. Moreover, in the charters that do relate specific terms of service, a number give evidence that some fiefs were held in exchange for solely non-military service. Gulbert d'Auffey held land from Saint-Étienne in Caen for suit of court only.

³³²Ganshof, *Feudalism*, xvi.

Likewise, Mathilda's monastery of La Trinité, for instance, invested the abbot of Saint-Étienne with part of a church in exchange for suit of court and a fee.³³³ The evidence for England immediately before the Conquest is likewise silent when connecting land tenure and service. According to Richard Abels, "the gift of land and the gift of service were open-ended, each reinforcing and confirming the other," so that a particular land holding or manor might be held with the expectation of future services and as a compensation for past activity.³³⁴ The evidence uncovered in regard to service and its many forms also leads to the dismantling of another assumption: that only people who were male were "men." Domesday records women who acted as both lords and "men." Thus, in Hertfordshire, "Leofwara held this manor from Bishop William; she could sell the half hide, but not the hide, without his permission,"³³⁵ and "Saehild, Earl Leofwin's man, held this manor; she could sell."³³⁶ and even, "Edeva, a girl, as the Hundred testifies, held this land; she was Archbishop Stigand's man."³³⁷ Domesday used "homo" interchangeably for dependants of both sexes, as it used "domino" in cases of both male and female lordship. The almost laconic assumption of gender indifference in Domesday Book provides compelling support for the idea that the lord/dependant

³³³ *Les Actes de Guillaume le Conquérant et de la reine Mathilde pour les abbayes Caennaises*, ed. Lucien Musset, (Caen, 1967), 135.

³³⁴ Richard Abels, *Lordship and Military Obligation in Anglo-Saxon England* (Berkeley, 1988), 85.

³³⁵ DB Hertfordshire 4, 8.

³³⁶ DB Hertfordshire 4, 20.

³³⁷ DB Hertfordshire 4, 16.

relationship included women in the eleventh century. Moreover, Domesday reveals women holding land against the wishes of the local community and the church. In Dorset, in the manor of Portesham, "Hugh son of Grip received one virgate of land wrongfully, and his wife still holds it by force."³³⁸ In Broadwater Hundred, "Godwin held Watton from St. Peter's Church. He could not sell, and after his death it was returned to the Church, as the Hundred testifies. But his wife turned with this land to Edeva the Fair, by force, and held it in 1066."³³⁹ Here Domesday discloses a female dependant who chose to render fealty to a female lord, holding land by force, in the face of pressure from both secular and sacred authorities. Neither lord nor dependant actually wielded a sword herself, but they fulfilled these roles all the same.

Likewise, both male and female religious houses generally owed military service to their overlords and had to make arrangements accordingly, as noted in the case of La Trinité. Monasteries founded by the ducal house were sometimes specifically exempt from military service, but most monasteries were not. Fécamp, a ducal monastery, was exempt from providing military service for the Norman dukes, but was still responsible for providing two knights in the service of Philip I of France.³⁴⁰ In the eleventh century, a lord/dependant relationship in which one party was a non-combatant was commonplace. Noblewomen, abbots, and abbesses all functioned as lords without personally providing military protection. These lords, in turn, served their

³³⁸ DB Dorset 13, 4.

³³⁹ DB Hertfordshire 16, 1.

³⁴⁰ Thomas, "Norman Aristocracy," 256.

overlords in the same fashion, either by serving through suit of court or fees, or simply providing surrogate military personnel to fight for them. A pointed illustration of the extent to which military personnel and noble non-combatants were interchangeable is provided by a rare eleventh-century recitation of the rights and obligations of William Paynel.

This charter relates the agreement made at Bayeux in the presence of the queen between Mont-Saint-Michel and William Paynel. If William Paynel has war in the land which the king of the English gave him with his wife, the agreement is that for forty days, Hugh de Bricqueville shall do him service of watch and ward with seven horesemen, he himself the seventh of the horsemen, at his own cost. And Hugh's nephew will also do so, if he should hold his land in parage, according to what he will hold. Again, if William (Paynel) shall summon Hugh, he will have him in his following (*familia*) with two knights, at his own cost, or his son, if he is free of the abbot's summons. Nor shall the lord abbot always have him to prevent William from having this. And so indeed he will have in his following Hugh's nephew and Robert de Chanteloup and William Beceth and the man who will hold the honor of Scollant. And if William should have a defense or a claim to make, he shall have for constituting his court the men he holds of Mont-Saint-Michel, in such a way that they will be able to return to their own homes by evening. And if the men should default from these services which are apportioned here, they shall make him amends at one of the houses he holds from Mont-Saint-Michel. From the land he holds from Mont-Saint-Michel, he shall receive aid for the capture of his body, or of his land, if he

forfeits it to the king, or the abbot, or for the son of the wife whose inheritance it is, if he should be captured in the service of the king or the abbot, of whom the fee is, or for the marriage of one daughter only from this wife. The agreement is that in the land that he holds from the abbot, William Paynel should appoint one man to whom the abbot shall send for the summonses which the same abbot has to make, in the land that William holds of him. If he does the summonses well, but he who has notice does not come, the abbot shall receive the penalty, but if the summoner omit to make the summons, he shall pay eighteen shillings to the abbot, who shall thenceforth make the summonses by a messenger of his own. It is agreed that William Paynel shall accept yearly twelve oaks, chosen by himself in the wood of Longueville as far as the water called Ars, and he shall not have more than twelve, except by the abbot's consent. The agreement is that the abbot shall give him yearly provision of wax, or twenty shillings, and it is in the abbot's choice of which he prefers, and this is for the reliefs of Chanteloup and for the pasture of La Lande, if the men of Chanteloup can prove their right to it in the court of William Paynel. Concerning Lavidande, which William Paynel has been claiming in fee since he came to Mont-Saint-Michel, it is in respite until it comes before the king. The agreement is, concerning the seven peers of the honor which William holds from the abbot, that he should summon them in his own court; and if they are willing to go of their own accord, they shall go, if they are free from the service of the abbot. If they are unwilling to go, William Paynel ought to deraign this in the abbot's court through men who

are of the honor which he accepted with his wife, who saw them in his service by the custom of his ancestors.³⁴¹

The Paynel document is perhaps the most explicit eleventh-century statement of military services due to a lord from a particular vassal. Consequently, it has been cited often by historians of feudal relationships and structures to support the early use of specific terms and types of service. But it is an anomaly; there is no other charter of the period that contains references to feudal aids, suit of court, and military service in such detail. It is also one of the only surviving Norman instances of feudal marriage, that is, the exercise of a lord's right to choose the spouse of an heiress, or ward, under his protection. The land and rights described by the document devolved to William Paynel

³⁴¹"Haec carta narrat conventionem Baiocis factam coram regina inter abbatem de Monte Sancti Michaelis et Guillelmum Paginellum. Si Willelmus Paginellus habet guerram de illa terra quam rex Anglorum dedit sibi cum femina sua, conventio est quoniam Hugo de Bricavilla quadraginta diebus illi faciet de guarda vel custodia sese septimum de caballariis ad suum cibum. Et nepos Hugonis similiter faciet si in parage terram suam tenuerit secundum hoc quod tenebit. Rursus si Guillelmus Paginellus illum Hugonem submonuerit, cum duobus equitibus eum in sua familia ad suum cibum habuerit vel filium suum, si liber erit de submonitione abbatis. Nec sic eum donnus abbas semper habebit quin Guillelmus Paginellus hoc habeat. Et ita equidem habebit in sua familia nepotem Hugonis et Robertum de Cantelupo et Guillelmum Becheth et illum qui honorem Scollant habebit. Et si vindictam vel placitum habuerit ad faciendum, homines quos tenet de Sancto Michaeli ita habebit quod in sero erunt ad suas domos. Et si homines sibi deficient de his serviciis que hic sunt divisa, rectum sibi facient ad unam mansionem quas tenet Sancto Michaeli. Auxilium accipiet de terre quam tenet de Sanctae Michaeli pro sui corporis captione aut pro sua terra, si forisfecerit eam erga regem vel abbatem, vel pro filio huius femine de qua est hereditas si capus fuerit in servito regis vel abbatis de quo est fedus, aut pro una sola filia maritanda quam habet de hac femina. Conventio est quoniam Guillelmus Paginellus in terra quam tenet de abbate statuet unum hominem apud quem abbas mittet pro submonitionibus quas habet facere ipse abbas in terra quam Guillelmus Paginellus tenet de illo. Qui si bene submonitiones fecerit et ille remaneat quem monuerit, abbas suam forisfacturam inde accipiet. Quod si in illo submonitore remanet submonitio remanet submonito, abbati decem et octo solidos emendabit et abbas postea per suum legatum submonitionem suam fecerit. Conventio est quoniam Willelmus Paginellus unoquoque anno duodecim quercus ad suum cois accipiet in silva de Longa Villa usque ad aquam que dicitur Ars, nec plus habet accipere nisi per abbatem fecerit. Conventio est quoniam abbas de Monte unoquoque anno dat illi unum provendarium de cera vel viginti solidos, et est in cois abbatis dare quale horum maluerit, et hoc pro relevationibus de Cantelupo et pro pastura de Lalande, si homines de Cantelupo possunt illam de raisneer in curia Guillelmi Paginelli. De Lavidande, quam Willelmus Paginellus interrogat in fedo, dum venit in Monte Sancti Michaelis est in respectu donec coram rege. Conventio est de septum paribus de honore quem Willelmus Paginellus tenet de abbate de Monte Sancti Michaelis quoniam submonuerit illos in sua curia, qui si sponte sua ambulare voluerint ibunt si liberi erunt de servicio abbatis. Si vero ire noluerint, hoc debet Guillelmus Paginellus de raisneer in curia abbatis per homines qui sunt de honore quem accepit cum sua uxore qui illos viderunt in suo servicioper consuetudinem antecessorum suorum" (J. H. Round, *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France, Volume I, 918 - 1206* [1899, repr., Lichtenstein, 1967], 255; Charles Homer Haskins, *Norman Institutions* [1918, repr., New York, 1960], 26-7; Emily Zack Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law* [North Carolina, 1988], 56-7).

upon his marriage to an unknown heiress under ducal protection. The recitation was made to Mathilda of Flanders and relates to the service owed to the ducal house from land held from the abbey at Mont-Saint-Michel. Featured in the charter is a system by which a military tenant, William Paynel, held land in exchange for service from a non-combatant lord, the abbey at Mont-Saint-Michel, codified under the authority of Mathilda, his non-combatant overlord. The document makes clear that the original lord of the property was also a non-combatant: William Paynel's wife. The Paynel document was cited by Round and Haskins as a "feudal document," and by Chibnall and Tabuteau as the exception that proved the rule of the ambiguous nature of military service in Normandy. But it has never before been used as an example of female and non-combatant lordship, though it is recited within the purview of both. William Paynel's immediate lord was an abbot, and his overlord was a woman.

Historians have discovered variations in the lord/dependant relationship according to epoch and geographical area. In eleventh-century Normandy, numerous historians have shown that the lord/dependant tie should not properly be considered an institution. Though the arrangements between lord and dependant may have often been guided by custom, to the extent that they seemed regularized, variation in the types of service required have repeatedly resisted historians' endeavors to normalize them. In fact, historians have determined that it might have been the Conquest itself that first introduced ideas of specific terms of service, defined by its type and its required duration.³⁴² Military service, suit of court, and counsel were all expected of the

³⁴²Emily Z. Tabuteau, "Definitions of Feudal Military Obligations in Eleventh-Century Normandy," in *On the Laws and Customs of England: Essays in honor of Samuel E. Thorne*, ed. Morris S. Arnold et al. (Chapel Hill, NC, 1981), 18-59; Marjorie Chibnall, "Military Service in Normandy before 1066," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 5 (1983), 65-77.

members of William and Mathilda's court and, in fact, followers who chose to take leave of the court could do so only with royal permission.³⁴³ Though service was at this time still chiefly undefined, it would seem that most eleventh-century lords and dependants made arrangements that were clear to them. But the documentation available to historians did not address service requirements, as would the later twelfth-century surveys, such as the Bayeux Inquest of 1133 or the Norman Inquest of 1172. Moreover, lords had obligations to their dependants that may not have been codified either, aside from generalized notions concerning protection, defense, and justice. The obligations of sac and soc, legal jurisdiction over anything from stray cattle to fornication, were expected of a lord within their locality, but the exact limits of the lord's charge were unclear. These responsibilities may have even reached to manslaughter and theft, but evidence for this period is not explicit about the point at which royal justice was engaged. These obligations, of course, had financial rewards; the presiding lord received the fees and penalties levied on convicted persons. Local men, or the men of the Hundred, were considered the true judges in local courts, however, though the presiding lord was held responsible for justice. Some of the unspoken commitments of lordship might require his or her presence for donations and sales of land. A lord might be called on to approve the transaction, and even protect the gift against the threat of acquisitive neighbors or relatives. William de Briouze's gifts to Saint-Florent-de-Saumur were made for the soul of his family and William and

³⁴³S. D. B. Brown, "Leavetaking: Lordship and Mobility in England and Normandy in the Twelfth Century," *History* 79 (1994), 199-215.

Mathilda's souls as well, "in order that they themselves should consent to this alms and, if anyone should wish to commit an injustice therein, they should hold him to right."³⁴⁴

Not only members of the high nobility entered into lord/dependant relationships. Men and women of less exalted origins held land in Domesday for services rendered. Land in Domesday was held by cooks,³⁴⁵ interpreters,³⁴⁶ goldsmiths,³⁴⁷ jesters (both male and female),³⁴⁸ stewards, chamberlains,³⁴⁹ reeves,³⁵⁰ concubines,³⁵¹ and was even given to a sheriff's wife in exchange for kenneling dogs.³⁵² Mathilda of Flanders was attended by many such people, who formed her personal staff, and all held land in exchange for their services. There were clerks, chamberlains, and chaplains who formed her retinue, as well as a complement of farmers, sheriffs, and geld collectors who managed her estates. Domesday and charter evidence allows us to glean some

³⁴⁴ Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property*, 128. Tabuteau cites Paul Marchegay, "Chartes Normandes de l'abbaye de Saint-Florent près Saumur de 710 à 1200 environ," *Mémoires de la Societes des Antiquaires de Normandie* 30 (1880), 678-80.

³⁴⁵ DB Buckinghamshire 55, 1.

³⁴⁶ DB Dorset 54, 7.

³⁴⁷ DB Surrey 36, 6.

³⁴⁸ DB Hampshire 1, 25.

³⁴⁹ DB Berkshire 56, 1.

³⁵⁰ DB Surrey 36, 9.

³⁵¹ DB Bedfordshire 24, 16.

³⁵² DB Berkshire 1, 38.

information about these men. She employed at least four chamberlains in England: Humphrey, Reginald, Gerard, and John.³⁵³ Reginald held extensive lands in Warwickshire, and actually moved estates from other Hundreds to make sure Mathilda was his lord for all of them.³⁵⁴ There seems to have been a separate staff in Normandy, comprised of at least William Le Flamand, or the Fleming, and Fulchold; both designated *camerarius regine* on Norman *acta*.³⁵⁵ The two groups of financial agents never appeared together on charters, writs, or other 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. The chaplains who served Mathilda may have accompanied her on both sides of the Channel; Rainald, Odo, and Henry signed charters in Normandy as members of her entourage, but none of them appear in English charters. The formal nature of these English diplomas, as stated above, may have precluded service members of the royal staff from involvement. In England, Mathilda employed Walter de Claville and his brother Goscelm who farmed lands for her, in exchange for holdings of their own. They both held manors "at farm" from Mathilda in Gloucestershire, that is, they collected the profits, taxes, and fees in return for paying the queen a fixed annual

³⁵³ Gerard held Kemerton in Gloucestershire, John held land at Twyning and Fairford in Gloucestershire (DB Gloucestershire 19, 2; DB Gloucestershire 1, 50).

³⁵⁴ DB Warwickshire 163d, 44; Charles S. Taylor, *An Analysis of the Domesday Survey of Gloucestershire* (Bristol, 1889), 34.

³⁵⁵ Musset, ed., *Les Actes*, 136-40.

rent.³⁵⁶ Judahel of Totnes served as her castellan; he held Asprington, in Devon, from her, and after her death, he donated land for her soul at St. Mary's, Totnes.³⁵⁷ Aiulf, who held land from her in Devon, was probably Aiulf the Chamberlain, sheriff of Dorset, whose brother was Mathilda's chamberlain, Humphrey.³⁵⁸ Robert d'Oilly, who held Shenington, in Gloucestershire, at farm for Mathilda, was sheriff of Warwickshire.³⁵⁹ Roger de Bully, lord of Tickhill, Yorkshire, was given Sampford in Devon and Clifford Chambers in Warwickshire from Mathilda, "with his wife Muriel," who may have been the daughter of Eudo dapifer, William's steward. Muriel's marriage may have been arranged by Mathilda; at the least we can assume that she was Mathilda's attendant.

All of the details Domesday Book provides notwithstanding, Mathilda's holdings there are difficult to assess. The project was begun 1086, three years after her death, when many of her lands had already reverted to the crown. Consequently, it is hard to know if some of the holdings under William's name were once hers. Domesday Book, moreover, is a less than reliable guide to royal lands generally, as they were particularly sensitive to change. Those who supported Robert Curthose in 1088 would soon forfeit much of the royal land enfeoffed to them by William and recorded by

³⁵⁶ Ann Williams, "A West-Country Magnate of the Eleventh Century," in *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics* ed. K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (Woodbridge, 1997), 48-9.

³⁵⁷ DB Devon 1, 71.

³⁵⁸ A. S. Ellis, "Biographical Notes on the Yorkshire Tenants Named in Domesday Book," *Yorkshire Archaeological and Topographical Journal* 4 (1877), 143.

³⁵⁹ DB Gloucestershire 1, 36.

Domesday in 1086. William Rufus handed these lands out, in turn, to more loyal dependants; only two years after Domesday's compilation, its information concerning royal lands was obsolete.³⁶⁰ A minor additional complexity is provided by the estates of Queen Edith, whose death in 1075 saw her manors distributed to some of Mathilda's servants, though most devolved to William. By the time Domesday's judges had gathered their data, England had two dead queens, whose extensive estates were now held in other hands. Generally speaking, however, the entries specify Queen Edith or Queen Mathilda, and there are only two or three pounds that are impossible to assign, either through the identity of the dependant or the geographic location of the land.³⁶¹

Despite all of these problems, the value of holdings cited in Domesday as unquestionably owned by Mathilda herself or enfeoffed to her servants is staggering: her holdings equaled over £1,070.³⁶² This amount of revenue places her in the highest stratum of Class A Domesday landholders. Corbett first made designations of landholders into classes based on the monetary value of their holdings.³⁶³ Corbett's list of barons did not include either Odo of Bayeux or Robert of Mortain, but grouped William's lands with Mathilda's and those of his two half-brothers. Later LePatourel

³⁶⁰ John Hunt, "Land Tenure and Lordship in Tenth and Eleventh Century Staffordshire," *Staffordshire Studies* 4 (1991-2), 1-20.

³⁶¹ These are DB Suffolk 6, 76-79, DB Suffolk 6, 209, DB Suffolk 6, 229, DB Suffolk 6, 230, DB Suffolk 7, 56.

³⁶² The pounds to shillings ratio has traditionally been 20 shillings to a pound, and 6 pounds to one gold marc (Taylor, *Domesday Analysis*, 114).

³⁶³ Corbett, "The Development of the Duchy of Normandy," in *The Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. 5, ed. J. R. Tanner, C. W. Previte-Orton, and Z. N. Brooke, (1926; repr. Cambridge 1952), 505-13.

and Hollister examined the holdings of Odo of Bayeux and Robert of Mortain apart from William, but ignored Mathilda's holdings.³⁶⁴ The designations are still widely used: £750 of land denotes a Class A magnate, £650-£400 a Class B baron, £400-£200 a Class C baron, and £200-£100 a Class D landholder. The categories were used by Corbett, LePatourel, Hollister, Fleming and many others, and remain a helpful guide to assessing the property of Domesday holders. Recent studies have calculated Mathilda's holdings at only between £320 and £200, placing her in the Class B category.³⁶⁵ However, a more careful examination of Domesday and especially the "Little Domesday," or *Liber Exoniensis*, and the lands that were formally held from Mathilda by her dependants, has not been attempted until now; such a study reveals that Mathilda's holdings were actually far greater. Thus, her wealth places her in the highest sector of the Class A category, alongside the wealthiest three landholders in England: Odo of Bayeux, Robert of Mortain, and Roger of Montgomery. As mentioned above, the land Domesday recorded as Mathilda's may have been only a portion of what she originally held. For instance, the "Queen's gold" was supposed to be paid by every manor in England over the value of one hundred pounds.³⁶⁶ This payment was a marc of gold, equal to £6, but records of this payment only appear for six counties in Domesday: Bedfordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Oxfordshire, Norfolk and

³⁶⁴ J. Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford, 1976), 335-6; Hollister, "Domesday tenants-in-chief," 220-24.

³⁶⁵ C. Warren Hollister, *Henry I* (Yale, 2001), 40.

³⁶⁶ Taylor, *Domesday Analysis*, 69-70.

Northamptonshire.³⁶⁷ Though there were estates large enough to owe this fee in other counties, we do not know if it was paid and went unrecorded, if other arrangements were made in kind, or if it was not assessed in certain counties. Even without these payments, Mathilda was undeniably cash rich. We have evidence of her wealth outside of Domesday. The myriad of cash payments that are recorded in the charters to La Trinité show proof of her liquidity, as do her traitorous gifts of money and arms to her son Robert Curthose. The attendance of barons, friends, advisors and staff is all the more understandable in light of Mathilda's financial position. Not only did they have connections to her based on blood, loyalty, and history, but on the shared goal of material enrichment based on English land.

The court that William and Mathilda built with such care did not survive their deaths. William the Conqueror's choice to split his kingdom between Robert Curthose and William Rufus had dire consequences for many barons who held land on both sides of the Channel. Orderic reported the frustration of the Anglo-Norman nobles at their impossible choice: "If we do our duty to Robert, the duke of Normandy, we shall offend his brother William. It will follow that we shall forfeit our great revenues and high honors in England. On the other hand, if we keep our fealty to King William, Duke Robert will take from us our patrimonial estates."³⁶⁸ Though the words are Orderic's, the sentiment reflected cannot have been far from the truth. By the time Henry I came to the throne, only one family out of the ten most trusted in William's and Mathilda's

³⁶⁷ DB Bedfordshire 1, 1a-3; DB Warwickshire 238a, 4; DB Worcestershire 17a, 2; DB Oxfordshire 1, 12; DB Norfolk 1, 117b; DB Northamptonshire B, 36.

³⁶⁸ Orderic, *Historiae* 4: 97-100.

court, the Beaumonts, was still in possession of its lands and honors.³⁶⁹ William Rufus's first year as king, 1088, saw the defection of Roger of Montgomery, Roger de Beaumont, Odo of Bayeux, Robert of Mortain, Richard FitzGilbert, Geoffrey of Coutances, and Eustace of Boulogne to Robert Curthose's cause. Though the Beaumonts were able to purchase William Rufus's forgiveness, they were not active in his court.³⁷⁰

William II and Henry inherited powerful, entrenched, noble families with close ties of interdependency to the throne, hand-picked by their parents and enriched by them. But these were not the friends of their own choosing. In examining the courts of William Rufus and Henry I, historians of the period repeatedly contrast them to the *curiales* of their parents. After the death or dishonor of many of William and Mathilda's companions, the composition of the court changed. The growing popularity of long hair, pointed shoes, effeminate styles, and long sweeping trains made Orderic shudder. "Our wanton youth is sunk in effeminacy; their long wide sleeves cover their hands whatever they do, impeded by these frivolities, they are almost incapable of walking quickly or doing any kind of useful work."³⁷¹ Rufus's court was also infamous for ravaging the countryside as it traveled. According to both Orderic and Eadmer, if the members of the royal court did not finish all the wine in a house, they would wash

³⁶⁹ Judith Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England*, 290-1.

³⁷⁰ Only the sons and heirs of Roger of Montgomery attested to William Rufus' charters; Hugh of Montgomery and Roger the Poitevin appear twice, their brother, Robert of Belleme, not at all (Hollister, "Magnates and Curiales" 104-5).

³⁷¹ Orderic, *Historiae* 4: 188.

they would wash their horses' feet in it, or pour it on the ground.³⁷² These deplorable customs continued until the middle of Henry's reign when, in 1108, the Synod of Rouen published notices forbidding his courtiers to plunder, rape, steal, or extort on pain of blinding and castration.³⁷³ The abuses came to an abrupt halt. Even so, the court of Henry I and his queen, Edith/Matilda was a very different one from his parents'. According to Walter Map, Henry did serious business through the morning until noon, when, after a meal and a nap, the afternoon and evening were for sports and "decent mirth."³⁷⁴

In contrast, hardship, military readiness, and the constant judicial transactions of a tenurial revolution defined the character of William and Mathilda's sober court. Their authority over England, barely conquered, was an almost perpetual contest, a daily-won sovereignty. Consequently, the men and women who proved most welcome in their inner court were generals, jurists, and administrators. Though Henry I eventually inherited the fruit of their efforts, an England that was undeniably Norman, he would never enjoy the kind of loyalty his mother and father commanded.³⁷⁵

³⁷² Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, ed. Martin Rule, Rolls Series (London, 1884), 192

³⁷³ Eadmer, *Historia*, 192-3; Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum* 2: 487.

³⁷⁴ Gualteri Mapes, *De Nugis Curialium Distinctiones Quinque*, (London, 1850), 438, 472.

³⁷⁵ For the protracted struggles between Henry and many of his treasonous barons, see Hollister, *Henry I*, 234-79.

Chapter Four

Judex, Masculine, Feminine or Neither? Royal Justice in the Realm of Mathilda of Flanders.

The English law court of the eleventh century was manifestly different from that of the twenty-first. First, it was larger; our modern streamlined version of justice, for all its torturous confusion, generally commands a much smaller audience. In the eleventh century, it was typical at inquests that different types of assemblies were all heard at once. For instance, the local courts of the hundred and the county courts of the shire would often meet simultaneously to argue over land disputes; even criminal cases could be included in these hybrid sessions. Long before Domesday and the Conquest, joint pleas and groups of shires and boroughs, headed by different districts, met together. Great meetings of the Five Boroughs are described in Anglo-Saxon charters and in Edward the Confessor's day; Westminster Abbey assessed its rights before nine different Hundreds at once.³⁷⁶ The Conquest saw the continuation of these kinds of joint pleas. In addition to the royal commissioners, the sheriffs and the reeves whose presence was required, at least eight men from every hundred attended as well.³⁷⁷ The jurors of the hundred, of course, had to have been present, as their testimony was crucial to adjudicating any dispute. Thanks to the work of Chris Lewis, we know that these

³⁷⁶ *Anglo-Saxon Charters: An Annotated List and Bibliography*, ed. Peter Sawyer (London, 1968), n. 1123.

³⁷⁷ *Inquisitio Comitatus Cantabrigiensis, Subjicitur Inquisitio Eliensis*, ed. Nicholas E. S. A. Hamilton (London, 1876), 97.

English counties each had an average of 128 jurors, all of whom were required to attend.³⁷⁸ From contemporary descriptions of this type of inquest, we know that royal officials brought their underlings and assistants, as did sheriffs. Bishops like Wulfstan of Warwickshire appeared before judicial bodies regularly and, from evidence of disputation, were some of the most practiced and seasoned litigators in the country.³⁷⁹ Even before the Conquest threw landholding into confusion, abbots and bishops invariably brought their entire households with them, and sometimes the entire monastic population of the abbey.³⁸⁰ Imagine for a moment how these scenes of royal justice took place during Mathilda's reign. The royal retinue included at least one chamberlain, the household staff, the clerks, and a suitable royal military guard, with its trappings and appurtenances.³⁸¹ In attendance for both the defendant and the plaintiff were scores of witnesses and supporters, ranging from the necessary players to the merely curious. Peasants, reeves, sheriffs, the newly minted Norman nobility, and their more desperate, displaced English counterparts all literally rubbed shoulders. Even if we allow for exaggeration on the part of contemporary sources, it is unmistakable that people traditionally turned out in huge numbers to support their kinsmen and friends when property was under dispute.

³⁷⁸ C. P. Lewis, "The Domesday Jurors," *Haskins Society Journal* 5 (1993), 18.

³⁷⁹ Robin Fleming, *Domesday Book and the Law: Society and Legal Custom in Early Medieval England* (Cambridge, 1998).

³⁸⁰ *Domesday-book ; seu, Liber censualis Willelmi Primi regis Angliae, inter archivos regni in domo capitulari Westmonasterii asservatus: jubente rege augustissimo Georgio Tertio praelo mandatus typis.* ed. Abraham Farley (London, 1783), Berkshire, 1: 59r (7-38).

³⁸¹ See above, Chapter Three.

The prodigious size of these assemblies may explain the profound impression they must have had on the population as a whole; the Domesday book itself was named for the final judgment. Certainly, to the inhabitants of these counties, royal inquests in this period must have appeared to be a close approximation of the Last Day. Relics of saints were held high for the swearing of oaths, hot fires blazed and smoked, heating iron bars and boiling vats of steaming water for the ordeal; all contributed no doubt to a mental picture of the possibilities of the afterlife. The incredible noise, the press of bodies from the throne's greatest men to the lowliest villein, the arguments and heated denials, all of this was illustrative of law coming to life; and it was over this din and confusion that Mathilda of Flanders often presided alone and handed down judgment. At the apex of this spectacle, the physical, human face of absolute royal power was sometimes female.

What can we say, then, about women and their judicial role in the Middle Ages? Mathilda was acting in her husband's absence, and though she handed down these decisions as queen, not merely as the king's agent, it is important to realize that, were William able, he would have sat alongside Mathilda. When William de Briouze made gifts to Saint-Florent-de-Saumur, he included both William and Mathilda in the donation, "in order that they themselves should consent to this alms and, if anyone should wish to commit an injustice therein, they should hold him to right."³⁸² William of Briouze thought it prudent and appropriate to include both the queen and king as

³⁸² Emily Zack Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 128. Tabuteau cites Paul Marchegay, "Chartes Normandes de l'abbaye de Saint-Florent près Saumur de 710 à 1200 environ," *Mémoires de la Societes des Antiquaires de Normandie* 30 (1880), 678-80.

prospective guardians of his donation, and he made the assumption that either Mathilda or William could be expected to uphold his claim in court. With or without William, meting out justice was the equivalent of claiming final authority, and Mathilda did just that.

Judicial assemblies have been seen as ritualized reenactments of the Conquest. Robin Fleming has postulated that in this legal, non-military venue, without force of arms, the Norman victory over the native population was revisited again and again.³⁸³ The legitimization of twenty years of Norman predation was brought home to a highly disparate audience. The day-to-day reality of a thousand juridical decisions, from the most inconsequential to the most weighty, regularly concretized Norman mastery and codified Norman presence. Given this understanding of the Domesday trial as a re-staging of the Conquest, it is a short step indeed to position Mathilda, acting within the established arena of English law and participating through her supremacy, in the exclusively male purview of her army's victory over a foreign race. If we regard the Conquest of England as revisited symbolically in the legal arena, then Mathilda was its champion.

An examination of medieval justice presents a woman who possessed authentic official dominion over her subjects, clerical and lay, male and female. These are not the surreptitious, subversive acts of the subjugated, but the exercise of real power in a convergence heavy with ritual, pregnant with meaning. In the previous chapter, I have made use of Domesday to note and discuss Mathilda's position as a landholder in response to the overwhelming evidence this document presents. The judicial activity in

³⁸³ Robin Fleming, *Domesday*, 17.

which she was engaged not only reveals with more clarity Mathilda's administrative authority, it reveals much about Anglo-Norman society as well. Here I will examine the ways in which Mathilda of Flanders was able to sit in judgment over highly-placed members of medieval society and the meaning of judicial activity when administered by a woman in the Middle Ages. Domesday Book was compiled after Mathilda's death in 1083. Between the overthrow of Harold Godwinson and the compilation of the survey, she had already given lands to her supporters, including her favorite abbeys and churches, and was five years dead. Domesday was the instrument, however, by which her decisions were recorded and upheld for the immediate future of the eleventh century as well as for posterity.

English law and justice have a historiographical pedigree that stretches back to the eighteenth century with Blackstone's *Commentaries*.³⁸⁴ The debate in microcosm has centered on the innovations, or lack thereof, of the Norman conquerors in the area of jurisprudence. Disciples of Maitland and Pollock, who claimed that the celebrated English legal system of the empanelled jury was a Norman-French import, have battled for two hundred years with Blackstone's, and later, Stubbs's adherents.³⁸⁵ The latter group saw the machinery of Anglo-Saxon law in the making further back than Alfred

³⁸⁴ William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England. A Facsimile of the First Edition of 1765-1769*, ed. T. Katz et al, 4 vols. (Chicago, 1979).

³⁸⁵ Frederic W. Maitland, *Domesday Book and Beyond*, 5th ed. (Cambridge, 1987); Frederick Pollock and Frederic W. Maitland, *The History of English Law to the Accession of Edward I*, ed. Stroud F. C. Milsom, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1968); William Stubbs *The Constitutional History of England in its Origin and Development*, 3 vols., rev. ed. (Oxford, 1880); Blackstone, *Commentaries*.

the Great, and the state of the justice system that the conquerors found in their new territory an agreeable inheritance not of their own making.

Through much examination, recent historians have built a case for a more synthetic approach. Though English law was in place at the time of the Conquest, William utilized English law in a manner that the Anglo-Saxons never did - that is, he collected it. The extant manuscripts developed during William's reign and just after were remarkable not for what was in them but what was not. As Patrick Wormald described them, "Frankish law books were, for the most part, unadulterated by anything else. Anglo-Saxon law books, by contrast, were always primarily about something else."³⁸⁶ In addition, the English codes that were bound post-Conquest were grouped together with the texts that supplemented them: in this case, those of Aethelred, Edgar, Alfred, and Cnut. The Norman-French influence can be identified more by way of organization than anything else. The change may have illustrated the new general feeling for centralization, and in the post-Conquest penchant for order illustrated by the Domesday inquests, this was not surprising.

The only collection from William's kingship, sometimes called "The Articles of William" or *Leis Willelme*, was a set of separate enactments written late in the reign and originally in Norman-French, with a later translation in Latin.³⁸⁷ They are entirely and consciously derivative.³⁸⁸ The preface makes the motive behind the collection perfectly

³⁸⁶ Patrick Wormald, *The Making of English Law, King Alfred to the Twelfth Century Volume I: Legislation and its Limits* (Oxford, 1999), 480.

³⁸⁷ Wormald, *The Making of English Law*, 408.

³⁸⁸ Henry G. Richardson and Gerald O. Sayles, *Law and Legislation from Aethelberht to Magna Carta*, (Edinburgh, 1966), 121-3 and 170-5.

clear. It states that the collection was "...a review of the customs and laws that King William granted to the people of England after the conquest of the land, those same as his cousin, King Edward, held before him."³⁸⁹ The collected articles do not seem to have a common author or to have been written up in the same scriptorium but, whatever their origin, they show an effort by the legal experts of the day to imitate the form and organization of their continental counterparts.³⁹⁰ The organization of law was beginning to be conceived, as any other field of thought, by "divisio."³⁹¹

The period just after the Conquest saw virtually no new royal legislation, but there was important innovation in use and in method. Legal authorities were characterized by the impulse to collect, analyze, and, most important, employ what had already become native to the English. The juridical activity immediately following the Conquest, up to and including the Domesday Inquest, reflected the changes in application of English law to such an extent that the court of law became as much a social and cultural phenomenon as it was legal and political. The adjudication of court cases involving the rights and titles to English lands was, materially, a Second Conquest. The legal experience of the Anglo-Norman period must be viewed against the backdrop of the eleventh-century landholding, or tenurial, revolution. William's

³⁸⁹ Felix Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1935), 1: 167.

³⁹⁰ Liebermann, *Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen*, 1: 227. See also Judith Greenberg, "The Confessor's Laws and the Radical Face of the Ancient Constitution," *English Historical Review* 113 (1989), 611-37; François L. Ganshof, *Frankish Institutions Under Charlemagne* (Providence, 1968); Doris M. Stenton, *English Justice, 1066-1215*, Jayne Lectures for 1963 (Philadelphia, 1964).

³⁹¹ Richard W. Southern *The Making of the Middle Ages* (London, 1953), 171-7; Margaret Gibson, *Lanfranc of Bec* (Oxford, 1978), 47-50, 61-7.

followers had not always been content with what was conferred upon them through royal favor, nor had they waited patiently for an instance of English revolt to gain property from the defeated. They seized whatever means were available to them, whether quasi-conventional or otherwise, to achieve their ends. These included, but were not restricted to, purchase, attachment through betrothal or marriage, basic fraud, or bald disseisin. Indeed, it is clear from the activity level of the Norman judicial machinery that the court of law was considered another, though perhaps secondary, arena of battle in which one acquired or defended land.

In a world that had yet to know a full-time lawyer, defending one's property in court was becoming as much a part of a noble education as battle.³⁹² During Stephen's reign, Rannulf de Glanvill's father claimed to have attended East Anglian shire courts regularly for fifty years or more. His father had taken him along to observe and learn, even before he reached his majority.³⁹³ There was an important cultural element at work. The highly competitive strategies that Glanvill's grandfather and his contemporaries attempted were undertaken to dispossess their rivals, by either violent means or lawsuits, whichever seemed more effective.

The judicial activity of the post-Conquest epoch has engaged historians of the Middle Ages partially because, through Domesday and other historical records, the historian can view law being manipulated, probed, analyzed in real court cases, and

³⁹² Paul Hyams. " 'No Register of Title': The Domesday Inquest and Adjudication," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 9 (1987), 137.

³⁹³ Helen Cam, "An East Anglian Shire-moot Court of Stephen's Reign," *English Historical Review* 39 (1924), 568-71.

eventually codified. These cases illuminate the real discomfort and anxiety felt both by the conquered and the conquering concerning their rights and the application of law that resulted in a written text.³⁹⁴ The gradual transformation to literacy from orality also played a role in the experiment of law in the early Middle Ages, as ecclesiastical and secular courts tested the usefulness of law and their own boundaries.³⁹⁵ In the era directly before the Conquest, in Wormald's words, "The point is emphatically not that texts did not matter, but that they did not resonate as they might have."³⁹⁶ The new government was beginning to have greater need of textual tools, and the sweeping changes represented by the Conquest hurried the trend along.

In this world of intense legal activity, Domesday was merely the foremost record among many.³⁹⁷ The largest ecclesiastical houses, like Abingdon, Evesham, Canterbury, and Worcester, had long memories and detailed records that extended back, in some cases, before the Conquest, and these houses were eager to retain or regain lands lost or threatened through the administrative turnover. The bewildering shuffle of changing lordships also provided the opportunity for abbeys to reopen land

³⁹⁴ Cam, "An East Anglian Shire-moot Court," 80-2.

³⁹⁵ For more on the transition from orality to literacy, see *Orality and Literacy in Early Middle English*, ed. Herbert Pilch, (Tübingen, 1996); Michael T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written record, England 1066-1307*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1993); Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy: the Technologizing of the Word* (New York, 1982).

³⁹⁶ Patrick Wormald, *Making of English Law*, 482.

³⁹⁷ See David C. Douglas, "Odo, Lanfranc and the Domesday Survey," *Historical Essays in Honour of J. Tail*, ed. John G. Edwards, Vivian H. Gilbraith, and Ernest F. Jacob (Manchester, 1933), 56-7; Edwin Miller, "The Ely Land Pleas in the Reign of William I," *English Historical Review* 62 (1947), 453-4; H. B. Clarke, "Domesday Satellites," in *Domesday Book: A Reassessment* ed. Peter H. Sawyer (London, 1985), 61-6.

disputes that had been settled unfavorably in the reign of Edward. The extant records available reflect a series of lawsuits involving these houses between 1066 and 1080 that, in their character, prefigured the work of the Inquest. The underwriting skills of some of the Domesday judges were sharpened during such cases as they participated in and were audience to the conformation of these cases.³⁹⁸

The aforementioned period of approximately fourteen years coincided with Mathilda's juridical activity. Mathilda's England may have not produced new and innovative law codes, but it was feverishly active in the "usufruct" of the law of the land. The extant sources indicate that those exceptional cases heard by Mathilda were specially summoned meetings of one or more shires. Royal justice was available only as a last resort and was reserved for either the elite or especially thorny problems. The individual cases recorded in the period give further insight into the rather skeletal language of law, a glimmer of what we could call "lived law" or the way that English law mutated as it was tested in the real world.

Domesday Book records two land disputes that Mathilda adjudicated: the first was in the county of Hampshire in the south of England and the second in Warwickshire, some eighty miles to the north. Two more cases were recorded in the archives of monastic houses; one case concerned Abingdon Abbey recorded in the Abbey chronicle, the other, concerning Wells Cathedral, was one of the only surviving Latin writs for this period and found in a Wells Cathedral cartulary. The dates of the Domesday cases are problematic. Neither record carries a precise date, but the

³⁹⁸ Some of these men included Geoffrey of Coutances and Lanfranc (Hyams, "No Register of Title," 139-40).

chronology can be partially fixed by two factors. Both cases occurred during Mathilda's visits to England and were heard in William's absence. Three periods meet both of these criteria. The first occurs almost immediately after Mathilda's coronation at Westminster in 1068. William went north to retake York from a rebel faction while the queen was still in Winchester, between February and April of 1069. Another possibility presents itself in the early months of 1070, sometime between January and March, when William conducted a campaign scholars would later call the "harrying of the North," immediately after he and Mathilda had held their Christmas court at York. The last plausible interval was in the fall of 1072. The royal pair were together at Winchester for the celebration at Pentecost, but soon thereafter William engaged in battle with Malcolm of Scotland and then crossed to Normandy while Mathilda stayed in England, probably throughout the spring. In November of 1074, they were both in Rouen. It is interesting to note that in the two Domesday cases, Mathilda might have acted as judge soon after her coronation, possibly a mere six months after becoming queen.³⁹⁹

³⁹⁹ The idea that Mathilda played such an enormous public role so early in her reign is given credence by a report of William of Poitiers, who claims that even before she was crowned in England, Mathilda was known commonly by her royal title. It is very likely that both William and Mathilda were aware of the intensely public executive role she would be asked to play in their new conquered territory and consciously prepared their court and nobles for the possibility by using her regal title before her coronation. In Chapter Three, I mentioned these kinds of machinations which occurred immediately before William sailed to England in 1066, for instance, the enormous number of charters that were generated at that time with Mathilda as signator; documents written by the couple themselves and those written by their nobility. It seems obvious that the pair were taking pains to demonstrate Mathilda's authority as duchess and acclimatizing their Norman barons to the idea of Mathilda's regency. Perhaps in much the same way, William and Mathilda may have thought it wise to use the title of Queen before the actual coronation to establish her royal authority to be utilized if and when the need arose. The idea that she could have held *de facto* royal power without the *de jure* of a formal coronation, investing her with the rights and privileges of Queen, is tantalizing (William of Poitiers, *Gesta Guillelmi*, ed. R. H.C. Davis and Marjorie Chibnall [Oxford, 1998], 179).

We cannot further narrow the exact time the courts recorded in Domesday were convened, but the two sessions, one in Hampshire and the other in Warwickshire, were held either in the spring of 1068 or in the two years between the fall of 1072 and November of 1074. As demonstrated in chapter three, Mathilda held extensive lands in both of these counties. But it was as queen, not chief landholder, that she presided over these courts. In other words, the plaintiff and defendant who came under her jurisdiction in these cases received royal justice, not merely a decision from the county court of the shire or its smaller subdivision, the local hundred.

The bare bones of the court case in Hampshire are outlined in Domesday as follows. "In Somborne Hundred William (the Balistarius, or William the Archer), held Compton. Aldred brother of Odo claims one virgate of land from this manor. He states that he held it in 1066, and he was dispossessed⁴⁰⁰ after King William crossed the sea. He established his right in front of the queen.⁴⁰¹ Hugh de Port is witness to this, and the men of the whole hundred."⁴⁰² The Warwickshire case was a bit more complicated. It involves ecclesiastical authorities and an entire manor of over fifteen hides, easily thousands of acres, was in question.

⁴⁰⁰ "*disaisitus fuit*," Ibid.

⁴⁰¹ "*dirationavit coram regina*," Ibid.

⁴⁰² "Aldredus frater Odo calumniatur unam virgatam terrae de hoc manerio et dicit se eam tenuisse die qua rex Edwardus fuit vivus et mortuus, et disaisitus fuit postquam rex Willelmus mare transiit, et ipse dirationavit coram regina. Inde est testis ejus Hugo de Port et homines de toto hundredo" (*Domesday Book* [London, 1991] Hampshire, I : 48v [52-53], also reprinted in *English Lawsuits from William I to Richard I, Vol. I*, ed. R. C. Van Caenegem [London, 1990], no. 35, and Robin Fleming, *Domesday Book and the Law*, 157).

Before 1066 Bricwin held 7 ½ hides in Alveston. Archbishop Aelred had the full jurisdiction of this land, and the market rights and church tax, and all the other forfeitures except those four that the King has throughout his whole kingdom. His sons Leofwin, Edmer, and four others testify thereto, but they do not know from whom he held this land, whether from the church or from Earl Leofric, whom he served. They state however that they held it themselves from Earl Leforic, and could turn where they would with the land. Bricnoth and Alfwy held the remaining 7 ½ hides before 1066, but the County does not know from whom they held. Bishop Wulfstan however states that he established his claims to this land before Queen Mathilda in the presence of the four Sherifffdoms, and he has King William's writ for it, and also the witness of the County of Warwick.⁴⁰³

The next example, the Abingdon case, can be dated a bit more precisely because of the presence of Adeelm, who brought his case to Mathilda during his abbacy there. The dates of his tenure were 1071-83, which place the Abingdon case in 1072/3. The case not only outlines a land dispute, but moreover, involved some violent criminal behavior on the part of the abbot.

A royal reeve from the manor of Sutton, in the neighborhood of this church, called Alfsi, has violated the old rights of the church in the plains and the woods, which were surrounded protectively by peasants, frequently and

⁴⁰³ "Wulstanus autem episcopiis dicit se hanc terram deplacitasse coram regina Mathilde in praesentia iii vicecomitatum et inde habet breves regis Willelim et testimonium comitatus Warwic" (*Domesday Book*, Warwickshire, I : 238v [3-4]; Van Caenegem, *English Lawsuits*, Vol. I no. 59; Fleming, *Domesday Book and the Law*, 250).

barbarously, by often harassing men and beasts and forcing them to perform transport services for the king and by ordering to cut as many virgates as he wanted in the woods of Bagley and Cumnor. The abbot restrained his audacity with such a strong hand that from that time onwards no one followed the example of that man. In the first place, when the said reeve had demanded that oxen of the church should help in the transport of lead, requisitioned for the king's use, to the royal manor of Sutton, he was not without shame hit by the stick the abbot happened to be carrying, the lead thrown onto the ground and the oxen returned. In the second place, when the reeve returned from the wood of Bagley with heavy carts, the abbot seized the load and forced the reeve to flee on horseback and to wade through the water near the mill adjacent to the bridge over the river Ock, wet up to his neck, because he avoided the bridge out of fear for the abbot. However, the man who had been hit went and complained to the queen, who was settled in those days at Windsor and weighed⁴⁰⁴ judicial matters in place of the king who was in Normandy, about the injury which he had suffered: the abbot, losing no time in preventing a royal inquiry, paid a sum of money to atone for what he had done to the royal official. He also put an end to tyrannical exactions by officials to the advantage of posterity, for in that royal assembly it was laid down after discussion and the testimony of numerous wise people, the church in Abingdon should in no way suffer this sort of exaction, but

⁴⁰⁴ "impendebat," 10.

on the contrary, enjoy perpetual freedom. This liberty which was then proclaimed is famous and freely defended until this day.⁴⁰⁵

The court cases above have some similarities. In all of them, Matilda's judgment was a final determinant of rights to the property in question. Because the cases received royal justice, her verdict held no possibility of appeal. All of the cases present the historian with difficulties. The Abingdon case was, of course, recorded by a biased participant. The tone of the chronicle was quite obviously in support of the rights of the abbey, as the royal reeve was described in pejorative language. *Barbare* and *inferendo* describe his appropriation of the abbey's resources, and though he was the victim of violence, he remained *tyrannus* in the chronicle, a term that represented royal officials in general.

The Wells cathedral case was recorded after Mathilda's judgement, and was to serve as a notice of the cathedral's rights.

⁴⁰⁵ "Cum interea praepositus quidam regiae villa Suttune, vicinae huic ecclesiae, Alfsi dictus, frequenter, contra antiqua ecclesiae jura, planis et nemorosis loci, rusticorum vallatus manu, barbare sese inferendo, homines et animalia ita passim exagitabat ut ab eis regalibus vectationibus summagia fieri exigeret, de nemoribus Bacheleia et Cumenora virgulta quantum volebat recidi juberet. Cujus ausum adeo viva manu tum abbas coercuit, ut ab eo tempore illius viri deinceps alter sectator non venerit. Nam primo, quadam vice dum plumbum, regio usui exquisitum, junctis ecclesiae bobus praepositus idem in curiam regis Suttune carreitare faceret, ipse baculo, quem abbas forte tenebat, non sine dedecore caesus, plumbum disjectum, boves reducti. Secundo, cum de silva Bacheleia onustis progrediretur rhedis, eadem onera abbas capiens, ipsum equo fugitantem prope molendinum contiguum ponti fluminis Eoche transvadare ad collum usque humectateum compulit, vitato (timore abbatis) ponte. Sed cum ab eo qui caesus fuerat, penes reginam, per hos dies Wildesore constitutam, querimonia de illata sibi injuria moveretur, quae regis vice, Normanniae degentis, justitiam rerum ingruentium impendebat, abbas nil moratus regium inde praevenit examen, et pecunia exsoluit quicquid in regis officiali fuerat commissum. Praeterea universis tyrannicum excussit exactum praefectorum posteris. Nam in concione illa regia, et rationatione et plurimorum testimonio sapientum, peroratum est nequaquam debere ecclesiam Abendonensem hujusmodi sufferre exactum, quin libertate potiri perpetua. Ea itaque libertas tunc praeconata, hodie usque celebris libere defenditur" (Van Caenegem, *English Lawsuits*, Vol. I, 157).

Mathilda, the Queen of England, to William de Moyon, the sheriff and all the men of Somerset, greetings. Bishop Osbern of Exeter, at my request, has conceded to Bishop Giso of Wells the church of Wedmore, with everything belonging to it, which Bishop Giso has often claimed. Therefore, I command so that he might successively hold it quietly, and that no one in any way do injury to it, wherefore this is to be done by my testimony. And you, William, by my command, are the one who should give him seisin.⁴⁰⁶

The Domesday entries present the most difficult challenge because they are brief and the descriptions sound cursory. A close reading of the text, however, and some subsidiary information from other sources draw the evidence into better focus. The way the Domesday scenes were framed by their compilers reveals a narrative voice, in the person of the defendant, in the midst of asserting his rights. In both of the Domesday cases, the defendant uses a previous court hearing to substantiate his claim. The court hearings in question involve the dual elements of Mathilda's royal authority and a multitude of witnesses, either the men of the entire hundred or the entire county, who witnessed Mathilda's final decision. The text underscores what we already know to be true; the court proceedings in this period were very public, well-attended affairs.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁶ "Mathildis Anglorum regina Willelmo de Moiu vicecomiti et omnibus hominibus de Sumersetensis, salutem. Sciatis episcopum Osbertum Essecestrensem Gisoni episcopo, causa mea petitionis, ecclesiam de Wedmor' cum omnibus ei pertinentibus annuisse quam idem Giso sepe clamavit hactenus. Ideo precipio ut quiete deinceps illam teneat et nullus de ea illo modo inuriam ei faciat, quare meo hoc actum est testimonio. Et tu Willelmus eundem episcopum de ea meo ex precepto saisias" (Bates, Regesta, 809).

⁴⁰⁷ Lewis, "Domesday Jurors," 14-28.

How can we compare Mathilda's activity to her contemporaries? Adjudicatory activity by women in the medieval period is highly unusual, even for queens.⁴⁰⁸ Neither of the Anglo-Saxon queens who predated Mathilda were involved in English justice. In fact, both Emma and Edith were actually the subjects of royal inquiries. In Edith's case, she was implicated in the murder of a noble of the Northumbrian house, Gospatric. Supposedly acting on behalf of her brother, Tostig, Edith was accused of engineering Gospatric's death on the fourth night of the Christmas festival, in 1064. Gospatric had English royal blood in his veins, and as a childless queen, Edith was far from indifferent to rival claimants as Edward the Confessor aged. Her interest in the North were strongly engaged with brother Tostig; he was the first West Saxon earl of Northumbria and had been appointed by King Edward. Though the sources do not mention a formal legal inquiry, Edith felt the need to devote a rather lengthy passage in her *vita* to refuting the charges of murder.⁴⁰⁹ Edith and Emma were both accused of adultery and were compelled to prove their innocence. Edith took an oath on her deathbed, and Emma may have even been forced to endure an ordeal.⁴¹⁰

Even in her most powerful days, as wife of Cnut, Emma was excluded from matters of law and justice. In the case of Cnut's absence, letters to his regency committee that advised them to maintain royal law in his stead did not include Emma.

⁴⁰⁸ "The traditions of pre-1066 England were formative – Mathilda inherited a tradition of English queenly power; but those traditions could be built on, as they were in her activities as regent which extended to the hearing of legal cases" (Pauline Stafford, "Women and the Norman Conquest," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6, 4 [1994]: 221-249).

⁴⁰⁹ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Edith*, 46-7 also 270.

⁴¹⁰ The source of this account, Richard of Deviseze, is late (Stafford, *Queen Emma and Edith*, 270-2).

His letter of 1020 instructed Earl Thorkell to uphold God's law in the king's absence "with the power of us both."⁴¹¹ There is no mention of Emma either in the body of the missive, or in the address to the archbishops and nobles "to whom I have entrusted the councils of all my kingdom." The *Annals* of Winchester tell of a letter from Cnut addressed to the archbishops and Emma, but the *Annals* are late and are generally considered a problematic source.⁴¹² Certainly, no evidence at all remains that links them to the exercise of royal justice. As mentioned in the previous chapters, moreover, the traditions of the English may be the wrong place to look for a culture that celebrated or even encouraged active female participation in rulership.⁴¹³ On the other hand, territories surrounding Mathilda's native Flanders provided more appropriate models for noble female judges. Especially in Lorraine, Flander's immediate neighbor to the East, juridical authority was wielded by noblewomen.

Beatrice of Lorraine and her daughter, Mathilda of Tuscany, were both intimately involved in judiciary activity, especially as it concerned the medieval papacy. Beatrice, daughter of Frederick II, the Duke of Lorraine, was related to Pope Leo IX and the Salian royal family. Widow of Count Boniface of Tuscany, Beatrice embodied the union of Tuscany and Lorraine. When she married a second time, it was to a persistent opponent of Emperor Henry III, a Lorraine noble, Duke Godfrey the Bearded, with whom she would regularly campaign, with her young daughter Mathilda in tow.

⁴¹¹ *English Historical Documents, Volume I*, ed. Dorothy Whitelock, 2nd ed. (London, 1979), no. 48.

⁴¹² Stafford relates some interesting tales from the *Annals*, but considers them deeply inaccurate, often conflating Emma and Edith together (Stafford, *Queen Emma and Edith*, 188).

⁴¹³ See introduction above.

Her ties to the Salian house were strained to the point of breaking when Henry III took Beatrice and her daughter Mathilda to Germany as prisoners. After Henry's death a year later, in 1056, Beatrice and Mathilda were able to return to Godfrey, in the company of Leo IX. The reform papacy was then "extensively dependent" on Beatrice and Godfrey, who busily consolidated their power until Godfrey's death in 1069.⁴¹⁴ Immediately before his death, Godfrey's son, also called Godfrey but nicknamed "the Hunchback," married Mathilda in an effort to further stabilize the family's political standing. Mathilda's marriage to Godfrey the Hunchback was unsuccessful. After their separation, Beatrice began preparing her daughter for sole rulership of Tuscany by regularly associating Mathilda with herself in documents and charters.⁴¹⁵ Beatrice of Lorraine and Mathilda of Tuscany enjoyed an unusually warm and personal relationship with Gregory VII, and he relied heavily on both women in his efforts to keep Henry IV tractable by admonishing him regarding his duty to the church. Because of their common goals for Henry and their piety, Gregory valued Beatrice and Mathilda. His high regard for them, moreover, was not merely an appreciation of their virtue as pious women, but also of their virility as princes. In fact, Gregory often referred to Beatrice and Matilda as princes, gendered male, in his letters.⁴¹⁶ By the time Gregory VII was pope in 1073, Mathilda of Tuscany had been separated from her husband Godfrey for

⁴¹⁴ H. E. J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085* (Oxford, 1998), 64.

⁴¹⁵ Elke Goetz and Werner Goetz, eds. *Die Urkunden und Briefe der Markgräfin Mathilde von Tuszien* (Hannover, 1998), 31-45.

⁴¹⁶ Phillippe Jaffé, *Monumenta Gregoriana* (Berlin, 1865), I:40-67, 38-89.

years and had become convinced she should take the veil. In his letters energetically dissuading her from this form of pious sacrifice, one can almost hear Gregory's barely suppressed horror at the thought of losing his warlike prince to the cloister. "Therefore I say with the Prophet, 'Offer the sacrifice of righteousness and hope in the Lord (Ps. 4:6), and, 'Judge the orphan and defend widows, and come and reason with me, says the Lord' (Isa. 1:17-18). From love of God, then, I place before prayers, fastings, vigils, and all other good works whatsoever, the help for the wretched and the aid for the oppressed which spring from love of our neighbor"⁴¹⁷

Gregory's admonition to Matilda went further, convincing her through his argument that the sacrifice she must make was one of an active political life, when she desired the peace of the cloister.⁴¹⁸ Gregory's letter, written in March 1074, was addressed both to Mathilda and her mother. It provided a full judiciary "investiture" of them based on scriptural principles. This support, however, came well after the fact, as Beatrice and Mathilda had long been active in judiciary concerns. In the fifteen years from Beatrice's marriage to Godfrey in 1052 to his death in 1069, fifteen judicial charters were issued. Of these fifteen, nine were produced in Lotharingia, three were produced by vassals of Beatrice and Godfrey, and three were produced by Beatrice's clerics.⁴¹⁹ In her own judicial placita, Beatrice styled herself variously as *domina Beatrix*, *domina Beatrix uxor Gottfredi ducis et marchionis*, and, in one case, Beatrice

⁴¹⁷ Jaffé, *Monumenta Gregoriana*, I:50, 70.

⁴¹⁸ Jaffé, *Monumenta Gregoriana*, I:50, 71.

⁴¹⁹ Elke Goetz, *Beatrix von Canossa und Tuszien, Eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte des 11. Jahrhunderts* (Sigmaringen, 1994), 89-93.

signed without Godfrey as *Beatrix dux*.⁴²⁰ Other than this notable exception, both Godfrey and Beatrice together signed all the other judicial charters from this period.

Mathilda of Tuscany was even more active in the judicial arena. Acting in concert with papal legates and supporters, Mathilda hosted numerous hearings at her court and actively presided over at least some of them.⁴²¹ It is difficult to make out exactly what role Mathilda played in some of these judiciary hearings. Her signature invariably occurs first, which would have been proper, since she was the reigning lord present. But in the charters that record these occasions, her signature is immediately followed by a list of up to four prelates who title themselves *judex*. Mathilda signs her usual inscription *Matilda dei gratia, si quis est, subscripsi*. However, in the body of a charter issued in Florence on March 2, 1100, the notary's diplomatic reads, "*Et ego Petrus notarius ex iussione domine Matilde dei gratia ducis et marchionesse et iudicum admonitione scripsi*." Exactly how involved Mathilda was in the weighing of these cases is unclear. She certainly held enormous influence with the legatine authorities in attendance at her court: considering her relationship to Gregory and her family's long association with the reform papacy, the situation could not have been otherwise. Henry IV regularly moved to usurp papal powers and lands, resulting in Mathilda's tireless attempts to defend Gregory, not only through military initiatives, but through juridical channels as well. In May of 1084, Mathilda re-issued a judicial decision that Henry IV had attempted to overturn. Calling Henry a false king who had listened to false

⁴²⁰ Elke Goez, *Beatrix*, 92-98.

⁴²¹ Goez, *Markgräfin Mathilde von Tuszien* 32-3, 39.

testimony, Mathilda reiterated her decision in the presence of papal legates, and her ruling stood.⁴²²

Both Beatrice of Lorraine and Mathilda of Tuscany were bound by their positions to provide justice to their subjects. The responsibility for “judging the orphan and defending widows” fell to these women as lords. This continental model was lived out during Mathilda of Flanders’s reign. Beatrice of Lorraine died in 1076, and her activities as margravine in Lorraine spanned the time from Mathilda’s childhood in Flanders until nine years after her coronation. Likewise, Mathilda of Tuscany, born in 1046, was probably no more than ten or twelve years younger than the queen and was moving to support Gregory with her army as early as 1074. In Mathilda of Flanders’s lifetime, women in continental Europe were exercising the rights of lordship concerning justice and shouldering the responsibilities of their subjects and dependants.

Turning back to England after Mathilda of Flanders’s reign, we can claim more authority for Mathilda’s descendants, including her daughter Adela, countess of Blois, and her daughter-in-law, Edith/Matilda, or Queen Matilda II, who changed her name to Matilda in honor of her mother-in-law. A writ exists in Edith/Matilda’s name which is attached to that of her husband, Henry I, to Nigel de Albini ordering him to restore land in Ross that rightfully belonged to Bishop Ranulf of Durham, but had been seized by Robert de Muschamp. Henry’s accompanying writ demanded the same thing of the sheriffs of Northumberland, Aluric and Liulf. Edith/Matilda was clearly involved in the

⁴²² Mathilda of Tuscany’s Florentine charter of 1100 serves as a reminder of the differences between comital judiciary authority and royal justice. Henry IV was able to overturn Mathilda of Tuscany’s decision, if temporarily, even though her ruling was proper, because of his royal authority. Likewise, Mathilda of Flanders’s royal authority allowed her to issue decisions that were final (Goez, *Markgräfin Mathilde von Tuszien*, 176).

process of settling adjudication, though her activity in the writ seems to have taken place after a verdict was reached by Henry.⁴²³

A similar writ exists in regard to the goods and the ship of the abbot of St. Augustine, which had been wrongfully seized. Edith/Matilda wrote to Ansfrid, the steward who was to restore the belongings, that “all those men who took it shall give pledges that they stand trial before the king when he wants them. And I command that all his goods shall be in peace, as they were on the day when the king crossed the sea, until he comes back to England.”⁴²⁴ Like the writ concerning Ross, the document above testifies to Edith/Matilda's engagement in legal affairs, but once again the parties in question did not actually appear before her; in fact, her writ was clearly a stop-gap measure until Henry's return, when he might have seen the offenders in court. Her protection to the abbot only extended until Henry reached England.

A more powerful example of Edith/Matilda's judiciary activity was given in a dispute concerning the jurisdiction of a church called Lewknor that the men of the hundred of Pyrton tried to claim for themselves. Once again, Abingdon Abbey was entrenched in a lawsuit that involved the reigning queen. Here, in the royal court of Winchester, “before the bishops Roger of Salisbury, Robert of Lincoln and Richard of London and many royal barons,” the Abbot Faritius proved that the claim of the men of

⁴²³ “Matildis. Angliae regina, Nigelo di Albineio salutem. Precipio tibi ut facias Ranulpho episcopo Dunelmensi habere plenum rectum de Roberto de Muscans, de terris quas occupavit super Sanctum Cuthbertum et super eam de Ros et aliis terris quas ipse Robertus occupavit post concordiam, que facta fuit inter Willielmum episcopum et comitem Robertum Northumberlandie, sicut Ranulphus episcopus monstrare poterit” (Van Caenegem, *English Lawsuits*, Vol. I, no. 188).

⁴²⁴ “Et praecipio quod omnes suae res sint in pace, sicut fuerunt die qua rex mare transivit, donec ipse in Angliam redeat” (Van Caenegem, *English Lawsuits*, Vol. I, no. 212).

Pyrton was unjust. The court decided, after consulting Domesday, that Lewknor was not obliged to the hundred of Pyrton in any way. "Therefore, he obtained by a judgment of the king's justices that the manor should in no way be answerable to another hundred than his own, and as the king was then in Normandy, the queen, who was present, confirmed it by her seal."⁴²⁵ Edith/Matilda then issued the surviving writ below, attesting to the decision.

Mathilda, queen of England, to Robert Bishop of Lincoln and Thomas de St. John and all the barons, French and English, in Oxfordshire, greeting. Know that Faritius, abbot of Abingdon, has in the court of my lord *and myself* (emphasis mine) in Winchester at the treasury, before Roger, bishop of Salisbury, and Robert, bishop of Lincoln, and Richard, bishop of London and William de Courcy, Adam de Port, Turstin the chaplain, Walter de Gloucester, Herbert the chamberlain, William de Oully, Geoffrey FitzHerbert, Willaim de Anesy, Ralph Basset, Geofrey de Mandeville, Geoffrey Ridel, and Walter, the archdeacon of Oxford, deraigned by the book of the treasury that his manor of Lewknor is not obliged to do anything in the hundred of Pyrton and that whatever has to be done, shall be done only in the hundred of Lewknor, where the church of Abingdon has seventeen hides.⁴²⁶

⁴²⁵ "Homines de hundredo Peritune moliebantur manerium hujus ecclesiae, Levecenore appellatum, suo juri mancipare, sed is abbas in castello Winestre, coram episcopis Rogero Saresberiensis et Roberto Lincolnensi et Ricardo Londoniensi et multis regis baronibus, ratiocinando ostendit declamationem eorum injustam esse. Quare justiciarorum regis judicio obtinuit ut illud manerium nulli alteri hundredo nisi proprio debeat in aliquo fieri obnoxium. Sed quia rex tunc Normannia erat, regina, quae tunc praesens aderat, taliter hoc sigillo suo confirmavit." (Van Caenegem, *English Lawsuits*, Vol. I, no. 189).

⁴²⁶ Mathildis, Angliae regina, Roberto episcopis Lincolnensi et Thomas de Sancto Johanne et omnibus baronibus, Francis et Anglis, de Oxenefordscira, salutem. Sciatis quod Faritius abbas de Abbendona in curia domini mei et mea apud Wintoniam, in thesauro, ante Rogerum episcopum Salesberensem et Rogero et Richardum episcopum of Londoniensem et Willielmum de Curceio et Adam de Porto et

Here evidence surfaces that Edith/Mathilda was involved in adjudication. The sources place her at the court at Winchester in Henry's absence, and her presence at the hearing resulted in a royal confirmation. Though the chronicle differentiates between Edith/Matilda and "the king's justices," she claims the court for her own.⁴²⁷ The evidence above is the nearest extant example of the kind of sway in judicial affairs that Mathilda of Flanders held. There are still some inherent differences, however, that render distinctions between the two sets of evidence. The sources speak of Edith/Matilda's presence at the hearing and of her confirmation, but the active language that was used for Mathilda of Flanders is missing. Though her writ certainly claimed the court as her own, the wording of the writ differentiates between Edith/Matilda and the nobles who were present, calling the latter group "royal justices." Edith/Matilda's presence at Winchester also seems almost coincidental in the language of the source; "the queen, who was present, confirmed it by her seal." Edith/Matilda appears in the record as an ancillary; she was not mentioned at the beginning of the account as the head, or even member, of the group of people who decided the outcome of the dispute. The *justiciarios* do not include Edith/Matilda. Although the lines being drawn here may seem fine, teasing out meaning from rather curt source material calls for close

Turstinum capellanum et Walterum de Glocestria et Herbertum camerarium et Willielmum de Oileio et Goisfredum filium Herberti et Willielmum de Enesi et Radulfum Basset et Goisfredum de Magnavilla et Goisfredum Ridel et Walterum archidiaconum de Oxeneford, et per librum de thesauro disratiocinavit quod Levecanora manerium suum nihil omnino debet in hundredo de Perituna facere, sed omnia quae debet facere, tantummodo in hundredo Levacanora facere debet, in quo hundredo habet ecclesia de Abbendon x et vii hidas. Testibus: Rogero episcopo Saresberiensis et Willielmum de Curceo et Adam de Porto. Apud Wincestriam" Ibid.

⁴²⁷ "in curia domini mei et mea apud Wintoniam" (Van Caenegem, *English Lawsuits*, no. 189).

textual readings. Active verbs like *impendebat* that were used to describe Mathilda of Flanders' activity were not employed for Edith/Matilda. The wording of these terse sources provides clues with which to unsnarl the knotty problems of who held power and how.

There can be no doubt that Edith/Matilda's participation in law and judgment exceeded that of the Anglo-Saxon queens who reigned before her. It is telling that the instance reflecting Edith/Matilda's most active engagement, the Lewknor/Pyrton litigation, specifically mentioned that Domesday was consulted for the verdict. Mathilda of Flanders's involvement, contained and reflected in Domesday, provided a model for her successor, Edith/Matilda. The history of Abingdon's litigation included a precedent for verdicts granted by a reigning queen. Edith/Matilda may have felt particularly comfortable intervening in this case, since her mother-in-law had done so before her, unlike the case concerning St. Augustine's bishop, who had to wait for Henry I return to obtain final judgment.

It comes as no surprise that the direct successor and daughter-in-law of Mathilda of Flanders, the queen who changed her name to reflect her connection to Mathilda, should be holding authority in the same way. Matilda of Flanders's own daughter might even be expected to do so as well. Adela of Blois, the titular head of the Thibaudian house, was heavily engaged in conciliar activity, especially in concert with Ivo of Chartres. Adela's relationship with Ivo was a factor that continued throughout her reign as countess, serving as an alternate means with which to cement her authority when the exercise of military power was not an option. The endangered position of her husband, Stephen of Blois, who infamously reneged on his Crusade oath, provided the

opportunity for Adela to wield power, especially in his absences.⁴²⁸ Threatened with ecclesiastical sanctions, Stephen's uneasy relations with the church gave impetus to the furtherance of Adela's influence in those circles. Her cultivation of her connection with Ivo gained prominence; the association was one of the couple's most useful alliances. It allowed Stephen to remain communicate with the church and minimized the effect of his oath-breaking. Meanwhile, fostering her relation with a reputable and influential bishop bolstered Adela's position as a ruler. Her support for Ivo and her involvement in convening church councils reflected her self-conscious understanding of how necessary it was to retain his preference.⁴²⁹

Much in the style of her mother, Adela also held judiciary hearings at her court, especially when they concerned land she had granted herself. Though this adjudication was not royal justice, and some of her decisions were overturned either by court hearings held by the crown of France or, in some cases, papal decisions, Adela nonetheless was handing down judgments regarding landholding disputes.⁴³⁰ Her orders that certain cases be heard in her *curia* are evidence that, like her mother, she was administering justice.⁴³¹ During Stephen's absences and after his death, her

⁴²⁸ Stephen returned to the Holy Land in 1101.

⁴²⁹ Thibaudian recognition of the moral standing of bishops like Ivo not only enhanced their authority throughout Blois, but when in competition with royal authority, good relations with leading churchmen allowed for privileged status on issues such as ecclesiastical election (Karl F. Werner, "Kingdom and Principality in the Twelfth Century," in *The Medieval Nobility*, ed. Timothy Reuter, Europe in the Middle Ages, Selected Studies [Amsterdam, 1978], 254, 281).

⁴³⁰ Kimberly LoPrete, "A Female Ruler in Feudal Society: Adela of Blois, 1067-1137" (Ph. D. diss., University of Chicago, 1992), 326-7, also 174-5.

⁴³¹ *Marmiotier Cartulaire Blésois*, ed. Charles Métais, (Blois, 1889-1891), no. 74.

regency involved adjudication on a fairly regular basis. Adela intervened in eleven cases concerning Marmoutier priories in a range of contexts: some of these were very informal, such as when she mediated disputes and advised the parties in question to come to reasonable terms.⁴³² More formally, she heard pleas from priories under Thibaudian protection, most often when they concerned rights violated by one of her household staff or vassals. Unlike her mother's court actions, Adela was not active in cases which did not involve property she herself had granted either to a lay person or an ecclesiastical institution, and more than likely she did not make these judgments alone.⁴³³ Comital authority was quite different than royal authority. Adela, however, exercised her rights just as actively as countess as her mother had as queen. A tradition of active female participation in justice had been established, and the women who ruled after Mathilda of Flanders, like Edith/Matilda and Adela of Blois, were able to make use of this heritage in their own courts to bolster their own authority.

Warren Brown examined the way monks in ninth-century Bavaria drafted charter evidence and legal decisions to manipulate the community's memory of the events in question. In a medieval version of what we now call "spin," they transformed the false claims of litigants into just ones and vice versa, depending on the relationship of the litigant to the abbey.⁴³⁴ His examination of the power of a written document to

⁴³² *Marmoutier Cartulaire Blésois*, nos. 85, 86.

⁴³³ This characterization of Adela's judicial activity was the result of a private conversation with Kimberly LoPrete, Saturday, May 29, 1999.

⁴³⁴ Warren Brown, *Unjust Seizure* (Ithaca, 2001), 10-49.

affect a society's experience of legal decisions and events can also shed light on how Mathilda was later perceived. The record of Domesday showed its eleventh-century contemporaries and their immediate successors that women could, and did, operate as judicial authorities. As notaries and sheriffs turned to this guide in later centuries to adjudicate disputes and settle legal conundrums, it revealed to them, as it does to us, that the face of medieval juridical power was once a woman's.

Chapter Five

Relics, Rites and Regulation:

Mathilda of Flanders as Patron

Gifts and patronage were a foundational part of medieval life, and they assumed a variety of meanings and social consequences. Lordship and family were the ties that bound society together, and patronage of any kind reflected this essential truth. To infer any single motive behind such complex transactions would be to ignore the subtleties and nuances inherent in medieval society. The focus of this chapter is patronage extended specifically to monastic houses and churches; ecclesiastical patronage was likely to be well documented in the eleventh century, and also to reap the most diverse benefits. The rewards for the donor, for example, were both tangible and intangible; they could include physical burial in the monastery cemetery, prayers of remembrance, and actual entrance for themselves or a relative into the monastic community. Further, a gift of land or men to a monastic institution could help bolster control of a region that was politically insecure. The intangible advantages, apart from the benefit to one's soul, could also include an association with a prestigious foundation that a gift would ensure, or a demonstration of political solidarity with a group of concomitant patrons. Gift giving was determined by many factors, but the benefits to the donor were unquestionably valued.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁵ "From the reign of Edward the Confessor, the upper echelons of society all supported religious houses, both secular and monastic The pool from which abbeys (were) to draw their benefactors, i.e. officials associated with the royal court and their families, was to be virtually unchanged by the Norman Conquest." Emma Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England: 1066-1135* (Woodbridge, 1998), 23.

In many ways, Norman aristocrats were no different than other noble houses with regard to patronage. Benefactors expected to be included in the *societas* of the community, which would result in prayers and intercession on the part of the monks and nuns.⁴³⁶ Norman donors occasionally arranged for their entrance as members of the monastic community in exchange for land or rents.⁴³⁷ Norman monastic patronage, however, followed its own specific contours. In Normandy particularly, the history of monastic patronage was intertwined with the history of the ducal house.⁴³⁸ The irony that the dukes of Normandy functioned as supporters of the Church rather than defilers, as their own Viking grandparents had been, was not lost on contemporaries. Dudo of Saint Quentin noted that though their fathers had left her in tatters, the Norman dukes of the tenth and eleventh centuries were destined to elegantly clothe the Church.⁴³⁹ Even outside Normandy, Ralph Glaber, writing in Burgundy in the eleventh century, carefully distinguished between “bad Northmen,” who had destroyed churches, and “good Northmen,” who had settled in Normandy and gave generously to churches ‘of almost the whole world.’⁴⁴⁰ One sympathizes with the efforts of contemporaries as they

⁴³⁶ A charter of Richard II to Saint Ouen states “. . . ea scilicet conditione ut tam presentes quam futuri monachi memoriam nostri jugiter habeant in orationibus suis . . .” M. Faroux, ed., *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie de 911 à 1066* (Caen, 1961), 150.

⁴³⁷ Gerard Fleitel became a monk at Saint Wandrille in his later years in exchange for five churches (Faroux, *Recueil des actes*, 267).

⁴³⁸ David Bates, *Normandy before 1066* (London, 1982), 192.

⁴³⁹ “. . . quorum praedatu pannosa, horum dono compte palliata” (Dudo of Saint Quentin, *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum*, ed. Jules Lair [Paris, 1865], 141).

⁴⁴⁰ *Rodulfus Glaber Opera*, ed. and trans. John France, Neithard Bulst, and Paul Reynolds (Oxford, 1989), 36-7.

attempted to synthesize the Northmen as the scourge of God with the Normans who were quickly inculturated into monastic patrons *par excellence*. Within two or three generations, the Viking settlers around Rouen switched from plundering the monasteries of northern Francia to patronizing them.⁴⁴¹ Their new position as dukes of Normandy contained an element of monastic patronage almost from the beginning. Olivier Guillot has characterized this relationship as “a sort of symbiosis between the Norman ducal state and Benedictine monasticism.”⁴⁴² The theory of this special relationship was supported by the donation patterns of the lesser Norman aristocracy, who founded secular colleges not bound by a rule, leaving monastic foundations exclusively to the dukes of Normandy until the latter part of the reign of Duke Robert.⁴⁴³ The ducal house used monastic endowment to consolidate its power. In the process of expansion, the Norman dukes donated lands to monasteries in an effort to establish enclaves of support in troublesome areas. Cassandra Potts has shown that the

⁴⁴¹ For the evolution of Norman identity, see David C. Douglas, “The Rise of Normandy,” in *Time and Hour: Some Collected Papers of David C. Douglas* (London, 1977), 95-119; Olivier Guillot, “La conversion des Normands après 911,” *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 24 (1981), 101-219; G. A. Loud, “The ‘Gens Normannorum’: Myth or Reality?” *Anglo-Norman Studies* 4 (1982), 104-209; Timothy Reuter, “Plunder and Tribute in the Carolingian Empire,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 35 (1985), 75-94; Niels Lund, “Allies of God or Man? The Viking Expansion in a European Perspective,” *Viator* 20 (1989), 45-59; Simon Coupland, “The Rod of God’s Wrath or the People of God’s Wrath? The Carolingian Theory of the Viking Invasions,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 42 (1991), 535-54; Felice Lifshitz, “Dudo’s Historical Narrative and the Norman Succession of 996,” *Journal of Medieval History* 20 (1994) 101-20; Cassandra Potts, “*Atque unum ex diversis gentibus populum effecit*, Historical Tradition and the Norman Identity,” *Anglo-Norman Studies* 18 (1996), 139-52.

⁴⁴² Olivier Guillot, “La Libération de l’église par le duc Guillaume avant la conquête,” in *Histoire religieuse de la Normandie*, ed. Guy-Marie Oury (Chambray, 1981), 71-85. Historians such as Lucien Musset have concurred. (Lucien Musset, “Monachisme d’époque franque et monachisme d’époque ducal en Normandie: le problème de la continuité,” in *Aspects du monachisme en Normandie [IVe – XVIIIe siècles]: Actes du Colloque Scientifique de l’Année des abbayes Normandes*, ed. Lucien Musset [Paris, 1982], 55-74, at 74).

⁴⁴³ Bates, *Normandy*, 192.

dukes gave loyal abbeys like Fécamp, which were located squarely within the duchy, additional properties far to the west, outside the region of firm ducal control.⁴⁴⁴ A good example for Fécamp was Saint-Gabriel, located in the middle of the Bessin, which was given to the monks by Robert the Magnificent. Fécamp invested the new house with cash, lands, tithes, and mills, as well as a community of monks who made the new satellite their home.⁴⁴⁵ Eventually, the monks in the Bessin purchased lands and vills around their new center, further ensconcing themselves in the region. The same pattern emerged for the other ducal monastic houses of Jumièges and Saint-Ouen.⁴⁴⁶ These monasteries proved ideal landlords, because they posed no threat to ducal authority; they could be relocated or removed at the duke's pleasure. Monastic houses were, in fact, the perfect agents of Norman ducal will as, through satellite outposts, they gradually drew distant territories into the web of ducal monastic houses, and thus ducal authority, centered in Rouen. Economic expansion also proceeded apace, as the dukes granted to the new houses fairs and markets that brought revenue to the monastery, their Norman masters, and local merchants. Likewise, the ducal house gave secular churches into the hands of monastic houses to extend their control on the local level. As a result of an abbey's possession of these local churches and their incomes, a monastery

⁴⁴⁴ Cassandra Potts, *Monastic Revival and Regional Identity in Early Normandy*, *Studies in the History of Medieval Religion* 11 (Woodbridge, 1997), 76.

⁴⁴⁵ Lucien Musset, "Actes inédits du XI siècle: I, les plus anciennes chartes du prieuré du Saint Gabriel (Cavalδος)," *Bulletin de la société des antiquaires de Normandie* 52 (1955), 117-41.

⁴⁴⁶ Potts, *Monastic Revival*, 58.

assumed responsibility for the spiritual life of rural communities.⁴⁴⁷ The content of the liturgical life of the church and its quality, then, rested comfortably in the hands of ducal monasteries. One of the most significant aspects of monastic reform was the attempt to deter laymen from holding tithes and proprietary churches. Secular colleges did not live in community, and their members were not asked to renounce marriage or property. The tenets of reform monasticism, in regard to secular houses, dovetailed almost seamlessly with the ducal program for Norman expansion. Indeed, it is anachronistic to attempt to separate spiritual and political motives on the part of the Norman dukes. As the reform movement gained popularity with the upper classes, donations to secular houses were slowly converted to gifts to monastic foundations. Robert's example began to be followed by his vassals, and monastic foundations were increasingly the recipients of largesse from members of the aristocracy that had traditionally gone to secular colleges. By the time of William the Conqueror's marriage to Mathilda of Flanders in the early 1050s, the transition had intensified.⁴⁴⁸ After the Conquest, the Norman predilection for endowing monasteries as opposed to secular colleges, like so many political and social factors, affected England significantly. Emma Cownie has shown that English secular minster churches serving local populations but not bound by a monastic rule were less likely to be heavily endowed by the new Norman aristocracy.⁴⁴⁹ Just as in their homeland, the Normans showed a

⁴⁴⁷ Potts, *Monastic Revival*, 46.

⁴⁴⁸ Marjorie Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis: Norman Monks and Norman Knights* (Woodbridge, 1996), 46-7; Bates, *Normandy*, 192.

⁴⁴⁹ Emma Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England: 1066-1135* (Woodbridge, 1998), 13.

preference for monasteries rather than secular colleges when they chose to donate. Furthermore, as in Normandy, the king/dukes were very likely to use donations of local secular churches to monastic houses as a means of consolidating their power. On the eve of the Conquest, England was served by thirty-five Benedictine monastic houses, but an enormous number of secular minster churches and proprietary churches provided for the spiritual needs of the rest of Edward the Confessor's kingdom.⁴⁵⁰ With the coming of the Normans, many of the minsters were impoverished because their tithes went to the favored monastic houses of the new royalty. Most of the larger minster churches saw their status decline precipitously or were given outright to monasteries as cells.⁴⁵¹ Even before the Conquest, English bishops propelling the monastic reform movement took pains to foster a special relationship between monasteries and the throne. Monastic communities were required to perform intercessory prayers for "the king and benefactors by whose bounty, under Christ, we are maintained."⁴⁵² The Benedictine houses also provided theoretical support for the "mystique of royalty" and gained royal protection and favor in return.⁴⁵³

The Conquest not only instituted a Norman monastic model that subsumed secular churches under the authority of Benedictine houses, it also exposed England to

⁴⁵⁰ Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, 26.

⁴⁵¹ Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, 13.

⁴⁵² *Regularis Concordia: The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation*, ed. and trans. Thomas Symons (London, 1953), 5.

⁴⁵³ D. H. Farmer, "The Progress of Monastic Revival," in *Tenth Century Studies*, ed. David Parsons (London, 1975), 10-19.

larger institutional and cultural changes taking place across Latin Christendom, especially in regard to clerical celibacy and simony.⁴⁵⁴ The growth and increasing sophistication of the structure of monastic orders overshadowed the secular minster churches and led to their slow decline over the next generation. As mentioned above, subsequent to the invasion, the bishops and greater abbots of England were all continental men; no Englishmen were appointed to high ecclesiastical office after 1066.⁴⁵⁵ These Norman churchmen followed the traditional ducal model of bringing local churches under their control; the strategy that had been so successful in subduing the outlying regions of the duchy proved equal to the task of dominating England. By the time of Henry I, secular houses had failed to flourish, while Benedictine houses and Augustinian monastic communities burgeoned.⁴⁵⁶

In Normandy, a particular group of religious houses together formed the ducal theatre of patronage. These were established by the Normans on the foundations of ancient Frankish communities that had been harried by their Viking predecessors. They included Fécamp, Saint-Ouen, Saint-Évroul, and Bayeux, and became places of special privilege where, according to Lucien Musset “to demonstrate a Norman prince’s dignity, and what was due to his name, donations were almost necessary.”⁴⁵⁷ These

⁴⁵⁴ Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, 33.

⁴⁵⁵ Brian Golding, *Conquest and Colonization, The Normans in Britain, 1066-1100* (New York, 1994), 158-61.

⁴⁵⁶ Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, 32-3.

⁴⁵⁷ Lucien Musset, “Le mécénat des princes normands au XI^e siècle,” in *Artistes, artisans et production artistique au moyen âge*, ed. Xavier Barral I Altet (Paris, 1987), 130.

monastic houses would later include the dual monasteries founded by Mathilda and William at Caen. A less constant object of Norman monastic activity was Mont-Saint-Michel, whose location on the edge of Brittany would cause the community great difficulty as it was claimed by both the lords of Normandy and Brittany and occasionally used as a pawn, even by Gregory VII, in larger disputes.⁴⁵⁸ Beyond Normandy, certain powerful houses were favored by nearly every ducal generation. These included Cluny, Chartres, Marmoutier, and later Saint-Denis. Further afield, Normans practiced benevolence toward Rome, Jerusalem, and their pilgrims.⁴⁵⁹ The Capetians and other royal houses throughout Europe also favored these famous sites; it is not surprising that the Normans, with pretensions to nobility, and later to royalty, patronized houses that enjoyed the favor of other royal families across Christendom. Later, Augustinians and Cistercians would hold the interest of the Normans, and at the time of the Crusades, the fighting orders of the Templars and Hospitallers found favor.⁴⁶⁰

The types of artistic objects given by powerful Normans seemed to follow the personal preferences of the individual. Though land and coins of gold and silver were

⁴⁵⁸ Paula de Fourgerolles, "Pope Gregory VII, the Archbishopric of Dol and the Normans," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 21 (1998), 47-66.

⁴⁵⁹ Odo of Bayeux who, according to Orderic, desired the papal throne, had a house constructed in Rome "decorated at great expense, with many superfluous ornaments." William of Malmesbury claimed that Odo also stuffed the bags of Roman pilgrims with silver (William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 2 vols. ed. R. A. B. Mynors [Oxford, 1998], 2: 334; Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, 6 vols. ed. Marjorie Chibnall [Oxford, 1969], 4: 39-40).

⁴⁶⁰ J. C. Ward, "Fashions in Monastic Endowment: the Foundations of the Clare Family, 1066-1314," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 32, No. 4 (1981), 427.

the most common sort of donation, the Norman ducal family often expressed themselves through particular artistic pieces and moveable goods. Not surprisingly, the Italian Normans gave materials with an eastern flavor, especially incense and perfumes.⁴⁶¹ William the Conqueror had a preference for towers, and he gave money to both Chartres and Saint-Denis specifically to construct them.⁴⁶² At Saint-Denis, the tower was raised at great expense, only to fall over not long afterward due to flaws in the artist's design.⁴⁶³ William also gave crystal vases to Saint-Denis that were apparently of the "Arab school," representing some contact through his Norman relatives to the East.⁴⁶⁴ Odo of Bayeux gave particularly lavish decorations to fit out his own cathedral at Bayeux, the most famous being a candelabrum fashioned to resemble a crown, of bronze and gilded gold, which held 66 candles and was engraved with 49 Biblical verses. In addition, he had fashioned two unicorns of gold, twenty feet high.⁴⁶⁵ Unlike many other noble houses, there is no extant evidence that the Normans gave books or deluxe manuscripts. Only Emma of Normandy, after her marriage to Cnut, was known to have donated Gospel books to her chosen place of benefaction.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶¹ Musset, "Le mécénat," 130-1.

⁴⁶² The donation for a tower at Chartres was given by William "for the love of his daughter Adeliza" (M. Lépinois, ed. *Cartulaire de Notre-Dames de Chartres*, 2 vols. [Chartres, 1862], 1:14).

⁴⁶³ Guibert of Nogent, *The autobiography of Guibert, abbot of Nogent sous-Coucy*, ed. Charles C. S. Bland (London, 1925), 148.

⁴⁶⁴ Musset, "Le mécénat," 133.

⁴⁶⁵ These objects existed at Bayeux until 1562. See V. Bourrienne, *Odon de Contreville, évêque de Bayeux* (Bayeux, 1900), 8-9.

⁴⁶⁶ Orderic, *Historia* 2: 42.

A deficiency in manuscript donations may simply be explained by a lack of books.

Lucien Musset blamed the Vikings for the striking paucity of this type of donation in the otherwise richly varied catalog of donated luxury items.

Flanders also had a long history of pious patronage; when Mathilda arrived in Normandy, she did so as a woman fully informed by and familiar with monastic giving. Her mother Adela, whose dowry included at least one royal monastery, the abbey of Corbie, founded her own abbey, Messen in Flanders.⁴⁶⁷ The size of Adela's abbey closely resembled La Trinité: it housed thirty Benedictine nuns and twelve canons. Mathilda's aunt, Judith of Flanders, was also both a renowned collector of relics and a patron of manuscript production. A native daughter of Flanders, then an English exile, she resided at the Flemish court intermittently throughout Mathilda's young adulthood.⁴⁶⁸ After her husband Tostig's death, Judith brought relics, most notably of the English St. Oswald, out of England with her. Her subsequent marriage to Welf of Bavaria brought Oswald's cult to Bavaria and Switzerland, and there she and Welf became important patrons of the monastery at Weingarten.⁴⁶⁹ Judith donated deluxe manuscripts to the monastery: one of these, the Judith Gospels, included her portrait.⁴⁷⁰

⁴⁶⁷ Maxime de Montrand, *Dictionnaire des abbayes et monasteries, ou histoire des établissements religieux* (Paris, 1856), 523.

⁴⁶⁸ See chapter 1.

⁴⁶⁹ Dagmar Ó Riain-Raedel, "Edith, Judith, Matilda: the Role of Royal Ladies in the Propagation of the Continental Cult," in *Oswald: Northumbrian King to European Saint*, Clare Stancliffe and Eric Cambridge eds. (Stamford, 1995), 210-29.

⁴⁷⁰ Hanns Swarzenski, *The Berthold Missal: The Pierpont Morgan Library MS 710 and the Scriptorium of Weingarten Abbey* (New York, 1943), 117.

Mathilda's father, Baldwin V, was also involved in monastic patronage; he supplied Judith with a relic of the Holy Blood, which she gave to Weingarten.⁴⁷¹

Mathilda as a patron showed awareness through her actions of both her natal and marital traditions, but developed her own favored places and types of benefaction. During her early years as duchess, Mathilda would simply confirm monastic grants her subjects made. In her first extant charter, signed in her own hand in 1050, she acted as signator in a concession to Notre-Dame de Lyre of a large parcel of forested land, to provide wood for its construction.⁴⁷² Though the exact date of her union to William remains uncertain, she certainly had been married less than a year at the creation of this document.⁴⁷³ According to Lucien Musset, until 1051, William also acted only as a signator to the donations of his nobles or confirmed monastic holdings as they stood under his father and gave nothing further.⁴⁷⁴ William made no new donations to abbeys or monasteries before his marriage to Mathilda. Considering his troubled minority, this circumstance is less striking than it first appears; William only truly gained his dukedom after the Battle of Val-es-dunnes in 1049. Mathilda's natal court

⁴⁷¹ Rev. E. P. Baker, "St. Oswald and his Church at Zug," *Archaeologia* 93 (1949), 105-6.

⁴⁷² The donation also included land given by William FitzOsbern, the Duke's steward, and his wife Adelize (Faroux, *Recueil des actes*, 284-6).

⁴⁷³ William and Matilda's marriage certainly had not taken place by autumn of 1049, when it was prohibited by Leo IX at the Council of Rheims. The charter mentioned above was drawn up before the church was built, as it makes provision for its construction. The church building was dedicated in 1050, considerably narrowing the possible date of the marriage. It must have taken place between September 1049 and before the close of 1050 (Charles Joseph Hefele, ed., *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux*, 11 vols. [Paris, 1911] 4: 2:1024; Faroux, *Recueil des Actes*, 284).

⁴⁷⁴ Musset, "Le mécénat," 126.

illustrated by example the necessity of monastic giving for a noble family. But in contrast to his earlier ancestors, William's father, though sometimes called Robert the Liberal, was anything but an ideal benefactor.⁴⁷⁵ The initial extant grant of new property by the duke and duchess was dated about 1056 at Fécamp and enriched the Benedictine monks at Saint-Flaurent in Angers. Mathilda and William gave the abbey the town of Flottemanville, with its church and twenty acres of land, a barn, twelve tenants, and five free knights. They both fixed their marks, and Robert Curthose, listed only as "filii ipsius comitis," made a mark as well.⁴⁷⁶ The first attempt Mathilda made at founding a house herself was in 1063; she began construction of a complex at the port of Rouen, specifically at Emendreville, which eventually took the name Notre-Dame du Pré at Saint-Sever.⁴⁷⁷ After one church was founded, however, Mathilda left the project for her son Henry I to finish.⁴⁷⁸ The reason for her desertion of the site might be found further west, at Caen.

⁴⁷⁵ Usurpations of church property by the Norman nobility were legendary early in Robert I's reign. In many of Robert's subsequent donations, he gave former monastic holdings back to their rightful owners. Though he provided some support to ducal monasteries, most notably Fécamp, he did not give to non-ducal foundations, as did William, Mathilda, and his predecessor, Richard II. Lucien Musset, "Le Fiefs de deux familles vicomtales de l'Hiémois au XI^e siècle, le Goz et les Montgomery," *Revue historique de droit Français et étranger* 48 (1970), 342-3; Bates, *Normandy*, 100.

⁴⁷⁶ Robert would have been no older than five at the time. The date of Mathilda's marriage was probably 1050-1, and Robert was her eldest child. *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France, Volume I 918-1206*, ed. J. Horace Round (London, 1899), 395.

⁴⁷⁷ Faroux, *Recueils des actes*, 27.

⁴⁷⁸ Lucien Musset, "La Reine Mathilde et la foundation de La Trinité de Caen (Abbaye aux dames)," *Bulletin de la société des Antiquaires de Normandie* 42 (1984), 193.

William and Mathilda's famous dual foundation of abbeys at Caen was made in response to a papal dictate in 1059 absolving them of the charge of consanguinity in exchange for monastic largesse. Two houses were to be founded by the couple, a male house for William and a female house for Mathilda. What might have been considered a costly and onerous duty, however, Mathilda approached eagerly as an opportunity for conspicuous giving. By the end of 1059, the year of Alexander II's decision, Mathilda had already approached her chosen candidate for her foundation's first abbess. Also named Mathilda, La Trinité's first abbess came from Saint-Leger-de-Préaux, an abbey only recently founded in 1050 or 1051 by Aubré, the wife of Onfroy de Veilles, baron of Risle.⁴⁷⁹ Just as at the traditional ducal houses of Fécamp, Bayeux, Saint-Évroul, and Saint-Ouen, Mathilda and William saw lavish endowment of both houses as an imperative for the dignity of the duchy. Mathilda spent much of her energy as duchess, and later as queen, securing the fiscal future of her abbey. That she considered La Trinité solely her responsibility was evident from her activity on the abbey's behalf. Her own daughter, Cecilia, was dedicated to the abbey as a child, and would eventually become its second abbess. Thus, Mathilda's connections to the community were more immediate than pure economics, or even the concern for her soul. Like so many medieval donors, her family was involved in the eventual success or failure of the community. Mathilda patently considered La Trinité first, above all of her other patronage responsibilities, endowing it with English lands after the Conquest as well as

⁴⁷⁹ Lucien Musset, ed., *Les Actes de Guillaume le Conquérant et de la reine Mathilde pour les abbayes Caennaises* (Caen, 1967), 14.

making the house the beneficiary of traditional English queen's tithes.⁴⁸⁰ The initial foundation charter of La Trinité in 1066 was actually the culmination of years of preparation. The charter recorded the first example of what would become Mathilda's life long passion: working to ensure the financial success of her abbey. Mathilda's first gift to the house consisted of properties within the walls of Caen itself: Vaucelles, Bénouville, Amblie, and Escanneville, and other smaller properties equaling 160 *livres* and one mark of gold.⁴⁸¹ It was crucial for the effective management of the abbey's properties that these foundational estates lay within easy reach of the nuns; the tithes of goods and cash that were necessary to the health and well-being of the abbey had to be physically collected. Even tenants who had agreed to deliver their rents to the abbey door needed to be close enough to contact if they let their payments fall behind. William was generous to his wife's foundation too; he donated two estates of Barges and Chauffour, near Exmes, equaling about 240 arable acres. Unlike Mathilda's gift, they were relatively distant properties, and lay about thirty miles from the abbey. Mathilda would work tirelessly over the course of her life to consolidate La Trinité's holdings, often paying off overlords and other interested parties to allow her nuns the necessary convenience of managing properties within Caen.⁴⁸²

Like any new monastic house, La Trinité would house its own collection of relics: considering the habits and experience of her natal family, Mathilda would not

⁴⁸⁰ David Bates, ed., *Regesta Regnum Anglo-Normannorum, The Acta of William I, 1066-1087* (New York, 1998), 292-295; Musset, *Les Actes*, 95-8.

⁴⁸¹ Musset, *Les Actes*, 52-7.

⁴⁸² Musset, *Les Actes*, 77-90.

have been remiss in this area. Her marital family also prized holy objects; William carried relics with him in his traveling private chapel.⁴⁸³ Mathilda, however, was no doubt presented with difficulty in obtaining relics of local Norman saints. Like every other aspect of monastic life, relics and reliquaries felt the impact of Viking destruction. The removal of relics to other geographical areas outside of Normandy, either licitly for safe keeping or illicitly by theft, has become the subject of much scholarly interest.⁴⁸⁴ There have also been recent discussions involving evidence for the role of Frankish depredation alongside Viking aggression in the removal or destruction of saint's relics in Normandy.⁴⁸⁵ As late as 1016, Emma of Normandy bought the entire body of St. Ouen while she was in Rouen after the death of Aethelred and took it to England. She then split it up, keeping the head for herself and giving the rest of the Norman saint to Christchurch, Canterbury.⁴⁸⁶ Scholars are generally in agreement that, in the eleventh

⁴⁸³ See below, 19-20.

⁴⁸⁴ For general background on relic theft, see Patrick Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages*, revised ed. (Princeton, 1990). For Normandy in particular, see Canon Legrise, "L'Exode des corps saints au diocèse de Rouen (IXe-XIe siècles)," *Revue Catholique de Normandie* 28 (1919), 125-221; Jean Laporte, "La Date de l'exode de Jumièges," in *Jumièges: congrès scientifique du XIIIe centaire*, 2 vols. (Rouen, 1955), 1: 47-8; Lucien Musset, "Les Destins de la propriété monastique durant les invasions normandes (IXe-XIe siècles): l'exemple de Jumièges," in *Jumièges: congrès scientifique du XIIIe centaire*, 2 vols. (Rouen, 1955), 1: 49-55; Lucien Musset, "L'Exode des reliques du Sées au temps des invasions normandes," *Bulletin de la société archéologique et histoire de l'Orne*, 83 (1970), 3-33.

⁴⁸⁵ Felice Lifshitz has made the argument that monastic chroniclers often assumed the threat of Viking invasion was the cause of relic translation into monasteries outside Normandy when, in fact, they were simple acts of theft by Franks (Felice Lifshitz, "The Exodus of Holy Bodies Reconsidered: the Translation of the Relics of St. Gildard of Rouen to Soissons," *Analecta Bollandiana* 110 [1992], 329-40). Lifshitz took her argument one step further in a more recent article by claiming that monastic chronicles actually wrote purposely to cover their own monastery's acts of relic theft (Felice Lifshitz, "The Migration of Neustrian Relics in the Viking Age: the Myth of Voluntary Exodus, the Reality of Coercion and Theft," *Early Medieval Europe* 4 [1995], 175-92).

⁴⁸⁶ Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith* (Oxford, 1997), 144.

century, local Norman saint's relics would have proved very difficult to obtain.⁴⁸⁷

Mathilda was obviously not deterred, however, as the number and variety of relics she brought together for La Trinité remains very impressive.

A piece of the True cross of Christ and his manger, and a piece of the Bread that he used and of the sponge, and the ointment, one piece, and of the sepulchre, two pieces. Of the hair of the most blessed Mary, mother of God, and her clothing, two pieces. Of the bones of Isaiah and of Samuel, one piece. Of the hair and beard of St. Peter the apostle, and of his cross and chausable and tunic, and the belt that held it together under the sea. Of St. Andrew the apostle. Of the blood of St. Stephen and a stone with which he was stoned. A hair of St. Denis, and St. Rusticus and St. Eleutherius. The dust and bones of St. Vincent and St. Dimitrius, St. Savianus, and St. Potentius. The blood of St. George in an ampula. A finger of St. Nicholas of Myra and his oil. The beard and clothing of St. Martin. The beard of St. Germain. A finger of St. Eligius of Noyon, and bones of St. Florent and St. Gaudentius. A tooth of St. Arnulf. Three pieces of the hair of Mary Magdalene. The finger of St. Cecile, the virgin. The hair of St. Margaret, and the hair of St. Agatha and their bones. The hair of St. Julian. The bones and hair of St. Aurea. The hair of St. Genevieve. The oil of St. Catherine and St. Demitrius. The body of one of the Innocents, and the body of St. Giles, and many more martyrs, and of the virgin Aaron.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁷ Lifshitz, "Neustrian Relics," 190.

⁴⁸⁸ Musset, *Les Actes*, 15.

The list of relics was highly unusual, not only for the sheer number of holy objects, but for the universality that the chosen items represented. An analysis of the relics list above reveals some surprises. First of all, there were no English saints included in the collection. If the list was compiled toward the end of Mathilda's life, as both Musset and Faroux have suggested, one would expect to see at least one or two English saints among the many Mathilda bestowed on her abbey. If Judith of Flanders, as the widow of Tostig, arranged to bring Oswaldian relics to Germany, how much more available would English relics have been to England's queen? Furthermore, there was an unusually large component of Eastern saints in the collection that give it an almost ecumenical appearance. Greek saints (Vincent and Dimitrius), Roman saints (Margaret, Cecilia, Agatha, and Gaudentius), Old Testament saints (Samuel, Isaiah, and Aaron the virgin) and apostles (Andrew, Peter, and Stephen) all appear in the collection. Less surprising are the saints whose roots were nearer to Normandy: St. Denis, St. Geneviève, St. Rusticus, St. Eleutherius. St. Savinius, and St. Potentius were both from Sens. The list obviously was ordered by rank; relics of the Virgin followed relics of Christ's cross, manger, sponge, and oil.

The origin of the saints did not, certainly, necessitate that their relics were only available in foreign locales. A piece of the True Cross, for instance, was not unknown in Flanders; such a relic was donated to the abbey of Stavelot in Flanders in 1046.⁴⁸⁹ In addition, the Countess Adeliza of Burgundy, William's aunt, donated a piece of the True Cross to Saint-Martin-de-Sees sometime between 1083 and 1089.⁴⁹⁰ She may have

⁴⁸⁹ A. Frolov, *La relique de la Vrai Croix* (Paris, 1966), 272.

⁴⁹⁰ Musset, "L'Exode des reliques," 3-33.

obtained this relic through Mathilda's contacts, but there is evidence that True Cross relics were available in France.⁴⁹¹ Likewise, the church of Sainte-Madeleine-de-Bayeux had acquired relics of St. George and Mary Magdalene around 1077.⁴⁹² Because Mathilda chose relics that originated in Rome, Greece, and many distant territories, one would assume that Mathilda utilized her extended family and patronage networks across Flanders, France, Normandy, and Germany to collect them. Some of these relics may have come from William's family in Sicily. St. Dimitrius, for example, was the patron saint of Thessalonika, and Robert Guiscard had pretensions in that direction, resulting in both military activity and monastic contacts.⁴⁹³ Guiscard and other Italian Normans also traveled throughout the Holy Land, as did some of the Counts of Flanders; these travels could have resulted in various holy objects. Gregory VII dedicated an altar in the church of St. Cecilia in Trastevere, and his contact with Mathilda had already been established. Their friendly relations may have resulted in Mathilda's obtaining a finger of the saint. As mentioned above in chapter 1, the Flemish court was populated with high-born foreigners from Normandy, England, and all over Europe; many of these expatriates were short of revenue. They could have brought relics with them that they were willing to part with in exchange for funds. From the example of Judith of Flanders and the Holy Blood, we already know that Mathilda's family exchanged saintly relics

⁴⁹¹ Frolov, *Vrai Croix*, 26-8.

⁴⁹² Lucien Musset, "Autour des origines de Saint-Étienne de Fontenay," *Bulletin de la société des antiquaires de Normandie* 56 (1963), 668.

⁴⁹³ G. A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest*, The Medieval World (London, 2000).

with each other and, indeed, a few of the saints in La Trinité's collection had ties to her natal court. Eligius of Noyon, who undertook the conversion of the Flemings in 640, was honored in Flanders in various churches at Tournai, Courtrai of Ghent, Bruges, and Douai. His relics were the object of special veneration and were often moved. Mathilda could have received his finger from her natal family during one such transfer, which occurred in 1066.⁴⁹⁴ St. Margaret, as well, was popular in Flanders, both in Brussels and Bruges; these would be particularly opportune places for Mathilda to locate and acquire holy objects. The relics of French saints whose roots were in the Ile de France might not have been difficult for Mathilda to obtain either. By 1066, Mathilda's father was already the guardian of the king of France, Philip I, who was Mathilda's first cousin. Mathilda and Philip I together oversaw the relic translation of the Holy Shroud at Saint-Corneille-de-Compiègne. Mathilda provided the reliquary for the shroud, "ornamented wondrously with gold, gems and precious stones."⁴⁹⁵ It is not an unbelievable conjecture that Philip would be willing to provide relics, such as those of St. Genevieve and St. Denis, at Mathilda's request. Thus, through her marital and natal families, and no doubt through persuasion and gifts of exchange, Mathilda gathered a treasury of relics to ensure the status of her monastery. In comparison, William's relic collection for Saint-Étienne looked perhaps a bit woeful, though it contained a remarkable forearm of its patron saint. In addition to this valuable relic, Saint-Étienne held only three more relics of St. Stephen: some of the martyr's blood in an ampule, a

⁴⁹⁴ L. Van Der Essen, *Etude critique et littéraire sur les Vitae de saints merovingiens de l'ancienne Belgique* (Louvain, 1907), 324-36.

⁴⁹⁵ M. Prou, ed., *Recueil des actes de Philippe Ier, Roi de France* (Paris, 1908), 319.

clump of his hair, and a scrap of his leather cap. Historians have noted the scanty nature of Saint-Étienne's relic collection in comparison with La Trinité, but they have made no suggestions as to why the two abbeys might have collected relics on a different scale.⁴⁹⁶ We have more evidence for the source of William's relics, however, than we do for the objects Mathilda acquired. In 1035, Robert the Magnificent had already brought the finger of the protomartyr from Jerusalem to Normandy, and had given it to the abbey of Saint-Étienne at Fontenay.⁴⁹⁷ The whole arm, however, somehow came to be housed at Besançon, with the ampule of Stephen's blood. There remains no real explanation as to how William was able to procure this valuable item, but the traditional liturgy of the abbey set the date of the relic reception at October 8.⁴⁹⁸ William's relics and their origin clearly articulated an awareness of the established saints of the ducal house, just as Mathilda's choice of relics, at least to some extent, helped to define her interests and elucidate her family connections. Her relics of St. Stephen's blood and stone may have come from William or another Norman family association.

St. Stephen's finger aside, through La Trinité Mathilda expressed her own desires and preferences, rather than a concern for the continuity of Norman ducal traditions. Her relic collection did not reflect a keen interest in Norman saints, though they may have been difficult to obtain. Likewise, her monastery was not within the

⁴⁹⁶ Lucien Musset commented rather that Saint-Étienne's modest collection of remains "was hardly enough to cause Saint-Étienne to become a center of pilgrimage." Musset, *Les Actes*, 18.

⁴⁹⁷ Musset, "Saint-Étienne de Fontenay," 18-9.

⁴⁹⁸ C. Hippeau, *L'Abbaye de Saint-Étienne de Caen* (Caen, 1855), 459 and 466.

conventional ducal power base, nor was it founded on an ancient monastic site, as were the other Norman ducal houses. At the time of its founding, La Trinité was at the extreme western end of the duchy and was to form the centerpiece of her new stronghold. In 1060, a year after the decree of Alexander II, walls were built to enclose the town and to help support the expansion into Caen. Along with La Trinité and William's abbey of Saint-Étienne, a large castle was also built as a ducal residence.

Her hallmark abbey was innovative in many ways, but throughout its planning and construction Mathilda and William continued to give land and gifts to the traditional ducal places of patronage. In 1064, Mathilda gave the abbey of Marmoutier money for a very large refectory, and William provided funds for a dormitory.⁴⁹⁹ She gave Saint-Évroul numerous gifts of gold placed on the altar and land equaling one hundred *livres* to construct a refectory.⁵⁰⁰ She made an arrangement with Fécamp to grant a cleric named Renaud the tithes, church, and property in Anneville-sur-Seine, under the provision that he would "endeavor to increase and multiply the tithes and the land as much as he could."⁵⁰¹ Perhaps Mathilda's involvement in the fortunes of Fécamp explains the entry noting the celebration of her death in the Fécamp necrology, from which William is notably absent.⁵⁰² Sometime between 1063 and 1066, Mathilda

⁴⁹⁹ Edmund Martène, ed., *Histoire de l'abbaye de Marmoutier*, 2 vols. (Touraine, 1875), 1:329.

⁵⁰⁰ Orderic Vitalis, *Historiae*, 3:240.

⁵⁰¹ Musset, "La vie économique de l'abbaye de Fécamp sous l'abbatiat de Jean de Ravenne (1028-1078)," in *L'Abbaye bénédictine de Fécamp: ouvrage scientifique du XIIIe centenaire*, 3 vols. (Fécamp, 1959), 1: 75, 347.

⁵⁰² David Chadd, ed., *The Ordinal of the Abbey of the Holy Trinity of Fécamp*, Henry Bradshaw Society (London, 1999), 14.

and William made a notable donation outside of their usual habit; they endowed the church of Sainte-Marie in the diocese of Coutances with secular canons. The surrounding circumstances shed light on this unusual gift. William, Mathilda and all three of their sons, Robert, Richard, and William Rufus, were in Cherbourg when William suddenly became gravely ill.⁵⁰³ In the midst of his illness, William pledged his gift, and actually appointed the canons by name: Robert, son of Teolf, Turnulf, and Walter.⁵⁰⁴ In addition, Mathilda laid one hundred shillings on the altar in the hope that William would be healed. His condition worsened, however, and when his death seemed imminent, he also pledged the relics that he usually carried with him in his private chapel to the new canons as well. William eventually recovered completely, and was convinced that St. Mary's intercession had saved him. The result was the re-dedication of the church of Sainte-Marie at Cherbourg and a donation of land in Jersey for the canon's support. William also appointed five more canons to Sainte-Marie, including one of his own chaplains, Odo of Saillusera, whom he endowed with lands he had received from Apulia.⁵⁰⁵ Mathilda herself placed the token of her husband's pledge on the altar. In addition, Mathilda and William ordered another church to be constructed outside the fortress walls as a token of thanks. Mathilda gave money to the

⁵⁰³ Faroux, *Recueils des actes*, 426-32; J. Horace Round, *Calendar of Documents preserved in France* (London, 1899), 341-2.

⁵⁰⁴ Faroux, *Recueils des actes*, 427.

⁵⁰⁵ According to the charter, William had received these lands from Nigel, a son of Constantine, who was living in Apulia at the time (Faroux, *Recueils des actes*, 427).

church herself and deliberated on what land would be committed toward its foundation.⁵⁰⁶

As duchess of Normandy, Mathilda was considered by contemporaries to be a lavish patron, and after the Conquest the list of preferred recipients of Mathilda's patronage expanded. In addition, her giving to abbeys she had already favored increased.⁵⁰⁷ The Conquest changed Mathilda's status in appreciable ways, one of which was a dramatic increase in the funds and land at her disposal. As Musset points out, it was the wealth of England that allowed both William and Mathilda to increase their largesse to Norman houses.⁵⁰⁸ Medieval economic studies have used Domesday Book and other surveys to examine the amount of gold and silver in circulation throughout England at the time of the Conquest.⁵⁰⁹ Though their conclusion about assessment and taxation may vary, nearly all historians have concluded that England was unusually cash rich. Even the English peasantry paid at least part of their taxes, namely the Danegeld, in silver coin.⁵¹⁰ As duke and duchess, the theatres of patronage

⁵⁰⁶ Faroux, *Recueils des actes*, 430.

⁵⁰⁷ Through the royal couple's gifts "the other barons of Normandy were inspired to do likewise, and vied with each other in the good work and competed in giving alms generously as befitted their rank. Each magnate would have thought himself beneath contempt if he had not supported clerks and monks on his estates in the service of God." Orderic, *Historia*, 2:11.

⁵⁰⁸ Musset, "Le mécénat," 127.

⁵⁰⁹ See Sally Harvey, "Domesday Book and Anglo-Norman Governance," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series 25 (1975), 175-93; Edward Miller and John Hatcher, *Medieval England: Rural Society and Economic Change, 1086-1348* (London, 1978), 1-63; J. McDonald and G. D. Snooks, "How Artificial Were the Tax Assessments of Domesday England? The Case of Essex," *Economic History Review* 38 (1985), 352-72.

⁵¹⁰ P. H. Sawyer, "The Wealth of England in the Eleventh Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 15 (1965), 145-64.

were much the same for William and Mathilda in the eleventh century as they had been for Duke Richard II. The conquest of a new kingdom, however, transformed the wealth that was available for monastic giving and the landscape of monasteries Mathilda would favor. In addition, something even more fundamental would transfigure the way Mathilda would associate with monasteries in England.

In the most basic sense, abbeys were managed by a very human abbot: one whose identity as an Englishman or Continental, as noble or common, along with his political finesse and administrative energy, could insure the success or failure of a monastic community. Therefore, monastic giving, *per se*, was not simply a function of the nobility or a hallmark of medieval royalty in a uniform way. Though chroniclers of the period, such as Orderic Vitalis or William of Poitiers, tend to describe an individual as either generous to the church or parsimonious, donors were more than capable of giving to one foundation open handedly while despoiling another. One monastery might be supported very much at the expense of another; donations, or lack thereof, were often dependent on the behavior or situation of the members of a particular house. In fact, generosity to monastic houses was often the result of the donor's personal relationship to or regard for the abbot of the foundation. Likewise, defrauding a particular monastic community's property and goods was also the result of the actions of the abbot or his connections and loyalties. Post- conquest Normans were not alone in acting on such distinctions; English nobles also illustrated this discriminating behavior. The English Æthelwine in the tenth century, "defended the monasteries of the East

Angles with great spirit,"⁵¹¹ yet he seized by force a piece of property he felt was due him from a monastic community in Ely.⁵¹² In much the same way, Ælfhere, a Mercian ealdorman, showed his opposition to Æthelwine by attacking the monasteries under his patronage.⁵¹³ Neither Æthelwine nor Ælfhere were anti-monastic, but their actions showed favor for one monastery and antipathy for another, based on each community's relationships and loyalties. At no time was this more evident than immediately after the Conquest, when some English abbots found themselves entangled in Conquest politics. Hence, before the Conquest, Mathilda's behavior toward monastic establishments was without exception positive and respectful, but the aftermath of the Conquest presented to her a population of monastic insurgents who questioned her right to rule.

Baldwin of Bury St. Edmund was one of the most successful examples of an English abbot who was able to navigate the difficult eddies of the Conquest. Though some of his lands were despoiled in the general confusion of 1066, he was able to negotiate the return of nearly all of them and even secure new donations from his Norman overlords.⁵¹⁴ His success was affected by a few key factors: first, Baldwin was the only Continental abbot in England in 1066. In addition, he was the personal physician and confidant of Edward the Confessor and acted quickly to offer his services

⁵¹¹ John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester, the annals from 450 to 1066*, ed. R. R. Darlington and Patrick McGurk (Oxford, 1995), 426.

⁵¹² Anne Williams, "Princeps Mericorum gentis: the family, career, and connections of Ælfhere, ealdorman of Mercia, 956-83," *Anglo-Saxon England* 10 (1982), 143-72.

⁵¹³ Williams, "Princeps," 157.

⁵¹⁴ Antonia Gransden, "Baldwin abbot of Bury St. Edmonds, 1065-1097," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 4 (1982), 65-76, 187-95.

to William as well; this provided a connection to Edward that William was extremely keen to draw by any means. That Bury St. Edmund was a royal necropolis no doubt gave the foundation additional caché in Mathilda's eyes; she continued to be exceedingly generous to Bury St. Edmund throughout her reign.⁵¹⁵ In fact, William and Mathilda were the abbey's most generous benefactors after the Conquest, donating land from four different counties. Bury was one of the only English houses to which Mathilda granted land specifically "of her own accord," a large estate worth over eight pounds by 1086.⁵¹⁶ Mathilda's affection for the abbey was further underscored by William's grant after her death of one hide and three virgates in Scaldwell, "for the soul of Queen Mathilda."⁵¹⁷ The preceding factors allowed Baldwin, who likewise became William Rufus's physician, to keep Bury in an enviable position when many other English foundations were much less fortunate.

Political machinations, on the other hand, worked profoundly against the monastic abbey at Ely, whose abbot Simeon took an active role in the Fenland rebellion of 1070-1, taking up arms against the throne and offering the abbey itself as a base of operations for rebel forces. After the rout of the English rebels, large portions of Ely's holdings were literally dismantled and portioned off to William and Mathilda's

⁵¹⁵ D. C. Douglas, ed., *Feudal documents from the abbey of Bury St. Edmonds* (London, 1932), 13.

⁵¹⁶ BL MS Add. 47847, 10r.

⁵¹⁷ *Domesday-book ; seu, Liber censualis Willelmi Primi regis Angliae, inter archivos regni in domo capitulari Westmonasterii asservatus: jubente rege augustissimo Georgio Tertio praeo mandatus typis.* ed. Abraham Farley (London, 1783) Northamptonshire, 1: 222b (7-38).

supporters; much of this land would never be held in Ely's possession again.⁵¹⁸ Ely never recovered from its part in the uprising. Neither Mathilda nor William ever made donations or grants to Ely, and indeed they fined the house £1,000 for its involvement in the Fenland uprising. Simeon was removed and the abbey was handicapped by two seven-year vacancies, during which Mathilda and William received the abbey's profits.⁵¹⁹ In terms of patronage, Ely was limited to grants by individuals who entered the community, none of whom incidentally, was Norman.⁵²⁰ Ely's abbots spent much of the following century wrangling in litigation over the return of the monastery's original holdings. The neighboring house of Bury St. Edmund indirectly benefited from Ely's misfortune, as William granted strategic and loyal Bury extra land and funds to support a large complement of knights engaged in keeping watch over the troublesome Fenlands.

A counterpart to Ely, St. Mary's at Abingdon, also suffered for its abbot's involvement in the revolt. The house was closely linked to the Godwine family but before the rebellion had managed to secure the return of some of their lands, despite the abbey's past connections. This changed when Abbot Ealdred joined the rebellion.

⁵¹⁸ Two of the beneficiaries had special connections to Mathilda: William of Warenne, who married a Flemish kinswoman of Matilda, and Richard FitzGilbert, whom Mathilda also gave five hides of land in Shalford. Richard FitzGilbert had probably been acquainted with Mathilda in Flanders, where he and his brother Baldwin fled from Normandy, after his father Gilbert of Brionne, was murdered. Gilbert of Brionne was one of William the Conqueror's ill-fated guardians who died protecting William during his minority (Judith Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* [Cambridge, 1997], 31, 44, 352; Robin Fleming, *Domesday Book and the Law: Society and Legal custom in early medieval England* [Cambridge, UK, 1998], 27).

⁵¹⁹ Fleming, *Domesday Book*, 408.

⁵²⁰ Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, 112.

After Ealdred was imprisoned, the abbey suffered many of the same depredations that were so damaging to Ely. The Abingdon chronicler bemoaned the seizure of not only Abingdon's lands to reward the crown's adherents, but the confiscation of books, vestments, gold, and silver as well. Queen Mathilda herself was the chief offender; she was mentioned specifically in the abbey chronicle. After the monastery's involvement in the rebellion, Mathilda demanded that the monks send her their most prized and valuable ornament. According to the abbey's chronicler, the monks carefully did as they were commanded, only to be further dismayed as Mathilda, unimpressed, demanded something more valuable.⁵²¹ Abingdon also owed a rather large quota of knight service and after the rebellion was refused a reduction.⁵²² The installation of a new Norman abbot did not immediately change Abingdon's fortunes, as the unfortunate abbot Athelhelm learned; he purchased a manor for the abbey with the confirmation of Odo of Bayeux, only to have his land taken from him by the king at Odo's arrest in 1082. This misfortune aside, it was notable that Athelham was able to begin purchasing lands only ten years after Abingdon's disgrace. Abingdon, unlike Ely, rebounded almost completely under the careful management of Rainald, whom we encountered in an earlier chapter. After his chaplaincy with William and Mathilda, Rainald became first a monk of Jumièges, and then abbot of Abingdon. Not surprisingly, it was during

⁵²¹ "Nec tantum de foris per hos dies huiusmodi incommoda, sed et de ornamentis ecclesiae dispendia infra ipsum sanctuarium provenerunt. Siquidem reginae imperio eorundem praetiosiora sibi deferri mandavit. Quid facto opus esset in his, abbate cum fratribus consuelentibus, reginae de electoribus transmittere ornamentis deliberant. Quae ut sibi exhibita sunt respuit, ac ornatiores requirit. Illi, quibus undique peregrinus incumbere metus novorum principum, quod cautius servare debuerant, pro voto imperantis dominae ad medium deferunt; id est casulam aurifixo per totum mirifice consutam, cum cappae choreali valde optima, alba quoque cum stola, et textu Evangeliorum, singulis auro gemmisque laudabili opere redimitis" (*Chronicon monasterii de Abingdon*, 2 vols. ed. J. Stevenson [London, 1858], 1: 485).

⁵²² David Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England, 943-1216*, (Cambridge, UK, 1966), 702-3.

Rainald's abbacy that Abingdon once again became worthy of lay support. "Cherished" by William Rufus, who gave Rainald a large endowment on the Conqueror's death, Rainald's relationship to Mathilda and William made Abingdon a proper recipient for aristocratic patronage.⁵²³

Though some English houses were the subject of Mathilda's wrath, her generosity toward Norman houses remained unstinting. She gave Saint-Amand in Rouen a large part of her dowry lands in Maintru, Bures, and Osmoy.⁵²⁴ La Trinité, especially, benefited from the queen's new riches. A second extant pancarte of the abbey, confirming all of the original grants and recording many new ones, was proof of Mathilda's handiwork.⁵²⁵ The 1082 charter has provided a very useful tool to gauge the relative success or failure of La Trinité after the Conquest. It is clear from this charter that the estates of La Trinité had grown enormously and now extended beyond Cavaldos and Orne to the *départments* of Manche, Eure, and Seine-Maritime. In fact, the abbey's holdings had at least doubled in size. Unlike the situation in the 1059 charter, the abbey's most substantial estates no longer seemed scattered and haphazard. Eight total *vills*, as opposed to the four Mathilda had originally granted, were now in La Trinité's possession. All of them were within a few kilometers of the abbey's walls: Ouistreham, Carpiquet, Auberville-sur-Mer, Sallen, and the villa of Calix. Mathilda had pursued a deliberate policy of consolidation. Though the abbey still held scattered

⁵²³ *Chronicon monasterii de Abingdon*, 2: 41.

⁵²⁴ Prou, *Recueils des actes*, 26.

⁵²⁵ Musset, *Les Actes*, 77-90.

properties in tithes, mills, meadows, and other fractions of villages and partial church holdings, Mathilda herself had undertaken either to fund new acquisitions from her own revenues or pay other donor's fees when necessary. For instance, Mathilda bought Chaffour, with everything attached to it, from Richard, the son of Ranulf, with the agreement of Aitard, from whom it was held. Walern, son of Ranulf, was an infamous usurer in Caen who enriched himself by the ruin of his clients.⁵²⁶ Mathilda pressured Walern to part with property he had gained in this fashion, including a mill at Amblie and an additional fifty acres in Caen. She redeemed the vill of Barge from the claims of Walern's niece, who was also involved in the family business, and donated it to La Trinité.⁵²⁷ Mathilda bought Escanneville from William and Robert, the sons of Wimund Cufel, and additionally from Robert, the lands he held at Hérrouville. She acquired lands at Tassilly and Montbouin from Richard, the son of Herluin, on the understanding that he would hold them until his death and then they would pass to the abbey in full possession. Mathilda obtained the agreement through payment of William de Briouze when Stigand de Mézidon gave to La Trinité the churches of Falaise and Guibray with their tithes and mills. Half of the manor of Capriquet had been given to La Trinité by Thurstan Haldup in 1066, upon the entrance of his daughter Adelaide. By the issuance of the second pancarte, it had been purchased in full by Mathilda. To accomplish this task, the duchess made exchanges and purchases from three different

⁵²⁶ *Charters and Custumals of the Abbey of the Holy Trinity Caen: Part II The French Estates, Records of Social and Economic History Series 22*, ed. John Walmsley (Oxford, 1994), 9.

⁵²⁷ *Charters and Custumals*, 201.

parties: Adelaide's brother, Odo of Bayeux, and Ranulf, vicomte of Bayeux.⁵²⁸

Moreover, the queen exchanged two of the properties originally donated by Thurstan Haldup for three churches and their tithes within Caen itself: St. Stephen the Elder, St. Martin, and St. George, which happened to be the castle church of Caen. Mathilda evinced an interest in viticulture with regard to La Trinité's holdings. She purchased for La Trinité seven *arpents*, or vineyard acres, at Argences, about ten miles southwest of Caen, and a total of thirteen *arpents* at different locations in Léry, Aubevoye, and Vernon on the left bank of the Seine.⁵²⁹ The queen also purchased the agreement of Robert fitz Hamo to sixty *arpents* at Chouain and Ducy-Sainte-Marguerite. La Trinité's first abbess Mathilda, perhaps influenced by the queen, also purchased vineyards for the abbey about a year after her patroness. She used abbey funds to obtain a total of three *arpents* in Argences and Exemes for 27 livres and 10 sous in 1083. After Mathilda's death that same year, there are no other purchases of this kind recorded for La Trinité, which might signal that this was a personal project of hers.⁵³⁰

Historians have remarked Mathilda's vigorous behavior on behalf of her abbey, especially her exercise of counter gifts. Counter gifts were often used in transfers of property, and though they were often granted to the donor, sometimes they were not. It was not unusual for a counter gift to be given to someone whose consent made the gift

⁵²⁸ Musset, *Les Actes*, 89-90.

⁵²⁹ The region around Argences was well known for its wine. In addition to the use of the wine at the abbey, as duchess of Normandy, Mathilda had always received free rights of carriage at Caen and Bayeux for its trade in the surrounding region, an additional boon for the nuns (Bates, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, 530-3).

⁵³⁰ Norman viticulture reached its apex in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, but no other vineyard donations are recorded in any other of the abbey's charters up to 1257.

possible - whether or not that consent had been given. Emily Zack Tabuteau has found that the countergift was sometimes used as a way to manipulate the consent of someone who was reluctant, or to give the impression to society at large in a public ceremony that a recalcitrant consenter had indeed capitulated. There are cases when someone else gave a countergift of this kind on behalf of the church. According to the evidence from La Trinité, Mathilda, sometimes with William's cooperation, gave these types of countergifts approximately fifteen times. In almost every case, the countergift was specifically mentioned in the charter as the motive for the donation or consent.⁵³¹ Tabuteau claimed that Mathilda was by far the most active party in Normandy when it came to this type of gift exchange.⁵³² "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."⁵³³

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

⁵³¹ Emily Zack Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Normandy Law* (Chapel Hill, 1988), 115-7.

⁵³² "No other person engaged in the same practice nor did any other church benefit from it, with anything like the same frequency but other examples occur in which the contributor of a countergift to a confirmer was an alienor or another confirmer" (Tabuteau, *Transfers*, 28).

⁵³³ Tabuteau, *Transfers*, 287.

pressure, and provided funds when necessary to allow for the growth and fiscal health of her abbey. Her donations to La Trinité in cash and lands, exclusive of English estates, add up to well in excess of a million dollars in modern monetary valuation.⁵³⁴ She was a profoundly resourceful, energetic, and powerful patron.

In addition, one of Mathilda's charters for La Trinité shows her to be a master of detail. Together with William, Mathilda assigned portions of La Trinité's patrimony to particular functions and needs of the abbey in a document that provides an intimate picture of monastic daily life. The sacristy was granted the offerings made at the altar, all the gold and deluxe fabrics granted to the abbey, the burial fees from the churches in its domain, and the income of the churches in Falaise except for the corn. There were four endowed canons at the abbey. Each was each granted a house in front of the church, and together they received forty acres of land, four freemen, an additional thirty acres in Blainville, three half-tithes scattered throughout the immediate area, a total of five peasants, and half the church at Bénouville. An enormous pool of resources was set aside for the nun's food. These included 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 with all of their appendages. Also reserved for their sustenance was a quarter of Calix, a third of Graye, a quarter of Ranville, a third of Grandcamp, two thirds of Puteus, two ploughlands, two peasants, two and a half mills, the tithe of Fôret d'Avranchin, and 200 acres of land. The tithe of coins and the whales from the holdings of William's abbey

⁵³⁴ Musset, *La Reine*, 200.

of Saint-Étienne at Bavent and on the Diveta were also donated for the nun's food. The eighteen acres of vineyard Mathilda acquired further served the nuns victual needs and provided surplus for trade. Furthermore, in order to support the construction and maintenance of these vineyard arpents, William and Mathilda together gave the tithe of the mills and the toll of Gacé, half the tithe of Hénouville, three peasants at Bures, and the English manor of Minchinhampton. For wood, and for the needs of the nuns' chambers, three English estates were set aside: Felsted in Essex, Tarrant in Dorset, and Penbury in Gloucestershire. For lighting the dormitory, the tithe of the toll of Ecouché was reserved; for lighting the houses of the infirmary, forty shillings from four tenants in Les Moutiers. The almonry also received a large share of La Trinité's income. The estates set aside for these purposes included: "one third of the tithe of all of Villers and half the tithe of Caen, two mills, two ploughlands, the tithe from all the pence of charitable gifts for both the living and the dead, three bordars with four freemen in Amblie, a peasant, two-thirds of the tithe at Montbouin, three sheaves of tithe, forty acres at Englesqueville-la-Perceé, the land of Foc with all of its appendages and the tithe from all bacon, cheese, and animals brought from England to the abbey."⁵³⁵ The king and queen also established a fair in front of La Trinité on the eighth day of Pentecost, and the revenues from the customs and tolls all went to the nuns' food. Immediately outside the abbey doors, Mathilda and William also founded a sanctuary dedicated to St. Giles, which contained the saint's body, for the burial of the poor. They made arrangements that burials for the indigent should always be done in front of all

⁵³⁵ Musset, *Les Actes*, 95-8.

four of the endowed canons and the almoner, probably to ensure that the poor were not made to pay the customary burial fees.

Mathilda's death in November of 1083 changed La Trinité's standing materially. The final gifts of English land Mathilda bequeathed the abbey on her death bed may actually have never been received; La Trinité was to receive two other English estates, probably Great Baddow in Essex and Umberleigh in Devon.⁵³⁶ There was no record of them in the accounts of the abbey's holdings after her death. She did successfully endow the abbey with English art: a chausable made in Winchester "operatur uxor Aldereti," of the celebrated *opus Anglicanum*. She donated chains of gold decorated with crosses to hold altar lanterns, a candelabrum made in Saint-Lô, a chalice, vases, and jewels.⁵³⁷ Most telling was her gift to La Trinité of her crown, her scepter, her mantle, and her horse's harness. These items were grouped together and were the symbols of her office. The crown, scepter, and mantle were emblems of her rule, and her horse's harness certainly represented her endless peripatetic journeys: to rule as regent over Normandy, to preside over her nobility, to dispense justice, and to take part in councils, commissions, and elections.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁶ They are mentioned as "Betdonia" and "Tembrelia" respectively in the charter of July 18, 1083, Matilda's testamentary charter. Later, in Domesday, they are listed under the names Great Baddow and Umberleigh, both previously manors of the queen (Marjorie Chibnall, ed., *Charters and Costumals of the Abbey of Holy Trinity, Caen* [London, 1982], xxv; Musset, *Les Actes*, 112-114).

⁵³⁷ The candelabrum may have been of Italian origin. Geoffrey, bishop of Coutances, the lord of Saint-Lô, visited Sicily to target Robert Guiscard for donations to Guiscard's home diocese. Geoffrey came back laden with treasures, no doubt stripped from Italian churches. Saint-Lô was famous for these possessions, and Geoffrey of Coutances and Mathilda were close associates (John H. LePatourel, "Geoffrey of Montbray, Bishop of Coutances, 1049-1093," *English Historical Review* 59 [1944], 136-7).

⁵³⁸ Mathilda left La Trinité in excellent standing after her death. A brief period of uncertainty during Robert Curthose's reign was followed by decades of generosity for La Trinité, as it continued to be highly favored by generations of royal patrons. These included Henry I and his wife Matilda, the Empress

Acting firmly in the Norman tradition, Mathilda chose moveable goods to donate to many of her favorite communities. Like her predecessors, she habitually chose particular kinds of objects that can be seen as expressions of her artistic preferences and perhaps even her spirituality. Mathilda's favored gifts were almost always liturgical vestments. She employed goldsmiths, embroiderers, and artisans specializing in gold fringe for this purpose.⁵³⁹ To Marmoutier, Mathilda gave a cope and "other beautiful things,"⁵⁴⁰ and to Saint-Évroul, she gave a chausable made of gold and pearls, and a cope to be worn by the cantor.⁵⁴¹ To Cluny, she gave a chausable so stiff with gold that it could not be folded,⁵⁴² and she gave another chausable to Chartres, for which we have no description.⁵⁴³ Mathilda did donate other types of objects, for instance; she bestowed on Saint-Florent-de-Saumur a gold chalice.⁵⁴⁴ Donations of vestments, however, outweighed any other type of moveable gift Mathilda

Matilda, Henry II, and noble families throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (Walmsley, *Charters and Custumals*).

⁵³⁹ Otto the Goldsmith, Leofgeta, who made gold fringe, and the wife of Aeldred, an embroideress, all held lands from Mathilda in exchange for their artistry (DB Essex 1, 11; DB Wiltshire 68, 86; DB Hampshire 6, 16).

⁵⁴⁰ Walmsley, *Charters and Custumals*.

⁵⁴¹ Orderic, *Historiae* 2: 148-50.

⁵⁴² H. E. J. Cowdrey, ed., *Memoirs of Abbot Hugh of Cluny*, Studi Gregoriani IX (1978), 64-65.

⁵⁴³ Guibert of Nogent, 186.

⁵⁴⁴ P. Marchegay, "Chartres angevines des Xie et Xlle siècles," *Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des chartes*, 36 (1875), 413-4.

utilized. Mathilda may have had a particular reason for using liturgical vestments as gifts so regularly.

Examining the Investiture controversy, Brigitte Bedos-Rezak showed that concerns about mediation, signification, and representation preoccupied the eleventh and twelfth century. The papacy held that the episcopal ring and crosier were themselves only meaningful when they were utilized by a valid candidate; the true significance of these objects was derived “from a value ascribed to them by common agreement.”⁵⁴⁵ In the eleventh century, however, the current debate concerned aspects of theology more foundational than the signs of episcopal office and their efficacy. Theologians and teachers were examining minutely the nature of personhood and representation as it touched theories of the Trinity, the sacraments, and the Incarnation.⁵⁴⁶ The pre-scholastics who were involved in this question were elite churchmen like Lanfranc and his circle. These ecclesiastics were not only teachers who founded schools, but also chancery officials who supervised the production and storage of charters. The post-Conquest English scriptorium was in its infancy, and the Norman ducal house relied on monastic charter production exclusively. Meanwhile, school and chancery shared the same location and personnel, a staff of men Bedos-Rezak has termed “chancery-scholars.”⁵⁴⁷ These were bishops and abbots whose monastic

⁵⁴⁵ Brigitte Miriam Bedos-Rezak, “Medieval Identity: A Sign and a Concept,” *American Historical Review* 105 (2000), 1492.

⁵⁴⁶ William J. Courtenay, *Covenant and Causality in Medieval Thought: Studies in Philosophy, Theology and Economic Practice* (London, 1984), see especially essays 2 and 7; H. de Lubac, *Corpus mysticum: L'eucharistie et l'église au Moyen Âge, étude historique* (Paris, 1949); Gary Macy, *The Theologies of the Eucharist in the Early Scholastic Age* (Oxford, 1984).

⁵⁴⁷ Bedos-Rezak, “Medieval Identity,” 1502.

foundations produced the documents both under their names and on behalf of the throne. In addition to this intimate relation between chancery office and theological epicenter, there also stood, as a complement to it, the almost familial ties and associations of teacher to apprentice, scholar to student, scholar to scholar. These ties bound high churchmen together, or fostered rivalries, that transcended geographical distance. Lanfranc was closely associated with Berengar of Tours in the Loire Valley before he found his way to Normandy, first as master of the school of Avranches, then as the founding master at Bec, and later as abbot of Saint-Étienne in Caen. At Bec, Lanfranc trained his successor, Anselm of Canterbury, and Ivo, who became an abbot in Beauvais before becoming bishop of Chartres. Anselm of Laon sat under Anselm of Canterbury, who in turn trained Peter Abelard, William of Champeaux, Alberic of Rheims, Gilbert of Poitiers, and his brother Ralph, who would be his successor.⁵⁴⁸ Chancery scribes and personnel were actively recruited from the schools mentioned above, and their careers could lead to high episcopal office. An illustrative case was Samson, a court scribe who went on to replace his brother, Archbishop Thomas of York, to become chaplain and archdeacon of Bayeux.⁵⁴⁹ The varied careers of the theologians above also demonstrate the fluid exchange between cathedral school and monastery. Lanfranc and Anselm of Canterbury produced much of their work while living in monastic houses, but their careers were ultimately bound up in the royal court.

⁵⁴⁸ John R. Williams, "Cathedral Schools of Rheims in the Eleventh Century," *Speculum* 29 (1954), 661-77; idem, "Godfrey of Rheims, a Humanist of the Eleventh Century," *Speculum* 22 (1947), 29-45; Ghislain Brunel, "Chartres et chancelleries épiscopales du Nord de la France au IX^e siècle," in *A propos des actes d'évêques: Hommage à Lucie Fossier*, ed. Michel Parisse (Nancy, 1991), 238-42.

⁵⁴⁹ See Chapter Four.

All of the above connections support the notion that theological debates and issues were not isolated from court circles. As we have seen with the primacy debate in Chapter One, the lay nobility were deeply involved in issues touching on the nature of the church and its organization, both spiritual and corporeal. Likewise, scriptural exegesis and the hotly contested theories of the Eucharist deliberated by Lanfranc, Berengar, and others swirled in and around the eleventh century Anglo-Norman court.⁵⁵⁰

The ideas of eleventh- and twelfth-century theologians are important for our discussion because these men were intimately involved in both teaching and royal administration. The bishops and abbots who were engrossed in the controversy regarding personhood, representation, and mediation also had the final authority on documents produced for the royal house that were eventually ratified for the benefit of their monasteries. Foundationally, the eleventh-century Eucharistic dispute centered on notions of real presence and the nature of representation. Lanfranc was a strong supporter of real presence; the Eucharist was transformed by the liturgy to become God as a tangible reality.⁵⁵¹ In defense of this concept, discussions regarding signs, representation, and the authority and authenticity of objects directed belief and attention away from the Augustinian gap between reality (signified) and symbol (signifier), an

⁵⁵⁰ At the Council of Rheims in 1049, Pope Leo IX denounced and made heretical many of Berengar's theories (A. J. Macdonald, *Berengar and the Reform of Sacramental Doctrine* [1930; rpt. edition, 1977]). For tracts directed against Berengar, see Macy, *Theologies of the Eucharist*, 44-53.

⁵⁵¹ Lanfranc himself believed he had witnessed a miracle involving the Eucharist as a young man. During the Mass, a priest had found real flesh and real blood on the altar in place of the bread and wine. It was later sealed into a reliquary (Guitmund La Croix-St.-Leofroy, *De corporis et sanguinis Christi veritae* ii, PL 144:1449-50).

alienation brought about by the fall of humankind.⁵⁵² Instead, scholars like Lanfranc, Anselm of Bec, and William of Champeaux promoted the idea that things and objects could be the realization of form in matter. In Lanfranc's famous *Liber de corpore et sanguine Domini*, he specified that the material objects on the Eucharistic table were themselves converted to the body of Christ *in their being* (emphasis mine).⁵⁵³ Berengar, by contrast, insisted that the Eucharist had to be allegorized in order to be understood by man.⁵⁵⁴ According to Berengar, the sacrament consisted of two things: the visible bread and wine, and the invisible body of Christ, to which it referred.⁵⁵⁵ Lanfranc wrote to contest the distinction between mere objects and the miraculous benefit they might convey. Lanfranc's defense of real presence against Berengar was very popular and repeatedly referenced.⁵⁵⁶ According to Bedos-Rezak, the cultural outcome of this debate changed the relation between the signifier and the signified "so that an iconic representation might be seen as more real than empiric evidence."⁵⁵⁷ The debate

⁵⁵² Augustine, *De Doctrina Christiana*, ed. R. P. H. Green (Oxford, 1995), 24-5.

⁵⁵³ *Credimus igitur terrenas substantias, quae in mensa dominica per sacerdotale mysterium divinitus sanctificantur, ineffabiliter, incomprehensibiliter, mirabiliter, operante superna potentia, converti in essentiam dominici corporis...* (Lanfranc, *Libre de corpore et sanguine Domini*, PL 150:234).

⁵⁵⁴ MacDonald, *Berengar*.

⁵⁵⁵ "Sacrificium...ecclesiae duobus constat, duobus conficitur: visibili et invisibili, sacramento et re sacramenti. Quae tamen re (id est Christi corpus) si esset prae oculis, visibilis esset; sed elevata in caelum sedensque ad dexteram Patris..." (Berengar of Tours, *De Sacra Coena* ed. A. F. Vischer and F. T. Vischer [Berlin, 1834], 166; see also Macy, *Theologies of the Eucharist*, 35-53).

⁵⁵⁶ Ivo of Chartres used whole passages in his *Decretum*, as did Bernold of Constance (R. B. C. Huygens, "Bérengrar de Tours, Lanfranc et Bernold de Constance," *Sacris Erudiri* 16 [1965], 355-87).

⁵⁵⁷ Bedos-Rezak, "Medieval Identity," 1503.

regarding the Eucharist, therefore, went beyond the supposition that reality could be perceived through an iconic object. Theories that conflated the object and the reality it signified produced the notion of immanence rather than transcendence. Consequently, the object was not merely representative of the signified reality, but contained in itself the identity of the signified.⁵⁵⁸

Lanfranc appeared at the papal court at least three times to denounce Berengar's theories, including his visit in 1059, at which he argued for the validity of Mathilda's marriage to William of Normandy. His concern for real presence would continue throughout his life. The *Liber de corpore et sanguine Domini* was written in or around 1080, seventeen years after his election to the archbishopric.⁵⁵⁹ It is within the context of these debates and the resultant theories, propounded by members of Mathilda's court, that we can interpret her gifts of liturgical vestments to monasteries. It is suggestive that Mathilda would so often favor gifts in this form precisely during a period in which debates concerning presence and representation were raging. Mathilda's motives and thoughts concerning these gifts are unreachable, however, we can surmise three things about them. First, the audience for Mathilda's gifts was restricted to monastic communities and those present during the community's celebration of the Eucharist. In the case of the rich and renowned houses such as Cluny, or Bury St. Edmund, visiting nobility may have occasionally attended the Mass, but the primary participants in the liturgy were the community members themselves. Second, the vestments Mathilda commissioned for these occasions were invariably heavily embroidered and covered

⁵⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁵⁹ Sally Vaughan, *The Abbey of Bec and the Anglo-Norman State* (Woodbridge, 1981), 17-9.

with gold or silver thread, precious gems, or ornaments. They were costly, deluxe garments that bespoke her wealth and position and were representative of royal and/or ducal rank. Last, royal and ducal gifts attracted other noble donations. The examples of the monasteries above provide illustrations of monastic houses that, though once suffering a dearth of grants and donations, saw their economic fortunes improve through the subsidiary gifts that came in the wake of royal favor. Therefore, a gift originating from the throne, in any form, would be a noted and welcome addition to monastic capital. These verifiable facts indicate that although it is impossible to read Mathilda's motives from a distance of hundreds of years, she could have made some assumptions about the gifts she commissioned and gave to monastic houses. She could be certain that her gift would be used to clothe a male monastic for the celebration of the Eucharist. Moreover, the gift would be recognized and esteemed by the community, both in terms of its tangible physical value and as a symbol of the increased status of the house. Mathilda would also be aware that if the monastic community made the gift widely known her generosity might lead to other noble donations, and in fact, she herself would have confirmed some of these. Viewed against the backdrop of controversy regarding real presence, mediation and representation, the role of Mathilda's gifts at the Eucharistic table can be seen as a representation of her real presence, her person. Of Mathilda's donations to monastic houses, at least five of the six major houses she favored during her lifetime received vestments to be worn specifically for liturgical practice.⁵⁶⁰ Her last documented charter willed to La Trinité a

⁵⁶⁰ Mathilda gave liturgical vestments as gifts to Saint-Evroul, Cluny, Marmoutier, La Trinité, and Chartres.

garment from her own chamber to be made into a cope. This gift, though made to a female house, could only be worn by a male monastic who performed the Eucharist. This line of inquiry, though fascinating, should be conducted with caution. Mathilda was not the first queen to give vestments to a monastic community, nor was she the last. Queen Emma often gave textiles to her favored churches, though we know of only one priestly garment: a cope with golden tassels given to Canterbury.⁵⁶¹ During the later Middle Ages, noble families regularly inscribed their crests and coats of arms on altar cloths and vestments as signs of patronage. The thirteenth-century Syon Cope is perhaps the most famous and well-preserved example of an English liturgical vestment. Literally covered with heraldic devices, the cope represented, on the body of the priest, the noble families of the district as the Mass was taking place.⁵⁶² Though the Syon Cope was unusual because it survives nearly intact and retains much of its original beauty, the nature of the devices that cover it were not atypical. In a late but rather pointed example, a scroll with the inscription “Henrici et Johanne uxoris ejus” was emblazoned across a fourteenth-century altar cloth.⁵⁶³ The presence of the laity within the Eucharist and the roles these dressings and furnishings played in the rites of the church have yet to be fully explored. It is sufficient to note, as elsewhere in this study,

⁵⁶¹ Gervase of Canterbury, *Gesta Regum, Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, 2 vols. Rolls Series ed. W. Stubbs (London, 1880), 1: 56. Emma gave to Ely a rich embroidered pall to drape around each saint, and a cloth to cover the tomb of Saint Aethelrith (Stafford, Queen Emma and Queen Edith, 142).

⁵⁶² E. R. D. MacLagan, *Catalogue of English Ecclesiastical Embroideries of the Thirteenth to Sixteenth Centuries in the Victoria and Albert Museum* (London, 1930), nos. 1-3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 21, 24, 26, 29, 31, 34, 38, 41.

⁵⁶³ MacLagan, *English Ecclesiastical Embroideries*, no. 34.

that modern divisions between sacred and profane have little meaning in the eleventh century. In addition, the discussion of Mathilda's donations of vestments illustrates that the distance between monastery and royal court was negligible.

Michal Kobialka described the Lanfranc-Berengar controversy in theoretical terms as a destabilizing force in a Church that heretofore had relied upon the homogeneous reading of the Eucharist as presented by Paschasius.⁵⁶⁴ The eleventh-century conflict over this foundational convention introduced Aristotelian philosophy into the debate. In some ways, Aristotelian theories of substance supplanted the teachings of the Church Fathers to allow Lanfranc's Eucharistic theology to dominate. The intellectual and theoretical space created by this tension made room for conflicting views where there was once, perhaps involuntary, consensus.⁵⁶⁵ Kobialka also examines the *Regularis concordia* that was rewritten at this period in the eleventh century. The production of the *Regularis* and the political particulars surrounding it allow another look at the possible destabilization of Church doctrine and the effect this opportunity could have had on society. Lanfranc, essentially pressed into service in post-Conquest England, reluctantly took up the mantle of reform to bring the English monasteries into line with continental and Clunaic models of monasticism.⁵⁶⁶ He

⁵⁶⁴ Michal Kobialka, *This Is My Body: Representational Practices in the Early Middle Ages* (Ann Arbor, 1999), 102.

⁵⁶⁵ Kobialka, *This Is My Body*, 102.

⁵⁶⁶ Lanfranc rather piteously claims in his letter to Alexander II, "I do not know to whom I may more appropriately unfold my misfortunes than to you, father, who have brought these misfortunes upon me. When William, duke of the Normans, had removed me from the community at Bec, where I took the religious habit, and I was in charge of the monastery at Caen, I was unequal to ruling a few monks; so I cannot conceive by what judgement of Almighty God I have at your insistence been made the overseer of many and numberless. Although that duke, now king of the English, endeavored in many different ways

inherited a system created “by someone else, for someone else” and in this foreign world, he imposed whenever possible the Benedictine rule as he knew it.⁵⁶⁷ These changes and the understandable resistance to them that could have been felt by the Anglo-Saxon monastic community were revealed in the *Regularis*. Though reproduced after the Conquest, which introduced Norman French as the new court language, the Latin of the eleventh-century *Regularis* was thoroughly glossed in Anglo-Saxon. Thus the document can be presented as possible evidence for social obstruction of the Conquest revolution. It could be illustrative, much like the Berengar-Lanfranc controversy, of the instability of the new order that allowed a space for resistance. English monastics not only submitted themselves to a vow of obedience and conformity to God’s law, but had also recently been forced to accede humbly to foreign abbots. Kobailka posits that the result of social destabilization was the uncovering of a non-orthodox voice, contrary to the prescriptive order present in the eleventh-century Church. Perhaps his theory can also be applied to a voice unorthodox because of its gender. Mathilda’s vestments, as they appeared in the exclusively male space of the Mass, might be considered as speaking of her in a brief period of flexibility when, like the competing theories of the Eucharist and the competing realities of the monastery, the hegemony of the eleventh-century Church was fissured. The insertion of her presence through this opening might be considered yet another intrusion allowed by

to bring this about, his labors were in vain. He could not win his point from me until finally your legates came to Normandy...I pleaded failing strength and personal unworthiness, but to no purpose; the excuse that the language was unknown and the native race barbarous weighed nothing with them either” (Lanfranc, *The Letters of Lanfranc of Canterbury*, ed. Helen Clover and Margaret Gibson [London: 1979], 31).

⁵⁶⁷ Kobialka, *This Is My Body*, 141.

ecclesiastical instability, shaken by concerns about the presence of Christ's body in the Mass. Mathilda's place within the Eucharist, if she indeed commanded one, was the result of heterogeneous notions of representation. These notions "...could morph or be morphed into different shapes once (they) entered a specific historical, cultural or ideological constellation that attempted to form and to lay to rest the body that had disappeared a long time ago."⁵⁶⁸ Mathilda's donations in the light of these speculations allow us to consider two complementary possibilities. At a time when ideas about real presence were being stridently debated and received heightened attention in monastic circles, spectacular vestments, given by a woman of the highest power, to clothe the body of a male priest during the Eucharistic celebration, may have invested the liturgy with an impression of her presence. In addition, England immediately after the Conquest was politically inchoate in a way that served the advanced level of Mathilda's power. The clergy who might be expected to protest, either at her judicial or lordly authority over men or the implication of her monastic gifts, were linked too closely to the throne to dispute Mathilda's authority.⁵⁶⁹ Just as the instability of the eleventh-century Church allowed for exceptional rationalizations and reinterpretations within the Mass and the *Regularis*, the political and social agitation of England as a whole disrupted and threw over traditional constraints and made way for a new order.

Like Norman and Flemish lords before her, Mathilda of Flanders made donations of land and moveable goods that forged strong links to Norman and, later,

⁵⁶⁸ Kobialka, *This Is My Body*, 32.

⁵⁶⁹ See Introduction, 9.

English monastic communities. Similarly, the types of objects she gave and her choice of recipients illustrated both personal preference and her sense of what was due to particular houses, first in her duchy, and eventually in her kingdom. Mathilda's propensity for vestments as gifts may stand as evidence for her awareness of her own power and princely rank. It would be almost impossible for Mathilda not to be aware of her unique status in regard to male monasticism. She presided over ecclesiastical synods and councils of the highest level, including the Easter council of Winchester at which she and William ruled on the primacy of Canterbury. On these occasions, she was the only layperson present, except William, and certainly the only female.

Mathilda's status as a queenly patron can be compared to her predecessors, Queen Emma and Queen Edith. Both queens were remembered as patrons, though Emma's gifts were far more numerous than those recorded for Edith. As mentioned above, Emma most often gave manuscripts; she and Cnut were involved in the donation of deluxe books to Canterbury, New Minster, London, Bury, and York.⁵⁷⁰ Edith left record of giving at least one vestment, an amice, to the abbot of Saint-Riquier in France. Both queens were involved in building projects, though to a lesser extent than Mathilda was at La Trinité. Emma arranged to have the roof at Saint Wulfsgie's in Sherborne repaired,⁵⁷¹ and Edith completely rebuilt the church at Wilton in stone.⁵⁷² Emma also paid an unspecified amount for restoration at the church of Saint Hilaire in Poitiers.

⁵⁷⁰ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, 144.

⁵⁷¹ C. H. Talbot, "The Life of Saint Wulfsgie of Sherborne by Goscelin," *Revue Bénédictine* 69 (1959), 68-85, at 81.

⁵⁷² *Vita Edwardi*, ed. Frank Barlow (Edinburgh, 1962), 47.

Neither Emma nor Edith gave large amounts of land to the church. Emma gave three grants of land to monastic houses during her lifetime: Newington to Christ Church, land in Ramsey for the soul of Cnut, and Godebegot to Old Minster, where she and Cnut were buried.⁵⁷³ Winchester claimed that Emma had given them nine “plowshare” manors after she cleared herself from the charge of adultery, but the claim was never completely resolved.⁵⁷⁴ On her death, Emma bequeathed Kirby to Bury St. Edmund. Edith gave Milverton and Mark to Wells.⁵⁷⁵ Neither English queen founded an abbey or monastery, nor did they seem to have the power or property to make enormous gifts to existing houses. Pauline Stafford has revealed the political vulnerability of both Emma and Edith through charter evidence and witness lists. “Some groups are invariably recorded in tenth- and eleventh-century witness lists: the king himself, the archbishops, and bishops, the ealdormen and the lay nobility. The queen is not among them.” Stafford’s statement regarding Emma and Edith’s position illustrates starkly the distinction between these two English queens and their post-Conquest successor. For, as David Bates has commented “. . . Mathilda not only always attests second to William, but also appears in all of the major surviving English diplomas . . . where she and her husband are the only members of the laity to attest . . .”⁵⁷⁶ Mathilda’s

⁵⁷³ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, 147.

⁵⁷⁴ The term refers to the red hot plow shares Emma was made to walk across to prove her innocence (DB 1: 57r).

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁶ Bates, *Regesta*, 93.

political influence and personal wealth distinguish her from both Emma and Edith, and her ability to donate very large portions of land to the monastic foundations of her choice provides further evidence that the character of her queenship owes very little to English traditions. Just as for her judicial activity examined in Chapter Four, continental models of female lordship fit more closely as models for Mathilda's patronage. Beatrice of Lorraine founded two monasteries with her daughter, Mathilda of Tuscany, before her death in 1076. Mathilda of Tuscany herself founded two Benedictine monasteries, San Maria e San Claudio in Frassinoro and San Michele in Pescia.⁵⁷⁷ The monastery most closely identified with her, however, was San Benedetto de Polirone, the Benedictine abbey founded in 1007 by her grandfather Tedaldo.⁵⁷⁸ She was singularly generous to the abbey during her lifetime, and donated estates, privileges, and dependencies. Most importantly, she insisted on being buried at Polirone instead of at the ancestral mortuary of Canossa, giving rise to an important local cult center, popular throughout the Later Middle Ages.⁵⁷⁹ Though Matilda of Tuscany was approximately ten years younger than Mathilda of Flanders, the general political and intellectual climate of the Continent, if such a thing can be spoken of, produced powerful female lords. Beatrice of Lorraine and Matilda of Tuscany were

⁵⁷⁷ Donizone of Canossa, *Matilde e Canossa: Il poema di Donizone*, trans. Ugo Bellocchi and Giovanni Marzi (Modena, 1970), 162; Lino Lionello Ghirardini, *Storia Critica di Matilde di Canossa* (Modena, 1989), 23-7; Elke Goetz, *Beatrice von Canossa und Tuszien* (Thorbecke, 1995), 30-2.

⁵⁷⁸ Pietro Pelati, "Le terre del montovano donate dai Canossa al monastero di San Benedetto," *Civiltà Montaviana* 8 (1974), 331-7.

⁵⁷⁹ Miracles at her tomb began to be recorded especially in the fifteenth century, when her legend experienced renewed interest (Ippolito Donesmondi, *Dell'istoria ecclesiastica di Mantova*, 2 vols [Bologna, 1977], 1: 248; see also Beth L. Holman, "Exemplum and Imitatio: Countess Matilda and Lucrezia Pico della Mirandola at Polirone," *Art Bulletin* 81 [1991], 637-640).

both active patrons of monastic life and the reform papacy. Alongside Adela's monastic foundation and Judith of Flanders's various donations mentioned above, these four women can be seen to form a representative group of female lords as unusually powerful monastic patrons, especially compared to English female lords, originating from a tradition that also formed Mathilda of Flanders.

In many ways, Matilda's grants to monastic houses were very public affairs; other members of the nobility, including William, signed the charters that documented her gifts. The houses involved were careful to keep a record of these transactions for the sake of posterity and for legal purposes. As mentioned above, gifts from Mathilda could also stand as a signal to other members of the nobility that a monastery was worthy of gifts. In what way then, can we argue for a more personal side to Matilda's giving? If indeed her endowments were both public displays and pious acts, does there remain any evidence for donations of a more intimate nature that can reveal something about Mathilda's spiritual interior? I believe we can point to at least three such instances in which Matilda's giving takes on a more confidential character: her offerings to La Chaise-Dieu in the Auvergne, her correspondence with an unknown hermit in Germany, and her commission of the tomb of Simon de Crépy.

The *vita* of St. Adelelme, who was the abbot of La Chaise-Dieu, tells of an English queen who, along with many of her subjects, suffered from the disease of *lethargia*.⁵⁸⁰ Hearing of the saint's ability to cure disease, the queen asked that bread, blessed by St. Adelelme, be sent to England, to heal her and her afflicted court. George

⁵⁸⁰ Pierre-Roger Gaussin, *L'Abbey de La Chaise-Dieu, 1043-1518* (Paris, 1962).

Beech made a convincing argument that this queen must have been Mathilda since Adelelme was abbot of Chaise-Dieu only for the duration of 1078.⁵⁸¹ The bread cured Mathilda and her subjects. In gratitude, she presented Saint Adelelme with a precious priestly vestment and the money for a new dormitory. This exchange can be considered apart from Mathilda's other donations for a few reasons. First, Mathilda had no claim to the land in the Auvergne, a remote, mountainous region of France, and may never have traveled there. Second, the donation was made without any charter. None exists at the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu, where prayers were said for the anonymous English queen at the Feast of All Souls every year until the eighteenth century. No charters have been recorded in the rich collections of the Norman ducal house or the royal acts of England. In fact, this royal gift was an isolated incident, one that took place without fanfare or pageantry; a correspondence between an English queen and a rural remote abbey, far from the seat of power. The second episode also centers around Matilda's contact through messengers to a monastic in a remote area; in this case, a hermit in Germany who appears in the chronicle of Orderic Vitalis. Known for his spirituality and his gift of prophecy, Mathilda requested his prayers concerning her quarreling husband and eldest son, and asked what might become of her loved ones.⁵⁸² The prophecy of the hermit, to whom Orderic refers only as "Teutonica," was given in exchange for "royal gifts."⁵⁸³ As in the case of La Chaise-Dieu, the occasion was one in

⁵⁸¹ George Beech, "Queen Matilda of England (1066-1083) and the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu in the Auvergne," *Frühmittelalterliche Studien* 27 (1993), 350-74.

⁵⁸² Orderic *Historia*, 3: 104-8.

⁵⁸³ *Ibid.*

which Mathilda experienced personal distress, and the gift accompanied a request for a specific benefit to a man of spiritual renown outside Mathilda's court.

The last example I will discuss has some common elements with the other two. The beneficiary was Simon of Crépy, raised in Mathilda and William's court in Normandy, who, causing something of a commotion in high Norman circles, gave up his career as a lord to take the monastic habit.⁵⁸⁴ One of the court's most talented knights, Simon, Count of Amiens-Valois-Vexin, was a favorite of Mathilda and William. They ensured his education and arranged a brilliant marriage for him with an heiress in the Vexin. His prospective bride, however, entered a convent, perhaps even at Simon's instigation. His defection from the secular world of the Norman court soon followed in 1077. He chose the monastery of Saint-Claude, in Burgundy, where the reigning countess was Adeliza, a kinswoman of his royal benefactors. After a few years, Abbot Hugh of Cluny asked Simon to use his influence with Philip I, who had taken some of Cluny's possessions. Simon visited Compiègne on his way to see Philip and was present, by chance, at the relic translation at Saint-Corneille that Mathilda and Philip had organized. This unexpected meeting had two results. First, Simon was able to convince Philip quite quickly to part with Cluny's possessions.⁵⁸⁵ No doubt Mathilda's presence was a favorable influence. Second, Simon set out the next day for Normandy, where William was clashing with a rebellious Robert Cuthose, and "made

⁵⁸⁴ *Vita Beati Simonis*, PL 156: 1211-24. Both Hugh of Burgundy and Guy Count of Macôn were said to have become Cluniac monks explicitly because of Simon's example (Anonymous II, *Biblioteca Cluniacensis*, [Macôn, 1915], 459-60).

⁵⁸⁵ *Vita Beati Simonis*, 1219.

peace.”⁵⁸⁶ After an emotional farewell to Mathilda and William, Simon returned to Saint-Claude.⁵⁸⁷ Simon died soon after in 1080 and this event was the occasion of another very personal act of patronage by Mathilda. She ordered one of her monks to travel to Rome, equipped “with much gold and silver” to find a burial space for Simon.⁵⁸⁸ Mathilda commissioned an elaborate marble tomb to be designed “of cut and highly polished stone, with incrustations of marble of different colors,” obviously made by Italian artisans in the local style.⁵⁸⁹ The tomb was elaborate and costly, and Mathilda had to manage the affair at a remove, but more important for the current discussion, it was a donation of an intimate nature. The tomb was commissioned and carried out to benefit someone who had been of great assistance to Mathilda’s family at a difficult time: someone who seems to have been a close and deeply admired friend. Unlike her contacts with La Chaise-Dieu and the hermit, Simon was no stranger. But all three episodes seem to reveal Mathilda’s firm belief in the efficacy of the intercession of holy men. She sought out visionaries, dreamers, and healers. She willingly gave gifts and rewards to those who brought her relief in moments of particular illness or familial conflict. These contacts were rooted in Matilda’s own religious belief in miracles and prophesy.

Mathilda of Flanders was adept at and conversant with the methods and practices of patronage. She showed respect for houses of God, awareness of her marital

⁵⁸⁶ *Vita Beati Simonis*, 1220-2.

⁵⁸⁷ *Vita Beati Simonis*, 1220-2.

⁵⁸⁸ *Vita Beati Simonis*, 1222.

and natal connections, and generosity toward religious men and women, through monastic gifts and donations. She was also capable of withholding patronage and support to punish rebels, and was even an accomplished despoiler of monasteries, like Abingdon, which were actively hostile to her rule. Supporting artistic production for her myriad donations, Mathilda commissioned Norman, English, and Roman artists and goldsmiths who created vestments, chalices, and vases, set jewels, and carved marble. Mathilda took part in cultural exchange by sending gifts of great artistry to isolated areas. Like any medieval ruler, Mathilda's gift for giving was informed by many influences. Nonetheless, her largess was ultimately a reflection of her foundational beliefs and was illustrative of a queen whose spiritual range of vision extended to remote places outside her kingdom.

⁵⁰⁹ Musset, "Les mécénat," 128.

Afterword

Mathilda's death in 1083 was marked by a funeral that lasted for two days.⁵⁹⁰ Her tomb was richly carved and studded with precious stones.⁵⁹¹ Even if her burial was another opportunity to magnify Norman power through ritual, post-mortem bequests for her soul by her husband, her children, and her court are suggestive of her influence. William donated land in Northamptonshire in exchange for prayers for her soul, and in Bedfordshire, where a priest performed mass every Monday on her behalf.⁵⁹² The members of her court and their children often made donations that specifically mentioned not only William, but Mathilda as well. Roger de Beaumont, Mathilda's close advisor, donated property to Holy Trinity, Beaumonte, for her soul and for William's.⁵⁹³ Roger of Montgomery gave to St. Martin of Sées for "the souls of William king of the English and of queen Mathildis."⁵⁹⁴ Robert, count of Meulan, gave a manor in Normandy to St. Peter de Préaux, "for the soul of king William and queen

⁵⁹⁰ Fulcoius of Beauvais, "Tempore quae nostro," in *Mélanges Julien Havet; Recueil de Travaux D'Érudition dédiés à la mémoire de Julien Havet, 1853-1893*, ed. M. L. Delisle (1895; repr. Geneva, 1972), 224-5.

⁵⁹¹ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols. (Oxford, 1969-1980), 4: 44-7.

⁵⁹² DB Northamptonshire, 8, 4; DB Bedfordshire 57, 21.

⁵⁹³ J. H. Round, *Calendar of Documents Preserved in France* (Liechtenstein, 1967), 123.

⁵⁹⁴ Round, *Calendar*, 233.

Mathildis.”⁵⁹⁵ Roger de Beaumont’s son, Henry, earl of Warwick, gave land in Wales to St. Taurin, Évreux, for the souls “of his lord king William and queen Mathildis.”⁵⁹⁶ Robert of Mortain’s son William made a grant to Marmoutier, “for the redemption of the souls of William, king of the English and his wife, queen Mathildis.”⁵⁹⁷ In fact, donations for his soul without any mention of her are rare.

Her children may have borne her stamp most clearly, however, though surviving evidence for them is terribly uneven. Her sons, of course, had well-documented public lives, except Richard, whose early death was memorialized by gifts of land in England by both Mathilda and William.⁵⁹⁸ He was the only son to have attended Mathilda’s coronation.⁵⁹⁹ Her son Robert Curthose’s career was beset by rebellion, difficulty, and a kind of inertia, but whatever ground Robert did gain had much to do with his mother’s support. Despite the constant stream of funds from her personal store, the cooperation of her natal family in his attempts to gain power, and the unwavering loyalty of her closest governmental advisors, she could not guarantee his success. His severe end, comfortable, respectful imprisonment until death, was the result of his own inability to rule a fractious and splintered Normandy. When able, Robert did show special regard

⁵⁹⁵ Round, *Calendar*, 112.

⁵⁹⁶ Round, *Calendar*, 106.

⁵⁹⁷ Round, *Calendar*, 436.

⁵⁹⁸ Mathilda freed Edmondsham, the manor of Eadgifu, of geld in Richard’s memory - William granted the manor in Haldane to “Peter and his mother for the soul of his son, Richard” (DB Dorset 1, 18; DB Hertfordshire 36, 19).

⁵⁹⁹ Richard signed the charter produced immediately after her coronation (Bates, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* [Oxford, 1998], 594-601).

for his mother's foundation at Caen. He donated property and a market for her soul.⁶⁰⁰ After returning from a successful crusade, he presented a banner to La Trinité that he had brought back especially for the nuns there; his sister Cecilia's position as abbess makes this gesture somehow poignant.⁶⁰¹

There is little surviving evidence of Mathilda's relationship to her third son, William Rufus. The chroniclers of the period typically paint an unattractive picture of him as disrespectful of the church and a lewd sodomite, whose court was frivolous and depraved. His charters do not typically contain bequests for either of his parents, and he did not donate to the church often. However, he was very careful to respect the holdings of his mother's foundation. Though the nuns at La Trinité complained that their properties had been threatened, they began an ambitious building program in 1090 that would continue for thirty years.⁶⁰²

Though her support for her eldest son, Robert, and her affection for him are beyond doubt, Mathilda seems to have had a special relationship with her two youngest children, Adela and Henry. Both children had names that originated in her natal family. Henry was named for Mathilda's royal uncle, though her husband held Henry of France in great enmity, and Adela was named for her mother. Henry was also bequeathed all

⁶⁰⁰ Round, *Calendar*, 142.

⁶⁰¹ Wace, line 9696.

⁶⁰² *Charters and Custumals of the Abbey of Holy Trinity, Caen, Part Two*, ed. John Walmsley, (Oxford, 1994), 12.

of Mathilda's English property, perhaps another sign of special fondness.⁶⁰³ It is perhaps not surprising that of all her sons, Henry would invoke her memory most often in charters and *acta*. A grant for Shrewsbury Abbey, dated 1121, is made in her memory and in that of William's.⁶⁰⁴ A grant for St. Martin's, Troarn, was given, "for the soul of his father and mother,"⁶⁰⁵ to the Abbey of the Holy Trinity in Savigny, "for his father, the king of the English, and his mother queen Mathildis,"⁶⁰⁶ and the same to abbey of St. Vincent, Le Mans.⁶⁰⁷ There are nine different grants from Henry to Selby Abbey alone, and all of them mention his mother's soul specifically. When his wife, Edith/Matilda was listed in Henry's bequests, she is always placed after his mother. The order of the document always reads, "for the soul of my mother, Mathilda, and my wife, Mathilda," or "for Mathilda, my mother, and Matilda, my wife."⁶⁰⁸ Indeed, his wife's name seems to have been changed to honor his mother; she was called Edith as a girl, and adopted the name Mathilda upon her marriage.⁶⁰⁹

⁶⁰³ Orderic claimed that in extreme anger, Henry threw a rebel, Conan, to his death from a Rouen tower, swearing "By my mother's soul, there shall be no ransom for a traitor..." (Orderic, *Historiae* 4: 225-7; Warren C. Hollister, "The Rouen Riot and Conan's Leap," *Peritia* 10 [1996], 341-50).

⁶⁰⁴ *The Cartulary of Shrewsbury Abbey* 2 vols ed. Una Rees (Aberystwyth, 1975), 1: 31-6.

⁶⁰⁵ Round, *Calendar*, 167.

⁶⁰⁶ Round, *Calendar*, 287.

⁶⁰⁷ Round, *Calendar*, 369.

⁶⁰⁸ *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, Volume 2 (1066-1154)* ed. Charles Johnson and H. A. Crone (Oxford, 1956), 68, 74, 105, 145, 155, 160, 164, 192, 210, 215, 234.

⁶⁰⁹ Lois Huneycutt, "The Idea of the Perfect Princess: the Life of St Margaret in the reign of Matilda II (1100-1118)," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 7 (1990), 81-97.

Evidence about her daughter's lives is more difficult to uncover. Cecilia was active as abbess at La Trinité from 1113-27; she continued in her mother's tradition of buying and selling land to consolidate the monastery's property.⁶¹⁰ She organized and implemented a survey of the abbey's properties on becoming abbess that reflects something of her mother's eye for detail.⁶¹¹ Arnoul of Choques, a Flemish-born priest who sat under Lanfranc and William Bona Anima, educated Cecilia. Arnoul served the ducal family as a tutor for years, probably participating in the education of all Mathilda's children to some extent, until he became Robert Curthose's chaplain and chancellor around 1080.⁶¹² The other daughters, Mathilda, Constance, and Adelize, are only known to us through fragments of documentation; it is impossible to reconstruct their personalities.⁶¹³ Constance married Alan Fergand of Brittany, and their son Brian was raised in the court of Henry I. Mathilda and Adelize both entered the monastic world, and neither married, though they may have been betrothed.⁶¹⁴

Adela, Mathilda's youngest daughter, appears in many sources due to her notable career as Countess of Blois. From extant records, she seems to have been very like her mother. She was a very active public figure, serving as regent while her

⁶¹⁰ *Charters and Custumals*, 8-9.

⁶¹¹ See Chapter Four.

⁶¹² Raymonde Foreville, "L'Ecole de Caen au XI^e siècle et les origines Normandes de l'université d'Oxford," in *Etudes médiévales offertes à M. le Doyen Augustin Fliche de l'Institut* (Paris, 1952), 89.

⁶¹³ See Chapter One.

⁶¹⁴ See Chapter One.

husband was on crusade between the years 1096 and 1099.⁶¹⁵ During his second crusade attempt in 1101, Stephen died a martyr's death, and Adela became the head of the Thibaudian house until her retirement in about 1119. She was intimately involved in the ecclesiastical councils concerning the election of Ivo as Bishop of Chartres, and like her mother, cultivated carefully her relationship with powerful members of the church. Like Gregory VII, Ivo was disgusted with the adulterous liaison of his overlord, Philip I of France, and openly criticized him.⁶¹⁶ Adela and Stephen's marriage, by comparison, was all that Ivo could wish, without a hint of adulterous scandal or bastard children. The countess of Blois was a generous patron to the monastic houses within Thibaudian territories, establishing parish churches and reforming both male and female houses, replacing canons with monks.⁶¹⁷ She also made donations to famous houses like Marmoutier, which her mother and father patronized. Like Mathilda, Adela presided over legal disputes concerning her property.⁶¹⁸ She was the patroness of poets and could sight-read Latin; she was known for her literary skill and wrote poetry herself.⁶¹⁹

⁶¹⁵ Kimberly A. LoPrete, "The Anglo-Norman Card of Adela of Blois," *Albion* 22 (1990): 569-89.

⁶¹⁶ Augustin Fliche, *Le Règne de Philippe Ier, roi de France, 1060-1108* (Paris, 1912), 40-51.

⁶¹⁷ Kimberly LoPrete, "Adela of Blois and Ivo of Chartres," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 14 (1991), 143.

⁶¹⁸ See Chapter Five.

⁶¹⁹ Elizabeth M. C. Van Houts, "Latin Poetry and the Anglo-Norman court, 1066-1135: the 'Carmen de Hastingae proelio'," *Journal of Medieval History* 15 (1989): 39-62; André Boutmey, ed. "Trois oeuvres inédites de Godefroid of Reims," *Revue de moyen âge latin* 3 (1947): 343.

Mathilda's children were some of the most famous rulers and administrators of their age. Her influence was felt for generations, through the ubiquitous use of her name and the strong, active role she carved out for her office.⁶²⁰ Anglo-Norman queens and would-be queens, Edith/Matilda, the Empress Mathilda, and Eleanor of Aquitaine, would continue to benefit from her early exploitation of her power and the assumptions she made about what was due her as queen.

Calvinists despoiled Mathilda's golden, gem-encrusted tomb in 1562. Opening the tomb, they found Mathilda in her robes of state, the episcopal sapphire still on her finger. It was presented to the abbess, Anne à Montmorency, who then presented it to her father, the Baron di Conti, constable of France, when he came to Caen in the train of Charles IX.⁶²¹ In 1849, John Everett Millais, a member of the artistic society known as the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood, portrayed the scene at Mathilda's tomb as he saw it in his imagination. In *The Disentombment of Queen Mathilda*, the nuns are terrified, some throwing themselves about in agony, and the abbess looks with a troubled face at Mathilda's ring, while the godless Calvinists bite and scratch over the books, jewels, and other treasures they dump out of the sacrosanct tomb. Millais composed the scene during a period when the ideal image of medieval kings and queens had captured the fancy of nineteenth-century Europeans. About the same time, renowned historians of the Middle Ages credited Mathilda with making the Bayeux Tapestry, which toured England numerous times in the nineteenth century. Like Millais, historians from the nineteenth through the twentieth centuries imagined what an eleventh-century queen

⁶²⁰ Constance Brittain Bouchard, *Those of My Blood* (Philadelphia, 2001), 124-6.

⁶²¹ Sir Joseph Alyoff, "The Body of King Edward the First," *Archeologia* 3 (1770): 391-2.

might do, what kind of role she could possibly fulfill, and how she would act. By looking at the society they themselves inhabited, past historians made decisions about what women like Mathilda could reasonably have done and been. They ignored references to her, even in the medieval sources with which they were so familiar. She spoke through the documents they had mined so successfully: Domesday Book, monastic and royal charters, legal cases, and coronation ceremonies. While they sifted through the evidence for information on feudalism, the beginnings of the common law, and how royal power was displayed through liturgy, they saw but disregarded her. Without one contemporary source to support the story, Mathilda was cast in the role of royal embroiderer. This theory has had such staying power, that even today Mathilda's role in post-Conquest government has been eclipsed by her supposed skill at needlework.⁶²² The puzzle of Mathilda's role in government and society can be only partially solved by exploiting the sources in which she appears, however, it can never be satisfied in its entirety. Reducing her life to the roles of queen, lord, judge, and patron provides only the barest outline of an answer, and is ultimately as unsatisfying as limiting her to those of daughter, wife and mother. The sources cannot show if power was Mathilda's desire or her obligation, and whether the strategies of patronage and

⁶²² The myth of Mathilda's role as embroiderer of the Bayeux Tapestry seems to have started in the nineteenth century. The legend was accepted uncritically by historians until very recently, and continues to hold sufficient weight in the modern imagination that on the popular television game show *Jeopardy*^o, the answer to the clue "Maker of the Bayeux Tapestry" was "Who was Mathilda of Flanders?" (Charles Stothard, *The Tapestry of Bayeux* [London, 1823]; Bolton Corney, *Researches and Conjectures on the Bayeux Tapestry* [London, 1838]; Hilaire Belloc, *The Book of the Bayeux Tapestry* [London, 1914]; Francis Birrell, *Guide to the Bayeux Tapestry* [London, 1921]; Eric Robert MacLagan, *The Bayeux Tapestry* [New York, 1945]; Frank M. Stenton, *The Bayeux Tapestry; a Comprehensive Survey* [London, 1957]; F. Sidney Walls, *The Bayeux Tapestry: Its Source and Influence* [Lexington, MA, 1962]; Norman Denny, *The Bayeux Tapestry; the Story of the Norman Conquest: 1066* [New York, 1966]; Lewis G. M. Thorpe, *The Bayeux Tapestry and the Norman Invasion* [London, 1973]; Suzanne Turgis. *La Reine*

juridical authority were imposed on her, if she herself was the force behind them, or if all of these potentialities existed together. Though what we can know of her is necessarily incomplete, our evidence points to a woman whose vigorous administrative career was founded on French royal blood, her noble Flemish upbringing, and Norman necessity.

Mathilde et la Tapisserie de Bayeux [Paris, 1975]; John Marshall Carter, *The Bayeux Tapestry as a Social Document: Selected Readings* [Lexington, MA, 1985]).

Appendix A

Cologne MS 138, folio (44r-v) – Ninth Century

Exaudi christi	Domino nostro a Deo decreto summo pontifici et universali pape vita.
Salvatore mundi	Tu illum adiuva
Exaudi christi	Domino Nostro N. augusto et a Deo coronato magno et pacifico imperatori vita et victoria
Sancta Maria	Tu illum adiuva
Exaudi Christi	Eius precellentissimis filiis regibus vita.
Sancte Petre	Tu illos adiuva
Exaudi Christi	Exercitui Romanorum et Francorum vita et victoria.
Sancte Theodore	Tu illos adiuva

Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat

Rex regnum	Christus vincit, Christus regnat , Christus imperat		
Rex noster	Christus vincit.		
Spes nostra	Christus vincit.		
Gloria nostra	Christus vincit.		
Misericordia nostra	Christus vincit.		
Auxilium nostrum	Christus vincit.		
Fortitudo nostra	Christus vincit.		
Liberatio nostra	Christus vincit.		
Arma Nostra invictissima	Christus vincit.		
Murus noster inexpugnabilis	Christus vincit.		
Defensio et exaltio nostra	Christus vincit.		
Lux, via et vita nostra	Christus vincit.		
Ipsi soli imperium, gloria et potestas per immortalia secula seculorum.			Amen.
Ipsi soli virtus, fortitudo et victoria per omnia secula seculorum.			Amen.
Ipsi soli honor, laus et jubilatio per infinita secula seculorum.			
Amen.			

Reprinted from Ernst. H. Kantorowicz *Laudes Regiae* (Berkeley, 1946), pp. 105-6.

Appendix B

A Nevers Laudes Regiae of 1059-1060

MS: Paris, Bibliotheque municipale MS lat. 9449 fols. 36v-37, late eleventh century

Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat

Exaudi Christe	Summo pontifici et universali pape vita
Salvatore mundi	tu illum adiuva
Sancte Petre	tu illum adiuva
Sancte Paule	tu illum adiuva
Sancte Andrea	tu illum adiuva
Exaudi Christe	Hugoni pontifici nostro salus et vita
Sancte Cyrice	tu illum adiuva
Sancte Nazari	tu illum adiuva
Sancte Genesii	tu illum adiuva
Sancte Simphoriane	tu illum adiuva
Exaudi Christe	Henrico regi Filippo regi serenissimo a Deo Coronato magno et pacifico vita et victoria
Redemptor mundi	tu illum adiuva
Sancta Maria	tu illum adiuva
Sancte Michael	tu illum adiuva
Sancte Gabriel	tu illum adiuva
Sancte Raphael	tu illum adiuva
Exaudi Christe	Omnibus iudicibus et
cunctoexercitui	
Christianorum vita et victoria	
Sancte Dionisii	tu illos adiuva
Sancte Martine	tu illos adiuva
Sancte Remigi	tu illos adiuva
Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Lux via et vita nostra	Christus vincit
Rex regum et Deus deorum	Christus vincit
Gloria et iubilacio nostra	Christus vincit
Misericordia et redempcio nostra	Christus vincit
Spes semper et fiducia nostra	Christus vincit
Fortitudo et iusticia nostra	Christus vincit
Prudencia et temperancia nostra	Christus vincit
Liberacio et redmpcio nostra	Christus vincit
Arma nostra invictissima	Christus vincit
Murus nostra inexpugnabilis	Christus vincit
Victoria nostra	Christus vincit
Defensio et exaltacio nostra	Christus vincit

**Ipse soli honor imperium gloria et potestas per immortalia secula seculorum Amen.
Amen.**

	Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat.	
Christe audi nos		Kyrieleyson
Christe leyson		Kyrieleyson
Te pastorem		Deus elegit
Ista sede		Te conservet
Annos vite		Deus multiplicet
Feliciter	Feliciter	Feliciter
Tempora bona habeas		
Tempora bona habeas		
Tempora bona habeas		
Multos Annos Amen		

Reprinted from H. E. J. Cowdrey "Anglo-Norman Laudes Regiae," *Viator* 12 (1981), pp. 39-78.

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Appendix C

The Canterbury Laudes Regiae

MS: Durham, University Library Cosin V. V. 6, fols. 19v-21 – late Eleventh Century

	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christe		Summo pontifici et universali pape
		vita
Salvatore Mundi		tu illum adiuva
Sancte Petre		tu illum adiuva
Sancte Clemens		tu illum adiuva
Sancte Sixte		tu illum adiuva
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christe		N. regi Anglonorum a Deo
coronato		
		Salus et victoria
Redemptor mundi		tu illum adiuva
Sancte Eadmund		tu illum adiuva
Sancte Erminigelde		tu illum adiuva
Sancte Osualde		tu illum adiuva
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christe		N. archiepiscopum et omnem
clerum		
Salvatore mundi		Sibi commissum Deus conservat
Sanct Augustine		tu illos adiuva
Sancte Dunstane		tu illos adiuva
Sancte AElphege		tu illos adiuva
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christe		N. regine Anglorum salus et vita
Redemptor mundi		tu illam adiuva
Sancta Maria		tu illam adiuva
Sancte Felicitas		tu illum adiuva
Sancte Perpetua		tu illum adiuva
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christi		Omnibus principibus et cuncto
		exercito Aglorum
		salus et victoria
Salvatore mundi		tu illos adiuva
Sancte Maurici		tu illos adiuva
Sancte Georgi		tu illos adiuva
Sancte Sebastiani		tu illos adiuva
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Rex regum		Christus vincit
Rex nostrum		Christus regnat
Gloria nostra		Christus imperat

Auxilium nostrum	Christus vincit	
Fortitudo nostra	Christus regnat	
Liberatio et redeptio nostra	Christus imperat	
Victoria nostra invitissima	Christus vincit	
Murus noster inexpugnabilis	Christus regnat	
Defensio et exultatio nostra	Christus imperat	
Ipse soli laus et iubilatio et benedictio per infinita seculum seculorum		Amen.
Christus vincit, Christus regnat , Christus imperat.		
Ipse soli laus et iubilatio et benedictio per infinita seculum seculorum		Amen
Christus vincit, Christus regnat , Christus imperat.		
Ipse soli honoe et claritas et spaienta per infinita seculum seculorum		Amen
Christus vincit, Christus regnat , Christus imperat.		

Reprinted from H. E. J. Cowdrey "Anglo-Norman Laudes Regiae," *Viator* 12 (1981), pp. 72-73.

Appendix D

The Fecamp Laudes Regiae

MS: Rouen, Bibliotheque municipale MS 489 (A. 254), fol. 71

	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christe		Exaudi Christe
Illi summo pontifici et universali pape vita		Exaudi Christe
Sancte Petre		tu illum adiuva
Sancte Paule		tu illum adiuva
Sancte Johannes		tu illum adiuva
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christe		Exaudi Christe
Illi Francorum regi in Christ pace vita et victoria		
Sancte Michael		tu illum adiuva
Sancte Gabriel		tu illum adiuva
Sancte Raphael		tu illum adiuva
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christe		Exaudi Christe
Guillelmo Normannorum duci salus et Pax continua		
Sancte Maurici		tu illos adiuva
Sancte Sebastiane		tu illos adiuva
Sancte Adriane		tu illos adiuva
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christe		Exaudi Christe
Omnibus pontificali honore sublimatis Salutaris vite gloria		
Sancte Ambrosi		tu illos adiuva
Sancte Martine		tu illos adiuva
Sancte Benedicte		tu illos adiuva
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Omnibus Christiane legis principibus ac iudicibus Salus eterna		
Sancte Georgi		tu illos adiuva
Sancte Triburci		tu illos adiuva
Sancte Fromunde		tu illos adiuva
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Rex regum et dominus dominorum		Christus vincit
Gloria et spes nostra		Christus vincit
Misericordia et auxilium nostrum		Christus vincit
Fortitudo et victoria nostra		Christus vincit

Arma nostra invictissima

Lux via et vita nostra

Ipse soli regnum et imperatum per immortalia seculum seculorum Amen.

Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat.

Ipsi solilaus et gloria per omnia secula seculorum

Christus vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat.

Christe audi nos

Kyrrieleyson

Christe eleyson

Kyrrieleyson

Feliciter

Tempora bona maneat

Feliciter

Regnum Christi veniat

Christus vincit

Christus vincit

Christe audi nos

Kyrrieleyson

Christe eleyson

Kyrrieleyson

Feliciter

Redempti sanguine Christi

Feliciter

Deo gratias Amen.

Reprinted from H. E. J. Cowdrey "Anglo-Norman Laudes Regiae," *Viator* 12 (1981), pp. 39-78.

Appendix E

The Anglo-Norman Laudes of 1068

MS: London, B. L. MS Cotton Vitellius E. XII, fol. 160v, late Eleventh Century

	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christe	Alexandro summo pontifici et universal pape vita	
Pater de celis Deus	tu illum adiuva	
Fili redemptor mundi Deus	tu illum adiuva	
Spiritus Sancte Deus	tu illum adiuva	
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christe	Wilhelmo serenissimo a Deo coronato magno et Pacifico regi vita et victoria	
Sancte Maria	tu illum adiuva	
Sancte Michael	tu illum adiuva	
Sancte Raphael	tu illum adiuva	
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christe	Mathylde serenissime a Deo coronate regine salus et vita	
Sancte Iohannes	tu illam adiuva	
Sancte Petre	tu illam adiuva	
Sancte Paule	tu illam adiuva	
Sancte Andrea	tu illam adiuva	
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christe	Aldrado Eboracensi archiepiscopo et omni clero Sibi comisso salus et vita	
Sancte Stephane	tu illum adiuva	
Sancte Laurenti	tu illum adiuva	
Sancte Vincenti	tu illum adiuva	
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christi	Omnibus episcopis et abbatibus et cunctis Congregationibus illis commissis salus et vita	
Sancte Martine	tu illos adiuva	
Sancte Benedicte	tu illos adiuva	
Sancte Gregori	tu illos adiuva	
Sancte Nicholae	tu illos adiuva	
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Exaudi Christi	Omnibus principibus Anglorum et cuncto exercitui Christianorum vita et victoria	
Sancta Maria Magdalena	tu illos adiuva	
Sancta Perpetua	tu illos adiuva	

Sancta Agatha	tu illos adiuva	
Sancta Lucia	tu illos adiuva	
	Christus Vincit, Christus regnat, Christus imperat	
Redemptio et liberatio nostra	Christus vincit	
Victoria nostra	Christus vincit	
Misericordia nostrum	Christus vincit	
Prudentia et iustitia nostra	Christus vincit	
Fortitudo et temperantia nostra	Christus vincit	
Auxilium nostra	Christus vincit	
Defensio nostra	Christus vincit	
Letitia et gloriatio nostra	Christus vincit	
Vita et salus nostra	Christus vincit	
Ipse soli honor () per infinita seculum seculorum.		Amen.
Ipsi soli decus potestas et imperium per infinita secula seculorum.		Amen
Ipsi soli gloria laus et iubilatio per infinita secula seculorum		Amen.

Reprinted from H. E. J. Cowdrey "Anglo-Norman Laudes Regiae," *Viator* 12 (1981), pp. 70-71.

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