Queens in the Anglo-Norman/Angevin realm 1066–1216

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I. Introduction

For most of the eleventh and early twelfth century England was a country under occupation. It was first occupied by the Danes (1016–1042) and then from 1066 onwards by the Normans. Foreign occupation had far reaching consequences for the role of king and queen. Special measures were needed to cover the king's frequent absence across the Channel in terms of delegated royal authority. Whereas in England from the late tenth-century royal power to an extent had been shared with the queen, her authority and agency in the exercise of this power increased after the Norman conquest. The Anglo-Norman/Angevin situation in Europe was unique not least because it allows us to compare the power of queen in England with that of duchess or countess in the continental lands.

England is exceptional in that it was by far the most centralised administration in Europe only equalled in the twelfth century by Sicily. Therefore the king could rely on delegated authority and queenly representation more than other European kings, who might have been weary of leaving the nobles in their royal domaine »unattended«. As a result of centralisation and conquest, medieval England has left a unique set of sources which allows us to trace the nature of queenly power: Domesday book for royal and queenly landholding[1]; Pipe Rolls for 1130 and continuously from 1154 onwards for her income and debt[2]; an exceptionally rich number of narrative sources some of which written as a result of conquest[3]; and of course the charters, especially the writ, the written royal order, which was used by queens as well as kings[4].

1) Domesday Book. A Complete Translation. Alecto Historical Editions, ed. Ann Williams/Geoffrey Haward Martin, London 2002. For the Latin text, cf. the individual volumes for each shire edited in the Alecto Historical Editions, ed. Ann Williams/Geoffrey Haward Martin 1992 or the only other printed edition Domesday Book seu Liber Censualis Wilhelmi primi regis Angliae, ed. Abraham Farley, 2 vols., London 1793.

2) The Great Roll of the Pipe for the Thirty First Year of the Reign of Henry I Michaelmas 1130 (Pipe Roll 1), ed. and transl. Judith A. Green (The Publications of the Pipe Roll Society 95) London 2012. All Pipe Rolls from 1154 have been edited under the auspices of the Pipe Roll Society (PRS) in the PRS Publications from 1884 onwards.

3) The standard survey is Antonia Gransden, Historical Writing in England, 2 vols., London 1974 and 1982. For a shorter but more up-to-date survey for our period, cf. Elisabeth van Houts, Historical Writ-

In what follows I will concentrate on the five themes, which I plan to discuss wherever possible in comparative European setting: 1. the queen's share in royal power, 2. the queen's relationship to the king's concubines and their offspring, 3. any previous experience a queen may have had as queen consort, 4. the unique presence in England in this period of a would-be-queen regnant, Empress Matilda, and finally 5. the queen consort as (foreign) heiress.

II. The queen's share of royal power

In Anglo-Saxon England, especially after the tenth-century reform movement, the queen was crowned and anointed and given a more defined role in government.The first recorded anointment was that of the Carolingian princess Judith who married King Æthelwulf (839–858) in 856 and of an indigenous queen, Ælfthryth, third wife of King Edgar I (957–975) in 973[5]. In that same year the ›Regularis Concordia‹ assigned to both king and queen the role of defenders of the church[6]. In practice this meant for the queen that she was the protector of nunneries and as quasi abbess entitled to the abbess' income during vacancies. Almost immediately king and queen realised the potential of this income stream so at times vacancies were left open deliberately for the royal couple to exploit this revenue. Although elsewhere in Europe, especially under the Carolingians, lay abbacies were far from being an exception, in England the written record of this role of the queen was unique. At the same time, we also find the recognition growing that queenship was an office in which the queen shared power with the king (*regalis imperii* […] *participem*)[7]. The queen witnessed royal acts usually second after the king and she shared with him acts of patronage. There is, however, no evidence for regency by Anglo-Saxon queens during their husband's lifetime[8]. Given the post conquest development this is particularly

ing, in: A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill/Elisabeth van Houts, Woodbridge 2003, pp. 103–121.

4) For a good introduction on the writ as document and its uses, cf. Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum. The Acta of William I (1066–1087), ed. David Bates, Oxford 1998, pp. 43–67.

5) Pauline Stafford, The King's Wife in Wessex, 800–1066, in: Past and Present 91 (1981), pp. 3–27, at 16–18; Pauline Stafford, Queens, Concubines and Dowagers. The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages, Athens 1983; Pauline Stafford, The Portrayal of Royal Women in England, Mid-Tenth to Mid-Twelfth-Centuries, in: Medieval Queenship, ed. John Carmi Parsons, Stroud 1994, pp. 143–167; Pauline Stafford, Emma. The Powers of the Queen in the Eleventh Century, in: Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe. Proceedings of a Conference Held at King's College London April 1995, ed. Anne J. Duggan, Woodbridge 1997, pp. 3–26; Pauline Stafford, Queen Emma and Queen Edith. Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England, Oxford 1997.

6) Regularis Concordia Anglicae Nationis Monachorum Sanctimonialiumque. The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and the Nuns of the English Nation, ed. and transl. Thomas Symons, London 1953.

7) Stafford, King's Wife (as n. 5), p. 18; Stafford, Queen Emma (as n. 5), pp. 13, 14–15.

8) Stafford, Queen Emma (as n. 5), pp. 188–191.

surprising for the reign of Cnut (1016/1017–1035) when one might have expected Queen Emma to have stepped in as regent during his many absences in Denmark (she accompanied him only once in 1027–1028). Although there is no doubt that Cnut married Emma, the wife of his predecessor Æthelred (978–1013, 1014–1016), as a way to legitimise his succession and more informally to benefit from her experience at court, he never left her (a foreigner of Norman birth) in sole control[9]. He probably did not trust her quite enough not to recall her sons by Æthelred, Edward and Alfred, who were in exile with her brother Richard II (996–1026) in Normandy.

The Anglo-Saxon tradition of sharing power, as represented by the ›Regularis Concordia‹, combined with Carolingian traditions of a consort's power in France, laid the foundations for a much more intimate and formal sharing of royal power between king and queen consort after 1066[10]. The reason was pragmatic in that after 1066 the kings of England had to divide their time between their continental patrimony and their kingdom[11]. However, once a pattern of increased queenly authority had been established it was applied even in the period of Stephen's reign (1035–1054) when Normandy and England were separated. William the Conqueror's son William Rufus was only king of England from 1087 to 1100 as his older brother Robert Curthose (duke, 1087–1106, d. 1134) had succeeded in Normandy and Maine, nor was he married – his reign is exceptional for two reasons and therefore will not feature in my discussion at all. During King Richard I's reign Normandy, and indeed the Angevin lands, were crucially important for the king of England. Yet, Richard I's queen Berengaria of Navarra is to this day the only queen never to have set foot in England; neither during her husband's lifetime nor during the three decades she survived him[12]. Finally, a word is needed on the office

9) Ibid., pp. 117–118; Timothy Bolton, The Empire of Cnut the Great: Conquest and the Consolidation of Power in Northern Europe in the Early Eleventh Century (The northern world 40), Leiden 2009, ignores Emma apart from a handful fleeting remarks.

10) Most recently David Bates, The Representation of Queens and Queenship in Anglo-Norman Royal Charters, in: Frankland. The Franks and the World of the Early Middle Ages. Essays in Honour of Dame Jinty Nelson, ed. Paul Fouracre/David Ganz, Manchester/New York 2008, pp. 285–303.

11) The amount of time spent on the Continent cannot be precisely known. Royal absences are listed in Handbook of British Chronology, ed. Edmund B. Fryde/D. E. Greenway/S. Porter/I. Roy (Royal Historical Society, Guides and Handbooks 2), London 1986, pp. 34–37. For updated information on William the Conqueror and Henry I, who it seems, spent as much of their time in Normandy as they spent in England, cf. Regesta Regum, ed. Bates (as n. 4), pp. 75–84 and Judith A. Green, Henry I, King of England and Duke of Normandy, Cambridge 2006, p. 320; Nick Vincent's estimation for Henry II is that during his 35 years as king he spent a total of 5 years in Anjou and as much in Aquitaine, but he doesn't hazard a guess for stays in Normandy (Nicholas Vincent, The Court of Henry II, in: Henry II. New Interpretations, ed. Christopher Harper-Bill/Nicholas Vincent, Woodbridge 2007, pp. 278–334, at 282). In the case of Richard I his participation on crusade meant that he certainly spent the majority of his time outside his kingdom, cf. John Gillingham, Richard I, New Haven/London 1999, pp. 101–123.

12) Elizabeth Hallam, Berengaria of Navarra, in: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, ed. Henry Colin Gray Matthew/Brian Harrison, Oxford 2004, s. v. (also on http://www.oxforddnb.com).

of the justiciar, the person who represented the king in his absence. Although in this paper I will concentrate on queens acting in that role, with the caveat that the queen's power had an edge over that of her male colleagues, in medieval Europe the justiciar, if not the queen-consort or another male royal relative, usually was a high ranking official (usually a bishop) associated with the royal treasury. In England there is some evidence that if the queen was in charge she might be assisted (but never overruled) by such high ranking officials who, if both the king and queen were absent, might be caretakers[13]. With the increasing attention given to the constitutional role of queens consort, the subject of justiciarship is in need of further research.

Let us now turn to the question of the queen's share of kingly power when the king was abroad, or, as in Stephen's case, when militarily engaged or held in captivity. Queens acted with full royal power in the absence of their husbands on the continent. They issued diplomas and writs, they acted as judges, they dispensed justice, they paid servants, disposed of royal income, and were involved in preparations for military expeditions. In a detailed analysis of original charters for royal couples before 1135 David Bates has shown the extent to which Matilda I of Flanders, wife of William the Conqueror (duke 1035–1087, king 1066–1087) and queen 1066–1083, and Matilda II, wife of Henry I (king 1100–1135, duke 1106–1135) and queen 1100–1118, had dispensation to act on their husband's behalf[14]. Where king and queen issued writs with regard to the same matter (be it a grant or a court action), the queen's action usually preceded that of the king as she did the investigative work, initiated proceedings and formulated judgements or solutions. The scope for her to have agency was enormous. Although all queen's acts had to be confirmed by her husband in order to become valid, in fact there was hardly ever a case – as David Bates has shown – where the king would not back his wife's decisions. Visual evidence confirms the close cooperation between king and queen in another way. The diplomas they issued revealed the shared power in the placing of their *signa;* the king's and queen's *signa* always appear on the first line, set apart from the next group of signatories (bishops, abbots or important noblemen)[15]. Only occasionally other members of the royal family were included in the same grouping as the royal couple. Language in the charters, too, reveals the interdependence of the couple's actions, for example where the king and the queen each have issued writs for confirmation of the same grant, as in

13) On the origins of the office which was not really defined before Henry II's reign, cf. David Bates, The Origins of the Justiciarship, in: The Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies 4 (1981), pp. 1–12; superceding (for its origins) Francis West, The Justiciarship in England 1066–1232 (Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought. New series 12), Cambridge 1966, pp. 2–30; cf. also Handbook of British Chronology (as n. 11), pp. 31–32.

14) Bates, Representation (as n. 10), pp. 287–289 (Matilda I), 289–291 (Matilda II).

15) Ibid., pp. 291–293.

the famous case of Matilda II's writ-charter of Lewknor (Oxfordshire) in which she refers to »my lord's court and mine meeting in the (royal) treasury at Winchester«[16].

Both Matildas, therefore, participated actively in the exploitative nature of Norman kingship[17]. For Matilda I this is not surprising, after all she had financed her husband's invasion warship the ‚Mora' with its gilded figure head on the prow[18]. In a sense Matilda was as much a conqueror as her husband. For Matilda II, who was of Anglo-Saxon descent, this share in royal exploitation indicated by one of her protégés, William of Malmesbury, with his barely veiled accusations of prodigality, remains enigmatic in a work dedicated to her brother David of Scotland, her daughter Empress Matilda, and her half-brother Robert, earl of Gloucester[19]. Although detailed study of the actively sharing of royal power along the lines of that by David Bates is lacking for Matilda III and Eleanor of Aquitaine, there are hints that the post conquest development of considerable queenly agency, and exploitation, continued rather than, as some historians have argued, diminished due to the rise of administrative kingship[20]. For example, Matilda III used vice-regal phrases similar to those of Bishop Roger of Salisbury as justiciar: *precipio ex parte regis et mea*[21]. The argument clearly must be that such statements were meant to inspire confidence amongst the beneficiaries that they could trust not only the king but also the queen as his representative. If this were the case in joint actions, individual acts of the queen in

16) Ibid., p. 293; Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154, vol. 2: Regesta Henrici Primi 1100–1135, ed. Charles Johnson/Henry Alfred Cronne/Henry William Carless Davis, Oxford 1956, no. 1000, p. 104; Lois L. Huneycutt, Matilda of Scotland. A Study in Medieval Queenship, Woodbridge 2003, Appendix I, no. 1, p. 151; Historia Ecclesiae Abbendonensis. The History of the Church of Abingdon, ed. and transl. John Hudson, 2 vols. (Oxford medieval texts), Oxford 2002–2007, vol. 2, pp. 170–171: *in curia domini mei et mea, apud Wintoniam in thesauro* […].

17) For the Norman exploitation of England, cf. David A. Carpenter, The Struggle for Mastery. Britain 1066–1284 (The Penguin History of Britain 3), London 2003, pp. 81–87; Thomas N. Bisson, The Crisis of the Twelfth Century. Power, Lordship and the Origins of European Government, Princeton 2009, pp. 168–181; Stephen Baxter, Lordship and Labour, in: A Social History of England 900–1200, ed. Julia Crick/Elisabeth van Houts, Cambridge 2011, pp. 98–114. For the looting of churches and monasteries, cf. Charles Reginald Dodwell, Anglo-Saxon Art. A New Perspective, Oxford 1982, pp. 216–234.

18) Elisabeth van Houts, The Echo of the Conquest in the Latin Sources. Duchess Matilda, her Daughters and the Enigma of the Golden Child, in: The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History, ed. Pierre Bouet/Brian Levy/François Neveux, Caen 2004, pp. 135–154.

19) William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regum Anglorum. The History of the English Kings, ed. and transl. Roger A. B. Mynors/Rodney M. Thomson/Michael Winterbottom, 2 vols. (Oxford medieval texts), Oxford 1998–1999, vol. 1, pp. 756–757. For the dedications, cf. vol. 1, pp. 2–5 (David), 6–9 (Empress Matilda), 10–13 (Earl Robert).

20) Bates, Representations (as n. 10), pp. 302–303; Heather J. Tanner, Queenship. Office, Custom or ad hoc? The Case of Queen Matilda III of England (1135–1152), in: Eleanor of Aquitaine. Lord and Lady, ed. Bonnie Wheeler/John Carmi Parsons (The new Middle Ages), London 2002, pp. 133–155, at 133–134; cf. also Jane Martindale's opinion that Eleanor's share in government has been underestimated (Jane Martindale, Eleanor of Aquitaine, in: Oxford Dictionary (as n. 12), s. v.).

21) Tanner, Queenship (as n. 20), p. 155 n. 60.

her husband's absence could be relied on to be confirmed later by the king. Sharing of royal power, however, always meant that a queen's action had to be confirmed by the king in whom resided ultimate sovereignty.

Furthermore, there is evidence for contemporary perceptions in Henry I's reign that in England queenship was seen as an office, one that was integrated with that of the king. The evidence consists of seals which list queens of the same name in numerical order. Henry I's Queen Matilda is listed as Matilda II both on her seal, datable between 1107 and her death in 1118 and her epitaph composed then[22]. There is, however, no such evidence for Matilda of Boulogne, wife of King Stephen, who was apparently not known as Matilda III[23]. Importantly, this contemporary usage is frowned upon by modern editors who argue that giving numbers after names is only appropriate for kings or queens regnant, not for their consorts. Contemporary chronicles on the other hand usually distinguish between people bearing the same name by calling them so and so »the old« or so and so »the younger«, as in the case of King Henry II and his eldest surviving son Henry »the Young King«, but such usage does not work beyond one or two generations if there is a series of rulers sharing the same name[24].

As for the later queens, only Eleanor of Aquitaine fits the discussion for queenly activity in a cross Channel realm, although her »regency« activities date to distinct periods as queen-consort in the years 1154–1160, 1168–1174, and after her husband Henry II's death (1189) as queen-mother between 1189 and 1194 and after Richard I's death in April

22) The important point is made by BATES, Representations (as n. 10), p. 287. Durham, Dean and Chapter of Durham Cathedral I. II. Spec. 23 (*sigillum Mathildis* [*se*]*cun*[*dae*] *dei gracia reginae Angliae*), for an image, cf. English Romanesque Art, 1066–1200 Hayward Gallery, London 5 April – 8 July 1984, ed. George ZARNECKI/Janet HOLT/Tristram HOLLAND, London 1984, no. 336, p. 305; TANNER, Queenship (as n. 20), p. 287; HUNEYCUTT, Matilda of Scotland (as n. 16), pp. 88–89; Susan M. JOHNS, Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm (Gender in History), Manchester 2003, Appendix 1, pp. 203–230 Catalogue of Seals from the twelfth to the sixteenth century, no. 1, p. 203. For Matilda II's epitaph, cf. The Warenne (Hyde) Chronicle, ed. and transl. Elisabeth M. C. VAN HOUTS/Rosalind C. LOVE (Oxford Medieval Texts) Oxford 2013, pp. 66–67, cf. HUNEYCUTT, Matilda of Scotland (as n. 16), p. 148. For Matilda III's seal, cf. TANNER, Queenship (as n. 20), p. 134 and p. 150 n. 7, and JOHNS, Noblewomen, Appendix 1, no. 3, p. 203.

23) For Matilda III's seal, cf. TANNER, Queenship (as n. 20), p. 134 and p. 150 n. 7 and JOHNS, Noblewomen (as n. 22), Appendix 1, no. 3, p. 203. In a private communication to me David Bates suggests that Matilda of Boulogne was never styled as Mathilda III as the fragmentary evidence of the seals (only two are known) only give *MATILDIS DEI GRATIA.* I am most grateful for this information. During the discussion after my paper it became clear that there is no equivalent evidence for queens on the continent, as far as the participants were concerned.

24) Matthew STRICKLAND, On the Instruction of a Prince. The Upbringing of Henry, the Young King, in: Henry II. (as n. 11), pp. 184–214, at 196 and there n. 6 where seal evidence is given for the young king as »Henry III«.

1199 later that year[25]. So for example, as Jane Martindale has suggested, while Henry II was on campaign in Toulouse in 1158/1159 Eleanor in England intervened in a case between the abbot of St. Albans and one of his lay tenants; around the same time she authorised Richard of Anstey to bring his suit to be heard by the king's court[26]. Like her predecessors she witnessed royal charters, while documents embodying her orders were issued in her own name. John of Salisbury implies that in the king's absence it was the queen who authorised anyone's leave from court[27]. But, there is no doubt that her most active role in English government dated from the time of her sons, which leads us to the next section, but not before I point out that neither Berengaria, wife of Richard I, nor the two wives of John, Isabella of Gloucester and Isabella of Angoulême, were ever given any chance to exercise royal power[28].

One aspect of the queens' share of power has however not had the attention it deserves and this relates to the chronology of the queen consort's activities. For all three Matildas and Eleanor there was special demand for their capacity as the king's representative in the early years of each reign. This is particularly striking in the reigns of Matilda I and Matilda III due to political upheaval of conquest in 1066–1068 and disputed accession in 1135 respectively. Furthermore, both Matilda II and Eleanor had ‚a second wind' due to Henry I's increased commitments in Normandy in the years before Matilda's death in 1118 and Eleanor's actions as queen mother after 1189.

How about queen mothers? In a European context the most striking aspect of the situation in England is that queen mothers as a rule did not act with vice-regal power during their son's reign, the spectacular exception being Eleanor of Aquitaine especially in the years 1189–1194[29]. For the most part the difference is a result of biological fact. In our period Eleanor was the only queen consort with sons to survive her husband[30]. In contrast, not queens consort but queen mothers ruled across the Channel in France where

25) Nicholas Vincent, Patronage, Politics and Piety in the Charters of Eleanor of Aquitaine, in: Plantagenêts et Capétiens: Confrontations et heritages, ed. Martin Aurell/Noël-Yves Tonnerre (Histoires de famille 4), Turnhout 2006, pp. 17–60, at 18–19.

26) Jane Martindale, Eleanor of Aquitaine, in: Oxford Dictionary (as n. 12), s. v.; the St. Albans document is dated more widely to 1154/1160 in Vincent, Patronage (as n. 25), Appendix, pp. 56–60, p. 59, no. 125; for the Anstey document, cf. ibid., p. 56 no. 7 dated to 1158.

27) Martindale, Eleanor of Aquitaine (as n. 26), section entitled ›duchess and queen of the English‹.

28) Nicholas Vincent, Isabella of Angoulême. John's Jezebel, in: King John. New Interpretations, ed. Stephen D. Church, Woodbridge 1999, pp. 165–219, at 184 for the possibility that initially John may have had plans to allow Isabella some vice-regal powers, at 204–205 on the lack of charters or writs for Isabella during John's lifetime as an indication that he would not allow her any autonomy or vice-regal power; cf. ibid., pp. 166–167 and 196–197 for Isabella of Gloucester's obscurity during her very brief period as queen (May 1199 – August 1200).

29) For Eleanor as queen mother and regent in the years 1190–1194, cf. Jane Martindale, Eleanor of Aquitaine. The last years, in: King John (as n. 28), pp. 137–164, esp. 141–145.

30) Empress Matilda was never an English queen consort. The only other queen was Emma (d. 1051).

in 1190 Queen Adela of Champagne, widow of Louis VII (1135–1180) and mother of Philip Augustus (1180–1223) shared the regency with her brother Archbishop William of Reims during Philip's crusade[31]. Given that at least one French queen mother as regent occurs in Eleanor's life time one wonders whether unwittingly Eleanor had become the role model for Adela of Champagne and, later, for Blanche of Castille. The case of Eleanor as queen mother is the more remarkable because her return to power came after a period of ten years of virtual house arrest between 1174 until 1184[32]. Yet, within moments of Henry II's death her son Richard summoned her, aged 67 or so, and left her in charge of England with full regal authority. She toured from »city to city and from castle to castle« (in the words of the well informed Roger of Howden)[33]. One of the most striking aspects of her regency work is her ambassadorial role in travelling around Europe recruiting and escorting brides, and indeed raising and transporting the large sum of money needed to buy her son Richard freedom from captivity in Austria[34]. This is »regency on the move« rather than the more traditional »regency at home« as we have described for Matilda II, or that of Eleanor's mother-in-law Empress Matilda who survived her husband Geoffrey of Anjou (d. 1151) but was never a queen consort in England (see below). During the Empress's retirement in Normandy, as Marjorie Chibnall has set out, the Empress acted as regent for Henry in the duchy and involved herself with other continental affairs not least liaising with the papal court and intervening on behalf of the exiled Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury (1162–1170), with her son[35]. All this, however, she did by dispatching representatives and emissionaries rather than travelling long distances herself. Royal diplomacy as a queenly task had already been fulfilled by Matilda III who on behalf of her husband Stephen negotiated a deal with the papal legate Alberic and King David of Scotland at Durham in 1139. That she was David's maternal aunt explains

31) Recueil des actes de Philippe-Auguste, roi de France, ed. Élie BERGER/Henri François DELABORDE (Chartes et Diplômes 6), vol. 1, Paris 1916, pp. 416–420.

32) For the quality of the queen's lifestyle and freedom of action while mostly living at Old Sarum with a substantial income and staff cf. VINCENT, Patronage (as n. 25), pp. 21, 25–26 and 26 n. 61 (£180 p/a at least according to the Pipe Rolls), 46, 47; only a single charter (to Fontevrault) was issued by her during this period, cf. p. 19.

33) Chronica magistri Rogerii de Houedene, ed. William STUBBS, 4 vols. (Rolls Series. Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi scriptores [51]), London 1868–1871, vol. 3, p. 4: *Interim Alienor regina, mater praedicti ducis, reginalem curiam circumducens, de civitate in civitatem et de castello in castellum, sicut ei placuit, profecta est* […].

34) MARTINDALE, Eleanor of Aquitaine (as n. 29), p. 141 and 146 n. 32 (journey to Spain in 1200 to collect Blanche of Castile for Louis VIII as arranged in the Treaty of Le Goulet) and p. 145 (journey to Holy Roman Empire in early 1194 which is compared to her earlier journey in 1191 when she escorted Berengaria to southern Italy to marry Richard during which journey she also met the emperor-elect at Lodi and spent some time in Rome with Celestine III).

35) Marjorie CHIBNALL, The Empress Matilda. Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English, Oxford 1991, pp. 158–159; Anne DUGGAN, Thomas Becket, London 2004, p. 100.

the pope's approach to her (rather than to Stephen) and the blood relationship almost certainly facilitated her task[36]. Much earlier in the eleventh century Emma's role as queen mother was an ignominious one as the relationship between herself and her eldest son was profoundly distrusting. One of the early actions of Edward as king was to ride with an army to Winchester, residence of the queen mother, in order to take the treasury away from Emma and deprive her of all but a handful of dower lands. We find her only sporadically at court and her attestations always follow those of her daughter-in-law Queen Edith[37].

Thus far we have been looking at the role of the queens consort in England, but what about their role as ruler's consort in the continental lands? Apart from Matilda I, whose regency in Normandy shortly after the Norman Conquest is well documented, there is little for the queens who were not heiresses on the continent. We have hardly any evidence for Matilda II in Normandy, which, as far as is known, she only visited once shortly after the battle of Tinchebray in 1106 or early 1107[38]. The same applies to her successor Adeliza of Louvain as duchess of Normandy[39]. Those queens who were heiresses of French principalities naturally left a significant trail there, as is clear from the cases of Matilda III in Boulogne and Eleanor in Aquitaine (see below). However, during her marriage to John Isabella was stripped of almost all her power in Angoulême as her husband consistently exercised authority in her name and took all revenue into his own hands[40]. We shall take a closer look at the queens as heiresses below, though for the moment it is sufficient to conclude that there is little trace of consortial power in Normandy with the exception of Matilda I of Flanders and briefly Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1170[41].

III. The queen and royal concubines and offspring

It is axiomatic that the primary role of the queen consort was to produce children, preferably sons for her husband so that the dynasty would continue to hold the crown and to keep its resources within the family. Between 1066 and 1154 all successions were con-

36) Tanner, Queenship (as n. 20), p. 139.
37) Stafford, Queen Emma (as n. 5), pp. 248–249.
38) Huneycutt, Matilda of Scotland (as n. 16), p. 86.
39) Laura Wertheimer, Adeliza of Louvain and Anglo-Norman Queenship, in: Haskins Society Journal 7 (1995), pp. 101–115.
40) Vincent, Isabella of Angoulême (as n. 28), pp. 185–187 on Isabella's lack of power over her dower as well as her inheritance.
41) Judith Green, The Duchesses of Normandy in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries, in: Normandy and its Neighbours. Essays presented to David Bates (Medieval Texts and Cultures of Northern Europe 14), ed. David Crouch/Kathleen Thompson, Woodbridge 2011, pp. 43–59.

tested either between brothers (Robert Curthose, William Rufus; Robert Curthose, Henry I) or between cousins, male and female (Stephen and Matilda). After Henry II's death the rivalry between Richard and John was on occasion a very dangerous one, particularly when Richard was in captivity in Austria, which caused John to challenge his brother's throne; a rebellion was only quelled thanks to the resolute actions of their mother Eleanor[42]. These moments of crisis were eventually solved, but never – crucially – by bringing in one of the many royal bastards. So much had changed between the lifetime of the most famous bastard William the Conqueror and the times of his children and grandchildren. The most baffling occurrence in this respect is surely the history of Henry I's succession after the death of his only legitimate son William Adelin in the White Ship disaster of November 1120. Despite the king's rapid remarriage to Adeliza of Louvain in February 1121 (see below), no child was born from this marriage. The king had his followers swear an oath of allegiance to his only other legitimate child, Empress Matilda in 1127, but she was deserted by most, including her cousin Stephen of Blois, who after Henry's death in 1135 was crowned king. In all negotiations thereafter Henry's eldest illegitimate son Robert, earl of Gloucester (b. c. 1090, earl 1122, d. 1147) played a crucial role, first as Stephen's supporter but from 1138/1139 as a staunch ally of his half-sister Empress Matilda, though he never was, it seems, a candidate himself[43]. English common law did not allow a bastard to have seisin of land (except if given as reward for service for life in which case he could pass it on to heirs), let alone succeed in royal office[44]. The Church, too, ensured that legitimacy was a prerequisite for a son to succeed his father though canon law was in various ways more flexible than the English common law at least in the twelfth century. Yet, despite the clergy's moral high ground, its attitude was flexible enough to tolerate

42) GILLINGHAM, Richard I (as n. 11), pp. 235–248 and for the role of Eleanor, p. 240 and MARTINDALE, Eleanor of Aquitaine (as n. 29), pp. 146–147. For Eleanor's mediation (*mediante Alienor regina matre eorum*), cf. Chronica magistri Rogerii (as n. 33), vol. 3, p. 252.

43) Kathleen THOMPSON, Affairs of State. The Illegitimate Children of Henry I, in: Journal of Medieval History 29 (2003), pp. 129–151, at 141–143; Judith A. GREEN, Henry I (as n. 11), p. 218 suggests that during the row between Empress Matilda (and her husband) and Henry I about her dowry castles, Henry may have considered disinheriting Matilda and leaving Robert of Gloucester and others as a regency council for her young son Henry (born in 1133). Otherwise the only contemporary evidence that Earl Robert made any claim on his own behalf, comes from the Gesta Stephani (ed. Kenneth Reginald POTTER/Ralph Henry Carless DAVIS [Oxford medieval texts], Oxford 1976, pp. 86–87) where upon his arrival in England in 1139 there is mention of his supporters, cf. also David CROUCH, Robert, Earl of Gloucester, in: Oxford Dictionary (as n. 12), s. v. Note that Geoffrey of Monmouth who wrote earlier (between 1123 and 1139) refers to him in his dedicatory letter to the De gestis Britonum as »a Henry reborn in our time« (*alter Henricum*) (Geoffrey of Monmouth. The History of the Kings of Britain, An Edition and Translation of De Gestis Britonum, ed. Michael D. REEVE, transl. Neil WRIGHT [Arthurian studies 69], Woodbridge 2007, pp. 4–5).

44) J. HUDSON, The Oxford History of the Laws of England, vol. 2: 871–1216, Oxford 2012, pp. 444–445 and 784–786. David CROUCH/Claire DE TRAFFORD, The Forgotten Family in Twelfth-Century England, in: Haskins Society Journal 13 (1999), pp. 41–63, esp. Section 2 (by Claire DE TRAFFORD) on illegitimacy and illegitimate children on pp. 52–63.

royal concubines and illegitimate children. What remains a fascinating question for us is how the queens consort coped with their husbands' children.

Of the kings in our period only the two Williams are noted for the absence of concubines and bastards, to which for an earlier period we may add, famously Edward the Confessor. William the Conqueror's seemingly happy marriage to Matilda resulted in at least seven children of whom four were boys, with no known concubine or bastard, while William Rufus's suspected homosexuality meant neither women nor children were part of his life[45]. All other kings of England in our period had bastard children on a scale not replicated by the main royal houses elsewhere in Europe. Amongst the early Ottonians contemporaries of the pre 1066 English kings Otto I had two illegitimate children, but amongst the eleventh and early twelfth-century Salian and Capetian kings we only know of two bastard daughters: one of Henry V and one of Louis VI[46]. As far as the English kings are concerned, it is prudent to make a distinction between kings who produced their bastards before they married and those who had many girlfriends throughout their lives. As for the former, Stephen and John each had five legitimate children and two and three known bastards respectively. Neither seems to have kept liaisons with their bastard children's mothers going[47]. On the other hand the two Henries' sex life is impressive by any standard. Not only as far as the birth of extra marital children was concerned, but also in terms of contemporary accusations as to their molestations of women (of all ranks). Henry II had at least eight legitimate children by Eleanor born between 1152 and 1167, but also seven by as many concubines (5 sons and 2 daughters), of whom several

45) For William the Conqueror's children, cf. Frank Barlow, William Rufus (English Monarchs Series), London 1983, Appendix A, pp. 441–445, and for Rufus's homosexuality, ibid., pp. 101–109. William of Malmesbury, Gesta (as n. 19), pp. 500–503 reports a rumour that William the Conqueror had an affair with a priest's daughter, who allegedly was suitably punished by Queen Matilda.

46) Claudia Zey, Frauen und Töchter der salischen Herrscher. Zum Wandel salischer Heiratspolitik in der Krise, in: Die Salier, das Reich und der Niederrhein, ed. Tilman Struve, Cologne/Weimar/Vienna 2008, pp. 47–98, esp. Appendix I, pp. 90–93 (Henry V) and Thompson, Affairs of state (as n. 43), p. 130. For perceptive remarks on Scandinavian kings as more comparable to the English kings in our period, cf. Timothy Bolton, Ælfgifu of Northampton. Cnut the Great's Other Woman, in: Nottingham Medieval Studies 51 (2007), pp. 247–268, at 256–257; cf. also Jenny M. Jochens, The Politics of Reproduction. Medieval Norwegian Kingship, in: American Historical Review 92 (1987), pp. 327–349 and Thyra Nors, Illegitimate Children and their Highborn Mothers, in: Scandinavian Journal of History 21 (1996), pp. 17–37.

47) Tanner, Queenship (as n. 20), p. 152 n. 31 (Gervase later abbot of Westminster, and a daughter who married Hervey le Breton); Vincent, Isabella of Angoulême (as n. 28), p. 193 (on Oliver and Richard FitzRoy). Perhaps we have examples here of the Frankish elite practice of the late ninth and early tenth century when in their youth noble men had local ›wives‹ before they entered a formal dynastic marriage, cf. Régine Le Jan, Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc (VIIe-Xe siècle). Essai d'anthropologie sociale (Publications de la Sorbonne. Histoire ancienne et medieval 33), Paris 1995, pp. 274–277.

were born before Eleanor appeared on the scene and several during the king's marriage[48]. However, in number he never outdid his grandfather Henry I who in the history of English kings still is the champion with 25 illegitimate children (9 sons and 16 daughters), and with only two legitimate children[49]. Of his women, six are known by name to which we can add another five known only as sisters or daughters of men. Of course, for all kings count that these instances do not include any occasional sexual encounters with women which did not – as far as is known – result in pregnancies. As has been noted recently by Kathleen Thompson for Henry I, the king seemed to have used women of various social status in three areas in particular: first, in frontier areas as mothers of children in a concerted effort to bind certainly families closer to the court and thus the king[50]. The children of these liaisons were then in turn married off into the local aristocracy. A second group of offspring are children of families with a record for service to the crown. This was a reciprocal arrangement as these families were keen to have royal protection and through a child to access profit from royal revenue; having their daughter as a royal concubine was a social honour. From the king's perspective, he gained the family's (military) support and in these children had a pool of potential marriage partners for further alliances in the region. Thirdly, the Church was a likely destiny for extra marital royal sons and daughters, for example Stephen's son Gervase became abbot of Westminster and Henry II's son Geoffrey Plantagenet was bishop of Lincoln 1173–1181, chancellor 1181–1189 and archbishop of York 1189–1212. Though a year after his older half-brother Archbishop Geoffrey died, Morgan, another royal bastard, was expressly barred from becoming bishop of Durham by Innocent III. Times had now really changed even for royal bastards[51]. Amongst the illegitimate daughters two, both named Matilda, became abbesses: Henry I's daughter at Montivilliers in Normandy and Henry II's daughter Matilda at Barking (c. 1175/1179–c. 1198/1199)[52]. Ironically, the illegitimate sons who be-

48) Marie Lovatt, Archbishop Geoffrey of York. A problem in Anglo-French Maternity, in: Records, Administration and Aristocratic Society in the Anglo-Norman Realm, ed. Nicholas Vincent, Woodbridge 2009, pp. 91–124.

49) Thompson, Affairs of State (as n. 43), esp. Appendix A, pp. 141–151 and Green, Henry I (as n. 11), pp. 4, 5, 27, Appendix 2, p. 323.

50) Thompson, Affairs of State (as n. 43), pp. 130–131; Judith Green, too, comments that all mistresses came from all ranks lower than high nobility, except for Isabella, daughter of Robert, count of Meulan (Green, Henry I [as n. 11], p. 27). Though Henry II recruited some mistresses from the highest nobility, i. e. Ida countess of Norfolk (Lovatt, Archbishop Geoffrey of York (as n. 48), p. 93).

51) Crouch/de Trafford, Forgotten Family (as n. 44), p. 58, and Lovatt, Archbishop Geoffrey of York (as n. 48), p. 92.

52) Thompson, Affairs of State (as n. 43), p. 149 and Chibnall, Empress Matilda (as n. 35), p. 186 (Matilda of Montivilliers); The Heads of Religious Houses, England and Wales 940–1216, ed. David Knowles/Christopher N. L. Brooke/Vera C. M. London, Cambridge 1972, p. 208 and Emily Mitchell, Patronage and Politics at Barking Abbey, c. 950 – c. 1200, Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge 2003, pp. 77–78, 161–162 (Matilda of Barking).

came clergymen therefore had to propagate Church policy on marriage as a sacrament at the highest level. We may wonder to what extent they ever considered their position an anomaly. But what about the concubines? We must assume that the arrangements made for them were mostly led by parents or fathers of attractive girls who themselves may not have had that much say in whether or not they could refuse the king's bed.

As for the queens, we have little evidence for their views in this matter. According to William of Malmesbury, Matilda II may have decided early on during her marriage that two children was enough and the implication is that if he is right king and queen did not sleep together after about 1104[53]. Whether her husband's many illegitimate children (by that date approximately ten) had anything to do with the resolution attributed to her we do not know. William knew Matilda well, so his information cannot easily be set aside. Henry's second wife Adeliza of Louvain followed her husband wherever he went presumably to maximise conception, but all in vain. Just, consider the pressure she must have been under in the full knowledge of her husband's obvious fertility! Despite her childlessness while she was queen, she is one of the few royal women to mention her husband's prolificacy in a *pro memoria* clause of an original charter to Reading (founded just after their wedding to please God so that he might give the new couple a son) dated to 1 December 1136 (that is within one year after Henry I's death) when she referred to »all the offspring of the most noble king Henry« (*totius progeniei nobilissimi regis Henrici*)[54]. Otherwise, we have evidence for Eleanor of Aquitaine during her widowhood that while in Rome she involved herself in talks at the papal court about her son Richard's appointment of his half-brother Geoffrey Plantagenet, the illegitimate son of her late husband[55]. Interesting is the absence of any hint that the queens were in any way responsible for the upkeep of their husband's offspring in the same way as we find elsewhere in Norman occupied territory. In southern Italy, for example Count Roger Borsa (1085–1111) at the express wish of his wife Adela gave a grant of a house to his former concubine, her hus-

53) William of Malmesbury, Gesta (as n. 19), vol. 1, pp. 754–757: *Haec igitur duobus partubus, altero alterius sexus, contenta in posterum et parere et parturire destitit, aequanimiterque ferebat rege alias intento ipsa curiae ualedicere, Westmonasterio multis annis morata* (»The bearing of two children, one of either sex, left her content, and for the future she ceased either to have offspring or desire them, satisfied, when the king was busy elsewhere, to bid the court goodbye herself, and spend many years at Westminster«). For the birth of her children empress Matilda in February 1102 and William Adelin in September 1103, cf. Huneycutt, Matilda of Scotland (as n. 16), pp. 74, 77; Green, Henry I (as n. 11), pp. 67, 75. Neither author picks up William of Malmesbury's, admittedly, ambiguous remark that the queen may have purposefully abstained from having more than two children.

54) Reading Abbey Cartularies, ed. B. R. Kemp, 2 vols. (Camden Fourth Series 31) London 1986, vol. 1, no. 370, pp. 300–301. Thompson, Affairs of State (as n. 43), p. 141 and Wertheimer, Adeliza of Louvain (as n. 39), p. 114.

55) Martindale, Eleanor of Aquitaine, in: Oxford Dictionary (as n. 20).

band and child[56]. Such responsibility is reminiscent of eighteenth-century arrangements whereby noble women took their husbands' children into their own household. Otherwise, kings had access to whores, an entirely different category of women for the royal bed, judging by King Henry II's whore masters in England and Normandy who were entitled to a cut of the prostitutes' income[57].

There is of course a practical reason for royal concubinage; the larger a king's realm, the greater the chance that he travelled fast distances and if not always accompanied by his wife still in need of sexual satisfaction. Both kings Henry spent long periods abroad. Intriguingly, most of Henry II's concubines seem to have been English, or, at least, based in England. What does all this mean? That marriages were arranged affairs not affairs of the heart? That marriages dry up and the king sought sexual relations elsewhere? And what about queens? Did queens have lovers? They certainly were regularly accused of adulterous behaviour (including incest) in the contemporary press though evidence to prove or disprove such behaviour is not easy to come by. During the second crusade when she accompanied her first husband Louis VII Eleanor of Aquitaine was famously accused of having shared her uncle Raymond of Toulouse's bed in Antioch adding incest to extra marital sex, and some rumour as to Isabella of Angoulême's unfaithfulness circulated in her lifetime when there was talk about a *filius reginae*[58]. When queens shared power with kings the resulting partnership, it seems, was based on trust and mutual protection, attitudes difficult to reconcile with sexual infidelities. On the other hand, the notion of »infidelities« may say more about our own twenty-first century sensitivities than about medieval attitudes to marriage, love, exclusivity of partners and concomitant trust.

IV. The queen's previous experience as queen

One of the interesting aspects of English queenship in the eleventh and twelfth centuries is that three women had previous experience as queen consort. Before 1066 there was

56) Ferdinand Chalandon, Histoire de la domination Normande en Italie et en Sicile, 2 vols., Paris 1907, vol. 1, pp. 311–312. A series of charters for the abbey of Cava, dating from 1105 when Count Roger was still alive, allows us to trace Adela's curious protection of Maria, the (former) concubine of her husband, and their son William, later count of Lucera.

57) Vincent, Court of Henry II (as n. 11), p. 332 and n. 2.

58) The *Historia Pontificalis* of John of Salisbury, ed. and transl. Marjorie Chibnall, London 1956, p. 52 and commentary Ursula Vones-Liebenstein, Eleonore von Aquitanien. Herrscherin zwischen zwei Reichen (Persönlichkeit und Geschichte 160–161), Göttingen 2000, pp. 32–33; Vincent, Isabelle of Angoulême (as n. 28), pp. 203–204. For important work on medieval notions of love and sex, cf. John Gillingham, Love, Marriage and Politics in the Twelfth Century, in: Forum for Modern Language Studies 25 (1989), pp. 292–303; John W. Baldwin, The Language of Sex. Five Voices from Northern France around 1200 (The Chicago Series on Sexuality, History, and Society), Chicago 1994; Ruth Mazo Karras, Sexuality in Medieval Europe. Doing unto Others, New York 2005.

Emma, first queen of Æthelred (marriage 1002–1016) and then of Cnut (marriage 1017–1035), after 1066 Eleanor of Aquitaine, who had been married to King Louis VII of France (marriage 1137–1152) while for our discussion of queenship it is important to include Empress Matilda (as would-be-queen regnant) since she had been wife of Henry V, emperor of the Holy Roman Empire (marriage 1114–1126). What strikes me first of all is the number of years these women had been queen before they married for the second time: Emma and Eleanor both fourteen years and Empress Matilda twelve years to which we may add the four years she was educated in preparation of her role. Two of the three women arrived as foreigners from across the sea at their husband's court (Emma came from Normandy to England, while Matilda went from England to Germany). In a sense Eleanor must have felt a stranger not least because, bearing in mind that the language border ran just south of Poitiers, she had been brought up in the langue d'oc and only in Paris acquired the langue d'oïl[59]. When they first became queens all three women were very young brides with ages ranging across their teens. For two of them we have contemporary evidence close to their own views of their career. Emma's thoughts are known through the ›Encomium Emmae reginae‹ an apology for the life of Cnut and her own rejection of her older sons by Æthelred[60]. The blatant manipulation of the truth has recently been confirmed by the discovery of a new version of the text which shows Emma and Edward, apparently reconciled, side by side weeping at the grave of Harthacnut[61]! Some approximation of Empress Matilda's views can be formed on the basis of her own information to Robert of Torigni, her father's biographer at the monastery of Bec (Normandy), who recorded in some detail her early education at the archiepiscopal court in Trier[62]. Sadly, we have no such records for the other Matildas, Eleanor or Isabella of Angoulême. This has not prevented modern historians to speculate or interpret circumstantial information to try and answer the question to what extent, if any, previous experience was an advantage.

The question is probably most easily answered for Emma, as she stayed put in England, and it was her second husband Cnut who was the foreigner. None of the administrative practices at court changed much, even though the language may have included more

59) Martindale, Eleanor of Aquitaine (as n. 20). For Eleanor's charter record as queen of France, Marie Hivergneaux knows 20 charters of which 18 concerned Aquitaine, cf. Marie Hivergneaux, Autour d'Aliénor d'Aquitaine. Entourage et pouvoir au prisme des chartes (1137–1189), in: Plantagenêts et Capétiens (as n. 25), pp. 61–73, at 62–64.

60) The Encomium Emmae Reginae, ed. Alastair Campbell with a supplementary introduction by Simon Keynes (Camden Classic Reprints 4), Cambridge 1998.

61) Timothy Bolton, A Newly Emergent Mediaeval Manuscript Containing the Encomium Emmae Reginae with the Only Known Complete Text of the Recension Prepared for King Edward the Confessor, in: Mediaeval Studies 19 (2009), pp. 205–221.

62) The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni, ed. Elisabeth M. C. van Houts, 2 vols. (Oxford medieval texts), Oxford 1992–1995, vol. 2, pp. 216–219.

Old Norse than English. After all Cnut has often been described as a king almost more English than the English in his attempts to adapt himself to the exigencies of English kingship. The greatest change for Emma was the fact that she forsook the existence of her children by her first husband, banished them to Norman exile and demanded that any son of hers would take precedence over his older half siblings[63]. In terms of her role as queen consort, not much changed. As for Empress Matilda and Eleanor there is no doubt in my mind that their early careers as queens must have prepared them infinitely better to take up their role (as would-be queen regnant and queen consort respectively), than had they been in their early teens. In this respect, once again, the contrast with nine or ten year old Isabella of Angoulême is illuminating. Both women too, as we know from their careers, were clearly intelligent, bright, well educated, and above all experienced in the demands of court life, itinerant kingship, military dangers and relations with aristocracy, clergy and servants. What all women must have appreciated was England's wealth due to its effective administration, wealth of dower lands and the availability of the Queen's Gold (a surcharge for people who paid voluntary fines and Jews on every 100 marks owed) to finance their careers[64].

Much of medieval royal administration across Europe was similar even though the English centralisation meant that the chain of commands across the country was infinitely better organised than elsewhere, and much more cash income was available to perform the queens's role. Patronage, lay and ecclesiastical, was identical across Europe. That Empress Matilda was a capable woman is clear from at least two occasions in 1117/1118 and 1118/1119 in northern Italy when she acted as judge and subsequently with vice regal powers, experiences surprisingly downplayed by Marjorie Chibnall, whereas Amalie Fößel and Claudia Zey convincingly have shown that Matilda did act in her own right and from a German perspective they point out the exceptional nature of her actions[65]. She had her own seal, which styled her as *Romanorum regina*, not a million mile different from her own mother's *regina Anglie*, though she was never referred to – in the more common German tradition – as *consors regni*[66]. I wonder in particular to what extent her involvement in the discussions around the Concordat of Worms in 1122 had any resonance in

63) Stafford, Queen Emma (as n. 5), pp. 225–254.

64) On the English queens' lands and dower, cf. Marc Anthony Meyer, The Queen's »demesne« in Later Anglo-Saxon England, in: The Culture of Christendom. Essays in Medieval History in Commemoration of Denis L. T. Bethell, ed. Marc A. Meyer, London 1993, pp. 75–113; Huneycutt, Matilda of Scotland (as n. 16), pp. 55–72; Tanner, Queenship (as n. 20), p. 137; Marie Hivergneaux, Aliénor d'Aquitaine. Le pouvoir d'une femme à la lumière de ses chartes (1152–1204), in: La cour Plantagenêt (1154–1204). Actes du colloque tenu à Thouars, ed. Martin Aurell (Civilisation Médiévale 8), Poitiers 2000, pp. 63–87, at 75–76 and Vincent, Isabella of Angoulême (as n. 28), pp. 185–186.

65) Contrast Chibnall, Empress Matilda (as n. 35), pp. 33–34 with Amalie Fössel, Die Königin im mittelalterlichen Reich (Mittelalter-Forschungen 4), Stuttgart 2000, pp. 159–161 and Zey, Frauen und Töchter (as n. 46), pp. 87–88.

66) Zey, Frauen und Töchter (as n. 46), p. 87; Fössel, Königin (as n. 65), p. 51 n. 217 and p. 87 n. 447.

Empress Matilda's negotiations forty years later between her son Henry II and Archbishop Thomas Becket (1162–1170)[67]. Due to the extraordinary eyewitness account of her chaplain Nicholas of St Jacques at Rouen do we know her reaction when the text of the ›Constitutions of Clarendon‹ was read out to her in Latin and then explained in French. For the first time an English king had made a written record of his wishes as to how Church and Crown ought to deal with, for example, the criminous clerks. Empress Matilda was appalled in particular that the law had been put into writing, which had never happened under earlier kings. The implication was that any record in writing removed flexibility on the part of the monarch's actions. This was a highly perceptive remark from a woman who had experience of government[68].

V. The would-be queen regnant

Empress Matilda's bid to the English throne is one of only a handful European examples of princesses having been accepted as heirs to a throne. That her father Henry I had his nobles swear to accept her on New Year's day 1127 at Westminster, at a time when, so it was later argued, he had promised she would not marry »anyone outside the kingdom« (*cuiquam … extra regnum*) without wide consultation, is as remarkable for his action as it is for the unanimous support of the aristocracy to it[69]. Jane Martindale has argued that the Europe-wide changes for women as a result of the crusades – when they had to take over the day to day running of estates and lands – while their husbands went to the Holy Land had shown men that women could be trusted; and if we add to this Matilda's expertise in Germany, Henry could only guarantee the continuity of his lineage by ac-

67) Chibnall suggests that in her dealings with Becket she may have been reminded of her German husband's relations with his chancellor Adalbert, Empress Matilda (as n. 35), p. 167.
68) The Correspondence of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1162–1170, ed. Anne Duggan, 2 vols. (Oxford medieval texts), Oxford 2000, vol. 1, no. 41, pp. 158–169, at 166–167: *Quamplurima capitulorum improbauit; et hoc modis omnibus sibi displicuit, quod in scripturam redacta essent* […] *hoc enim a prioribus factum non est*; Chibnall, Empress Matilda (as n. 35), pp. 170–171 and Elisabeth van Houts, Latin and French as Languages of the Past in Normandy During the Reign of Henry II. Robert of Torigni, Stephen of Rouen and Wace, in: Writers of the Reign of Henry II. Twelve Essays, ed. Ruth Kennedy/Simon Meecham-Jones (The New Middle Ages), Basingstoke 2006, pp. 52–77, at 68–69.
69) William of Malmesbury, Historia Novella, the Contemporary History, ed. Edmund King, transl. Kenneth Reginald Potter, Oxford 1998, pp. 10–11; Chibnall, Empress Matilda (as n. 35), pp. 51–52; Green, Henry I (as n. 11), pp. 193–197. For a detailed discussion of the oath and her title of *domina*, cf. George Garnett, Conquered England. Kingship, Succession, and Tenure 1066–1166, Oxford 2007, pp. 210–213.

cepting his daughter as next in line[70]. At the time of Henry I's death in 1135 Stephen, as count of Boulogne, was quick to reach London and for pure geographical reasons he beat Matilda (based in Anjou) in the race for the throne[71]. She in turn due to the lack of support from the Norman aristocracy through whose lands she had to travel to reach the coast, did not cross the Channel until four years later in 1139[72]. During the next eight years England was torn between Stephen and the would-be queen, who came very close to reaching her goal in 1141. With Stephen in her custody, she arrived in London only to be defeated by the shrewd politics of her opponent Queen Matilda III who as heiress of Boulogne marshalled her merchant supporters[73]. After four tense days Empress Matilda left never to regain the upper hand again. She lingered for another six years in England until her final farewell in 1147. By then her lengthy stay had been enough to convince the English that her claim was a valid one. Within another seven years her son Henry succeeded his uncle Stephen, broken in mind and body after the deaths in rapid succession of his wife and eldest son Eustace. In the famous treaty of Winchester of late 1153 Stephen had accepted Henry as his heir and successor resulting a few months later in 1154 in the first uncontested succession to the English throne since Æthelred's in 987, a feat in no small part due to the Empress Matilda's efforts[74].

During her time as rival monarch Matilda issued most of her surviving charters (just under 100), of which the bulk is known from the years 1141 to slightly later in 1154[75]. They reveal her as issuing coins, settling disputes, granting land and offices and issuing writs. In short according to the documentary evidence she behaved like a king. The closest she came to styling herself queen, a title she could not carry as she remained uncrowned, was as *domina Anglorum*[76]. Why then did she fail? Several reasons can be given:

70) Jane MARTINDALE, Succession and Politics in the Romance-Speaking World, c. 1000–1140, in: England and her Neighbours, 1066–1453. Essays in honour of Pierre Chaplais, ed. Michael JONES/Malcolm VALE, London 1989, pp. 19–41, at 22–23 and 32–33.

71) For Stephen as count of Boulogne, cf. Edmund KING, Stephen of Blois, Count of Mortain and Boulogne, in: English Historical Review 115 (2000), pp. 271–296.

72) CHIBNALL, Empress Matilda (as n. 35), pp. 64–74.

73) Edmund KING, A Week in Politics. Oxford, Late July 1141, in: King Stephen's Reign (1135–1154), ed. Paul DALTON/Graeme J. WHITE, Woodbridge 2008, pp. 58–79, esp. 63–64; CHIBNALL, Empress Matilda (as n. 35), pp. 102–105.

74) James C. HOLT, The Treaty of Winchester, in: The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign, ed. Edmund KING, Oxford 1994, pp. 291–316.

75) The Empress's charters are calendared in Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154, vol. 3: Regesta Regis Stephani ac Mathildis Imperatricis ac Gaufredi et Henrici ducum Normannorum, ed. Henry Alfred CRONNE/Ralph Henry Carless DAVIS/Henry William Carless DAVIS, Oxford 1968. For additions and revisions, cf. Marjorie CHIBNALL, The Charters of Empress Matilda, in: Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy. Essays in Honour of Sir James Holt, ed. George GARNETT/John HUDSON, Cambridge 1994, pp. 276–298, at 294–296.

76) CHIBNALL, Empress Matilda (as n. 35), pp. 102–108, but note on p. 102 n. 45 that Adeliza had been styled in the same way before she was crowned. For a more recent discussion of the title, cf. GARNETT,

the most fundamental remains that she was a woman and in particular a married woman. None of her supporters could be sure that she would be able to rule in her own right as queen regnant while her husband Geoffrey of Anjou was alive. The custom of any husband to rule by right of his wife was so ingrained that it would have been exceptional if he were not allowed to fulfil his customary role. However, the historical consensus remains that there is no contemporary evidence for Geoffrey doing more than ruling in his wife's name in Normandy[77]. Secondly, closely related, the ambivalence of the Norman aristocracy was a crucial factor due to the historical distrust and rivalry with the counts of Anjou[78]. Thirdly, there is the aspect of the Empress's personality. It seems that her sense of entitlement to the throne, her exploitation of her position as former Empress (though never formerly crowned by the pope), and her overt determination put people off[79]. Qualities recognised as valid and acceptable in a man were simply not appreciated in a woman. The ›Gesta Stephani‹, written contemporaneously by an anonymous supporter of her rival King Stephen, and therefore necessarily biased against her, nevertheless gives us an interesting glimpse of what contemporaries did not like[80]. In good rhetorical style the author set up the picture by describing the Empress as often »arbitrary or rather headstrong« (*potenter immo et praecipitanter*) and engaging »in reckless innovation« (*ordine indiscrete permutato*) disregarding the advice from her (male) allies[81]. Faced by the citizens of London, at whose invitation she had come to the capital and who explained their inability to give her the large sums of cash, »she [demanded], with a grim look, her forehead wrinkled into a frown, every trace of a woman's gentleness removed from her face, blazed into unbearable fury […]«[82]. Contrast this with the author's portrayal of Stephen's queen (Matilda of Boulogne) only a few lines further as »a woman of subtlety and a man's resolution« (*astuti pectoris uirilisque constantiae femina*) and we understand what was at stake. A female ruler was expected at all times to behave like a woman. Steely (manly) determination was fine provided it was displayed with grace and gentleness. On no account was she to take on the demeanor of a man and certainly not that of a man in fury.

Conquered England (as n. 69), pp. 213–231 where on p. 213 he points out that contemporary evidence recorded Matilda of Flanders and Adeliza of Louvain as *domina* before their coronation. The empress's seal styled her as *regina Romanorum*, CHIBNALL, Empress Matilda (as n. 35), p. 107 and plate 5.

77) For Geoffrey as Matilda's obstacle, cf. William of Malmesbury's testimony, Gesta (as n. 19); CHIBNALL, Empress Matilda (as n. 35), p. 206.

78) For the centrality of Normandy (not Anjou) to Henry II's career, cf. Daniel POWER, Henry, Duke of the Normans (1159/1150–1189), in: Henry II (as n. 11), pp. 85–128.

79) CHIBNALL, Empress Matilda (as n. 35), p. 115: »Matilda had shown at the height of her power that she had neither the political judgement nor the understanding of men to enable her to act widely in a crisis.«

80) On its putative author, cf. Gesta Stephani (as n. 43), pp. xxxiv–xxxviiii making a persuasive case for Robert of Lewes bishop of Bath (1136–1166).

81) Gesta Stephani (as n. 43), pp. 120–121.

82) Ibid., pp. 122–123: […] *illa torua oculos, crispate in rugam frontem, totam muliebris mansuetudinis euersa faciem in intolerabilem indignitationem exarsit* […].

And this was precisely what the empress did and caused her downfall. In contrast the queen consort got it right: she behaved like a woman even though she displayed a man's resolve. Her »male« qualities were acceptable as long as she used them to further the interest of husband and son(s). Such women, like the Empress's own mother Matilda II, her rival Matilda III and her daughter-in-law Eleanor (though not when she conspired with her sons against her husband in 1173–1174)[83], were valued because they represented a royal partnership, but never as head of that partnership. Therefore, in practice, for a queen to achieve her goal came down to »playing it by ear«, being diplomatic and being resolute without being too pushy or arrogant or royally angry. The fact that Empress Matilda was an heiress and that her father had had her accepted as his successor in his lifetime was simply no guarantee that she would succeed. What then did it mean for queens to be an heiress?

VI. The queen consort as heiress

Of the English queens under discussion, three women were foreign French heiresses, Matilda III of Boulogne, Eleanor of Aquitaine and Isabella of Angoulême, while Isabella of Gloucester, King John's first wife, was an English heiress. Empress Matilda, the heiress who strove to become queen in her own right can be added to this list, as can – in a sense – Matilda II, who as Edith of Wessex brought English royal blood to her marriage with Henry I son of William the Conqueror[84]. How did their status of heiress affect their role as queen in England? There is no doubt in the mind of historians (or indeed contemporaries) that their landed wealth was the primary reason why they were chosen as marriage partners well before a throne was in sight. Neither Matilda of Boulogne nor Eleanor of Aquitaine, or their families, had any idea that their respective husbands Stephen and Henry II would become king of England. It is therefore crucial that we should not be guided by hindsight in our assessment of these heiresses as 'would be queens consort' from the start. Stephen had married Matilda in c. 1125 a full decade before he became king at a time when even Henry I had not given up hope for a son by Adeliza of Louvain, while Henry's whirlwind courtship of Eleanor, a royal divorcee, resulted in a wedding in 1152 when he had just succeeded his father as count of Anjou and duke of Normandy[85]. With King Stephen and his son Eustace still alive, there was only the remotest of possibil-

83) Ursula Vones-Liebenstein, Aliénor d'Aquitaine, Henri le Jeune et la révolte de 1173. Un prélude à la confrontation entre Plantagenêts et Capétiens? in: Plantagenêts et Capétiens (as n. 25), pp. 75–93.
84) For Henry's political choice of a Wessex royal bride, cf. Green, Henry I (as n. 11), pp. 53–59.
85) King, Stephen of Blois (as n. 71), pp. 279–280; Vones-Liebenstein, Eleonore von Aquitanien (as n. 58), pp. 38–41 (on the divorce proclaimed on 21 March 1152 and the wedding on 18 May that same year).

ities that the English throne would soon become vacant. Similarly, John's marriage to his first wife Isabella of Gloucester spanned the reign of his brother Richard and his parents' choice for her as bride had little to do with her potential as future queen[86]. In fact, the choice confirms a faint English tradition that younger royal princes chose an English noble woman rather than a foreigner as bride. However, John's second wife, the heiress Isabella of Angoulême was chosen shortly after he had become king and in urgent need to shore up the defence of his French domains and fill his coffers[87].

Yet, ironically, of the three heiresses it was not Isabella but Matilda and Eleanor who as queen to a large extent were in control of their own inheritance. In Boulogne, after marriage in 1125 Count Stephen exercised all comital responsibilities by right of his wife Matilda. Only after his accession to the English throne in 1135 did he hand over the de facto rule of the county to his wife while keeping the title of count of Boulogne, and concentrated on England and his own disputed rule there. When Matilda III died in late 1152, it was her son Eustace who succeeded to the countship[88]. What was crucial in Matilda's time as queen consort was that her inheritance included the vast Boulogne lands in England given by William the Conqueror to her grandfather Eustace II of Boulogne[89]. Situated mainly in Essex and London, these properties were of vital importance, political and financial, to keep the royal couple with a supply of cash during the civil war. The city of Boulogne and its harbour Wissant formed a vital trading post linking the English with the Continent, so when Empress Matilda entered London in 1141, while Stephen was in captivity, it took Queen Matilda four days to marshal troops and the traders of London to throw out the intruder. Empress Matilda may have lost out because she was haughty and arrogant, as the *Gesta Stephani* tells us, but a significant factor was that she lacked the crucial support of the merchant class for whom the trade with the Continent was at least as important as its ruler's legitimacy. So, whereas the Boulogne lands in France were strategically significant, those in England were far more important financially and this coupled with the trading interests in London allowed the Boulogne heiress to save the day for her husband. Naturally, Matilda of Boulogne also relied on her dower income, but unfortunately many of her dower lands were in those parts of the country which were in the hands of Empress Matilda (the city of Exeter and the Wiltshire lands)[90]. So, in her case her own inheritance was absolutely vital.

86) The marriage was negotiated by their parents in 1176 when John was 11 and Isabella 16, and not concluded until after Richard I's accession in 1189. The marriage was annulled upon John's accession ten years later, cf. HALLAM, Isabella of Gloucester (as n. 12).
87) VINCENT, Isabella of Angoulême (as n. 28), pp. 166–179.
88) KING, Stephen of Blois (as n. 71); TANNER, Queenship (as n. 20), p. 136; for a political narrative, cf. Heather J. TANNER, Families, Friends and Allies. Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c. 879–1160 (The Northern World 6), Leiden 2004, pp. 181–203.
89) TANNER, Queenship (as n. 20), p. 136.
90) Ibid.

In contrast, neither Eleanor nor Isabella's French estates had an English counterpart going back to the days of the Norman Conquest, consequently for them their dower income was as important as their own inheritance. However, as is well known, whereas Eleanor received untold riches from England and Normandy which she added to her own income from Aquitaine, as clearly Henry II allowed her access and a certain amount of control – except for the years that she was under house arrest –, John's treatment of Isabella of Angoulême was atrocious in that he neither allowed her income from her own lands nor from the extensive dower properties in England[91]. Moreover, as Nick Vincent has pointed out, Isabella had the disadvantage that she overlapped for a while with her mother-in-law Eleanor (until her death in 1204) and for the duration of her queenship (until 1217 and beyond) with Berengaria, Richard's widow, both of whom had to be provided for[92]. Nevertheless, resources should have been made available to her on a much larger scale than happened in reality. A significant reason why Matilda of Boulogne and Eleanor of Aquitaine were treated so differently from Isabella of Angoulême was related to the age at which the women married and subsequently became queen. Both Matilda and Eleanor were adults, with Matilda probably being in her twenties if not thirties and Eleanor about thirty two when they became queen. In contrast Isabella, for all her wealth, was still a child perhaps as young as nine or ten when John married her, so no match physically or intellectually to make demands for herself[93].This difference becomes even more poignant if we take into account that Isabella seems to have come with an exceptionally small retinue of Angoulême followers without a later stream of countrymen[94]. Throughout their lives both Matilda III and Eleanor were served by clergymen and administrators and servants who came from Boulogne and Aquitaine respectively[95]. We should not underestimate what contacts with countrymen and women mean for queens consort who left their homeland in order to settle abroad, nor should we underestimate what forced departure of their followers meant immediately after settling in, something Empress Matilda experienced when she arrived in Germany aged only eight years old[96].

91) For Eleanor's income, cf. Vincent, Patronage (as n. 25), pp. 25–27; for Isabella, cf. Vincent, Isabella of Angoulême (as n. 28), pp. 184–185.

92) Ibid., pp. 186–192.

93) For Isabella's age on marriage, cf. ibid., p. 166: »not more than fifteen years of age and perhaps considerably younger«.

94) Ibid., pp. 198–199.

95) Tanner, Queenship (as n. 20) does not single out Boulognese servants, but cf. Elisabeth van Houts, The Warenne view of the past, in: Anglo-Norman Studies 26 (2003), pp. 103–122, at 112–113 for Eustace and Baldwin of Boulogne in the royal household; in Eleanor's case, Vincent, Patronage (as n. 25), pp. 52–53 noted the presence of men from medium to lower aristocratic circles rather than the most noble families.

96) Zey, Frauen und Töchter (as n. 46), p. 86 quoting The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis, xi 38, ed. Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols. (Oxford medieval texts), Oxford 1969–1980, vol. 6, pp. 166–168; cf. also Miriam G. Büttner, The Education of Queens in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries, PhD thesis University of Cambridge 2003, pp. 86–108.

They would have provided emotional support and some measure of protection if only to raise the alarm at home if they felt that their queen was not treated properly.

VII. Conclusion

By way of conclusion I briefly set out some findings. First, military conquest made for exceptional circumstances, which not only allowed queens much more agency than before in England but also compared with other queens in Europe. The Anglo-Norman/Angevin cross maritime realm was only later mirrored by that of the Aragonese rule in Naples[97]. That queen consorts and not, queen mothers, with the exception of Eleanor of Aquitaine, acted as regents was the result of biological accident and expediency. Wives, even as foreigners, were trusted as several had been married before they became queen. Moreover, the cross Channel realm's geographical position as yet led to no excessive fear that these queens might call in their birth families. Financial resources allowed for large income for queens, especially compared with other queens (though the exception might be the Sicilian queens), which in turn allowed them leeway in making themselves feel at home in domestic arrangements and buy whatever support if they needed it. In these matters their agency is beyond doubt. The exceptional state of the English kings' extra marital offspring was no doubt the result partly of a wish to establish blood ties with potentially rebellious aristocratic families in border areas. The extra marital affairs throw light on what it meant for families and women to be in royal service. And they also call into question what exactly it meant for the royal couple to trust each other, an area of »emotional history« that would benefit from much more research. This survey of the queens of England has emphasised the extent to which education, previous experience as queen consort and personality played a role in their individual histories. These qualities cut both ways: a well-educated, experienced woman (and heiress) could be a significant asset to any king with an extended realm divided by a sea (Matildas I–III), but these very same qualities could conversely turn a queen into a king's worst enemy within his closest circle (Eleanor). Empress Matilda's case, finally, has shown that in England a woman who behaved like a man was not considered fit to rule as a queen regnant[98].

97) I gratefully acknowledge that I owe this reference to Nikolas Jaspert.

98) I am most grateful to David Bates who kindly read a first draft of my paper and made most valuable comments. Needless to say any mistakes are my own.

Summary: Queens in the Anglo-Norman/Angevin Realm

English queenship, in the sense of a queen consort, was deeply affected by the results of the Norman conquest of England in 1066, an event that resulted in three areas in which queenship stood out in Europe. First, for the next century and a half during long periods kings had to rule a cross maritime realm, a task that necessitated delegation of authority on a larger scale than was normal elsewhere in Europe. It became the queen's task to share in royal power and to cover for her husband when he crossed the sea. Second, it will be argued that the frequent absences of kings contributed to the exceptional number of royal concubines and illegitimate offspring and we will discuss the queens' relationship with them. A third exceptional circumstance of English queenship is the presence of a would-be queen regnant, Empress Matilda. Furthermore, we will explore to what extent previous experience as a queen consort (Eleanor of Aquitaine in France and, in her bid to become queen regnant, Empress Matilda in Germany) gave the queen an advantage (of age and knowledge) in her new position. Finally, several queens consort were French heiresses in their own right (Matilda of Boulogne, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Isabella of Angoulême and, in England as would-be-queen regnant, Empress Matilda) a position that allowed some queens greater leeway in the exercise of power than had they not come with a considerable (claim to an) inheritance.

TABLE 1: KINGS AND QUEENS OF ENGLAND 871–1066

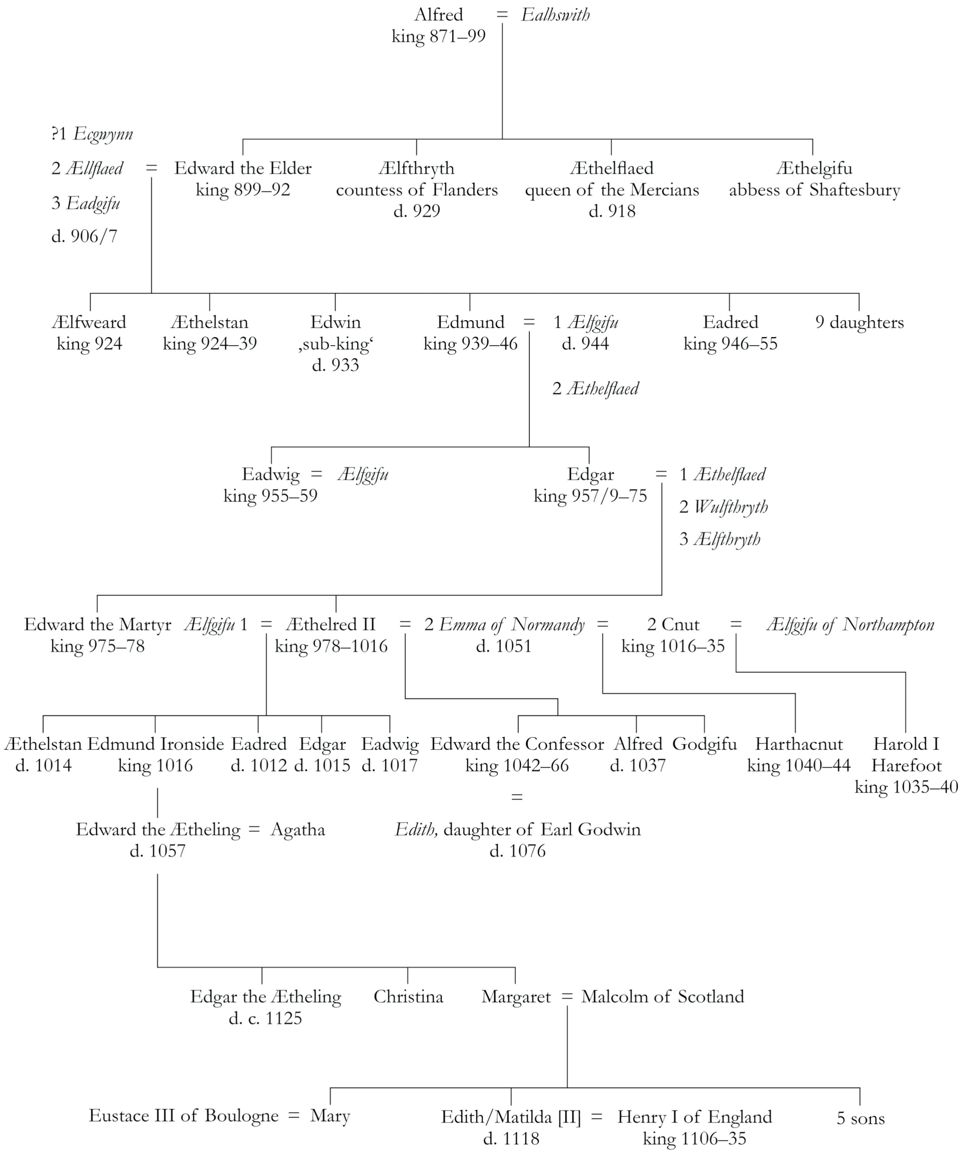

TABLE 2: THE NORMAN AND ANGEVIN KINGS AND QUEENS OF ENGLAND 1066–1216