

**THE CAREER OF  
MATILDA OF  
BOULOGNE AS  
COUNTESS AND QUEEN  
IN ENGLAND, 1135-1152**

by

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*For my father, who knew it was  
finished,*

*and my mother, who finally gets  
to read it.*

## Abstract

This thesis attempts to produce a biographical study of King Stephen's wife, similar in scope and type to Marjorie Chibnall's 1991 work *The Empress Matilda*. The introduction will examine the primary sources for Matilda of Boulogne's career – chronicles written during and after her lifetime and charters she issued or attested – and point out their problems; examine her career as discussed in secondary sources; and examine her early life, including an attempt to put her children in birth order. A lack of primary source material prevents any longer examination of her career before Stephen's 1135 accession.

The first chapter is a narrative of the queen's career, collating documentary and chronicle sources to provide the background for later, in-depth discussion. Where possible and appropriate, this chapter also attempts to date charters more precisely. The second chapter discusses Matilda's religious life, and has three parts. The first and longest is an in-depth analysis of her charters to religious houses, to determine her patterns of patronage and personal preferences. The second compares her religious charters to Stephen's and examines the connections between them using the queen's attestations; this determines whether the queen's grants were self-directed or motivated by her husband. The final section examines Matilda of Boulogne's relationships with various religious figures, and in particular tries to date her various interactions with Bernard of Clairvaux.

The third chapter analyses the witness-lists of Matilda's charters in order to determine with whom she was in closest contact – the make-up of her *curia*, in other words – and provides some discussion of her most frequent attestors. There is also a comparison between Stephen and Matilda's most frequent attestors, which determines that Matilda, rather than being an alternative nexus of prestige or having a parallel *curia*, was a member of Stephen's inner circle who had a small personal household. The fourth chapter is an examination of Matilda of Boulogne's authority – its sources, types, and uses. In general, Matilda's authority was highly nuanced, came from multiple sources, including her roles as wife, mother, countess, and queen, and allowed her to take

highly effective, flexible action whenever Stephen's interests or hers were threatened. The final chapter places the queen's career in context by examining the careers of four of her relatives, and comparing them to Matilda's; it becomes apparent from this analysis that Matilda actively modelled herself on her predecessors, particularly those who were queens.

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## Preface

As an exercise in biography, this work minutely examines, and extensively quotes, a variety of untranslated Latin primary sources, mostly documentary sources such as charters. Where necessary, I have translated these documents for inclusion in the body of the text; the original text is presented in the footnotes. Any errors in translation are entirely my own. Additionally, several quotations have been taken directly from the *Patrologia Latina Database*; any grammatical errors in the Latin are present in the original. Brill published Heather Tanner's Ph.D. thesis in 2004, as *Families, Friends, and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c.879-1160*; although I have consulted it, it appeared too late for me to cite it in this work.

I have incurred many debts of gratitude over the several years of my research. First and foremost, my deepest thanks to my supervisor, Dr. Benjamin Thompson of Somerville College, Oxford; his support, and especially his examination of my translations has been invaluable. I must also thank the Master, Fellows, and Scholars of St. John's College, Cambridge for allowing me to use material from the College archives, and Mr. Malcolm Underwood, the college archivist, for his help. Finally, Mrs. Margaret Dean, Lord Lieutenant of Fife, provided me with a William Forbes-Leith's English translation of the *Life of St. Margaret of Scotland*. Others have been generous with their expertise, for which I am grateful: Prof. Christopher Holdsworth graciously discussed Bernard of Clairvaux; Miss Clare Croft, of Oxford University Press, translated works by Ferruccio Gastaldelli for me, while Dr. Nicholas Karn, of Christ Church, Oxford alerted me to the writ favouring St. Augustine's, Canterbury (referred to here as A) and discussed English and continental diplomatic practices with me. Finally, for their patient support over the years, I must thank my family and friends, particularly Robert Dougans, my brother Michael Dark II, Heather McKee, Ruhena Begum, Tani Mauriello, Isabel Schlinzig, and Katsura Hoshino.

### Index of Abbreviations

AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
ANS	<i>Anglo-Norman Studies</i>
ASC	Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, in D.C. Douglas and G.W. Greenaway (eds.), <i>English Historical Documents, vol. II: 1049-1189</i> (London, 1981)
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
GC	Gervase of Canterbury, <i>The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury</i> , ed. W. Stubbs (2 vols, Rolls Series 73, London, 1879)
GS	<i>Gesta Stephani</i> , ed. K.R. Potter (OMT, Oxford, 1976)
HBC	<i>Handbook of British Chronology</i> , ed. E.B. Fryde et. al. (3 <sup>rd</sup> edn. corrected, Cambridge, 1996)
HH	Henry of Huntingdon, <i>Historia Anglorum</i> , ed. D.E. Greenway (OMT, Oxford, 1996)
HN	William of Malmesbury, <i>Historia Novella</i> , ed. E. King (OMT, Oxford, 1998)
HSJ	<i>Haskins Society Journal</i>
JH	John of Hexham, 'History of the Church of Hexham', in J. Stevenson (ed), <i>The Church Historians of England, vol. IV, pt. 2</i> (London, 1853)
JMH	<i>Journal of Medieval History</i>
JW	John of Worcester, <i>The Chronicle of John of Worcester, vol. III</i> , ed. P. McGurk (OMT, Oxford, 1995)
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i> (Oxford, 2004) < <a href="http://www.oxforddnb.com">http://www.oxforddnb.com</a> >
OMT	Oxford Medieval Texts
OV	Orderic Vitalis, <i>The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis, vol. VI</i> , ed. M.J. Chibnall (OMT, Oxford, 1978)
RC	Ralph of Coggeshall, <i>Radulphi de Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum</i> , ed. J. Stevenson (Rolls Series 66:1, London, 1875)
RH	Richard of Hexham, 'The Acts of King Stephen and the Battle of the Standard', in J. Stevenson, ed, <i>The Church Historians of England, vol. IV pt. 2</i> (London, 1853)
RRAN	<i>Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066-1154, vol 3: Regesta Regis Stephani ac Mathildis imperatricis ac Gaufridi et Henrici ducum Normannorum</i> , ed. H.A. Cronne and R.H.C. Davis (Oxford, 1968)
TRHS	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
WN	William of Newburgh, <i>The History of English Affairs</i> , ed. P.G. Walsh and M.J. Kennedy (Warminster, 1988)

## **Introduction: Sources for Matilda of Boulogne's Career and Early Life**

### *Part 1: Preliminary Remarks*

Matilda of Boulogne, wife of Stephen of Blois, countess of Boulogne, and queen of England from 1135 to 1152, is one of the most shadowy figures on the political stage on England during the period of the Anarchy. Her legacy has, in general, been buried by her husband's failure to fend off an Angevin succession, and even more by the historiographical virulence of later ages against him. The resources that her patrimony gave her, both in England and on the continent, played a crucial strategic role in Stephen's defence of his throne. However, later historians, with a few notable exceptions, have consistently undervalued this role. Matilda's contribution to her husband's cause was firmly rooted in her position as queen-consort, which has itself been profoundly devalued by historical scholarship. Political history was for decades defined as the study of parliaments and battles, and almost by definition the study of men's deeds specifically; the queen of England was held to have played no role on the political stage. In the past twenty years, however, queens have increasingly come under the lens of academic scrutiny in their own right, as political actors as well as transmitters of authority and cultural and religious patronesses.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis aims to correct, even in a small measure, this historical oversight. In the first chapter, Queen Matilda's career will be set out in narrative form; by correlating narrative and documentary source material, a basic itinerary for the queen will be constructed and a foundation laid for later analysis. The second and third chapters will examine the evidence, especially Matilda's extant charters, in much greater depth to determine her ties to the religious world and the royal administration respectively. Specifically, chapter two will analyse her charters to religious houses to determine her religious preferences – and provide a glimpse into her personal spiritual life

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<sup>1</sup> This scholarship will be discussed further below, p. 15.

through letters and other narrative sources. Chapter three will utilise the witness-lists of both the charters the queen-consort issued and those of her husband's she witnessed, with several aims: to identify the members of the queen's *familia*; to determine the queen's place in the royal *familia* and administration more broadly; to examine any ties between the two; and to identify any patterns in the queen's attestation. Chapter four addresses the subject of Matilda of Boulogne's authority in England, examining the types of authority she had at her command and analysing via case-studies how, when, and why she exerted and combined these various authorities. The fifth and final chapter examines the context within which Matilda of Boulogne's queenship was set. It will examine the careers of contemporary noblewomen – the queen-consort's relatives – for parallels, to make clear the powers available to an Anglo-Norman queen or countess and to illuminate the expectations contemporary society had of its ruling women.

A few comments must be made on the terminology used in this work. In order to avoid any implication that Matilda held regal authority in England, the word 'tenure' will be used, despite its modern academic overtones, to describe the period when she was queen-consort, rather than 'reign'. Similarly, in order to emphasise her specific identity and to avoid implications of a dynastic queenship, Matilda will be referred to throughout as 'Matilda of Boulogne', not 'Matilda III' as used by Huneycutt and Tanner.<sup>2</sup> Along with their independent county in north-eastern France, the counts of Boulogne controlled vast estates in England, centred on the south-eastern county of Essex, which became most commonly known as the Honour of Boulogne.<sup>3</sup> To avoid confusion, the Boulonnais holdings on the continent will be referred to as the 'county' of Boulogne, while English holdings will be referred to as the 'honour' of Boulogne. Finally, the term 'imperial', rather than 'Angevin' is used to describe the opposing faction, to clarify the empress Matilda's position as its head.

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<sup>2</sup> H. J. Tanner, 'Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc? The Case of Queen Matilda III (1135-1152)', in J. C. Parsons and B. Wheeler (eds.), *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 133-58; L. L. Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland: A Study in Medieval Queenship* (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 61.

<sup>3</sup> See below, p. 127.

*Part 2: The Primary Sources*

There are a wide variety of sources for Matilda of Boulogne's life and career. By far the most numerous of these are narrative in nature – chronicles and histories. Fortunately for scholars, Matilda of Boulogne's tenure as queen-consort of England coincides with the unprecedented explosion in written history in England at the end of Henry I's reign.<sup>4</sup> There are a variety of reasons for this newfound interest in the past. The Norman Conquest was one such cause, especially for monks; the subsequent losses suffered by the pre-Conquest houses caused them to cherish and defend their culture – and their remaining holdings – by delving into their accumulated legal records and oral traditions.<sup>5</sup> However, especially for the period of Stephen's reign and for the secular historians who dominate the contemporary chronicles, there was the added influence of romantic literature, which prompted the creation of works to be read by or to patrons, who were often laypeople.<sup>6</sup>

The chronicles documenting Stephen's reign – and thus Matilda of Boulogne's career – can be divided into two distinct groups: those written roughly contemporaneously with the events they describe, and those written in the generation or two afterwards. Even the narratives written as events unfolded are not necessarily ideal sources for a historian. Each was written from the perspective and to the agenda of its author, and the historian making use of such material must take these perspectives and aims into account. English tradition demanded that historians took on a judicial role, giving their works a distinctly moral gloss that modern scholars must consider.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> M. Brett, 'John of Worcester and His Contemporaries', in R.H.C. Davis, J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, J.I. Catto, and M.H. Keen (eds.), *The Writing of History in the Middle Ages: Essays Presented to Richard William Southern* (Oxford, 1981), p. 101.

<sup>5</sup> M. Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis: Norman Monks and Norman Knights* (Woodbridge, 1996), p. 175; V. H. Galbraith, 'Historical Research in Medieval England', in V. H. Galbraith and C. Hill (eds.), *Kings and Chroniclers: Essays in Medieval English History* (London, 1982), pp. 24-6.

<sup>6</sup> A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England, vol. I: c.550 to c.1307* (London, 1974), p. 186ff.

<sup>7</sup> J. Gillingham, 'Two Yorkshire Historians Compared: Roger of Howden and William of Newburgh', *HSJ* 12 (2002), 18.

Additionally, many contemporary narratives end before Stephen's 1154 death; these gaps seriously hamper tracing and analysing the queen's entire career.

Orderic Vitalis, for instance, wrote the final books of his *Historia Ecclesiastica* in Stephen's reign, and added the events of the Anarchy almost as soon as they occurred, but stopped writing between July and early November 1141, while Stephen was still imprisoned by the empress. Orderic laid great stress on historical writing as a vehicle for personal edification and clarification of divine providence.<sup>8</sup> John of Worcester also wrote as events occurred, but only one recension continues into Stephen's reign, and even that ends in 1140; additionally, John's attempts to blend written and oral evidence, as well as his frequent corrections to a hurried layout, occasionally make his narrative confusing.<sup>9</sup> The *Historia Novella* by William of Malmesbury was begun around October of 1140, and William continued writing until early in 1143. His narrative, however, ends with the siege of Oxford in December 1142, and is heavily slanted in favour of his patron, Robert of Gloucester.<sup>10</sup> Richard of Hexham, writing in the north of England, provides a valuable and contemporary account of Matilda's diplomatic efforts with the Scots in his *De Gestis Regis Stephani et de Bello Standardii*. This work, however, only covers Stephen's reign up to 1139 – making its worth negligible for any of the queen-consort's activities except this diplomacy.<sup>11</sup> All of these accounts are thus unbalanced and incomplete – and often exude a profound sense of pessimism about Stephen's cause. More importantly, of these works, only the *Historia Novella* includes an account of Matilda of Boulogne's most politically active period, during Stephen's 1141 imprisonment.

Three other contemporary accounts form the backbone of evidence for Matilda's career, because they span the period of her tenure as consort. The first is Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia*

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<sup>8</sup> Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, vol. VI, ed. M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1978), pp. xvii-xix; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 154-5.

<sup>9</sup> John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, vol. III, ed. P. McGurk (Oxford, 1995), pp. xix, xxxii-xxxviii, xl.

<sup>10</sup> William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, ed. E. King, trans. K. R. Potter (Oxford, 1998), pp. xxix-xxxiii; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 182-3.

<sup>11</sup> Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 216-18.

*Anglorum*; he began book X, in which he chronicles Stephen's reign, around 1140 and continued working on it, as events occurred, until just after 1154, when he records Henry II's coronation.<sup>12</sup> The second is the *Gesta Stephani*, possibly written by Robert, bishop of Bath.<sup>13</sup> Its first part, covering the years 1135-1147, was probably written in 1148 as one continuous effort. The remaining text dates from after 1153, when the author had switched his support to Henry of Anjou; before this time, he was a staunch adherent of the king's.<sup>14</sup> Both of these works have the drawback of having been begun after the beginning of Stephen's reign, when the author's information and memory may not have been current. The 'E' recension of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, kept at Peterborough, has several entries that carry the narrative through to 1153.<sup>15</sup> Unlike the former two works, it was written as events occurred; although continuing '...the Anglo-Saxon tradition of objectivity in relation to national affairs...' it becomes increasingly constricted and provincial in outlook, and this provincialism and its highly confused chronology render it less useful than the others as a historical source.<sup>16</sup>

The lack of current information affects those chronicles written in the two generations or so after the Anarchy even more. These chronicles may be less valuable because they tend to use the contemporary chronicles as source material. Additionally, they were written after Henry II's accession, and may tend to see that event as inevitable – and filter Matilda of Boulogne's career through the lens of hindsight and loss. Four of these works are used: John of Hexham's *Historia*, William of Newburgh's *Historia Rerum Anglicarum*, Robert of Torigni's *Chronica*, and Gervase of Canterbury's *Chronica*. John probably started his chronicle after becoming prior of Hexham around 1160, and completed it after May 1162. Although he used Richard of Hexham, John of Worcester,

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<sup>12</sup> Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. D. E. Greenway (Oxford, 1996), pp. lxi-iii; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 193-9.

<sup>13</sup> K. R. Potter (ed.), *Gesta Stephani* (Oxford, 1976), pp. xxix-xxxviii.

<sup>14</sup> *GS*, pp. xviii-xxi; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 188-9.

<sup>15</sup> 'Anglo-Saxon Chronicle', in D. C. Douglas and G. W. Greenaway (eds.), *English Historical Documents, vol. II: 1042-1189* (London, 1981), pp. 199-203.

<sup>16</sup> Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 142-3.

and Henry of Huntingdon as sources, he has highly detailed information about affairs in the north of England and in Scotland; like many contemporary authors, he has an agenda of moral didacticism.<sup>17</sup>

William was born during Stephen's reign, but only began writing around 1196, and probably died with the work unfinished in 1198. His chronicle is marked for its critical use of sources and its objectivity.<sup>18</sup> Robert of Torigni, a Norman author who relied on Henry of Huntingdon, began his chronicle around 1150 and continued it until his 1186 death; although his work is generally accurate, it shows little critical judgement.<sup>19</sup> Gervase, a monk of Christ Church, began the *Chronica* around 1188 and continued it until about 1199; although he used a wide variety of documentary evidence, his lack of critical sense and his loyalty to – and fixation on – his house permeates his narrative.<sup>20</sup> House chronicles – narratives produced within an individual cloister and focusing on its institutional history – have also been used when they document Matilda's career. The three most important are those of Bermondsey, Holy Trinity Aldgate, and Coggeshall. Bermondsey's chronicle was written in a single piece during the mid-fifteenth century, and its dating of events is notoriously poor; Ralph, the abbot of Coggeshall, probably wrote its chronicle in the early thirteenth century, around the same time as Holy Trinity's.<sup>21</sup>

The other major source of primary evidence for Matilda of Boulogne's tenure as queen is documentary evidence, mainly charters. No letters of Matilda of Boulogne survive, but three letters to the queen do – two from Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, and one from Pope Eugenius III.<sup>22</sup> Charter evidence for Matilda of Boulogne's career is far more plentiful; forty-six references to charters

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<sup>17</sup> T. Arnold (ed.), *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia, vol. II* (London, 1885), pp. x-xi; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p.261.

<sup>18</sup> William Newburgh, *The History of English Affairs*, ed. P. G. Walsh and M. J. Kennedy (Warminster, 1988), pp. 4-5; Gransden, *Historical Writing*, p.263; Gillingham, 'Two Yorkshire Historians', 15-37.

<sup>19</sup> Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 261-3.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 253-4, 257-60.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 318-32; below, p. 17 n. 65.

<sup>22</sup> B. S. James and B. M. Kienzle (eds.), *The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux* (Stroud, 1998), pp. 267-8,448; Pope Eugenius III, 'Ad Mathildem Anglorum Reginam', *Patrologia Latina Database, vol. 180* (Chadwyck and Healey, 1995), col. 1249B-D. Cf. J. Leclercq et al. (eds.), *S. Bernardi Opera: Epistolae, vol. VIII* (Roma, 1977), pp. 498, 499.

involving the queen survive.<sup>23</sup> Of these, thirty-two are charters of the queen printed in the third volume of the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, or its addenda, an appendix to the third edition of R.H.C. Davis's *King Stephen*. However, a small but significant number of her charters, or references to them, were not printed in the *Regesta*, either because they did not fit the volume's remit, or – in one case, at least – because of misidentification. A charter of Matilda's, given to St. Augustine's, Canterbury, while she acted as regent during Stephen's 1137 Normandy trip, was printed in Hardwick's *Historia Monasterii Sancti Augustini Cantuariensis* in 1858; it was later miscaldendared in both the first and second volumes of the *Regesta* as a charter of Matilda of Flanders and Matilda of Scotland respectively,<sup>24</sup> but because of the identity of the sheriff of Kent in its address clause, it must be a charter of Matilda of Boulogne's.<sup>25</sup>

Several charters in the archives of St. John's College, Cambridge, relate to the foundation, by Queen Matilda and King Stephen, of the nunnery of Lillechurch for their youngest daughter Mary to preside over; although none of these charters was given by the queen herself, a charter of her son William refers to a charter she gave to Lillechurch.<sup>26</sup> Finally, there are two references to Matilda's charters in documents of later kings: an *inspeximus* by Edward I of a charter of Queen Matilda's to St. Osyth's, and in a *curia regis* case heard by Henry III, as evidence given by the prior of St. Bartholomew's.<sup>27</sup> Matilda also appears as a beneficiary or actress in a handful of her husband's charters, and was frequently mentioned in them as either a witness or a beneficiary in the *pro anima* clause.<sup>28</sup>

Most of Matilda's charters were issued to ecclesiastical beneficiaries; however, a handful of them – mostly writs – were addressed to lay recipients, as the queen ensured the smooth running of

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<sup>23</sup> Table I, p. 243.

<sup>24</sup> My thanks to Prof. Richard Sharpe and Dr. Nicholas Karn for this identification; H. W. C. Davis (ed.), *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066-1154, vol. 1: Regesta Willelmi Conquestoris et Willelmi Rufi* (Oxford, 1913), no. 189; C. Johnson and H. A. Cronne (eds.), *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1060-1154. Vol. 2, Regesta Henrici Primi, 1100-35* (Oxford, 1956), no. 1190.

<sup>25</sup> J. A. Green, *English Sheriffs to 1154* (London, 1990), p. 50; Table I, p. 243.

<sup>26</sup> E; Table I, p. 243.

<sup>27</sup> Table I, p. 243.

<sup>28</sup> Table II, p. 243.

her English honour.<sup>29</sup> Perhaps the most troublesome aspect of Matilda of Boulogne's charters is that so few are original documents – only four documents, all printed in *Regesta*, exist in their original form, one of which was badly damaged in the Cottonian fire.<sup>30</sup> However, this survival rate is not appreciably worse than for the charters of other personalities of the era – notably King Stephen and the empress – and represents probably no more than one of the hazards of Anglo-Norman research.

### *Part 3: The Secondary Sources*

In contrast, however, the relative dearth of scholarly attention to Matilda of Boulogne probably has little to do with the pitfalls of the sources, which are relatively plentiful for her tenure, and much more to do with the vagaries of chance and the fashions adopted by historians. The only extant monograph on Matilda of Boulogne was written by Agnes Strickland, which appeared in the first volume of Agnes and Elizabeth Strickland's *Lives of the Queens of England*, published in 1840.<sup>31</sup> It is dated but interesting as a work for popular consumption, but its accumulated shortcomings render it useless as a piece of historical scholarship. Some of these shortcomings are unavoidable, as some of the major sources for the period – notably the *Gesta Stephani* – were either unknown or known only in forms that were difficult to access.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, the absence of charter evidence in her monograph is probably due to the difficulties scholars of the time faced in accessing and utilizing these records. Until 1852, anyone researching public records held by the Master of the Rolls paid for the privilege; moreover, medieval records were scattered throughout public and private archives, particularly arcane to consult, and during the mid-1800s generally were not available in printed editions.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup> RRAN 224, 239d, 243, 276, 557: Table I, p. 243.

<sup>30</sup> RRAN 149, 243, 503 (damaged), and 539.

<sup>31</sup> A. Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England: From the Norman Conquest* (Bath, 1972), pp. vi, 198-236; M. Delorme, "Facts, not Opinions" - Agnes Strickland', *History Today* 38:2 (1988), 46.

<sup>32</sup> Gransden, *Historical Writing*, pp. 193-9.

<sup>33</sup> A. Laurence, 'Women Historians and Documentary Research: Lucy Aikin, Agnes Strickland, Mary Anne Everett Green, and Lucy Toulmin Smith', in J. Bellamy et al. (eds.), *Women, Scholarship and Criticism: Gender and Knowledge, c. 1790-1900* (Manchester, 2000), p. 125.

However, Strickland's position as a woman with no formal education,<sup>34</sup> and in particular no education as a historian, also detracts from the usefulness of her monograph. Laurence notes that early-nineteenth-century history, defined as writing about the past for entertainment and edification, and allowed 'women of letters' a stature similar to that of their male counterparts. However, as the nineteenth century progressed, history became an academic discipline – with a degree in history from a university and membership in learned societies increasingly its entrée – and therefore concerned with full-time research rather than writing. This tended to drive women into subordinate positions and calcified the restrictive genres in which it was acceptable for them to write.<sup>35</sup>

Strickland's lack of formal historical training, in particular, mars the utility of her work. Although she comments that '..."facts, not opinions"' should be the motto of every candid historian; and it is a sacred duty to assert nothing lightly or without good evidence...', her lack of research proficiency tends to have led her to utilise abbreviated versions – often sixteenth- to eighteenth-century compilations – of medieval chronicles.<sup>36</sup>

Moreover, as a woman Strickland was shoehorned by social convention into focusing almost exclusively on the private lives of her subjects; this led her to concentrate on the moral character of the women about whom she was writing at the expense of a detailed examination of their roles in politics.<sup>37</sup> Writing for public consumption, Strickland '...showed no hesitation in putting words into the mouths and thoughts into the minds of those [she] wrote about...' and at times her prose lapsed into the banal.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps her most crucial failing, however, was her lack of critical judgement. On the one hand, she was generally unable to filter out her '...Tory, Jacobite, high Anglican...' sensibilities from her writing. On the other, Antonia Fraser comments in the introduction to the 1972 edition of *Lives of the Queens of England* that Strickland's use of non-contemporary compiled works, combined with her enthusiasm for her subject, '...sometimes led her into sheer gullibility...'

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<sup>34</sup> Laurence, 'Women Historians', pp. 128-9; Delorme, 'Facts, not Opinions', 45.

<sup>35</sup> Laurence, 'Women Historians', pp. 125-8.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid*, pp. 129-30; Delorme, 'Facts, not Opinions', 46; Huneycutt, *Matilda*, p.1.

<sup>37</sup> Laurence, 'Women Historians', pp. 126-7, 133-6.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid*, p. 137.

– such as her claim that Henry II was the product of an adulterous liaison between Stephen and the empress.<sup>39</sup>

Heather Tanner is one of the few modern scholars to address Matilda of Boulogne's career directly, which she did in two works.<sup>40</sup> The first was her 1993 Ph.D. thesis, 'Between Scylla and Charybdis: the Political Role of the Comital Family of Boulogne in Northern France and England', whose time span covers Matilda's reign as countess of Boulogne as well as the period of her tenure as queen-consort.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately for scholars of the queen, Tanner's work examines the family's general political influence over a four-century span – indeed, the entire period 1125-1153 occupies only part of one chapter – leaving little space for a discussion of Matilda's career specifically.<sup>42</sup> Additionally, she tends to focus on the county of Boulogne, eschewing a discussion of the honour's role in English politics, and concentrates her discussion of Matilda on her role as queen-consort, as signalled by her consistent use of 'Queen Matilda'.<sup>43</sup> Because of this focus on the family in general, rather than on any one member of it, Tanner limited her engagement with Matilda's career to a summation of the chronicle evidence for her political actions.

In contrast, Tanner's 2002 article 'Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?', published after this research began, focuses on one aspect of Matilda's career: her political authority as queen-consort of England. It analyses several of Matilda's charters and examines the witnesses to those charters, in order to determine the nature of Anglo-Norman queenship: whether it was a formal office, with defined responsibilities and authority, or merely an *ad hoc* position that gave a well-connected or determined woman the opportunity to assert herself. Although her work makes a

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<sup>39</sup> Laurence, 'Women Historians', pp. 136-8; Delorme, 'Facts, not Opinions', 49; Strickland, *Lives of Queens*, pp. viii, 226-9, 231.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. M. Chibnall, 'Matilda of Boulogne', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18337>>, accessed 3 December 2004.

<sup>41</sup> H. J. Tanner, 'Between Scylla and Charybdis: The Political Role of the Comital Family of Boulogne in Northern France and England (879-1159)', Ph.D. thesis (University of California, Santa Barbara, 1993).

<sup>42</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 177-232.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*, pp. 177, 194, 203.

useful contribution to the discussion of this limited topic, the analysis presented below in Chapter IV challenges her major argument; the article also contains some lapses in the use of data.<sup>44</sup>

Consideration of Matilda's career also appears, to a widely varying degree, in the enormous corpus of research devoted to King Stephen and his reign.<sup>45</sup> The first such work was J.H. Round's 1892 *Geoffrey de Mandeville*. Although it suffers from some of the same general problems of evidence as does Strickland, and was moreover the origin of the pernicious 'anarchic magnate' myth, there is some fodder for the scholar of Queen Matilda. Round gives her non-extant grants to Geoffrey de Mandeville a place in the jockeying for the earl's favour – which in turn suggests a political role for the queen – and addresses the technical point of her seal.<sup>46</sup> The publication of the third volume of the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* in 1968 spawned a new wave of research into the hapless king, in which Matilda appeared on the periphery. J.T. Appleby's 1969 book *The Troubled Reign of King Stephen* highlights the strategic advantages Stephen gained from his marital alliance with Boulogne, but finds only a small political role for the queen.<sup>47</sup> H.A. Cronne's *The Reign of Stephen* attempts to place Matilda's patrimony in its proper strategic place in his discussion of the events of 1141, but does not discuss Matilda's role in peace talks with the Scots and tends to cast her as a dutiful wife.<sup>48</sup>

Generally, monographs published in the recent past similarly treat Stephen's queen as a sidelight in the story of his reign. R.H.C. Davis opens the third edition of his *King Stephen*, published in 1990, with some analysis of the advantages Stephen gained from his marriage to Matilda of Boulogne, but does not continue this into a discussion of the Boulonnais impact on Essex.<sup>49</sup> Jim Bradbury's *Stephen and Matilda*, Keith Stringer's *The Reign of Stephen*, and Donald Matthew's *King Stephen* – all notably written for consumption by non-specialists and having the

<sup>44</sup> Tanner, 'Queenship', pp. 133-58.

<sup>45</sup> A search of the Royal Historical Society's database (<http://www.rhs.ac.uk/bibl/dataset.asp>) with the subject 'Stephen (king) (d. 1154)' returns 93 books and articles.

<sup>46</sup> J. H. Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville: A Study of the Anarchy* (London, 1892), pp. 114-22, 302.

<sup>47</sup> J. T. Appleby, *The Troubled Reign of King Stephen* (London, 1969), pp. 9, 59, 79.

<sup>48</sup> H. A. Cronne, *The Reign of Stephen, 1135-54: Anarchy in England* (London, 1970), pp. 37, 46-50, 64, 74, 77, 147, 153, 184, 205, 230.

<sup>49</sup> R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen, 1135-54* (London, 1990), pp. 7-11, 55-6.

expressed intent of re-evaluating Stephen's ability as king – generally do not discuss the queen-consort's importance to her husband's cause.<sup>50</sup> The most sustained discussion of Matilda in these works often appears when discussing her death; the scholars generally agree that she was a major driving force behind the success of Stephen's reign and his cause rapidly declined after her death, because of her efforts as his advisor.<sup>51</sup>

David Crouch makes perhaps the most sustained effort to integrate Matilda of Boulogne into the royal administration in his 2000 book *The Reign of King Stephen 1135-1154*.<sup>52</sup> He is the only author to discuss the queen's religious preferences and to examine the reasons for them. He also gives Matilda a role in diplomacy with the Scots, military interventions in 1138 and 1141, and the struggle to ensure their son Eustace's succession.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, in a work focused on the king, his consort can only form a sideline to the argument, and he accordingly does not attempt a detailed consideration of Matilda's role as queen-consort and countess or its impact on Stephen's rule. He also eschews examining the importance of Matilda's patrimony on the political balance of the Anarchy; for example, while Crouch gives the balance of power in Essex a prominent place, his analysis circles round the person of Geoffrey de Mandeville, not the balance of power between the Boulonnais and Mandeville houses.<sup>54</sup> He also gives Stephen the role of bellwether for the fashion of patronising Templar houses, and generally assumes that Prince Eustace took sole, absolute control of the Boulonnais county and honour in 1147, despite grants and writs issued by his mother after that date.<sup>55</sup>

The shorter length and sharper focus of articles means that scholars focus even less attention on Matilda of Boulogne in these works.<sup>56</sup> For instance, some of Round's shorter works usefully

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<sup>50</sup> J. Bradbury, *Stephen and Matilda: The Civil War of 1139-53* (Stroud, 1996); K. J. Stringer, *Reign of Stephen: Kingship, Warfare and Government in Twelfth Century England* (London, 1993); D. Matthew, *King Stephen* (London, 2002).

<sup>51</sup> Cf. Cronne, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 64, 74, 188, 205.

<sup>52</sup> D. Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen, 1135-1154* (Harlow, 2000).

<sup>53</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 78, 89-90, 174-88, 260-1, 314-19.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid*, pp. 21, 32.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid*, pp. 245, 317-18.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. J. Bradbury, 'The Early Years of the Reign of Stephen, 1135-1139', in D. Williams, (ed.), *England in the Twelfth*

discuss the extent of the Boulonnais comital family's English holdings and their dependants there; they do not, however, extend this discussion into the period of the Anarchy, and so do not address the strategic role Matilda of Boulogne and her patrimony played in the struggle.<sup>57</sup> Similarly, in their long-running debate over Geoffrey II de Mandeville's difficult relations with the English crown, R.H.C. Davis and J.O. Prestwich did not discuss the role tensions between the competing needs of Geoffrey's and Matilda's families may have played.<sup>58</sup> However, two articles examining the roots of Stephen's power base have viewed the effect of the queen's patrimony on English politics. Edmund King's 2000 *English Historical Review* article 'Stephen of Blois, Count of Mortain and Boulogne' appraised Stephen's career before taking the throne and the forces that led him to be crowned. He concluded that Matilda's county gave him an unprecedented opportunity to exert independent authority and the Essex honour brought with it vital connections to the capital.<sup>59</sup> Judith Green's 1991 article 'Financing Stephen's War', which analyses Stephen's revenue sources and their impact on his fight for the throne, corroborates this view of the Boulogne honour as vital to Stephen's good relations with the citizens of London.<sup>60</sup>

Finally, although Matilda was queen-consort of England for nearly two decades, scholars of queenship have paid her relatively little attention. The growth in scholarly interest in queens, their authority, and their official duties in the past three decades has been explosive, which renders Matilda's relative obscurity odd.<sup>61</sup> However, much of this work, such as that of the influential John Carmi Parsons, has focused on the far better documented later medieval queens. The only Anglo-

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*Century: Proceedings of the 1988 Harlaxton Symposium* (Woodbridge, 1990), pp. 17-30.

<sup>57</sup> J. H. Round, 'The Counts of Boulogne as English Lords', in J. H. Round (ed.), *Studies in Peerage and Family History* (Westminster, 1901), pp. 147-80; J. H. Round, 'Ingelric the Priest and Albert of Lotharingia', in J. H. Round (ed.), *The Commune of London* (Westminster, 1899), pp. 28-38; J. H. Round, 'London under Stephen', in J. H. Round (ed.), *The Commune of London* (Westminster, 1899), pp. 97-124.

<sup>58</sup> This historiographical epic began with R. H. C. Davis, 'Geoffrey de Mandeville Reconsidered', *EHR* (1964), 299-307, and continued in J. O. Prestwich, 'The Treason of Geoffrey de Mandeville', *EHR* 103 (1988), 283-312; R. H. C. Davis, 'The Treason of Geoffrey de Mandeville: A Comment', *EHR* 103 (1988), 313-17; J. O. Prestwich, 'Geoffrey de Mandeville: A Further Comment', *EHR* 103 (1988), 960-8; R. H. C. Davis, 'Geoffrey de Mandeville: A Final Comment', *EHR* 103 (1988), 670-2; J. O. Prestwich and R. H. C. Davis, 'Last Words on Geoffrey de Mandeville', *EHR* 105 (1990), 670-2.

<sup>59</sup> E. King, 'Stephen of Blois, Count of Mortain and Boulogne', *EHR* 115 (2000), 271-96, esp. 293-6.

<sup>60</sup> J. A. Green, 'Financing Stephen's War', *ANS* 14 (1991), 91-114, esp. 99-100, 105-7.

<sup>61</sup> A search of the Royal Historical Society's bibliographic database (see above, p. 13 n. 45) with the terms 'queenship, 1000-1500', yielded 85 results, most no earlier than 1980.

Norman queen to receive sustained interest from scholars of queenship is Matilda of Scotland, Henry I's first wife, the subject of Lois Huneycutt's work. Matilda's status as wife of Stephen of Blois, one of the most controversial of medieval English kings, may place her further out of the spotlight, as academics choose to evaluate his career rather than hers. However, Lois Huneycutt's 2002 study '*Alianora regina Anglorum*' compares Eleanor of Aquitaine with her predecessors, including Matilda of Boulogne; although it does not devote much time to analysing her career specifically, the correlation of these various women sheds some light on her role and allows for useful parallels to be made.<sup>62</sup>

#### *Part 4: Matilda of Boulogne's Career Before 1135*

Very little is known of Matilda of Boulogne's early life, as she did not generally enter the historical sources until after her marriage, and few Boulonnais documents survive for the period of her reign as countess before Stephen acceded to the throne (c. 1125-1135). However, it is possible, using what evidence exists and extrapolating from the lives of her maternal relatives, to make some remarks. John of Worcester comments that Mary of Scotland, the youngest daughter of St. Margaret and Malcolm Canmore, king of Scots, wed Count Eustace III of Boulogne in 1102. The count was a famous crusader, the elder brother of Godfrey of Bouillon, the first ruler of Christian Jerusalem, and Baldwin I, its first king, and would later be offered the throne himself.<sup>63</sup> The match, which had the additional benefit of tying the loyalties of one of the wealthiest English magnates firmly to the throne, was probably brokered, or at least assisted, by Mary's sister Matilda, who had married Henry I two years previously.<sup>64</sup> Countess Mary died in the spring of 1115 or 1116. Although the Bermondsey chronicler had a notoriously poor grasp of dates, a charter of Queen Matilda's to

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<sup>62</sup> L. L. Huneycutt, '*Alianora Regina Anglorum: Eleanor of Aquitaine and Her Anglo-Norman Predecessors as Queens of England*', in J. C. Parsons and B. Wheeler (eds.), *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady* (London, 2002), pp. 115-31.

<sup>63</sup> B. A. Lees (ed.), *Records of the Templars in England in the 12th Century: The Inquest of 1185 with Illustrative Charters and Documents* (London, 1935), p. xl; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 317-18.

<sup>64</sup> JW, pp. 102-3; Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 141-51.

Durham's cathedral chapter, which includes the countess in its *pro anima* clause and was granted before Henry's April 1116 trip to the continent, gives a *terminus ante quem* for her death.<sup>65</sup> Because Matilda of Boulogne, the only child of this marriage and Eustace III's only legitimate child, probably married around 1125, it is most likely that she was born between 1102 and 1110.<sup>66</sup>

Young Matilda may well have spent a great deal of time during her childhood in England. Her mother, Countess Mary, was close to her sister Matilda, Henry I's queen, as the latter's memorial donation to Durham at Mary's death shows.<sup>67</sup> Mary may have also been a frequent resident of the English court, if the example of her younger brother David carries weight – which it may well do, since Mary and David were only three years apart in age.<sup>68</sup> Moreover, Eustace himself appears to have spent much of their early marriage in England, as he frequently attested Henry's charters between the fall of 1101 and 1108 and was highly involved in the king's military affairs.<sup>69</sup> Grants made by various members of the comital family to English houses – including holdings belonging to the Boulonnais county – also suggest that Matilda's family had deep English roots.<sup>70</sup>

After 1108 Eustace appears much less frequently in Henry's charters. Tanner argues that this reticence stemmed from the series of wars between Henry I and Louis VI of France, who was aided by the counts of Flanders and Ponthieu. In short, Eustace probably stayed at home in Boulogne to protect his patrimony from marauders.<sup>71</sup> Although there were relatively frequent truces and Eustace appears to have managed to placate most of his neighbours, as shown by his *rapprochement* with

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<sup>65</sup> 'Annales de Bermondseia', in H. R. Luard (ed.), *Annales Monastici, vol. III* (London, 1866), p. 432; M. Brett, 'The Annals of Bermondsey, Southwark and Merton', in D. Abulafia (ed.), *Church and City: Essays in Honour of Christopher Brooke* (Cambridge, UK, 1992), pp. 296-7; R. Graham, 'The Priory of La Charité-sur-Loire and the monastery of Bermondsey', in R. Graham (ed.), *English Ecclesiastical Studies: Being Some Essays in Research in Medieval History* (London, 1929), pp. 93-100; C. Johnson and Cronne (eds.), *RRAN II*, no. 1180.

<sup>66</sup> A. V. Murray, *The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Dynastic History 1099-1125* (Oxford, 2000), p. 159; below, pp. 19-21.

<sup>67</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 90-1, 122-3, 149-50; C. Johnson and Cronne (eds.), *RRAN II*, no. 1180.

<sup>68</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 17, 89, 104, 120-2, 133-4; L. L. Huneycutt, 'Public Lives, Private Ties: Royal Mothers in England and Scotland, 1070-1204', in J. C. Parsons and B. Wheeler (eds.), *Medieval Mothering* (London, 1996), pp. 303, 307; Huneycutt, '*Alianora Regina Anglorum*', p.128.

<sup>69</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 153-4.

<sup>70</sup> 'Bermondsey Annals', p. 432; Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', p. 154; Huneycutt, *Matilda*, p. 108.

<sup>71</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 156-76.

the count of Flanders in 1113, the situation was probably volatile and somewhat dangerous.<sup>72</sup> In this situation, it is not unreasonable to suggest that the young Matilda spent these years in England, perhaps under the supervision of her mother, her aunt Matilda, or both.<sup>73</sup> If Matilda did remain in England, the question arises of where she spent her formative years. Strickland comments, apparently on the basis of her mother's grants to the house and burial there, that Matilda was probably educated at Bermondsey. This is extremely unlikely, however, given that Bermondsey was a male house – the porosity of male cloister walls to the families of patrons simply did not extend so far.<sup>74</sup>

On the other hand, it is likely that Matilda of Boulogne received a claustral education in her girlhood, simply because she came from a family that appears to have valued female intellectual prowess. Both her grandmother and her maternal aunt could definitely read, and her mother, who shared an education with Henry I's queen, was probably similarly capable; the presence of Latin epitaphs on Matilda of Boulogne's and Countess Mary's tombs may reflect their links with literacy and intellectualism.<sup>75</sup> Matilda's mother and her maternal aunt had been educated at Romsey and Wilton abbeys. The latter in particular remained a centre of female learning into Matilda of Boulogne's girlhood in the twelfth century, as evidenced by its contribution of a verse epitaph – one of only four houses of either sex in England and France to send one – for the mortuary roll of Vitalis, abbot of Savigny.<sup>76</sup> Despite Matilda of Scotland's unpleasant memories of Wilton, the abbey provided the best education in England for women, and would have been an ideal – and very plausible – place for the half-Saxon heiress to a huge English honour to be educated.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> *ibid*, pp. 160-1, 164-5, 170.

<sup>73</sup> 'Bermondsey Annals', p. 432.

<sup>74</sup> Strickland, *Lives of Queens*, p. 200.

<sup>75</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 13-17, 130-32; T. Southouse (ed.), *Monasticon Favershamiense in Agro Cantinao: or A Surveigh of the Monastery of Faversham* (London, 1671), p. 109; O. Lehmann-Brockhaus, *Lateinische Schriftquellen zur Kunst in England, Wales, und Schottland vom Jahre 901 bis zum Jahre 1307, vol. 1* (Munich, 1956), p. 304; below, p. 49, n. 236.

<sup>76</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 18-20, 131.

<sup>77</sup> Eadmer, *Eadmer's History of Recent Events in England*, R. W. Southern and G. Bosanquet (eds.) (London, 1964), pp. 126-31; above, n. 76.

The first appearance of Matilda of Boulogne in Boulonnais documents is in the 1125 charter of her father on his retirement to take the cowl at Cluny, in which he gave ten pounds annually to Cluny and ten to Rumilly. Eustace describes himself as ‘...once count of Boulogne, but now, at the dispensation of God, monk of Cluny...’ and comments that ‘I Eustace put this in the hand of Bernard, prior of Cluny, publicly at Rumilly, in the year of the incarnation of the Word 1125, it being confirmed and upheld by Stephen, count of Boulogne, to whom I gave my patrimony with Matilda, my daughter, who also upheld and confirmed this gift, in the presence of many people whose names are noted below’.<sup>78</sup>

This charter provides the date universally used for Stephen and Matilda’s marriage; however, it is worth re-examining this assumption in the light of the subsequent succession crisis. Karl Leyser assumes that the empress was Henry’s unchanging choice to be his heir after 1120, even though she was not available to rule England until her husband’s 23 May 1125 death.<sup>79</sup> She did not, in fact, return to England until more than a year afterwards, in September 1126. Hollister allows that Stephen may briefly have been Henry’s first choice as heir, but eventually agreed with Leyser that his marriage to Matilda was to secure a strategic area to a trusted relative.<sup>80</sup> This explanation does not make sense, since marrying Stephen to Matilda gave him – along with the advantages of male gender and favour with the king – a potent link to the Anglo-Saxon dynasty in exactly the degree the empress possessed, thereby neutralising a potent claim for the empress.<sup>81</sup> If Henry really did intend for his daughter to succeed him, it was totally counterproductive to broker Matilda and Stephen’s marriage after May 1125.

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<sup>78</sup> L. A. Bruel, *Recueil des chartes de l’abbaye de Cluny, vol. V* (Paris, 1894), no. 3984: ‘...olim comes Boloniensis, nunc autem, disponente Deo, monachus Cluniacensis...’; ‘Hoc feci ego Eustachius in manu Bernardi, prioris Cluniacensis, publice apud Rumiliacum, anno Verbi incarnati M.C.XX.V., laudante simulque confirmante Stephano, comite Boloniensi, cui hereditatem meam cum Mathildi, filia mea, dedi, que et hoc donum laudavit atque confirmavit, presentibus multis quorum nomina subnotata sunt.’

<sup>79</sup> M. Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English* (Oxford, 1991), p. 40; K. Leyser, ‘The Anglo-Norman Succession, 1120-1125’, *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe: The Gregorian Revolution and Beyond* (London, 1994), p. 100.

<sup>80</sup> C. W. Hollister, ‘The Anglo-Norman Succession Debate of 1126: Prelude to Stephen’s Anarchy’, in C. W. Hollister (ed.), *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World* (London, 1986), pp. 148-9.

<sup>81</sup> Hollister, ‘Anglo-Norman Succession’, p. 146; Bradbury, ‘The Early Years of Stephen’, pp.19-20.

It appears, then, that 1125 is the *terminus ad quem* for the marriage, and that preparations were underway by 1124 or early 1125 at the latest, as Hollister suggests.<sup>82</sup> In fact, it is possible that Stephen and Matilda had already married by the time Count Eustace abdicated, since the abdication charter may be the final stage in a longer-term process of leaving the world. It is, on the other hand, unlikely that the match was made more than a year or two before 1125, making a date of ‘around 1125’ accurate. This marriage date incidentally helps narrow the date-range of Matilda’s birth. If she had been born shortly before her mother’s 1115x16 death, she would have been below the canonical age of marriage at that time – an unlikely proposition since her father was still probably capable of rule and Matilda herself began child-bearing not long afterwards.<sup>83</sup> This makes it likely that she was born some time in the first decade of her parents’ marriage, roughly between 1101 and 1110.

The births of Matilda’s children – both date and birth order – are another vexing question, which cannot be definitively answered for lack of evidence.<sup>84</sup> However, enough remains to attempt a partial chronology. Mary, the couple’s firstborn and only surviving daughter, was probably their eldest child; King posits that she was named in honour of her maternal grandmother.<sup>85</sup> She spent her early years as a nun, possibly a child oblate, and eventually spent some time at the convent of St. Sulpice in Rennes. A group of nuns from this house followed Mary to Stratford-by-Bow before 1148; in that year, after a struggle between the foreign and English nuns, Mary became prioress of her parents’ foundation at Lillechurch, where she remained until her 1160 inheritance of the Boulonnais title and subsequent abduction by Matthew of Flanders.<sup>86</sup> Since Lillechurch was founded by the direct intervention of a number of bishops and abbots, it is likely that Mary was a grown woman of twenty-five or thirty – the usually accepted age to head a house – in 1148, which

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<sup>82</sup> *ibid*, p. 148.

<sup>83</sup> See below, p. 21 n. 88.

<sup>84</sup> E. B. Fryde (ed.), *Handbook of British Chronology* (3rd corrected edn., Cambridge, 1996), pp. 35-6.

<sup>85</sup> King, ‘Stephen of Blois’, 296 n. 1.

<sup>86</sup> A. Saltman, *Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury* (London, 1956), pp. 379-80; M. A. E. Green, *Lives of the Princesses of England: From the Norman Conquest, vol. 1* (London, 1850), pp. 192-214; D; E; below, pp. 61-63.

in turn suggests that her parents married slightly before 1125. Mary's own forced marriage also indicates her early birth. Despite the fact that she had only two daughters, born in 1160 and 1161, Matthew did not act to dissolve the marriage, which suggests that he entertained few expectations of offspring from his wife, and married her in order to claim her lands for himself.

Eustace, who carried the name of every ruling count of Boulogne since 1024, was undoubtedly the couple's firstborn son; his name, moreover, suggests a birthdate before 1135, when the highest rank he could aspire to was ruling count.<sup>87</sup> Since he was married in 1140 and invested count in 1147, when in his mid-teens at least, he was probably born in the first few years of his parents' marriage, although the *HBC*'s date of 1130-1 is plausible.<sup>88</sup> Matilda, probably named for her mother or maternal great-aunt rather than her paternal grandmother as King suggests, appears in Orderic when she was betrothed, aged two, to Waleran of Meulan in 1136.<sup>89</sup> She died before Waleran's 1137 marriage, and was buried on the south side of the altar of Holy Trinity Priory Aldgate, where her parents made commemorative gifts in her name. Baldwin was the namesake of Matilda's youngest uncle, the first king of Jerusalem, and because of this name was probably born before 1135, when the couple held only the Boulonnais inheritance. He is known only through a group of charters given in his memory to Holy Trinity Priory, Aldgate by his parents and an entry in Holy Trinity's house chronicle stating that his grave was at the north side of its church's altar.<sup>90</sup> The *terminus ante quem* for his death is late summer 1147 to early spring 1148, when these grants were made. The total lack of chronicle evidence for his life, however, and the persistent connection with his sister Matilda, who definitely died as a young child, suggests he died as an infant also; he and Matilda may even have been twins.

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<sup>87</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', p. 196 n.37; J. B. Freed, 'The Counts of Falkenstein: Noble Self-Consciousness in Twelfth-Century Germany', *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 74 (1984), 1-67.

<sup>88</sup> Fryde (ed.), *HBC*, p. 35.

<sup>89</sup> J. Martindale, 'The French Aristocracy in the Early Middle Ages: A Reappraisal', *Past & Present* 75 (1977), 34-40; King, 'Stephen of Blois', 296n.1; OV, pp. 456-7.

<sup>90</sup> G. A. J. Hodgett (ed.), *The Cartulary of Holy Trinity Aldgate* (Leicester, 1971), p. 232; RRAN 511, 512.

The birth of William, the couple's younger surviving son, marks a highly symbolic watershed in Matilda's life: the point at which she became the wife of a king. William was not a name that appeared in the main line of the Boulonnais house – in fact, the only relative of Matilda's to bear it was a son of her father's illegitimate half-brother.<sup>91</sup> It was, however, the name of Stephen's illustrious grandfather, the founder of the Anglo-Norman dynasty, and was the perfect way for a newly-crowned king to mark out his dynastic intentions.<sup>92</sup> Other sources – notably the first version of Bernard of Clairvaux's *vita* – remark that one of Matilda's sons was born shortly after Stephen's accession, in late 1135 or early 1136, at Boulogne; William is the most likely candidate.<sup>93</sup>

The countess appears to have taken an active role in Boulonnais administration from the beginning of her marriage, if not before, since she affixed her personal seal to her father's abdication charters. This impression is borne out by the very small amount of charter evidence for Stephen from the period before his accession. Three charters granted by Stephen as count of Boulogne are extant, and in all of them he made the grant jointly with his wife.<sup>94</sup> This joint issuing is a strong suggestion that the administration of the county was aware of, and responsive to, the authority that Matilda held as her father's daughter. In fact, given Stephen's role as an itinerant diplomat for Henry I, Matilda may have been the day-to-day administrator in Boulogne, thereby ensuring that her authority was probably more binding to Boulonnais tenants than Stephen's. Matilda may also have acted as co-foundress of the abbey of Longvilliers, in Picardy, which Stephen founded in 1135, immediately before Henry's death.<sup>95</sup>

Thus, by 1135, Matilda of Boulogne was perhaps thirty years old, had borne at least four children and was pregnant with her fifth and last, and had shared the administration of her

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<sup>91</sup> Murray, *Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, p.160ff.

<sup>92</sup> King, 'Stephen of Blois', 296.

<sup>93</sup> *ibid* 296 n.1; below, pp. 92f.

<sup>94</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 188-9; King, 'Stephen of Blois', 287.

<sup>95</sup> C. Auvry and A. P. Laveille (eds.), *Histoire de la congrégation de Savigny*, vol 2, (Rouen, 1896), pp. 247-8; Ralph of Coggeshall, *Radulphi de Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. J. Stevenson (London, 1875), p. 11. Cf. L. H. Cottineau, *Répertoire Topo-bibliographique des abbayes et prieurés*, vol. II, (Mâcon, 1935), p. 1650.

inheritance with her husband for at least ten years. Her biological commitments were beginning to wind down, leaving her free to travel and take action, as she entered the prime of her ruling life. She was well-equipped to meet the new challenges she faced after her husband's seizure of the English crown.

## Chapter I: The Outlines of Matilda of Boulogne's Career

The first step in discussing Matilda of Boulogne's career involves organising and outlining it; it is impossible to track the tenor of and changes in the queen's activities without first laying out what those activities were. However, it is also important to note at the outset the limitations of this exercise. Unlike her husband, Matilda did not consistently appear in contemporary chronicles; rather, like most queens and noblewomen, she entered the historical record at liminal moments, periods of crisis for her husband's rule.<sup>96</sup> Her intermittent appearance on the historian's stage, especially when combined with the difficulty in dating most of her charters accurately, means that it is particularly difficult to determine her whereabouts for much of the reign; an itinerary for Matilda like that for Stephen in the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* would have a significant number of gaps.<sup>97</sup> These gaps, in turn, make plotting the queen's lifecycle, and in particular the births of her children fairly difficult.<sup>98</sup> This chapter will at least attempt, however, to outline Matilda's career using charter and documentary evidence.

Matilda's tenure as queen strictly began on Sunday, 22 December 1135, the date of Stephen's coronation.<sup>99</sup> This date is the most authoritative given in the sources; the *Historia Novella*, John of Worcester, Gervase of Canterbury, and the *Chronicle of Battle Abbey* all agree on it, though the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* and Orderic Vitalis give other dates in December.<sup>100</sup> Henry of

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<sup>96</sup> L. O. Fradenburg, 'Introduction: Rethinking Queenship', in L. O. Fradenburg (ed.), *Women and Sovereignty* (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 1-13; J. C. Parsons, 'Introduction: Family, Sex, and Power - The Rhythms of Medieval Queenship', in J. C. Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship* (Stroud, 1993), pp. 2-3, 7; P. Stafford, 'The Portrayal of Royal Women in England, Mid-Tenth to Mid-Twelfth Centuries', in J. C. Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship* (Stroud, 1993), pp. 143-7, 166-7.

<sup>97</sup> H. A. Cronne and R. H. C. Davis (eds.), *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066-1154, vol. 3: Regesta regis Stephani ac Mathildis imperatricis ac Gaufridi et Henrici ducum Normannorum, 1135-54* (Oxford, 1968), pp. xxxix-xliv.

<sup>98</sup> Fryde (ed.), *HBC*, pp. 35-6.

<sup>99</sup> *HN*, p. 28.

<sup>100</sup> *JW*, pp. 214-15; Gervase of Canterbury, *The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. W. Stubbs (London, 1879), p. 96; E. Searle (ed.), *The Chronicle of Battle Abbey* (Oxford, 1980), pp. 140-1; *OV*, pp. 454-5; *ASC*, p. 199.

Huntingdon comments that the new king's first court was held in London at Christmas, 1135.<sup>101</sup> However, Matilda herself was not present at Stephen's coronation, probably because she was recovering from a birth. Heather Tanner argues, and the evidence corroborates, that Matilda and Stephen's son William was born in early December, and that the new queen-consort crossed the Channel in early January.<sup>102</sup> Regardless of the child's identity, Matilda, in all probability, spent the first days of Stephen's reign in Boulogne, the county's capital. Robert of Torigni comments that Stephen received news of Henry I's death and departed for England from there; the *Historia Novella* comments that Stephen sailed from Wissant, but this would have been a short journey from Boulogne.<sup>103</sup>

The queen had obviously settled into her husband's realm by the spring of 1136, as Orderic Vitalis mentions that '...King Stephen betrothed his infant daughter, then two years old, to Waleran, count of Meulan, and the count returned to Normandy immediately after Easter'.<sup>104</sup> Presumably, this betrothal, made at Stephen's first Easter court, would have intimately involved the queen, if only because the little princess was still too young to move to Normandy with her betrothed. Gervase of Canterbury reported that Matilda was crowned queen-consort at the same Easter court, at Westminster on March 22, 1136.<sup>105</sup> Matilda's coronation may have been the ceremonial highlight of this court, which Henry of Huntingdon described as '...more splendid for its throng and size, for gold, silver, jewels, robes, and every kind of sumptuousness, than any that had ever been held in England'; it is particularly telling that Stephen chose the elevation of his wife to the dignity of queen-consort as the moment to assert and flaunt his power.<sup>106</sup>

The queen's first appearances in Stephen's charters occur around this time, presumably because the arrival and coronation of a new queen was a perfect opportunity to request and make

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<sup>101</sup> HH, pp. 702-3.

<sup>102</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', p. 196 n.37; see above, pp. 20-22.

<sup>103</sup> Robert of Torigni, *The Chronicles of Robert de Monte*, ed. J. Stevenson (Lampeter, 1991), p. 46; *HN*, pp. 26-7.

<sup>104</sup> OV, pp. 456-7.

<sup>105</sup> GC, pp. 96.

<sup>106</sup> HH, pp. 706-7.

donations. Matilda witnessed a charter granting a meadow and general confirmation to Reading Abbey in 1136; Cronne and Davis assume that this was made at Henry I's funeral on 4 January.<sup>107</sup> This seems somewhat tenuous, especially given that the queen's coronation was not until March, but is entirely plausible.

A large number of the charters given in this year benefited Stephen's younger brother Henry of Blois, either as bishop of Winchester or as abbot of Glastonbury – most commonly by restoring land usurped from either by William the Conqueror. These charters share a common diploma format, probably reflecting the particularly formal and solemn circumstances in which they were given.<sup>108</sup> One, which exchanged the previously Boulonnais manor of Bishop's Sutton, Hants, for that of Steeple Morden, Cambs, was given at Westminster, and can be conclusively dated to Stephen's 1136 Easter court.<sup>109</sup> This charter almost certainly coincided with the queen's 22 March coronation, and may well – since it involved her patrimony – have been made at her insistence. A charter restoring the Devon manor of Uffculme, usurped by William the Conqueror, to Glastonbury Abbey was probably also granted at or just after Matilda's coronation; the relative formality of the occasion can be seen by the attestation of the queen and their son Eustace, who at the time was probably still a young boy.<sup>110</sup>

The other restorative charters Stephen granted to his brother's see were also granted at Westminster, but due to the presence of Robert of Gloucester, could not have been made at the Easter court. These five charters restore a total of six manors in Somerset, Hampshire, and Berkshire to the Winchester see.<sup>111</sup> They share the vast majority of their witness-lists, implying that all were made on the same occasion. This must have been after early April, when Robert of Gloucester landed in England and swore homage to Stephen – and when Stephen granted his second

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<sup>107</sup> RRAN 678.

<sup>108</sup> Table II, p. 243.

<sup>109</sup> RRAN 944.

<sup>110</sup> RRAN 341.

<sup>111</sup> Table II, p. 243.

charter of ecclesiastical liberties, which the earl of Gloucester witnessed.<sup>112</sup> It is possible that they date from Christmas 1136, a traditional time for holding court and hearing pleas. The issuing of a charter recording the outcome of a plea *coram rege* by the prior of Holy Trinity Aldgate, in which the queen acted as an advocate for the plaintiff, lends some support to this theory. It was granted at Westminster between Christmas 1136 and March 1137, and suggests that the proceedings took place during a formal meeting of the king's court; Christmas is the only date within that range that would have supported such a formal gathering.<sup>113</sup>

Matilda also visited Winchester at some point during 1136, where she witnessed a charter to the abbey of Cluny that replaced the one hundred mark pension granted by Henry I with the manor of Letcombe Regis, Berks.<sup>114</sup> The witness-list – which includes Stephen and Matilda's son Eustace, Roger of Salisbury, Henry of Blois, Alexander bishop of Lincoln, Nigel bishop of Ely, Aubrey and Robert de Vere, William Peverel, Gilbert de Lacy, Alan earl of Richmond, and Roger earl of Warwick – suggests that it was given at an official court, almost certainly connected with a crown-wearing. It cannot be from Easter 1136, spent at Westminster; it may, however, date from Christmas of that year. Most likely, perhaps, the court met at Winchester at Whitsuntide in mid-May 1136 – the need to press on with the siege of Exeter might account for the length of the witness-list, much shorter than those from the Easter court.

Finally, there is some tenuous evidence that Matilda joined her husband at some point during the protracted siege of Exeter. Matilda witnessed a confirmation of various churches to the see of Exeter; this charter was rejected by Cronne and Davis as a forgery, based on its use of uncommon alternative styles for four witnesses, which they regarded as cumulatively fatal to its authenticity.<sup>115</sup> However, they note that it was beneficiary-drafted, and that eight of its witnesses,

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<sup>112</sup> HH, pp. 704-5; Richard of Hexham, 'The Acts of King Stephen and the Battle of the Standard', in J. Stevenson (ed.), *The Church Historians of England, vol. IV, pt. 2, vol. 4:1* (London, 1853), pp. 40-1; HN, pp. 32-7; RRAN 271.

<sup>113</sup> RRAN III, p. xl; RRAN 506.

<sup>114</sup> RRAN 204.

<sup>115</sup> RRAN 284.

not including the queen, witnessed a confirmation given to Furness Abbey during the siege.<sup>116</sup> This at least raises the possibility that the charter is a genuine, if amateurish, charter drafted by the canons of Exeter, who may not have known the preferred titles of the various witnesses. If this was indeed the case, then Matilda's inclusion in the *Vita* of St. Wulfric of Haselbury, where the saint berated her for snubbing William FitzWalter's wife on a trip to Corfe Castle, becomes much more intelligible.<sup>117</sup> It appears that Matilda accompanied her husband to Exeter in the spring of 1136, at least in part to visit the saintly hermit; presumably the queen left Exeter soon after the siege began.

The queen's whereabouts in 1137 come almost entirely from charter evidence. Stephen crossed the Channel in March: '...the third week of March' according to Orderic Vitalis and '...in March and before Easter (which was on 11 April)...' according to John of Worcester.<sup>118</sup> Orderic comments that the king '...landed at La Hougue [Saint-Vaast la Hougue, south of Barfleur] with a large retinue...'; it seems that the queen was a member of this retinue.<sup>119</sup> In part, this may have been because the royal couple's eldest son, Eustace, was also a member of the party. Several sources comment that he did homage to the French king for Normandy on this trip, probably after April.<sup>120</sup> The queen made the most of her time in Normandy, since her first extant charter was given whilst there. It was given at Évreux, between 22 March and 10 April 1137, and granted the manor of Cressing Temple, Essex, and St. Mary's church there to the Knights of the Temple.<sup>121</sup> This charter is historically important, since it is the earliest extant charter to the English Temple – implying that Matilda of Boulogne, with her strong familial ties to the Holy Land and its rulers, was the first catalyst for the Templars' twelfth-century popularity.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> RRAN 337.

<sup>117</sup> M. Bell (ed.), *Wulfric of Haselbury* (London, 1933), pp. 108-9; P. M. Matarasso, *The Cistercian World: Monastic Writings of the Twelfth Century* (London, 1993), p. 262.

<sup>118</sup> OV, pp. 480-1; JW, pp. 228-9; HH, pp. 708-9; HN, pp. 36-7; WN, pp. 54-5. Cf. R. Helmerichs, 'King Stephen's Norman Itinerary, 1137', *HSJ* 5 (1993), 89-97; H. J. Tanner, 'Reassessing King Stephen's Continental Strategies', *Medievalia et Humanistica* 26 (1999), 101-117.

<sup>119</sup> OV, pp. 480-1; HH, pp. 708-9.

<sup>120</sup> HH, pp. 708-9; OV, pp. 482-3; RT, p. 48; below, n. 121.

<sup>121</sup> RRAN 843. Cf. RRAN 69.

<sup>122</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, 318.

Queen Matilda also witnessed two of her husband's charters while in Normandy. One of these was given at Rouen, probably in the early summer of 1137; it confirmed the pension of one hundred marks of silver per year which Fontevrault received from Henry I.<sup>123</sup> The other, made at Lyons-la-Forêt, confirmed the possessions of Mortemer Abbey and made some additional grants of land, granges, and other rights.<sup>124</sup> It is difficult to tell when in the Norman trip the Mortemer grant was made, but it seems likely that it also dates from the early summer of 1137, since Stephen was occupied with petty warfare from June at the latest.<sup>125</sup>

Various chroniclers comment that increasing unrest there sparked Stephen's return to England in late November 1137.<sup>126</sup> The king's concern over the stability of his Norman possessions may be reflected in a charter issued by Matilda in 1137 – which incidentally shows her wielding regential authority. In it, Matilda orders

...Ansfred *dapifer*... that you should justly take action to return to the abbot of St. Augustine his ship and all his things which were captured. And all those men who took them should be put under pledge that they should be at the king's justice when he should wish to have them. And I order that all his things should be at peace just as they were on the day the king crossed the sea, until he himself should return to England.<sup>127</sup>

It was granted at Westminster and attested by Roger bishop of Salisbury, the mainstay of Henry I's bureaucracy – and, in particular, his regent after the death of Queen Matilda of Scotland.<sup>128</sup> Its significance is obvious and manifold. First, it shows Matilda taking an active and dominant role in the royal administration from the beginning of her husband's reign – a role, moreover, that her predecessors as queen-consort had taken on.<sup>129</sup> It also demonstrates that Stephen valued Matilda's ability to oversee and further his interests; further, and perhaps most importantly, it demonstrates

<sup>123</sup> RRAN 327; *HN*, pp. 38-9; *OV*, pp. 484-5.

<sup>124</sup> RRAN 598.

<sup>125</sup> *OV*, pp. 484-7, 491-5.

<sup>126</sup> *OV*, pp. 494-5; *HN*, pp. 38-9; *RT*, p. 49; *HH*, pp. 710-11.

<sup>127</sup> A: '...Anssu' *dap[ifero]*... *ut facias iuste reddi nauem abbati de Sancto Augustino et omnes suas res que capte fuerunt. Et ponantur per plegios omnes illi homines, qui eam ceperunt, ut sint ad rectum regi quando eos habere voluerit. Et precipio quod omnes sue res sint in pace sicut fuerunt die qua rex mare transiuit, donec ipse in Angliam redeat.*' See above, p. 9 n. 24-25.

<sup>128</sup> M. Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England, 1066-1166* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 71, 123, 125; E. King, *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 9, 118-19; H. G. Richardson and G. O. Sayles, *The Governance of Mediaeval England from the Conquest to Magna Carta* (Edinburgh, 1963), pp. 158-66.

<sup>129</sup> C. W. Hollister and J. W. Baldwin, 'The Rise of Administrative Kingship: Henry I and Philip Augustus', *AHR* 83 (1978), 875-80; above, p. 29 n. 128.

the depth of Stephen's concern about the volatile situation in England that he sent her back in his stead.<sup>130</sup> Stephen was back in England by Advent, which began that year on 28 November: John of Worcester comments that his Christmas court that year was held at Dunstable, in Bedfordshire, from which town he presumably began a siege of Bedford.<sup>131</sup>

It is impossible to tell from the evidence whether Matilda was present at this court, and it becomes increasingly unlikely if the siege was contemporaneous with or immediately after the festivities, as Henry of Huntingdon's indignation implies.<sup>132</sup> However, the presence of Matilda as a witness to a charter of Stephen's confirming Roger FitzMiles in the lands of his father-in-law suggests that such was not the case. Cronne and Davis date the charter, given at Marlborough, to December 1137.<sup>133</sup> If, as Marjorie Chibnall suggests, the siege of Bedford continued through January 1138, it seems unlikely that Stephen would have left and travelled to Marlborough for the sole purpose of making a grant.<sup>134</sup> Rather, it is probable that this grant was given hard on the heels of the king's return to England, possibly on his way to Dunstable. Thus it would be dated from early December 1137; additionally, if this confirmation was given before the Christmas court, it implies that Matilda of Boulogne was present there at Christmas – and presumably taking more active part in court ceremonial than Matilda of Scotland did in the latter part of her tenure.

Matilda became seriously engaged in the political life of her realm for the first time in 1138. In early January, King David of Scots launched a major offensive against the north of England, spreading rapine and destruction across Northumbria. This offensive was checked by the arrival of an army, led by King Stephen, from the south on the feast of the Purification (2 February 1138), which some chroniclers claim caused David to give up without a fight.<sup>135</sup> It appears that Queen Matilda accompanied the king on the first part of his journey north, since she attests a charter of

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<sup>130</sup> OV, pp. 490-5.

<sup>131</sup> JW, pp. 234-6; GS, pp. 46-51; OV, pp. 510-11; RT, p. 49; HH, pp. 710-11.

<sup>132</sup> See above, p. 30 n. 131.

<sup>133</sup> RRAN 312.

<sup>134</sup> OV, p. 510.

<sup>135</sup> RH, pp. 42-5; John of Hexham, 'History of the Church of Hexham', in J. Stevenson (ed.), *The Church Historians of England, vol. IV, pt. 2* (London, 1853), pp. 7-8; OV, pp. 518-21; HH, pp. 710-11; GS, pp. 51-7; RT, p. 49.

Stephen's giving Eye Priory a general confirmation of its holdings.<sup>136</sup> This charter was granted at Eye – the *caput* of Stephen's eponymous honour – which suggests Stephen went there before going north. This in turn narrows Cronne and Davis's date of pre-Lady Day 1138 to no later than mid or late January 1137, to give Stephen time to travel north, and suggests that the Bedford siege started in early January.<sup>137</sup> The king was in the north until early April, which tends to rule out a visit after the early Northumbrian campaign.<sup>138</sup>

The queen's whereabouts in the winter and spring of 1138 are unrecoverable, perhaps because '...after Easter the abominable madness of the traitors flared up'.<sup>139</sup> Stephen convened an ecclesiastical council at Northampton on 10 April. From John of Worcester's narrative, it appears that he learned of the mass rebellion against him at this council.<sup>140</sup> During the spring and summer of 1138, Stephen faced an essentially dual-pronged attack on his realm, as the Scots re-invaded Northumbria in the week after Easter 1138 and Robert of Gloucester renounced his allegiance to Stephen in late May.<sup>141</sup> Robert's defection appears to have sparked a mass rebellion, whereby Hereford, Bristol, Leeds Castle in Kent, Castle Cary, Dudley, Dunster, Wareham, Malton, Dover, and Shrewsbury were taken and held in the king's despite.<sup>142</sup>

However, the sheer scale of the rebellion against the king forced him to rely on lieutenants to put out the fires of revolt; it is at this juncture that Matilda makes her next entrance on the political stage. Stephen himself commanded the siege of Hereford, which began after the feast of the Ascension and lasted about a month, until mid-June.<sup>143</sup> John of Worcester notes that Stephen then captured Weobley and Shrewsbury. Orderic Vitalis comments further that William FitzAlan held

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<sup>136</sup> RRAN 288.

<sup>137</sup> RRAN 288. Lady Day is 25 March.

<sup>138</sup> RRAN III, p. xl.

<sup>139</sup> HH, pp. 712-13; RT, p.49.

<sup>140</sup> JW, pp. 240-1; RRAN III, p. xl.

<sup>141</sup> RH, pp. 45-7; JH, pp. 8-9; RT, p. 50; HH, pp. 712-13; OV, pp. 518-19; *HN*, pp. 38-41.

<sup>142</sup> HH, pp. 712-13; WN, p. 55; OV, pp. 518-19; RT, p. 49.

<sup>143</sup> JW, pp. 242-3; HH, p.712; OV, pp. 518-21.

Shrewsbury for a month before fleeing in August.<sup>144</sup> In order to quash the other rebellions, Stephen turned to trusted confederates – he granted earldoms to Robert Ferrers and Gilbert FitzGilbert of Clare for the purpose – and in particular his wife.<sup>145</sup>

In the late summer of 1138, after the capitulation of Shrewsbury, Matilda ‘...besieged Dover with a strong force on the landward side, and sent word to her friends and kinsmen and dependants in Boulogne to blockade the force by sea. The people of Boulogne proved obedient, gladly carried out their lady’s commands and, with a great fleet of ships, closed the narrow strait to prevent the garrison receiving any supplies’.<sup>146</sup> This military pressure, combined with the persuasive power of the rebel Walchelin Maminot’s father-in-law Robert of Ferrers – and, according to Henry of Huntingdon, the object lesson provided by the hanging of the Shrewsbury garrison – caused Walchelin to surrender to the queen, probably in late August or early September.<sup>147</sup> It is extremely unlikely that Stephen took Walchelin’s surrender; John of Worcester notes that he moved on to besiege Wareham after the fall of Shrewsbury.<sup>148</sup>

Matilda’s charter granting her manor of Cowley, Oxon, to the Templars may reflect the end of the siege – it was given at Reading between October 1138 and September 1139. In particular, a group of Stephen’s stalwarts who do not otherwise appear in the queen’s charters attest this grant, and may represent the tactical experts who aided the queen at Dover.<sup>149</sup> At any rate, the king and queen were probably reunited by the end of the year, and certainly by the Christmas court session, held at Westminster in 1138. Some evidence of this can be seen in a charter to Westminster supposedly witnessed by Matilda on 13 December 1138. The charter is a forgery, but a

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<sup>144</sup> JW, pp. 242-5, 250-1; OV, pp. 520-1; HH, pp. 712-13.

<sup>145</sup> OV, pp. 520-1; JW, pp. 242-3.

<sup>146</sup> OV, pp. 520-1.

<sup>147</sup> *ibid*, pp. 520-1; HH, pp. 712-13; RT, p. 50.

<sup>148</sup> JW, pp. 250-1.

<sup>149</sup> RRAN 850.

contemporary one, and it is entirely possible that the witness-list, in the main, reflects those actually present at court.<sup>150</sup>

The next year opened with a continuation of the formality of the Christmas court as Theobald, abbot of Bec, was elected archbishop of Canterbury at Westminster around Christmas 1138 and consecrated at the primatial see by the papal legate Alberic of Ostia on 8 January 1139.<sup>151</sup> Stephen and Matilda were present at Theobald's election, and Battle Abbey's house chronicle suggests that they were also present at his consecration. Indeed, if Matilda's input caused the king to install Walter de Luci as abbot there, as Battle's chronicle suggests, it is possible that she had a similar input into Theobald's election.<sup>152</sup> The court, if it did not follow the archbishop elect to Canterbury, appears to have reconvened informally at Oxford for the dedication of Godstow Abbey between Theobald's consecration and Alberic's departure from England on 13 January; Stephen confirmed the abbey's foundation gifts with a charter placed at Oxford, which mentions donations from the queen, Prince Eustace, Archbishop Theobald, Robert D'Oilly, Robert earl of Leicester, and Miles of Gloucester.<sup>153</sup> Matilda's presence there is confirmed by a second charter which Stephen gave at the same time and place, granting King's Ripton, Hunts, to Ramsey Abbey, to which she attested.<sup>154</sup>

Matilda appears to also have spent this time deeply engaged in a diplomatic effort with the legate Alberic of Ostia, who had travelled north shortly after his arrival and returned to England in October 1138.<sup>155</sup> After John of Hexham noted Alberic's part in the new archbishop's consecration, he commented that

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<sup>150</sup> RRAN 928.

<sup>151</sup> Saltman, *Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>152</sup> RT, p. 50; HH, pp. 718-19; GC, pp. 109; Searle (ed.), *Battle Chronicle*, p. 143; JW, pp. 260-3.

<sup>153</sup> RRAN 366.

<sup>154</sup> RRAN 667.

<sup>155</sup> Cf. J. A. Green, 'Aristocratic Loyalties on the Northern Frontier of England', in D. Williams (ed.), *England in the Twelfth Century: Proceedings of the 1988 Harlaxton Symposium* (Woodbridge, 1990), 83-100; eadem, 'Anglo-Scottish Relations, 1066-1174', in M. C. E. Jones and M. G. A. Vale (ed.), *England and her Neighbours, 1066-1453: Essays in Honour of Pierre Chaplais* (London, 1989), 53-72.

He also besought, with much entreaty, the king of England, respecting the renewal of a peace with the king of Scotland. Matilda, queen of the English, lent her aid to his wishes by her private entreaties, being by no means indifferent to the preservation of peace between her husband and the king of Scotland, her uncle; for King David had two sisters, Mary and Matilda; the latter married King Henry; Mary, the earl of Boulogne had taken in marriage, and of her begat this Matilda, his heiress. But King Stephen took her for his wife with the earldom of Boulogne...<sup>156</sup>

Richard of Hexham's narrative also places the queen's efforts at brokering peace after Theobald's consecration, but places much more stress on her efforts, as would be expected after Alberic's departure:

During the course of these proceedings, [Alberic] was engaged most discreetly and earnestly in treating with several persons, and especially with the queen of England, respecting the renewal of peace between the two kings. Finding that the queen's mind was much set upon the accomplishment of this object, with her mediation, and backed by her feminine shrewdness and address, he frequently appealed to the king himself regarding this matter. They found him at first stern, and apparently opposed to a reconciliation; for many of his barons who had suffered severe losses from their variance, eagerly urged him on no account to make peace with the king of Scotland, but to avenge himself upon him; but notwithstanding all this, the zeal of a woman's heart, ignoring defeat, persisted night and day in every species of importunity, till it succeeded in bending the king's mind to its purpose. For she was warmly attached to her uncle David, the king of Scotland, and his son Henry, her cousin, and on that account took the greatest pains to reconcile them. The legate, seeing the affair progressing in this way, derived fresh confidence in his intercourse with the king, from the better hope which had sprung up, and gave his attention to his other concerns.<sup>157</sup>

Queen Matilda remained active in the treaty negotiations, which Richard of Hexham claims were completed '...[s]oon after the aforesaid legate had left England...'; Richard's narrative also includes a précis of the treaty's terms:

Stephen, king of England, granted to Henry, son of David, king of Scotland, the earldom of Northumberland, except two towns, Newcastle and Bamburgh, with all the lands which he held before. But for these towns he was bound to give him towns of the same value in the south of England. He directed also that the barons who held of the earldom, as many as chose, might make acknowledgment for their lands to earl Henry, and do homage to him, saving the fealty which they had vowed to himself; and this most of them did. The king of Scotland and his son Henry, with all their dependants, were bound therefore to remain for life amiable and faithful to Stephen, king of England. And to render their fidelity more secure, they were pledged to give him as hostages five earls of Scotland, the son of earl Cospatrick, the son of Hugh de Morville, the son of earl Fergus, the son of Mel..., and the son of Mac... They were bound also to observe unalterably the laws customs, and statutes which his uncle king Henry had established in the county of Northumberland.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> JH, pp. 12-13.

<sup>157</sup> RH, p. 57.

<sup>158</sup> *ibid*, p. 58.

It is likely that this treaty was brokered in late December 1138 or early in January 1139, since there is no evidence that Alberic returned to England after the conclusion of the Lateran Council, which began on 4 April 1139.<sup>159</sup>

The treaty was not ratified, however, until 9 April, presumably in order to provide time to finalise the terms and ensure its acceptability to both sides. Richard of Hexham notes that ‘this agreement was signed at Durham on [April 9, 1139], by Henry son of the king of Scotland, and their barons, in the presence of Matilda, queen of England, and many earls and barons of the south of England’.<sup>160</sup> John of Hexham, although relating the same facts, once again highlights Matilda of Boulogne’s role, commenting that the treaty was concluded ‘...at the instance of the queen of the English...’ and that Matilda herself was party to the confirmation, not just an onlooker.<sup>161</sup> Both narratives agree that after the formal confirmation of the treaty, Queen Matilda accompanied her cousin Henry to Nottingham, where Stephen was holding court; Henry did homage for his new earldom and spent the summer in southern England – possibly with his cousin Matilda.<sup>162</sup>

The queen’s whereabouts for the rest of 1139 and much of 1140 are obscure. The bishops of Salisbury, Lincoln, and Ely were arrested at what appears to have been a formal meeting of the king’s court in Oxford at midsummer 1139; Matilda of Boulogne was probably present there, although none of the chroniclers mention her.<sup>163</sup> It is also possible that the queen attended the council convened at Winchester on 29 August to discuss the bishops’ arrest.<sup>164</sup> The empress Matilda arrived in England on 30 September, sparking a wave of insurrection against Stephen.<sup>165</sup> Possibly the empress’s potential supporters were warned in advance of her arrival in order to launch diversionary attacks, since from July 1138 to the end of the year Stephen was engaged in at least

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<sup>159</sup> OV, pp. 528-9.

<sup>160</sup> RH, p. 58.

<sup>161</sup> JH, p. 13.

<sup>162</sup> RH, p. 58; JH, p. 13.

<sup>163</sup> JH, p.13; RH, pp. 44-51; *GS*, pp. 73-81; *JW*, pp. 245-9; *WN*, pp. 56-61; *RT*, pp. 50-1; *HH*, pp. 718-21; *OV*, pp. 530-5; K. Yoshitake, ‘The Arrest of the Bishops in 1139 and Its Consequences’, *JMH* 14 (1988), 97-114.

<sup>164</sup> *HN*, pp. 50-61; *JW*, pp. 266-9; *HH*, pp. 722-3.

<sup>165</sup> Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, pp. 80-1 Cf. *HH*, pp. 722-3; *HN*, pp. 60-1; *RT*, p. 51; *JW*, pp. 268-9; *OV*, pp. 534-5.

four sieges. The queen almost certainly did not accompany him, and probably stayed in the vicinity of London or in Essex, where her natal family's power was highest.<sup>166</sup> The king's military activities continued well into 1140, as he battled the imperial faction at Ely, Worcester, Little Hereford, Bath, and Lincoln, among others.<sup>167</sup>

In this year Matilda spearheaded several particularly sensitive diplomatic missions, probably on Stephen's orders. The first of these was the arrangement and solemnisation of her son's marriage. According to John of Worcester, 'it was agreed, after the magnates of [Louis], king of France, and Stephen, king of England, had been consulted, that Stephen's son should marry the French king's sister. The betrothal took place overseas in February in the presence of the queen-mother of England and of many of the highest nobility of both kingdoms'.<sup>168</sup> Although John is the only chronicler to date this event, several others make it clear that one side-effect of the bishops' arrest was to provide money to enable the match – which was made for an unashamedly political reason: '...to strengthen the son who was to succeed him against the count of Anjou and his sons'.<sup>169</sup> It seems that the queen, besides acting as a formal witness and engaging in the final negotiations, was also responsible for ensuring her daughter-in-law's safe arrival in England. William of Newburgh comments that the king's anger against Geoffrey II de Mandeville stemmed from an incident when

Constance was in London with her mother-in-law the queen. It chanced that the queen sought to go elsewhere with this daughter-in-law, but the said Geoffrey, who at that time commanded the Tower, opposed her. He seized the daughter-in-law from the hands of her mother-in-law, who resisted as best she could, and detained her, allowing the queen herself to depart in humiliation. The king later demanded Constance back, hiding for the moment his just anger; and Geoffrey reluctantly surrendered his outstanding prize to the king her father-in-law.<sup>170</sup>

The queen must have been back in England by the late spring of 1140. William of Malmesbury notes that

<sup>166</sup> RRAN III, p. xli; *HN*, pp. 62-3; *GS*, pp. 84-99; *JW*, pp. 268-77; *JH*, p. 14.

<sup>167</sup> *JW*, pp. 280-5, 290-1; *OV*, pp. 538-41; *HH*, pp. 722-5; *GS*, pp. 98-102, 110-11; *HN*, pp. 80-3.

<sup>168</sup> *JW*, pp. 284-5, which repeatedly and mistakenly calls the French king Philip.

<sup>169</sup> *WN*, pp. 68-9; *RT*, p. 51; *HH*, pp. 720-1; *GS*, pp. 226-9; *OV*, pp. 514-15.

<sup>170</sup> *WN*, pp. 68-9.

...some time [after Whitsuntide], by the mediation of the legate, a parley was appointed between the empress and the king, on the chance that peace might be restored by the inspiration of God. The meeting was near Bath: on the empress's side her brother Robert was sent and the rest of her advisors, on the king's, the legate and the archbishop, together with the queen. But vainly, vainly, I say, they wasted both words and time and parted without making peace.<sup>171</sup>

Given her previous experience in diplomacy – and the stake she held in her husband's continued rule – Matilda was a good choice for this venture; she could advocate the king's interest clearly, and could offer a counterfoil for the empress.<sup>172</sup>

Because of the political situation, it is unlikely that Matilda spent Christmas 1140 with her husband. According to John of Hexham, the feud over Carlisle and Northumbria between Henry, earl of Huntingdon, and Ranulf, earl of Chester led the latter '...to endeavour to trap [Henry] with an armed force...' on his way north from an extended stay at Stephen's court. However, '...the king, instigated by the queen's entreaties, restored him to his father and his country, having secured him from the threatened danger; and this hostility was transferred to plots against the king's safety: for earl [Ranulf] seized all the fortifications of Lincoln' sometime before Christmas.<sup>173</sup> Orderic Vitalis adds that Ranulf bluffed his way into the castle through a treacherous ruse involving his wife.<sup>174</sup> The resulting siege lasted for more than a month and culminated in the battle of Lincoln on 2 February, the feast of the Purification, at which Stephen was captured.<sup>175</sup> Robert of Gloucester took custody of the king, bringing him first to Gloucester on 9 February, and then to more secure custody at Bristol.<sup>176</sup>

The queen and Prince Eustace were almost certainly not present in Lincoln during the period leading up to the battle. Solid evidence of this can be found in a charter Matilda gave jointly with Eustace to Arrouaise abbey in Artois. Internally place-dated to London, on 9 February 1141, the date on which the king reached Gloucester, it gives the abbey the lands which the queen's

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<sup>171</sup> *HN*, pp. 76-9.

<sup>172</sup> R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, p. 43.

<sup>173</sup> *JH*, p. 16.

<sup>174</sup> *OV*, pp. 538-41; *HH*, pp. 724-5; *WN*, pp. 60-1.

<sup>175</sup> *OV*, pp. 538-47; *HH*, pp. 724-5; *WN*, pp. 60-3; *JW*, pp. 292-3; *HN*, pp. 80-7; *RT*, pp. 52-3; *GS*, pp. 110-15; *JH*, pp. 15-18.

<sup>176</sup> *JW*, pp. 292-3; above, p. 37 n. 175.

Boulonnais tenant Eustace de Legrefth held in the vicomté of Merck for ten pounds' annual rent.<sup>177</sup>

This charter also suggests that the king's wife and son knew of the calamity soon afterwards – and were suitably concerned – since the first request in its *pro anima* clause is for ‘...the health of our lord King Stephen...’.<sup>178</sup>

It appears that Matilda quickly became the focus for resistance to the empress's planned takeover. Orderic Vitalis puts it the mostly baldly, when he comments that although most of the country, including the king's own brother Henry of Blois, ‘...went over to the Angevins...’, ‘...Count Waleran, William of Warenne, and Simon [de Senlis] and many others remained loyal to the queen, and vowed to fight manfully for the king and his heirs’.<sup>179</sup> Even more pessimistic chroniclers note that the royal stronghold of Kent, ‘...where the queen and William of Ypres opposed [the empress] with all their might’, never fell under imperial control.<sup>180</sup> This may be due to the presence of her friends and retainers in the rump government; John of Hexham comments that William of Ypres and Faramus of Boulogne, a relative of the queen's, ran the royal household during the king's captivity.<sup>181</sup> Matilda probably exerted regential authority during this, as shown by a writ she issued to John, the sheriff of London, ordering ‘...on the part of my lord the king and myself that you permit the canons of St. Martin's of London to hold and have their soke of Cripplegate and all their liberties...’. It is worth noting, however, that Cronne and Davis emphasise that the date they assign this writ is only an assumption – it refers to a charter of Stephen's that cannot be definitively dated.<sup>182</sup>

<sup>177</sup> RRAN 24: ‘...*terram quandam quam Eustachius de Legrefth sub annuo decem librarum censu nobis persolendo tenebat in perpetuam elemosinam dedimus...*’. Merck was a discontinuous part of the county of Boulogne: Tanner, ‘Scylla and Charybdis’, pp. 133-136, 172-173, 210-211.

<sup>178</sup> RRAN 24: ‘...*pro salute domini nostri Stephani regis...*’.

<sup>179</sup> OV, pp. 526-7.

<sup>180</sup> HH, pp. 738-9; RT, p. 53; R. Eales, ‘Local Loyalties in Norman England: Kent in Stephen's Reign’, *ANS* 8 (1985), 88-108.

<sup>181</sup> JH, p. 19.

<sup>182</sup> RRAN 530: ‘...*ex parte regis domini mei et mea quod permittatis canonicis Sancti Martini de London[ia] tenere et habere socnam suam de Crepelsgata et libertates suas omnes...*’.

The queen's role in the royalist resistance seems at first to have been totally non-violent. She sent a representative to the council convened at Winchester from Monday 7 to Thursday 10 April 1141, to discuss the Empress's accession to the throne. According to William of Malmesbury, on the Wednesday,

...a certain man, named Christian if I remember rightly, a clerk of the queen as I have heard, stood up and held out a document to the legate. He read it in silence, and said at the top of his voice that it was not valid and ought not to be read out in so great an assembly, especially one of persons of rank and religion... While he was havoring in this fashion, the clerk did not fail to perform his commission, but with a splendid boldness read the letter before that audience, the substance being as follows: "The queen earnestly begs all the assembled clergy, and especially the bishop of Winchester, her lord's brother, to restore to the throne that same lord, whom cruel men, who are at the same time his own men, have cast into chains."<sup>183</sup>

John of Hexham's report is similar, if less detailed; he comments that Matilda '...made supplications to all, and importuned all with prayers, promises, and fair words for the deliverance of her husband'.<sup>184</sup>

The queen took this supplication directly to her archrival after the empress's arrival in London near 24 June 1141.<sup>185</sup> The problem hinged on Prince Eustace's maternal inheritance – namely, the county of Boulogne's extensive holdings in England. There are three basic versions of this episode, which involve the queen in varying degrees. The *Gesta Stephani* comments that '...the queen, a woman of subtlety and a man's resolution, sent envoys to the countess and made earnest entreaty for her husband's release from his filthy dungeon and the granting of his son's inheritance, though only that to which he was entitled by her father's will...'.<sup>186</sup> John of Worcester's account is rather more specific, and implies that the royalist faction was willing to make a deal to secure peace and the king's freedom:

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<sup>183</sup> *HN*, pp. 94-7.

<sup>184</sup> *JH*, p. 19.

<sup>185</sup> *HN*, pp. 96-7.

<sup>186</sup> *GS*, pp. 122-3, which refers to the empress as the countess of Anjou.

...the queen interceded with the empress on behalf of her king, who was a prisoner under guard and in chains. She was also implored on his behalf by the chief men and greatest nobles of England, who offered to give her many hostages, castles, and great riches, if the king were to be set free and allowed to recover his liberty, if not the crown. They promised to persuade him to give up the crown, and thereafter live devoted to God alone as a monk or pilgrim. She would not listen to them nor would she listen to the bishop of Winchester's plea that the earldom which belonged to his brother should be given to his nephew, the king's son.<sup>187</sup>

Finally, the *Historia Novella* comments that Henry of Blois had attempted to get both the honour of Boulogne and that of Mortain in Normandy, which Henry I gave to Stephen before 1125, for Eustace and was rebuffed. At that point, the legate '...had a family conference at Guildford with the queen, his brother's wife, and influenced by her tears and offers of amends, he resolved to free his brother...'.<sup>188</sup>

The most likely explanation for this discrepancy lies in the ultimate outcome of the failed negotiations, at least on Queen Matilda's part: violence.<sup>189</sup> According to the *Gesta Stephani*,

...when she was abused in harsh and insulting language and both she and those who had come to ask on her behalf completely failed to gain their request, the queen, expecting to obtain by arms what she could not by supplication, brought a magnificent body of troops across in front of London from the other side of the river and gave orders that they should rage most furiously around the city with plunder and arson, violence and the sword, in sight of the countess and her men.<sup>190</sup>

This, the narrative continues, is what caused the empress to flee London. Once Queen Matilda had gained this initial momentum, it became far easier for her to attract allies:

The queen was admitted into the city by the Londoners and forgetting the weakness of her sex and a woman's softness she bore herself with the valour of a man; everywhere by prayer or price she won over invincible allies; the king's lieges, wherever they were scattered throughout England, she urged persistently to demand their lord back with her; and now she humbly besought the bishop of Winchester, legate of all England, to take pity on his imprisoned brother and exert himself for his freedom, that uniting all his efforts with hers he might gain for her a husband, the people a king, the kingdom a champion.<sup>191</sup>

It is entirely possible that Henry of Blois made some overture to the empress, in an attempt to free his brother and recover Prince's Eustace's inheritance, either in concert with or independently from Matilda of Boulogne.

<sup>187</sup> JW, pp. 296-7; GC, pp. 119f.

<sup>188</sup> HN, pp. 99-101.

<sup>189</sup> Cf. J. A. Truax, 'Winning over the Londoners: King Stephen, the Empress Matilda, and the Politics of Personality', *HSJ* 8 (1996), 43-61.

<sup>190</sup> GS, pp. 122-3.

<sup>191</sup> *ibid*, pp. 126-7.

However, it is unlikely that the bishop – a consummate politician who had staked his reputation and thrown away his standing with Stephen on backing the king’s rival – would have removed himself from the empress’s camp without having sensed a shift in the balance of power. The queen’s invasion of London, and the empress’s flight, would have provided such a shift. For whatever reason, the bishop was now firmly a member of the royalist camp. In response, the empress went to Winchester around the end of July and besieged the bishop’s palace – although he had escaped from it beforehand.<sup>192</sup> The siege ended with the battle of Winchester, on 14 September 1141, during the course of which the empress’s forces were routed and Robert of Gloucester, her chief supporter, captured.<sup>193</sup>

Most chroniclers concur that Matilda of Boulogne provided the decisive force that broke this siege – and that she was in overall command of the royalist troops at Winchester. John of Hexham comments that ‘the queen, advancing with her forces, laid siege to [the empress and her forces]. And in this adventure she obtained the aid of the legate Henry, and the Londoners, and a great number of the nobles of the kingdom, who assembled from day to day, with whom also was Ranulf, earl of Chester’.<sup>194</sup> Several other chronicles comment that the queen took control after receiving a formal request for help from Henry of Blois; Henry of Huntingdon, Robert of Torigni, and William of Newburgh all comment that Henry ‘...summoned the queen and William of Ypres...’, as well as various other nobles who ‘...were irritated by the disdainful tyranny of the woman’.<sup>195</sup> The *Gesta Stephani* comes closest to reconciling these two views when it notes that

the bishop, sending all over England for the barons who had obeyed the king, and also hiring ordinary knights at very great expense, devoted all his efforts to harassing [the empress’s] forces outside the town. The queen likewise, with a splendid body of troops and an invincible body of Londoners, who had assembled to the number of almost a thousand, magnificently equipped with helmets and coats of mail, besieged the inner ring of besiegers from outside with the greatest energy and spirit.<sup>196</sup>

<sup>192</sup> JW, pp. 296-9; GS, pp. 126-7; JH, p. 19; HH, pp. 740-1; RT, p. 54; WN, pp. 62-5; HN, pp. 100-3; GC, pp. 120.

<sup>193</sup> JW, pp. 300-3; GS, pp. 130-5; JH, pp. 19-20; HH, pp. 740-1; RT, p. 54; WN, pp. 64-5; HN, pp. 104-7; ASC, p. 202.

<sup>194</sup> JH, p. 19; ASC, p. 202.

<sup>195</sup> WN, pp. 64-5; HH, pp. 740-1; RT, p. 54. Quotes are from the first.

<sup>196</sup> GS, pp. 128-31.

Several chronicles stress the queen's overall military leadership, either directly or indirectly.

The *Historia Novella* emphasises queen's role, and that played by the Londoners under her command:

....everywhere outside the walls of Winchester the roads were being watched by the queen and the earls who had come, to prevent provisions being brought in to the empress's adherents...In the east, all the way to London, the tracks were crowded with masses of provisions being taken to the bishop and his men... and the Londoners were making the greatest efforts, and not letting slip a single thing that lay in their power whereby they might distress the empress.<sup>197</sup>

Those chronicles influenced by Henry of Huntingdon note that the turning-point in the siege was the arrival of forces from London – which, as the *Gesta Stephani* notes, were mustered and led by Matilda of Boulogne.<sup>198</sup> Finally, the cosmopolitan nature of the royalist troops at Winchester tends to reflect the queen's upper hand in its muster. For example, the *Gesta Stephani* notes that '...the whole of England, together with an extraordinary number of foreigners, had assembled from every quarter and were there in arms...', while the Scottish *Chronicle of Melrose* notes that 'at the festival of the Holy Cross in September a numerous army was levied from England, and the parts beyond the sea, and at the insistence of his queen Stephen was entirely restored to his liberty...'.<sup>199</sup> Some of these foreign troops would have been Flemish mercenaries, but almost certainly some would have been levies from the queen's continental holdings, such as she had used in 1139.<sup>200</sup>

Matilda of Boulogne's dominant role did not end with the rout of the empress in September; John of Worcester comments that 'Robert the earl of Bristol, [the empress's] brother, escaping by another route [from Winchester], was hard pressed by his pursuers, taken prisoner at Stockbridge by the Flemings with Earl Warenne, and offered to the queen who was staying in the city. On her orders he was entrusted to William d'Ypres, and confined at Rochester'.<sup>201</sup> The *Historia Novella* admires the queen's humanity – in the process confirming her authority:

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<sup>197</sup> *HN*, pp. 102-3.

<sup>198</sup> See above, p. 41 n. 194, 195.

<sup>199</sup> *GS*, pp. 130-1; 'Chronicle of Melrose', in J. Stevenson (ed.), *The Church Historians of England: vol. 4 pt. 1* (London, 1856), p. 125.

<sup>200</sup> See above, p. 32 n. 146.

<sup>201</sup> *JW*, pp. 302-3; *GC*, pp. 121.

...the queen, though she remembered her husband had been fettered by [Robert of Gloucester's] orders, never allowed any chains to be put on him or ventured anything that would have dishonoured his rank. Finally at Rochester, for he was taken there, he was free to go to the churches beneath the castle when he liked, and to talk with whom he liked, or as least as long as the queen was there...<sup>202</sup>

Perhaps alongside her role as the earl of Gloucester's jailer, Matilda appears to have spearheaded the royalist contingent at the negotiations that eventually led to the exchange of the king and the earl. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* comments that this exchange occurred after '...wise men went between the king's friends and the earl's...'; the most steadfast friends these men were likely to have were their wives – especially when each woman had charge of the other's husband.<sup>203</sup> John of Worcester, however, gives the most detailed account of these negotiations:

the queen worked hard on the king's behalf, and the countess of Gloucester on the earl's, many messengers and reliable friends going to and fro. It was finally agreed on both sides that the king should be restored to the royal dignity, and the earl should be raised to the government of England under the king, that both should be just rulers and restorers of peace just as they had been instigators and authors of dissension and upheaval...<sup>204</sup>

The empress rejected this accord, however, and eventually a one-to-one exchange of the king for the earl – putting the country back to its *status quo* as of early 1141 – was devised.<sup>205</sup> Even this exchange involved the queen, this time as a hostage in the complicated transaction that freed both men, on 1 November 1141:

...that was the day the king emerged from captivity, on the same day leaving his queen and son with two men of high rank at Bristol, there to serve as sureties for the earl's release immediately the king by travelling at speed could reach Winchester. That was where the earl was kept, having been brought there from Rochester, where he was kept at first. On the third day, as soon as the king came to Winchester, the earl departed, leaving his son William there as hostage in the same manner until the queen's release. So he travelled rapidly, came to Bristol, and released the queen. On her return the earl's son William was released from custody as a hostage.<sup>206</sup>

The king wasted no time in impressing his status and authority on the people of England, through the medium of his Christmas court, held in Canterbury. In particular, the occasion of his release was marked by a special re-coronation by Archbishop Theobald: 'then King Stephen, gratefully coming at the Nativity of the Lord together with the queen and the chief nobles, was crowned on that same

<sup>202</sup> *HN*, pp. 114-17.

<sup>203</sup> *HN*, pp. 118-19; *GS*, pp. 136-7; *HH*, pp. 740-1; *JH*, p. 20; *WN*, pp. 64-5; *ASC*, p. 202. The quote comes from the last.

<sup>204</sup> *JW*, pp. 304-5; *GC*, pp. 122.

<sup>205</sup> *HN*, pp. 116-21; *GS*, pp. 136-7.

<sup>206</sup> *HN*, pp. 106-9.

holy solemnity in Christ Church [Canterbury] by the venerable Theobald, archbishop of that same church; the queen herself wore a gold crown on her head with him in that place'.<sup>207</sup> Further evidence of the queen's involvement in the first Christmas court after Stephen's release comes from the second charter granted by the king to Geoffrey II de Mandeville, earl of Essex. Matilda is the first attestor to this charter, possibly because it includes a confirmation to the earl of '...whatever the queen's charter says'; presumably this charter was given to Geoffrey as an incentive to act for the king.<sup>208</sup>

Matilda of Boulogne makes only sporadic appearances in historical sources after late 1141. John of Hexham uniquely comments that in 1141 'after Easter... King Stephen, followed by his wife Queen Matilda, came to York, and put an end to the passages of arms which were being carried on between William, earl of York, and Alan, earl of Richmond'.<sup>209</sup> Not long afterwards, Stephen '...was kept at Northampton by an illness so dangerous that in nearly the whole of England he was proclaimed as dead. His ill health lasted until after Whitsuntide'.<sup>210</sup>

Matilda apparently made a trip to the continent soon after, as one of her charters definitely shows, and another may do; it may have been prompted by the aftermath of the king's illness.<sup>211</sup> On Midsummer's Eve, 1142, Matilda, together with her son Eustace, '...by the concession and command of my lord King Stephen, for the good of our souls and our relatives', transferred the tithe of Merck with everything which pertains to it, which I held from paternal right up to now, to God and the church of St. Nicholas of Arrouaise in the hand of Dom Gervase the abbot, a religious man and our dear friend, for the use of the abbot and canons fighting for God there...'.<sup>212</sup> This charter was given in the Boulonnais town of Lens, and features the attestations of the count of Soissons and

<sup>207</sup> GC, pp.123; RRAN III, p. xlii.

<sup>208</sup> RRAN 276: '*...quicquid carta regine testatur ei dedi et concessi*'.

<sup>209</sup> JH, p. 20. John's dating is one year in advance of the true date from 1141.

<sup>210</sup> HN, pp. 112-3; JH, p. 20.

<sup>211</sup> R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, pp. 45-6; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, p. 248.

<sup>212</sup> RRAN 26: '*...concessione ac jussu domini mei regis Stephani, pro salute animarum nostrarum atque parentum nostrorum decimam de Merc cum uniuersis que ad eam pertinent, quam ex jure paterno hactenus tenui, tradiderim deo et ecclesie Sancti Nicholai de Aridagamantia in manus domni Geruasii abbatis uiri religiosi et amici nostri delicti usibus abbatis uidelicet et canonicorum ibidem deo militantibus...*'.

his reeve, which may suggest that the queen had been sent to shore up old alliances and forge new ones for her husband.<sup>213</sup>

Another charter was probably given on this trip, although it is impossible to be certain from the extant evidence. Some time in 1142, Matilda and Eustace confirmed various grants of land in the forest of Beaulo at Éperlecques to the Cistercian abbey of Clairmarais, in the county of Boulogne; among its attestors are Bernard of Clairvaux and three other Cistercian abbots.<sup>214</sup> The likeliest time for such a gathering of Cistercian abbots is immediately before or after the order's general chapter, which was held in early October of that year. Although their relative order can be only a suggestion, it is probable that the charter to Arrouaise, made at Lens, was soon after the queen's arrival and before the autumn 1142 Clairmarais grant.

Matilda's next two appearances in the historical record are at Christmas courts. The first was that of 1146, when '...King Stephen showed himself in the kingly regalia in the city of Lincoln, where no other king – deterred by superstitious persons – had dared to do so'.<sup>215</sup> According to William of Newburgh, he stayed several days there – probably over the Christmas feast.<sup>216</sup> During this time, she attested a writ of her husband's ensuring that Bishop Alexander of Lincoln had the service of two knights previously attached to the honour of Lancaster.<sup>217</sup> Stephen's charter granting the royal manor of Blewbury, Berks, to Reading Abbey implies the court spent Christmas 1147 in London.<sup>218</sup> The queen is the first attestor, as was perhaps fitting on such a formal occasion; moreover, Bishop Roger of Chester, who died on crusade in April 1148 and Prince Eustace – described as count of Boulogne – attest as well. This narrows the date range to Christmas 1146 or 1147 – and if Christmas 1146 was spent at Lincoln, it must be from the next year.

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<sup>213</sup> See below, p. 101, n. 475.

<sup>214</sup> RRAN 195; below, pp. 95, 102.

<sup>215</sup> HH, pp. 748-9.

<sup>216</sup> WN, pp. 82-5; RT, p. 61.

<sup>217</sup> RRAN 475; cf. RRAN 474.

<sup>218</sup> RRAN 694.

Matilda may have spent much of 1147 in London, as four charters in which she was involved can be place-dated to the capital between August 1147 and April 1148. One benefited Bury St. Edmunds; in this charter, where Matilda appears as the premier lay witness, Stephen granted the abbey to Abbot Ording.<sup>219</sup> The remaining three charters should be regarded as a group, since they benefit the same house – the Augustinian priory of Holy Trinity, Aldgate – deal with the same piece of land – Braughing, Herts. – and share a *pro anima* request – the souls of the royal couple’s dead children Baldwin and Matilda.<sup>220</sup> It is likely that these charters were given on the same occasion. The first was given by Stephen, and confirms the canons in

...one hundred shillings’ of land in my manor of Braughing in perpetual alms for the repose of the souls of Baldwin my son and Matilda my daughter buried in that same church... [and] six pounds’ of land in that same manor of Braughing in exchange for their mill and those pieces of land which they conceded to Queen Matilda my wife next to the tower of London where she made a paupers’ hospital.<sup>221</sup>

The queen is, once again, the first lay attestor to this grant, preceded only by six bishops. The presence of a large number of clerics suggests that it was made during a major festival; Cronne and Davis suggest Christmas 1147.<sup>222</sup> Matilda herself matched the king’s granting, confirming:

...the gift of my lord King Stephen... of one hundred shillings’ of land in Braughing in perpetual alms for the repose of the souls of Baldwin my son and Matilda my daughter who rest buried in that same church... [and] six pounds’ of land in that same manor of Braughing in exchange for their mill and those parts of their land which they conceded to me next to the Tower of London where I made a paupers’ hospital. I conceded those six pounds’ of land to them which the king retained in his demesne after they were divided from the other parts of that manor, that is that part in which the church was founded and to which, moreover, the market belongs.<sup>223</sup>

The same witnesses – excepting the queen herself – as Stephen’s charter, witness this charter. It is likely that they were drawn up at the same time to ensure the canons’ possession. Matilda made an

<sup>219</sup> RRAN 760.

<sup>220</sup> RRAN 511, 512, 513.

<sup>221</sup> RRAN 511: ‘...*c solidatas terre in manerio meo de Brackyng in perpetuam elemosinam pro requie animarum scilicet Bald[wini] filii mei et Matildis filie mee qui in eadem ecclesia sepulti requiescunt... vi libratas terre in eodem manerio de Brack[yng] pro escambio molendini sui et illius partis terre sue quam concesserunt Matildi regine uxori mee juxta turrin Lond[onie] ubi ipsa fecit hospitale pauperum*’.

<sup>222</sup> RRAN III, p. xliii.

<sup>223</sup> RRAN 512: ‘...*donum regis Stephani... de c solidatas terre in manerio de Bracching[e] in perpetuam elemosinam pro requie animarum scilicet Baldewi[ni] filii mei ey Matild[is] filie mee qui in eadem ecclesia sepulti requiescunt... vi libratas terre in eodem manerio de Bracching[e] pro escambio molendini sui et illius partis terre sue quam concesserunt mihi juxta turrin Lond[onie] ubi feci hospitale pauperum. Illas videlicet vi libratas terre illis concessi quas rex retinuerat in dominio suo postquam partitus fuit ceteras partes illius manerii, hoc est partam illam in qua fundata est ecclesia et ad quam etiam forum pertinet*’.

additional grant to Holy Trinity in Braughing, granting the canons ‘...the church of Braughing with its appurtenances’.<sup>224</sup> This charter is witnessed by only a fraction of the witnesses of the other two, suggesting that it was made at the same occasion but not exactly simultaneously.<sup>225</sup>

Matilda re-entered the political life of the realm in 1148. In March of that year, Archbishop Theobald, along with various other English bishops, was summoned to Rheims for a papal council. When Theobald applied for permission to attend the meeting, however, it was refused and royal officials posted at ports to bar the archbishop from attending. Theobald secretly crossed the Channel nevertheless, causing the king to exile him on his return from Rheims. The archbishop returned to France where he stayed with the queen and William of Ypres.<sup>226</sup> Implicit in this description is the fact that Matilda herself could take a hand in the negotiations by attempting to mediate between the archbishop and her husband.

Further evidence for a stay abroad may come from charter evidence. One of Matilda’s *acta* orders that ‘...the abbot and monks of my foundation of Coggeshall should be quit with all their goods from toll and *transue* and all customs through all my lands and those of my son Eustace in England and Boulogne...’.<sup>227</sup> This charter was given at Steenvorde, on the border between Boulogne and Flanders, and its date is disputed. Davis comments that it was given not later than 1146, but Crouch dates it to no earlier than 1148, suggesting that she was accompanying Henry of Blois on an 1150 diplomatic mission to the French king.<sup>228</sup> If given before 1146, it may have been a product of Matilda’s 1140 trip to marry off her son, or the 1142 trip that produced the Arrouaise and Clairmarais grants.<sup>229</sup> If given during or after 1148, however, the stay documented by Gervase of Canterbury is highly plausible; Matilda may have travelled with the archbishop to gather support.

<sup>224</sup> RRAN 513: ‘...ecclesiam de Brackyng cum pertinentiis suis...’.

<sup>225</sup> Archbishop Theobald, Bishops Robert of Hereford and Hilary of Chichester, Richard de Lucy, and Warner de Lusors.

<sup>226</sup> See below, p. 91.

<sup>227</sup> RRAN 207b: ‘...abbas et monachi de elemosina mea de Coggshala sint quieti cum omnibus rebus suis de tolneto et *transue* et omnibus consuetudinibus per totam terram meam et Eustachii filii mei de Anglia et Bolonia...’.

<sup>228</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 248, 261; R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, p. 167.

<sup>229</sup> See above, pp. 36-37, 44-45.

1148 also saw the royal couple found what would become their mausoleum: the Cluniac abbey of Faversham in Kent, which they planned as an independent entity akin to Henry I's foundation at Reading.<sup>230</sup> Stephen granted

...for the good of my soul and Queen Matilda my wife's and Eustace my son's and all my other children's and those of my predecessors the kings of England, my manor of Faversham in order to found an abbey of the Cluniac order in that same place... My wife Queen Matilda and I give to William of Ypres in exchange for his manor of Faversham, Lillechurch with its appurtenances from the queen's inheritance, and the surplus from my manor of Milton<sup>231</sup>

some time before Abbot Clarembald's November 11, 1148 consecration, probably early in that year. The queen does not appear to have been present for the granting of this charter, at Bermondsey just outside London.<sup>232</sup> She did, however, take an active interest in the abbey. Gervase of Canterbury comments that, during the interdict of St. Augustine's, Canterbury from early March to August 1148, '...the queen of King Stephen was accustomed to frequent the court of St. Augustine's, because she wanted to complete the work at Faversham which she herself with her husband King Stephen began from the foundations, and, because silence had been imposed on the Augustinians, she used to summon the monks of Christ Church, so that they could celebrate mass for her at St. Augustine's'.<sup>233</sup>

The last appearance of the queen in the historical sources comes between 1148 and 1152, in a charter of Archbishop Theobald. A small minority of the nuns of Stratford-by-Bow, who had accompanied Mary, the royal couple's surviving daughter, there had revolted, finding life there too austere; Matilda acted with Archbishop Theobald, Hilary bishop of Chichester, and Clarembald, the abbot of Faversham, to mediate the dispute. The Stratford nuns agreed to abandon all their claims to the manor of Lillechurch, Kent, on condition that it be used to found a house for the rebel nuns,

<sup>230</sup> Saltman, *Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury*, pp. 82-3.

<sup>231</sup> RRAN 300: '*...pro salute anime mee et Mathild[is] regine uxoris mee et E[ustachii] filii mei et aliorum puerorum meorum et antecessorum meorum regum Angl[ie] manerium meum de Favresham ad fundandum abbatiam unam ibidem de ordine monachorum Cluniacensium... dedimus ego et Mathild[is] regina uxor mea Will[elm]o de Ipra in escambium pro eodem manerio de Favresham, Lillechirc[he] cum pertinentiis suis de hereditate regine, et superplus in manerio meo de Middletona*'.

<sup>232</sup> GC, pp. 138f.

<sup>233</sup> *ibid*, pp.139: '*Solebat his diebus regina regis Stephani curiam Sancti Augustini frequentare, quia opus de Faversham quod ipsa cum domino suo rege Stephano a fundamentis inceperat perficere cupiebat, et, quia Augustinianis silentium impositum est, monachos ecclesiae Christi vocare solebat, ut ei apud Sanctum Augustinum divina celebrarent*'.

who promptly left and settled there.<sup>234</sup> This may have been the queen's last public appearance; she died on 3 May 1152, at Castle Hedingham, Essex – probably while visiting Eufemia, countess of Oxford – and was buried at Faversham.<sup>235</sup> Her epitaph described her as

...happy wife of King Stephen  
 She died outstanding in character and titles.  
 She was a true follower of God and a follower of poverty  
 Here she was elevated by God in whom she rejoices;  
 If any woman whatever deserves to rise up to heaven, she does  
 Angels hold this godly queen in their hands.<sup>236</sup>

Matilda's career as queen began on a particularly active note, perhaps because she was relatively far along in her lifecycle when she began her tenure – and, crucially, was nearing the end of her childbearing, which freed her from domestic responsibilities. During the early years of Stephen's reign, when the political situation was most stable, she was an active participant in her husband's court; even after the civil war made that role more difficult, she intervened at various crucial points, notably 1141. After that time, her itinerary is more difficult to trace. Although she occasionally travelled on official business she probably remained within the relatively safe confines of London, Kent, and Essex much of the time, and began to take an increasing interest in religious patronage as her political role waned.

<sup>234</sup> Saltman, *Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury*, p. 379; D.

<sup>235</sup> JH, p. 29; *CHTPA*, p. 301.

<sup>236</sup> Southouse (ed.), *Monasticon Favershamiense*, p.109: '*...foelix conjunx Stephani quoque Regis/Occidit insignis moribus et titulis./Cultrix vero Dei, cultrix et pauperiei/Hic subnixa Deo quo frueretur eo;/Foemina si qua polos conscendere quaeque meretur/Angelicis manibus diva Regina tenetur*'.

## Chapter II: Matilda of Boulogne's Religious Patronage

### *Introduction*

It is notoriously difficult to form a personal picture of a member of the early medieval laity, since so many left only brief impressions of their characters in letters and chronicles. Religious patronage thus gives another angle from which to glimpse the personal preferences and choices of a subject. In Matilda of Boulogne's case, chronicles tend to fall back on stereotyping about ruling women in their descriptions, and no letters she composed survive;<sup>237</sup> this leaves only her actions as a patroness to illuminate not only her relationship with the clergy, but also her personal religious beliefs. This chapter aims to examine all these facets of Matilda's career as a religious patroness: by closely examining her charters to religious institutions, her personal preferences, concerns, and relationship with the clergy should become clear. A short comparison of her religious charters with Stephen's will show that the couple had a coherent, shared religious bent, which Matilda in particular fostered through patronage.

There is a relatively large stock of primary source material dealing with Queen Matilda's religious patronage with which to make such an analysis. Of the forty-six charters involving the queen, thirty-five represent her gifts to religious houses; several more show her acting as a patroness in other ways, by initiating a grant or acting on behalf of a house.<sup>238</sup> In addition Matilda appeared as a witness to her husband's religious charters fifty-two times and was invoked in the *pro anima* clause of these charters seventy-eight times.<sup>239</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> L. L. Huneycutt, 'Female Succession and the Language of Power in the Writings of Twelfth-Century Churchmen', in J. C. Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship* (Stroud, 1993), pp. 189-201; above, p. 8 n. 22.

<sup>238</sup> Table I, p. 243. This chapter does not consider RRAN 243 and 276, which have lay beneficiaries.

<sup>239</sup> Table II, p. 243. This count does not include charters labeled forgeries by Cronne and Davis in RRAN.

*Part 1: Foundations*

Perhaps the clearest picture of the queen's motivation for patronage comes from the six houses that she founded: the abbeys of Coggeshall, Faversham, and Lillechurch, the Templar preceptories of Cressing and Cowley, and the hospital of St. Katherine by the Tower of London.<sup>240</sup> While these houses were of different sizes and orders, it can be argued that they were the pinnacle of the queen's patronage, involving the greatest outlay of time and resources possible. Moreover, their creation involved granting away most, if not all, of the rights associated with the land on which each was built – representing a real sacrifice of resources for the medieval laity.

The first house Matilda of Boulogne founded was the Templar preceptory of Cressing Temple, in Essex.<sup>241</sup> In the spring of 1137, Matilda

...gave and conceded in pure and perpetual alms to God and blessed Mary and the brother knights of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem for the soul of my father Count Eustace and for the good of my soul and the souls of all my ancestors and successors the whole of my manor of Cressing with the church of that same vill and all things pertaining to that church. Therefore, I wish and I firmly order that the aforesaid brothers should have, hold, and possess my manor there well and in peace and freely and quit from all secular services, customs, and exactions in wood and in plain, in meadow and in pastures, in lanes and in roads, in waters and outside waters, in mills and in outlying parts and in all places and things with sake and soke and toll and team and infangtheof and in all customs and liberties of the manor pertaining to it. And so that this my donation and concession might persevere firm and unshaken in the hands of the brother knights of the Temple of Solomon forever, by the power given to me by God I confirm it and by the impression of my seal and the witness of those written below I attest it.<sup>242</sup>

She later made two more grants that expanded the Templars' lands in Essex. Before 1140, Stephen

...conceded and confirmed that donation which Queen Matilda my wife made to Hugh de Argentan and the other brothers of the Temple in perpetual alms of land at Uphall.<sup>243</sup>

<sup>240</sup> Of these, Cowley, Cressing, and St. Katherine's appear to be sole foundations of the queen, while the monasteries were probably founded jointly with Stephen.

<sup>241</sup> Cf. E. Lord, *The Knights Templar in Britain* (Harlow, 2002).

<sup>242</sup> RRRAN 843. '*...dedit et concessit in puram et perpetuam elemosinam deo et beate Marie et fratribus militie Templi Salomonis de Ierusalem pro anima patris mei et comitis Eustachii et pro salute anime mee et omnium antecessorum et successorum meorum totum manorium de Cressyng cum ecclesia ejusdem uille et omnibus ecclesie pertinentibus. Quare uolo et firmiter precipio quod habeant teneant et possideant illud manerium meum predicti fratres bene et in pace libere et quiete ab omnibus secularibus seruitiis consuetudinibus et exactionibus in bosco et plano in pratis et in pastura in semitis et in uis in aquis et extra aquas in molendinis et diuisis et in omnibus locis et rebus cum soca et saca et tholl et them et infangenetheof et in omnibus consuetudinibus et libertatibus manerio illi adjectentibus. Et ut hec mea donatio et concessio firma et inconcussa predictis fratribus militie Templi Salomonis in sempiternum perseueret a deo michi collata potestate illam confirmo et sigilli mei impressione et subscriptorum subnotatione consigno*'.

<sup>243</sup> H. A. Doubleday and W. Page (eds.), *The Victoria History of the County of Essex, vol. I* (Westminster, 1903), p. 465.

Whence I wish and order that those same brothers of the Temple should hold it in perpetuity... just as the charter of the queen which they have testifies.<sup>244</sup>

In 1147-8 the queen made a second additional grant in Essex, this time involving the manor of

Witham:

Know you that with the concession of my lord Stephen king of England I gave in perpetual alms to the brother knights of the Temple at Jerusalem my manor of Witham for the soul of Count Eustace my father and for the health of my lord King Stephen and my own and of my children with all things pertaining to it, except the church and the pertinences of the church, which I gave to the church of St. Martin at London and its canons. Whence I wish and I firmly order that they should have and have it... with the half-hundred pertaining to that same manor in all things just as Count Eustace my father well and freely had it in his life.<sup>245</sup>

These grants helped to make Temple Cressing one of the order's most important rural settlements;<sup>246</sup> the Templars regarded them as a mark of favour and high status, as shown by their placement at the head of the order's 1185 inquest into property, immediately after the preamble.<sup>247</sup>

Perhaps most importantly, the queen's grants created an economic unit that quickly became disproportionately important because of its agricultural fecundity and strategic location.<sup>248</sup>

The queen's next foundation, a matter of months after Cressing, was a sister preceptory at Cowley, Oxfordshire. Between October 1138 and September 1139, Matilda

...had given and conceded and by this my present charter confirmed to God and to the brother knights of the Temple at Jerusalem for the soul of Count Eustace my father all my land of Cowley with all its appurtenances in pure and perpetual alms for the good of my soul and that of my lord Stephen king of the English my husband and my children and my predecessors and successors.<sup>249</sup>

<sup>244</sup> RRAN 844: '*Sciatis me concessisse et confirmasse donationem ille quam Mathilda regina uxor mea fecit Hugoni de Argent[ein] et aliis fratribus de Templo in perpetuam elemosinam de terra de Luppehalla. Quare uolo et precipio quod ipsi fratres de Templo teneant eam in perpetuam bene... sicut carta regine quam inde habent testatur*'.

<sup>245</sup> RRAN 845: '*Sciatis quia concessione domini mei regis Anglie Stephani dedi in perpetuam elemosinam militibus fratribus de Templo Ierusalem manerium meam de Witham pro anima com[itis] Eustachii patris mei et pro salute domini mei regis Stephani et mea et puerorum meorum cum omnibus ei pertinentibus, excepta ecclesia et ecclesie pertinentiis que dedi ecclesie Sancti Martini London[ie] et canonicis. Quare uolo et firmiter precipio quod... teneant et habeant cum dimidio hundredo eidem manerio pertinenti in omnibus rebus sicut comes Eustachius pater meus melius et liberius tenuit in uita sua*'.

<sup>246</sup> Lees (ed.), *Templar Records*, pp. lxxii, 9; *VCH Essex I*, p. 428.

<sup>247</sup> Lees (ed.), *Templar Records*, pp. lxxii, 9.

<sup>248</sup> *ibid*, pp. lxxii-iii; *VCH Essex I*, pp. 462, 465.

<sup>249</sup> RRAN 850: '*...dedit et concessisse et hac presenti carta mea confirmasse deo et fratribus militibus Templi Ierusalem pro anima comitis Eustachii patris mei totam terram meam de Couel(e) cum omnibus pertinentiis suis in puram et perpetuam elemosinam pro salute anime mee et domini Stephani regis Angl(or)um mariti mei et puerorum meorum et antecessorum et suorum meorum*'.

In the Domesday survey, Roger d'Ivry held Cowley, assessed at three hides, in fee of Count Eustace II; it was this land that Matilda granted to the Templars.<sup>250</sup> As at Cressing, this gift took on an importance greater than the manor's size or economic value, because of the status of its foundress and its connection with the major town of Oxford.<sup>251</sup> Matilda may have alienated this particular land as a strategic move, to prevent it falling under the empress's control while still allowing her to retain leverage and authority in Oxfordshire.<sup>252</sup>

These two foundations probably served a variety of purposes. First, as the queen's first documented foundations, they helped to knit the identity of her natal family into the nascent dynasty created by her marriage to Stephen. Crusading was an important part of Matilda's heritage, and as Jonathan Riley-Smith remarks, by the 1140s pride in previous generations' crusading exploits had become ingrained in the collective consciousness of some families.<sup>253</sup> Matilda may have used these grants as a way of keeping the memory of her natal family, especially her father, alive; the presence of her father or her ancestors in the *pro anima* clause of all the Templar charters that survive intact tends to reinforce this theory.<sup>254</sup> One of the founders of the Templars, Godfrey de St. Omer, was a Boulonnais tenant, further strengthening the links between the comital family and the Templars. David Crouch speculates that Matilda patronised the order as the only way for a woman to continue the family tradition or vocation of crusading.<sup>255</sup> Stephen's family also had a crusading history, albeit slightly tarnished, and connections to the founders of the Templars:

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<sup>250</sup> L. F. Salzman (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Oxford, vol. I* (London, 1907), p. 410; M. D. Lobel (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Oxford, vol. V* (London, 1957), p. 80.

<sup>251</sup> Lees (ed.), *Templar Records*, p. cxvii.

<sup>252</sup> M. T. Clanchy, *England and Its Rulers 1066-1272: Foreign Lordship and National Identity* (Oxford, 1983), p. 125; Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England*, pp. 95, 99; K. J. Stringer, 'A Cistercian Archive: The Earliest Charters of Sawtry Abbey', *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 6:6 (1980), 328; E. Cownie, 'Religious Patronage and Lordship: The Debate on the Nature of the Honor', K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics: The Prosopography of Britain and France from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge, 1997), 133-46.

<sup>253</sup> J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095-1131* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 102; above, p. 16.

<sup>254</sup> Eustace III is invoked in RRRAN 843 and RRRAN 845; her ancestors appear in RRRAN 843 and RRRAN 850.

<sup>255</sup> Lees (ed.), *Templar Records*, p. xxxix; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 317-318.

Matilda's enthusiasm may have served to link the two families and negate Stephen's familial shame.<sup>256</sup>

These grants may also have been an attempt to ameliorate the adverse spiritual effects of the continuing warfare in England. The Templar grants were generally made at or after times of unrest within Stephen's realm. The Cressing grant, made in late March or early April of 1137, followed the rebellion of Baldwin de Redvers and the brutal siege of Exeter it provoked.<sup>257</sup> The Uphall and Cowley grants were made before 1140, at a time when open warfare had begun in England, and after the queen herself had led troops at the siege of Dover.<sup>258</sup> Finally, by the time of the Witham grant in 1147-8, fighting had become endemic. In all these cases, the king – and in some the queen herself – had condoned and presided over the whole-scale shedding of blood: Matilda had directed soldiers in battle at London and Winchester in 1141.<sup>259</sup> In the mid-twelfth century, this was regarded as inherently sinful; as such, taking part in these violent actions necessitated an obvious, visible act of atonement.<sup>260</sup> One traditional way of doing so was to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem,<sup>261</sup> but as a woman, the only viable way for Matilda to invoke the salutary effects of fighting in the *militia Christi* was to patronise the military orders.<sup>262</sup>

The next foundation in which Matilda of Boulogne had a hand was the Savignac (later Cistercian) abbey of Coggeshall in Essex. Although the royal couple and their eldest son Eustace jointly founded the house, the queen issued its foundation charter between 1139 and 1141.<sup>263</sup>

<sup>256</sup> See below, pp. 203-204.

<sup>257</sup> *GS*, pp. 30-7; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 45-59.

<sup>258</sup> *OV*, pp. 520-1.

<sup>259</sup> *GS*, pp. 128-133.

<sup>260</sup> C. Harper-Bill, 'The Piety of the Anglo-Norman Knightly Class', *ANS* 2 (1979), 64; J. Riley-Smith, 'Crusading as an Act of Love', in T. F. Madden (ed.), *The Crusades* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 45-7.

<sup>261</sup> Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, pp. 27-9, 69, 83; J. Richard, *The Crusades, c.1071 - c.1291* (Cambridge Medieval Textbooks; Cambridge, 1999), pp. 17, 23-4.

<sup>262</sup> J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (London, 1986), pp. 27-8; A. J. Forey, 'The Emergence of the Military Orders in the Twelfth Century', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 36 (1985), 187.

<sup>263</sup> B. Poulle, 'Savigny and England', in D. Bates and A. Curry (eds.), *England and Normandy in the Middle Ages* (London, 1994), pp. 159, 164.

Let all of you know that my lord King Stephen, and I, and my son Eustace, give and in perpetual alms concede, for the good of our souls, and those of our predecessors and children and all our friends both living and dead, to God and the church of Saint Mary and the abbot and convent of Coggeshall the self-same manor of Coggeshall whole... just as Count Eustace my father and we afterwards held it free and quit...<sup>264</sup>

The alienation of this demesne land was a substantial gift. Coggeshall was assessed in the Domesday survey at three-and-a-half hides, thirty-three acres TRE and had TRW ‘...wood... for 500 swine... 38 acres of meadow, and ten pence worth of pasture’.<sup>265</sup>

The manor and its extent may hold the key to the abbey’s foundation. The Savignacs, like the Cistercians with whom they eventually merged, based their spirituality on returning to strict observance of St. Benedict’s Rule, manual labour by the monks, and as simple a life as possible.<sup>266</sup> This desire led the monks to seek out, and patrons to donate, isolated areas of land where – ideally – the monks could live self-sufficiently.<sup>267</sup> These lands, coincidentally, were often ones which patrons could best afford to grant away, which may account for the relatively high incidence of Cistercian founders having strong ties to other religious orders.<sup>268</sup> Thus, Matilda may have seen Coggeshall as a relatively cheap foundation; by the time of its foundation, perhaps a major consideration when the civil war was posing a significant threat to her resources. Unlike the Cistercian order, however, Savignac houses took possession of churches and played a role in pastoral care of the laity.<sup>269</sup> This may also have played a role; the inevitable emphasis this would put on prayer in these houses may have appealed to Matilda, especially if Coggeshall was founded just after Stephen’s capture in February 1141.

As with the Templars, however, dynastic and political considerations also played a role.

<sup>264</sup> RRAN, 207: ‘*Notum sit omnibus uobis quia dominus meus rex Stephanus, et ego, et filius meus Eustachius, damus et in perpetuam elemosinam concedimus, pro salute animarum nostrarum, et antecessorum et liberorum et omnium amicorum nostrorum tam uiuorum quam mortuorum, deo et ecclesie Sancte Marie atque abbati et conuentui de Coggeshale ipsum idem manerium de Coggeshale totum... sicut comes Eustachius pater meus et nos postea liberius et quietius illud tenuimus...*’.

<sup>265</sup> *VCH Essex I*, p. 461; Tanner, ‘Scylla and Charybdis’, pp. 152-3.

<sup>266</sup> B. D. Hill, *English Cistercian Monasteries and Their Patrons in the 12th Century* (Urbana, 1968), p. 86.

<sup>267</sup> J. Wardrop, *Fountains Abbey and its Benefactors 1132-1300* (Kalamazoo, 1987), pp. 11-12; Hill, *English Cistercian Patrons*, pp. 44-46, 86.

<sup>268</sup> D. O’Keefe, ‘The Cistercian Settlement of England’, in D. Rees (ed.), *Monks of England: The Benedictines in England from Augustine to the Present Day* (London, 1997), pp. 102, 106-7; Hill, *English Cistercian Patrons*, pp. 44-50.

<sup>269</sup> Hill, *English Cistercian Patrons*, pp. 92-94.

Matilda's husband Stephen introduced the Savignac congregation to England when settled the monks of Tulketh priory at Furness, Lancs in 1127.<sup>270</sup> The queen's grant thus strengthened the ties between her family and the congregation, gave her nuclear family, rather than her natal family or Stephen's, another nexus of patronage, and impressed its royal status more firmly on the country. The other grant Matilda made to Coggeshall reflects this desire to assert her family's claim to the throne. Before 1146, she exempted Coggeshall's men and goods from tolls at Dover, Wissant, and Boulogne.<sup>271</sup> Henry I had previously exempted St. Vitalis's goods from transport-duty at all Norman and English harbours, a privilege Stephen extended to the whole congregation.<sup>272</sup>

The ports Matilda referred to did not fall under the king's jurisdiction, but rather her own as countess. However, granting an exemption so reminiscent of a previous king's clearly asserted her husband's place as his rightful successor. Additionally, founding a monastery – especially of an order with such profound ties of loyalty to Stephen – in the heart of the Boulonnais honour served to give the family a patronage site within their local stronghold, and therefore a check on possible expansion by other local magnates, notably the Mandeville and de Vere families, who founded family houses in Essex.<sup>273</sup>

The royal family also founded the independent Cluniac house of Faversham. Around 1148, King Stephen issued its foundation charter; it is highly likely that the queen was a joint founder of this house and that she had an extended and formal role in its creation.<sup>274</sup> The manor of Lillechurch, with which William of Ypres was compensated for the loss of Faversham, was part of the queen's inheritance – thus she would have had to assent to the transfer.<sup>275</sup> From Eudo *dapifer*, the manor

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<sup>270</sup> Hill, *English Cistercian Patrons*, pp. 32, 97-98; Poulle, 'Savigny and England', p. 164; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, p. 317.

<sup>271</sup> See above, p. 47, n. 227.

<sup>272</sup> Poulle, 'Savigny and England', p. 162.

<sup>273</sup> *VCH Essex I*, pp. 93-4, 102-3, 110-11, 122, 125.

<sup>274</sup> W. Page (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Kent, vol. II* (London, 1926), p. 137; C. Morris, *The Papal Monarchy: The Western Church from 1050 to 1250* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 378ff; B. J. Thompson, 'Monasteries and their Patrons at Foundation and Dissolution', *TRHS* 6:4 (1994), 103-25; above, p. 48.

<sup>275</sup> W. Page (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Kent, vol. III* (London, 1932), p. 231; Round, 'Counts of Boulogne', pp. 165-6; RRAN 300.

passed to Count Eustace III of Boulogne, who confirmed his predecessor's grants in Lillechurch to St. John's Colchester – which Matilda would later get back for her foundation there.<sup>276</sup> The queen probably also influenced the choice of monks to colonise the new house, who came from Bermondsey Abbey, of which Matilda's parents were benefactors.<sup>277</sup> Although the abbey was built on former royal demesne, the queen and her patrimony were intimately involved in the foundation; Matilda donated her manor of Tring, Hertfordshire, to the house sometime after 1148, and spent significant time overseeing its construction.<sup>278</sup>

Matilda's personal oversight of Faversham's construction, combined with its scale – equal to the cathedral at Canterbury and larger than all contemporary Cluniac houses – suggests that it had a specific purpose. The sheer magnificence of the building, including elaborate mouldings in the nave, paired apsidal chapels, and a royal chapel east of the choir with elaborate, painted stone monuments that served as the English prototype of the shrine-areas used in popular pilgrimage sites such as Westminster, makes it clear that the new foundation had a specific purpose: to serve as the mausoleum for the new dynasty and a mark of its power.<sup>279</sup> Stephen, Matilda, and their eldest son Eustace were all buried there, strongly suggesting that the only reason Faversham – a totally unique creation at the time – sank into obscurity after the 1150s was the transfer of power to the Angevin dynasty. The choice of Cluniacs to staff the new house also reflects its purpose as a mausoleum. Burial in a cloister was seen as one of the few ways for members of the laity to achieve salvation, and the Cluniacs were particularly popular, given their focus on spiritual intercession and elaborate services.<sup>280</sup>

Most importantly, perhaps, setting up Faversham as a Cluniac house tied the new royal family into the previous dynasty as well as both their families. Faversham paralleled Reading,

<sup>276</sup> Round, 'Counts of Boulogne', pp. 163-166.

<sup>277</sup> 'Bermondsey Annals', p. 432; above, p. 18.

<sup>278</sup> W. Page (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Hertford*, vol. I (Westminster, 1902), p. 320; GC, ppp. 138-9; 'Bermondsey Annals', p. 438; RRAN 301, 302.

<sup>279</sup> B. Philp, *Excavations at Faversham 1965: The Royal Abbey, Roman Villa and Belgic Farmstead* (Bromley, Kent, 1968), pp. 9-17, 35-7; W. Telfer, 'Faversham Abbey Reconsidered', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 80 (1966), 215-20.

<sup>280</sup> Harper-Bill, 'Piety of Anglo-Norman Knight', 64, 74-6.

Henry I's mausoleum and site of his burial.<sup>281</sup> Stephen's mother, Adela of Blois, retired to, and was buried in, the Cluniac nunnery of Marcigny, while Matilda's father Eustace III retired to Romilly, another Cluniac house. Similarly, Bermondsey housed Mary of Boulogne's tomb, while Eustace II and Ida of Boulogne's burial site was their Cluniac foundation of La Waast.<sup>282</sup> It is likely, therefore, that the choice of Cluniacs to staff the new foundation reflected more than a general idea that Cluniacs were the most appropriate choice for posthumous remembrance. It was also a way of commemorating their far-flung nuclear families and connecting with their prestige; furthermore, the parallels between Faversham and Reading allowed the couple to tap into Henry I's legacy, enhancing the dynasty's legitimacy while impressing the family's grandeur on the realm. Such considerations were at least as important as the spiritual benefits they accrued.

At roughly the same time as Faversham, the queen also founded the hospital of St. Katherine by the Tower as a dependency of the Augustinian priory of Holy Trinity Aldgate. Between August 1147 and April 1148, she granted the canons six librates of land in her patrimonial manor of Braughing, Hertfordshire, in exchange for '...their mill and those parts of their land which they conceded to me next to the Tower of London where I made a paupers' hospital'.<sup>283</sup> Somewhat later, Matilda formalised the relationship by granting the priory custody of the hospital via a charter:

... I have transferred my hospital next to the Tower of London with the consent of my lord King Stephen to perpetual custody of the church of the Holy Trinity at London and the prior and canons serving God there ... I have also conceded, for the maintenance of the hospital itself the mill next to the Tower of London and all the land pertaining to that mill. And the aforesaid church of the Holy Trinity should have in that hospital in perpetuity thirteen paupers for the health of the soul of my lord King Stephen and my own, as well as for the health of our children Eustace and William and [the others]. I have conceded therefore to the hospital in the custody of the aforesaid church of the Holy Trinity twenty pounds annually from Queenhithe in perpetual alms, my lord King Stephen [agreeing] to it.<sup>284</sup>

<sup>281</sup> Harper-Bill, 'Piety of Anglo-Norman Knight', 76; P. Stafford, 'Cherchez la Femme: Queens, Queens' lands and Nunneries: Missing Links in the Foundation of Reading Abbey', *History* 85 (2000), 4-5.

<sup>282</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, p.318; Tanner, 'Queenship', pp. 144-5; below, p. 228f.

<sup>283</sup> *CHTPA*, p. 972; *VCH Herts I*, p. 322; W. Page (ed.), *The Victoria History of the County of Hertford*, vol. III (London, 1912), p. 308; above, p. 46.

<sup>284</sup> RRAN 503: '... tradidisse hospitale meum juxta turrim Lundonie concessu domini mei regis Stephani ecclesie Sancte Trinitatis Londonie et priori et canonicis ibidem deo seruentibus in custodiam perpetuam... Concessi etiam ad ipsum hospitale manutenendum molendinum juxta turrim Londonie et totam terram ad ipsum molendinum pertinentem. Et predicta ecclesia Sancte Trinitatis tenebit in ipso hospitali in perpetuum xiii pauperes pro salute anime domini mei regis Stephani et mee, necnon et pro salute filiorum nostrorum Eustachii et Willelmi et omnium nostrorum. Concessi etiam eidem hospitali in custodia predictae ecclesie

Matilda had both personal and dynastic reasons for patronising Holy Trinity, and for creating a hospital. Matilda's maternal aunt and Henry I's first wife, Matilda of Scotland, founded the priory in 1108; she was an enthusiastic patron of the house until her death in 1118.<sup>285</sup>

Patronising Holy Trinity thus aligned the new queen with her namesake, emphasising her status and authority as queen-consort. Matilda of Scotland was particularly famous for her practical works of patronage, so her niece's building a hospital, rather than another cloister, may have been a conscious emulation of her predecessor – and certainly suggests that she shared her aunt's practical bent. David Crouch also suggests that the queen's patronage of Holy Trinity stemmed from a more general connection to the '...intellectual earnestness...' of the Augustinian way of life.<sup>286</sup> The positioning of a new refuge for the poor next to the Tower, the symbolic centre of royal authority, may also be significant, either as a typically female reaction to the poor, or perhaps as a reaction to the queen's personal authority.

Matilda also had a friendly relationship with the priors of Holy Trinity, which may have affected her patronage to them. At the Christmas court of 1136, in her husband's second regnal year, a long-running legal battle between various castellans of the Tower of London and the canons of Holy Trinity over the English *Cnightengild* was heard, at which Norman, the prior of Holy Trinity:

...having the assistance and aid of Queen Matilda, wife of that king, Algar bishop of Coutances, Roger then chancellor, Arnulf archdeacon of Sées, William Martel steward, Robert de Courcy, Aubrey de Vere, Geoffrey de Mandeville, Hugh Bigod, Adam de Balnai, Andrew Buccuinte [then sheriff of London], and many other citizens of London... approached him [the king] and diligently showed by what force or injury that part had been separated from the remainder.<sup>287</sup>

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*Sancte Trinitatis xx libras singulis annis de Edredeshytha in perpetuam elemosinam, domino meo rege Stephano idipsum annuente*. It is dated 1147-1152 in RRAN, with the suggestion that it was a deathbed grant.

<sup>285</sup> CHTPA, pp. xiii-xv.

<sup>286</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, p. 318.

<sup>287</sup> RRAN III, p. 383; RRAN 506: '...adiit... assistentibus et auxiliantibus sibi regina Matilde ipsius regis conjuge, Algaro episcopo Constancie, Rogero tunc cancellario, Arnulfo archideacono Sagiensi, Willelmo Martel dapifero, Roberto de Curcy, Albrico de Ver, Gaufrido de Magnavilla, Hugone le Bigot, Adam de Balnai, Andrea Buchuinte, pluribusque aliis burgensibus Londonie, adiit eum et diligenter ostendit qua vi vel injuria pars illa a reliqua fuerit separata'.

This is the only documented occasion in which the queen appears as a formal advocate before her husband. It implies that Matilda and Norman had, at the least, a close, friendly, working relationship – which would give the prior leverage to ask for additional patronage and the queen an incentive to give it.

Her relationship with the second prior, Ralph, was even closer. The house chronicle comments that he was not only known and well-liked by the king, queen, and their court, but that Archbishop Theobald appointed him the queen's personal confessor.<sup>288</sup> He took the cure of the queen's soul so seriously that he

...was at the deathbed of the venerable Queen Matilda, wife of the said illustrious King Stephen at [Castle] Hedingham, having been called especially to it three days before her death because [he was] the father [who] heard her confession by the licence and commission of Archbishop Theobald... [T]hat same prior Ralph ministered to the said queen all the sacraments which it is needful [to have] on that journey [and] by his advice that same queen made many alms...<sup>289</sup>

Prior Ralph was, from his position, one of the queen's primary spiritual advisors; as such, he had a unique ability to guide the queen's patronage and was the logical choice to oversee her new hospital.<sup>290</sup>

Finally, the queen's continuing interest in and generosity to Holy Trinity was capped by a personal tragedy: it was the burial place for two of her children, who probably died before her coronation as queen.<sup>291</sup> Holy Trinity's chronicle comments that

King Stephen and the queen so much loved Prior Ralph and that church that their son Baldwin and their daughter Matilda once the wife of the count of [Meulan]... should be buried honourably in that church, that is Baldwin at the northern part of the altar and Matilda at the southern.<sup>292</sup>

It is obvious that the memory of her two lost children was precious to Matilda; her exchange of Braughing for the land to build St. Katherine's hospital was given '...in perpetual alms for the

<sup>288</sup> *CHTPA*, pp. 231-232.

<sup>289</sup> *ibid*, p. 232: '*...Dormicioni vero dicte venerabilis regine Matilde uxoris dicti regis illustris Stephani... affuit apud Halyngham, vocatus specialiter ab eo triduo ante suum obitum quia pater extitit suarum confessionem ex licencia et commissione Theobaldi archiepiscopi, qui quidem Radulphus dicte regine ministravit omnia sacramenta que hinc migraturis debentur cuius consilio eadem Regina multas fecit elemosinas...*'.

<sup>290</sup> *ibid*, p. 232.

<sup>291</sup> See above, pp. 20-22.

<sup>292</sup> *ibid*, 231-232: '*Stephanus Rex et Regina dictum Radulphum priorem et hanc ecclesiam adeo dilexerunt quod filium suum Baldwinum et filiam suam Matildam quondam uxorem Comitis de Medlint... hunc videlicet Baldwinum ad aquilonarem partem altaris et Matildam ad australem in hac ecclesia fecerunt honorifice sepeliri*'.

repose of the souls...of Baldwin my son and Matilda my daughter who lie buried in that church'.<sup>293</sup>

This *pro anima* clause is one of only two to specifically name any of the queen's children, making it unusual for the queen.<sup>294</sup> Moreover, Emma Cownie comments that the dynamics of inheritance tended to remove predeceased children from remembrance in this way – implying that the queen was particularly concerned that her children should have access to salvation.<sup>295</sup>

The final house Matilda of Boulogne founded was the Benedictine nunnery of Lillechurch in Kent. This house was set up for a specific reason: as a home for the royal couple's youngest child, Mary. The circumstances behind its creation were somewhat fraught, as Archbishop Theobald explained in a charter between 1150 and 1152:

...the nuns of Stratford, in our presence and that of our venerable brother Hilary bishop of Chichester and Queen Matilda and Clarembald abbot of Faversham and other religious persons returned and wholly quitclaimed the manor of Lillechurch with its appurtenances, which they received with Mary the daughter of King Stephen from the gift of the king and queen, on condition that the nuns of St. Sulpice who received it with the aforesaid Mary because the nuns could not take it on account of the stringency of the order and the conflict with its customs, should now leave them and entirely quit the church of Stratford after reclaiming all their buried dead. Now this transaction having been made, and they having collected their belongings and gathered up everything of theirs, Mary the said daughter of the king and her nuns have left entirely the church of Stratford and have settled themselves in the manor of Lillechurch as their own property.<sup>296</sup>

Lillechurch, a Boulonnais estate, was given to William of Ypres in 1148, in exchange for his manor of Faversham, and it is unclear how it returned to royal hands soon after, or whether William ever received it.<sup>297</sup> This may have been part of the reason the queen was a member of the conference that hammered out the agreement. At the least, her involvement shows the depth of the queen's interest in the practicalities of patronage and her concern for her daughter.

<sup>293</sup> See above, p. 46, n. 223.

<sup>294</sup> RRAN 503 included Eustace and William.

<sup>295</sup> E. Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England, 1066-1135* (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 156.

<sup>296</sup> D; cf. Saltman, *Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury*, pp. 379-80: '*...moniales Stretfordie in presentia nostra et venerabilis fratris nostri Hilarii Cicestrensi episcopi et Matild[is] regine et Clar[embaldis] abbatis de Faversham et aliarum religiosarum personarum, ea conditione manerium de Lillecerchia quod cum Maria filia regis Stephani ex dono ipsius regis et regine susciperint, reddiderunt et cum appenditiis suis quietum penitus clamaverunt, ut moniales Sancti Sulpicii quas cum predicta Maria receptas, propter ordinis difficultatem et morum dissonantiam, ferre non valebant ab ipsis prorsus recederent et ecclesiam de Stratford a se omni reclamatione sepulta penitus liberarent. Hac igitur facta transactione collectis sarcinulis et omnibus que ad se spectabant comportatis Maria sepredicta regis filia cum monialibus suis ecclesiam Stratfordie penitus liberam dereliquit et in manerio suo de Lillecherchia se tanquam in proprietate sua recepit*'.

<sup>297</sup> See above, p. 56.

The queen's concern is most apparent in the grants she made to secure the nuns a home.

Between 1147 and her death, Matilda granted

... in alms to the church of St. John at Colchester the land of East Donyland with all its appurtenances free and quit and expressly from all military service. And I wish that the aforesaid monks should hold it in perpetual alms just as they previously held the church of Lillechurch for which I gave them the land of East Donyland in exchange.<sup>298</sup>

This exchange may have provided the new foundation with a claustral church;<sup>299</sup> however, it required the queen to make reparations to her tenant there, as Abbot Hugo of St. John's noted in a charter after Matilda's death:

...that exchange was made at the insistence of Queen Matilda on behalf of her daughter Mary a consecrated nun, that being desired and confirmed by King Stephen and his son Count Eustace, who moreover by the arbitration of the queen pacified Henry of Merch by making grants of his choice overseas in return for East Donyland and surrendering that land to the abbot and monks of Colchester in the baronial court of East Donyland warranting it in perpetuity to them from himself and his successors.<sup>300</sup>

These charters make it clear that Matilda took the lead role from the beginning in founding Lillechurch, and exerted her authority as countess in order to facilitate the nuns' move – even after her son had officially taken over the county. Her concern here is markedly personal. Although as a side effect Matilda created another centre of patronage for her nuclear family, the immediate cause of Lillechurch's foundation was the tension between the party of nuns led by her daughter and the other nuns at Stratford. In essence, Lillechurch's *raison d'être* was Mary's unhappiness and the need for a sheltered place for her to live.

Several observations can be made about the queen's foundations in general. The first, and most important, is that all of them serve to reinforce her nuclear family's identity as a new royal dynasty. The new houses that she created were spectacular gifts to God truly fit for a king; they also

<sup>298</sup> *VCH Essex I*, p. 466; RRAN 221: '... in elemosinam ecclesie Sancti Iohannis de Colecestria terram de Estdonilanda cum omnibus suis pertinentiis liberam et quietam et nominatim ab omni seruitio militari. Et uolo quod monachi predicte ecclesie teneant eam in perpetuam elemosinam sicut prius tenuerunt ecclesiam de Lillechirche pro qua dedi eis illam terram de Estdonilanda in escambium.'

<sup>299</sup> *VCH Kent III*, p. 145.

<sup>300</sup> F: 'Hoc escambium factum ex instantia regine Mathildis gratia filie sue Marie deo sacrate voluntibus et confirmantibus illud rege Stephano et filio eius comite Eustachio. Qui etiam pro arbitrio regine pacaverunt Henricum de Merch redditibus transmarinis ad suam voluntatem pro Dunilanda et redditam ab eo coram baronibus Dunilandam tradiderunt abbati et monachis Colecestre in perpetuum warrantizandam eis de se ac de suis successoribus'.

served to knit together her natal family and Stephen's symbolically.<sup>301</sup> In the process, the queen gave her children a new focus for their patronage, confirmed her dynasty's power, and left a legacy in stone of her own tenure as queen.<sup>302</sup> The large number of new foundations Matilda was involved in suggests that she may have aspired to the kind of sanctity for which her maternal aunt, Henry I's wife Matilda of Scotland, was famous.

Finally, the variety of religious orders that Matilda patronised suggests that she was highly and sincerely interested in religious patronage, but was also concerned with maximising the spiritual return on her investments. In general, the orders she chose to staff her new foundations also reflect her identity as daughter, wife, and mother: her Templar patronage stressed her connections to her family's crusading glory, Faversham and Coggeshall linked her past with Stephen's, while St. Katherine's and Lillechurch aided her children, living and dead.

### *Part 2: Other Patronage*

Though the most involved and substantial of Matilda of Boulogne's patronage came in the form of foundations, many of her gifts enriched existing houses instead. However, some of the queen's grants to existing houses, although benefiting these in a practical way, did not directly grant them property.<sup>303</sup> The relatively small number of surviving *acta*, and the unevenness of that survival, can make drawing conclusions difficult; for this reason, two *acta* where the queen's status as donor is doubtful are omitted from discussion.<sup>304</sup>

In some cases, the charter evidence implies that the queen's interest in a house related to her broader responsibility as a landholder. For instance, the *acta* relating to the land exchange between

<sup>301</sup> B. Thompson, 'Free Alms Tenure in the Twelfth Century', *ANS* 16 (1993), 227-8; E. Mason, 'Timeo Barones et Dona Ferentes', in D. Baker (ed.), *Religious Motivation: Biographical and Sociological Problems for the Church Historian*. (Oxford, 1978), pp. 63, 66-7.

<sup>302</sup> C. B. Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister: Nobility and the Church in Burgundy, 980-1198* (Ithaca, NY, 1987), pp. 142, 147-8; Thompson, 'Free Alms Tenure', 229ff; Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, p. 181.

<sup>303</sup> RRAN 149, 224, 530, 548, 550, 556, 557, A; see below, Table I, p. 243.

<sup>304</sup> A. Rumble et al. (eds.), *Domesday Book: Essex* (Chichester, 1983), pp. 1-4, 2-3; D. Knowles and R. N. Hadcock, *Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales* (London, 1971), p. 165; B, C; below, Table I, p. 243.

Lillechurch and St. John's Colchester probably fall in this category.<sup>305</sup> Two other charters to St. John's also reflect the queen's need to ratify her tenants' *acta*. After giving land in Tey, Hertfordshire, to St. John's, she ordered Malcolm de St. Liz, his son Walter and her men, who had '...done [much] to disseise the church of St. John Colchester and the monks of that same place of their tenement of Tey which I gave them to hold in chief', to return the land to the monks' control.<sup>306</sup> She also confirmed '...those donations and conventions which Turgis FitzHardechin made to that same church and monks there from his land which pertains to Tey'.<sup>307</sup> While neither of these charters shows the queen making the initial donation, they do show her taking steps to protect it and assert her authority. Given the connections between St. John's founder Eudo *dapifer*, and Geoffrey II de Mandeville, this assertion was as much a strategic as a spiritual act.<sup>308</sup>

Three houses – Bec, Waltham, and Godstow – received a single charter. This paucity of *acta* may reflect a lack of enthusiasm on the queen's part, though it is difficult to tell for lack of evidence. They served a useful purpose, however, by reinforcing her identity as queen and linking her symbolically with her predecessors. Moreover, the charters to Bec and Waltham were confirmations of previous gifts made by particularly saintly people; the queen may have aspired to their sanctity, or tapped into it to further her own reputation.

Possibly the first of these charters was given to Bec, when between 1139 and 1146, the queen

...confirm[ed] that *mansura* of land in Marchaltat in Boulogne which my grandmother Countess Ida gave to that church of Bec and to Anselm then its abbot... And so that this my donation should remain intact, I communicate the present charter with the concession and testimony of Eustace my son and heir and the impression of my seal.<sup>309</sup>

<sup>305</sup> See above, p. 63.

<sup>306</sup> RRAN 239d: '...multum quod dissaisire fecistis ecclesiam Sancti Iohannis Colecestrie et monachos eiusdem loci de tenemento suo de Teia quod ego eis dedi ad tenendum in capite...'

<sup>307</sup> RRAN 239b: '...illas donationes et conuentiones quas Turgisus filius Hardechini eidem ecclesie et monachis ejusdem loci fecit de terra sua que ad Teiam pertinet'

<sup>308</sup> J. H. Round, 'The Early Charters of St. John's Abbey, Colchester', *EHR* 16 (1901), 729-30; J. de Hadlegh, *Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Iohannis Baptiste de Colecestria: From the original manuscript in the possession of the Right Hon. Earl Cowper*, 2 vols. (London, 1897), pp. xiv-xvii, 48-9, 146-7, 171-6, 205.

<sup>309</sup> Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, p.169ff; RRAN 76: 'M[atildis] Anglorum... regina. Confirmit illam mansuram terrae in Marchaltat in Bolonia quam auia mea Ida comitissa dedit illi ecclesie Becci et Anselmo tunc ejus abbati... Et ut haec donatio mea integra perseueret, Eustachii filii et heredis mei concessu et testimonio sigilli mei impressione cartam presentem communitio'. The ellipses occur in the printed version.

Religious houses, particularly prestigious ones like Bec, tended to receive patronage from several generations of landholding families.<sup>310</sup> These houses thus exerted claims even on individuals who tended to direct the bulk of their patronage elsewhere, reinforcing political and social ties to ancestral holdings in the process. This grant is a prime example; it reinforces both the significance of Matilda's natal family – at risk of being subsumed into the house of Blois<sup>311</sup> – and of Matilda's place as *de facto* head of that family. Moreover, Ida was acknowledged as a saint, and the queen may have been attempting to tap into that reputation, or aspiring to that kind of piety herself.<sup>312</sup>

The queen also associated herself with the previous grants of her predecessor and maternal aunt, Matilda of Scotland. At some point during her tenure, she

...had quit claimed all the demesnes of the canons of the Holy Cross at Waltham from all gelds and scots perpetually, and I do not wish that anything more should be required from the demesne of the canons, but it should always be quit for the good of my lord the king and myself, just as it was in the time of Queen Matilda my aunt.<sup>313</sup>

This charter is somewhat more than a simple confirmation, since Stephen earlier granted the queen custody of '... Waltham with all [things] adjacent to it and the service of the canons and their men...'.<sup>314</sup> Waltham was probably part of the queen-consort's dower; Henry I had granted it successively to Matilda of Scotland and Adeliza of Louvain.<sup>315</sup> By making this grant, the queen was asserting her identity as queen and the responsibility and prestige that entailed. It also tied her into the personal sanctity of Matilda of Scotland, and emphasised her familial ties to her.

The final house to receive one charter was Godstow Abbey, founded early in 1139.<sup>316</sup> The queen appears to have been among the 'other lords' present at the consecration of the abbey, just

<sup>310</sup> Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, pp. 195-7.

<sup>311</sup> Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister*, p.142; P. D. Johnson, *Prayer, Patronage, and Power: the Abbey of la Trinité, Vendôme, 1032-1187* (New York, 1981), p. 88; Mason, 'Timeo Barones', p.181.

<sup>312</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 238-87.

<sup>313</sup> RRAN 917: '*...clamasse quietum totum dominicum canonicorum Sancte Crucis de Waltham de omnibus geldis et scottis perpetualiter, et nolo quod amplius de dominio canonicorum aliquid requiratur, set semp[er] sit quietum pro salute domini mei regis et mea, sicut fuit tempore Mathildis regine amite mee*'.

<sup>314</sup> RRAN 915: '*...Walth[am] cum omnibus ei adjectentibus et servitium canonicorum et hominum eorum...*'.

<sup>315</sup> Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, p.130; L. Wertheimer, 'Adeliza of Louvain and Anglo-Norman Queenship', *HSJ* 7 (1995), 109-10, 115.

<sup>316</sup> See below, p. 66 n. 317.

after 8 January.<sup>317</sup> At the least, it appears that the royal couple was expected to appear and donate at certain high-prestige religious events; the confirmation of gifts made at Godstow's consecration mentions that the king, queen, and Eustace, Archbishop Theobald, two other bishops, John of St. John, Miles of Gloucester, Robert D'Oilli, and two abbots, among others, made gifts.<sup>318</sup> Matilda's gift was a cash grant of ten marks a year. Notably, both her husband and son meant to convey the new nunnery land, either immediately or in the future, while it is far less obvious that Matilda had any such intention.<sup>319</sup>

The Godstow grant, although large – one third larger than her son's grant, the next biggest – was the only cash grant the queen made; undoubtedly, she intended it as a munificent, expected gesture that did not tie her into the long-term connections and responsibilities alienating land would entail.<sup>320</sup> Given that she was not involved in the house's foundation, had only one manor in Oxfordshire, and that Godstow was founded by an imperial partisan and later claimed by the empress, there was no particular reason for her take particular interest in it, and even less to give an abbey possessing connections to her husband's rival any of her land.<sup>321</sup>

Another of the queen's grants went not to a religious house, but to an individual religious. Sometime during her tenure, she gave

...Helmide the nun one acre of land in alms in order to make her house, at Faversham next to the cemetery between the church of St. Mary and the chapel of St. Gregory, so that she may have it quit in her life. After her death, I wish and concede that the church of St. Mary at Faversham should have that aforesaid acre of land in Faversham in perpetual and free alms for the good of the soul of my lord King Stephen and mine and my children's and for the safety of our realm and for the souls of our predecessors and successors.<sup>322</sup>

<sup>317</sup> D. M. Smith (ed.), *English Episcopal Acta, vol. I: Lincoln 1067-1185* (London, 1980), pp. 33-4; RRAN 366: '...alii domini...'

<sup>318</sup> RRAN 366.

<sup>319</sup> RRAN 366.

<sup>320</sup> Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, p.158; above, pp. 52, 61.

<sup>321</sup> Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, pp. 131-2; RRAN 370.

<sup>322</sup> RRAN 157: '*Sciatis me dedisse Helmide sanctimoniali unam acram terre ad faciendam domum suam in eleemosinam apud Fav[er]sham juxta coemeterium, inter ecclesiam Sancte Marie et capellam Sancti Gregorii, ut habeat illam quietam in vita sua. Post mortem vero ejus, volo et concedo ut ecclesia Sancte Marie de Faversham pro salute domini mei regis Stephani et mea et filiorum nostrorum et statu regni nostri et pro animabus predecessorum et successorum nostrorum habeat prefatam acram terre in perpetuam et liberam eleemosynam*'.

It is likely that Matilda gave this acre to Helmid to use as an anchorhold, with its tenure then reverting to the abbey that controlled the church to which it was attached; such a small grant would have sufficed for that purpose.

The queen appears to have been partial to anchorites, seeing them as a source of spiritual insight and consolation, as shown by her unfortunate meeting with Wulfric of Haselbury, probably during a visit to Corfe Castle, Dorset, in 1136. When the queen approached the anchorite, he castigated her for her unkindness to the wife of a local magnate, and predicted that she would find desperate for any allies in the future.<sup>323</sup> The tone of the story, and Wulfric's reaction to Matilda, undoubtedly come from his biographer's desire to stress the saint's power and conciliatory effectiveness. However, Matilda's visit suggests that she was drawn to holy men, and saw anchorites as capable of fulfilling her desire for spiritual advancement. She also took steps to create her own network of holy advocates to fulfil this desire, by founding an anchorhold for Helmid the nun. In so doing, Matilda allowed a woman to retreat from the world into the highest and most perfect life known to a medieval Christian; this act of devoted patronage would undoubtedly have benefited her spiritually.<sup>324</sup>

Matilda patronised three other existing houses: Arrouaise in Artois, Clairmarais, in Boulogne, and St. Martin-le-Grand in London. Each of these houses received at least two charters. These were the houses that the Boulonnais comital family had traditionally viewed '...as *their* churches'.<sup>325</sup> As such, Matilda had a duty to ensure each house's continued well-being, despite the fact that, in many cases, her personal preferences lay elsewhere.<sup>326</sup> These grants, therefore, ensure that the queen's natal identity did not get subsumed into her nuclear family's – in many cases, drafting by the recipients may have placed special emphasis on her status as countess.

<sup>323</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, p. 316; Matarasso, *Cistercian World*, p. 262; Bell (ed.), *Wulfric*, pp. 108-9.

<sup>324</sup> H. Mayr-Harting, 'Functions of a Twelfth-Century Recluse', *History* 60 (1975), 349-50; A. K. Warren, *Anchorites and Their Patrons in Medieval England* (Berkeley, 1985), pp. 1-2, 15, 123-4, 127-8, 285.

<sup>325</sup> Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, p.168; Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister*, p.148, emphasis in original. Cf. B.-M. Tock, *Monumenta Arroasiensia* (Corpus Christianorum. Continuatio Mediaevalis; 175; Turnhout, 2000), pp. ix-xiii; H. P. F. d. Laplane, *L'abbaye de Clairmarais, d'après ses archives* (Saint-Omer, 1863), pp. 4-8.

<sup>326</sup> Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, pp. 172, 181; Mason, 'Timeo Barones', p.61.

The first of these grants was made to the Augustinian priory of Arrouaise, in Artois, founded as a hermitage before 1090.<sup>327</sup> On 9 February 1141, the queen

...and countess of Boulogne and Eustace my son gave and conceded to God and the church of the Holy Trinity and St. Nicholas of Arrouaise and Abbot Gervase and his successors and the regular canons of that same church the land which Eustace de Legrefth once held (paying to us yearly ten pounds assayed) in perpetual possession free and quit from all county, from all customs, from all harassments, from all secular exactions, with all its easements in land, in water, in road[s], and in all other things for the good of our lord King Stephen and our own, and for the souls of our ancestors. We wish and direct therefore that they should have and hold the aforesaid land in the vicomté of Merck and in the jurisdiction and the parish of St. Omer Chapelle well and honourably, lest anyone presume to attack them or anyone remaining in it to any extent. Therefore this donation, made in the presence of illustrious men and our vassals, we confirm by our unshakable authority and we have signed it with the impression of our seals, and we wish and beg that it be corroborated by the protection of the apostolic see'.<sup>328</sup>

This charter conveys a fairly substantial grant; as well as forgoing the ten pounds' annual levy on the land, the queen remitted all monies owing from the grant – potentially increasing its worth to the monks by several pounds. Such munificence may have served to remind the canons of their obligations to the Boulonnais family, or to placate them for a relative lack of patronage.<sup>329</sup> Since Merck was a discontinuous part of the Boulonnais county, separated from it by the lordship of Guines, this *actum* may also have served to assert Boulonnais authority there, to woo the lord of Guines away from the influence of Flanders, or even to set the stage for Matilda's seneschal, Baldwin of Ardres, to take over Guines in 1145.<sup>330</sup>

<sup>327</sup> Tock, *Monumenta*, pp. ix-xi; Laplane, *L'abbaye de Clairmarais*, pp. 8-12.

<sup>328</sup> RRAN 24: '...et Bolonie comitissa et Eustachius filius meus terram quandam quam Eustachius de Legrefth sub anno decem librarum censu nobis persolvendo tenebat in perpetuam elemosinam dedimus et concessimus deo et ecclesie Sancte Trinitatis et Sancti Nicholai et Aridagamentia et Gervasio abbati ejusque successoribus et ejusdem ecclesie canonicis regularibus in perpetuum possidendam libere et quiete ab omni comitatu, ab omni consuetudine, ab omni inquietatione, ab omni seculari exactione, cum omnibus asiamentis suis in terra, in aqua, in via, et in aliis omnibus pro salute domini nostri Stephani regis et nostra, et pro animabus antecessorum nostrorum. Volumus igitur et precipimus quod prefatam terram in vicecomitatu de Merch et in potestate et parochia Sanct-Omerglise sitam bene et honorifice habeant et teneant, nec ullus eos vel aliquem in ea manentem aliquatenus infestare presumat. Hanc itaque donationem in presentia virorum illustrium et hominum nostrorum factam, auctoritate nostra inconvulse confirmamus et sigilli nostri impressione signamus, et ut sedis apostolice munimento corroboretur volumus et rogamus'. Cf. Tock, *Monumenta*, pp. 85-8.

<sup>329</sup> This theory is bolstered by the charter's appearance as recipient-drafted: Nicholas Karn, personal communication, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2002.

<sup>330</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. vii, 15, 133-6, 139, 172-4, 210-11; A. Decaux and A. Castelot, *Dictionnaire d'histoire de France Perrin* (Paris, 1981), p. 52ff; Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, pp. 189, 297.

The queen's second charter to Arrouaise was prompted by a writ she received from Stephen in June 1142, asking her to seize the canons of the tithes of the vicomté.<sup>331</sup> Presumably, the canons wanted a charter from their traditional patron, the countess, as opposed to a foreign king whose authority there was dubious. In response to this writ, the queen issued a charter on 23 June 1142:

I and my son Eustace, by the consent and command of my lord King Stephen, for the good of our souls and those of our relatives, have given the tithes of Merck with all that pertains to it, which I had up till now by paternal right, to God and the church of St. Nicholas of Arrouaise, into the hands of lord Gervase, abbot, religious man, and our dear friend... in perpetuity and free from all exactions or secular laws from now on and quit of penalties. And so that this our transfer may remain firm and untouched by anything in posterity, we freely concede and devotedly beg that this our albeit small largesse be strengthened by the safeguard of the authority of Rome, so that should any ecclesiastical or secular person presume to change, diminish or in any way disturb it, the rod of excommunication should terrify and constrain him.<sup>332</sup>

The queen's personal connection with Arrouaise seems obvious from the extreme emphasis put on the grant's inviolateness and the abbot's holiness. However, if it too was recipient-drafted,<sup>333</sup> then the characterisation of the abbot as a close friend may have been an attempt to remind the queen of her duty as patroness to protect and nurture the houses favoured by her ancestors. Nevertheless, the clear implication is that Queen Matilda was conscious of the state of her soul and anxious that '...the canons engaged in battle for God...' at Arrouaise should turn some of their attention to it.<sup>334</sup> Political considerations may also have played a role. Count Thierry of Flanders confirmed, noting the land in question was part of his fief; it may have been an effort to pacify or win over the count by ceding control of disputed land.

<sup>331</sup> RRAN 25. See above, p. 44 n.210.

<sup>332</sup> RRAN 26: '*...ego et filius meus Eustachius, concessione ac jussu domini mei Stephani regis, pro salute animarum nostrarum atque parentum nostrorum decimam de Merc cum universis que ad eam pertinent, quam ex jure paterno hactenus tenui, tradiderim deo et ecclesie Sancti Nicholai de Aridagamantia in manus domni Gervasii abbatis viri religiosi et amici nostri... in perpetuum profuturam et ab omni exactione ac jure seculari amodo liberam penitusque absolutam. Et ut hec nostra traditio in posterum firmior et omnino inconvulsa permaneat, libenter concedimus ac devote rogamus quatinus Romane auctoritatis munimento hec nostra quantulacumque largitio corroboretur, et ne qua ecclesiastica secularisve persona deinceps eam mutare minuere sue quoquomodo perturbare presumat, ferula excommunicationis terreat atque constringat*'.

<sup>333</sup> RRAN 26 is in the form of a diploma, extremely uncommon in contemporary England; little is known of Boulonnais diplomatic practice, so it could be in the typical form of a comital charter: Nicholas Karn, personal communication, 14<sup>th</sup> November 2002. Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 210-11, discusses witnesses but not drafting practice.

<sup>334</sup> RRAN 26: '*...canonicorum... deo militantium...*'.

Matilda made a similar set of grants to the Cistercian abbey of Clairmarais, founded in 1128 near St. Omer in Boulogne. Laplane describes her as one of the principal founders along with Thierry and Sibyl of Flanders.<sup>335</sup> In 1142, she ‘...and Eustace my son...’ confirmed the king’s charter granting ‘...to the brothers serving God at Clairmarais all the land with its woods which is between Malger’s house and the house of Raymund Tolsath just as the road which is in the wood and the priest’s road divides [it]. If anyone likewise will give or will sell to them land in my lordship, we freely concede it’.<sup>336</sup> Between 1142 and 1147, she reconfirmed this grant, and added a carucate to it:

I Matilda by the grace of God queen of the English and countess of Boulogne and Eustace my son concede to Gunfrid abbot of Clairmarais and his successors in perpetuity one carucate in order to construct the abbey in our wood of Beaulo.. for the good of the souls of our predecessors and successors. Moreover to the first gift... and the second...which is two carucates, we link this third.<sup>337</sup>

Both these charters show the queen acting as a major patron of the house, and, indeed, attempting to exert a more potent patronage than the count of Flanders; by giving the monks land on which to build a new, more convenient abbey, she tied their fortunes more securely to those of her family.<sup>338</sup> This may have been of considerable practical use to Matilda, given that she spent the vast majority of her time in England, as did her son. However, her final charter to them, allowing the monks to remain at their current site, suggests that Matilda prudently backed down from a large-scale confrontation with Thierry, presumably in the hopes of keeping him an ally, or at least a bystander, in the English conflict.<sup>339</sup>

Both Arrouaise and Clairmarais received a relatively small number of surviving charters, possibly due to their continental location. Although the Boulonnais comital family slowly shifted its priorities from their continental possessions to England beginning in the late eleventh century, this

<sup>335</sup> Laplane, *L'abbaye de Clairmarais*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>336</sup> RRAN 195: ‘...et Eustachius filius meus...fratribus de Claromaresch deo servientibus totam terram cum nemore suo que est inter domum Malgeri et domum Raimundi Tolsath sicut via que est in nemore dividit et via presbyteri...Si quis quoque eis terram in postestate nostra dederit aut vendiderit, liberam concessimus’. Cf. RRAN 194.

<sup>337</sup> RRAN 196: ‘Ego Mathildis gratia dei Anglorum regina et Bolonie comitissa et Eustachius filius meus Gunfrido abbati de Claromaresch et successoribus ejus in perpetuum unam carrucatum ad abbatiam construendam in nemore nostro de Bethlo... pro salute animarum nostrarum et predecessorum nostrorum concessimus. Huic autem primo dono. .. et secundo... quod est duarum carrucatarum, tertium adiunximus’.

<sup>338</sup> Laplane, *L'abbaye de Clairmarais*, pp. 6-12.

<sup>339</sup> *ibid*, vol 2, pp. 8-21; RRAN 198.

process was greatly speeded up by the family's attachment to the English throne under Stephen. It no doubt led to a steep drop in patronage directed toward continental houses.<sup>340</sup> In contrast, the other traditionally Boulonnais house the queen patronised, the collegiate church of St. Martin-le-Grand in London, was heavily favoured by the royal couple; it was a traditional English patronage site for the Boulonnais comital family as well as a centre of twelfth-century royal bureaucracy.<sup>341</sup> As such, it received the largest number of charters granted to any single house by both the king and the queen.<sup>342</sup>

This combination of territorial princess as patron and royal scribes as recipients explains the unusual nature of the queen's charters to St. Martin's – of the nine documents directed to them, seven are writs of command or notification.<sup>343</sup> The explanation no doubt lies in the chaos of the Anarchy. In troubled times, all landowners were forced to rely on themselves to a greater or lesser extent to ensure their continued tenure; for the canons of St. Martin's, that meant applying legal force by copiously documenting their rightful tenure.<sup>344</sup> Because of this, the queen's help to 'my canons...' was of an extremely practical nature.<sup>345</sup> St. Martin's did not need large grants of land that it was ill-prepared to protect by force, but a patron with extremely high prestige and personal power to act as a bulwark for their legal claims. Matilda of Boulogne – hereditary patroness, queen-consort, wealthy magnate – was ideally placed to fulfil that role.

Matilda did, however, make some original grants to St. Martin's. Between 1145 and 1147, she gave St. Martin's its tenth prebend when she ordered Walter, the priest there, that

...just as you love me and that which you hold of me... within three days after you should see this my writ, you go to the College of St. Martin of London and, as I have said to you, make fealty to that church of St. Martin and the canons for the church of Witham and for all the

<sup>340</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 125-7, 172-3.

<sup>341</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'The College of St. Martin-le-Grand and the Anarchy, 1135-54', *London Topographical Record* 23 (1974), 9-26; A. J. Kempe, *Historical Notices of the Collegiate Church or Royal Free Chapel and Sanctuary of St Martin le Grand* (London, 1825), pp. 32-9; W. R. Powell, 'St. Mary, Maldon and St. Martin-Le-Grand, London', *Essex Archaeology & History* 28 (1997), 142-50. Cf. P. Taylor, 'Ingelric, Count Eustace and the Foundation of St Martin-le-Grand', *ANS* 24 (2001), 215-37.

<sup>342</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'St. Martin's and Anarchy', 9-10; below, Table I, p. 243.

<sup>343</sup> See below, Table V, p. 246.

<sup>344</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'St. Martin's and Anarchy', 25-6.

<sup>345</sup> RRAN 556: '...canonicorum meorum...'

things pertaining to it which I have given and conceded to them, saving your right, namely that you should hold it in your life of them just as you had held it of Richard of Boulogne and you should render to them just each year the same amount, because I desire that they should be seised.<sup>346</sup>

This charter was confirmed by a similar notification to Archbishop Theobald, stating that she had given the canons Witham as a tenth prebend.<sup>347</sup>

The queen may also have given the canons another church, that of Chreshall, Essex, on one of her demesne estates.<sup>348</sup> Between 1145 and 1147, she ordered

Hubert chamberlain and Everard the priest and her ministers at Creshall... that the canons of Saint Martin in London should hold the land and its men and pertinent things of the church of St. Mary at Creshall... and they should have all [the] customs and rights pertaining to the liberty of the church... just as Richard of Boulogne or any priest freely held it in the time of my father, or freely afterward...<sup>349</sup>

As at Witham, Matilda ensured the canons' tenure by granting redundant charters; in the case of Chreshall, she had Hubert, her chamberlain, and order local officials to transfer the church's tithe to the college.<sup>350</sup> Presumably, this redundancy of charters was created at the canons' request to give them extra ammunition in their legal battles.<sup>351</sup>

All the land the queen donated to St. Martin's, like her other donations, came from the honour of Boulogne rather than royal holdings. This probably occurred because it was easier for the queen to alienate her own land. However, by granting comital land to a house with increasingly strong ties to the royal house, Matilda reinforced the links between St. Martin's and her patrimony and family. This, in turn, had practical benefits for the royal family. St. Martin's was located in London, while much of their land was in Essex; it was vitally important for the king to retain

<sup>346</sup> RRAN 539: '*Sicut me amas et ea que de me tenes... quod infra tertium diem postquam hoc breve meum videris, eas ad Sanctum Martinum Lundonie et, sicut tibi dixi, fidelitatem facias eidem ecclesie Sancti Martini et canonicis de ecclesia de Witteha(m) et de omnibus rebus ei pertinentibus que illis dedi et concessi, salvo jure tuo, ita videlicet quod in vita tua ita teneas de illis sicut tenuisti de Ric(ardo) de Bolonia et tantumdem illis singulis annis reddas, quia volo quod ipsi sint saisiti*'. Cf. above, p. 52 n. 13.

<sup>347</sup> RRAN 541.

<sup>348</sup> *VCH Essex I*, pp. 470-1.

<sup>349</sup> RRAN 553: '*Huberto camerario et Ailo clerico et ministris suis de Christehala... Precipio quod canonici de Sancto Martino Londoniensi teneant terram et homines suos et res pertinentes ecclesie [Sancte] Marie de Cristehale... et habeant omnes consuetudines et rectitudines suas pertinentes libertati ecclesie... sicut Ricardus de Bolonia vel aliquis sacerdos melius habuit tempore patris mei vel postea melius...*'. Cf. RRAN 539, 555.

<sup>350</sup> RRAN 554.

<sup>351</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'St. Martin's and Anarchy', 14-16, 25-6.

control of those two areas at all cost, and the ties to St. Martin's thus created gave him a valuable ally.<sup>352</sup>

The queen's non-foundational patronage followed similar lines to her foundations, having the same effect of tying her identity and her natal family's into that of her nuclear family. Matilda, as the matriarch of a new dynasty, needed to ensure that her family had patronage sites appropriate to their rank as royalty; she did this most easily by patronising houses with ties to her family or to the crown. In the case of St. Martin-le-Grand, the house which received the largest number of the queen's charters, these patronage links were enhanced by a long-standing relationship with the crown as a bureaucratic centre. Matilda's other goal in her non-foundational patronage seems to have been to establish her own identity as queen. She did this relatively often by patronising houses associated with particularly saintly kin such as her aunt Matilda of Scotland or her grandmother Ida of Boulogne. Finally, in a few cases, personal preference undoubtedly influence Matilda of Boulogne's distribution of patronage – most notably in the case of Holy Trinity, the burial site of her young children Baldwin and Matilda.

### *Part 3: Piety*

As discussed above, there were distinct temporal advantages to founding or patronising a religious house: disposal of an indefensible estate, ties of patronage that would ensure support in a critical area, reinforcement of identity and authority. However, the primary reason medieval magnates engaged in patronage was not temporal gain, but rather spiritual. Gifts to religious houses aligned the donor – and by extension his or her family – to the saint of that house, who in turn could provide powerful patronage on the spiritual plane.<sup>353</sup> Grants also aided in the expiation of sin; the

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<sup>352</sup> See below, pp. 181-197.

<sup>353</sup> Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister*, pp. 147-8.

importance of this motivation cannot be underestimated in an era when sudden death was so common.<sup>354</sup>

In many cases, personal, official, or dynastic considerations determined Matilda's patronage at the level of individual houses. However, like many other magnates, the queen's preferences did extend to entire orders. In Matilda of Boulogne's case, her patronage was spread out over a wide variety of house types, although her grants of land went mainly to reformed houses.<sup>355</sup> Benedictine houses received four documents confirming their holdings, while the Cluniac houses of Bec and Faversham – the queen's mausoleum – received another three.<sup>356</sup> The situation was similar for the two houses of secular canons. Although they received the largest number of charters of any house type, only St. Martin's received original grants – and two of the three charters they did receive referred to the same grant.<sup>357</sup>

In contrast, newer religious groups received small numbers of charters, but a far higher proportion of original grants – probably because they staffed the queen's foundations. Nunneries formed a small but meaningful part of the queen's patronage repertoire, receiving five of Matilda's *acta*, including two charters transferring land, one rights to a church, and one cash grant.<sup>358</sup> This is consistent both with the rising interest in nunneries through Matilda's tenure and the inferior liturgical position of nuns. Cistercian (including Savignac) houses received five charters, including two land grants and a remission of tolls.<sup>359</sup> Augustinian houses definitely received seven charters from Matilda, including a grant of tithes, a confirmation, and three land grants whose purpose was patronage.<sup>360</sup>

<sup>354</sup> Bouchard, *Sword, Miter, and Cloister*, pp. 225-7; Thompson, 'Free Alms Tenure', 229ff.

<sup>355</sup> See Table V, p. 246.

<sup>356</sup> RRAN 76, 149, 239b, 239d, 300, 301, A. See above, p. 58; below, Table I, p. 243.

<sup>357</sup> RRAN 530, 539, 541, 548, 550, 553, 554, 556, 557, 917. See below, Table V, p. 246.

<sup>358</sup> RRAN 221, 224, 336, D, E. See below, Table I, p. 243.

<sup>359</sup> RRAN 195, 196, 198, 201, 201b.

<sup>360</sup> RRAN 24, 26, 503, 506, 509, 512, 513. See above, p. 36 n. 75, 76.

Perhaps the queen's most favoured order, however, was the Templars; all four grants they received from her were donations of land.<sup>361</sup> This may imply that the queen's enthusiasm for the Templars was particularly great – certainly great enough to alienate a large amount of land to them. Crouch notes that a substantial number of *curiales* donated to the Templars and attributes this to Stephen's influence, although the guiding influence could just have easily been the queen's, especially given her long-standing connections to Stephen's court.<sup>362</sup> This particular devotion to the Templars probably had several sources. One of the most potent was the crusading history of the Boulonnais comital family and the concomitant pride she took in that history. Matilda may indeed have wanted to be part of that history; Crouch suggests that her abdication plan of 1141 was motivated by a desire to accompany Stephen to the Holy Land.<sup>363</sup> Finally, it seems that Matilda, like others of her time including Matilda of Scotland, had a particular fondness for and desire to advance active forms of spirituality that can also be seen in her patronage of the Augustinians, and especially in her construction of a hospital under their auspices.

However, Matilda's particular affinity for practical, active spirituality did not prevent her from patronising a wide variety of religious groups. Patronising Templars and Augustinians allowed her to express her active, practical nature in the religious realm. She also valued and favoured the contemplative life, whether in the form of a solitary anchorite in a small cell like Helmid, or the communal contemplation practiced by the Savignacs or nuns. Her patronage of the latter suggests some interest in aiding women to live out their religious ideals, although Lillechurch was founded for more pragmatic reasons. It would seem that she, like Stephen, made a personal search for holiness by embracing and investing in a diversity of religious forms; the explosion of religious feeling in the twelfth century made this possible by expanding her spiritual horizons. However, even Matilda valued conservative forms of spirituality for her posthumous commemoration.

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<sup>361</sup> RRAN 843, 854, 845, 850.

<sup>362</sup> Lees (ed.), *Templar Records*, p. xxxix; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 317-18; below, pp. 123-124.

<sup>363</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 317-18.

Another way in which to examine Matilda of Boulogne's piety is via her charters' *pro anima* clauses, which defined those on whose behalf the grant was made – those whose spiritual welfare was most important to the donor. A close examination of these clauses and the charters in which they appear illuminated the queen's special concerns, and thus her personal religious life. Fifteen of Matilda's thirty-two full-text charters, or just under half, contain a *pro anima* clause.<sup>364</sup> The presence of a *pro anima* clause generally signals that the donor considered the spiritual returns on the attached grant more valuable than the temporal ones;<sup>365</sup> this in turn implied a strong interest in the house concerned, since it was intimately tied into the donor's salvation. The relatively small number of Matilda's charters that contain *pro anima* clauses reflects the highly practical bent of her patronage – and the correspondingly high number of confirmatory writs she issued.<sup>366</sup> However, these particular charters can also be seen as the core of her patronage, in many cases denoting the houses to which she was most devoted.

The houses from which Matilda requested specific prayers were often those that she founded – unsurprisingly, since one reason for doing so was to solicit spiritual assistance.<sup>367</sup> Seven of the fifteen charters with *pro anima* clauses went to foundations of the queen's: the grant of an anchorhold to Helmid; Coggeshall's foundation charter; the grant of Tring to Faversham; the charter giving Holy Trinity custody of the queen's hospital; and all three original Templar charters.<sup>368</sup> Presumably, these clauses identified to the recipient exactly who the queen wished to be remembered in the daily prayers of the house – or in the case of the Templars, the entire order. By exerting her rights as patron, Matilda also bound these houses together firmly with her natal family; these new houses would then form the core of her dynasty's patronage in the future.

Houses with deep and abiding links to the queen in her person or office received the eight remaining charters with *pro anima* clauses. Both the charters to Arrouaise, and two of Clairmarais's

<sup>364</sup> See below, Table IV, p. 245.

<sup>365</sup> Thompson, 'Free Alms Tenure', 229ff.

<sup>366</sup> See above, p. 63 n. 303-304; below, Table V, p. 246.

<sup>367</sup> See above, p. 74 n. 354.

<sup>368</sup> RRAN 157, 207, 301, 503, 843, 845, 850.

three charters, were among this group; undoubtedly Matilda requested prayers from these houses as a way of reinforcing their links to her family.<sup>369</sup> St. Martin-le-Grand, another traditional patronage site for the comital family, received one *pro anima* clause, connected to the queen's grant of Witham church as a new prebend. Once again, the request for prayers undoubtedly served to bind the house tighter to her family, particularly her nuclear one.<sup>370</sup> Holy Trinity received three *pro anima* requests and Waltham one.<sup>371</sup> Both these houses had long-standing links with previous Anglo-Norman queens that Matilda probably wished to exploit through her request. Holy Trinity also had powerful personal ties to the queen in the shape of her children's graves, and the Templars probably had similar emotional resonance to her father. In the case of Holy Trinity, her personal connections to the house also played a role.<sup>372</sup> Whether to newly-founded or long-established houses, Matilda exploited the spiritual benefits of patronage to reinforce her and her family's identity and to tie 'their' houses more closely to it.

The intended spiritual beneficiaries are another important insight into Matilda of Boulogne's religious life. Her charters generally express concern for her nuclear family, and to a lesser extent her natal family – those outside these two spheres are seldom invoked. This fairly narrow range of concern is reflected in the charters. The average number of beneficiaries in the queen's *pro anima* clauses is three, and the mode two, most often Stephen, herself, and another family member. In three cases, all granted jointly with her son Eustace, the beneficiaries were the grantors and their predecessors; in most of the other cases, members of the queen's immediate family were the beneficiaries.<sup>373</sup> Certain houses seem to be specifically connected with various people. The link between Eustace III and the Templars was noted above, while all mentions of her children by name appear in charters to Holy Trinity.<sup>374</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> RRAN 24, 26, 195, 196.

<sup>370</sup> RRAN 541; see above, p. 74 n. 354.

<sup>371</sup> RRAN 503, 512, 513, 917.

<sup>372</sup> See above, pp. 53, 60-61.

<sup>373</sup> RRAN 26, 195, 196, 301, 512, 513, 917.

<sup>374</sup> RRAN 503, 512.

Analysing the frequency of various beneficiaries' appearance tends to support this thesis; though the sample size is small, Matilda's patronage appears unique, conforming to neither to the pattern Emma Cownie outlined as typical of Anglo-Norman noblemen nor to that of noblewomen.<sup>375</sup> Many non-specific invocations emphasised the queen's Boulonnais identity and its transfer to her children. Matilda requested prayers for her ancestors six times, significantly more than either men or women in Cownie's study.<sup>376</sup> Of these seven charters, continental Boulonnais houses received three – they and an additional one were granted jointly with her son Eustace.<sup>377</sup> The remaining four charters were grants that founded a new religious house on Boulonnais honorial land. In either case, Matilda's concern seems to have been to ensure that her natal family's identity was woven into that of her nuclear family and not lost; the invocation of her forebears undoubtedly was meant to aid that process by keeping her family in the minds of her religious clients.

Similarly, Matilda invoked her friends and liegemen – *amici* and *liberi* – more often than both Cownie's men and women;<sup>378</sup> these were, moreover, attached to significant grants to Boulonnais houses: the foundation grant of Coggeshall and the prebendal grant of Witham to St. Martin's.<sup>379</sup> It seems that these were deliberate, pre-planned acts, probably done to acknowledge and reward the sacrifices of all her '... friends both living and dead' – probably in the main tenants – whom the queen had commanded during the course of the war.<sup>380</sup> Such commemoration also served, ideally, to tie the loyalty of vassals more firmly to their lord – an important consideration in times of civil unrest.

By far the queen's overriding concern, however, was the spiritual welfare of herself and her immediate family. Matilda requested prayers for her own soul thirteen times – her most common invocation and a far more common one than any group studied by Cownie. This is probably due to

<sup>375</sup> Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, pp. 156-157; below, Table VI, p. 247.

<sup>376</sup> RRAN 24, 157, 195, 196, 207, 843, 850.

<sup>377</sup> RRAN 24, 195, 196.

<sup>378</sup> See below, Table IV, p. 247.

<sup>379</sup> RRAN 207, 541 respectively.

<sup>380</sup> RRAN 207. '*...omnium amicorum nostrorum tam vivorum quam mortuorum*'.

her great and independent wealth, combined with an especially pressing concern for the state of her soul.<sup>381</sup> Intercession on her husband's behalf – which occurred eight times – was less frequent than women generally, but far more common than men for their wives. Once again, this is due to Matilda's status as a wealthy heiress. Unlike most women, who received the land that they donated in dower from a deceased husband, Matilda gained hers as patrimony. This removed a primary reason to invoke Stephen in a grant, and the presence of redundant grants from both Stephen and Matilda may have removed another.<sup>382</sup> Instead, these requests reflect her concern for Stephen's safety, health, and throne amid the uncertainty of the Anarchy – and, at least in at least three cases where Stephen was explicitly linked with the Boulonnais comital family, her desire to knit together a new identity for their nuclear family.<sup>383</sup>

The spiritual welfare of her children was also a particular concern of the queen's. Five charters request prayers for her children, once again more than either men or women in Cownie's study.<sup>384</sup> Four of these charters pray for all Matilda's children collectively, one her surviving sons Eustace and William, and one her dead children Baldwin and Matilda.<sup>385</sup> The slightly lesser number of *acta* invoking Eustace, Matilda's heir, compared to noblewomen in general is interesting, but can be explained by the source of Matilda's wealth. In general, noblewomen granted as widows in control of dowries, more or less at the sufferance of the son who controlled the bulk of the estate; Matilda, in contrast, controlled a patrimony which did not indebt her spiritually to her eldest surviving son.<sup>386</sup>

The relatively large number of prayer requests for her children as a whole, however, is probably the result of this wealth, which gave her the means to express the maternal concern that a

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<sup>381</sup> *CHTPA*, p. 232.; below, pp. 89f.

<sup>382</sup> Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, pp. 156-57.

<sup>383</sup> RAN 24, 541, 845, 850.

<sup>384</sup> RAN 157, 503, 512, 845, 850.

<sup>385</sup> RAN 157, 503, , 512, 845, 850.

<sup>386</sup> Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, pp. 154, 156.

pious woman like Matilda no doubt had for her children.<sup>387</sup> In contrast, Matilda requested prayers for her father, Count Eustace III, three times – less often than both men and women in Cownie’s study.<sup>388</sup> Given the connection Cownie highlighted between inheritance and intercession, this lack is particularly strange.<sup>389</sup> Two factors may account for the relatively small number of prayer requests Matilda made, however. First, Eustace died not as count, but as a monk of the Cluniac house of Romilly, thereby drastically reducing his need for intercession.<sup>390</sup> Moreover, all the prayer requests Matilda made for her father were attached to grants to the Templars – an order to which Eustace, a famous crusader, had strong ties; such targeted donations may have, at least in the queen’s mind, rendered the intercession more potent.<sup>391</sup>

#### *Part 4: Comparative Analysis*

It is possible to gain a better idea of the nature and purpose of Matilda of Boulogne’s religious patronage by comparing it to her husband King Stephen’s. Even a brief examination of the king’s religious charters makes clear that much of his patronage to religious houses was directly related to his status as king of England; relatively few of his charters appear to reflect his personal acts of charity, and those that do generally have parallels in his wife’s charters. Thus, it seems likely that part of Matilda’s role as wife and queen – part, therefore, of the couple’s division of labour within the household – was to oversee their nuclear family’s spiritual welfare and guide its continuing patronage, particularly through the endowment of new houses.

At the most basic level, Stephen granted more than twenty times the number of charters that his wife did.<sup>392</sup> Several factors can account for the overwhelming numerical superiority of his

<sup>387</sup> Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, p. 156.

<sup>388</sup> See below, Table VI, p. 247.

<sup>389</sup> Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, pp. 154, 156.

<sup>390</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 317-18; Harper-Bill, ‘Piety of Anglo-Norman Knight’, 62-77.

<sup>391</sup> RRAN 843, 845, 850.

<sup>392</sup> There are 691 charters attributed to Stephen, compared to Matilda’s 32, found in RRAN III ; R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen* ; N. Vincent, ‘New Charters of King Stephen with Some Reflections upon the Royal Forests during the Anarchy’, *EHR* 114 (1999), 899-928; D. C. Cox, ‘Two Unpublished Charters of King Stephen for Wenlock Priory’, *Shropshire History and Archeology* 66 (1989), 56-9; Stringer, ‘Earliest Charters of Sawtry’, 325-34.

charters over his wife's. First, Stephen had more control over a far greater area than did Matilda. Royal demesne was extensive and widely scattered; additionally Stephen had control of all escheated land, and controlled various regalian rights, such as in forests, throughout the country. Unlike Matilda of Boulogne, who was a powerful local magnate in her own right, but whose power was predominantly local, Stephen was – if not the absolute hegemon that his uncle Henry I was – certainly the one man in England whose power was the most respected and far-reaching. Moreover, monastic houses expected to be reaffirmed in the tenure of their lands by each succeeding king, and Stephen was no exception. Royal *curiales* would also prize a royal confirmation of their pious donations, since this would confer additional security – and might also give their patronage site additional benefits, bestowed by the king.<sup>393</sup> Finally, these charters were also powerful evidence of legal tenure, which made them far more likely to be kept by succeeding generations of religious. This in turn might tend to reduce the random survival that plagues non-royal charters, and perhaps those of women in particular.

This general case is borne out by the number of houses to which Stephen gave charters. 182 different religious institutions received one or more of the king's charters, compared to seventeen that received the queen's patronage. To grant charters to so many houses, when the prevailing custom was to split patronage and its accompanying responsibilities among only a handful of different recipients, is strongly indicative that Stephen's charters reflect political expediency, rather than personal piety. In contrast, the queen's patronage was much more focused. When dealing with only original grants, it is particularly obvious that Matilda of Boulogne's patronage was centred on a small handful of houses with close ties to her family; this narrow, familial focus stresses her essentially personal and local sphere of intervention.

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Of these, 13 are spurious, 37 occur only as notices, and 2 were given by Roger of Salisbury on the king's behalf. When these are subtracted, Stephen himself granted 639 charters, slightly less than 20 times Matilda's output. For the purposes of this study, all 691 charters granted in Stephen's name will be considered.

<sup>393</sup> Cf. RRAN 852, 853, 856, H.

Examining the purpose of Stephen's charters sharpens the contrast in purpose between his charters and Matilda's. Thirty-six per cent of Stephen's charters were confirmations, and a nearly equal proportion were writs.<sup>394</sup> Additionally, twenty-two of his charters are extant only as notices in newer documents, rendering it impossible to determine what their purpose was.<sup>395</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear that nearly three-quarters of Stephen's charter output to religious houses were not, strictly speaking, patronage. Although the king would have derived some spiritual benefit from conveying confirmations or issuing writs protecting a given house, the sheer number of such charters implies that their spiritual benefit was a disregarded side benefit.

Another indication of the generally political tenor of Stephen's charters is their geography. The king's charters were overwhelmingly directed toward English houses, as less than two per cent went to non-English, non-Norman houses; this suggests that a high proportion of his ecclesiastical *acta* were given as king, rather than as an individual. Within England Stephen scattered his charters far more widely than did Matilda of Boulogne.<sup>396</sup> The queen's charters were almost uniformly granted to houses in the southeast of England;<sup>397</sup> only her charter to the Oxfordshire nunnery of Godstow was directed to a house in southern England. Tellingly, eighteen of the nineteen English manors involved in the queen's patronage were also in southeast England – the centre of Boulonnais power and influence and one of the few areas of the country where Matilda had authority in her own right.<sup>398</sup>

Stephen's charters, in comparison, were much more equitably distributed through the country despite the unevenness of ecclesiastical colonisation. The sixty-three houses in the

<sup>394</sup> 249 of Stephen's 691 charters are confirmations, 241 writs.

<sup>395</sup> Vincent, 'New Charters of Stephen', 926-8. Cf. RRAN 89-97.

<sup>396</sup> In the following discussion, the counties of England are divided as follows: Far North – Cumberland, Westmoreland, Northumberland, Durham; North – Lancs, Yorks; North Central – Ches, Derbys, Notts, Lincs; Central – Northants, Staffs, Leics, Warwicks, Worcs; West – Salop, Glos, Herefordshire; East – Hunts, Cambs, Beds, Norfolk, Suffolk; South East – London, Essex, M'sex, Herts., Kent, Surrey, Sussex; South – Bucks, Berks, Wilts, Oxon, Hants; South West – Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, Dorset.

<sup>397</sup> For these purposes, neither Stephen nor Matilda's charters to the Templars have been considered. St. Martin's, HTPA, St. Bartholomew's, Colchester St. John's, Coggeshall, St. Osyth's, Faversham, Lillechurch, and St. Mary's Faversham (the location of Helmid's anchorhold) are all in southeast England (the first three in London, the second three in Essex, and the last three in Kent).

<sup>398</sup> Round, 'Counts of Boulogne', pp. 156-61.

southeast and east of the country – the administrative and ecclesiastical centre of the realm and Stephen’s heartland – received 306 of his *acta*. Fifteen houses in the south of England received eighty-five charters, while another fifteen houses in the centre received only forty-five *acta*. Twenty houses in north and north-central England obtained sixty-nine documents, and twenty-two houses in south-western and western England received seventy-eight documents. This relative parity, especially between areas without ties to the king’s personal holdings, suggests that the duties of kingship – and specifically that to confirm and protect ecclesiastical holdings – were a driving force behind Stephen’s issuing of charters, as opposed to the primarily pious thrust of Matilda’s.

The patterns revealed in Stephen’s charters strongly reflect his political duties and tended to subsume those donations that reflect his personal piety – those, in other words, made by his private body, not his political one – in the general flow of his kingly duties. At the most basic level, his charters were distributed in a much more diffuse manner than Matilda’s. 111 of his recipient houses, more than three-fifths of the total, received one or two charters from the king. Of those houses, seventy-nine – more than seven-tenths – received only a single charter.<sup>399</sup> This suggests that a large number of Stephen’s charters were made for avowedly political purposes – primarily to make a *pro forma* confirmation of the recipient house’s holdings.

Similarly, the frequency with which various types of houses received charters reflects Stephen’s overriding concern with the political aspects of patronage.<sup>400</sup> Sixty-nine Benedictine houses received more than two-fifths of Stephen’s charters, the largest share of any type.<sup>401</sup> This is unsurprising, since this category included the most ancient and powerful pre-Conquest foundations, such as Abingdon, Canterbury St. Augustine’s, Gloucester, and St. Edmund’s, all of which received more than ten charters. Sees received the next largest share, at nearly one-fifth. Like non-episcopal Benedictine houses, episcopal houses were old – often founded in the tenth century – and thus had

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<sup>399</sup> Thirty-two houses received two charters from Stephen, seventy-nine one.

<sup>400</sup> For this discussion, ‘nuns’ includes female houses of all types, including Fontevrault; ‘cathedrals’ include both episcopal abbeys and secular colleges attached to sees.

<sup>401</sup> 284 charters.

extensive, valuable holdings for which royal protection was critical.<sup>402</sup> Moreover, bishops, the titular abbots, were powerful and influential men. The archbishops of Canterbury and York, the pre-eminent English clerics, were powerful players in English politics, while the bishops of Lincoln, Ely, and Winchester were heavily involved in royal administration at various points in Stephen's reign.<sup>403</sup> As such, these charters – especially those that made grants – served to placate and reward men upon whom Stephen's throne rested. In contrast, Augustinian houses – which included in their number Holy Trinity Aldgate, one of Stephen's favourites – received less than fifteen per cent of his patronage;<sup>404</sup> nuns, Cistercians, Cluniacs, and secular colleges obtained less than ten per cent, suggesting that they had significantly less political clout or fewer assets to protect.<sup>405</sup>

The identity of those houses that profited most from Stephen's patronage highlights its essentially political nature. Five of the sixteen houses that received ten or more charters from the king were attached to sees, suggesting that grants were remuneration for royal service.<sup>406</sup> Six more were pre-Conquest Benedictine houses: Abingdon, Canterbury St. Augustine's, Westminster, Gloucester, Thorney, and Bury St. Edmunds.<sup>407</sup> Once again, these houses had two factors in common: their age and their wealth. St. Augustine's, founded in the late sixth or early seventh century, may have had an unbroken monastic tradition; Abingdon, Thorney, and Westminster were founded in the tenth century, and even Bury St. Edmund's and Gloucester were founded in the early 1020s.<sup>408</sup> Moreover, many of these houses had influential founders or patrons, so that it was even

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<sup>402</sup> D. Knowles, *The Monastic Order in England: A History of its Development from the Times of St. Dunstan to the Fourth Lateran Council, 943-1216* (Cambridge, 1950), pp. 100-3, 697-700; Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England*, pp. 34-5, 40-2; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 218-19; *The Cambridge Medieval History*, vol. V (Cambridge, 1926), pp. 509-11.

<sup>403</sup> Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England*, pp. 71, 92-3, 115, 125; C. W. Hollister, 'The Aristocracy', in E. King (ed.), *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 57-61; R. H. C. Davis, 'St. Martin's and Anarchy', 25-6; O'Keefe, 'Cistercian Settlement of England', pp. 103-5; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 24, 213-14, 227-9.

<sup>404</sup> 92 charters.

<sup>405</sup> Respectively: 33, 42, 31, and 42 charters. Hospitals received 16 charters, the Templars 19.

<sup>406</sup> Lincoln, Winchester, Ely, York, and Canterbury, which received, respectively, 29, 15, and 10 (Ely, York, and Canterbury) charters each.

<sup>407</sup> They received, respectively, 13, 13, 17, 18, 19, and 22 charters.

<sup>408</sup> D. Knowles et al. (eds.), *The Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales* (Cambridge, 1972), pp. 23-4, 31-2, 34-6, 40, 52-3, 73-7; D. Knowles, *The Religious Houses of Medieval England* (London, 1940), pp. 59, 61, 63, 66; Knowles, *Monastic Order in England*, pp. 21-71.

more important for the king to be seen giving them his munificence.<sup>409</sup> The charters going to these houses ultimately fulfilled the same essentially political functions as those Stephen granted to episcopal houses – in the main, confirming and protecting their existing holdings.

The remaining five houses had potent ties to Stephen's family or his kingly office, which provided reasons for him to be especially generous. Reading was Henry I's mausoleum, while Holy Trinity Aldgate was the flagship foundation of Henry's influential wife Matilda. Conspicuous gifts to these houses served to highlight Stephen's status as successor to his uncle, as well as his kin ties to Henry – which bolstered the legitimacy of his claim to the throne. The counts of Boulogne were the hereditary *advocati* of St. Martin-le-Grand, giving Stephen one potent reason to patronise them. The college's position as the royal *scriptorium* and a hub of administration gave him another, making Stephen appear more kingly and giving him access to bureaucratic expertise.<sup>410</sup> Colchester St. John's, in Essex, had been founded shortly after the Conquest, and Stephen's extensive patronage to it may reflect a desire to placate a wealthy house in his heartland, thereby gaining further loyalty; moreover, Eustace III was a benefactor, giving the house some claim to Stephen's munificence.<sup>411</sup>

Personal considerations may have played a limited role in the extent of Stephen's patronage; those houses that had ties to his family or Matilda's appear to have been especially rewarded. Holy Trinity was the burial site for two of his children.<sup>412</sup> Similarly, the Templars were founded by two knights who were vassals of the counts of Blois and Boulogne.<sup>413</sup> Stephen's relatively extensive grants to the Temple suggest that he was anxious to tap into his family's crusading past, and possibly to wipe out any residual shame caused by his father's abandonment of the First Crusade in 1099. Moreover, Holy Trinity, St. Martin-le-Grand, and the Templars were the three houses most

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<sup>409</sup> Knowles, *Religious Houses of Medieval England*, pp. 11-20.

<sup>410</sup> See above, p. 71, n. 344; below, pp. 128, 139.

<sup>411</sup> Round, 'Early Colchester Charters', 721-30; Hadleigh, *Cartularium Monasterii Sancti Johannis Baptiste de Colecestria: From the original manuscript in the possession of the Right Hon. Earl Cowper*, pp. 48-9.

<sup>412</sup> See above, p. 53.

<sup>413</sup> See above, p. 53, n. 255.

patronised by Matilda. This suggests that, at the least, the royal couple had similar religious tastes, and may have coordinated their patronage in order to reap as much benefit for their nuclear family as possible.

The extent to which Stephen and Matilda's patronage converged tends to bear out this theory. Stephen gave 133 charters to houses that the queen patronised, or nineteen per cent of his total output. Of these, twenty-three were original grants, meaning that Stephen gave about twenty per cent of his patronage to houses connected to his wife.<sup>414</sup> Although this is a relatively small overlap, it suggests some degree of coordination. This parallel is more extensive when viewed by houses. The king made grants to fourteen of the seventeen recipients of Queen Matilda's largesse; only Lillechurch, the anchoress Helmid, and St. Bartholomew's in London did not receive a charter from King Stephen. In these cases, there was probably no need – or no opportunity – for Stephen to confirm his wife's grant.<sup>415</sup> However, the fact that more than four-fifths of the queen's beneficiaries received charters from the king suggests that Stephen shared his wife's general religious outlook, in particular her preference for those orders that arose from the eleventh and twelfth century renaissance.

Finally, although Matilda of Boulogne's appearances in Stephen's charters were not frequent they do, to a certain extent, reflect an intention on the king's part that she be part of his patronage. The queen witnessed fifty-two of Stephen's charters, and was mentioned in the *pro anima* clause of eighty-two.<sup>416</sup> A significant minority of these – fifteen per cent of the attestations and seventeen per cent of the *pro anima* clause appearances – went to houses that she also patronised, reinforcing that there was some coordination of their patronage.<sup>417</sup> These proportions are not especially high, but Matilda's relative absence can be explained in the essentially political agenda of the king's charters. As noted above, a large number of the king's charters were

<sup>414</sup> Stephen made 149 original grants: see above, p.80, n. 392; p. 82, n. 394.

<sup>415</sup> RRAN III, pp. xliii-iv; RRAN 157; B; E.

<sup>416</sup> 8% and 12% of his total charters.

<sup>417</sup> Nine of her attestations and twelve of her mentions in *pro anima* clauses.

administrative in nature – routine confirmations and writs to his bureaucrats – neither requiring neither the queen’s attestation nor entitling the king to special prayers. The political situation also tended to take Stephen away from the southeast, where the queen spent much or most of her time, leaving her unable to witness charters. Similarly, as Cownie notes, those mentioned in *pro anima* clauses tended to have predeceased the donor; since most of Stephen’s charters were made when his queen was alive, he may not have felt as urgent a need to make provision for her soul.<sup>418</sup>

Dealing only with grants – those charters Stephen was most likely to have given for the immediate reason of personal piety – increases Matilda’s involvement in Stephen’s patronage. The queen witnessed fifteen per cent of her husband’s grants and was mentioned in just more than twenty per cent of their *pro anima* clauses.<sup>419</sup> This reflects a slightly lower than average solicitude for the queen’s soul on Stephen’s part, as a quarter of the charters Cownie analyses contain prayer requests for the donor’s wife. Given that Matilda was still alive and was actively making provision for her own soul, this is understandable.<sup>420</sup> Approximately fifteen per cent of her involvement in Stephen’s grants, either as witness or via the *pro anima* clause, benefited houses she patronised, suggesting that grants did not necessarily trigger special consideration for the queen.<sup>421</sup> Matilda’s witnessing of a higher proportion of grants suggests that Stephen waited to make grants until he was in a relatively safe, loyal area – the same area, not coincidentally, where his wife spent the most time. However, it also suggests that he considered the queen to be an important player – or partner – in his patronage activities. This suggests that the king and queen’s religious priorities were similar, and when possible, were realised in tandem.

In general, Stephen granted charters to religious institutions for overwhelmingly political purposes. More than three-quarters of his *acta* were not original grants, recipients were spread all over the country, and large numbers of *acta* were directed to episcopal seats or to long-established

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<sup>418</sup> Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, pp. 154-6.

<sup>419</sup> She witnessed 21 grants and was mentioned in the *pro anima* clause of 31 grants.

<sup>420</sup> Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, p. 155; above, p. 79.

<sup>421</sup> 3 of 21 attestations and 5 of 31 *pro anima* clauses.

Benedictine houses which needed to confirm their extensive holdings. In contrast, Matilda of Boulogne's patronage was tightly focused both geographically – on the southeast of England – and religiously – to orders spawned by the twelfth century reform movement. There is no evidence of active coordination of their patronage, but Stephen's patronage of most of his wife's beneficiaries, combined with her much higher rates of involvement in the charters that went to those houses, suggests that king and queen had a similar personal piety, and a single agenda of religious patronage, which they pursued together – presumably in an attempt to direct their nuclear family's future patronage.

#### *Part 5: Spiritual Mentors*

Matilda's religious life consisted of more than just donations to religious houses, however. She also appears to have had a rich inner spiritual life, which she found very important. Moreover, unlike some other medieval magnates, her piety seems to have been genuine. Her penchant for patronising and consulting with recluses has already been discussed in relation to her donation of an anchorhold to Helmid the nun. Another good, if unflattering, example comes from her prolonged stay at St. Augustine's, Canterbury, in 1148 while overseeing Faversham's construction. During the interdict there, she had monks from Christ Church celebrate mass in her guest quarters at St. Augustine's.<sup>422</sup> The queen's attachment to various religious mentors also demonstrates her sincere religious conviction.

Perhaps her most immediate spiritual advisor was Ralph, sub-prior then prior of Holy Trinity Aldgate. The house chronicle comments that he was '... a venerable man of mature years, very well educated in divine and humane letters, born and raised in [London], amiable and devoted to all its citizens, known and loved by King Stephen and his wife Queen Matilda and the king's court, who undertook the confessional care of the said Queen Matilda from Archbishop

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<sup>422</sup> See above, p. 48, n. 233.

Theobald'.<sup>423</sup> From this passage, it would appear that Ralph took over his duties as the queen's confessor before he became prior. The royal couple's obvious and intensely personal devotion to the house bolsters this idea. It is unlikely that Stephen and Matilda would have buried at least one child at Holy Trinity shortly after Stephen's accession if they did not have a comforting, close, and above all long-standing spiritual relationship with the house.<sup>424</sup>

Moreover, from Stephen's quick acceptance by the citizens of London in 1135, it appears that he and his queen had spent time there and made highly-placed friends – among whom, in all likelihood, were the canons and prior of Holy Trinity.<sup>425</sup> Indeed, Stephen's deep involvement in Henry's court after Charles the Good of Flanders's 1127 murder and again from 1132 until Henry's death may have given Matilda an extended residence in London, where she could have got to know, trust, and esteem Ralph.<sup>426</sup> For his part, Ralph took the care of the queen's soul so seriously that he attended the queen's deathbed.<sup>427</sup> While it is conceivable that Ralph's presence as a confessor was an anomaly, it is hardly likely that Matilda would want a near-stranger overseeing her preparations for eternity.<sup>428</sup> Additionally, Ralph is shown advising the queen on her final acts of alms-giving; although this would give him a unique opportunity to direct her patronage, it also implies that he had a good working knowledge of her religious tastes. Taken as a whole, this scene seems to be the climax of a long-standing, nurturing, warm relationship between the prior and the queen.

Indeed, the simple fact that Matilda had a personal confessor is interesting. Murray notes that the practice of lay confession was generally not common before 1150, although it appears to

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<sup>423</sup> *CHTPA*, p. 232: 'vir venerabilis etate maturus in divina et humana pagina optime eruditus, hac urbe natus et nutritus, omnibus civibus amabilis et devotus, regi Stephano et eius uxori Matilde regine et curie regie cognitus et dilectus qui curam confessionem dicte regine Matilde ab Archiepiscopo Theobaldo suscepit'.

<sup>424</sup> See above, pp. 20-22.

<sup>425</sup> Strickland, *Lives of Queens*, p. 201; J. Stow, *A Survey of London: Reprinted from the Text of 1603* (Oxford, 1971), pp. 71, 243, 246.

<sup>426</sup> Malmesbury, *HN*, 28-33; King, 'Stephen of Blois', 283-4, 291-3.

<sup>427</sup> See above, p. 60 n. 292.

<sup>428</sup> A. Murray, 'Counselling in Medieval Confession', in P. Biller and A. J. Minnis (eds.), *Handling Sin: Confession in the Middle Ages, York Studies in Medieval Theology*, 2 (York, 1998), pp. 70-2, 76-7.

have been slightly more common in England than on the continent.<sup>429</sup> In part, Ralph's appointment as Matilda's confessor can be explained by the mechanism by which regular confession reached England; the school of Laon, and particularly Master Anselm, was the heart of theological study in the early 1100s. Pupils of Anselm's held high ecclesiastical office all over England, making it more likely that confession would become popular there. The rise of the Augustinian movement was the second critical factor. Both Norman, Holy Trinity's first prior, and William de Corbeil, the archbishop of Canterbury who died in 1123, were Laon *alumni* and Augustinian canons; both had embraced a rule tailored for existing communities of clergy, many of which were based in urban areas.<sup>430</sup> To a certain extent, then, Ralph was taking up an expected role; however, lay confession remained largely practised in cases of dire necessity, such as grave illness, so Matilda's use of a personal confessor suggests a particularly high degree of piety and devoutness.<sup>431</sup>

The queen appears to have had a similar, though somewhat less intimate, relationship with Theobald of Bec, archbishop of Canterbury from 1139 to 1161 and papal legate from c. 1150.<sup>432</sup> As Holy Trinity's house chronicle notes, Theobald assigned Prior Ralph to be Matilda's personal confessor; this implies that the archbishop was thoroughly familiar with the queen's personality as well as her spiritual needs.<sup>433</sup> Another possible pointer to his relationship with Matilda is his refusal to swear allegiance to the empress at Winchester in the spring of 1141 – respect for the queen, as well as his reputation, may have come into play.<sup>434</sup>

Most of the evidence for Theobald and Matilda's relationship, however, comes from later in the reign. Between 1148 and 1149, having been '...favourably disposed by the requests of our lady Matilda queen of the English...' Theobald consecrated a cemetery for the monks of her foundation

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<sup>429</sup> A. Murray, 'Confession before 1215', *TRHS* 6:3 (1993), 51-81, esp. 67-75, 79-81. Cf. Morris, *The Papal Monarchy*, p. 381; D. Crouch, 'The Troubled Deathbeds of Henry I's Servants: Death, Confession, and Secular Conduct in the Twelfth Century', *Albion*, 34:1 (2002), 24-36; J. A. Green, 'The Piety and Patronage of Henry I', *HSJ* 10 (2001), 1-16.

<sup>430</sup> Murray, 'Confession before 1215', 75-80.

<sup>431</sup> *ibid.*, 71-2, 79.

<sup>432</sup> D. E. Greenway (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1066-1300: Monastic Cathedrals, vol. II* (London, 1971), p. 4.

<sup>433</sup> See above, p. 88 n. 422.

<sup>434</sup> *HN*, pp. 88-91.

of Faversham.<sup>435</sup> Not coincidentally, this was the queen's chosen burial site, and informing Theobald of her choice may have been part of her request; for Matilda, a cemetery for 'her' monks would eternally surround her with religious, transferring some of their sanctity to her.<sup>436</sup> Perhaps the most telling evidence of their relationship, however, came in 1148. Theobald asked for, but did not receive, permission to attend the Council of Rheims on 22 March of that year; he then, '...being more afraid of God than the king, secretly crossed the sea... and presented himself to the lord pope'.<sup>437</sup> On the archbishop's return, Stephen, '...moved by anger, quickly came to Canterbury...', where after a short exchange of messengers, he '...forced the archbishop to leave England'.<sup>438</sup> Theobald embarked from Dover for France. However, he had only been there a few days when '...he was called back to St. Omer by the queen and William of Ypres, so that royal messengers could more easily reach him placed nearby'.<sup>439</sup> From this passage it seems obvious that Matilda was beginning a dialogue between the king and the archbishop. More to the point, however, she was also risking serious damage to her relationship with her husband by aiding someone at loggerheads with him. Although there is a distinct element of political expediency in the queen's actions, it is also clear that she genuinely revered Theobald as an advisor and friend.

However, Matilda's most prestigious spiritual mentor was Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux from 1115 to 1153. Evidence for their relationship comes from four sources: two letters written from Bernard to Matilda; a story in the 'A' version of Bernard's *vita prima*; and a charter of Matilda's to Clairmarais abbey, witnessed by Bernard. However, this relationship has generally been overlooked or downplayed because of problems in dating the individual pieces of evidence. Probably the first recorded interaction between Bernard and Matilda is noted in the *Fragmenta* written by Geoffrey of Auxerre around 1145:

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<sup>435</sup> Saltman, *Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury*, no. 57: '...precibus Matildis regine Anglorum domine nostre inclinatus...'.  
<sup>436</sup> Harper-Bill, 'Piety of Anglo-Norman Knight', 64-5.

<sup>437</sup> Saltman, *Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury*, pp. 29-30; RT, p. 62; GC, pp.134: '...Deum magis quam regem meteuns, clanculo mare adit... et domino papæ se præsentavit'.  
<sup>438</sup> GC, pp.135: '... ira commotus, celeriter Cantuariam venit,... archiepiscopum Angliam exire coegit'.  
<sup>439</sup> GC, pp.135: '... a regina et Willelmo Yprensi ad Sanctum Audomarum revocatus est, ut eum juxta positum regii nuntii facilius possent adire'.

...Matilda queen of the English, who revered the holy man of the Lord with incredible intensity, so much so that once she herself ran outside the town to him as he approached Boulogne when she was pregnant and the hour of delivery was most gravely fraught with danger, so much that she expected only death and disposing of those things that pertained to herself likewise prepared for the funeral exequies. In the meantime she, remembering the man of God, invoked his name and asked help of him. In that very same hour she then bore the despaired-of son and sending a certain religious rendered very devoted thanks through him to her liberator.<sup>440</sup>

Geoffrey revised and expanded this narrative for inclusion in book IV of Bernard's *vita prima*, finished by 1156, which attempted to give a systematic account of the miracles Bernard wrought in his lifetime<sup>441</sup>:

Matilda, queen of the English, ever displayed such intensity of devotion for this servant of God, such that she ran with the people out of the city to him as he approached when she was extremely pregnant. After a few days, when her time of labour approached, she was so gravely afflicted that both she and all of her household despaired of her life; and then having consigned all of her chattels to paupers and churches, the queen even prepared the clothes in which she was to be buried, just as if she would die on the spot. Then suddenly remembering the man of God, and invoking his name with full faith, in the same moment as the invocation she gave birth without the desperate danger. Nor did she delay distributing the pledged bequests, by which she gave thanks to her celebrated rescuer, calling the newborn himself, not unmeritedly, his son. Indeed, he himself, whenever he happened to hear anyone say such a thing, used to say not a little humbly, refuting it jokingly, "That certainly is to be imputed to me, as I was entirely unconscious of him".<sup>442</sup>

This story, although it seems somewhat outlandish, has verification from Bernard himself. At some point later he wrote to Matilda, whom he described as

<sup>440</sup> A. Bredero, *Bernard of Clairvaux: Between Cult and History* (Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 23-4; R. Lechat, 'Les Fragmenta de Vita et Miraculis S. Bernardi par Geoffroy d'Auxerre', *Analecta Bollandiana* 50 (1932), 83-4, 119: '...regina Anglorum Mathildis que incredibili sanctum Domini veneratur affectu, ita ut advenienti aliquando Boloniam ipsa occurreret extra villam, cum pregnans esset adveniente demum partus hora gravissime periclitata est, adeo ut solum obitum expectaret et dispositis que ad se pertinebant ipse quoque funeris eius exequie pararentur. Interim recordata hominis Dei invocat nomen eius et ab eo petit auxilium. In ipsa vero hora desperatum iam edidit filium et mittens religiosum quendam virum devotissimas per eum liberatori suo retulit grates'.

<sup>441</sup> A. Bredero, 'Études sur "la Vita Prima" de Saint Bernard', *Analecta Cisterciensium* 17-18 (1961-2), 17.

<sup>442</sup> 'S. Bernardi Vita Prima', *Patrologia Latina Database*, vol. 185 (Chadwyck-Healey, 1995), col. 324-5: 'Anglorum quoque regina Mathildis, tantum huic famulo Dei exhibuit aliquando devotionis affectum, ut venienti Boloniam extra urbem cum populo pedes occurreret, gravida tamen ipsa, multumque jam gravis. Quae post dies aliquot, ut pariendi tempus advenit, tam graviter est afflicta, ut tam ipsa, quam domus omnis, de vita ejus penitus desperarent: jamque omni reliqua suppellectili pauperibus et ecclesiis delegata, vestis etiam regia pararetur in qua sepeliretur, tanquam protinus moritura. Tum subito recordata Hominis Dei, et nomen illius invocans plena fide, in ipsa protinus invocatione sine periculo partum edidit desperatum. Nec distulit legatum destinare fidelem, per quem gratias ageret celebri subventori, ipsum sic natum, non immerito natum ejus appellans. Verum ille, quoties tale aliquid contigisset audire, non minus humiliter, quam jucunde refutans, dicere consueverat: "Hoc certe mihi sic est imputandum, sicut ei qui conscius omnino non fuit"'.

...the most illustrious lady, and beloved daughter in Christ (which I say with affection and not presumption)... If I should seem to presume somewhat in thus addressing you it is no matter for surprise, since almost everyone knows how you favour me and how great is your affection for me. Because of this I have been asked by a certain friend of yours, the abbot of La Capelle, to remind you of his plea for a certain tithe which, if you remember, I mentioned to you at Boulogne, and which, with your usual kindness, you favourably considered. But because my request has not yet been granted, the time has now come for it to be discharged. For the rest, keep well for me that son to whom you have recently given birth, for (if it will not displease the king) I claim some share in him.<sup>443</sup>

The next recorded interaction between Matilda and Bernard came in 1142. In that year, Matilda and her son Eustace granted a charter to the Boulonnais abbey of Clairmarais, which the abbot of Clairvaux witnessed along with three other Cistercian abbots: Waleran of Ourscamp, Theodoric of La Capelle, and Henry of Vaucelles.<sup>444</sup> It is noteworthy that Theodoric of La Capelle is the same abbot on whose behalf Bernard pleads in his previous letter to Matilda – and whom, tellingly, he describes in that letter as a friend of the queen's. This may imply that Matilda had a network of Cistercian friends and mentors, and (since La Capelle was founded by her grandmother) it certainly suggests she kept in contact, albeit sporadically, with her family's houses.<sup>445</sup>

As the most formal interaction between Bernard and Matilda in the historical record, it superficially has little to say about the pair's relationship. However, the simple fact that Bernard went to visit the queen in 1142 is telling – it implies a warm relationship between the two was pre-existing. However, his presence at the head of a small delegation of abbots from Clairvaux's daughter-houses is particularly noteworthy. The only recorded time Bernard was in northern France in that year was during the negotiations between the Cistercian and Premonstratensian orders around 11 October, in which Bernard took part.<sup>446</sup> In this case, it seems likely that Bernard met with Matilda just before the conference. For such an influential and in-demand churchman to give up his time to witness a routine confirmatory charter leaves the strong impression that Bernard was a mentor, and possibly friend, to the queen.<sup>447</sup>

<sup>443</sup> James and Kienzle (eds.), *Letters of Bernard*, ep. 376; Leclercq et al. (eds.), *S. Bernardi Epistolae*, ep. 315; F. Gastaldelli (ed.), *Opere di San Bernardo*, vol. 6:2 (Milano, 1987), ep. 315.

<sup>444</sup> Cottineau, *Répertoire*, vol. II, pp. 2160, 3301 ; Cottineau, *Répertoire*, vol. I, p. 591; RRAN 195.

<sup>445</sup> See below, p. 205.

<sup>446</sup> H. Daniel-Rops, *Bernard of Clairvaux* (London, 1964), p. 596.

<sup>447</sup> Daniel-Rops, *Bernard*, pp. 596-7.

The final extant piece of evidence for Matilda's relationship with Bernard dates from the year after her charter. In mid-1143, probably in May, Bernard wrote '...to his dear daughter in Christ, Matilda, by the grace of God queen of the English, that she may reign in heaven for ever with the angels...', asking for her help in ousting William FitzHerbert from the archiepiscopal see of York.<sup>448</sup> Although the general thrust of this letter was to gain the queen's support, and thus gain a back-door route to the king's ear, several phrases strongly suggest that Bernard and Matilda were on terms of spiritual intimacy. Although the address of the letter may smack of sycophancy, his reference to Matilda as '*...dilectissimae in Christo filiae*' is almost certainly sincere.<sup>449</sup> This is suggested by Bernard '...affectionately greeting in the Lord your Majesty and not only gladly but faithfully suggesting certain things which I know to concern your own salvation and the glory of your kingdom'.<sup>450</sup> More tellingly, Bernard commented that Matilda would take this action 'if you fear God and if you wish at all to hearken to my counsel... This is the cause of God and I entrust it to you. It is for you to see that my trust is not betrayed'.<sup>451</sup> This dual stress – the threat to the queen's salvation and the trust Bernard places in her – would be extremely odd, probably threatening, if it came from a relative stranger. At the least, taking such a tack with a mere acquaintance ran a severe risk of alienating its recipient and thereby failing to obtain the desired result. Given this, it is logical to posit that Matilda was used to and expected such spiritual advice from Bernard. In fact, the evidence of Bernard's *vita*, combined with the letter corroborating the story, suggests that she positively craved his advice and support.

Putting the individual pieces of evidence together to form a coherent picture of Matilda and Bernard's relationship is more difficult, however, since few of the documents are dated and scholars

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<sup>448</sup> James and Kienzle (eds.), *Letters of Bernard*, ep. 198; C. H. Talbot, 'New Documents in the Case of Saint William of York', *Cambridge Historical Journal* 10 (1950), 3-4, 6-7, 13.

<sup>449</sup> Leclercq et al. (eds.), *S. Bernardi Epistolae*, ep. 534.

<sup>450</sup> James and Kienzle (eds.), *Letters of Bernard*, ep. 198.

<sup>451</sup> *ibid*, ep. 198.

generally have not considered Matilda's life history when discussing them.<sup>452</sup> Doing this gives a much clearer context to the relationship, and some insight into the queen's character, as well as helping to illuminate her childbearing years to a certain degree. The identity of the 'miracle baby' is perhaps the linchpin in this analysis. The story's inclusion in the *Fragmenta* means that the birth must have occurred before 1145, but a more accurate date may be found by examining the rationale behind the first *vita*'s creation.

Its fourth book, as Bredero comments, was written specifically to highlight those miracles Bernard wrought before his death in 1153. It was added when a group of his ecclesiastical friends met in 1155-6 to organise his canonisation, and thus has a notably sceptical air.<sup>453</sup> For a variety of reasons, the only one of Stephen and Matilda's sons this story could refer to is William, their youngest child. First, Matilda is referred to as queen of England when the child is born; although this is unconvincing in the miracle stories, Bernard's letter, which is definitive evidence, references these stories and also refers to her as queen. Both Baldwin and Eustace were born before – in Eustace's case, significantly before – 1135.<sup>454</sup> The fourth book also laid stress on cases involving well-known families, particularly those with survivors capable of giving evidence. Since Baldwin died probably before 1135 and certainly before 1147-8, and Eustace died in 1153, neither is an especially convincing witness to the abbot's sanctity. This attempt was aborted in its early stages, and its 1163 resumption led to a revision of the dossier to stress Bernard's posthumous works and remove potentially embarrassing or unverifiable references.<sup>455</sup> The 'miracle baby' story did not appear in this new redaction, suggesting that its emotional impact was lost with William's 1159 death.

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<sup>452</sup> Gastaldelli (ed.), *Opere di San Bernardo*, pp. 333-5; Leclercq et al. (eds.), *S. Bernardi Epistolae*, ep. 315; Fryde (ed.), *HBC*, p. 35.

<sup>453</sup> Bredero, 'Études sur Vita Prima' vol. 17, 12-13, 18; Bredero, 'Études sur Vita Prima', vol. 18, 4-9, 18; Bredero, *Bernard: Cult and History*, pp. 39-42.

<sup>454</sup> See above, pp. 21-22.

<sup>455</sup> Bredero, *Bernard: Cult and History*, pp. 43-5.

Noting the miracle stories also adds to our knowledge of their itineraries. In the latter part of 1135 and early part of 1136, when Stephen was preparing for and ascending the throne, Matilda was in Boulogne, dealing with what may have been – given her anxiety to see the abbot – a difficult pregnancy. William's birthplace can be pinpointed to Boulogne, and he was definitely born around his father's accession to the English throne, in late 1135 or early 1136. The miracle stories explicitly link William's birth with Matilda's anxious meeting with Bernard outside the walls of Boulogne, and Bernard himself links the birth and a meeting with Matilda at Boulogne. This means that Bernard must have made a previously unrecognised visit to the county in 1135-6.

Finally, examining the admittedly scant evidence for their spiritual relationship gives an indication of its growth. The narrative in Bernard's *vita* suggests that Matilda had a long-standing admiration, perhaps veneration, of the abbot. She obviously felt that Bernard was a particularly spiritual, even blessed, man to have so much faith in his intervention. Bernard's first letter to Matilda, on the other hand, is relatively formal, acknowledging that his correspondence is a possibly presumptuous surprise, downplaying his role in the request for patronage, and stressing the queen's feelings for him rather than his for her. This suggests that they may not have known each other very well at that time. By 1143, the situation appears to have changed radically. Bernard's letter is forthright, to the point of offensiveness if directed to a stranger, suggesting that he felt comfortable offering the queen frank advice and asking for controversial patronage. This was probably due to additional interaction between them, such as the meeting in 1142 when Bernard witnessed Matilda's charter to Clairmarais.<sup>456</sup> Matilda's miraculous survival in childbed may well have prompted a particular devotion to Bernard that would serve to bind them together – and to prompt her patronage of the Cistercian order, which would further endear her to the abbot.

Although Matilda appears to have had a friendly, flourishing relationship with Bernard of Clairvaux, she still enjoyed warm relationship with both Cluniacs like Archbishop Theobald and

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<sup>456</sup> See above, p. 93.

Augustinians like Prior Ralph. This reinforces the image of her given by her religious patronage: a woman deeply interested in spirituality, eager to help others, concerned for the souls of herself and her family, and on a personal quest for religious fulfilment. She found this fulfilment by investing in a wide variety of religious forms, both conservative and different strains of new-order religious spawned by the twelfth-century revival.

### Chapter III: Matilda of Boulogne's *Familia* and Household

One of the most pressing questions regarding Matilda of Boulogne's career is the existence and make-up of her court and household; unlike her husband, who held authority and interacted with officials by virtue of his office, Matilda's position was much less clear-cut.<sup>457</sup> As such, it is possible that those who attested her charters – and who, by extension, were members of her *familia* and in frequent contact with the queen – changed as her political role did, or differed significantly from King Stephen's.<sup>458</sup> This chapter aims to determine the makeup of the queen's household staff, to examine if and to what extent she possessed a *familia* separate from Stephen's, and to determine her place within the royal court. It will also attempt to establish whether Matilda's political influence – as measured by the identity of those close to her – changed over Stephen's reign.

A logical starting point for analysis is the locations at which Matilda of Boulogne issued *acta*. All but eight of Matilda's extant charters mention the place at which the grant was made.<sup>459</sup> However, five of the eight placeless grants were writs benefiting the college of St. Martin-le-Grand in London, which tended to act as Stephen's chancery; it is likely that these were drafted by the canons themselves at the college.<sup>460</sup> The overwhelming majority of locatable charters were given in the southeast of England, particularly in areas where royalist loyalty was highest or where Matilda herself had a particular claim to authority.

Eleven – more than a third of the overall total and nearly half of locatable charters – were granted in or in the immediate vicinity of the city of London. The capital owed the queen a dual debt of loyalty, as both the wife of the king who probably created its commune and as the countess

<sup>457</sup> Tanner, 'Queenship', pp. 133-58.

<sup>458</sup> Cf. C. W. Hollister, 'The Viceregal Court of Henry I', in B. S. Boehrach and D. Nicholas (eds.), *Law, Custom, and the Social Fabric in Medieval England* (Kalamazoo, MI, 1990); Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 98.

<sup>459</sup> RRAN 76, 149, 509, 530, 548, 553, 556, 557.

<sup>460</sup> RRAN 530, 548, 553, 556, 557. Cf. R. H. C. Davis, 'St. Martin's and Anarchy', 18-20, 25-6.

of Boulogne who held the city's economic life in her hands.<sup>461</sup> Five other charters were granted in the royalist strongholds of Essex and Kent – the seat of the queen's patrimonial honour of Boulogne was at Witham in the former.<sup>462</sup> These two counties were chief among the handful of areas in England to support Stephen even during his 1141 captivity.<sup>463</sup> In all these areas the queen was a potent political force, usually in her own right; in London she was St. Martin's hereditary patroness, in Essex a dominant landholder, and in Kent the leader of the royalist opposition. This made it more likely that she would exercise authority and that her authority would be accepted in these areas, within which she gave one-half of all her charters and two-thirds of locatable charters.<sup>464</sup> In fact, only three of Matilda's English charters were given at locations that lay outside her south-eastern sphere of influence. All three charters were granted in England, at areas not far removed from her authority and each was granted at a time, usually early in the reign, when the king's political authority was high and stable and the area under royal control.<sup>465</sup>

The queen's five continental charters also demonstrate, perhaps even more than her English ones, that she gave charters only in areas where her authority would be relatively unchallenged. Three of these charters were definitely given at a town – Lens, Steenvorde, or Boulogne – under the queen's direct control as countess of Boulogne, with an additional charter probably granted in Boulonnais lands. The single charter Matilda granted in Normandy – at Évreux – was drafted during the Easter court there in 1137, while Stephen was still master of the duchy.<sup>466</sup> It thus seems obvious that Matilda of Boulogne's effective authority was at least partly dependent on geography; she tended to issue charters only in areas where her authority – whether derived from her patrimony or marriage – was particularly solid and presumably unquestioned. Matilda also travelled far less than

<sup>461</sup> Includes place-dates of London, Westminster, or Bermondsey. Cf. R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, pp. 9-11, 54-6; J. A. Green, 'Financing Stephen's War', 105-6.

<sup>462</sup> I. J. Sanders, *English Baronies* (Oxford, 1960), p. 151.

<sup>463</sup> RRAN 239d, 503 (Essex); RRAN 157, 198, 301 (Kent). Cf. E. Amt, *The Accession of Henry II in England: Royal Government Restored, 1149-1159* (Woodbridge, 1993), pp. 35-6; HH, pp. 738-9.

<sup>464</sup> Cf. GS, pp. 122-7; J. A. Green, 'Financing Stephen's War', 105-6; above, p. 38 n.180.

<sup>465</sup> RRAN 221 (Oxford?, Dec. 1148-May 1152), 539 (Windsor, 1145-7), 850 (Reading, Oct. 1138-Sept. 1139).

<sup>466</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 248n, 261n; RRAN 26 (Lens), 195 (Boulogne?) 196 (Boulogne), 207b (Steenvorde), 843 (Évreux).

her husband. Aside from her command of the siege at Dover in late 1138 and her expeditions against London and Winchester after Stephen's capture at Lincoln in 1141, the queen did not take an active part in the warfare of the Anarchy – unlike her husband and son, who were occupied with skirmishes against imperial magnates until the very end of Stephen's reign.<sup>467</sup> Although she travelled to the continent more often than Stephen – aside from his official visit in 1137, she went to France in 1140, 1142, and probably between 1148 and 1150 – these trips served a specific diplomatic purpose.<sup>468</sup>

Attestations provide the next point of analysis. Of Matilda's thirty-two extant charters, six list no witnesses, six list one witness, and twenty give two or more witnesses; in total, more than four-fifths of the queen's charters contain a witness-list, and nearly two-thirds have the extant attestation of more than one witness.<sup>469</sup> Three of the queen's unattested charters survive only in cartulary copies, whose witness-lists were deliberately not added when they were transcribed.<sup>470</sup> The three remaining unattested charters appear to have been writs, and may never have needed separate attestation because of their form and function.<sup>471</sup> It is also possible that some of the multi-attested charters had their witness-lists cut short by scribes entering them into cartularies, but this is impossible to confirm.<sup>472</sup> Nearly three-quarters of her attestors witnessed a single charter and more than three-fifths of her witnessed charters have more than three witnesses.<sup>473</sup> These two tendencies suggest that Matilda of Boulogne's charters were generally issued on particularly formal occasions, such as the thrice-yearly royal courts, and were attested by those who happened to be in attendance

<sup>467</sup> See above, pp. 32-32. Cf. *GS*, pp. 216-33, 238-9; *HH*, pp. 754-61.

<sup>468</sup> R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, pp. 45-6; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, p. 248.

<sup>469</sup> RRAN 149, 530, 548, 553, 556, 557 give no witnesses; RRAN 76, 157, 224, 539, 845, A have one; RRAN 24, 26, 195, 197, 198, 207, 207b, 221, 239b, 239d, 243, 301, 503, 509, 512, 513, 541, 550, 843, and 850 list two or more attestors.

<sup>470</sup> RRAN 149, 553, 556 include *Testes*, but no names.

<sup>471</sup> RRAN 530, 548, 557.

<sup>472</sup> Cf. RRAN III, p.394; RRAN 845.

<sup>473</sup> 62 of the 87 attest once; 16 of 26 charters with lists have 4 or more witnesses.

at the time. However, a small number of attestors witnessed more than three charters, and can be considered the core of the queen's household.<sup>474</sup>

Another possible reason for the generally large witness-lists attached to Matilda of Boulogne's charters is the nature of the documents. Matilda made a relatively large number of grants alienating land to religious houses, where the advice and consent of as many witnesses as possible would have been desirable, if only as a token of their future support for the house involved. Moreover, the continent lacked the strong central authority the monarchy provided in England, making politics there much more complicated, and thus the number and identities of witnesses to grants more important. Two grants Matilda made from continental Boulonnais holdings are good examples of this. Since both the donated land and the recipient houses involved were outside the English king's effective sphere of control due to Geoffrey of Anjou's inroads into Normandy, the issue of local support may have been a particularly pressing one.

Matilda gave the Augustinian abbey of Arrouaise, in Artois, the tithes of Marck on 23 June, 1142, at Lens.<sup>475</sup> Marck was part of the county of Lens, which in turn was a discontinuous holding of the county of Boulogne; it was undoubtedly vulnerable to predation from neighbouring magnates.<sup>476</sup> Perhaps in acknowledgment, twelve people attest this grant, including the local secular and religious grandees Ivo count of Soissons and John, abbot of St. Mary's, Boulogne as well as officials affiliated with both Boulogne and England.<sup>477</sup> The large number of witnesses was included with the apparent purpose of highlighting the queen's authority and ensuring that the grant would not be tampered with, either by Boulonnais vassals or outsiders. The charter's wording of 'this

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<sup>474</sup> Nine, or 10%.

<sup>475</sup> RRAN 26.

<sup>476</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, p. 21.

<sup>477</sup> Ernulf the reeve of Lens, Robert his brother, and her chancellor Thomas are Boulonnais, Richard de Lucy royal, and two canons, Ricard and Alelm.

donation having been made in the presence of illustrious men and our vassals, we confirm our authority unshakably...’ laid particular emphasis on this act of witness and its ramifications.<sup>478</sup>

Later in 1142, Matilda confirmed two grants made by her husband in Beaulo forest to the Cistercian abbey of Clairmarais, located not far from the Boulonnais town of St. Omer.<sup>479</sup> This charter is notable for having the largest witness-list of any of Queen Matilda’s charters, at fifteen. The vast majority of these witnesses are clerics, including St. Bernard of Clairvaux and the abbots of three of Clairvaux’s daughter houses; Abbot John of St. Mary’s, Boulogne; Abbot Peter of St. Omer; an Archdeacon Milo; and four men who were probably Knights Templar.<sup>480</sup> Matilda’s steward in Boulogne, William Monk, probably attested in his official capacity, and it is likely that Osto of St. Omer, the son of the castellan, was also in attendance as an official of Matilda’s county.<sup>481</sup> Taken as a whole, this witness-list is a powerful statement of support for the queen’s action. Moreover, it probably had the effect of warning off potential aggressors by stressing that both the queen and the Cistercian order would defend the new grant.

The dates of the queen’s charters provide relatively little in the way of correlation for the make-up of her *familia*, since so few can be reliably dated, though a few points can be raised.<sup>482</sup> All the non-attested charters given by Matilda of Boulogne are dated no earlier than 1141. This is certainly due partly to random survival, but probably also to the queen’s burgeoning responsibilities as regent and religious patroness after 1141.<sup>483</sup> More simply, most of Matilda’s charters were granted after 1141, presumably since she was too occupied with diplomacy and warfare to issue

<sup>478</sup> See above, p. 69, n. 332. The juxtaposition of spiritual (Abbot John) and secular (Count Ivo and Ernulf the reeve) authority is particularly striking.

<sup>479</sup> RRAN 195.

<sup>480</sup> After St. Bernard, Waleran abbot of Ourscamp, Henry abbot of Vaucelles, and Theodoric abbot of La Capelle attest. After the attestation of Abbot Osto, it is unclear how many of the next seven witnesses are ‘*militibus de Templo*’ (the final witness, William Monk, is certainly not).

<sup>481</sup> Lees (ed.), *Templar Records*, p. xxxix; K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesday Descendants* (Woodbridge, 2002), p. 655.

<sup>482</sup> RRAN III, p. v.

<sup>483</sup> See above, pp. 51-73.

*acta* before that date. Because the role of earls in royal administration evaporated after the king's imprisonment, the small number of earls attesting for the queen is unsurprising.<sup>484</sup>

In many cases, single witnesses to charters appear to have been chosen specifically for their ties to the charter's recipient – and thus their particular relevance to the task at hand.<sup>485</sup> The queen's single charter to Bec, which confirmed a gift of her paternal grandmother Countess Ida, was attested by Archbishop Theobald, a former abbot, and presumably reflects the primate's continued interest in that house.<sup>486</sup> Similarly, the only witness to the queen's writ regarding a ship belonging to the abbot of St. Augustine's,<sup>487</sup> Canterbury was Roger, bishop of Salisbury. He had been the sole regent for Henry I after Queen Matilda of Scotland's death, and remained prominent in Stephen's early administration; as such he was the ideal witness to an act of the queen's as regent.<sup>488</sup> The presence of the queen's chancellor Hubert as sole witness to her gift to Helmid the nun also reflects the fact that administrative writs had short, relevant witness-lists, usually a few officials. Hubert may have been the key administrator for the Boulonnais honour that Roger was for England, or he may have overseen informing the queen's tenants of new grants.<sup>489</sup> The presence of Warner de Lusors as sole witness to two grants involving the queen's patrimony in Essex similarly suggests he held an administrative role of some sort there.

The witnesses to Matilda of Boulogne's charters can be sorted into three concentric 'circles' of proximity to her. Although the paucity of Matilda's charters makes the in-depth analysis and fine grading of the household that Warren Hollister accomplished for Henry I impossible, it is still a truism that those persons who spent more time in the queen's presence would – simply through

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<sup>484</sup> Only seven men of comital rank witnessed charters for Matilda of Boulogne: Ivo, count of Soissons, Eustace IV, count of Boulogne, Waleran, count of Meulan, Simon de Senlis, Geoffrey II de Mandeville, earl of Essex, William III de Warenne, earl of Surrey, and (probably) Gilbert FitzGilbert, earl of Pembroke: see RRAN 207 and RRAN III, pp. xxiv-v, 394.

<sup>485</sup> See above, p. 100 n. 469.

<sup>486</sup> Greenway (ed.), *Fasti II*, p.4; RRAN 76.

<sup>487</sup> See above, p. 29.

<sup>488</sup> Hollister and Baldwin, 'Rise of Administrative Kingship', 875-876; below, p. 221.

<sup>489</sup> RRAN 157.

having the greatest opportunity to do so – attest her charters more often.<sup>490</sup> Although the small number of Matilda's *acta* surviving makes it impossible to make conclusions on it alone, witness-list evidence can be combined with other knowledge of these individuals to reveal patterns in their attestation that suggest their possible roles in relation to the queen.

The queen's attestors fall into three groups: frequent attestors, who witness four or more of her charters; occasional attestors, who witness two or three charters; and single attestors. Approximately seventy per cent of the queen's attestors did so only once, while about twenty per cent did so occasionally; only about ten per cent witnessed frequently.<sup>491</sup> Nevertheless, that small fraction of witnesses who attested frequently is the most interesting, since it is most likely to contain the queen's *familia*. This group is made up of nine men: Prince Eustace, the queen's eldest son; Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury; Ralph the queen's chancellor; William of Ypres; Thomas the queen's chaplain; Richard of Boulogne; Richard de Lucy; William Martel; and Warner de Lusors. The least interesting of these men, from the point of view of determining the queen's *familia*, are the first two. Prince Eustace attested or consented to seven different grants, making him one of his mother's most frequent attestors. However, five of these – the four occasions where Eustace acted as a joint grantor and Matilda's confirmation of her chamberlain Hubert's grants to Holy Trinity Aldgate – were probably given before his formal assumption of the county of Boulogne in the late winter of 1146-7. As such, they perhaps represent, in part, efforts by the queen to teach her son statecraft by involving him in the governance of her patrimony, or to introduce him to the Boulonnais *curiales*.<sup>492</sup> More importantly, there is the question of the prince's age at the time of these grants. He was born in the late 1120s or early 1130s, and so may have still been under his mother's supervision in 1142.<sup>493</sup>

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<sup>490</sup> Hollister and Baldwin, 'Rise of Administrative Kingship', 867-905; C. W. Hollister, 'Magnates and *Curiales* in Early Norman England', *Viator* 8 (1977), 63-82; Hollister, 'Aristocracy', pp. 37-66.

<sup>491</sup> 9 frequent attestors, 16 occasional attestors, 62 single attestors, total 87.

<sup>492</sup> RRAN 509.

<sup>493</sup> Fryde (ed.), *HBC*, pp. 35-6.

Several of the grants he witnessed, moreover, were involved enough that the recipient may have desired to obtain the specific consent of Matilda's heir to the grant. The continental grants to Arrouaise and Clairmarais, in which he was a co-actor, did not benefit from the authority Stephen could bring to bear as king, since they were outside his realm. In these cases, obtaining the *laudatio* of the queen's son and heir in as binding a way as possible may have been particularly important.<sup>494</sup> One of these was the queen's exchange of the Boulonnais manor of East Donyland for Lillechurch, Kent, held by the monks of St. John's, Colchester. Eustace's attestation may reflect a wish on the part of the monks to know that he considered it a fair trade and would not attempt to reverse the decision later.<sup>495</sup>

The other two grants concern the same recipient (Holy Trinity Priory Aldgate) and the same Boulonnais manor (Braughing, Hertfordshire). Both, moreover, make reference to potential complications. Braughing was a Boulonnais demesne estate at Domesday, but in a series of transactions, the queen seems to have transferred it into Stephen's royal control; he in turn donated £16 of the manor to Hubert, his wife's chamberlain, who then gave one-quarter of it to Holy Trinity. Stephen, however, reserved the right to give Hubert land elsewhere '...in exchange for the aforementioned sixteen pounds of land...', providing that '...in that same exchange the aforesaid canons shall have their four pounds of land'.<sup>496</sup> In this event, it is unsurprising that they sought confirmation of this intent from Stephen and Matilda's heir.<sup>497</sup>

The queen's other charter dealt with a fairly complex transfer of land in Braughing between the queen's patrimony, the royal demesne, and the canons.<sup>498</sup> This could be a particularly troublesome grant, since it had so many aspects which could be disputed at a later date: the siphoning of Boulonnais land into the royal demesne; the size of the grant; the addition of tithe and

<sup>494</sup> S. D. White, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints: The Laudatio Parentum in Western France, 1050-1150* (Chapel Hill; London, 1988); RRAN 24, 26, 195, 196.

<sup>495</sup> RRAN 221.

<sup>496</sup> RRAN 509: '*Et si contigerit quod rex alibi det ei escambium de predictis xvi libratis terre, in eodem escambi habeant canonici prefati suas iiii libratis terre*'. See below, Map I, p. 239.

<sup>497</sup> See below, pp. 109-112.

<sup>498</sup> See above, p. 46, n. 223.

particularly market rights to the canons' gift. The mill next to the Tower of London, moreover, was not only a valuable piece of real estate, but could also generate significant revenue. Any of these might have given cause for a disgruntled heir to interfere with the canons' tenure, making an affirmation of the grant by Prince Eustace – heir to both the throne and the county – particularly desirable. The canons, in fact, appear to have asked for and received a confirmation charter from Eustace himself for this reason.<sup>499</sup>

Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, attested five of the queen's charters. One of these, a confirmation of land to the abbey of Bec, was undoubtedly due to his previous position as abbot of that house.<sup>500</sup> His four other attestations, however, appear to be opportunistic in nature; judging from their other witnesses, it is likely that all of them were drafted during one of the official thrice-yearly royal crown-wearings and courts. The queen's grant of her manor of Tring, Herts., to Faversham Abbey was probably made at Canterbury, so Theobald would be a logical witness as the ranking cleric there in that city.<sup>501</sup> The exchange of East Donyland for Lillechurch, which also includes Bishop Robert de Chesney of Lincoln's only attestation, may have been given just after he consecrated Robert in mid-December 1148.<sup>502</sup> The two confirmations to Holy Trinity Aldgate involving land at Braughing were made at London, probably together, at Whitsuntide 1147 or Easter 1148.<sup>503</sup> On the other hand, Theobald's relatively large number of attestations may also reflect what appears to be a genuinely friendly relationship with Queen Matilda, as evidenced by his stay in St. Omer with her during his exile after the Council of Rheims.<sup>504</sup>

The remaining seven witnesses form the true core of the queen's *familia*. At least three of these men were probably household officers for the queen, about whose personal lives relatively

<sup>499</sup> RRAN 512.

<sup>500</sup> See above, p. 103 n. 486.

<sup>501</sup> RRAN 301.

<sup>502</sup> D. E. Greenway (ed.), *Fasti Ecclesiae Anglicanae, 1066-1300: Lincoln, vol. III* (London, 1977), p. 2; RRAN 221.

<sup>503</sup> RRAN 512, 513. Cf. Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, pp. 68, 138, 145-6; E. H. Kantorowicz and M. F. Bukofzer, *Laudes Regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Mediaeval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley, 1958), pp. 171-8; H. E. J. Cowdrey, 'The Anglo-Norman *Laudes Regiae*', *Viator* 12 (1981), 46-7, 50-3.

<sup>504</sup> See above, pp. 46-47, 45.

little is known; however, it is possible to comment on their positions and careers. The most important of these personal servants of the queen was probably her chancellor, Ralph. He attests five charters: her grant of land in the vicomté of Merck to Arrouaise; her gift of an acre of land to Helmid the nun; Coggeshall Abbey's foundation charter; Matilda's confirmation of Turgis FitzHardechin's gifts to St. John's Colchester; and the grant of Cressing, Essex, to the Templars.<sup>505</sup> Ralph's title implied that he oversaw the clerks of the queen's personal chapel, who were responsible not only for fulfilling the queen's spiritual needs, but also for drafting and sealing documents in her name. Scholarly opinion is divided whether the royal chapel and *scriptorium* were separately organised during Stephen's reign, but it is unlikely that the queen-consort, who issued far fewer *acta* than the king, needed or had elaborate scriptorial bureaucracy.<sup>506</sup>

Cronne and Davis comment that Ralph cannot be proven to be in his post before 1137 or after 1141. However, the grant to Helmid and the confirmation to St. John's do not have specific dates, and may indicate that Ralph held his post for much longer than five years.<sup>507</sup> His symbolic importance as the keeper of the queen's seal is reflected in the charters which he attested; all but one of them were grants of land, which may have required a greater degree of formality – including a formal seal.<sup>508</sup> Moreover, his attestation of a charter in Normandy indicates, if only faintly, that he was part of the queen's personal entourage – it certainly suggests that it was important for the queen to travel with her own personal seal. Ralph, unlike his predecessor Bernard, Queen Matilda's chancellor who later became bishop of St. David's, does not appear to have advanced up the ecclesiastical ladder, suggesting that the general upheaval in political life after 1141 and changes in

<sup>505</sup> RRAN 24, 157, 207, 239b, 843.

<sup>506</sup> Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, pp. 240-7; Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England*, pp. 121, 133-4; cf. J. A. Green, *The Government of England under Henry I* (Cambridge, UK, 1986), pp. 27-30; W. L. Warren, *The Governance of Norman and Angevin England 1086-1272* (London, 1987), p. 83.

<sup>507</sup> RRAN 157, 239b.

<sup>508</sup> Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, p. 244.

ecclesiastical preferment made it impossible for Stephen and Matilda to exert their patronage in the same way that Henry I and Matilda of Scotland did.<sup>509</sup>

The queen's chaplain, Thomas, witnessed four charters: Matilda's confirmation and grant of land to Clairmarais Abbey; her charter allowing the Clairmarais canons to remain at their current site; her grant of custody of St. Katherine's Hospital to the priory of Holy Trinity, Aldgate; and her notification to Archbishop Theobald of her grant of Witham, Essex to St. Martin-le-Grand.<sup>510</sup> His identity is hard to determine, since two chaplains of that name served the royal couple, probably at the same time. However, one appears to have been attached to the king's household, while this particular chaplain was connected with Queen Matilda's. It is possible that he eventually became the queen's chancellor.<sup>511</sup> Thomas may have entered the queen's service late, as all of the charters he attests date from at least 1142, and most date-ranges take in 1147.<sup>512</sup>

The final member of the queen's personal staff to witness her charters was Richard of Boulogne. He attested the queen's second grant to Arrouaise; her grants to Clairmarais; and a document mortgaging her manor of Gamlingay, Cambs, to Gervase de Cornhill, a prominent Londoner.<sup>513</sup> Richard was a canon of St. Martin-le-Grand, which produced a large number of the royal family's clerks and chaplains – and was additionally the queen's natal family's main English patronage site. Stephen named him as 'his clerk' in a charter, and given his connections, Richard probably acted in the same capacity for the queen as well.<sup>514</sup> Richard was also a tenant of Matilda's, as suggested by her letter to Walter the priest of Witham instructing him to do fealty to the canons of St. Martin's '...so that during your life you should hold [it] from them just as you [previously] held it of Richard of Boulogne and you should render to them each year just as much...' and her grant of the church of Crishall to St. Martin's '...just as well as Richard of Boulogne or another

<sup>509</sup> Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England*, p. 82.

<sup>510</sup> RRAN 196, 198, 503, 541.

<sup>511</sup> RRAN III, pp. x, xiii, 412; both chaplains attested two 1145 charters of Reginald FitzCount to Godstow (see PRO Exch. K.R. Misc. bk i.20, f. 29).

<sup>512</sup> RRAN 196 (1142-7), 198 (1143-7), 503 (1147-52), 541 (1145-7).

<sup>513</sup> RRAN 26, 196, 198, 243. Cf. Round, 'London under Stephen', pp. 107-12, 120-1; below, p. 145.

<sup>514</sup> RRAN III, p.xii. Cf. RRAN 536, where Stephen calls him '*clericus meus*'.

priest held it in the time of my father, or afterwards...'.<sup>515</sup> This tenancy, and his connection to the Boulonnais comital family's premier patronage site, makes it likely that he was connected to the administration of Boulogne. In particular, his attestation of charters to continental houses concerning manors on the continent may suggest that he was a bureaucrat primarily involved with the county, rather than the honour, of Boulogne.<sup>516</sup>

The remainder of the queen's frequent attestors had some connection, greater or lesser, to the royal administration. These royal bureaucrats tended to be Matilda's most frequent attestors, suggesting that she spent a great deal of time in contact with her husband's administration. They do not generally appear in large numbers in any given charter of Queen Matilda's – an unsurprising finding given the duties these men had in royal administration. The notable exceptions to this generality are the queen's charter allowing Clairmarais Abbey to remain on its present site and her confirmation of grants to Holy Trinity at Braughing, both of which indirectly involved the king and thus had special need of witnesses based in the royal bureaucracy.<sup>517</sup>

William of Ypres, who attested two of the queen's charters to Clairmarais, Coggeshall's foundation charter, two confirmations to Holy Trinity of land in Braughing, and two administrative documents in favour of St. Martin-le-Grand, straddles the line between Boulonnais and royal officials, with ties to both the queen and the king.<sup>518</sup> William was the illegitimate son of Philip of Loo; he probably first encountered Stephen in 1127 after the murder of Count Charles the Good, since Stephen had been authorised by Henry I to back William's bid for the county.<sup>519</sup> The coup attempt failed, however, and William was banished from Flanders in 1133.<sup>520</sup> Stephen was one of the richest men in England and so could have been an excellent patron for the cast-adrift William.

<sup>515</sup> See above, p. 72, n. 346, 349.

<sup>516</sup> RRAN III, p. xii.

<sup>517</sup> RRAN 198, 512; above, pp. 46, 97.

<sup>518</sup> RRAN 196, 198, 207, 509, 512, 541, 550.

<sup>519</sup> King, 'Stephen of Blois', 26-7.

<sup>520</sup> Unless noted, below taken from R. Eales, 'William of Ypres', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29465>>, accessed 3 December 2004.

Given his later history of loyal service, it seems likely that William entered Stephen and Matilda's service not long after his banishment.

He became the commander of Stephen's Flemish mercenaries around December 1135 and accompanied both the king and Waleran de Meulan on trips to Normandy in 1137 and 1138. After his retreat at the Battle of Lincoln, which received opprobrium from all the chroniclers of the time, William appears to have played a critical role in the royal household.<sup>521</sup> John of Hexham comments that he, along with the queen's kinsman Faramus, had charge of the king's household during his captivity.<sup>522</sup> Henry of Huntingdon notes that Kent – where William was dominant – was the only holdout against the empress's tide of victory in 1141, since '...the queen and William of Ypres opposed her with all their might'.<sup>523</sup> He was also apparently Queen Matilda's military advisor and commander of her troops; Henry of Huntingdon, among others, comments that he led the queen's troops into the battle of Winchester in September 1141.<sup>524</sup> The close working relationship between Matilda and William appears to have continued after this period of crisis, as exemplified by his part in the reconciliation of Stephen and Theobald in 1148.<sup>525</sup> In return for this steadfast support, William was rewarded with significant estates that gave him *de facto* control of the strategically important county of Kent, although the king – perhaps to avoid a conflict with the count of Flanders – stopped short of granting William an earldom there.<sup>526</sup>

William of Ypres' attestations reinforce this picture of a generally close relationship. All three of the houses whose charters he witnessed had strong ties either to the comital family of Boulogne or to Stephen and Matilda's nuclear family; three cases, moreover, deal with original grants of land, the most resource-intensive and powerful statements of patronage made during this period. In fact, William seems to have had a particularly strong connection to Clairmarais, illustrated by a grant of

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<sup>521</sup> See above, pp. 38-38.

<sup>522</sup> See above, p. 38 n. 181.

<sup>523</sup> See above, p. 38.

<sup>524</sup> See above, p. 41-42.

<sup>525</sup> See above, p. 106 n. 504.

<sup>526</sup> R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, pp. 54, 57, 66-7; J. A. Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* (Cambridge, UK, 1997), p. 135.

land he gave the abbey between 1142 and 1147, witnessed by Queen Matilda and Prince Eustace.<sup>527</sup>

While this charter, which shares only two witnesses with any of the queen's charters to Clairmarais, suggests that Matilda and her commander tended to stay in close proximity, the other attestations he made also bear this out. They are, overwhelmingly within the queen's south-eastern English 'safety zone', with three at London, and one each at Bermondsey, Rochester, and Boulogne.<sup>528</sup>

Richard de Lucy, Matilda of Boulogne's most frequent attestor was more firmly entrenched in the royal bureaucracy. His family was Norman, and had hereditary lands both in Normandy and England. According to the *Cartae Baronum*, Richard's ancestors held land in Norfolk, Suffolk, and Kent, for which they did castle guard service at Dover; Henry I augmented this with additional grants in Suffolk from royal demesne.<sup>529</sup> Richard's entry into Stephen's service is unclear – he may have been in Henry I's service, as a grant of royal demesne may denote, or in Stephen's as count of Mortain or Boulogne. At any rate, he witnessed charters for the king from the beginning of the reign, and – as Orderic Vitalis notes – successfully defended Falaise against Geoffrey of Anjou for Stephen in 1138.<sup>530</sup> His worth to the king as an administrator can be gauged by his recall to England around 1140.<sup>531</sup>

It is probably at this point that Richard's career in the royal household began to take off. By 1143, he held a wide variety of offices: sheriff of Hertfordshire and Essex; local justice for Middlesex, London, and Essex; and by 1154 chief justiciar.<sup>532</sup> Along with this increased power – which, notably, was almost entirely local – came land and wealth. Stephen granted Richard land in Essex and Sussex, including the valuable and strategic manor of Chipping Ongar, Essex. As a result, Richard gathered together a barony with Chipping Ongar as its *caput*, and became one of the most important 'new men' in the critical royalist stronghold of Essex. Amt suggests that these

<sup>527</sup> RRAN 200.

<sup>528</sup> RRAN 196, 198, 207, 512, 541, 550.

<sup>529</sup> Unless noted, taken from E. Amt, 'Richard de Lucy, Henry II's Justiciar', *Medieval Prosopography* 9:1 (1988), 61-85; cf. E. Amt, 'Richard de Lucy', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17149>>, accessed 3 December 2004.

<sup>530</sup> OV, p.526; Amt, 'Richard de Lucy', 64.

<sup>531</sup> Amt, *Accession*, p. 67.

<sup>532</sup> Amt, 'Richard de Lucy', 64.

interlocking curial and local ties, which were typical of Essex in the period, helped reinforce the county's loyalty to the king and queen.<sup>533</sup>

This combination of local and curial interests is reflected in the charters Richard witnessed for Matilda of Boulogne: one to Arrouaise; two to Clairmarais; a land exchange involving St. John's Colchester; Coggeshall's foundation charter; three charters to Holy Trinity; and two to St. Martin-le-Grand.<sup>534</sup> In some cases, his attestation appears to be directly related to his position in local administration. In the case of the charters to St. Martin's, both document transactions involving Boulonnais land in Essex. Richard would, at least, be one of 'all [Matilda's] men and tenants' notified, while in the court proceedings over the manor of Mashbury, Essex, that Richard witnessed, he was actually addressed by name. This may have reflected his standing in the queen's honorial court, or that the situation now required the intervention of the county's royal justice.<sup>535</sup> The land exchange for St. John's also involved an Essex manor, making it likely that he was, again, involved in his role as a local justice, since he would have the authority to enforce the agreement on Stephen's behalf.

However, Richard was also a tenant of the honour of Boulogne, and would be required, at least on occasion, to attend the honorial court. His attestations of the St. Martin's grants indicate that the presence of the most powerful, influential vassals of the countess were expected to attend her courts and possibly to participate, either as jurors or advocates. His presence at the Arrouaise and Clairmarais grants may reflect similar concerns. The grant Matilda made to Clairmarais, however, was originally authorised by King Stephen, possibly necessitating a royal official's presence; moreover, both this grant and the Arrouaise grant were made overseas, suggesting that Richard may have had some responsibility for the queen's travel plans or safety.<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>533</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 334-8; Amt, *Accession*, pp. 67-8; Amt, 'Richard de Lucy', 65-7.

<sup>534</sup> RRAN 26, 196, 198, 221, 301, 509, 512, 513, 541, 550.

<sup>535</sup> RRAN 550.

<sup>536</sup> RRAN 196, 26.

At any rate, Richard would have had ample opportunity to interact with Matilda in London and the southeast as both a royal official in the southeast of England and a tenant of the queen's honour. The largest number of his attestations were in fact made at London, and with one exception, the remaining charters he witnessed in England were given in Kent.<sup>537</sup> This would logically have been Richard's main area of residence; his wife's burial at Holy Trinity may indicate his primary residence was in London, making it easy for him to attest for the queen.<sup>538</sup> Given these connections to the queen, who took on the role of regent during the turmoil of 1141, it is not unreasonable to suggest that Richard de Lucy played a previously unnoticed role as advisor and liaison for the queen.

William Martel had a much more clearly defined place in the royal bureaucracy. He began his career in Henry I's service, rising to become one of four stewards – responsible for provisioning the royal court with food and linen – by Stephen's 1135 accession; his position as steward suggests that his social origins lay in Henry I's aristocratic 'new men'.<sup>539</sup> Crouch comments that William may have acted as a 'spymaster' for Stephen in Henry I's final years, since he spent 1134 and 1135 in Normandy with the old king yet appeared in England for Stephen's coronation.<sup>540</sup> If this were the case, it would help explain why William, unlike Henry I's other stewards Humphrey de Bohun, Robert Malet, and Hugh Bigod, did not defect to the empress.<sup>541</sup> For much of the reign he was Stephen's only steward, and quickly became a leading administrator in Stephen's regime.<sup>542</sup>

After 1141 he was almost constantly in attendance on the king, as shown by his 181 attestations for Stephen; moreover, he was one of the select group of *curiales* who dominated the court after 1142.<sup>543</sup> Finally, he appeared to have wielded significant power in two areas of the country: Dorset, where he was a regional governor similar to William of Ypres in 1143, and Surrey,

<sup>537</sup> RRAN 512, 513, 541, 550 (Bermondsey); 198, 301 (Kent); 221 (Oxford?).

<sup>538</sup> Amt, 'Richard de Lucy', 82.

<sup>539</sup> RRAN III, p. xviii; W. L. Warren, *Governance of England*, pp. 78-9.

<sup>540</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 32n, 38.

<sup>541</sup> RRAN III, p. xviii.

<sup>542</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 98-9, 102, 162.

<sup>543</sup> RRAN III, p. xviii; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, p. 223.

where he acted as local justice and sheriff. He additionally presided over the 1150 county court of Norfolk and Suffolk.<sup>544</sup> William's desirability as a witness for Matilda of Boulogne appears to have stemmed directly from his increased prestige as a 'new man' after 1142. All six charters he attested date from no earlier than 1143, and most centre on the years 1145-1148.<sup>545</sup> This probably reflects William's growing role as a *curialis* and, as Crouch puts it, 'military governor' responsible for the smooth administration of a local area; in all likelihood, William's status as justice for Surrey suggests that he was a substantial landholder there.<sup>546</sup>

The specific charters William attested also reflect his ties to the southeast, and suggest that he had links to the honour or county of Boulogne. The final Clairmarais charter between 1143 and 1147 may show him in connection with either the royal or Boulonnais court, since the witnesses are a mixture of both officials.<sup>547</sup> In the latter part of Matilda's tenure, William witnessed the exchange of the Boulonnais manor of East Donyland, Essex, for Lillechurch, Kent, as well as an undatable writ commanding two other Boulonnais tenants to reaise the monks of Colchester.<sup>548</sup> His curial status probably explains his attestation of the queen's confirmation of lands in Braughing to Holy Trinity Aldgate, since it was likely made at a court gathering and has several high-status episcopal witnesses.<sup>549</sup> Matilda and William may have had a long working relationship, at least where London or Holy Trinity was concerned, as both of them appear as advocates for the prior in a *coram rege* case between the castellan of the Tower and the priory in the first year of Stephen's reign.<sup>550</sup> Finally, William witnessed two documents involving the college of St. Martin-le-Grand and Boulonnais manors in Essex: the notification to Archbishop Theobald of the donation of Witham church and the Boulonnais honorial court decision involving Mashbury.<sup>551</sup>

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<sup>544</sup> RRAN III, pp. xxii-v; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 205-8, 338.

<sup>545</sup> See above, p. 99, n.465.

<sup>546</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 327, 440-2; W. L. Warren, *Governance of England*, pp. 81-2.

<sup>547</sup> RRAN 198.

<sup>548</sup> RRAN 221, 239d.

<sup>549</sup> RRAN 512, attested by Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, Robert bishop of London, Robert bishop of Hereford, Robert bishop of Exeter, Hilary bishop of Chichester, and William bishop of Norwich.

<sup>550</sup> RRAN 506.

<sup>551</sup> RRAN 541, 550.

The final frequent attestor for Matilda of Boulogne, Warner de Lusors, is probably the most enigmatic. Warner was the second most prolific of the queen's witnesses, witnessing Matilda's charters to Holy Trinity concerning Braughing and St. Katherine's (as well as Stephen's confirmation of Braughing); her final charter to Clairmarais; a writ to St. John's Colchester ordering tenants to return land; and her mortgage of Gamlingay, Cambs. to Gervase de Cornhill. All of these documents are administrative and show the queen in her role as countess, alienating patrimonial land and directing her retainers' actions. This strongly suggests that Warner played some official role in the queen's patrimonial honour, especially since many document complicated land transfers where a trusted retainer's aid was necessary.<sup>552</sup> However, all his attestations of Matilda's charters were made in the southeast of England: four in London and one each at Castle Hedingham, Colchester, Rochester, and Windsor.<sup>553</sup> This pattern of attesting in areas of Boulonnais hegemony and prestige suggests that he was an official of the honour, or possibly of the crown in the southeast. The dates of his attestations – six were definitely made after Stephen's 1142 shift from territorial magnates to royal retainers as administrators – and the large number of *acta* he witnessed for the king may suggest that he was a royal official.<sup>554</sup> Finally, Warner de Lusors attested two charters of Queen Matilda's alone; although it is difficult to determine what place, if any, Warner played in government, these charters show evidence of his possible involvement in the honour of Boulogne or the royal administration in Essex.

However, close examination of the charters he witnessed tends to favour his identity as a Boulonnais official. He was the sole witness to two of the queen's administrative writs, which might imply he was a retainer of the queen's charged with enforcing them. The first is an order to Walter, the parish priest of Witham, to do fealty to the canons of St. Martin-le-Grand for his prebend, while the other demands that the queen's tenant Geoffrey de Tregoz take the chapter of St.

<sup>552</sup> RRAN 198, 239d, 243, 503, 512, 513.

<sup>553</sup> RRAN 224, 243, 512, 513 (London); 503 (Castle Hedingham); 239d (Colchester); 198 (Rochester); 539 (Windsor).

<sup>554</sup> D. Crouch, *The Beaumont Twins: The Roots and Branches of Power in the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 51; Vincent, 'New Charters of Stephen', pp. 910-11.

John's, Colchester, as his lord.<sup>555</sup> In both cases, the land involved was in Essex, and the recipient was ordered to transfer his allegiance from one lord to another. In addition, Warner witnessed Matilda's charters to Holy Trinity concerning Braughing and St. Katherine's (as well as Stephen's confirmation of Braughing); her final charter to Clairmarais; a writ to St. John's Colchester ordering tenants to return land; and her mortgage of Gamlingay, Cambs. to Gervase de Cornhill. All of these documents are administrative and show the queen in her role as countess, alienating patrimonial land and directing her retainers' actions. This strongly suggests that Warner played some official role in the queen's patrimonial honour, especially since many document complicated land transfers where a trusted retainer's aid was necessary.<sup>556</sup>

From this prosopographical analysis, it should be clear that Matilda's frequent attestors served either herself as countess, or the royal administration.<sup>557</sup> It is also worth examining individual charters attested by a large proportion of these witnesses, in order to determine if there were any cases where curial support was particularly desired. Two *acta* were witnessed by six of Matilda's nine frequent attestors, which suggests that the corroboration of court members was particularly important in these cases.

The first was the queen's writ to Clairmarais, allowing the house to remain on its contemporary site, rather than the site that she and King Stephen had provided for it.<sup>558</sup> This charter was given at Rochester, possibly in connection with a court occasion. More importantly, however, the abbey of Clairmarais was connected with the county of Flanders. Heather Tanner comments that the royal couple's and William of Ypres's grants of land to the abbey served to bind the English throne to Count Thierry, whose support – or, at least, neutrality – was desperately important to the royal cause for both strategic and personal reasons.<sup>559</sup> This charter helped to bolster the peace between Flanders and England, and possibly prevented an escalation in tensions between the two

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<sup>555</sup> RRAN 539, 224; cf. F.

<sup>556</sup> RRAN 198, 239d, 243, 503, 511, 512, 513.

<sup>557</sup> Cf. Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England*, pp.208-16.

<sup>558</sup> RRAN 198.

<sup>559</sup> Tanner, 'Queenship', p. 140.

politics by abrogating any claims on the abbey by Matilda and Stephen. In such a case, it was particularly important to have the attestation of high-prestige curial officials, both royal and Boulonnais, such as William of Ypres, Richard de Lucy, and William Martel, as a means of broadcasting and cementing the royal couple's intent.<sup>560</sup>

The other charter that a majority of the queen's frequent attestors witnessed, the queen's confirmation of gifts to Holy Trinity in Braughing, Herts., was much different. There was no question of international diplomacy involved. Instead, it essentially documented a variety of grants to the priory, as both the creation of St. Katherine's hospital and the addition of six poundsworth of land to the royal demesne are mentioned within it.<sup>561</sup> The fact that it documented the formation of a new religious foundation may be one reason for the large number of frequent attestors, as might its complexity and mentions of royal demesne – having both Boulonnais and royal officials on hand to attest would ensure its fairness and inviolability. However, its date provides a much simpler reason for the large number of frequent attestors appended to it. It was given in London between August 1147 and April 1148, almost certainly at the Christmas or Easter court, both of which were held in London.<sup>562</sup> A large number of magnates and retainers were certain to be present at a court occasion, particularly one held in London, so drafting an *actum* at that time ensured a sufficient number of witnesses.

A few of the queen's retainers and family witnessed for her only occasionally, suggesting that their duties or connection to the queen were more tenuous and intermittent, or their social status lower, than those of the frequent attestors. The queen's steward, William Monk, is a case in point. He attested the queen's first confirmation to Clairmarais and her grant of Cressing, Essex, to the Templars.<sup>563</sup> The former, given its date of 1142 and its other witnesses, was probably granted on the continent, while the latter was definitely given at Évreux during the king and queen's 1137 spring

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<sup>560</sup> Thomas the chaplain, Eustace, Richard of Boulogne, William of Ypres, Richard de Lucy, William Martel, Warner de Lusors, and Lambert, abbot of Boxley.

<sup>561</sup> RRAN 512.

<sup>562</sup> RRAN III, p. xliii.

<sup>563</sup> RRAN 195, 845.

trip to Normandy.<sup>564</sup> Since William is one of the queen's only witnesses to act exclusively on the continent, it seems likely that he was steward for the county of Boulogne, overseeing the queen's interests as countess when she was not present.<sup>565</sup> His usefulness to the royalist cause can be seen in Robert of Torigni's chronicle, which comments that he was the castellan of Arques, the last Norman castle to hold out against Geoffrey of Anjou; he was '...accidentally killed in the tower by an arrow...' in 1145.<sup>566</sup> That Stephen would install one of his wife's retainers as castellan is not surprising, given his increasingly desperate situation in Normandy in the mid-1140s.<sup>567</sup>

Matilda of Boulogne's chamberlain, Hubert, attested three charters, and the reason for this paucity is unclear. It is possible, however, that his duties as chamberlain – which included overseeing the queen's treasury and personal items, paying out money on her behalf, and possibly even overseeing the education of the couple's children – kept him relatively stationary.<sup>568</sup> The specifics of the charters he attested make it somewhat difficult to tell if such was the case, however. At Easter 1137, he was in Évreux with Matilda and witnessed her grant of Cressing, Essex, to the Templars.<sup>569</sup> Between 1139 and 1141, he was in London, where he attested Coggeshall's foundation grant; finally, he was in London again between 1145 and 1147 to attest the notification to Archbishop Theobald of the donation of Witham church to St. Martin's.<sup>570</sup> Hubert's duties probably led him to Normandy with Matilda in 1137, since one of his duties was to oversee the queen's wardrobe and household goods.<sup>571</sup>

If he also oversaw the movement of money into and out of the queen's household, it is possible that he spent a great deal of time travelling between estates, possibly in a formal

<sup>564</sup> RRAN 195.

<sup>565</sup> See below, p. 118 n. 566.

<sup>566</sup> RT, pp. 58-59; H. J. Tanner, 'The Expansion of the Power and Influence of the Counts of Boulogne under Eustace II', *ANS* 14 (1991), 251, 276-7.

<sup>567</sup> Crouch, *Beaumont Twins*, p. 51ff.

<sup>568</sup> W. L. Warren, *Governance of England*, p. 78; Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, pp. 422, 428; J. A. Green, *Government of England under Henry I*, pp. 27-8, 43.

<sup>569</sup> RRAN 843.

<sup>570</sup> RRAN 207, 541.

<sup>571</sup> Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, pp. 229-31.

administrative role, leaving him little opportunity to attest.<sup>572</sup> A writ Hubert gave on the queen's behalf, ordering Alfred the clerk and other officials of the queen's manor of Crishall, Essex, to give the canons their tithes there, may bear this out.<sup>573</sup> It suggests that Hubert was empowered to act on his mistress's behalf in her patrimony, at least in the late 1140s; given that it became increasingly dangerous for Matilda to travel, it is logical that she would have an itinerant retainer as her man on the ground.<sup>574</sup> This is, however, nearly impossible to determine, and the vagaries of document survival – and possible Hubert's low status – explain the ambiguous evidence as well.

Henry of Essex, a royal official, attested three charters for Queen Matilda. Their recipients, timing, and contents imply that at least part of the reason he did so was his status as a major Essex landholder and tenant of the honour of Boulogne. His influence and sphere of action was predominantly local – Amt comments he was a local justice for Essex – although he did become constable near the end of Stephen's reign.<sup>575</sup> His attestations – of the queen's charter granting custody of St. Katherine's Hospital to Holy Trinity; her confirmations of gifts in Braughing to that house; and her grant of the manor of Tring to Faversham – all date from the late 1140s, consistent with an entry into politics fairly late in the reign.<sup>576</sup> The confirmation to Holy Trinity was made at London, probably at a royal court, the grant to Faversham was made at Canterbury – connected with either a court or the queen's extended residence to oversee the house's construction – and the transfer of St. Katherine's, made at Castle Hedingham, is often connected with the queen's death.<sup>577</sup> These occasions would have been particularly public, opportune times to make specific alienations – and for local royal officials to interact with the queen.

Having examined the queen's charters and their witnesses, it seems obvious that those men closest to Matilda of Boulogne were either members of her personal staff, who tended to double as

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<sup>572</sup> See above, p. 113 n. 539.

<sup>573</sup> RLAN 554.

<sup>574</sup> *VCH Herts III*, p.308; RLAN 509.

<sup>575</sup> Amt, *Accession*, pp. 39-41, 66, 114-15; Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 334-8.

<sup>576</sup> RLAN 503 (1147-52), 512 (Aug. 1147-Apr. 1148), and 301 (1148-52).

<sup>577</sup> RLAN III, p.xliii; RLAN 503.

officials of the honour and county of Boulogne, or royal administrators. This begs the question of whether the queen had a household of her own, or was merely part of King Stephen's wider entourage. Examining the king's charters – and their witnesses – and comparing them to the queen's, as well as examining Matilda's attestations of her husband's charters, provides the most fruitful means of answering this question. First, the limitations of this approach must be noted. Stephen spent much of the reign travelling the country in the course of waging war.<sup>578</sup> Matilda, on the other hand, remained relatively static in the area around London and the southeast.<sup>579</sup>

This, to a certain extent, limited her ability to attest for Stephen. Of the fifty-two charters that Matilda attested for her husband, thirty-nine give their place of origin.<sup>580</sup> Twenty-eight of these charters were granted in the immediate vicinity of London.<sup>581</sup> Two charters each were granted in Kent, Hertfordshire, and Essex, all areas where the queen's influence was especially strong. Two more were given in Normandy during the 1137 trip, when royal authority there was at its height.<sup>582</sup> Even charters granted away from the queen's sphere of authority tended to be in areas less than 100 miles from London.<sup>583</sup> This tendency for the queen to remain near the capital highlights her role as administrative deputy, but limited her ability to attest, and probably also reduced her pool of potential attestors.

Dating provides another limit; a significant number of the queen's attestations were made in the first two years of Stephen's reign.<sup>584</sup> There are number of reasons for this. The first years of the reign were the most peaceful, offering the queen the largest number of chances to be with her husband, and thus to attest. Moreover, Stephen, like any Anglo-Norman king, was expected to issue

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<sup>578</sup> RRAN III, pp. xxxix-xliv.

<sup>579</sup> See above, p. 98ff.

<sup>580</sup> RRAN 34, 35, 162, 184, 185, 200, 204, 207a, 249, 276, 284, 312, 327, 341, 402, 446, 471, 477, 478, 479, 483, 501, 505, 507, 508, 511, 538, 598, 633, 643, 662, 667, 678, 694, 718, 740, 743, 757, 760, 829, 830, 842, 921, 928, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 956, 957, 960, G, H, I.

<sup>581</sup> London and vicinity: RRAN 34, 185, 341, 402, 446, 477, 479, 483, 501, 505, 507, 508, 511, 633, 694, 740, 743, 760, 829, 830, 842, 928, 945, 946, 947, 948, 957, H.

<sup>582</sup> Kent: RRAN 162, 276 (Canterbury). Herts: RRAN 538 (Cheshunt), 662 (St. Albans). Essex: RRAN 207a (Coggeshall), H (Saffron Walden). Normandy: RRAN 598 (Lyons-la-Forêt), 327 (Rouen).

<sup>583</sup> RRAN 678 (Reading), 478, 643, 667 (Oxford), 204, 341 (Winchester), 248 (Stamford), 288 (Eye), 312 (Marlborough), 921 (Waverley), 960 (Guildford), 35 (Windsor).

<sup>584</sup> Tanner, 'Queenship', p. 139.

a large number of confirmatory charters on accession. Nonetheless, this temporal bias may have affected the number and identity of the queen's pool of attestors, specifically by making it easier for royal functionaries to witness Matilda of Boulogne's charters; Matilda's own charters may show these effects, since functionaries make up a large proportion of her witnesses.

Despite these limitations, the king's charters still have a great deal of value in determining the queen's household and its relation to his own. Eighty-seven separate people attested for the queen; of these, only thirty-five – considerably less than half the total – also attested for King Stephen. There are a number of possible explanations for this: that the two royal households were relatively separate; that the majority of the queen's attestors were not attached to her household; or that a few members of the king's *familia* were also members of the queen's, making the latter a subset of the former. The second of these propositions is highly likely to be true. Only twenty-seven of Matilda of Boulogne's attestors witnessed more than one charter; this is less than one-third of her total attestor pool. Moreover, her most frequent witnesses had ties to the king's household and witnessed royal charters as well. This means that the majority of the attestors to the queen's charters were 'expedient' witnesses, men who happened to be in the vicinity when the charter was given; alternatively, they were connected with the recipient of the grant, and so tended, given the queen's low output of charters, to attest very infrequently.

Comparing the frequency with which different sub-groups of the queen's frequent and occasional attestors witnessed for the king is also helpful. Tanner briefly attempts such an analysis in her 2002 article, giving a comparison of attestation frequency by various witnesses in her Chart 6.3.<sup>585</sup> She claims that only Hubert, the queen's chamberlain, attested for Stephen, but this is not the case. Several of the queen's personal retainers witnessed charters for the king; however, they tended to do so extremely infrequently and in circumstances which highlight their specific connection to the queen. Ralph, Matilda's chancellor, witnesses a confirmation the king gave to Missenden

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<sup>585</sup> Tanner, 'Queenship', pp. 142-9.

Abbey, as well as one to Waverley Abbey.<sup>586</sup> Both were given before or during 1140 – fairly early in the reign when the queen still had relatively frequent contact with her husband.<sup>587</sup> The former was given at Windsor, probably during a royal court; the latter, however, also attested by the queen, particularly stresses Ralph's service to the queen.

Thomas the chaplain witnessed a restorative grant Stephen made to Holy Trinity between 1140 and 1146, and the confirmation by Stephen of Matilda's writ to Clairmarais.<sup>588</sup> Once again, his ties to the queen's specific service are highlighted by his attestations. Matilda herself also witnessed the Holy Trinity grant, while the Clairmarais grant was probably given contemporaneously with her own, obviating any need for her to witness.<sup>589</sup> Richard of Boulogne and William Monk witnessed the same charter – Stephen's confirmation of an annual rent to the hospital of St. Mary Magdalen, Boulogne.<sup>590</sup> Although Queen Matilda did not attest this charter, it was granted at Rouen during the royal couple's 1137 Norman trip. In this case, the recipient's being Boulonnais appears to have been the deciding factor in their attestation, since both men almost certainly were involved in the administration of the county's continental possessions.<sup>591</sup>

In contrast, Hubert the queen's chamberlain witnessed four charters for the king: the grant of an annual fair to St. Augustine's, Canterbury; a grant of land in Kent to Holy Trinity, as well as confirmation of it; and a grant of a tithe of the royal ferm to Southwark Priory.<sup>592</sup> Queen Matilda also attested the first and last of these grants, which bear place-dates suggestive of royal courts, highlighting Hubert's particular connection to her specifically.<sup>593</sup> Hubert is the only witness to the two charters benefiting Holy Trinity Aldgate, but there are several points that suggest that these were essentially opportunistic attestations. Both are writs, where attestation was not nearly as

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<sup>586</sup> RRAN 596, 921.

<sup>587</sup> RRAN 596 (1136-40), 921 (1140).

<sup>588</sup> RRAN 507 (1140-6 at London), 199 (1143-7 at Rochester).

<sup>589</sup> RRAN III, p.412.

<sup>590</sup> RRAN 117.

<sup>591</sup> RRAN III, p. xii; above, p. 117 n. 566.

<sup>592</sup> RRAN 162, 516, 517, 830.

<sup>593</sup> RRAN 162 (1136-1145 at Canterbury), 830 (1139-1152 at London).

important as in other documents, and both were given at Westminster, suggesting that they were generated at a court occasion, possibly even the queen's coronation.<sup>594</sup>

In general, the queen's personal retainers attested relatively seldom for King Stephen, and the attestations they did make were either opportunistic or due directly to their position as members of the queen's staff. Royal servants who attested frequently for the queen, however, tended to also be prolific witnesses to the king's charters – and often witnessed only a few charters to which the queen also attested. Additionally, a significant number of the king's most frequent attestors witnessed at least once for the queen, suggesting that she was in relatively close contact with, and probably a satellite of, the king's court. For instance, three of Matilda of Boulogne's top five attestors – Richard de Lucy, William of Ypres, and William Martel – were also among Stephen's.<sup>595</sup> Richard's 144 attestations include only twenty-two made together with the queen, which suggests that, unlike Hubert, Ralph, or the queen's other personal retainers, his service was rendered to the king. William Martel shows a similar disjunction, since only twenty-five of his 186 attestations were made with the queen.<sup>596</sup> William of Ypres made sixty-one attestations for Stephen, of which slightly more than a quarter the queen also witnessed; this is an unsurprising result given that William appears to have been in more sustained, closer contact with the queen while acting as her military commander than most of the king's officials would have been.<sup>597</sup>

The findings are similar for others of Matilda's frequent attestors. Warner de Lusors and Prince Eustace were jointly Stephen's twelfth most frequent witnesses with thirty-six attestations each; Warner was the queen's second most frequent attestor and Prince Eustace her fourth most frequent. Only Archbishop Theobald, Matilda's fourth most frequent attestor, came lower on Stephen's list of witnesses at eighteenth. Finally, of the thirty-seven witnesses of Stephen's charters

<sup>594</sup> RRAN III, pp. xxvi-xxvii; above, p. 119 n. 574.

<sup>595</sup> Tanner, 'Queenship', p. 149, chart 6.3.

<sup>596</sup> Both are less than 2/5 of their respective totals.

<sup>597</sup> 17 of William's attestations were made with the queen.

Tanner lists, fully twenty also attest at least one charter for the queen as well.<sup>598</sup> Of the remainder, one is the queen herself, four are bishops (including William de Corbeil, who died in November 1136) and four were in the king's personal service, as chancellor, chaplain, chamberlain, steward, or butler.<sup>599</sup>

From this analysis, it seems clear that Matilda of Boulogne's role administering the county and honour of Boulogne and generally overseeing the royal bureaucracy left its mark in the attestation of her charters. She tended to stay within a short distance of London, and had a relatively small personal staff, consonant with her immobility, which tended not to interact with the far more active and mobile king on an independent basis. These men aside, however, the most frequent attestors to her charters, with whom she worked most closely and interacted with most often, were members of the royal bureaucracy, and in particular members of the local administration of areas where she was especially powerful, such as Essex. Her most frequent attestors closely matched the king's, which suggests that their *familiae* were not just blended, but identical. The queen, rather than creating a rival court for herself, entered into the life of her husband's court to the fullest. She was an integral and highly, perhaps supremely, influential member of his *familia*. In return, she drew important royal bureaucrats to her, possibly reflecting a remit on their parts to protect the queen, but certainly giving ample demonstration of her power, prestige, and activity in contemporary politics.

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<sup>598</sup> Tanner, 'Queenship', p. 149 chart 6.3. Tanner erroneously claims that Roger of Salisbury and William III de Warenne did not attest for Queen Matilda; Roger attested A, while William witnessed RRAN 207; see below, Table I, p. 243.

<sup>599</sup> RRAN III, pp. x, xii, xvii-ix, 384.

## Chapter IV: Matilda's Authority as Countess, Queen, Wife, and Mother

### *Part 1: Types of Authority*

One of the more pressing questions surrounding a medieval noblewoman's career was that of her authority, defined by Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski as the socially sanctioned right to command others, as distinct from more informal forms of influence, however powerful.<sup>600</sup> Having the ability to make and enforce decisions, or to exert her will on subordinates, was the crucial first step in being able to act in the political arena. This chapter will examine Matilda of Boulogne's authority and its effects on her political role. After a discussion of its sources and nature, some of her actions and documents will be analysed to determine how her authority affected the queen's ability to take part in England's turbulent political life. The final section will involve 'case studies' of other actions – this discussion will be somewhat more in-depth, and will attempt to plot the limits of the queen's authority.

The starting point for this discussion is the variety, or varieties, of authority Matilda of Boulogne could draw upon, which in turn mediated the type and range of actions she could undertake. It appears that Matilda had six different types of authority on which she could draw, stemming from a variety of sources: personal, charismatic, patrimonial, wifely, queenly, and motherly. Perhaps the most basic of these was the authority she gained from the force of her own personality. It is, admittedly, difficult to reconstruct the character of a subject when viewing them through the constructed projection of narrative sources. However, there is enough narrative material to gain an idea of Matilda's personality. She was a decisive, highly forceful, courageous woman, as even her detractors admitted.<sup>601</sup> Because of this, she was willing and able to take action that other women could or would not; moreover, her decisive character was likely to win the loyalty of fighting men to her cause and keep it there. Her direction of troops at Dover in 1138 and at London

<sup>600</sup> M. Erler and M. Kowaleski (eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (London, 1988), p. 2.

<sup>601</sup> Cf. above, p. 43 n. 202.

and Winchester in 1141, for example, would have been impossible if she had been a shy, retiring person.<sup>602</sup> Similarly, the men who Orderic reports as remaining with Matilda after Stephen's capture were reacting, in part, to the sheer force of her character.<sup>603</sup>

Charisma, defined by André Vauchez in an influential article as '...a magical quality linked to high birth...', was the second source of Matilda's authority. This mystical quality, which separated nobles from peasants, ultimately justified the position of rulership held by those who possessed it.<sup>604</sup> In some cases, this power became almost sacred; the large number of saint-kings or holy royal women associated with the dynasties of Sweden, Russia, and Hungary meant that royal authority and charisma became increasingly intertwined with holiness – thereby further boosting the charisma and authority of the dynasty through the generations.<sup>605</sup>

Matilda of Boulogne inherited a strong measure of this sacred charisma from both sides of her family. Both her mother's mother, Margaret of Scotland, second wife of Malcolm III Canmore, king of Scots and her mother's sister, Matilda of Scotland, first wife of Henry I, were queens-consort famous for their sanctity; Margaret, in fact, was canonised around 1250.<sup>606</sup> Matilda of Boulogne's maternal grandfather, Malcolm Canmore, was an anointed king. Her father's family was equally illustrious. Matilda's paternal grandmother, Countess Ida of Boulogne, was a descendant of Charlemagne and also famous for her sanctity, although she never attained canonisation. Her charisma passed down to her three sons, all of whom embarked on the First Crusade, where they excelled. Her middle son Godfrey was chosen by the crusaders to be the first ruler of Jerusalem, the youngest, Baldwin, became its first crowned king. Eustace III, Matilda's

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<sup>602</sup> Cf. above, p. 32-32, 40-42.

<sup>603</sup> Cf above, p. 38.

<sup>604</sup> A. Vauchez, 'Beata Stirps': Sainteté et lignage en occident aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles', in G. Duby and J. Le Goff (eds.), *Famille et parenté dans l'Occident médiéval* (Roma, 1977), pp. 398-9: '...une qualité magique liée au fait de la haut naissance'.

<sup>605</sup> Vauchez, 'Beata Stirps', pp. 400-2; G. Duby, *Medieval Marriage: Two Models from Twelfth-Century France*, trans. E. Forster (London, 1991), pp. 4-5.

<sup>606</sup> D. Baker, 'A Nursery of Saints': St Margaret of Scotland Reconsidered', in D. Baker (ed.), *Mediaeval Women: Dedicated and Presented to Rosalind M.T. Hill on the Occasion of her Seventieth Birthday* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 119-21.

father, was himself offered the crown but refused it.<sup>607</sup> This glittering panoply of noble, saintly, charismatic ancestors allowed her to project herself as a natural charismatic leader, and, because of the medieval linkage between charisma and leadership, to act as one.<sup>608</sup>

As well as a large measure of metaphysical, charismatic authority, Matilda also inherited the concrete authority that accompanied her status as countess *jure suo* as Eustace III's retirement in 1125 to Rumilly gave her control of all his lands. The charter signalling Eustace's retirement by donating money to Cluny and Rumilly describes Stephen as '...count of Boulogne, to whom I gave my inheritance with Matilda, my daughter [in marriage]...'; it suggests, however, that Matilda had authority at least to the extent that marriage to her was the *sine qua non* of the county's transfer.<sup>609</sup> The reality of Matilda's authority is affirmed by her description as *comitissa* and the affixing of her seal to mark her assent.<sup>610</sup> Both suggest not only that her confirmation was crucial to the success of the transfer, but also that she had a measure of real authority in the county as early as 1125. Her possession and use of a seal would be extremely useful in lending weight to her orders. Stephen's making all extant grants as count of Boulogne jointly with Matilda further corroborates her authority as countess.<sup>611</sup> Matilda's ability to exert active control over her patrimony almost certainly increased on Stephen's accession in 1135; the king was too preoccupied and too often absent, from the beginning of his reign, to take much of an interest in Boulonnais administration.

The specific Boulonnais authority that Matilda inherited from her father of course ran only as far as the county and honour of Boulogne; however, despite the county's relatively small size, its strategic value, and thus its political utility, was high. The county contained two of the most well-used and convenient cross-Channel ports, Boulogne itself and Wissant. This gave the counts of Boulogne a definitive advantage in continental trade; the increased commercial activity of St-Omer

<sup>607</sup> Murray, *Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, ch. 3; above, p. 53 n. 253.

<sup>608</sup> *ibid.*, p. 27; Vauchez, 'Beata Stirps', pp. 398-406; G. Klaniczay, 'Legends as Life-Strategies for Aspirant Saints in the Later Middle Ages', in G. Klaniczay et al. (eds.), *The Uses of Supernatural Power: The Transformation of Popular Religion in Medieval and Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 105-6.

<sup>609</sup> Bruel, *Chartes de Cluny*, no. 3984: '...comite Boloniensi, cui hereditatem meam cum Mathildi, filia mea, dedi...'

<sup>610</sup> *ibid.*, no. 3984: '...S. Matildis, comitisse, que et laudavit'. Bruel does not describe Matilda's comital seal.

<sup>611</sup> King, 'Stephen of Blois', p. 287.

and Arras in the twelfth century tended to amplify it.<sup>612</sup> Moreover, the prestige and independence that came with a continental possession gave the comital family an additional measure of authority and pomp in England, where the bulk of their twelfth-century wealth lay.<sup>613</sup> In England, the honour of Boulogne, bestowed on Count Eustace II, Matilda's grandfather, as a reward for his aiding William in the Conquest, was worth approximately £ 915 at the time of the Domesday survey; this made the count the seventh richest layman in England after William the Conqueror.<sup>614</sup>

These holdings stretched over twelve counties, but were particularly concentrated in the south-east of England, where the honour was the dominant lay land interest in Essex, and second only to the honour of Mortain (held at the time by Stephen) in Hertfordshire.<sup>615</sup> This concentration of Boulonnais landed power in the fertile farmland around London, combined with the counts' possession of the most important of the capital's continental trading partners, probably gave the comital family of Boulogne a disproportionate level of influence in London by Stephen's reign.<sup>616</sup> This influence would have been further deepened by the interests the comital family had in London itself, notably those connected to the college of St. Martin-le-Grand, whose patronage the counts of Boulogne had taken over from its founder, Ingelric the priest, when Eustace II received his lands sometime before the Domesday survey.<sup>617</sup> Its importance to the Boulonnais counts – and by extension their local power in London – can be gauged by the fact that one of the count's honorial courts was held there.<sup>618</sup>

Matilda of Boulogne's wifely and queenly authority were interlocking. On her marriage to Stephen, Matilda took on his interests, and was expected to act to further them. Clerical attitudes toward marriage, which stressed the wife's duty to influence her husband's actions toward religious

<sup>612</sup> P. Grierson, 'The Relations between England and Flanders before the Norman Conquest', in R. W. Southern (ed.), *Essays in Medieval History: Selected from the TRHS on the Occasion of its Centenary* (London, 1968), pp. 67-8; King, 'Stephen of Blois', p. 280.

<sup>613</sup> Tanner, 'Expansion of Boulogne', 251, 265-7; Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. vii, 15.

<sup>614</sup> Round, 'Counts of Boulogne', p.155; Hollister, 'Aristocracy', p.39, Table 1.1.

<sup>615</sup> *VCH Herts I*; *VCH Essex I*, pp. 343-4.

<sup>616</sup> J. A. Green, 'Financing Stephen's War', 106.

<sup>617</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'St. Martin's and Anarchy', 12-13, 15-17; Round, 'Ingelric and Albert', pp. 28-36.

<sup>618</sup> Sanders, *English Baronies*, p. 151.

patronage and moderation and praised good women as agents of civilisation, made it clear that women were seen to have the ability to influence and even act for their husbands.<sup>619</sup> This wifely responsibility to act as her husband's helpmeet – thereby propping up their shared interests – is also prominent in the writings of medieval chroniclers, particularly Orderic Vitalis. As Chibnall points out, his depictions of wives as positive helpmeets are more numerous than those as bad influences.<sup>620</sup> Moreover, on several occasions Orderic praises a woman for taking decisive, even drastic and violent, action to protect the interests she shared with her husband; he shows wives taking up arms to defend the domains of an absent husband, exercising authority on the husband's behalf, and acting as intercessors for vassals.<sup>621</sup> Countess Mabel of Gloucester, who took charge of the captive king and threatened to send him to Ireland, may be a good parallel for Matilda's position in the ten years of her marriage before Stephen's accession.<sup>622</sup>

After her 1136 coronation, Matilda added the status and authority that came with being an anointed queen to that of wife. In part, this authority was a more nuanced version of her authority as a wife, deepening and extending her scope for action. Matilda, like other queens-consort, had greater opportunities to exercise power and authority than other noblewomen because of her connection to the anointed, charismatic ruler – she found herself wrapped in, and able to adopt, the mantle of his power.<sup>623</sup> However, this power was a double-edged sword. Because the authority of the queen-consort was defined solely in terms of her relationship to the anointed king, her authority was circumscribed by his to a significant degree; the power that the king's wife could exert *qua* consort on her own or others' behalf was, at the most fundamental, the power that her husband

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<sup>619</sup> S. A. Farmer, 'Persuasive Voices: Clerical Images of Medieval Wives', *Speculum: A Journal of Medieval Studies* 61 (1986), 517-18, 521-6, 532-8, 540-3.

<sup>620</sup> M. Chibnall, 'Women in Orderic Vitalis', *HSJ* 2 (1990), 111.

<sup>621</sup> Chibnall, 'Women in Orderic', 114-20; P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1983), pp. 37-8, 40-1, 77-8, 117-20.

<sup>622</sup> See above, pp. 42-43; cf. S. M. Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy, and Power in the Anglo-Norman Realm* (Manchester, 2003).

<sup>623</sup> J. C. Parsons, 'The Queen's Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England', in J. Carpenter and S.-B. Maclean (eds.), *The Power of the Weak* (Urbana, IL, 1995), p. 147.

allowed or chose to let fall to her. A king who, like Henry II, chose not to involve his wife in rulership in any way could strangle her authority before she had a chance to wield it.

In particular, medieval English queens-consort had at their ready disposal a highly-charged form of moral authority, which they wielded in the form of formalised, even ritual intercession with their husbands on a third party's behalf, probably a direct extension of the wifely duty to intercede with her husband for others. John Parsons comments that this authority stemmed from the underlying symbolism of the king's position, as a paternal figure acting as ruler and lawgiver. In contrast, the queen was portrayed as a maternal figure. Put together, it meant that duties of rulership were conceived as split along gendered lines, so that the king embodied the law in all its harsh majesty and the queen mercy; this intercession was, additionally, the extension of a wife's duty to use her womanly character – envisioned as gentler and more compassionate than that of a man – to incline her husband to clemency.<sup>624</sup> This intercession took the form of highly ritualised pleading, often in public. Paul Strohm notes that the later medieval convention seems to have seen the queen pleading on her knees in front of the court.<sup>625</sup> In so doing, the queen-consort placed herself in a liminal position at court, and one that moreover emphasised her inferior position in the political sphere. She was – as a request for intercession proved – superior to the petitioners on whose behalf she acted, but firmly inferior to her husband, who wielded the '...magisterial authority' she lacked.<sup>626</sup>

Although this process framed the queen-consort as relatively powerless, it was perhaps fundamental to the smooth functioning of Western medieval kingship. By emphasising the queen's powerlessness in the face of the king, the latter's authority was bolstered; indeed, the Western ideal of the warrior-king demanded that the king always act authoritatively, even harshly. The intercessory role of the queen-consort provided the king with the opportunity to dispense mercy

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<sup>624</sup> Parsons, 'Queen's Intercession', pp. 147, 153; L. L. Huneycutt, 'Images of Queenship in the High Middle Ages', *HSJ* 1 (1989), 67-8, 70.

<sup>625</sup> P. Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow: The Social Imagination of Fourteenth-Century Texts* (Princeton, 1992), pp. 99-102, 109-11.

<sup>626</sup> Parsons, 'Queen's Intercession', pp. 153, 158.

without losing face, or to modify an unpopular or unwise course of action.<sup>627</sup> Parsons points out that unmarried kings were not only unusual in the medieval west, but were also difficult for their subjects to accept, suggesting that this duality of king and queen, justice and mercy, was part of the process by which the medieval court generated order.<sup>628</sup> It had the added effect of giving an adept queen the opportunity to create and nurture her own networks of influence, and to extend her own authority. It gave her a window, although perhaps a small one, from which to exert her influence on the court. As Huneycutt points out, modern scholars would be foolish to discount the effect that influence could have, or how eagerly it would be sought.<sup>629</sup>

Some scholars, including Heather Tanner in her 2002 article, claim that the coronation *ordo*, which made the queen a participant in her husband's divinely ordained charisma, also gave her structural authority over the country.<sup>630</sup> It is perhaps disturbingly easy to place too much weight on this evidence, since liturgical texts are highly stylised, normative, and conservative.<sup>631</sup> There is little evidence of the second recension's use beyond the immediate post-Conquest period. Finally, only two manuscripts of the *ordo*, Corpus Christi College Cambridge MSS 44 and 146, are suggestive of the queen's independent political authority.<sup>632</sup> However, as long as this relative paucity of evidence is borne in mind, the *ordo* provides a useful entry point into the English conception of queenship, and what expectations it placed on a woman who took up its mantle.<sup>633</sup>

First, the rubric to the queen's coronation notes that she was '...because of her honour to be anointed by a bishop with sacred oil on the crown of the head...', in a manner exactly parallel to

<sup>627</sup> Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow*, pp. 103-4.

<sup>628</sup> Parsons, 'Queen's Intercession', pp. 161-2; Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p. 304.

<sup>629</sup> L. L. Huneycutt, 'Intercession and the High-Medieval Queen: The Esther Topos', in J. Carpenter and S.-B. Maclean (eds.), *Power of the Weak* (Urbana, 1995), p. 132; Huneycutt, 'Images of Queenship', pp. 70-1; below, p. 201.

<sup>630</sup> Tanner, 'Queenship', pp. 134-5, 141-3. Cf. L. G. W. Legg, *English Coronation Records* (Westminster, 1901), p. 29; Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, p. 139.

<sup>631</sup> G. Garnett, 'The Third Recension of the English Coronation *ordo*: The Manuscripts', *HSJ* 11 (2003), 43; J. W. Legg, *Three Coronation Orders* (London, 1900), pp. xxxviii-xl, 171.

<sup>632</sup> L.G. W. Legg, *English Coronation Records*, p.28; J. W. Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, pp. xxxviii-ix; Garnett, 'Third Recension Manuscripts', 68-71.

<sup>633</sup> The following refers to the queen-consort's coronation *ordines* found in Corpus Christi College Cambridge [CCCC], MS 146, p. 138, and CCCC MS 44 in, respectively, L.G. W. Legg, *English Coronation Records*, pp. 21-2; J. W. Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, p. 3.

the king.<sup>634</sup> Like her husband, unction thus signalled her divine appointment to the office of queen, strongly suggesting that there was a contemporary conception of queenship as office.<sup>635</sup> The rubric also specifies that the queen is to be anointed ‘...in the church in the presence of the greatest [in the realm]...’.<sup>636</sup> This comment stresses both the queen’s authority over the population, as well as the strong interests the people of the realm had in the ceremony, and, by extension, the person of the queen.<sup>637</sup>

The blessing attached to the queen’s anointing – ‘...may this unction with oil aid you in honour and truly [be an] eternal confirmation of faith...’ – is telling.<sup>638</sup> It stresses the queen’s honour, and suggests that the spiritual health of the realm was her particular concern – a suggestion that recurs in the ceremony. However, it does not explicitly give the queen *imperium*, nor define her role as queen, which left a useful loophole for future political action. After the unction, a longer, more elaborate prayer was said:

Almighty and eternal God, pour out your abundant spirit over this your handmaiden... by our prayers. Impart your blessings, especially on her whom by imposition of our hands is made a queen today. Therefore by your sanctification may she remain worthy and pre-eminent, so that at no time afterwards may she be separated from your grace...<sup>639</sup>

This prayer stresses the status and authority of the queen. It simultaneously amplifies the message of divine nature given by her unction, since the imposition of hands was an ancient gesture associated with clerical ordination which specifically transferred grace from one person to another. Once again, however, any specific role the queen was to have in ruling was not mentioned.

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<sup>634</sup> J. W. Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, p.62: ‘...propter honorificentiam ab episcopo sacri unguinis oleo super verticem perfundenda est’. L. G. W. Legg, *English Coronation Records*, p. 21 uses ‘fundenda’ instead of ‘perfundenda’. Cf. J. W. Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, pp. 53-61; L. G. W. Legg, *English Coronation Records*, pp. 15-21.

<sup>635</sup> Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, p. 154.

<sup>636</sup> L. G. W. Legg, *English Coronation Records*, p. 21: ‘...in ecclesia coram optimatibus...’. Cf. J. W. Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, p. 62.

<sup>637</sup> Cf. Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, p. 142.

<sup>638</sup> J. W. Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, p. 62: ‘...prosit tibi haec unctio olei in honorem. et recte fidei confirmationem aeternam...’. L. G. W. Legg, *English Coronation Records*, p. 21 omits ‘...recte fidei...’.

<sup>639</sup> J. W. Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, p. 62: ‘Omnipotens sempiternae deus, affluentem spiritum tuę benedictionis super hanc famulam tuam... nobis orantibus. propitiatus infunde. ut quę per manus nostrę impositionem hodie regina constituitur. Ita sanctificatione tua digna et praelecta permaneat, ut numquam postmodum de tua gratia separetur...’. Cf. L. G. W. Legg, *English Coronation Records*, p. 22.

The prayers said in bestowing the queen's coronation regalia give some idea of what the English expected a queen to do. Her ring was '...a symbol of holy integrity and innocence, by which you may avoid all heretical corruption, and urge barbarous people to the virtue of God, and advocate the recognition of truth...', suggesting that the supervisory role assigned to the queen in the *Regularis Concordia* and the *Vita Oswaldi* may have continued, even in a token form, down to the twelfth century.<sup>640</sup> It also has the effect, repeated elsewhere in the ceremony, of stressing the need for the queen herself to '...always remain worthy... strive continuously to be pleasing to...' God.<sup>641</sup> However, the explicitness of the connection between the queen's role and religious piety and orthodoxy make it difficult to place much weight on this passage as proof of her sharing in the governance of England.

The prayer after the queen's crowning, on the other hand, comes closest to an explicit inclusion of the queen in governance when it asks that God '...grant this your handmaiden... that she may order well the high dignity she obtained and by good works fortify herself to deserve the fulfilled glory in which you put her'.<sup>642</sup> There is the obvious suggestion here that the queen was expected to play some sort of political role in England; even this passage, however, stresses the queen as a doer of good and pious works much more than as a ruling figure.

The problematic manuscripts from Corpus Christi, Cambridge mentioned above, however, give the queen an explicit, if vague, role in the rule of England through the wording of various unique prayers.<sup>643</sup> An antiphon sung after the queen received her ring commanded '...the English

<sup>640</sup> J. W. Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, p. 62: '...signaculum sanctae integritatis et innocentiae, quo possis omnes hereticas pravitates devitare, et barbaras gentes virtute dei premere. et ad agnitionem veritatis advocare'. Cf. L. G. W. Legg, *English Coronation Records*, p. 22; Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, p. 401; T. Symons, 'Regularis Concordia: History and Derivation', in D. Parsons (ed.), *Tenth-Century Studies: Essays in Commemoration of the Millennium of the Council of Winchester and Regularis Concordia* (London, 1975), p. 42.

<sup>641</sup> J. W. Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, p. 62: '...semper digna maneat...jugiter placere contendat'. Cf. L. G. W. Legg, *English Coronation Records*, p.22.

<sup>642</sup> J. W. Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, pp. 62-3: '...tribue huic famulę tuę N adeptam bene regere dignitatem, et a te sibi prestitam, in ea dignare bonis operibus corroborare gloriam'. L. G. W. Legg, *English Coronation Records*, p. 22 omits 'dignare'.

<sup>643</sup> See above, p. 131.

people [to] rejoice, being ruled by the authority of the king and being governed by the prudence of the queen's virtue...', while one after her crowning noted that

Today for us by the providence of God [the heavens] have dropped grace, today the glory of the Anglo-Saxons is crowned by divine virtue, we rejoice in delight at the king and queen's consecration, hence we should pronounce glory to God and in total devotion say alleluia.<sup>644</sup>

In a similar vein, the final prayer asks '...may God confer the largesse of his blessing on you his handmaiden... our queen, who wishes you to be a participant in royal power...'.<sup>645</sup> Taken together, these passages provide a powerful image of the queen as a divinely sanctioned possessor of legitimate regal authority – in a fashion similar to that of her husband, the coronation ceremony may well have given Matilda of Boulogne a second, official body.

From this analysis, Matilda almost certainly assumed some kind of queenly authority on her coronation, if not before; it was totally separate from her own existence and dependent on her status as her husband's wife. Although the example of Adeliza of Louvain shows that the mantle of queenship did not disappear with the death of the king who bestowed it, the king was vital to its transfer. Matilda had authority as queen because, and only because, she was the wife of the king – if she had been married to another magnate, or Stephen had not gained the throne, she would not have.

Although the scale of this power was far greater than of any other English noblewoman, its nature was generally not much different from that wielded by both Matilda herself and Countess Mabel of Gloucester in their position as wives of magnates and faction leaders, since it ultimately also stemmed from marriage. Because the role the queen was to play in political life was never spelled out in the coronation ceremony – as it was for the king when he received the sceptre and rod – its nature was ambiguous and informal. The traces that do appear in the coronation *ordo* stress the queen's virtue and prudence much more than political power and give no real expectation of what

<sup>644</sup> *ibid*, p. 62: '*Letur gens anglica domini imperio regenda et regine virtutis prudentia gubernanda*'; '*Hodie nobis dei providentia, cael... stillaverunt karismata, hodie coronatur anglisaxonica divine virtutis gloria, hodie letamini jocunditate in regis et regine consecratione, hinc deo gloriam pronamus et tota devotione dicamus alleluia*'.

The lacuna in the second quotation is present in the original.

<sup>645</sup> *ibid*, pp. 62-3: '*Benedictionis suae dominus omnipotens... ancillę suę... reginae nostrae conferat largitatem, qui regalis imperii te voluit esse participationem*'.

the queen was to do. Like that of other medieval noblewomen, it was left only implicitly defined, which gave an active, able, or desperate woman significant leeway for action. To a certain extent, Matilda's queenly authority elided with and subsumed the wifely authority of which it was the writ-large version. However, the mystical power of unction did give her an exalted status far superior to that of any other wife in the realm, no matter how wealthy or prestigious; this status, in turn, gave her access to far greater authority, and greater elasticity of action, than other magnates' wives.

One measure of the power of this specific queenly authority was its scope. Matilda, acting as queen-consort, could affect events and issue orders over a vastly larger area than her counterparts, the wives of major magnates, could. In theory, she could effect action anywhere in England. Even though in reality her writ would only run in those areas that acknowledged Stephen as king, this still encompassed the majority of England, and until 1144, varying parts of Normandy. Additionally, Matilda's status allowed her to direct orders to members of the royal administration, as well as people who were neither her tenants-in-chief nor her husband's; this was in contrast to wives of magnates, whose writ ran only as far as the fief's tenants. Moreover, Matilda's status as queen-consort probably made her the first choice as regent if the king was absent from England as queen-consort.<sup>646</sup>

However, Matilda's status as queen-consort gave her direct authority (as opposed to that she could wield as consort or regent) over relatively little land. Dower lands for English queens had little continuity. Given the need to allow Adeliza of Louvain to retain her dower lands intact and Matilda's vast personal inheritance, it is likely that her dower was little more than nominal.<sup>647</sup> This, in turn, would have severely restricted her ability to take actions such as issuing writs as queen, aside from those she gave as a regent. Her authority as queen was nebulous, and thus informal; it tended to centre on diplomatic or intercessory roles and acting as an adjunct or locum for the king.

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<sup>646</sup> See below, p. 146.

<sup>647</sup> Tanner, 'Queenship', p. 136. Cf. RRAN 918; below, p. 150 n. 699.

Finally, being the mother of the king's heir probably also brought with it a measure of authority, or at least gave the queen a good reason to exert her other types of authority. By the twelfth century the kinds of protracted struggles for succession caused by the early medieval practice of serial monogamy were obsolete, as was the English practice of denying the status of 'queen' to the king's wife. Both of these changes meant the mother of the heir was unlikely to be embroiled in succession politics or the head of a successful court faction. Nevertheless, the fact remains that a disputed succession – like that of the Anarchy – gave the mother of a potential heir, especially the mother of the ruling king's son, a powerful reason to take part in the fray.<sup>648</sup> This kind of crisis allowed a noble mother to take actions otherwise barred to her, such as commanding troops; Orderic Vitalis looked particularly favourably on such women.<sup>649</sup>

Ensuring the smooth running of an estate and its transition to the next generation was the main goal of any landed family, one in which women played a key role. One of the commonest ways in which women ensured the trouble-free administration of familial estates was by overseeing that administration during a husband's absence. Orderic Vitalis noted that Matilda of Flanders acted as regent for Normandy during William the Conqueror's frequent and lengthy stays in England, related that Sibyl, lady of Tarragona, actively defended her husband Robert Bordet's city while he recruited men in Normandy, and referred to the wife of Bartholomew Boel, the vidame of Chartres, as *vidamesse*, which may indicate that she exercised his office while he fought in the First Crusade.<sup>650</sup> Matilda, like any other wife and mother, shared her husband's fortunes more closely than did his *curiales*, since she was the matriarch of their nascent dynasty. Given that her husband

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<sup>648</sup> P. Stafford, 'Sons and Mothers: Family Politics in the Early Middle Ages', in D. Baker (ed.), *Mediaeval Women: Dedicated and Presented to Rosalind M.T. Hill on the Occasion of her Seventieth Birthday* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 79-100; Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, pp. 141-72.

<sup>649</sup> J. A. Truax, 'Anglo-Norman Women at War: Valiant Soldiers, Prudent Strategists, or Charismatic Leaders?' in D. J. Kagay and L. J. A. Villalon (eds.), *The Circle of War in the Middle Ages: Essays on Medieval Military and Naval History* (Woodbridge, 1999), pp. 115-16; M. McLaughlin, 'The Woman Warrior - Gender, Warfare And Society In Medieval Europe', *Womens Studies-An Interdisciplinary Journal* 17 (1990), 196-7; Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.119; above, p. 129 n. 620.

<sup>650</sup> Chibnall, 'Women in Orderic', 112-15; R. E. Archer, '"How Ladies Who Live on their Manors Ought to Manage Their Households and Estates": Women as Landholders and Administrators in the Later Middle Ages', in P. J. P. Goldberg (ed.), *Woman is a Worthy Wight': Women in English Society, c.1200-1500* (Stroud, 1992), pp. 149-81.

was a crowned and anointed king, the family's estates included the throne of England. This meant that her actions on Stephen's behalf differed from those of other noblewomen protecting their husbands' lands only in degree.

Although Matilda of Boulogne wielded various types of authority from two quite different sources – that derived from her inheritance, both physical and metaphorical, and that derived from her marriage to Stephen – it can often be difficult to declare that any given action was undertaken using one type or the other. Instead, the queen tended to draw on numerous types of authority in order to achieve any given goal. This allowed her a much greater scope of action than her nearest rival, the empress Matilda, could muster. Most basically, the queen held a substantial inheritance in England in her own right, which gave her the resources and prestige to attract and reward military followers effectively – and, obviously, to give them orders or to revoke the grant if necessary.

The empress, on the other hand, had very few resources in her own right, since her inheritance from her father – aside from the kingdom of England, over which she never came close to holding full control – amounted to a handful of castles in Normandy. Her dowry in Germany was lost when she remarried, and her second husband Geoffrey of Anjou was notoriously disinclined to allocate his own resources to his wife's campaigns in England.<sup>651</sup> This forced her to reward followers by giving them *carte blanche* to conquer a neighbour's estates; since it would be much harder to get one of her men to give up what he had taken by force, this tactic reduced her authority considerably.<sup>652</sup> The empress's ambiguous and subordinate position in England, and the lack of English holdings it entailed, also meant that she could not muster troops of her own, and was instead dependent on the levies of her major followers.

Matilda of Boulogne also had the established, safe title of *regina Anglorum* behind her. Although her authority as queen was informal and ill-defined, it was nevertheless clear that she held an exalted and divinely given position, and that she could give orders and take action on its

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<sup>651</sup> Prestwich, 'Treason of Geoffrey', 290-1.

<sup>652</sup> *ibid*, 290-4; Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, pp. 90-1, 106-12.

strength. In contrast the empress had, even at the zenith of her power, only been able to adopt the ambiguous title *domina Anglorum*. Although Richardson and Sayles claim that this title reflects a preliminary election of its holder to the throne, there is little evidence for its use in any fashion. It is also unlikely that the title would have been used both to denote Adeliza of Louvain as queen-consort and the empress Matilda as queen-regnant.<sup>653</sup> Given the probable novelty of the title, it is likely that it carried little or no authority with it, other than that which the force of the empress's personality and success at winning the loyalty of powerful people could give it; an attempt to lend meaning and authority to an otherwise worthless title would explain her constant use of it even after her 1141 defeat.<sup>654</sup>

### *Part 2: Uses of Authority*

This multi-faceted authority was not simply theoretical. Matilda exploited all the different types of authority she possessed – as noblewoman, queen, countess, wife, and mother – in various combinations in order to take necessary political action. In some cases, Matilda interlaced these types so tightly that it becomes difficult and fruitless to try to separate the means and motivation she drew upon; other of her actions were fuelled by only one or two of the types she commanded. Examining these less complicated cases first may help clarify how and why the queen could use all her different types of authority to her advantage. This section will first analyse the documentary evidence for Matilda's various authorities, examining the evidence of the *acta* as countess and as queen-regent, as well as her seal. The narrative sources for the queen's authority, which tend to show her acting using a broader mix of authorities, will be examined next. The section will end with a discussion of the strategic role played by Matilda and her patrimony in the politics of the Anarchy, by examining the crown's interactions with Geoffrey II de Mandeville, another Essex magnate.

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<sup>653</sup> Cf. Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, p. 142.

<sup>654</sup> Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, p. 102.

### A: Documentary Evidence

A number of the queen's *acta* show her wielding the authority she inherited from her father in regard to her honour in England. Tanner argues that Matilda of Boulogne issued charters as part of her '...royal and curial activity...', and that her 'official' authority '...extended to all royal lands, not just those assigned for her use'.<sup>655</sup> However, many (if not most) of the charters Tanner cites as examples of the queen so doing are highly ambiguous because of the comital family's patronage of the college of St. Martin-le-Grand, in London. The counts of Boulogne, as Ralph Davis noted and Tanner appears to neglect, were the hereditary *advocati* of St. Martin's after receiving Ingelric the priest's lands some time before the Domesday survey.<sup>656</sup>

At the least, three of the four charters which Tanner claims demonstrate the queen acting *qua* queen<sup>657</sup> are tainted with Matilda's wide-ranging authority in Essex as countess, as well as her need as *advocata* to protect her family's house.<sup>658</sup> However, there is also the more basic complaint that there is no evidence for other Anglo-Norman queens having acted with regal authority in their husband's presence, and a great deal that power as regent was only exercised in the king's absence.<sup>659</sup> Van Caenegem's admonition that noblemen as well as kings could use writs to exert their will and oversee their holdings is also worth keeping in mind.<sup>660</sup> In Matilda's case, her estates were extensive and strategically valuable, and her status as queen gave her the opportunity to exert a great deal of public authority – and to tap into the royal bureaucracy to aid her in so doing. It is unsurprising that she chose to take this opportunity; addresses to local royal administrators in her writs do not provide proof that she was granting those writs as queen, as Tanner suggests, only that she was exploiting her connections as queen to govern her patrimony more effectively.

<sup>655</sup> Tanner, 'Queenship', pp. 141-2.

<sup>656</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'St. Martin's and Anarchy', 14.

<sup>657</sup> RRAN548, 550, 557; below, Table I, p. 243.

<sup>658</sup> See below, p. 143 n. 674.

<sup>659</sup> Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, pp. 152-4, 162, 169.

<sup>660</sup> R. C. Van Caenegem, *Royal Writs in England from the Conquest to Glanvill: Studies in the Early History of the Common Law* (London, 1959), pp. 107, 133-4.

One of these *acta*, involving the church of Maldon and its pertinent lands, shows her attempting to mitigate the effects of political disorder on her honour's tenants. Maldon's lands were divided TRW between the honour of Boulogne and the honour of the London Peverels, which escheated to the crown before 1135.<sup>661</sup> Stephen gave the town's borough to his brother Theobald, count of Blois, in 1137, which caused Theobald – and, later, Geoffrey II de Mandeville – to violently usurp surrounding manors.<sup>662</sup> The ensuing legal battle led Matilda, some time after 1147, to order

Richard de Lucy and Maurice sheriff of Essex... I command you that... you should make sure the church and canons of St. Martin's London have their marsh at Maldon... as they held it in the time of King Henry and just as Ranulf of Venion gave them it and the church of St. Mary at Maldon. Nor should you allow my alms to St. Martin's to be disturbed...<sup>663</sup>

After a decade of disseisin and counter-disseisin, only the royal justice and sheriff had the wide-ranging authority and resources to untangle the claims, especially since they splayed over three different political entities. However, the authority which she invoked to ensure that her men left the canons' lands undisturbed was that which she held as countess, not as queen-consort. Moreover, both Richard and Maurice were tenants of the honour, making it difficult to tell whether Matilda addressed them as consort or countess.

A writ addressed to Baldwin of Boulogne, regarding the manor of Good Easter, Essex, issued between 1145 and 1147, sprang from less complicated motives but was similarly confused by Tanner. The Boulonnais counts held a moiety of the manor before the Domesday survey, when Eustace II gave it to St. Martin's.<sup>664</sup> Because of its proximity to Geoffrey II de Mandeville's manor of High Easter, it suffered significant depredation.<sup>665</sup> The case may have been made worse by Boulonnais tenants raiding it as well, since Matilda ordered

<sup>661</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'St. Martin's and Anarchy', 16.

<sup>662</sup> *ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>663</sup> RRAN 548: '*... Richardo de Luci et Ma[uricio] vicecomiti Essex... Mando vobis ... faciatis ecclesiam et canonicos Sancti Martini Londoniensis tenere... marescum suum de Meldona sicut tenebant illud tempore Henrici regis et sicut Ranulphus de Venion dedit eis illud et ecclesie Sancte Marie de Meldona. Nec patiamini el[emosin]am meam de Sancto Martino... conturbari*'. Cf. Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 334-8; RRAN III, p. xxiv.

<sup>664</sup> Rumble et al. (eds.), *Domesday: Essex*, pp. 12-1, 1-8.

<sup>665</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'St. Martin's and Anarchy', 16-19.

...Baldwin de Wissant constable... The bishop of Winchester has complained to the king and to me that you are troubling his land and his canons of Good Easter and you are acquiring his men. Therefore I command you... that they have peace from you and the men who are under your authority... and you should calmly permit each man of theirs to be quit of one silver mark that you imposed on him because of the injustices done by Manasser, lest I should hear more complaints.<sup>666</sup>

That Matilda was acting as countess here is clear: Baldwin was a member of her comital *familia*, not a royal official. In this case, it made sense for the countess to take a pro-active role as *advocata* and rein in her own men who were molesting her canons.

The final charter Tanner cites as a source for Matilda of Boulogne's inchoate 'regal power' is the announcement of the end of a lawsuit involving Mashbury, Essex, decided between 1143 and 1147. In this document, Matilda addressed

Richard de Lucy and the sheriff and barons of Essex and all tenants of the honour of Count Eustace of Boulogne... Richard FitzHubert *armiger* recognised in the hearing of King Stephen and myself the right of the church of St. Martin London to the land of Mashbury namely the half hide of land which Gislebert had about which Richard himself and the canons had to plead in the king's court... And they should hold it in chief of the king and of me and of our heirs through the service of one-quarter part of one knight which we shall retain as long as it is pleasing to us.<sup>667</sup>

Mashbury was also a divided vill, partly attached to a Boulonnais manor, which strongly suggests that the queen's interest in it was as countess, not as consort.<sup>668</sup> Moreover, the mention of only the king and queen's presence during this case suggests a less formal setting than that of the *curia regis*, especially when, at this time, the use of the phrase *in audientia regis* did not guarantee the king's presence.<sup>669</sup>

There would be no reason, in fact, for the queen to preside over a royal court case if Stephen were present; moreover, the fact that the writ addresses the queen's comital tenants is highly indicative of the hearing's status as an honorial court case. This suggests that Matilda had the power

<sup>666</sup> RRAN 557: '...Bald[wino] de Wissant constabulario... Conquestus est episcopus Wintoniensis apud regem et apud me quod inquietas terram suam et canonicorum suorum de Estra et redimis homines eorum. Quare mando tibi ... quod pacem eis habere facias de te et de militibus et hominibus qui sunt sub potestate tua... et quietum permittite esse quendam hominem eorum de una marca argenti quam posuisti super eum pro injustis occasionibus Manasseri, ne audiam inde clamorem amplius'.

<sup>667</sup> RRAN 550: '...Richardo de Luci et vicecomiti et baronibus de Essexia et omnibus tenentibus de honore comitis Eustachii Bolonie... Richardus filius Huberti armigeri recognovit in audientia regis Stephani et mea rectum ecclesie Sancti Martini London[iensis] de terra de Maisseberia scilicet dimidia hida terre quam Gislebertus tenuit de qua idem Richardus et canonici placitari debebant in curia regis... Et teneant in capite de rege et de me et de heredes nostris per servitium quarte partis unius militis quod retinemus quamdiu nobis placuerit'.

<sup>668</sup> VCH Essex I, pp. 460-73.

<sup>669</sup> Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, p. 189.

and authority to preside over her honorial court.<sup>670</sup> Indeed, she may have been the preferred judge, as the king may have been perceived as having a conflict of interest between his duties as king and a feudal magnate. Matilda, on the other hand, held no formal authority as queen, and so would not be so contentious a choice.

Several other writs to St. Martin's stress its connection with the counts of Boulogne, tending to disprove Tanner's thesis. In a writ issued between 1145 and 1147, Matilda ordered her chamberlain as well as the local archdeacon and the local officials of Crishall, Essex to ensure that the canons of St. Martin's held the church there '...just as Richard of Boulogne or any other priest freely had in my father's time, or afterwards... because I wish that they should hold [it] honourably'.<sup>671</sup> This writ was almost certainly given as countess; Hubert was not a member of the royal administration, but one of the queen's staff, who probably attended to the local administration of the honour. Moreover, if Matilda had been issuing a document as her husband's wife, there would have been much less reason to stress her own will and the connection to her father.

Some time before 1145, Matilda gave the college the parish church of Witham, Essex, as a tenth prebend; however, Witham already had an incumbent priest, Walter, who could not be stripped of his living, and may have wished to join the canons of St. Martin's. He was instead ordered by the queen, '...just as you love me and that which you hold of me... that you make fealty to that same church of St. Martin's...'.<sup>672</sup> This charter makes it clear that Walter did indeed hold his church of Matilda as countess. Her self-confident authority is reflected in the type of document she sent – a writ, expressing an order and written in the simple imperative. This self-confidence reappears in the letter she sent Archbishop Theobald notifying him of the grant, which stressed the patrimonial nature of her authority, described Witham as '...my manor...' and ordered that the college should have '...their other churches and their tenements which it is agreed are held of me

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<sup>670</sup> See below, p. 190.

<sup>671</sup> See above, p. 72, n. 349.

<sup>672</sup> See above, p. 72, n. 346.

and my predecessors by right'.<sup>673</sup> Once again, the emphasis in this document is on Matilda's rank and self-sufficiency as a feudal landowner – as such, she could dispose of her own holdings as she saw fit.

Another of the queen's writs shows her acting not just as a feudal magnate who controlled an English honour, but as the independent territorial princess she also was. She ordered Bosoher of Boulogne, probably a retainer or official of hers in regard to the county of Boulogne, '...that this Robert, a priest and chaplain of my canons of St. Martin at London and his servants and all his things have my firm peace...'.<sup>674</sup> Although it is possible that she was acting here as queen of England, her writ would have been inferior to the king's as a travel pass, and so much less likely to be requested. On the other hand, Matilda's authority over the county and honour of Boulogne was hereditary and therefore unassailable and absolute within them. It is thus most probable that this writ was given, not as queen-consort, but as countess.

Many more of the queen's charters, not merely those to St. Martin's, show her acting as countess of Boulogne. In fact, all of her original grants demonstrate this to a greater or lesser degree, since Matilda only granted land from her patrimony to religious houses. Three of these grants – her charter granting Eustace de Legrefth's land in Merck to the Boulonnais abbey of Arrouaise and two charters confirming grants to the Cistercian abbey of Clairmarais in Artois – particularly stress the queen's hereditary authority by referring to her as '*Bolonie comitissa*'; moreover, each asks that the monks pray for her ancestors – the counts of Boulogne who passed the lands, title, and authority to her.<sup>675</sup> Matilda also gave Arrouaise the tithe of the vicomté of Merck, carefully stressing that '...I had held [it] up to this point by paternal right'.<sup>676</sup> Obviously, the queen's ability to make such a grant of regalian rights was dependent on being her father's daughter. In

<sup>673</sup> RRAN 541: '*...manerii mei de Witham... alias ecclesias suas et teneduras suas quas constat fore de iure meo et predecessorum meorum*'.

<sup>674</sup> RRAN 556: '*...quod iste Robertus presbiter et capellanus canonicorum meorum Sancti Martini Lond[oniensis] et socii eius et omnes res sue firmam pacem meam habeant....*'.

<sup>675</sup> See above, pp. 78, 105.

<sup>676</sup> See above, p. 44, n. 212.

making a grant on the continent, where she spent little time after Stephen's accession, it was perhaps prudent to stress the fact that she was the legitimate heiress of Eustace III.

She made a similar grant of regalian rights to Coggeshall Abbey before 1146, commanding '...her ministers of Dover and of Wissant and of Boulogne...' that the abbey was quit '...of toll and *transue* and all customs through all my land and that of my son Eustace in England and Boulogne...'.<sup>677</sup> This charter contains a double suggestion of Matilda's authority; she was able, as countess, to dispose of the tolls and other customs to which she was entitled as she saw fit. It would also appear from this charter that even when her son Eustace was given authority in Boulogne, his mother's was overarching and thus could trump it.

From these examples, it appears clear that Matilda of Boulogne could indeed actually assert the authority as countess she inherited from her father, without (as traditional legal theory would suggest) recourse to her husband. This ability to act decisively on her own proved very useful to Stephen's bid to save his throne. Because Matilda could administer the county and honour of Boulogne herself, ensuring a steady flow of revenue and levies, the king was free to lead royal troops around the country putting down rebellions at individual castles as they occurred. Although he became increasingly unable to force a final showdown between himself and the empress or Henry of Normandy after the crisis of 1141, this ability to take immediate action against rebel castellans without losing control of his strategic heartland probably played a major role in his keeping the throne. Without his wife's patrimony, her administrative skill, and her charisma to keep the royal bureaucracy running smoothly with its coffers full, Stephen would likely have been forced off the throne before he died.

Several of Matilda of Boulogne's charters, as well as her seal, reinforce and illuminate her official authority as queen-consort. Most powerfully, she appears to have taken on her aunt Matilda of Scotland's role as a regent during her husband Henry I's absences. However, unlike Henry I,

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<sup>677</sup> See above, p. 47, n. 227.

who travelled with great frequency between his English and Norman possessions, Stephen was absent from England only once during his reign, when he spent the period between Lent and Advent 1137 in Normandy.<sup>678</sup> Because Stephen spent the vast majority of his reign in England, where he was available to grant charters and oversee the royal administration himself, there is relatively little evidence to determine how active she was as regent. Some measure of the queen's ability to take the reins of governance can be seen from her actions during Stephen's February to November 1141 imprisonment when he was unable to govern by definition. They suggest that she had had some practice in acting in her husband's stead – and perhaps also that she was, by long-standing arrangement, Stephen's primary regent.

One of Matilda's charters, mortgaging the manor of Gamlingay, Cambs, may reflect her role as regent; it gives

...Gervase justice of London ten marks of land in the vill of Gamlingay for his service. And that which remains in that vill aside from the aforesaid ten marks of land I have conceded to him free and quit, to hold until I pay him the debt which I owe to him, so that within that limit he should have the profits which are produced by that aforesaid vill. And when I repay his debt to him or his heirs, he shall have the fortifications that he himself shall put on my land.<sup>679</sup>

Although Round interpreted it as proof that Matilda had formal regential authority, such an interpretation is problematic. The charter cannot be precisely dated, and Gamlingay was a Boulonnais demesne manor, within Matilda's power to alienate independently from 1125.

However, the royal couple's need for ready cash would have been most pressing in 1141, making it a likely date. Moreover, the presence of both royal and Boulonnais officials as witnesses suggests that Matilda was deeply, if perhaps not formally, involved in administration during her husband's captivity.<sup>680</sup>

<sup>678</sup> RRAN III, p. xl.

<sup>679</sup> RRAN 243: '...Gervasio justice[ie]de Lond[onia] x marcatas terre in villa de Gamelingea pro servitio sup. Et quod superest de eademvilla p[re]t[er] x marcatas terre predictas concessi ei libere et quiete, tenendum donec ei persolvam debitum quod ei debeo, ut infra illum terminum habeat profuita que exhibunt de villa predicta. Et quando ego reddidero ei vel heredibus suis debitum suum, habeant ipsi stauramenta que ipsi posuerint super terram meam'.

<sup>680</sup> Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, p. 120; Round, 'Counts of Boulogne', p. 164. Earl Simon de Senlis and probably Warner de Lusors being examples of royal officials; Richard of Boulogne and Simon de Gerardimolendino Boulonnais.

Two charters, however, provide evidence that Matilda did take on the regency at various points in her tenure. The first is St. Augustine's writ A, regarding the abbot's ship, which is fairly unambiguous.<sup>681</sup> It does not contain the phrase which Tanner, following Van Caenegem, takes as being indicative of a regential writ (*per breve regis*); however, Van Caenegem himself notes that this phrase was not always used, since the entire point of the regent's office was that the holder could issue documents on the king's behalf *without* royal input.<sup>682</sup> It was given after Stephen's departure for Normandy, which strongly suggests that the queen had been left behind to oversee the administration.<sup>683</sup> It also demands that the abbot's goods and men '...be in peace just as they were on the day on which the king crossed the sea until he himself returns to England', and that the men responsible for the hijack be held under pledge '...so that they should be at the king's justice when he should wish to have them'.<sup>684</sup> This phrasing demonstrates two things. The first is that the queen herself was responsible for the enforcement of the king's peace – and by extension, the entirety of the royal administration. Secondly there seem to have been strict limits on regential authority; although Matilda could bind evil-doers to keep the peace, it was not in her apparent remit to actually punish them – a stance consistent with the idea that justice was the prerogative of the king. Moreover, the sole witness to this writ is Roger, bishop of Salisbury, who had been the head – and, indeed, the linchpin – of Henry I's administration, acting occasionally as regent during Matilda of Scotland's tenure as queen-consort, and continuously thereafter.<sup>685</sup> He would make the most obvious witness to a regential writ – in fact, the queen, relatively new to the position, may well have asked him for advice; it is also place-dated to Westminster, the seat of royal administration, and the most obvious place for a queen-consort acting as regent to be spending her time.

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<sup>681</sup> See above, pp. 9, 29.

<sup>682</sup> Van Caenegem, *Royal Writs*, pp. 163-4.

<sup>683</sup> See above, p. 29; below, p. 146 n. 685.

<sup>684</sup> See above, p. 29.

<sup>685</sup> Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England*, pp. 71, 123-6, 132; Richardson and Sayles, *Governance of Mediaeval England*, pp. 153-60.

The other potentially vice-regal writ is the queen's order that the canons of St. Martin's were to hold their soke of Cripplegate freely.<sup>686</sup> Cronne and Davis assume that Matilda, acting as regent, issued it during Stephen's imprisonment, but there is little evidence to confirm this.<sup>687</sup> Many scholars are probably swayed by two key phrases in this document: '*ex parte regis domini mei et mea*' and '*sicut rex dominus meus precepit per breve suum*'. The latter phrase is of course highly evocative of van Caenegem's '*per breve regis*'. Put together with the fact that Cripplegate was royal demesne – unlike other writs of Matilda's favouring St. Martin's, where the land in question was at least partly Boulonnais – it may well signal that the queen was acting in her husband's stead as regent.

However, as has been noted above, the queen's issuing of a charter in relation to St. Martin's may instead have been connected to her status as hereditary *advocata* of the house; it is also important to note that no English queen acted as regent while her husband was in the country, which the wording of the charter implies Stephen was. Additionally, the verb *precipere*, which governs the critical clause, is in the perfect tense rather than the present, suggesting that it refers to the king's earlier charter that confirmed the canons' soke of Cripplegate and ordered the dumping of rubbish there to stop.<sup>688</sup> When taken as a whole, the wording of this charter makes it likely that Matilda was acting as countess and *advocata*, although it is not impossible that she gave the charter as regent, either in 1137 or 1141.

Matilda also took part in the intercession that was the traditional role for wives and English queens in particular. Bernard of Clairvaux's letters to her show him acting as a suppliant, requesting a relatively small favour of patronage from Matilda, as well as asking her to intervene in the complex, politically explosive controversy surrounded the election of William FitzHerbert to the archbishopric of York.<sup>689</sup> Bernard was not the only one to ask Matilda to put her reputation on the

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<sup>686</sup> RRAN 530.

<sup>687</sup> RRAN 530.

<sup>688</sup> RRAN 523.

<sup>689</sup> See above, pp. 93-94.

line in the church's service. In a letter dated June 26, 1147, Pope Eugenius III addressed Matilda, combining flattery with a request for substantial intervention:

We declare, as Solomon bears witness, that a wise woman builds her house; a foolish one, however, destroys the building with her own hands. We rejoice on your behalf, and we applaud your zeal for devotion in the Lord; because, as we have heard from religious men, having the fear of God before your eyes, you are intent on works of piety, and you both love and honour ecclesiastical persons. So that, therefore, you may be strong enough to progress from good to better, with the inspiration of the Lord, we ask your nobility in the Lord, and in asking we warn and exhort you in the Lord, so that you may join good beginnings to better outcomes, that you should love and honour especially our venerable brother Robert bishop of London, who although he was once rich wished to become poor for our sake. In the case of your husband and our beloved son, Stephen, glorious king of the English, you should strive to bring it about that, by your admonition, exhortation, and counsel, he will receive that man [Robert] in his grace and love, and for the reverence of St. Peter and us he should more willingly receive him who has been commended. And because, as we contend with testified truth, it is not possible for him [Robert] to be bound to our aforesaid son without danger to his [Robert's] health and order; we wish and with paternal affection we counsel him and you, that it be sufficient for you both to take from him [Robert] a promise in simple and true words that he will not cause injury or detriment to him [Stephen] or his land.<sup>690</sup>

Although Stephen badly needed the support of the church in order for his son to be named his heir, deserting FitzHerbert would destabilise the north at a critical moment, making it unlikely that the king would heed his wife's advice. As such Bernard's and Eugenius's request placed her in danger of losing face in a similar manner to her aunt twenty years previously.<sup>691</sup> However, it also clearly demonstrates their faith in Matilda's ability to sway her husband to an unpopular action.

Several other charters show Matilda of Boulogne following in the footsteps of her predecessor queens, either by taking over property traditionally associated with the queen-consort or acting on behalf of religious houses connected with previous consorts. Within the first two years of Stephen's reign, he '...conced[ed] to Queen Matilda that she should have the abbey of Barking in

<sup>690</sup> Pope Eugenius III, 'Ad Mathildem Anglorum Reginam', *Patrologia Latina Database* (Chadwyck-Healey, 1995), col. 1249C-D: '*Salomone attestore, didicimus quod mulier sapiens aedificat domum; insipiens autem, constructam destruet manibus. Gaudemus pro te, et devotionis studium in Domino collaudamus: quoniam sicut religiosorum relatione accepimus, timorem Dei prae oculis habens, operibus pietatis intendis, et personas ecclesiasticas et diligis et honoras. Ut ergo de bono in melius, inspirante Domino, proficere valeas, nobilitatem tuam in Domino rogamus, et rogando monemus et exhortamur in Domino, quatenus bonis initiis exitus meliores injungas, et venerabilem fratrem nostrum Robertum London. episcopum, pro illius reverentia, qui cum olim dives esset, pro nobis pauper fieri voluit, attentius diligas et honores. Apud virum tuum, et dilectum filium nostrum Stephanum, insignem regem Anglorum efficere studeas, ut monitis, hortatu, et consilio tuo, ipsum in benignitatem et dilectionem suam suscipiat, et pro beati Petri et nostra reverentia propensius habeat commendatum. Et quia, sicut veritate teste attendimus, eum sine salutis et sui ordinis periculo, praefato filio nostro astringi non posse; volumus et paterno sibi et tibi affectu consulimus, ut vobis sufficiat, veraci et simplici verbo promissionem ab eo suscipere, quod laesionem vel detrimentum ei, vel terrae suae non inferat.*

<sup>691</sup> See below, p. 216.

her custody just as Queen Matilda her aunt once held it'.<sup>692</sup> This connection between the two queens is emphasised by Stephen's repeated reference to 'the time of her aunt'.<sup>693</sup> As Huneycutt notes, Barking had connections to English queens stretching back to before the Norman Conquest.<sup>694</sup> Perhaps more importantly, however, Barking had been part of Queen Matilda of Scotland's demesne, over which she had held and exercised jurisdiction, including rents, tithes, and the abbatial revenues during a vacancy. The elder Matilda was assiduous in taking advantage of her custodianship, and gave customary dues to her tenants, improved the roads in the area, traded land with the abbey, and made Barking responsible for the upkeep of a bridge she built over the River Lea, assigning the house lands in West Ham to fund it.<sup>695</sup>

Matilda also had control of the other religious house traditionally assigned to the queen-consort, Waltham Abbey. At some point during his reign, Stephen informed the bishop of London that '...I have given to Queen Matilda my wife Waltham with all that is adjacent to it and the services of the canons and their men... And if any of the men of the aforesaid vill is accused of any offence, he shall go before the court of the queen and there canons shall plead in accordance with their rule and laymen in accordance with secular law'.<sup>696</sup> This charter makes it clear that Matilda's overlordship of the house was more than simply nominal. Instead, she had her own court in respect to Waltham, where she was expected to wield the judicial authority that accompanied territorial lordship in her own right. Her charter freeing the abbey from gelds and scots is an example of her active pursuit of her rights as lady of the manor. Indeed, it shows her taking a role very similar to that of her aunt, who had issued a large number of charters dealing with a variety of contentious issues as well as grants.<sup>697</sup>

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<sup>692</sup> RRAN 31: '*...concedo Matildi regine ut habeat abbatiam de Berching[a] in custodia sua sicut Matildis regina amita sua unquam illam melius habuit*'.

<sup>693</sup> RRAN 31: '*...tempore amite sue*'.

<sup>694</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, p. 37.

<sup>695</sup> *ibid*, pp. 63-4.

<sup>696</sup> RRAN 915: '*...dedit Math[il]d[i] regine uxori mee Walth[am] cum omnibus ei adjacentibus et servitium canonicorum et hominum eorum... Et si quis ex hominibus predictae ville de aliqua re calumpniatus fuerit, veniat ad curiam regi[n]e, ibique canonici regulariter respondeant et laici secundum regulam secularem*'.

<sup>697</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, p. 63; RRAN 917.

A charter of the empress's, granting Waltham to the queen-dowager, Adeliza of Louvain, throws the question of when Matilda of Boulogne took over the abbey into sharp relief.<sup>698</sup> Some commentators believe that this charter reflects Queen Adeliza's continued holding of the abbey until her retirement in 1150.<sup>699</sup> However, given that Stephen's assignment of Barking was made early on in his reign, it is likely that he would have granted his wife Waltham at or near the same time. The empress, moreover, could only have made an attempt to dispose of land in Essex – the queen's patrimonial stronghold – during the short period of her ascendancy in 1141,<sup>700</sup> making it likely that it was a conditional grant similar to those she made to Geoffrey II de Mandeville and Aubrey de Vere at the same period, or a reversal of Stephen's policy as happened after Henry II's accession.<sup>701</sup>

Finally, surviving charters make it clear that Matilda of Boulogne took over the patronage of Holy Trinity Aldgate, an Augustinian priory founded by her aunt.<sup>702</sup> At a royal court during Stephen's second year on the throne, Norman, Holy Trinity's prior, brought a case against Aschuillus, the castellan of the Tower of London, who was illegally holding the greater part of the canons' soke of the *Cnihtengild*; although King Henry I had previously found for the priory, his death and the installation of a new castellan ensured that the issue remained unresolved.<sup>703</sup> The case was heard at Westminster, where Norman collected a glittering array of royal *familiares* and London's most powerful citizens to act as his witnesses and advocates.<sup>704</sup> Tellingly, the queen was first on the list of these advocates given in the record of the case, before even Algar bishop of Coutances, who, from the queen's usual position in her husband's witness-lists, might reasonably

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<sup>698</sup> RRAN 918.

<sup>699</sup> R. Ransford (ed.), *The Early Charters of the Augustinian Canons of Waltham Abbey, Essex, 1062-1230* (Woodbridge, 1989), p. 12; Wertheimer, 'Adeliza of Louvain', 109-11. Cf. M. J. Franklin (ed.), *English Episcopal Acta, vol. 8: Winchester, 1070-1204* (Oxford, 1993), pp. xxxv-xxxvi.

<sup>700</sup> RRAN 918. Cf. above, p. 153 n. 715.

<sup>701</sup> See below, p. 181ff; above, p. 137 n. 652.

<sup>702</sup> See above, pp. 57-61.

<sup>703</sup> RRAN 506.

<sup>704</sup> RRAN 506. Cf. Round, 'London under Stephen', pp. 97-124; S. Reynolds, 'The Rulers of London in the Twelfth Century', *History* 57 (1972), 339, 354; RRAN III, pp. xvii-xxvi.

be expected to be first.<sup>705</sup> Moreover, the record's wording, which comments that the prior made his case '...in the presence and with the help of Queen Matilda wife of the king...' and the other named officials, suggests strongly that Matilda was acting as a formal advocate for the prior in open court. This highlights her exalted position at court and her ability to translate that position into practical aid, which would be highly sought-after by potential litigants. It moreover suggests that the queen was taking an active interest in her aunt's foundation – and thus bolstering her authority and reputation by association with a well-respected predecessor – from the very beginning of her tenure.<sup>706</sup>

Matilda of Boulogne's patronage of Holy Trinity also provides some slight evidence that she held the estate of Queenhithe in London, which, as its name suggests, had an abiding tie to the English queens-consort. Tanner comments that Stephen's charter giving the canons of Holy Trinity possession of Queenhithe is proof of Matilda of Boulogne's previous possession of the estate; however, the queen whose previous possession was cited by Stephen was '...Queen Matilda wife of King Henry my uncle...', not his own wife. Similarly, his charter confirming William of Ypres's gift of one hundred shillings from the estate's farm is specifically noted as coming from a gift given him by the king.<sup>707</sup> However, Matilda of Boulogne gave her newly-founded hospital of St. Katherine next-the-Tower, which she put into the custody of Holy Trinity, '...twenty pounds once a year from Queenhithe in perpetual alms, my lord King Stephen having consented to it'.<sup>708</sup>

This charter suggests that Matilda of Boulogne herself controlled at least a portion of the revenue of Queenhithe. However, other charters muddy the water, highlighting just how little evidence we have for her dower as queen. First, Matilda's charter includes a specific reference to the king's assent, which was theoretically unnecessary if she controlled the estate in her position as queen-consort. This reference, moreover, goes hand-in-hand with a charter of the king's confirming

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<sup>705</sup> RRAN 506; above, p. 46.

<sup>706</sup> See above, pp. 57-61.

<sup>707</sup> Tanner, 'Queenship', p.137; RRAN 501, 502: '...*Matildis regina uxor Regis Henrici avunculi mei...*'.

<sup>708</sup> See above, p. 58, n. 284. Cf. RRAN 504.

the grants.<sup>709</sup> More telling, perhaps, are the two charters discussed above;<sup>710</sup> the fact that Stephen gave William of Ypres part of Queenhithe's farm and could in fact grant it to the canons of Holy Trinity without reference to his wife suggests that Matilda's dower did not include Queenhithe. Sadly, the evidence is simply too patchy to judge either way. Perhaps the best conclusion to be drawn is that Matilda of Boulogne's authority as queen-consort had little to do with the land she held in that regard – if, indeed, she held any.

Her seal, like her connections to Waltham, Barking, and Holy Trinity, served to symbolically connect her to her predecessors. Although it is no longer extant, Sir Christopher Hatton's *Book of Seals* describes it as depicting 'the queen standing crowned in mantle and gown, a fleur-de-lis sceptre in her right hand and a bird on her left...'. It bore a striking resemblance to that of Matilda of Scotland, her maternal aunt and the first wife of Henry I, which featured the queen crowned holding a sceptre and orb.<sup>711</sup> Undoubtedly, this similarity served to heighten the resemblance between Matilda of Boulogne and her aunt – fondly remembered by the English people as a paragon of queenship – and thus bolster her own authority and status as queen-consort. Given that the consort's authority came from being in the shadow of the anointed king, it is hardly surprising that an enterprising queen would wish to take on the mantle of a powerful and well-remembered predecessor.<sup>712</sup>

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<sup>709</sup> RRAN 503, 504. Cf. RRAN 917.

<sup>710</sup> See above, p. 151 n. 707.

<sup>711</sup> D. M. P. Stenton et al. (eds.), *Sir Christopher Hatton's Book of Seals* (Oxford, 1950), p. 296; Huneycutt, *Matilda*, p. 89, whose cover depicts Matilda of Scotland's seal.

<sup>712</sup> See above, pp. 234-236.

## B: Narrative Evidence

The political turmoil of the Anarchy provided Matilda of Boulogne with ample opportunity to exert her various authorities, both more and less mixed. One of the less mixed episodes came near the beginning of the queen's tenure; in the early summer of 1138, she led the siege of Dover castle against the rebel Walchelin Maminot, and eventually took his surrender.<sup>713</sup> In this particular case, the direct justification for Matilda of Boulogne's action – namely that of putting down a rebellious vassal of the king – was her status as Stephen's wife and an anointed queen. She was sent to Dover to undertake the siege as her husband's lieutenant, probably because of the concerted, and very likely pre-organised, rebellions occurring throughout the country at that time.<sup>714</sup> However, even though Matilda was acting on behalf of her husband, she almost certainly drew the forces she brought to bear against Walchelin from her Boulonnais holdings – and thus drew on her very personal authority as countess to muster them.

The sources are clear that the naval forces used came from the county of Boulogne. However, since there are few if any local narrative sources for eastern England – which would be more likely to comment on such involvement – it becomes more difficult to examine their involvement. The honour of Boulogne had two manors in Kent, and it is not unreasonable to suggest that some honorial vassals from nearby Kent were involved.<sup>715</sup> This suggests that Queen Matilda was in the same position as every other nobleman in England in respect to the land she held there; not only did she have the independent personal authority to collect and direct troops, but also like any other tenant-in-chief, she could be ordered to put those troops at the disposal of the king's military interests.

The fact that Matilda of Boulogne, rather than a member of her military entourage, received the rebel Walchelin's surrender of Dover castle is especially telling.<sup>716</sup> In part, it can be explained by

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<sup>713</sup> OV, pp. 520-1; above, pp. 31-32.

<sup>714</sup> OV, pp. 518-21.

<sup>715</sup> OV, pp. 520-1; Amt, *Accession*, pp. 64-5; *VCH Kent III*, pp. 250-1.

<sup>716</sup> See above, pp. 31-32.

King Stephen's itinerary. The king was in the Welsh marches from around July to late August 1138, when he was moving through the middle march to take Ludlow, Bridgnorth, and Shrewsbury, as confirmed by charters issued at the latter two locations. Stephen was simply not in the right place at the right time to take Walchelin's surrender himself.<sup>717</sup> However, the association of this highly symbolic acknowledgment of command probably also reflects the queen's ability to lead troops in her own right as a feudal magnate. Although Walchelin may have surrendered to the queen because she was acting as the king's deputy, she was also leading the force that bested him. This would give her the right to take charge of the resulting prisoners, since under medieval custom the commander – by definition the highest-ranked person available – could dispose of enemy prisoners at will.<sup>718</sup>

The stress laid by the narrative sources on Matilda's status as an independent feudal magnate highlights another potential reason she was given the duty of ousting these rebels – the long-standing interest of the counts of Boulogne in controlling Dover, and particularly its castle.<sup>719</sup> Matilda's grandfather, Eustace II, landed there from the county of Boulogne in 1051, where his men got into a homicidal fray with the local townsmen, partisans of Godwine, earl of Kent and Wessex. Although the narratives dealing with this event are highly partisan and therefore irreconcilable, the resulting showdown between the house of Godwine and King Edward, to whom Eustace had appealed, nearly brought England to civil war, and led to the Godwineson family's exile.<sup>720</sup>

Heather Tanner comments that this debacle may have been sparked by expansionist desires on the part of Count Eustace – desires which could also have motivated, or at least informed, action by his granddaughter. As noted above, the two biggest ports for England-bound trade were in the county of Boulogne. Dover provided the shortest Channel crossing from Boulogne. Thus, if it were under Boulonnais control, the counts would have a virtual monopoly on trade to and from England, providing them with lucrative tolls – and possibly providing them with a springboard to escape

<sup>717</sup> OV, pp. 520-1; HH, pp. 712-13; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 80-1.

<sup>718</sup> M. Strickland, *Anglo-Norman Warfare: Studies in Late Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Military Organization and Warfare* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 186-9.

<sup>719</sup> Amt, *Accession*, pp. 16-17; below, p. 155.

<sup>720</sup> ASC, pp. xviii, 116-22.

English oversight. Additionally, controlling Dover castle would give the Boulonnais counts a valuable strategic advantage by hindering any attempt to invade either their continental possessions or their English honour.<sup>721</sup>

The appointment of the queen's second cousin Faramus of Boulogne as castellan of Dover may reflect that town's vital place in Boulonnais as well as royal interests.<sup>722</sup> At the least, placing a cadet member of the Boulonnais comital family in charge of a strategically important castle is an acknowledgment of the significant – and separate – concerns that family had with regard to Dover. It is likely, however, that Faramus's appointment has a more profound meaning. He may well have been responsible for overseeing Boulonnais shipping entering and leaving Dover, including collecting tolls. This may in turn indicate an increase in shipping through safe and reliably royalist Boulonnais channels, either as a deliberate policy to deprive the imperial faction of supplies or as a result of Stephen's increasing reliance on Flemish mercenaries. If Faramus did indeed have significant administrative or supervisory duties attached to his castellancy, this may help explain why, although appearing to be a staunch royalist, he does not appear to have been politically active on Stephen's behalf.<sup>723</sup>

Chronicle evidence for the siege provides definitive evidence that the queen's military action was undertaken in her role and using her hereditary authority as countess.<sup>724</sup> Henry's account, which baldly states that the queen besieged Dover, suggests that there was no problem with the queen herself taking charge of troops rather than one of her honorial officers – and thus that she could effectively wield the authority she inherited from her father in her own right. Close examination of Orderic's word choice for the siege narrative also suggests that she was in charge. The verb used to describe the queen's action in calling out troops was *mandare*. This word carries not only the meaning 'to send word to', as Chibnall translated it, but also 'to summon' and, most

<sup>721</sup> Tanner, 'Expansion of Boulogne', 273-4, 265-8, 272-3; *VCH Kent III*, p. 190.

<sup>722</sup> Murray, *Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, pp. 159-60.

<sup>723</sup> Amt, *Accession*, pp. 85-7; Round, 'Counts of Boulogne', pp. 160-1; RRAN 276.

<sup>724</sup> See above, pp. 32-32, 128.

importantly, ‘to command’.<sup>725</sup> This at least suggests that Orderic used this word purposefully, intending to depict the action as that of a feudal magnate enacting her right to demand military aid from her subordinates; indeed, the fact that he later describes the queen’s message as *iussa*, ‘commands’, corroborates this.

The words denoting those who received this command also reinforce the queen’s authority over them. Although Chibnall translates *amicis* as ‘friends’, in mediaeval Latin it could mean ‘friend’ and ‘kinsman’. Chibnall translates *alumnus* as ‘relation’, but it could carry the more subordinate meaning of ‘foster-son, protégé, ward’. It is obvious that Matilda’s wards or *protégés* would be her social inferiors and in all likelihood under her command. It is less immediately obvious that her kinsmen, as described by both *amici* and *parentes*, would be so.<sup>726</sup> Those so denoted probably were, however, subordinate to the queen, because she was her father’s only legitimate child. The surviving members of her kin (other than her own children) would be either bastards or members of cadet lines, and therefore her vassals.<sup>727</sup> Orderic further identifies Matilda as *domina* of the Boulonnais, and comments that they *famulatum suum ei exhibent*.<sup>728</sup> He likely chose *domina* as a direct female counterpart to *dominus*, with the connotations of rulership that the word carried; this suggests that he believed Matilda wielded the wide-ranging and effective authority her father had before her.<sup>729</sup>

This description of Matilda as a female feudal lord is amplified by the latter phrase, and in particular the word *famulatum*. During the medieval period, this carried the range of meanings ‘personal or domestic service’, ‘membership of household’, ‘duty, obedience’. These definitions more clearly spell out the relationship between Matilda and her Boulonnais navy. Rather than simply being a noblewoman, a woman of status, Matilda of Boulogne was a feudal ruler, who

<sup>725</sup> Unless noted, definitions come from R. E. Latham and D. R. Howlett, *Dictionary of Medieval Latin from British Sources* (London, 1975).

<sup>726</sup> R. E. Latham and J. H. Baxter, *Revised Medieval Latin Word-List from British and Irish Sources* (London, 1965).

<sup>727</sup> Murray, *Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, pp. 155-65.

<sup>728</sup> See above, p. 32.

<sup>729</sup> Cf Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, p. 102.

demanded military service as her inherited right. The men of Boulogne who led the blockade were her faithful vassals – rather than the king's, who is never mentioned – whose actions were the expected and logical response to their lady's command.

Matilda's force of personality and hereditary charisma combined with her status as queen-consort in her next political intervention: brokering, negotiating, and ratifying the second treaty of Durham with the Scots in 1139. As discussed above, Matilda, along with Bishop Alberic of Ostia, began pressing for an end to war with Scotland in December 1138, and the queen continued the process after Alberic left England in mid-January, 1139. Matilda's months of intercession and negotiation paid off on 9 April, 1139, when the treaty was ratified at Durham, in the presence of the queen, Earl Henry of Huntingdon, King David's son, and a variety of Scottish and English nobles.<sup>730</sup> Although she appears to have ratified the treaty as queen of England and proxy for her husband, her role as mediator was due to her 'general' inheritance from her family: her personality, her charisma, and her ties to her blood kin.

Part of the reason that Matilda of Boulogne was responsible for the negotiation of this treaty was because of her familial ties to the Scottish throne. King David of Scots was the brother of Matilda of Boulogne's mother Mary; as her maternal uncle he shared with her the legacy of his mother, Margaret of Scotland, who was widely venerated even before her c. 1250 canonisation.<sup>731</sup> Tanner comments that David of Scotland's aid to the empress, and concomitant unwillingness to aid his other niece, shows that Margaret's reputation did not affect Matilda of Boulogne; the evidence is fairly clear, however, that Matilda's maternal family was close-knit and heavily committed to mutual aid. One late account comments that his elder sister, Queen Matilda, Henry I's wife, brokered David of Scots' marriage to Matilda of Huntingdon.<sup>732</sup> It is equally possible, given that

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<sup>730</sup> See above, pp. 34-35.

<sup>731</sup> King, *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign*, pp. xxii-iii; Baker, 'Nursery of Saints', pp. 138-4.

<sup>732</sup> Huneycutt, '*Alianora Regina Anglorum*', p. 124.

their marriages were only a year apart, that Queen Matilda had performed the same service for her sister Mary.<sup>733</sup>

It is not unlikely that Matilda of Boulogne knew her uncle well, since he had been brought up at Henry I's court, and Matilda may have spent time there as a girl.<sup>734</sup> David's gift to Arrouaise of a moiety of hides and tallow from the animals killed, presumably by royal hunts, at Sterling may have been influenced not only by Carlisle's brief assumption of that house's observance, but also by his ties to his sister Mary and her family.<sup>735</sup> Indeed, this grant, coupled with Matilda's veneration for her saintly grandmother Margaret, reinforces the picture drawn by Richard of Hexham, of her deep and abiding affection for her mother's kin.<sup>736</sup> Such affection and the ties it created were one of the engines driving medieval diplomacy – noble marriages were perhaps the most tried-and-true method of cementing a peace or an alliance. In Parsons's terms, '[a]t a time when society lacked an abstract notion of the state, and power was conceived of in patrimonial terms, marriage was an important instrument of royal alliance'.<sup>737</sup> Stephen and Matilda's marriage was not contracted to cement Anglo-Scottish relations, but nevertheless shows how existing ties were exploited for that purpose, validating Henry III's comment that 'friendship between princes can be obtained in no more fitting way than through the link of conjugal troth'.<sup>738</sup>

Matilda was at least a far better choice to negotiate the treaty than the magnates who formed the core of the king's *familia*. As Richard of Hexham noted, the king's military retainers could only stand to lose from peace with Scotland. Although the lands of nobles in northern England had been attacked, those who fought at the battle of the Standard could bring in significant income through

<sup>733</sup> *ibid*, p. 124; ASC, pp. 176-7; JW, pp. 102-3.

<sup>734</sup> See above, p. 17.

<sup>735</sup> A. A. J. Gosse, *Histoire de l'abbaye et de l'ancienne congrégation des chanoines réguliers d'Arrouaise: avec des notes critiques, historiques & diplomatiques* (Arras, 1972), pp. 56-7. Cf. the confirmations of Henry of Huntingdon and Pope Alexander III, given in Tock, *Monumenta*, pp. 115, 293.

<sup>736</sup> R. L. G. Ritchie, *The Normans in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1954), pp. 269-70. Cf. J. C. Holt, 'Feudal Society and the Family in Early Medieval England: I, The Revolution of 1066', *TRHS* 5:32 (1982), 193-212.

<sup>737</sup> J. C. Parsons, 'Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power: Some Plantagenet Evidence, 1150-1500', in J. C. Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship* (Stroud, 1993), p. 63. Cf. J. C. Holt, 'Feudal Society and the Family in Early Medieval England 3: Patronage and Politics', *TRHS* 5:34 (1984), 11-13, 23-4.

<sup>738</sup> Cited in Parsons, 'Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power', p. 63.

seized lands, goods, and ransoms.<sup>739</sup> The power of the magnates, moreover, had received a serious boost in 1139, when Stephen arrested Roger, bishop of Salisbury, the head of the royal administration.<sup>740</sup> Since that coup, engineered by the Beaumont twins, the king relied on his military *curiales* to help keep the peace – and thereby set severe limits on how much he could defy their interests.<sup>741</sup> The king, moreover, was well-known to his contemporaries as a man prone to rash decision-making, and amenable to pressure from those around him, which gave the magnates another way to ensure that the treaty died on the vine.<sup>742</sup>

Matilda of Boulogne, on the other hand, was well equipped to persuade the king into a course of action. Contemporary writers agree with Ritchie that she was ‘...a woman of singular charm, ability, and persistence...’.<sup>743</sup> Analysing the wording of these chronicles shows just how critical this personal charisma and her ties to the Scottish king were to the queen’s mission. According to John of Hexham, the ‘...*domestica instantia Matildis regina Anglorum, lege consanguinitatis avunculo suo regi Scotiae...*’ was crucial in Stephen’s assent to the treaty.<sup>744</sup> *Instantia* carried connotations in the medieval period not just of urgency, but also of perseverance, of sustained effort toward a goal; in this case, the treaty itself was due to the prolonged, insistent pressure applied by Matilda of Boulogne on her husband. Moreover, John stresses the ties of blood relationship that bound Matilda and David – with the suggestion that ties of marriage may not have been strong enough to allow the queen to negotiate a treaty unfavourable to so many of her husband’s men.

Richard of Hexham’s account, however, shows how the queen’s forceful personality was vital to the treaty’s success. Even Bishop Alberic’s pleadings were undertaken with the queen’s

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<sup>739</sup> See pp. 34-34.

<sup>740</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 93-7.

<sup>741</sup> *ibid*, pp. 84-9.

<sup>742</sup> R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, p. 24; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, p. 58; *GS*, pp. 40-3; *JH*, p. 14.

<sup>743</sup> Ritchie, *Normans in Scotland*, pp. 269-70.

<sup>744</sup> *SD*, pp. 299-300.

‘...*mediante, ac feminea calliditate atque protervitate instante...*’.<sup>745</sup> *Mediante* had a clear and uncomplicated medieval meaning of ‘interceding’ or ‘mediating’; however, both *calliditas* and *protervitas* are more complicated, since both carried double – and oppositely connoted – sets of meanings. *Calliditas*, used positively, denoted ‘subtlety’, but in a negative sense meant ‘craftiness’. *Protervitas* similarly denoted either ‘boldness’ or ‘impudence’.<sup>746</sup> However, based both on the context – the queen brokering peace in concert with the papal legate – and the general tenor of the passage, it seems that Richard meant to praise the queen and stress her skill in persuasion.<sup>747</sup> His statement that peace was made over the English nobility’s objections by ‘...*femininei pectoris ardor vinci nescius...*’ reinforces this idea. Unlike his previous choice of words, the medieval meaning of *ardor* was metaphorical and unabashedly positive: ‘passion, intensity’.

Richard’s wording shows that Matilda of Boulogne’s ties to her mother’s family, while enough for her to be the logical and accepted ambassador to her uncle’s court, were not enough to ensure the treaty’s success. For that, the queen had to rely on the charisma she had inherited from both sides of her family, but particularly her father’s. As the sole descendant of a particularly noble family, Matilda would have inherited a large share of *nobilitas*. Moreover, as the daughter and niece of three of the most famous crusaders, she may have been able to tap into the leadership and oratorical qualities that marked out Eustace, Godfrey, and Baldwin. Even if her distinguished parentage did not give her an extra measure of respect from the other members of Stephen’s *curia*, her undoubted tenacity and charisma were vital to the advancement of a treaty that was against the best interests of many curial magnates. Even though only a few, such as Ranulf earl of Chester, would have territorial ambitions in the areas conceded to the Scots, continued fighting allowed English nobles an extra income from spoils and ransoms. Being the king’s wife gave Matilda of

<sup>745</sup> R. Howlett (ed.), *Chronicles of the reigns of Stephen, Henry II, and Richard I* (London, 1886), p. 176.

<sup>746</sup> C. T. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford, 1896), p. 1478 s.v. *protervitas*.

<sup>747</sup> It does not resemble descriptions of the empress as haughty: JH, p. 19; GS, pp. 110-25; Chibnall, ‘Women in Orderic’, 115-16.

Boulogne privileged access to his ear, but her forceful personality allowed her to sway the minds of his courtiers, without whose approval the treaty would not have gone through.

Matilda turned to her personal charisma, force of personality, and her authority as wife and mother in the most fraught period of Stephen's reign – between his capture at Lincoln in February 1141 and his release in November of that year – to bolster her increasingly tenuous authority as queen-consort; all of her actions during this period can, and should, be regarded as a coherent whole. Her role was foreshadowed by her actions a year earlier, as related by William of Malmesbury. In the *Historia Novella*, he comments that Henry, bishop of Winchester, organised peace talks after Whitsuntide of 1140, when the king and the empress appear to have brought their closest advisers to Bath to parley. The juxtaposition of names in William's account suggests this, since he comments that '...on the empress's side her brother Robert was sent and the rest of her advisers, on the king's side the legate and the archbishop, together with the queen'.<sup>748</sup>

Robert of Gloucester was the empress's strategic adviser, and to a notable degree, the imperial party – and the empress's ability to claim the throne – depended on him. The 'rest' of the empress's advisers were in all probability the two other members of the triumvirate that kept her cause alive: Miles of Gloucester and Brian FitzCount, lord of Wallingford.<sup>749</sup> Given this, it becomes likely that the three people listed on the king's side – his wife, his brother, and the archbishop – were the king's equivalent advisers. Although Stephen had imprisoned Roger of Salisbury the year before, it is telling that, at a time when the influence of the Beaumont twins was at its height, neither appeared at the bargaining table. Matilda's presence, on the other hand, is a strong indication of her value to Stephen's cause.

In 1141, Matilda stepped onto the historical stage for the longest period of her career – and, arguably, her most important actions occurred during this period. After Stephen's capture, she became the logical head of the royalist cause. Henry of Huntingdon commented that the royalist

<sup>748</sup> *GS*, pp. 76-9.

<sup>749</sup> *GS*, pp. lix-lxii; Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, pp. 12, 81-5, 174-5.

stronghold of Kent remained firmly in the king's camp because of the queen's and William of Ypres's efforts there.<sup>750</sup> Orderic Vitalis, in fact, recorded that Waleran de Meulan, Simon de Senlis, William de Warenne, '...and many others remained loyal to the queen, and vowed to fight manfully for the king and his heirs'.<sup>751</sup> This passage sheds a vital light on the queen's role, which, it seems, was similar to that of any medieval noble wife, who shared her husband's status and interests, and was responsible for furthering both.<sup>752</sup>

Her unshakable connection to the royalist cause also meant that Matilda was the perfect choice to lead the royalist faction after Stephen's capture. She could claim the loyalty of his *familiares*, and could speak and act on his behalf more persuasively than anyone else in his entourage. Because of this, she appears acting as a stand-in for her husband, a king by proxy who could legitimately claim the loyalty of her husband's subjects.<sup>753</sup> An almost exact parallel to Matilda's situation, in fact, appears in Orderic Vitalis; when Normans captured King Louis IV of France at Rouen, his wife Gerberga took advice from his *curiales* and eventually negotiated his release and made peace.<sup>754</sup>

The danger to the queen during the period of Stephen's captivity was real. Lois Huneycutt comments that the authority of a medieval queen rested on her influence at court; loss of that influence spelled disaster.<sup>755</sup> Although Matilda, unlike Huneycutt's worst-case scenario, did have independent wealth in her own right, events could have rendered her just as powerless as a destitute queen. Several chronicles make it clear that the king was to be permanently imprisoned after his capture, in a parallel to Henry I's treatment of William Clito. William of Malmesbury, a partisan of the empress, suggests that Earl Robert of Gloucester was pressed by imperial magnates to keep Stephen under close confinement – a move that Richard of Hexham attributed to the empress's

<sup>750</sup> HH, pp. 738-9; see above, p. 38 n. 180.

<sup>751</sup> OV, pp. 546-7.

<sup>752</sup> See above, p. 129 n. 620.

<sup>753</sup> See above, pp. 136-136; below, pp. 169-173.

<sup>754</sup> OV, pp. 82-3; Chibnall, 'Women in Orderic', 111.

<sup>755</sup> Huneycutt, 'Intercession and the Queen', p. 138.

inappropriate, unfeminine haughtiness. The author of the *Gesta Stephani* commented that the earl and the empress, ‘...by agreement between the two of them, put him under guard in the tower of Bristol to be kept there until the last breath of life...’.<sup>756</sup>

If Stephen were to be imprisoned for life, and particularly if the empress were to gain the English throne, the queen’s honour would have been mortally threatened from two directions. First, if the empress attained the throne, she would be almost certain to escheat the honour of Boulogne to the crown. Since this made Matilda of Boulogne one of the richest laypeople in England and provided the royalist faction with an important strategic hold on the capital, the empress simply could not afford to allow it to pass from Matilda to her son. Secondly, any successful challenge by the empress to Stephen’s throne risked a mass defection of Boulonnais tenants to the imperial faction. This risk became a certainty if the empress toppled Stephen, as tenants bowed to the inevitable in the hopes of keeping or expanding their holdings or to avoid the kind of punitive action that the empress took against the Londoners in 1141 for their aid to the king. The testimony of the *Historia Novella* and *Gesta Stephani* suggests that not only did the empress intend to escheat Matilda of Boulogne in 1141, but also she may in fact have begun the process by promising the honour to a number of unnamed military retainers.<sup>757</sup>

This grave threat led to the queen’s next move – attempting to parley with the empress. She sent Christian, one of her household clerks, to read a letter on her behalf to the council assembled at Winchester in early April, 1141, to discuss the empress’s claim to the throne. In it, she ‘...earnestly beg[ged] all the assembled clergy, and especially the bishop of Winchester, her lord’s brother, to restore to the throne that same lord, whom cruel men, who are at the same time his own men, have cast into chains’.<sup>758</sup> Almost certainly, she could not have moved to address the council in person, as she could not risk imprisonment. It would spell the final collapse of Stephen’s cause, and also give the empress the opportunity to extort or escheat her patrimonial land.

<sup>756</sup> *HN*, pp. 86-7; *RH*, pp. 56-7; *GS*, pp. 114-15.

<sup>757</sup> *HN*, pp. 98-101; *GS*, pp. 122-3.

<sup>758</sup> *HN*, pp. 94-7.

The chronicles elucidate not only the extreme weakness of her bargaining position, but also the structural weaknesses inherent in the authority of the queen-consort. The wording of contemporary chronicles makes it clear that Matilda of Boulogne was forced by circumstances into fairly desperate measures. John of Hexham portrays the queen as begging for support wherever she could find it. The *Historia Novella*, *Gesta Stephani*, and John of Worcester all also stress the queen's desperation and lack of support, with William of Malmesbury laying particular stress on her tearful interview with her brother-in-law, Henry of Blois.<sup>759</sup> All these accounts strongly suggest that Matilda's exalted status – and thus her authority and freedom of action – as queen-consort was negated by Stephen's imprisonment. This left her only emotional pleas and her personal charisma, to which the empress's reaction showed she was immune, as weapons. Once Stephen had been captured, Matilda's ability to claim special privileges as queen was short-circuited, leaving her in the same position as any other unprotected wife. An interesting parallel in this regard is the *Gesta Stephani*'s treatment of the siege of Exeter, and particularly that of Baldwin de Redvers's wife, who pleaded with the king to bring a merciful end to the siege before her husband and the rest of the garrison were driven out – or killed – by thirst. Its wording, and its emphasis on the emotional appeal of a desperate woman, are strikingly similar to its treatment of Matilda in early 1141.<sup>760</sup>

In both Matilda of Boulogne's and Baldwin de Redvers's wife's case, the Latin wording employed by the chroniclers reinforces the impression of women in fairly desperate situations. The *Gesta Stephani* describes Baldwin's wife as approaching the king '*...nuda pedis, sparsa scapulis crines, largos lacrymarum imbres emanans, ad regem pro suis supplicatura accessit*'. The king in turn took pity on her '*...de miserando et afflicto sexu habuerat*', and listened to her '*...flebiter de reddendo castello miseranda deposcebat*'.<sup>761</sup> Similarly, the *Gesta Stephani* relates that Matilda of Boulogne approached the empress after Stephen's capture and '*...enixe supplicavit...*' for his release and Eustace's inheritance, and notes that she '*...humiliter supplicare... flexus tum lacrymosis*

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<sup>759</sup> See above, p. 28.

<sup>760</sup> *GS*, pp. 30-41.

<sup>761</sup> *GS*, pp. 40-3.

*mulieris precibus... instantissime suggerebat* her brother-in-law Henry bishop of Winchester.<sup>762</sup>

The *Historia Novella* relates that the message Matilda of Boulogne sent to the council of Westminster began ‘... *Rogabat regina obnixe...*’, and notes that she offered her brother-in-law ‘...*lacrimis et satisfactione infractus...*’.<sup>763</sup> The continuation of John of Worcester, from which Gervase of Canterbury takes the account, notes that Queen Matilda ‘...*interpellavit...pro domino suo rege...*’. *Interpellare* is also used to describe the offer to broker Stephen’s entrance to a monastery noted immediately afterwards.<sup>764</sup> Finally, according to John of Hexham, ‘*Regina omnibus supplicavit, omnes pro ereptione mariti sui precibus, promissis, et obsequiis sollicitavit. Et Deus superbae restitit, humili vero dedit gratiam...*’.<sup>765</sup>

All these accounts have a similar turn of phrase, and often share wording, which has the general effect of stressing the queen’s relative powerlessness. The narrative of Baldwin de Redvers’s wife is a good starting point, since she was blatantly in a position of total powerlessness in regard to Stephen. The depiction of her barefoot, with unbound, uncovered hair, and crying serves to highlight both her femininity and her desperation. The narratives of the *Gesta Stephani* and the *Historia Novella* similarly describe Matilda of Boulogne as lachrymose, which suggests that they wished to tap into that clichéd image of despondent womanhood. The key words in the narrative are *afflictere*, *miserari*, and their derivatives. Both these words suggest subjection and desperation: *afflictere* means ‘to afflict’, while *miserari* means ‘to have mercy, show compassion’. The effect of stressing Baldwin’s wife’s tears through the use of *flebiter* (‘tearfully, sorrowfully’) merely intensifies this portrait of impotent femininity.

Although neither of the words the author of the *Gesta Stephani* employs to describe Baldwin de Redvers’s wife appear in the narratives of Matilda of Boulogne, the authors deploy language with similar connotations. The *Gesta Stephani* and John of Hexham use the verb *supplicare* (‘to sue

<sup>762</sup> *ibid*, pp. 122-3, 126-7.

<sup>763</sup> *HN*, pp. 94-7, 100-1.

<sup>764</sup> *JW*, pp. 296-7; *GC*, pp. 119.

<sup>765</sup> *SD*, p. 310.

for mercy, beg humbly, beseech').<sup>766</sup> John additionally employs *sollicitare* ('to be anxious'); the *Historia Novella* uses the synonym *rogare* ('to beg', 'to beseech'), while John of Worcester uses a third – *interpellare* ('to appeal to, entreat, beg, plead, intercede'). The nouns used in these accounts often amplify the feeling of subjection engendered by these words. *Prex* or *preces* ('prayer, entreaty, supplication'),<sup>767</sup> *promissus* ('promise, offer'), *petitio* ('petition, claim'), and *obsequium* ('service, compliance, submission') were all used. *Prex* appears most frequently, possibly because of its suggestion of sinners interceding with God in prayer.

These accounts portray the queen-consort as a woman with few options, generally shorn of the authority that her anointing gave her and in too precarious a position to make use of her inherited authority; there are, however, occasional glimpses of another view of the queen: one that stresses her charisma and suggests just how far she could employ it. Although the use of the adverb *obnixè* ('strenuously, eagerly') in the queen's letter to the Council of Westminster suggests to the reader the direness of her situation, it also suggests the forcefulness of her personality and her persistence in trying to free her husband. The *Gesta Stephani* makes the queen's charisma and her use of it even clearer. In describing her meeting with the empress, the author uses the phrase *enixè supplicavit*, and describes her action as a *petitio*. *Petitio* carries an explicitly legal connotation, as of pressing a claim, which when linked with *enixè* ('earnestly, assiduously') gives a fairly clear outline of Matilda pressing her son's legal claim to her inheritance and Stephen's with all the intensity she could muster.

Perhaps the most interesting and revealing of the encounters recorded is that which Matilda had with Henry bishop of Winchester.<sup>768</sup> Although William of Malmesbury's mention of the queen's tearfulness and especially the connotation of wrong-doing implied by *satisfactio* suggest a woman with few options and little hope, the *Gesta Stephani* goes slightly further and adds an additional stress on her forcefulness. Matilda's appearance, as she 'humbly beseeches' the bishop,

<sup>766</sup> This word and the two following from Latham and Baxter, *Medieval Latin Word-List*.

<sup>767</sup> This word and next two from Latham and Baxter, *Medieval Latin Word-List*.

<sup>768</sup> See above, pp. 40-41.

once again highlights her lack of useful formal authority, but the use of the words *instantissime* ('most urgently, fervently, insistently') and *suggero* ('to supply words or ideas, to indicate as possible') again show her as a forceful woman making her point clear, authoritative, and persuasive. Thus even at the nadir of the queen's ability to utilise her formal authority as queen-consort and ruling countess, she could still use her personal charisma and persuasiveness to further her goals.

One narrative in particular shows the limits of Matilda of Boulogne's ability to harness her charisma: that given by John of Worcester and, later, Gervase of Canterbury. Both authors claim that the English nobility offered to persuade Stephen to give up the throne in favour of retiring to a monastery or to the Holy Land as a crusader in return for his freedom.<sup>769</sup> It is likely, however, that this offer was spearheaded by, and originated from, the queen, for three reasons.<sup>770</sup> The first and simplest is that such an offer was an acknowledgment that the royalist faction was moribund with the king's capture – that the empress had won the war. Needless to say, it would almost certainly prove difficult to convince the king that such was the case, and to give up his crown – and even if Stephen intended to renege on the offer, he would find it difficult to regain the throne once he had abdicated. Matilda of Boulogne was more than capable of inducing her husband to take such a step, probably more than any of his military retainers were. Secondly, such a plan had dynastic implications; Stephen's abdication was worthless if Prince Eustace did not also relinquish his rights. Once again, it would be far easier for the prince's mother to persuade him to do so than any of his father's retainers.

Finally, at least one of the choices – entering a monastery, presumably the most attractive option for the empress – had as an absolute prerequisite the queen's active consent, since it required the dissolution of Stephen and Matilda's marriage. From the time of Pope Gregory the Great, any binding vow of chastity had to be taken by both spouses simultaneously. Moreover, canon law

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<sup>769</sup> See p. 40 n. 187.

<sup>770</sup> Cf. Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 317-18.

demanded that when one spouse entered the cloister, the other did as well.<sup>771</sup> It is thus preposterous to suggest that the abdication plan was an independent brainchild of the English nobility. She had to know of and consent to the plan, but more plausibly made it herself. It also gives a tantalising glimpse into the queen's paradoxical position. With her authority as consort at the lowest possible ebb and her authority as countess under dire threat, Matilda of Boulogne was desperate enough to forfeit her marriage for a measure of security and her husband's life. However, her charisma and force of personality were still intact to the point that she could persuade her husband to agree to end their marriage and the English nobility to put forward the offer. The sources are unclear, but she may have made the offer to the empress personally. Even if doing so was too big a security risk, it is almost certain, from her letter to the council of Westminster, that she sent a message to her and possibly argued her case in front of her chief rival herself.<sup>772</sup>

Matilda of Boulogne may also have been tapping into the intercessory abilities of English queens-consort in this confrontation with the empress.<sup>773</sup> Scholars generally agree that the Empress Matilda intended to occupy the English throne in her own right, and acted accordingly.<sup>774</sup> However, few have taken that idea to its logical conclusion. Once she entered the capital, the empress was probably acting as the ruler of England. She therefore adopting the paternalistic, legalistic, 'hyper-male' persona required by the English conception of kingship, since there was no precedent of female ruler for her to fall back on; this may be part of why she rejected the abdication plan and thus lost the throne.<sup>775</sup> The empress's actions at London – demanding money from the Londoners '...with a voice of authority...'; giving Eustace's lawful inheritance to her favourites; and dealing in a harsh and uncompromising way with suppliants – all suggest that she had taken this persona to

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<sup>771</sup> D. Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage* (Princeton, 1993), pp. 78, 128, 157-9.

<sup>772</sup> See above, p. 39.

<sup>773</sup> See above, pp. 39, 129-131.

<sup>774</sup> Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, p. 102; *HN*, pp. lvi-lix.

<sup>775</sup> Strohm, *Hochon's Arrow*, p. 104.

heart and was determined to act in a manner befitting her father, who had acquired a formidable reputation for harsh justice.<sup>776</sup>

However, unlike her father, Matilda was a woman, and could not have a wife to provide her the necessary ability to change her mind or modify an action without losing face. In view of how precarious her political situation was, this was a particularly critical lack.<sup>777</sup> In this context, especially given the emphasis on Matilda of Boulogne's inferiority in the chronicle accounts, it appears that she was attempting to act as the empress's intercessory foil on this occasion. By humbling herself before her rival, either in person or through an intermediary, the queen-consort may well have been signalling that if the empress were to be the ruler she desired to be, she needed to act mercifully with her vanquished opponent.

The empress did not take the queen-consort's thinly veiled advice, however. It is possible that she may not have been able to interpret it, since her inability to accept useful advice was well-known and commented on, even by her own supporters.<sup>778</sup> Unfortunately, accepting counsel was something of a litmus test of good kingship, and the empress, by rejecting it, had failed that test, and shown herself unworthy of taking the throne.<sup>779</sup> In the process, she also alienated and divided her most important followers, as the negative comments about made her by chroniclers – even those previously sympathetic to her cause – shows.<sup>780</sup>

This in turn gave Matilda of Boulogne the opening she needed. As initial support for the empress soured, the queen-consort took advantage of her position and the growing discontent of various groups who had been rebuffed by the empress to create a new royalist coalition; the citizens of London, rather than the king's military retainers, appear to have played the key role in it. It is likely that the queen-consort was exploiting the fact that, as Parsons points out, 'the lack of

<sup>776</sup> *HN*, pp. 98-101; *GS*, pp. 120-5; *ASC*, p. 198.

<sup>777</sup> Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, pp. 96-7.

<sup>778</sup> *HN*, pp. lviii-lxii, 98-101; *JW*, pp. 296-7.

<sup>779</sup> J. C. Parsons, 'The Pregnant Queen as Counsellor and the Medieval Construction of Motherhood', in J. C. Parsons and B. Wheeler (eds.), *Medieval Mothering* (London, 1996), pp. 45-54.

<sup>780</sup> *HH*, pp. 738-9; *JH*, p.19; above, p. 130 n. 624.

constitutive oaths for the queen put no formal restraints upon her relationship with either the king or the realm'. This lack of definition left the individual consort free to define her role, and actions appropriate to it, as she wished and circumstances allowed.<sup>781</sup> In this case, it seems Matilda defined herself as her husband's proxy, and acted accordingly to draw support for his cause. At the very least, the fact that the chronicles' consensus is that the men of Kent, a royalist stronghold, were under her command; this suggests that she was generally acknowledged as the stand-in and caretaker for her husband's cause.<sup>782</sup> John of Hexham comments that her greatest drive to win followers came after the empress's flight from London. From William of Malmesbury's remark that many English nobles were '...ashamed of having abandoned the king in battle...' and gathered under his banner to try to vitiate that disgrace suggests her probable rhetorical tactic – one which, given the queen's charisma, was probably very successful.<sup>783</sup>

The *Gesta Stephani*, however, makes her course of action after being rebuffed most clear. It notes that the queen-consort engineered the empress's flight, by gathering an army, presumably of her own vassals or the die-hard royalists of Kent, and using it to ravage the vicinity of London.<sup>784</sup> This threat, combined with their insulting and shabby treatment at the hands of the empress, led the citizens of the capital to

...[judge] it worthy of consideration to make a new pact of peace and alliance with the queen and join together with one mind to rescue their king and lord from his chains, since having incurred a just censure for too hastily and too heedlessly abandoning the king they were in some fashion accepting, while he was still alive, the tyranny of usurpers that was laid upon them.

The Londoners, probably with the collusion of the queen's forces outside the walls, then drove the empress out of London.<sup>785</sup> Matilda of Boulogne was allowed into the capital, shortly thereafter, where

<sup>781</sup> Parsons, 'Pregnant Queen', p. 39.

<sup>782</sup> HH, pp. 738-9; R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, pp. 54, 56, 66; above, p. 154 n. 719.

<sup>783</sup> JH, p. 19; HN, pp. 100-3.

<sup>784</sup> Cf. GS, pp. 122-3; R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, p. 57.

<sup>785</sup> GS, pp. 124-5.

‘...forgetting the weakness of her sex and a woman’s softness she bore herself with the valour of a man; everywhere by prayer or price she won over invincible allies; the king’s lieges, wherever they were scattered throughout England, she urged persistently to demand their lord back with her; and now she humbly besought the Bishop of Winchester, legate of all England, to take pity on his imprisoned brother and exert himself for his freedom, that uniting all his efforts with hers he might gain her a husband, the people a king, the kingdom a champion.’<sup>786</sup>

There is no indication here that the queen had behaved wrongly by calling up and using troops, suggesting that Parsons’s comments about the obscurity of the queen-consort’s role are probably correct. The stress laid by the chroniclers on Matilda’s relationship to her husband, moreover, reinforces the fact that she was acting in the interests and on the behalf of her husband. The authority by which she called for a general muster in aid of the king was as his wife, not as the countess of Boulogne – if she had been married to any man other than the anointed king, she would not have been able to do so. Finally, the universally positive tenor of the chroniclers’ treatment of the queen-consort compared with the empress suggests that was a significant amount of leeway given to a woman acting on her husband’s behalf. Ultimately, the difference between the empress, who was vilified for behaving like a man, and Matilda of Boulogne, who was praised, is that the former was acting for herself, whereas the latter was fulfilling her role as help-meet for her royal spouse.

Subsequent events also show the queen continuing to act on her authority as consort. Orderic Vitalis and William of Malmesbury’s comments noted above make it clear that the queen drew her support from royal supporters all over England, rather than simply her own retainers.<sup>787</sup> The consensus of the various accounts also makes it clear that the queen was the leader of the royalist forces at Winchester. The Melrose and Anglo-Saxon chronicles and John of Hexham baldly state that the queen-consort led the forces that defeated the empress. Henry of Huntingdon and the chronicles based on his account comment that the queen-consort’s involvement was sparked by a request from Henry of Blois, bishop of Winchester, for her aid and that of William of Ypres. The only chronicle not to give the queen a role at Winchester is John of Worcester, and this may be

<sup>786</sup> *ibid*, pp. 124-5.

<sup>787</sup> See above, p. 161 n. 749.

explained by the fact that the 1141 entry is part of a continuation made at Gloucester – well away from the fighting and from insight into the royalist faction.<sup>788</sup>

The *Historia Novella* and *Gesta Stephani* may hold the key to reconciling these accounts. William of Malmesbury's account notes that Henry of Blois, on finding himself surrounded by the empress's forces, had sent for '...all those he knew would favour the king'; obviously, this would include both the king's wife and his military retainers.<sup>789</sup> He also notes that during the siege '...everywhere outside the walls of Winchester the roads were being watched by the queen and the earls who had come, to prevent provisions being brought in to the empress's adherents'.<sup>790</sup> According to the *Gesta Stephani*, Henry sent for '...the barons who had obeyed the king...', while Matilda of Boulogne appears to have marched her troops, which included the Londoners and probably her own Boulonnais levies, to Winchester independently.<sup>791</sup> It further notes that 'the whole of England, together with an extraordinary number of foreigners, had assembled from every quarter and was there in arms' and points out the king's *familiares* Robert and William de Chesney as leaders of what he calls 'the king's forces', rather than William of Ypres.<sup>792</sup>

Putting these narratives together makes the queen's role clear. She was the overall commander of the army that defeated the empress at Winchester, since Henry of Blois's call for aid reflects only the fact that he was caught unawares and undefended by the empress's forces. Davis argues that the foreign forces involved were Flemish mercenaries and that William of Ypres was in command of the royalist forces, but neither is necessary and the latter is unlikely.<sup>793</sup> As the queen's siege of Dover in 1139 showed, she had the military forces of the county and honour of Boulogne at her disposal, and was willing to use them.<sup>794</sup> It is likely that some, at least, of the foreign forces at Winchester were under her authority as countess. The force at Winchester, moreover, contained

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<sup>788</sup> See above, pp. 41-42.

<sup>789</sup> *HN*, pp. 100-1.

<sup>790</sup> *ibid*, pp. 102-3.

<sup>791</sup> *GS*, pp. 128-9.

<sup>792</sup> *ibid*, pp. 130-1.

<sup>793</sup> R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, pp. 59-60, 65-6.

<sup>794</sup> See above, p. 154 n. 51.

troops from all over England, and included a number of high-ranking English nobles. The chances that they would have accepted William as a commander are small, since he was widely reviled both for being Flemish and particularly for being a hired sword.<sup>795</sup>

The queen, on the other hand, was the king's wife and so carried with her the mantle of anointed, divine authority. She could act in her husband's interests in a relatively untrammelled way and had exalted status. This meant that she could command the loyalty of a large group of nobles, some of whom were jockeying for position at court, and all of whom resented William, far better than William could. It was likely that she was in command of the army, and probably controlled its overall strategy. The fact that Robert of Gloucester was brought to her after his capture tends to confirm this, as disposal of prisoners was the prerogative of an army's leader.<sup>796</sup> Given that he and Matilda often appear together, William of Ypres probably acted as her adviser and led the Flemish troops, while William and Robert de Chesney may well have led the king's household retainers into battle.<sup>797</sup> Taking the field was something Matilda of Boulogne probably could not do, but equally was something that the commander of an army was not expected to; it in no way diminished her queenly authority at Winchester.<sup>798</sup>

The queen's final exertion of her official authority was the peace talks of late 1141, which culminated in the exchange of the king and the earl of Gloucester on All Saints' Day of that year. The short narratives of this event in Henry of Huntingdon and the *Gesta Stephani* comment that the two men were exchanged for each other, and that Matilda of Boulogne and Countess Mabel of Gloucester each acted as jailer for the other's husband.<sup>799</sup> This strongly implies their involvement in the deal, or at least their assent to it, since each would have to have agreed to release her captive. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* comments that friends of the king and earl were involved in discussions that ultimately led to the exchange. At the least, the wives of both men must have been

<sup>795</sup> *GS*, pp. 112-13; *HN*, pp. 38-, 104-5; R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, p. 25.

<sup>796</sup> See above, p. 154.

<sup>797</sup> See above, p. 109-111.

<sup>798</sup> Truax, 'Anglo-Norman Women at War', 113-15, 123.

<sup>799</sup> *HH*, pp. 740-1; above, p. 43.

aware of these talks, because they impacted on their role as jailers,<sup>800</sup> but it is far more likely that Mabel and Matilda initiated the talks, since the two women stood to gain the most from their husbands' release.

The *Historia Novella* confirms their involvement, and indicates their ability to take action on their own initiative; when the English nobles suggested a straightforward one-to-one exchange between the two men, the countess, '...on account of her longing for her [beloved] husband, at once accepted this proposal when she received the messengers, being from a wife's affection the more eager for his release'.<sup>801</sup> At the very least, Matilda, standing in the penumbra of her husband's authority as an anointed king and acting on his behalf, had the ability to dispose of a prisoner as she saw fit, and this must have had some bearing on the negotiations.

The accounts of the negotiations given by John of Worcester and Gervase of Canterbury make it clear, however, that Matilda of Boulogne was one of the driving forces behind the exchange.<sup>802</sup> Both point out that the *internuntiis et amicis* ('messengers between two parties, go-betweens, intermediaries' and 'friends'), by whose mediation the peace treaty was hammered out, were shuttling between the queen and the countess of Gloucester; this clarifies that the peace discussions were led by the wives of the prisoners, and specifically did not include the empress or nobles from either side.<sup>803</sup> Although both chronicles comment that Earl Robert refused to accede to this agreement without the consent of his sister, Gervase makes it particularly clear that the empress had no knowledge of the plan until she was asked to ratify it.<sup>804</sup>

Moreover, the peace plan itself – which would ignore the empress's claims, free the king, set him back on his throne, and make the earl of Gloucester his right-hand man in ruling the country – is unlikely to have originated from anyone other than the queen. It is true that the disparity in prestige between the earl and the king made it unlikely that the imperial faction would give up

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<sup>800</sup> *HN*, pp. 86-7, 114-19.

<sup>801</sup> Malmesbury, *HN*.

<sup>802</sup> See above, p. 43.

<sup>803</sup> See above, p. 43.

<sup>804</sup> *GC*, pp.122: '*At comite id agere renuente absque consensu imperatricis, relata sunt hæc ad imperatricem*'.

anything other than the royal hostage. Nevertheless, any comprehensive settlement of the war initiated by royalist nobility would include adjudication of outstanding claims to land, and would not exalt the empress's mainstay over the king's loyal *curiales* and *familia* members. The fact that the queen-consort was able to negotiate and ratify such a treaty speaks volumes for her authority as the king's wife, and her ability to override other policy considerations.

Gervase also comments that a secret settlement was concluded between the countess and the queen-consort after the empress scotched the original plan; this *collusio* ('collusion'), which was a quid-pro-quo prisoner exchange, bears all the hallmarks of being the queen's brainchild.<sup>805</sup> Once again, a broader settlement was eschewed when it would have been in the interests of the nobility, suggesting that they had little input into it. From this it appears that Matilda of Boulogne's authority was strong enough by the end of 1141 that she could not only override the interests of her own followers, but also split her rival's faction to obtain a goal beneficial to her own interests.

In this case, Matilda seems to have called upon a complex blend of different authorities. Obviously, she could undertake such secret negotiations in her capacity as queen-consort, which allowed her to act as the head of the royalist faction – and thereby take whatever steps she felt necessary to secure Stephen's release. Her interests as Stephen's wife tended to underpin this authority, and probably gave her the right to negotiate on his behalf. This authority may have been enough for her to ignore the interests of her own followers (a comprehensive mediated settlement) but her personal charisma almost certainly played a role as well. The sheer force of her personality probably helped convince the countess of Gloucester to negotiate against the best interests of the empress – her benefactress and lord. Only a woman well-skilled in the arts of persuasion could split the imperial faction and manipulate her own in this way. The queen's brief time as a hostage at Bristol, during the elaborate exchange of the king and earl begun on All Saints' Day 1141, may suggest that the imperial faction was well aware of how powerful and influential the queen had

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<sup>805</sup> See above, p. 173 n. 799.

become; under lock and key she would be unable to take action on Stephen and Eustace's behalf if anything went wrong.<sup>806</sup>

Matilda made perhaps her most complex mixing of authorities in 1140, when she went to France to undertake the final negotiations for and witness her son's wedding to Constance of France. Any given action of the queen's could be motivated by at least two totally separate considerations: the welfare of the Boulonnais county and honour; and the English kingdom's welfare, including that of her family as its rulers. For the most part, especially when she acted in England, the interests of the two polities were identical. However, they could – and when dealing with the county of Boulogne, did – diverge, although British scholars focusing on England tend to overlook this fact. Particularly in the fraught and cut-throat atmosphere of the Anarchy, it was vitally important for Matilda of Boulogne to use all the resources at her disposal to ensure the survival of her husband, family, and nascent dynasty. John of Worcester and Gervase of Canterbury have fairly detailed narratives of the queen's trip that strongly suggest that the queen-consort was responsible for the final negotiation of the marriage, but neither gives an explicit reason why Matilda in particular went to France.<sup>807</sup> Heather Tanner views her presence as a tribute to her diplomatic skills: 'although a family member usually arranged betrothals and marriages... he could have asked his brother Theobald of Blois, a prominent member of Louis VII's court, to carry out the negotiations'.<sup>808</sup>

However, this explanation ignores the fact that Prince Eustace was not merely his father's heir, but also his mother's; although the county of Boulogne had been drawn into closer and closer orbit to the English throne since the time of Count Eustace II, its interests were still, to a great degree, distinct from those of England.<sup>809</sup> It had immense strategic value to the king, since his ability to keep the throne substantially rested on the loyalty of the tenants of the honour. Perhaps

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<sup>806</sup> See above, p. 43.

<sup>807</sup> See above, pp. 36.

<sup>808</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', p. 206; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, p. 95.

<sup>809</sup> Tanner, 'Expansion of Boulogne', 262-4.

more important, however, was the fact that control of Boulogne gave him the resources to recruit Flemish mercenaries and dominate the capital.<sup>810</sup> However, the county's independence from feudal overlordship gave it a large measure of that value, by allowing the royal couple to allocate its resources and manpower as they desired – or needed. This meant that the county had to be protected from encroaching overlordship, notably that of Flanders, at all costs.<sup>811</sup>

One method the Boulonnais counts used to drive and direct their foreign policy to this end was the creation of strategic marriage alliances, which Tanner comments were generally made with the aim of frustrating the growing hegemony of the Flemish counts.<sup>812</sup> In the eleventh century, the Boulonnais house had aligned itself with other local lords; the gradual loss of these allies, often to the burgeoning power of Flanders, meant that aligning with the Anglo-Norman kings of England was, by the twelfth century, the most effective way to salvage the county's sovereignty.<sup>813</sup> During the Anarchy, however, even the Boulonnais alliance with the Anglo-Norman kings of England was becoming problematic because of Stephen's difficulties in holding his throne.

In 1140, the king of France was rapidly becoming, if he was not already, the most desirable of the available partners for a new, additional alliance. The increasing power of the French crown made Louis a plausible candidate for hegemon. Even if he was not at the time an effective overlord, he was able to engage the regional princes as an equal, providing a potent, useful counterweight to the increasing power of the Flemish.<sup>814</sup> However, possession of the Anglo-Norman throne by the Blois-Boulogne dynasty ensured that their continental possessions – Boulogne and Mortain – did not slide into French overlordship. Louis's power also allowed him to challenge the count of Anjou, which was useful from the standpoint of the Anglo-Norman realm. Moreover, aligning the new

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<sup>810</sup> King, 'Stephen of Blois', 80; J. A. Green, 'Financing Stephen's War', 106-7; R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, pp. 7-9, 54; Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 195-6.

<sup>811</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 15ff, 139, 148-9; OV, pp. 520-1.

<sup>812</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 23, 127-8.

<sup>813</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 127-8, 172-3; Tanner, 'Expansion of Boulogne', 262-4. Cf. J. Dunbabin, *France in the Making, 843-1180* (2nd edn., Oxford, 2000), p. 354.

<sup>814</sup> Dunbabin, *France in the Making*, pp. 276-86, 310-55.

Blois-Boulogne dynasty of England with the long-established Capetians further reinforced its royal status, which provided useful symbolic capital in the civil war.

The choice of Louis as a marital ally may also have been a calculated decision on Matilda's part, to provide her son with an ally who had the means and a motive to help her son claim his inheritance if Stephen lost the war. Louis had both, since the aggressive expansionism of Geoffrey of Anjou could easily pose a threat to his growing power and influence. From Louis's point of view, the Blois-Boulogne alliance gave him a much-needed counterweight against growing Angevin and Flemish expansionism. Since he faced threats from two different aggressive princes, acting to stop the traditional Norman rivalry by allying with its new ruler and his dynasty made tactical sense. While these tactical reasons explain the creation of the French alliance, they do not necessarily explain why Matilda personally oversaw the marriage, and probably its final negotiations. Here, once again, her dual authority came into play. She was the best (possibly the only) person qualified to assess, explain, and protect both Boulonnais and Anglo-Norman interests to the king of France. If nothing else, Stephen was far too busy until the spring of 1140 putting down the rebellions sparked by the aftermath of Roger of Salisbury's death to negotiate.<sup>815</sup> Matilda had also proved her negotiating prowess during the creation of the second treaty of Durham, making her an excellent choice as a negotiator.<sup>816</sup>

As queen-consort, she probably attended the wedding in order to meet her new daughter-in-law and brief her on the English political situation during the trip back to England. John Carmi Parsons notes that Plantagenet queens were often intimately involved in the creation of dynastic marriages, particularly as consultants on potential matches and overseers of the nuptial festivities.<sup>817</sup> In addition, mothers spent a great deal of time and care in training their daughters not only to fulfil their royal roles, but also to recognise and uphold the interests of their natal families; as Parsons

<sup>815</sup> *GS*, pp. 96, 99-103; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 115-16; RRAN 263.

<sup>816</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 28-9, 82-3, 130, 143-4, 355; Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, p. 56.

<sup>817</sup> Parsons, 'Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power', pp. 63-4.

points out, the royal mother was the best-equipped person to undertake such training.<sup>818</sup> Although his focus on the role Plantagenet mothers played in their biological daughters' marriages makes Parsons's study somewhat problematic to use to evaluate the role of an Anglo-Norman queen in her daughter-in-law's marriage, his observations are still useful. Eustace was his father's heir and, it must be stressed, fully expected to succeed his father. As such, his wife would in the fullness of time become queen-consort. This meant that she needed to know what her role in English politics would be, and what the people of the realm expected of her in her official role, especially as a 'peaceweaver' between England and France.

Additionally, the fraught state of English politics may have dictated that the English consort take charge of her new daughter-in-law as quickly as possible. Given the tenuous state of politics at the time, it was inadvisable that Constance cross the Channel by herself or with an inadequate escort. Her early contact with Matilda would give the princess an early start in the specific training she would need to negotiate the minefield of contemporary English politics. Queen Matilda appears to have taken a lively interest in her daughter-in-law's education, since the next time Constance appears in contemporary narratives, it is in the Tower of London in the company of her mother-in-law.<sup>819</sup> Finally, it is likely that the turmoil in England meant that the royal couple wanted their daughter-in-law in hand as quickly as possible to cement the alliance. Parsons comments that in 1282 the queen of Aragon demanded that her future daughter-in-law be sent from England immediately, for that reason.<sup>820</sup>

From the preceding discussion, it becomes clear that Matilda of Boulogne took a lively interest and an active role in the ruling of her husband's realm. Her period as regent, and her activity as a military lieutenant of the king's tend to suggest that ruling was something of a family affair in twelfth-century England. Particularly because of the increasing fragmentation of lordship through the reign, Stephen found it difficult to find loyal subordinates whom he could trust to

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<sup>818</sup> *ibid*, pp. 69-75.

<sup>819</sup> WN, pp. 66-8.

<sup>820</sup> Parsons, 'Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power', pp. 63-4.

oversee the royal administration or perform other tasks while he led armies into the field. This difficulty only worsened after the disastrous events of 1141, which caused the earls he had created to distance themselves from him as a means of protecting their own interests and holdings.<sup>821</sup> His family thus became not only the inheritors of his realm, who needed to be trained for the position, but also an important source of administrative capacity, especially in a period when personal rule tended to elide the family and the realm.<sup>822</sup>

That Matilda was aware of the need to train and groom her eldest son Eustace and successor seems clear from several charters she granted jointly with him.<sup>823</sup> As a mother one of her responsibilities was overseeing her children's education,<sup>824</sup> and it seems that she interpreted this widely enough to include training in the art of rule. Matilda gave the first of these charters, granting the land of Eustace de Legrefth in the vicomté of Merck to Arrouaise abbey, in London on 9 February 1141, when Eustace was probably still a minor.<sup>825</sup> It may represent a first attempt at introducing Eustace to the workings of Boulonnais administration. Many of its witnesses do not attest any of the queen's other charters, and so may be Boulonnais tenants or administrators, and its place – the capital – suggests that the queen, one week after the disaster at Lincoln, was also occupied with royal administration.<sup>826</sup>

Somewhat more than a year later, at Lens in June 1142, Matilda and Eustace gave Arrouaise the title of Merck, a discontinuous part of the county of Boulogne. The count of Soissons, his brother, the abbot of St. Mary's Boulogne, and the county's probable chancellor witnessed this grant; it suggests that the queen was introducing her son to important allies and bureaucrats in

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<sup>821</sup> G. J. White, *Restoration and Reform, 1153-1165: Recovery from Civil War in England* (Cambridge, UK, 2000), pp. 6-7, 89-90; C. W. Hollister, 'The Magnates of Stephen's Reign: Reluctant Anarchists', *HSJ* 5 (1993), 85.

<sup>822</sup> Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, pp. 99-114.

<sup>823</sup> See above, pp. 104-106.

<sup>824</sup> Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, pp. 112-13.

<sup>825</sup> See, above, pp. 20-22; R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, pp. 102-3.

<sup>826</sup> Of its seven witnesses, one of whom is the queen's chancellor Radulf, three (Geoffrey of the Hospital, Guy of Montreuil-sur-Mer, and Ralf FitzMarshall) do not attest any other charters; two more (Walter Bolbec and William de Noers) attest one charter each for the king involving a manor in Hertfordshire (RRAN 944, 856), which might suggest they were Boulonnais tenants there.

preparation for his eventual takeover of the county.<sup>827</sup> This charter was followed by one granted possibly at Boulogne the same year, confirming a parcel of forest to Clairmarais, her grandmother Ida's foundation. Once again the presence of unique witnesses suggests that Matilda was showing her son the ropes of running the county, but the addition of Abbot Bernard of Clairvaux and the abbots of three of its daughter-houses lends some credence to Amt's suggestion that Matilda was pleading her son's case to the throne to Bernard – and wished him to meet the youth.<sup>828</sup> Within five years of it, she and Eustace added an additional carucate of land to this grant; the presence of Richard of Boulogne and Arnulf advocate of Thérouanne, men with demonstrated or probable connections to the counts, and its place at Boulogne are likely to indicate a date not long after the previous grant and perhaps a final introduction to comital officials and the finer points of rulership.<sup>829</sup>

The fact that all the grants given jointly by Matilda and Eustace are to houses on the continent is significant; it suggests that Matilda acted as the ruling countess of Boulogne, rather than her husband, and as such was the best person to introduce her son to its administration. This may have been the division of labour settled upon after their marriage, or it may have been a pragmatic consequence of the king's preoccupation with defending his throne. Her educational responsibility as wife and queen thus elided neatly with her duties as ruling countess. Moreover, that these were the only joint grants issued by Matilda suggests that her authority as countess was absolute. Although she on occasion associated her son with her in rule, she did not need him to give her actions legitimacy. They demonstrate, on the contrary, that Eustace was associated with his mother before his majority. In one charter of William of Ypres's to Clairmarais, which he witnessed with Matilda between 1142 and 1147, he is referred to as 'Eustace son of the queen of England'.<sup>830</sup>

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<sup>827</sup> RRAN 26.

<sup>828</sup> Amt, *Accession*, p. 104; RRAN 194.

<sup>829</sup> RRAN 198.

<sup>830</sup> RRAN 200: '*Eustachii filii regine Anglie*'.

This association of mother and son demonstrates that power and authority were shared out within the family, and gradually assumed over time.

### **C: The Honour of Boulogne, Essex, and Geoffrey II de Mandeville**

Matilda of Boulogne inherited various kinds of authority from her family; although she could not share her personal charisma with Stephen, she could and did share her more tangible Boulonnais authority. Just as she could partake of Stephen's authority as his wife, and Eustace could partake of hers as her son, she brought her authority as countess to her marriage, making it available for Stephen to exploit in defence of his throne. The honour of Boulogne, in fact, played a critical but generally unrecognised strategic role in the Anarchy, perhaps nowhere more directly than in the struggle between the royal couple and Geoffrey II de Mandeville, first earl of Essex. Geoffrey's career was one of the most turbulent of the era, and has been the subject of sustained and significant critical discussion by scholars of English history. However, most of these discussions have overlooked a significant factor in his relations with King Stephen: the interplay between Mandeville familial interests in Essex and Boulonnais hegemony there. The remainder of this chapter will discuss Geoffrey's territorial ambitions, as expressed in extant charters, in the context of the honour of Boulogne, attempting to better contextualise Geoffrey's chequered career, and to show the practical intertwining of Boulonnais and royal authority.

Any discussion of Geoffrey II de Mandeville, arguably the most controversial of the Anarchic magnates, must begin with a brief outline of his family, particularly what Warren Hollister has dubbed the 'misfortunes of the Mandevilles'.<sup>831</sup> The family's patriarch, Geoffrey I, rose from obscure origins to become one of the Conqueror's most favoured vassals;<sup>832</sup> he was given a number of royal offices and '...an immense fief centring on Essex and including lands in ten other

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<sup>831</sup> C. W. Hollister, 'The Misfortunes of the Mandevilles', in C. W. Hollister (ed.), *Monarchy, Magnates and Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World* (London, 1986), pp. 117-27.

<sup>832</sup> K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, 'The Prosopography of Post-Conquest England: Four Case Studies', *Medieval Prosopography* 14 (1993), 9; D. C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact upon England* (London, 1969), p. 269.

shires, valued collectively at about £782 per year in 1086'.<sup>833</sup> The family's upward mobility ceased, however, in February 1101, when Geoffrey's son, William, the castellan of the Tower of London, allowed Ranulf Flambard to escape custody. Flambard nearly unseated Henry I from his newfound throne, and the king's revenge was swift. He granted the manors of Sawbridgeworth, Herts., Great Waltham, and Saffron Walden, Essex to William's father-in-law Eudo *dapifer* until William paid more than £2,000 levied on him by Henry as a fine. Barlow notes that the 1130 Pipe Roll records only £133 6s 8d having been paid, implying that the fine was not deducted from the income of the confiscated manors.<sup>834</sup> Since the debt was nearly three times the family's total yearly income in 1086, and the confiscated manors made up nearly one-third of that total, William's ability to pay the debt was severely limited. The final indignity was that these manors lay within the centre of the Mandeville family's power and influence. With the heart of their demesne cut out and subject to the wrath of the king for the Flambard debacle, the family quickly fell '...from the upper stratum of the English baronage'.

However, even Henry I provided a means for the Mandeville family to redeem themselves. Rather than giving the estates to a stranger, he granted them to William's father-in-law, from whom he could expect to inherit them back, possibly along with Eudo's entire estate. The family's potential rehabilitation was scuppered when William died some time before 1120 and his widow Margaret married Othuer FitzEarl, the natural son of Hugh I, earl of Chester. Othuer thus became Eudo *dapifer*'s most likely heir for both his own estates and the escheated ones; the birth of his son William by Margaret threatened to permanently alienate the heart of the Mandeville holdings from the family. The plot thickened yet again when Eudo died in February 1120 and Othuer himself died in the wreck of the White Ship on 25 November 1120. This left both inheritances essentially in Henry's hands, although he granted away some estates, notably to the count of Boulogne. Henry's

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<sup>833</sup> The following, unless noted, is from Hollister, 'Misfortunes of the Mandevilles', pp. 117-27. Cf. Keats-Rohan, 'Prosopography of Post-Conquest England', 9; F. M. Stenton, *William the Conqueror and the Rule of the Normans* (New York, 1908), p. 241; Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, p. 297.

<sup>834</sup> F. Barlow, *William Rufus* (London, 1983), p. 254; Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England*, p. 75.

delay in deciding the fate of the inheritance and William FitzOthuer's minor status left Geoffrey II a golden opportunity, since royal favour was overwhelmingly the deciding factor in such a case. Geoffrey pressed his claim as soon as he came of age by joining Henry's entourage – with the aim of currying favour with the king and gaining back his patrimony. He participated in the 1135 campaign against William Talvas, in the course of which he witnessed three of Henry's charters; however, he had not received the manors by Henry's death.<sup>835</sup>

Any attempt to analyse Geoffrey de Mandeville's career must be set against this background of a wealthy, powerful family come down in the world, where the hope of social redemption was not yet a reality.<sup>836</sup> However, any analysis must also take account of the long debate by Anglo-Norman historians over Geoffrey's career and character and particularly the charters he received from King Stephen and the Empress Matilda.<sup>837</sup> Round began this debate with his book *Geoffrey de Mandeville*.<sup>838</sup> He decided that each charter Geoffrey received improved his position and referred to its immediate predecessor; he thus placed the charters in a relative order before dating them, and considered it impossible to do otherwise. He posited that the two rivals granted alternate charters to Geoffrey,<sup>839</sup> with the first grant, made by Stephen (S<sub>1</sub>), being given in the latter half of 1140 and the last (M<sub>2</sub>), given by the Empress, between Christmas 1141 and the end of June 1142.<sup>840</sup> Round's logical conclusion was that Geoffrey had been selling his allegiance to the highest bidder, which in turn undoubtedly informed his uniformly negative view of the earl.<sup>841</sup> However, Round's arguments are based on incomplete evidence and are hobbled by his insistence on viewing Stephen as a weak usurper who was overwhelmed by his predatory, ambitious nobles. They additionally fall into the trap of circular argumentation. Round assumed that the grants made must have increased in scope,

<sup>835</sup> Hollister, 'Misfortunes of the Mandevilles', pp. 125-6; Hollister, 'Aristocracy', pp. 48-9.

<sup>836</sup> Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England*, p. 75.

<sup>837</sup> These charters have been given the shorthand titles of S<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub>, M<sub>1</sub>, and M<sub>2</sub>, referring to the first and second charters granted by Stephen and the Empress respectively. They appear as RRAN 273, 274, 275, 276, in the order S<sub>1</sub>, M<sub>1</sub>, M<sub>2</sub>, and S<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>838</sup> Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, pp. 43-4.

<sup>839</sup> Yielding the order S<sub>1</sub>, M<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub>, and M<sub>2</sub>.

<sup>840</sup> Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, pp. 47, 49, 84-6, 138-9, 163.

<sup>841</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'Geoffrey Reconsidered', 299.

then used the escalating grants to determine the relative dates of the charters, which he believed proved that the magnates were self-seeking anarchists; however, the conclusion that they sought ever greater grants is that on which is relative dating rests.<sup>842</sup>

Ralph Davis challenged this view in a series of articles in the *English Historical Review*,<sup>843</sup> claiming that some of Round's assertions were erroneous and others stretched credibility to breaking point.<sup>844</sup> He also disagreed with Round's theory of relative dating, and instead dated each charter individually. This generally gave the same dates as Round, with the crucial exception of M<sub>2</sub>, re-dated to the period immediately after M<sub>1</sub>, in the last week of July 1141 rather than spring 1142, giving the amended order S<sub>1</sub>, M<sub>1</sub>, M<sub>2</sub>, S<sub>2</sub>.<sup>845</sup> He claimed that this date fits both the witness-list and the contemporary political situation better, since the Empress was only in a position to need imminent support in the southeast in 1141, when she was within London itself.<sup>846</sup> Alongside Davis's re-dating came a re-evaluation of Geoffrey's character. He appeared to have changed sides less often, returning to Stephen at Christmas 1143. His 1143 arrest, therefore, stemmed from the king's anticipation of trouble from an over-mighty magnate, rather than one who had joined the empress.<sup>847</sup>

The debate over Geoffrey continued with John Prestwich's 1988 *English Historical Review* article 'The Treason of Geoffrey de Mandeville', in which he argued that Round's dating was correct, but for the wrong reasons.<sup>848</sup> Prestwich pointed out that M<sub>2</sub> would have had to have been granted a matter of days after M<sub>1</sub> for the empress to reach Winchester by 31 July 1141. Taking this as true, he found disturbing gaps in the witness-list and references to Geoffrey of Anjou that did not support an 1141 date.<sup>849</sup> Prestwich believed that the empress recruited Geoffrey in an attempt to attract her husband's aid, to which the earl conditionally assented in a highly provisional treaty;

<sup>842</sup> Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, pp. 26, 53, 98, 270-2.

<sup>843</sup> See above, pp. 15, n. 58; p. 185 n. 841.

<sup>844</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'Geoffrey Reconsidered', 299-300, 304-5.

<sup>845</sup> *ibid*, 300-1.

<sup>846</sup> *ibid*, 305-6.

<sup>847</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'Geoffrey Reconsidered', 303-4.

<sup>848</sup> Prestwich, 'Treason of Geoffrey', 283-312; Prestwich, 'Geoffrey: Further Comment', 960-6; above, p. 185 n. 843.

<sup>849</sup> Prestwich, 'Treason of Geoffrey', 286-8, 290-1; Prestwich, 'Geoffrey: Further Comment', 962-4.

when that aid never materialised, Geoffrey ignored the compact.<sup>850</sup> To Prestwich's mind, Geoffrey was aiming to control the court and government rather than to break away from it, with the ultimate aim of extending his influence.<sup>851</sup> This, coupled with his regional power and wealth, made him a serious threat to other factions at court and highly vulnerable to a palace coup.<sup>852</sup>

Both Davis and Prestwich have forceful arguments for the dating of M<sub>2</sub>, and because of a lack of evidence it is difficult to determine which is more plausible. Prestwich pointed out that the unusual wording and lack of witnesses to M<sub>2</sub> strongly suggests a date later than 1141, and that chronicle evidence for Geoffrey's treason closely parallels that of Odo of Bayeux or William of St. Calais.<sup>853</sup> Other scholars, however, tend to favour Davis's argument.<sup>854</sup> Ultimately, however, the dating of M<sub>2</sub> is less important than the fact that both scholars agree that Geoffrey's actions were rational, within the context of the times, the prevailing norms of lordship, and his own self-interest. If M<sub>2</sub> was granted in 1142, it was a provisional treaty that was never enacted, making it more difficult and less important to date.

Geoffrey II de Mandeville's goal was to consolidate and maintain his family's position as high-level magnates; he may have broadcast his intentions early, since most of Essex's contemporary castles lay in the area of his most extensive holdings.<sup>855</sup> This was a reaction to his family's precipitous decline at Henry I's hands.<sup>856</sup> It may also reflect a more general problem among the nobility. Magnates in England tended to have scattered holdings in a number of shires, which diluted their power and led to an interminable tussle for local supremacy.<sup>857</sup> During Stephen's reign, this led several magnates to defy the king violently, hoping to gain specific lands or offices. Baldwin de Redvers claimed the Devon shrievalty, Robert of Bampton the manor of Uffculme;

<sup>850</sup> Prestwich, 'Treason of Geoffrey', 193, 291-3.

<sup>851</sup> *ibid*, 299-304; *GS*, pp. 160-3.

<sup>852</sup> Prestwich, 'Treason of Geoffrey', 301.

<sup>853</sup> *ibid*, 286-8, 290-2; Prestwich, 'Geoffrey: Further Comment', 962-4; above, n. 851. Cf. R. H. C. Davis, 'Geoffrey Reconsidered', 303-4; R. H. C. Davis, 'Treason of Geoffrey: Comment', 316.

<sup>854</sup> Bradbury, *Stephen and Matilda*, pp. 127-32; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, p.182n.

<sup>855</sup> *Amt*, *Accession*, pp. 70-1; below, p. 187.

<sup>856</sup> See above, p. 183.

<sup>857</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 147-57.

even the empress's main stalwarts were less motivated by her rights than a need to have regional dominance.<sup>858</sup> Most tellingly, perhaps, Turgis de Avranches, a die-hard royalist who was granted Saffron Walden in 1143, revolted two years later in a desperate attempt to keep control of the castle.<sup>859</sup>

Key to Geoffrey's ambitions, at least his territorial ones, was the county of Essex. Essex was the traditional seat of Mandeville power and the site of most of their major holdings. However, one thing lay between Geoffrey II de Mandeville and total dominance in Essex: the honour of Boulogne and the comital family that controlled it. As the Domesday survey shows, the comital family was richer and more powerful than the Mandevilles; their Domesday holdings were valued at £915 to the Mandevilles' £740.<sup>860</sup> The comital family had the added prestige and resources of an independent territory at their disposal.<sup>861</sup> By 1135 this gulf would have been wider than at Domesday, since the Boulonnais family had gained land and the Mandevilles lost it.<sup>862</sup>

This relative dominance – the two families were the two most powerful in Essex – is reflected in the two family's landholding patterns.<sup>863</sup> At the time of Domesday, Mandeville holdings spread in a rough northwest to southeast line from Uttlesford hundred near the confluence of Essex, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, site of the Mandeville *caput* of Saffron Walden, which Geoffrey II recovered by 1141,<sup>864</sup> through Dunmow hundred to Chelmsford hundred in the west-centre of the county. There were relatively few Boulonnais holdings in these three hundreds, and only one comital demesne manor.<sup>865</sup> The Mandevilles had only scattered estates elsewhere in the county; seven of their estates lay in the eight eastern hundreds, and five in the hundreds of Harlow, Ongar,

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<sup>858</sup> *ibid*, pp. 121, 123, 126.

<sup>859</sup> *GS*, pp. 174-7.

<sup>860</sup> Hollister, 'Aristocracy', p. 39; *VCH Essex I*, pp. 343-4; above, p. 183 n. 832.

<sup>861</sup> Tanner, 'Expansion of Boulogne', 251, 276-7; Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. vii, 15.

<sup>862</sup> J. Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford, 1976), p. 34; Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 266-7; Round, 'Counts of Boulogne', pp. 156-64; J. H. Round, 'The Lords of Ardres', in J. H. Round (ed.), *Feudal England* (London, 1964), pp. 351-2; King, 'Stephen of Blois', 287-8.

<sup>863</sup> See below, Map II, p. 240.

<sup>864</sup> Cf. RRAN 274.

<sup>865</sup> A. Rumble et al. (eds.), *Domesday Book: Cambridgeshire* (Chichester, 1981); M. Newman et al. (eds.), *Domesday Book: Hertfordshire* (Chichester, 1976); Rumble et al. (eds.), *Domesday: Essex*; *VCH Essex I*, pp. 343-4; Round, 'Lords of Ardres', p. 155; below, Map II, p. 240.

and Chafford. The Mandevilles also dominated Braughing hundred in neighbouring Hertfordshire, and had several manors in Hertford hundred.

In contrast, the Boulonnais house held land TRW in sixteen of Essex's nineteen hundreds, with particularly large demesne holdings in Tendring hundred on the east coast, Barstaple in the south, and Ongar in the west-centre of the county. In Hertfordshire, the comital family's holding were concentrated in Edwinstree hundred along the northern edge of the Essex border. They also had two strategic demesne holdings in Whittlesford hundred, Cambridgeshire, on Essex's northern border. Significant landholding by both families occurred in relatively few Essex hundreds.

Tellingly, Uttlesford hundred was one, with both Mandeville and Boulonnais demesne holdings.<sup>866</sup> However, Boulonnais dominance of the hundreds to the east and, to a lesser degree, the northwest of Mandeville-dominated areas prevented Geoffrey from extending his family's influence and becoming a true regional hegemon.

Essex was the key to both Geoffrey's and Stephen's ambitions. The county was a linchpin of the king's ability to rule, and any change in its balance of power seriously endangered Stephen's hold on the throne. Control of Essex gave Stephen much-needed money to buy mercenary troops, since it became one of the few areas of England with a stable, continuous bureaucracy working in his favour as lordship over the country became more and more divided through the 1140s.<sup>867</sup> Moreover, it allowed him to dictate access to London and, in conjunction with the royal demesne in Kent, the corridor between the capital and the port of Dover, which was vital for access to the county of Boulogne itself and the troops it could provide.<sup>868</sup>

Trade may have been the most important factor in Stephen's desire to retain control of Essex, however. The Boulonnais ports of Boulogne and Wissant were '...the chief continental ports on the short sea crossing from France to England'. Most if not all of this trade would be funnelled

<sup>866</sup> Five vills in Essex contained holdings by or of both families.

<sup>867</sup> J. O. Prestwich, 'The Military Household of the Norman Kings', *EHR* 96 (1981), 12, 15-17, 21-4; J. O. Prestwich, 'War and Finance in the Anglo-Norman State', *TRHS* 5:4 (1954), 38-42; Amt, *Accession*, pp. 64-5, 68, 70-1, 77-8, 80.

<sup>868</sup> Amt, *Accession*, pp. 83, 85-7.

into south-eastern England, and particularly London.<sup>869</sup> Although Stephen controlled the continental side of this route, it was critical that he also control the English, since trade was a vital component of Essex's wealth.<sup>870</sup> Trade also fostered his '...excellent relationship with the Londoners...', since '...as count of Boulogne he controlled their most important trading outlet, and because of his large estates in Kent and Essex which ensured that this power reached to the capital's very walls'.<sup>871</sup> This good relationship allowed Stephen access to money markets, special aids, and, of course, the military aid which drove the empress from the city in 1141.

Finally, Stephen drew many of his officials from Essex. A late charter of Matilda of Boulogne's describes Henry of Essex, a significant local magnate, as the king's constable; he was probably also an itinerant justice.<sup>872</sup> A number of royal officials were also Boulonnais tenants. Richard de Lucy, a sheriff and local justice, and Maurice de Tiretot, the sheriff of Essex after 1147, held land of the Boulonnais honour, while the tenant Hamo de St. Clair was probably castellan of Colchester.<sup>873</sup> Green notes that '...the centre of gravity of Stephen's financial administration shifted towards London and the south-east...' during this period, presumably in response to the location of Stephen's power-base and most loyal following.<sup>874</sup> It demonstrates just how critical control of the south-east was to Stephen – a long-term struggle for power there might lead other magnates to defect, causing the king to lose officials, revenue, and soldiers. Being the pre-eminent landholder in Essex, as he was through his wife and the honour of Boulogne, gave Stephen an added measure of control, shoring up his royal authority with a more local one.

Matilda of Boulogne's writs in favour of the college of St. Martin-le-Grand in London, the family's traditional patronage site, demonstrate her prestige and power in Essex, which Geoffrey

<sup>869</sup> King, 'Stephen of Blois', 280; Amt, *Accession*, pp. 83, 87.

<sup>870</sup> J. A. Green, 'Financing Stephen's War', 105-7; Amt, *Accession*, pp. 64-5, 91-2, 95; RRAN 243.

<sup>871</sup> J. A. Green, 'Financing Stephen's War', 106.

<sup>872</sup> RRAN III, pp. xx, xxiii; Amt, *Accession*, pp. 66-7; RRAN 503.

<sup>873</sup> Amt, *Accession*, pp. 67-8; Amt, 'Richard de Lucy', 185; J. A. Green, 'Financing Stephen's War', 108-9; above, pp. 111-113, 140.

<sup>874</sup> J. A. Green, 'Financing Stephen's War', 110; Amt, *Accession*, pp. 34-6.

would find very difficult to overcome.<sup>875</sup> In particular, she often liaised between the royal court and her tenants, since the authority that she could muster as countess in Essex was immediate (and potentially more useful) than the king's. Two good examples are the writ to Baldwin de Wissant concerning Good Easter and the honorial court case over Mashbury; Matilda dealt with from her authority as countess, apparently without reference to Stephen's as king.<sup>876</sup> Whether or not the royal court was involved, the queen herself apparently took responsibility for her tenants' behaviour and for chastising them if necessary. This would obviously require that they recognised her authority as countess, which her announcement and presumed judgement of the Mashbury case reinforced; it is particularly interesting that she could co-opt a royal official to enforce an honorial judgement.

In one case, Matilda even sent an order to Geoffrey II de Mandeville. In 1141 she demanded that he, as

...the justiciar, John the sheriff of London and barons and ministers and all the faithful of the king and his men of London... on behalf of the king my lord and myself that you all permit the canons of St. Martin of London to hold and have their soke of Cripplegate and all its liberties ... just as they freely had them in the time of King Henry or King Stephen my lord afterwards and just as the king my lord ordered by his writ...<sup>877</sup>

Although the implication of an address to royal officials is that Matilda gave this writ as regent, such cannot be proved, particularly given the use of the phrase '*ex parte ... mea*'. Matilda probably used her position as countess and patroness to reinforce the king's writ, since the royal officials in question were also her tenants.<sup>878</sup>

Geoffrey's desire to see his family prosper was hard to achieve with Boulonnais hegemonic power in Essex. He thus saw the queen's patrimony as a threat and concentrated on annexing its land to consolidate his family's position. The first evidence of this process can be found in three of

<sup>875</sup> Kempe, *Historical Notices of St. Martin's*, pp. 33, 179-80; R. H. C. Davis, 'St. Martin's and Anarchy', 12; Round, 'Ingelric and Albert', pp. 28-38; *VCH Essex I*, pp. 343-4, 460-73; Taylor, 'Ingelric, Eustace, and St. Martin's', 215-37.

<sup>876</sup> See above, pp. 141-141.

<sup>877</sup> RRAN 530. '*...justice[ie] et Johanni vicecomiti et baronibus et ministris et omnibus fidelibus regis et suis de Lond[onia]... ex parte regis domini mei et mea quod permittatis canonicis Sancti Martini de Lond[onia] tenere et habere socnam suam de Crepelsgata et libertates suas ... sicut melius habuerint eas tempore regis H[enrici] vel regis Stephani domini mei postea et sicut rex dominus meus precepit per breve suum...*'.

<sup>878</sup> J. A. Green, *English Sheriffs*, pp. 58-9; Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 334-8; above, pp. 139-141.

the charters he received from Stephan and the empress: M<sub>1</sub>, S<sub>2</sub>, and M<sub>2</sub>.<sup>879</sup> M<sub>1</sub>, at midsummer 1141, gave Geoffrey considerable lands and rights in Essex, almost certainly as original grants.<sup>880</sup> The empress

...gave and conceded to [Geoffrey] and his heirs one hundred pounds' worth of land from me and my heirs in demesne, namely Newport at as much as it was accustomed to render on the day upon which King Henry my father was alive and dead... And Maldon in order to complete the aforesaid one hundred pounds' worth of land at as much as it ought to have rendered on the day in which King Henry was alive and dead with all appendages and things which lay adjacent that aforesaid town in land and sea on the day on which King Henry died.<sup>881</sup>

Both these manors were at least partly royal demesne at the time of Domesday Book.<sup>882</sup> Maldon had especially strong ties to the royal couple. Part of the estate was held by St. Martin's of the Boulonnais honour, while Stephen granted the remainder, previously royal demesne, to his brother Theobald before 1140.<sup>883</sup> Geoffrey received three other new grants in Essex, the manors of 'Depden... at as much as it ought to have rendered on the day King Henry was alive and dead with all its appurtenances, and the forest of Catlidge with its men at twenty shillings, and the land of Bonhunt at forty shillings'.<sup>884</sup> He was also guaranteed unspecified lands in either Essex, Cambridgeshire, or Hertfordshire to make up the promised one hundred pounds of land,<sup>885</sup> and the shrievalty of Essex with '...as much of the farm of the shrievalty as pertains to Maldon and Newport which I gave to him...'.<sup>886</sup>

These grants show the beginnings of Geoffrey's play for dominance in Essex.<sup>887</sup> Crucially, whatever the empress's theoretical right to alienate royal demesne, she did not control Essex at any point in her English tenure. Her ability to alienate royal demesne land was probably low and

<sup>879</sup> S<sub>1</sub> made Geoffrey earl of Essex and confirmed his holdings: RRAN 273.

<sup>880</sup> Prestwich, 'Treason of Geoffrey', 283-4.

<sup>881</sup> RRAN 274: '*...do ei et concedo heredibus suis c libratas terrae de me et de heredibus meis in dominio, videlicet Niweport pro tanto quantum reddere solebat die qua rex Henricus pater meus fuit vivus et mortuus... Et Maldonam ad perficiendum predictas c libratas terrae pro tanto quantum inde reddi solebat die qua rex Henricus fuit vivus et mortuus cum omnibus appendiciis et rebus quae adiacebant in terra et mari ad burgum illud predicto die mortis regis Henrici*'.

<sup>882</sup> VCH Essex I, pp. 435-6.

<sup>883</sup> VCH Essex I, pp. 434, 464-5; Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, pp. 102, 140.

<sup>884</sup> Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, p. 90; RRAN 274: '*...Deopedenam... pro tanto quantum inde reddi solebat dia qua rex Henrici fuit vivus et mortuus cum omnibus appendiciis suis. Et boscum de Chatlega cum hominibus pro xx solidis, et terram de Bonhunta pro xl solidis*'.

<sup>885</sup> Cf. RRAN 274.

<sup>886</sup> RRAN 274: '*firma vicecomitatus quantum pertinuerit ad Meldonam et Niweport quae ei donavi...*'.

<sup>887</sup> See below, Map I, p. 239.

effectively nil for land not in her supporters' control, since she was not crowned at midsummer 1141. She merely gave Geoffrey *carte blanche* to take land by force, and provided a legal pretext for retaining it. These particular estates were probably valuable to Geoffrey, since controlling Maldon reduced the holdings of the king's wife and brother and also gave Geoffrey control of shipping entering and leaving the port there. Newport (in the family's north-western Essex stronghold) Bonhunt, and Depden were strategically placed to attack the manor of Shortgrove in Uttlesford hundred, a tenancy of the honour of Boulogne.<sup>888</sup>

By giving Geoffrey legal right to these manors, the empress gave him a foothold in Boulonnais territory and a springboard from which to mount attacks on it. This zero-sum increase in his status had the potential to benefit her as well. These estates lay in areas where the honour of Boulogne's holdings were highly scattered, making it easier for Geoffrey to assert and extend a competing authority. Granting him the county's shrievalty also helped bolster his prestige and authority, while the grant of farm money gave him ready cash, and the empress leverage and authority in her rival's stronghold. Finally, granting additional land in Essex, Cambridgeshire, or Hertfordshire bolstered Geoffrey's power in his family's heartland and could dilute Boulonnais authority in Essex and Hertfordshire, where the honour was the principal lay landowner.

Although the provisions of the treaty documented in M<sub>2</sub>, possibly given in the late spring of 1142,<sup>889</sup> were less focused on land than her previous charter, they still reflect Geoffrey's goal of local dominance; its land grants were particularly focused on the honour of Boulogne. The empress confirmed Geoffrey in the shrievalties and justiciarship of Essex, Hertfordshire, London, and Middlesex.<sup>890</sup> She also '...gave and conceded to that same Ernulf [de Mandeville, Geoffrey II's son] one hundred pounds' worth of escheated lands, and the service of ten knights... that is Chrishall and

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<sup>888</sup> *VCH Essex I*, p. 463; Round, 'Lords of Ardres', pp. 351-2.

<sup>889</sup> See above, pp. 185-186; below, p. 198f.

<sup>890</sup> RRAN 275.

Bendish Hall for as much as they are worth...'.<sup>891</sup> Both these estates, in Freshwell hundred, were Boulonnais demesne estates at the time of Domesday.<sup>892</sup>

Their strategic value was high, since they lay within striking distance of Boulonnais estates further south in the hundred and over the border in Cambridgeshire. Together with the estates he had already been granted by the empress and the king, Geoffrey would have been able to create a Mandeville hegemony in northwest Essex potentially powerful enough to dominate or usurp the remaining Boulonnais manors in Uttlesford hundred, as well as to counterbalance the Boulonnais dominance of the eastern half of the county and break free of it.<sup>893</sup> This regional hegemony, coupled in turn with his significant holdings in Dunmow and Chelmsford hundreds, may have given him the ability to split the county in half west to east, or to make himself the regional hegemon by taking over Boulonnais estates.

It is possible that Stephen or Matilda originally made these grants, though their absence from S<sub>2</sub> makes it extremely unlikely. However, Boulonnais estates for support was an excellent bribe for the empress to offer; it allowed her to gain a desperately needed grip on the king's loyal heartland, install a rival for that hegemony, and prove the breadth and strength of her support to her husband, all of which she desperately needed in 1142. Granting royal offices was another excellent, dual-purpose bribe. Geoffrey received extra authoritative leverage, cash, and a traditional family post; the empress gained an official and the revenue he could bring in. Co-opting the man responsible for revenue collection and lawsuits could cause administrative gridlock and deprive Stephen of needed funding, wreaking havoc on his ability to continue the war.

The royal couple also made grants to Geoffrey in Essex. S<sub>1</sub>, from Whitsun 1140, did not grant Geoffrey land, but Matilda of Boulogne herself made some grants to Geoffrey later that year. Unfortunately, although S<sub>2</sub> confirms '...whatever the charter of the queen bears witness to...', and

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<sup>891</sup> RRAN 275: '*do et concedo eidem Ernulfo c libratas terrae de terris eschaetis, et servitium x militum... videlicet Cristeshalam et Benedis pro quanto valent...*'

<sup>892</sup> Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, p. 168; *VCH Essex I*, pp. 470-1.

<sup>893</sup> See above, p. 186 n. 852; below, p. 194f; Map I, p. 239; Map II, p. 240.

M<sub>2</sub> also refers to a charter of the queen's when it confirms '...that 200 pounds of land which King Stephen and Queen Matilda have given to him...', no charter from Matilda of Boulogne to Geoffrey survives.<sup>894</sup> The *Gesta Stephani* also points out that '...everywhere by prayer or price [Matilda] won over invincible allies...' for her husband in 1141.<sup>895</sup> It is likely that in some cases these allies were drawn by strategic grants. Although it is impossible to tell what these might have been, they almost certainly involved holdings in Essex. Geoffrey was castellan of the Tower – an almost impregnable tactical position – in 1141. As such, he was almost certainly in the Tower and actively supporting the empress when Queen Matilda arrived in the capital in late summer 1141. He switched sides relatively quickly after the queen entered London in 1141, at a time when she needed urgent access to troops. The quickest and easiest way to obtain his support was granting him land, the land she could alienate most easily was her patrimony, and the most effective grant to attract Geoffrey's support would be one in Essex.

S<sub>2</sub>, given around Christmas 1141, confirmed Matilda of Boulogne's grants and contained further Essex grants. Stephen confirmed the grants Geoffrey received from the empress – Maldon, Newport, Bonhunt, and Depden – and added '...Writtle at one hundred twenty pounds, and Hatfield Broad Oak at eighty pounds'.<sup>896</sup> He also

...gave and conceded... one hundred pounds of land from escheated lands, namely all the land which Robert of Baenton held in Essex, namely Rainham and Great Holland and Amberden and Woodham Mortimer and Easton which Picard de Danfront held. And Ickleton with all its appurtenances for one hundred pounds. And...I gave and firmly conceded... one hundred pounds of land to Ernulf de Mandeville to hold of that same Earl Geoffrey, namely Anstey and Braughing and Ham with all their appurtenances. And one hundred shillings of land in Hatfield Broad Oak to make up the aforesaid one hundred pounds of land.<sup>897</sup>

<sup>894</sup> RRAN 276: '*...quicquid carta regine testatur...*'; RRAN 275: '*...illas cc libratas terrae quas rex Stephani et Mathildis regina ei dederunt*'.

<sup>895</sup> GS, pp. 126-7; Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, pp. 118-19.

<sup>896</sup> Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, p. 140; RRAN 276: '*...Writtleam pro sexies xx libris. Et Hadfeld pro quater xx libris*'.

<sup>897</sup> RRAN 276: '*...dedi ei et concessi... c libratas terre de terris excaatis, scilicet totam terram Roberti de Baentona quam tenuit in Essexia, videlicet Reneham et Hoilandam et Amberdenam et Wodeham et Eistan quam Picardus de Danfront tenuit, Et Ichilingtonam cum eorum pertinentiis pro c libratas. Et preterea dedi ei et firmiter concessi... c libratas terre ad opus Ernulfi de Mannavilla de ipso comite Gaufrredo tendendas, scilicet Anastiam et Braching et Hamam cum omnibus eorum appendiciis. Et c solidatas terre in Hadfeld ad prefatas c libratas terre perficiendas*'.

Finally, Ernulf received ‘...the service of Adam de Sumeri in relation to the fee of Elmdon for three knights...’.<sup>898</sup>

These grants highlight Geoffrey’s preoccupation with Essex and the Boulonnais honour. The value of the estates transferred to Geoffrey’s control is telling. Writtle and Hatfield Broad Oak were worth £200; combined with the other estates he received, this charter significantly boosted his income, status, and prestige. Moreover, many of these estates came from the Boulonnais honour. Writtle, Hatfield, Ickleton, Anstey, and Braughing were all demesne estates, while a Boulonnais tenant held Elmdon.<sup>899</sup> Alienating these estates would increase the scope of Geoffrey’s authority and wealth while undermining the honour of Boulogne.

However, Stephen appears to have made an attempt to limit the adverse fallout to his own authority and finances.<sup>900</sup> As the charter notes, several of these grants were escheated land, so granting them away lowered the amount of money available to Stephen but did not deplete either royal or Boulonnais core holdings. Unlike the Empress’s grants, moreover, which tended to be in the Mandeville heartland where Boulonnais holdings were thin, Stephen’s grants were more geographically scattered and tended to be in Boulonnais-dominated areas. Although Writtle was in Chelmsford hundred, where Mandeville holdings were prominent, several factors probably diluted its impact: much of this holding was sub-infeudated, the new manor was somewhat further south and thus isolated from its neighbours, and it lay relatively close to the Boulonnais-dominated Ongar hundred, where the honour held eight manors, in the main just west of Writtle.

Hatfield Broad Oak, in Harlow hundred, and Rainham, in Chafford, were also significantly isolated. Great Holland, in Tendring hundred, lay in an area of few Mandeville holdings in a rough circle of Boulonnais manors. Of the Essex manors granted to Geoffrey in S<sub>2</sub>, only Elmdon, Amberden, and Woodham Mortimer lay in the family’s northwest stronghold; of these, only

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<sup>898</sup> Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, p. 141; RRAN 275: ‘...servicium Ade de Sumeri de feodo e Elmedone pro iii militibus’.

<sup>899</sup> Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, p. 141; Prestwich, ‘Treason of Geoffrey’, 288-9.

<sup>900</sup> See below, Map I, p. 239; Map II, p. 240.

Elmdon was previously Boulonnais. The non-Essex manors given to Geoffrey in S<sub>2</sub> were Boulonnais and lay in the Mandeville heartland, but even here Stephen diluted the impact, since these manors lay close to other Boulonnais holdings.<sup>901</sup>

Thus, although circumstances forced Stephen to alienate land in Essex, particularly Boulonnais land, to a potential rival, he did so in a way that left him the most room to manoeuvre. By scattering grants, Stephen gave Geoffrey the idea that he could achieve wider dominance in Essex, by ceding him control of estates all over the county. However, by doing so, the king was simultaneously keeping him on a short lead by refusing to give the earl a new nexus of authority or cementing his dominance of the county's border with Hertfordshire. Matilda herself may have set up this canny double-bind by offering Geoffrey a certain amount of land in Essex and Hertfordshire as part of her lost charter to him, given when her family's fortunes were at their lowest ebb.<sup>902</sup> When royalist fortunes revived after the battle of Winchester, the king and queen took the opportunity to give Geoffrey as little leeway as they could, presumably holding on to local authority for Eustace. Giving Geoffrey manors which did not suit his strategic plans fulfilled the promise made and left him without immediate reason to rebel, but may have provided a potent reason for him to negotiate with the empress in 1142.<sup>903</sup>

Geoffrey's ambition to become a magnate can also be seen in his treatment of the college of St. Martin-le-Grand in London. His relationship with the comital family's most favoured clerics began with depredation. His men ravaged the canons' estate at Good Easter, Essex, until, on his deathbed, he issued a writ to his tenants, ordering them to make good the losses.<sup>904</sup> In this case, Geoffrey probably wanted to disrupt good relations between the canons and their protectors, or to force the king and queen to waste men and revenue to safeguard them. However, once Geoffrey obtained control of land belonging to the canons, he attempted to exert patronal control over them,

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<sup>901</sup> See below, Map II, p. 240.

<sup>902</sup> See above, p. 194.

<sup>903</sup> See below, p. 198.

<sup>904</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'St. Martin's and Anarchy', 16.

splitting their loyalties in the process. Between his usurpation of the Boulonnais manor of Maldon in 1141 and his 1143 arrest he confirmed the canons' right to land there in a document to the bishop of London, adding that the canons should hold their land and churches there as his tenants.<sup>905</sup> This writ covered several other specific places in Essex as well as Maldon, and Geoffrey issued confirmations regarding Newport and Bonhunt's churches.<sup>906</sup>

It thus seems obvious that he was exploiting his rights as a landowner to the utmost, presumably in an attempt to become a second patron of St. Martin's. Such a move would highlight his new and growing authority, reinforcing his status as a hegemonic power. Additionally, Geoffrey stood to gain a great deal from creating a relationship with the college of St. Martin's. It lay within London's walls,<sup>907</sup> and had land at Cripplegate and Aldersgate; becoming its patron would give him further authority in London, which he sorely needed since the Londoners were his 'mortal enemies'.<sup>908</sup> St. Martin's also acted as the chancery in this period, giving its patrons advantages that were profound and too good to let go.<sup>909</sup>

Geoffrey's desire and bid for territorial hegemony is obvious, as is the tension this created between him and the royal couple. As can be clearly seen from the grants made to him by the empress, Geoffrey wished to gain estates that would help him consolidate his hold on the north-west corner of the county, where the majority of his holdings and relatively few Boulonnais holdings were. The secondary thrust of his ambition was to reduce the power of the royal family by taking estates belonging to the honour of Boulogne, which would simultaneously boost his power and lower his rival's in the area. The empress, who had a stake in curtailing the royal family's dominance in Essex, appears to have been happy to give Geoffrey leeway in amassing a personal empire by granting him estates in his existing area of control, such as Newport, Bonhunt, Chrishall,

<sup>905</sup> Powell, 'Maldon and St. Martin's', 142.

<sup>906</sup> *ibid*, 146; Round, 'London under Stephen', pp. 118-19.

<sup>907</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'St. Martin's and Anarchy', 11.

<sup>908</sup> *ibid*, 11-12, 21-6; Round, 'London under Stephen', pp. 110, 114.

<sup>909</sup> R. H. C. Davis, 'St. Martin's and Anarchy', 17-26.

and Bendish; she drew the line, however, at the kind of hegemony the honour of Boulogne enjoyed by insisting he give up Eudo *dapifer*'s lands.<sup>910</sup>

The king and queen, on the other hand, did not want a rival in Essex with a well-delineated and exclusive power base, since they could not afford an overly strong underling. The events of 1141 and 1142 – captivity and long illness – left Stephen woefully unsupported and lacking control even in his power base. This situation forced the king and queen to alienate Boulonnais manors in Essex to obtain the desperately needed support of the other major local magnate.<sup>911</sup> However, since Stephen's very throne depended on his control of Essex, he did so in a way that would ultimately spread the earl's resources thin, by forcing him to garrison and staff estates all over the county. Stephen probably saw his second charter, like M<sub>2</sub> after it, as a conditional grant, and would accordingly refuse to complete the grant when in a stronger tactical position.

The final question to consider is why Stephen arrested Geoffrey in 1143. Although a significant part of Prestwich and Davis's debate dealt with this question, both men seem to have missed the most obvious answer: that Geoffrey's attempts to wrest hegemonic control of Essex were eventually intolerable to the king and queen. The juxtaposition of royal and local authority available to the royal couple in Essex completely froze Geoffrey out, leaving him incapable of building a large power base or wielding much authority himself. By being made earl in 1140 – a rank which brought with it administrative duties and opportunities at the county level – Geoffrey may have expected to be the most immediate authority in Essex, issuing writs, presiding over courts, and overseeing the royal administration on the king's behalf.<sup>912</sup> His expectation, of course, would include Stephen giving over some control and authority in the county to him. As time passed and this did not happen, he may have chafed at the king's continuing administrative control and

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<sup>910</sup> RRAN 274.

<sup>911</sup> Prestwich, 'Treason of Geoffrey', 292.

<sup>912</sup> Hollister, 'Aristocracy', pp. 54-64; G. J. White, *Restoration and Reform*, pp. 56-9; G. J. White, 'Earls and Earldoms during King Stephen's Reign', in D. Dunn (ed.), *War and Society in Medieval and Early Modern Britain* (Liverpool, 2000), pp. 83-4, 88.

looked to the example of other earls who gradually usurped regalian rights from the king. In this frame of mind, the empress swayed him to switch sides easily.<sup>913</sup>

Circumstances forced the king to turn again to Geoffrey after his release, but by this time Geoffrey's appetite for power had been piqued, Stephen's trust in him was wearing thin, and the king had the ability to manipulate the situation to his own advantage. Under these circumstances, Prestwich's redating of M<sub>2</sub> appears especially plausible, since his inability to make headway against the royal couple would have made an offer of more land and power from the empress almost irresistibly tempting. Even if the empress did not entice Geoffrey to change sides, his patent ambition made him a liability, threatening the king's access to power. This may in turn have made his arrest a similarly irresistible temptation to Stephen once he had recovered from the disaster of 1141.

### *Part 3: Conclusion*

Matilda of Boulogne had access to a wide variety of different types of authority, ranging from her highly personal and intangible charisma and force of personality, through that nebulous authority she could claim in her roles as wife, mother, and queen, to the formal, structured power she held as ruling countess. Save for her comital authority, all of these were fairly informal and undefined, which gave Matilda the freedom to act unreservedly and to take whatever action she felt necessary to uphold her family's and nascent dynasty's interests.

More importantly, perhaps, the undefined nature of her authority as wife, mother, and queen-consort allowed her to assume a combination of different roles and to exert the authority associated with them in order to deal with any given situation. For example, her command of the 1138 Dover siege (although assumed as the king's lieutenant) used her authority as countess to draw troops from the honour and county of Boulogne, while her witnessing of Prince Eustace's

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<sup>913</sup> G. J. White, *Restoration and Reform*, p. 59.

1140 marriage probably combined her roles of queen, countess, and mother. Perhaps most elaborate was the authority she exerted during the dark days of Stephen's 1141 captivity. Her charisma and status as queen-consort allowed her to take command of the royalist faction, while her strength of character wedded itself to her intercessory role as consort to parley with the empress.

As well as employing her authority as daughter, wife, mother, queen, and countess in aid of Stephen's cause, Matilda of Boulogne brought this authority, particularly her authority as countess, to her marriage and put it at the disposal of her nuclear family and its interests. In the case of her son Eustace, Matilda's act of sharing authority with him before his majority and subsequent investment with the title of count probably represents a fulfilment of her duty as a mother and countess by instructing him in the arts of rule he would need to fulfil his future role to the fullest. In regard to her husband, the concrete inheritance Matilda of Boulogne brought to Stephen of Blois – the honour of Boulogne – was probably even more important to his continued rule than her formidable skill as a ruler and diplomat.

The honour of Boulogne dominated the south-eastern county of Essex; together with the honour of Mortain's holdings in Hertfordshire and the royal demesne of Kent, the royal couple dominated much of the southeast of England during Stephen's reign. Critically, this area included the quickest route from the Channel to the capital and many areas, such as Colchester, frequented by Flemish traders and Jewish merchants and moneylenders.<sup>914</sup> Essex was also very wealthy and exploited its links both to London, to which it provided food and additional trade opportunities, and to Flanders, its nearest continental neighbour. Many members of the royal bureaucracy, such as Henry of Essex, Hamo de St. Clare, Maurice of Tilty, and Richard de Lucy, were also the royal couple's neighbours and vassals in Essex.<sup>915</sup>

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<sup>914</sup> Amt, *Accession*, pp. 64-5.

<sup>915</sup> See above, p. 116 n. 557; cf. J. A. Green, 'Family Matters : Family and the Formation of the Empress's Party in South-West England', in K. S. B. Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics : The Prosopography of Britain and France from the Tenth to the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 147-64.

Boulonnais dominance and the presence of royal administrators may help explain why the county was more stable and royal government there was more efficient and effective than nearly anywhere else in the country. Essex also provided the king with a steady flow of income with which to conduct his efforts to hold the throne: equipping his knights, paying ransoms, buying the resources to conduct sieges and garrison castles, and buying the services of Flemish mercenaries. All of these can be seen in Stephen's 1142 siege of Oxford, whose successful conclusion put paid to the empress's hopes of taking the throne herself.<sup>916</sup> They became even more important as the war dragged on into the stalemate and endless sieges of the mid-1140s.<sup>917</sup> The king's ability to muster troops was especially important during Henry FitzEmpress's 1149 campaign. The latter's defeat gave Stephen a significant breathing space and the opportunity to consolidate his authority – one which, unfortunately, was not fully successful.<sup>918</sup> Although Keith Stringer comments that Stephen '...was blighted by an excess of enemies, a chronic lack of money, and crippling shortages of manpower...' that forced him to fight '...with one hand tied behind his back...', without his wife's patrimony in Essex, it is hard to see how he could have been able to fight at all.<sup>919</sup>

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<sup>916</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 202-4.

<sup>917</sup> *ibid*, pp. 213-29.

<sup>918</sup> Amt, *Accession*, pp. 7-8; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 241-5.

<sup>919</sup> Stringer, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 26-7.

## Chapter V: Matilda of Boulogne – A Queen in Context

### *Part 1: Introduction*

An analysis of Matilda of Boulogne's career would not be complete without placing it within its context: the more general realm of ruling women in twelfth-century Europe and the specific one of Anglo-Norman queenship. Examining the careers of Queen Matilda's predecessors for parallels to her own provides this context, and simultaneously clarifies several more general concerns.

Comparing the parallels between Matilda of Boulogne's career and those of other ruling women highlights the most interesting and important aspects of the former's career; it also clarifies how unusual it was for a woman to exercise the rights and responsibilities of rulership or to take part in politics. In the specific case of English queens, comparison will help to clarify if, and in what form, an ideal or model of queenship existed to guide the consort in her duties, and more broadly to determine what activities and duties a medieval noblewoman was expected to undertake.

The ruling women whose careers form the basis of this comparison provide two particular avenues for contextual inquiry. The first is a straightforward comparison of the power available to different types of ruling women. However, because all the women chosen for this comparison had powerful kinship ties to Matilda of Boulogne, it is possible to use their careers to discuss whether the example of family members made it easier for women to exert political authority; whether, in short, there were 'dynasties' of ruling women in medieval Europe.<sup>920</sup> They are Adela of Blois, ruling countess of Blois from 1096 to 1120; Ida of Boulogne, countess of Boulogne from 1057 to 1086x1088 and dowager countess from then until her death in 1113; Margaret of Scotland, queen of Scots from c. 1070 to 1093; and Matilda of Scotland, daughter of Margaret and queen of England

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<sup>920</sup> Adeliza of Louvain, Matilda's immediate predecessor, who was almost exclusively a literary patron during her marriage, will not be discussed: cf. Wertheimer, 'Adeliza of Louvain', 101-15; J. van Moolenbroek, 'Engelse koninginnen als opdrachtgeefsters van literatuur', *Madoc: Tijdschrift over de Middeleeuwen* 8 (1994), 211, 218-19; U. T. Holmes, 'The Anglo-Norman Rhymed Chronicle', in A. S. Crisafulli and H. A. Hatzfeld (eds.), *Linguistic and Literary Studies in Honor of Helmut A. Hatzfeld* (Washington, DC, 1964), pp. 231-6; M. D. Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature and its Background* (Oxford, 1963), pp. 7-35.

from 1100 to 1118. To begin this analysis, it is necessary to outline the careers of these four women.

Adela, Matilda of Boulogne's mother-in-law, was the youngest daughter and penultimate child of William the Conqueror, duke of Normandy and king of England, and his wife Matilda, daughter of Count Baldwin V of Flanders and Adela, sister of Henry I of France.<sup>921</sup> Her biographer, Kimberley LoPrete, suggests from the evidence of poems addressed to her in later years that Adela was born in the purple, probably in 1067-8.<sup>922</sup> She married Stephen-Henry, eldest son of Count Theobald III of Blois, Châteaudun, Chartres, and Meaux,<sup>923</sup> between 1081 and 1085.<sup>924</sup> She and Stephen, who became count of Blois in 1089, had at least six children: William, who married Agnes de Sully and was probably born before 1089; Theobald, who inherited his father's lands and was also born before 1089; Stephen, later king of England, probably born around 1096; Odo, who appears to have been a sickly child who died young; Henry, later bishop of Winchester and abbot of Glastonbury, probably born between 1096 and 1099; and Matilda, who married Richard earl of Chester around 1113.<sup>925</sup> She may have had additional daughters or stepdaughters, about whom little is known.<sup>926</sup>

Adela is perhaps best known for her direct rule of the Thibaudian lands, first during Stephen's 1096-1099 participation in the First Crusade, then from his 1101 departure for the Holy Land, where he died at the siege of Ramla in 1102.<sup>927</sup> In 1120, she passed the county to Theobald and retired to the nunnery of Marcigny, where she died on March 8, 1137.<sup>928</sup> During her regency, she endowed monasteries, settled disputes among her lay and religious tenants, arranged marriages

<sup>921</sup> K. A. LoPrete, 'A Female Ruler in Feudal Society: Adela of Blois (ca. 1067-ca.1137)', Ph.D. thesis (University of Chicago, 1992), pp. 20-1; cf. J. Dunbabin, 'Geoffrey of Chaumont, Thibaud of Blois, and William the Conqueror', *ANS* 16 (1993), 101-16.

<sup>922</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 21-38.

<sup>923</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>924</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 38-40, 59-63.

<sup>925</sup> K. A. LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', in T. Evergates (ed.), *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France* (Philadelphia, 1999), pp. 25-6; K. A. LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois as Mother and Countess', in J. C. Parsons and B. Wheeler (eds.), *Medieval Mothering* (London, 1996), pp. 313-33; Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, pp. 11-13.

<sup>926</sup> LoPrete, 'Adela as Mother', pp. 323-4; LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', p. 26.

<sup>927</sup> 'Thibaudian' is LoPrete's term for the comital family of Blois. LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 98-135.

<sup>928</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 178-9, 432-9; LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', p. 26.

for her children, and engaged in diplomatic and military ventures with her younger brother, Henry I of England, to counterbalance the threat posed by their eldest brother, Robert Curthose, and the growing influence of the counts of Anjou.<sup>929</sup> She also enjoyed fruitful relationships with some of the leading clergymen of the day, particularly Ivo of Chartres and Archbishop Anselm. She was, in addition, one of the most prolific literary patronesses of the Anglo-Norman age, who enjoyed the poetic attentions of Godfrey, bishop of Rheims, Baudry de Bourgeuil, and Ingelran, archdeacon of Soissons and later bishop of Laon.<sup>930</sup> Kimberley LoPrete has studied and discussed her career extensively; because of the countess's prominence she appears in a wide variety of primary source material, including charters, poetry, and chronicles – perhaps the most important in the latter category is Hugh of Fleury's *Historia Ecclesiastica*.<sup>931</sup>

Ida of Boulogne, Matilda's paternal grandmother, was the daughter of Godfrey II, duke of Lotharingia, and his wife Doda, born probably in the late 1030s or early 1040s, since she is referred to as a young woman at the time of her marriage. The date of her marriage to Eustace II, count of Boulogne, is unknown, but historical consensus places it in 1057.<sup>932</sup> She had three sons, all of whom were to become famous: Eustace, the eldest, probably born not later than the 1060s, who inherited the county of Boulogne; Godfrey, who acceded to his uncle's county of Lower Lotharingia as a minor and became the Defender of the Holy Sepulcre in 1099; and Baldwin, who married the heiress Godehilde de Tosny and became Jerusalem's first king in 1100.<sup>933</sup>

Ida was countess-consort until her husband's death, probably some time before 1088. After this time, she spent much of her time in retirement, near the monks whose houses she founded, until her death in 1113. She did, however, act as regent – apparently successfully – for her son Eustace

<sup>929</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 136-436; LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 25-39; K. A. LoPrete, 'The Anglo-Norman Card of Adela of Blois', *Albion* 22:4 (1990), 569-89.

<sup>930</sup> K. A. LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois and Ivo of Chartres: Piety, Politics, and the Peace in the Diocese of Chartres', *ANS* 14 (1991), 131-52; LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 21-33; E. M. C. Van Houts, 'Latin Poetry and the Anglo-Norman Court, 1066-1135: the Carmen de Hastingae Proelio', *JMH* 15 (1989), 47-51.

<sup>931</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 4-7; above, n. 2-10, pp. 203-204.

<sup>932</sup> Murray, *Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, pp. 155-6; Tanner, 'Expansion of Boulogne', 262-3; 'Beatae Idae Vita Auctore Monacho Wastensi Coaeva', *Patrologia Latina Database* (Chadwyck-Healey, 1995), col. 348A.

<sup>933</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 140-1, 325; Murray, *Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, pp. 6-8, 16-26, 30-2, 156-9.

III during his 1096-1100 absence on the First Crusade.<sup>934</sup> However, Ida is perhaps best known as a religious patroness and wonder-worker; most of the evidence for her career comes from her overtly hagiographical *vita*, written between 1130 and 1135 by Hugh, a monk of her foundation of La Waast, probably at the behest of Matilda of Boulogne herself. In it, Hugh does not discuss any role Ida may have had in Boulonnais politics, rather stressing Ida's actions on behalf of her sons, her religious foundations, and the miracles she wrought. The countess has received relatively little scholarly attention. Heather Tanner and Alan Murray treat her career as a sideline to their work on (respectively) the counts of Boulogne and the first dynasty of kings of Outremer. Renée Nip and Georges Duby have examined Ida as a means of analysing medieval marriages, while Baudouin de Gaiffier dealt with the countess as a religious patroness.<sup>935</sup>

Margaret of Scotland, Matilda's maternal grandmother, was the daughter of Edward the Exile and his wife Agatha, a kinswoman of the German emperor Henry III. Margaret was born around 1050 and spent her early years in Hungary with her family, but in 1057 they settled in England at the behest of Edward the Confessor. Edward died shortly thereafter, leaving Agatha and her children Margaret, Christina, and Edgar in a precarious position. The Norman Conquest made it impossible for them to remain in England, and they fled to Scotland, where Margaret married the king, Malcolm III Canmore, by 1070.<sup>936</sup>

During the two decades or so of their marriage, Malcolm and Margaret had eight children: Edward, Edmund, Æthelred, Edgar, Edith-Matilda, David, Alexander, and Mary.<sup>937</sup> Of these children, Edward died after the same raid, on 13 November 1093, in which his father was killed;

<sup>934</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 136-8, 145-8; R. Nip, 'Godelieve of Gistel and Ida of Boulogne', in A. B. Mulder-Bakker (ed.), *Sanctity and Motherhood: Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages* (London, 1995), pp. 209-16.

<sup>935</sup> B. de Gaiffier, 'Sainte Ide de Boulogne et l'Espagne: A propos de reliques Mariales', *Analecta Bollandiana* 86 (1968), 67-82; Nip, 'Godelieve and Ida', pp. 191-223; G. Duby, *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, UK, 1994), pp. 38-54; N. Huyghebaert, 'La mère de Godefroid de Bouillon: la comtesse Ide de Boulogne', *Publication de la section historique de l'Institut Grand-Ducal de Luxembourg* 95 (1981), 43-63; above, pp. 204 n. 932-934.

<sup>936</sup> V. Wall, 'Queen Margaret of Scotland (1070-1093): Burying the Past, Enshrining the Future', in A. J. Duggan (ed.), *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe: Proceedings of a Conference held at King's College London April 1995* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 27-31; Baker, 'Nursery of Saints', pp. 132-6.

<sup>937</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 10, 17.

Edmund aided his uncle Donald III in the overthrow of Duncan; Æthelred took over the family abbey of Dunkeld; Edgar, Alexander, and David became successive kings of Scots in 1074, 1107, and 1124; Edith-Matilda married Henry I of England in 1101; and Mary wed Eustace III, count of Boulogne, in 1102.<sup>938</sup> Margaret herself did not live to be a queen mother; she died on 16 November, 1093, almost immediately after word arrived of the defeat and death of her husband and son.<sup>939</sup>

Margaret, like Ida, is known to history primarily for her religious piety. Unlike Ida, she tended to engage in direct and personal patronage, by feeding, clothing, and housing the poor, taking advice from hermits, and seeing to the needs of pilgrims.<sup>940</sup> The main primary source for her career, the *Vita Margaretae*, was written, perhaps by Turgot, bishop of St. Andrews, in the early 1100s at the behest of Margaret's daughter Edith-Matilda. Unlike Ida's *vita*, miracles are downplayed – the only one mentioned in the long form is the miraculous preservation of her gospel book when it fell into a stream – and Margaret's role as a Scottish political figure is mentioned, if in extremely broad terms.<sup>941</sup> Various scholars have examined Margaret's career; Alan Wilson wrote the most recent examination of her career, for general consumption, in 2001. Valerie Wall, Derek Baker, Alan Macquarie, Richard Gameson, and Lois Huneycutt have examined it, or aspects of it, in shorter papers.<sup>942</sup>

Matilda of Scotland, Matilda of Boulogne's maternal aunt, was born Edith, the daughter of Malcolm III Canmore, king of Scots, and his wife Margaret, discussed above. She was the elder of the couple's two daughters, and was most likely born in 1080. Only her earliest childhood was spent in Scotland, however, since she and her younger sister Mary were probably sent to Romsey to

<sup>938</sup> Wall, 'Margaret of Scotland', pp. 36-8; Baker, 'Nursery of Saints', pp. 138-41; Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 25-30; JW, pp. 102-3.

<sup>939</sup> Baker, 'Nursery of Saints', p. 131; Wall, 'Margaret of Scotland', p. 36; Turgot bishop of St. Andrews, *The Life of St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland*, W. Forbes-Leith (ed.) (Dunfermline, 1980), pp. 24-6.

<sup>940</sup> L. L. Huneycutt, 'The Idea of the Perfect Princess: The "Life of St Margaret" in the Reign of Matilda II (1100-1118)', *ANS* 12 (1989), 81-97; Baker, 'Nursery of Saints', pp. 135-8; Wall, 'Margaret of Scotland', pp. 33-6; Turgot, *Life of St. Margaret*, pp. 16-21.

<sup>941</sup> Turgot, *Life of St. Margaret*, pp. 5-15, 21-2; R. Gameson, 'The Gospels of Margaret of Scotland and the Literacy of an Eleventh-Century Queen', in J. H. M. Taylor and L. Smith (eds.), *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence* (London, 1996), pp. 160-1.

<sup>942</sup> A. J. Wilson, *St Margaret Queen of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 2001); above, pp. 205-206. Ms. Katie Keene, of Southern Methodist University, is currently researching Margaret for a Ph.D.

be educated in care of their aunt Christina in 1086.<sup>943</sup> During this time, it appears that the young princess was unhappy, cowed by her authoritarian aunt and annoyed by the habit she was forced to wear. By 1093, Malcolm put his eldest daughter on the marriage market. Although the sources are confused, it seems that a match with Alan the Red, earl of Richmond, fell through before she married the newly-crowned Henry I at Martinmas 1101.<sup>944</sup> She and Henry had two children together: Matilda, born in early February 1102, who married Henry V of Germany and Geoffrey, count of Anjou, and whose bid for the throne shattered the peace of Stephen's reign; and William Ætheling, born probably in September 1103, whose birth was widely heralded as the fulfilment of a deathbed prophecy made by Edward the Confessor, but whose death in the wreck of the *White Ship* in 1120 sparked the succession crisis that led to the Anarchy.<sup>945</sup>

Matilda of Scotland was one of the most widely active of the Anglo-Norman queens. She played an active role in governance and court politics until her 1118 death, headed the exchequer on at least one occasion, was a frequent regent, and acted as a liaison between the royal *curia* and the chancery. She also aided her siblings, particularly David and Mary, in finding spouses and establishing themselves – both probably spent significant amounts of time in England.<sup>946</sup> She founded Holy Trinity Priory Aldgate, helped launch the Augustinian canons in England, and was loved for her practical patronage.<sup>947</sup> Finally, she was a prolific patroness of the arts, who helped make Henry's court a famous and popular destination for ambitious clerks throughout Europe. She carried on a two-way exchange of panegyric poetry and church furnishings with such as Ivo of Chartres, Hildebert of Lavardin, and Marbod of Rennes, and commissioned works on history from William of Malmesbury.<sup>948</sup> There is a variety of primary source material documenting Matilda of

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<sup>943</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 9-17.

<sup>944</sup> *ibid*, pp. 17-19.

<sup>945</sup> *ibid*, pp. 74-9.

<sup>946</sup> Huneycutt, '*Alianora Regina Anglorum*', pp. 123-4.

<sup>947</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 73-124.

<sup>948</sup> L. L. Huneycutt, 'Proclaiming Her Dignity Abroad: The Literary and Artistic Network of Matilda of Scotland, Queen of England 1100-1118', in J. H. McCash (ed.), *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women* (London, 1996), pp. 155-66; Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 125-43; Van Houts, 'Latin Poetry', 51-3; van Moolenbroek, 'Engelse koninginnen', 211-16; Legge, *Anglo-Norman Literature*, pp. 7-25.

Scotland's career: she gave more than two dozen charters, most of which were calendared in the second volume of the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*. Matilda also features in many of the chronicles of the era – some of which, notably William of Malmesbury's *Gesta Regum*, she commissioned – in her role as consort. Lois Huneycutt has focused on Matilda's career, both in a number of short articles, and most recently in her 2003 book *Matilda of Scotland*.<sup>949</sup>

It is important to note that our knowledge of these women is based in part or whole on projections of their images, created by others who had their own reasons for projecting that image. This effect is most pronounced in the cases of Margaret and Ida, where the main source for each career is a *vita* whose explicit purpose was to extol holiness. Ecclesiastical clients wrote many of the sources for Adela's life, often at her request or as a gift, which meant that they had a vested interest in portraying her as favourably as possible; similar caveats are attached to the narrative sources for Matilda of Scotland's life. This makes it difficult to determine whether or not their actual lives and personalities corresponded exactly with their portrayal. For the purposes of this discussion, however, this difficulty is unimportant. The concern here is with the construction and norms of queenship or female rulership, and how this construction affected Matilda of Boulogne. Ultimately, queenship norms can be reconstructed from a portrayal of a ruling lady, which may be informed by those norms, and are less dependent on the details of that lady's actual life.

### *Part 2: Parallels*

The parallels between the careers of Matilda's predecessors in rule, as well as between these women and Matilda herself, make it clear that medieval society expected its noblewomen to adhere to a certain paradigm and to be active within political, religious, and cultural spheres.<sup>950</sup> This section will examine these parallels, attempting to unearth the norms by which medieval noblewomen, especially queens, conducted their careers.

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<sup>949</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 1-16.

<sup>950</sup> See above, p. 129 n. 622.

## A: Marriage

Marriage was not, in this era, a personal choice for women of the nobility. Rather, it was a tool of statecraft for the familial politics of medieval Europe, and as such a successful new bride had to bring her husband's family advantages of birth and wealth. Adela, the purple-born daughter of northern Europe's richest monarch, brought both to the county of Blois. Although Stephen-Henry had an illustrious background, including descent from Charlemagne, it is surely no coincidence that Adela's panegyrists stress her exalted birth as daughter of an anointed king.<sup>951</sup> William the Conqueror also bestowed on her a huge cash dowry (which ensured that her husband did not dip into his patrimony when he embarked on crusade)<sup>952</sup> and a huge area of forested land on the mutual borders of Châteaudun, Vendôme, Blois, and Maine. This was an area where the counts of Anjou, traditional enemies of Normandy and Blois alike, were asserting a rival influence. Adela's dower suggests the rest of her political life, which was to bolster the ties between Blois and its northern and western neighbours against the rising power of Anjou.<sup>953</sup>

The advantages Ida brought to her marriage are somewhat harder to determine because primary sources are so much scarcer. However, Hugo's stress on the nobility of Ida's paternal and maternal relatives suggests one reason for the match: to provide Eustace's sons with as exalted a heritage as possible.<sup>954</sup> His remark that Eustace wanted the match '...by which there would always be the links of nobility between them' may also cover Eustace's desire to secure allies on his eastern borders, or a buffer between his independence and the hegemonic ambitions of the counts of Flanders.<sup>955</sup> Ida's personality may also have played a part. Hugo comments that Eustace began negotiations with Count Godfrey after '...hearing the habits and deeds and beauty, and the dignity of the family of the...virgin Ida...', '...a remarkable young woman... imbued with letters by them...

<sup>951</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 38-41, 63.

<sup>952</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 101-2.

<sup>953</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 38-68; LoPrete, 'Anglo-Norman Card', 569-74; LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 10-14.

<sup>954</sup> 'Ide, comtesse de Boulogne', *Nouvelle Biographie Nationale*, vol. II (Brussels, 1988), p. 233; *Vita Idae*, col. 438A-B. Cf. below, n. 37, p. 210.

<sup>955</sup> *Vita Idae*, col. 439A-B: '...per quod in sempiternum esset inter illos generositatis eorumdem vinculum'. Cf. Murray, *Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, pp. 6-36.

enriched with an honest character, she did not aspire to a lascivious life, but sighed more and more for love of her heavenly homeland, and through this it was well known and understood that she was filled by much pure grace'.<sup>956</sup> Finally, Eustace may have found the prospect of Ida's dowry of various allods in Lotharingia appealing, since they could give him a foothold of power and prestige within the empire but separated from the ambitions of the Flemish.<sup>957</sup>

The rationale behind Margaret's marriage to Malcolm III Canmore is perhaps the most difficult to unearth; as a refugee from the Anglo-Saxon court, and daughter to a mother with only dubious dower rights in England, Margaret did not bring her husband material wealth.<sup>958</sup> It is possible that this was a love match in the truest sense of the word – that they married in spite of Margaret's lack of resources. The future queen's reluctance to marry, expressed by the author of her *vita*, may hint at a lack of dowry as well as the love that may have prompted the union.

Alternatively, Margaret's Anglo-Saxon heritage, which the *vita*'s author stresses, may have given Malcolm a potent reason to marry her; attempting to regain his wife's rightful inheritance could be a potent justification for future military intervention in England.

In the case of Margaret's daughter Matilda, Anglo-Saxon blood and the claim to the throne it carried seem to be the reasons for Henry I's choice of bride. During her lifetime, many saw her marriage as the fulfilment of a prophecy supposedly made by Edward the Confessor on his deathbed, whereby the glory of the Anglo-Saxon *régime* would reassert itself after three generations, when the severed trunk of the Anglo-Saxon family tree grafted itself onto that of the Norman conqueror's.<sup>959</sup> At the least, Henry's marriage to Matilda of Scotland reflects a highly practical *realpolitik*. As the youngest son of the Conqueror, Henry's legitimacy as king was dubious, both to those who favoured the overthrow of the Normans and those who championed the

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<sup>956</sup> *Vita Idae*, col. 439A: '...mores et actus atque pulchritudinem... virginis Idae, generisque dignitatem ejus audiens...'; '...insignis adolescentula...litteris imbuta est...Ditata vero moribus honestis, non vitae praesentis intendebat lasciviae, sed magis ac magis ad amorem suspirabat coelestis patriae; per quod satis compertum notumque est, quanta qualive replebatur gratia'.

<sup>957</sup> *ibid*, col. 439B-440A: '...religione laicali egregius...'; Murray, *Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>958</sup> Baker, 'Nursery of Saints', pp. 132-6; Wall, 'Margaret of Scotland', pp. 30-3.

<sup>959</sup> Huneycutt, 'Proclaiming Her Dignity', pp. 159, 163-4.

claims of his older brother Robert Curthose. By marrying Matilda, a scion of the house of Cerdic, Henry forestalled both these objections and boosted his prestige and authority by giving himself access to an older, and probably superior, claim to the throne.

Few scholars have offered an explanation for Matilda of Boulogne's marriage to Stephen of Blois, and those who have generally consider it to have been a reward from Henry I for his nephew's faithful service.<sup>960</sup> However, this explanation assumes that Eustace III was merely a vassal of Henry I, which is unlikely to be the case. Even though he held a vast honour from the English king, Eustace's independent principedom gave him a higher status than the rest of Henry's magnates. The 1103 and 1110 treaties between Henry I and Robert II of Flanders, which explicitly set limits on Henry's ability to invoke Eustace II as a vassal, suggest that Eustace was a major strategic political asset in his own right.<sup>961</sup> Although Eustace probably could not have brought off the match over Henry's opposition, it is equally unlikely that he played no part in it – it was probably mutually agreed.

Moreover, if Henry did intend to leave the kingdom to his daughter from 1125, as Karl Leyser has suggested, matching his niece and nephew was a tactically disastrous move.<sup>962</sup> As the granddaughter of Margaret of Scotland, Matilda of Boulogne carried the same degree of Anglo-Saxon royal blood in her veins as Henry's daughter did. A marriage between the king's favourite nephew and Matilda was in fact a direct parallel to Henry's own and boosted Stephen's legitimacy to an intolerable degree. It seems more likely that this match was posited by Eustace III for his own reasons; it is possible that he intended for his daughter to be queen-consort, and nearly certain that the links with Blois would help keep Boulogne out of reach of Flemish hegemony. From Stephen's point of view, marriage to Matilda, the prize heiress of her day, made him easily the richest magnate in the kingdom and gave him an independent county to boot. The money and land his wife brought him would be invaluable in obtaining and keeping a kingdom, but even if he was not Henry's

<sup>960</sup> Cf. Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire*, p.214.

<sup>961</sup> F. Vercauteren, *Actes des comtes de Flandre 1071-1128* (Brussels, 1938), pp. 30, 41.

<sup>962</sup> Leyser, 'Anglo-Norman Succession, 1120-1125', pp. 97-114; above, pp. 19-20.

chosen heir, and did not intend to make a bid for the throne, his wife's patrimony would allow him be as much of a power behind the throne as he desired.

What all these women had in common is that they brought some capital, whether tangible or symbolic, to their marriage. In one sense, noblewomen were pawns to their husbands' and fathers' political goals; by augmenting the wealth or status of their new nuclear family, they contributed to its success and thereby began to accumulate authority. However, there appears to be a subtle difference in the portrayal of women who brought both symbolic and tangible capital to the marriage – in other words, rich women – and those who did not. The treatment of Adela of Blois's and Matilda of Boulogne's marriages stresses both their nobility and the landed or liquid assets they brought their husbands. These women later appear especially active politically, which may suggest that women with independent financial resources may have had more leeway to do so, and were expected to act accordingly. Conversely, women whose portrayal focuses on their nobility, piety, and good character, like Ida of Boulogne and Margaret of Scotland, appear to have brought fewer financial assets to the marriage, and later appear especially active in religious patronage. In this case, it may have been easier for a woman with few resources to do so, since she was more dependent on her husband for support; alternatively, commentators may have expected them to act as religious patronesses, and focused their narratives accordingly.

### **B: Court Participation**

Once the match was made, a noblewoman's chief political duty was to affirm and strengthen her husband's authority. Often this meant sharing in his rule, but could also mean boosting his prestige by a conspicuous place at court. Adela of Blois had perhaps the most obviously political career of all of Matilda's predecessors. In 1085, not long after her marriage, she began her career as Stephen-Henry's political helpmeet by witnessing a charter of his ward, Hugh II of Bardoul, to the priory of

La Charité-sur-Loire – at the same time she was also inducted into the priory's confraternity.<sup>963</sup>

Once she became countess-consort on Theobald's death in 1089, her attestations increased dramatically alongside Stephen-Henry's authority. She accompanied him on a tour of their comital domains and prominently witnessed two charters within the first three months of Stephen's rule. One grant, to Pontlevoy, includes her explicit consent to both parts of the grant and included her parents in the *pro anima* clause, while the other, to Coincy, included her consent in the body of the document, as well as a subscription.<sup>964</sup> Although these do not show Adela acting as Stephen-Henry's juridical equal, they do show that her formal participation in grants was important to demonstrate his authority as count. This is borne out by the fact that Adela is mentioned either as a co-grantor, an attestor, or the impetus for the grant in all Stephen's extant charters, such as the 1094 sale of two houses in Blois to Marmoutier.<sup>965</sup>

Adela's exalted position at Stephen's court continued throughout his active career in Blois. In 1092, the countess participated in the curial judgement of a dispute between the provost of Blois and the monks of Marmoutier. Around the same time she voluntarily swore an oath, binding on both herself and her husband, to protect Bishop Ivo of Chartres in his ongoing struggle with Philip I of France; tellingly, Stephen-Henry never challenged this action.<sup>966</sup> In the late 1090s, she also renewed the agreement between the count and the chapter of Rheims cathedral, whereby the house of Blois held Vertus castle in exchange for other parcels of land. She also acted with her husband to remit the tax on wine sold in Blois in exchange for its citizens taking responsibility for the town gate.<sup>967</sup> These episodes suggest that, even as a consort, Adela had significant political authority and responsibility within Blois. Her wider prestige is shown by her role in the October 1095 translation of St. Helena's relics at the monastery of Hautvillers, where she was the sole layperson to join the phalanx of bishops on the stage; she even played an active role in the ceremony by reading the label

<sup>963</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 38-40.

<sup>964</sup> LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 16-17; LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 85-7; LoPrete, 'Anglo-Norman Card', 577-8.

<sup>965</sup> LoPrete, 'Anglo-Norman Card', 577-8; LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 17-19; LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', p. 88.

<sup>966</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 88, 283-5; LoPrete, 'Anglo-Norman Card', 578; LoPrete, 'Adela and Ivo', 135.

<sup>967</sup> LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 18-19.

on the empress's reliquary aloud.<sup>968</sup> All of these actions make it clear that a wide variety of her husband's vassals, not merely the court, considered Adela to enjoy an authority similar (but probably not equal) to her husband's during the relatively short period that he acted as ruling count.<sup>969</sup>

The hagiographical nature of the sources for Ida of Boulogne and Margaret of Scotland's careers and the paltry survival of documentary sources for each woman make it nearly impossible to determine the existence and extent of their respective political roles.<sup>970</sup> Ida's hagiographer, Hugo, minimises her political role as a wife, noting that, while '...she considered the regal ornaments just like menstrual clothes... the venerable lady was eager to have chaste familiarity with the powerful'. This suggests that Ida was acutely aware of her responsibilities as countess and was prepared to fulfil them, probably as a hostess or a member of the judicial *curia*.<sup>971</sup> Hugo's interest in Ida's political role stops dead, however, at her ability to produce and mother sons: at this most basic duty of a noblewoman Ida excelled. She was one of the few women of her time and rank known to have breastfed her own children, '...fearing lest they be contaminated by perverse morals'.<sup>972</sup> Hugo notes a prophetic dream Ida received as a young woman, where the sun settling in her lap signified the greatness of her destined sons. All three became well-known leaders in the first crusade, while the younger two, Godfrey and Baldwin, became immortal as the first two rulers of crusader Jerusalem.<sup>973</sup> This crusading provides the only other evidence for Ida's involvement in the political administration of Boulogne. During her eldest son Count Eustace III's absence, she acted as regent of Boulogne, where her ties with prominent churchmen may have helped smooth her path.<sup>974</sup> Before Godfrey departed, she sold her allodial dowry in a series of transactions between 1094 and 1096

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<sup>968</sup> *ibid*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>969</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 97-8, 134-5.

<sup>970</sup> Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', pp. 294-5, 301-2.

<sup>971</sup> *Vita Idae*, col. 440B: '*...regia ornamenta...aestimabat quasi menstruata indumenta... Casta familiaritate potentes... venerabilis domina studebat habere*'.

<sup>972</sup> *ibid*, col. 440A: '*...timens ut pravis contaminarentur moribus*'.

<sup>973</sup> *Vita Idae*, col. 338B-C; Nip, 'Godelieve and Ida', pp. 210-15; Murray, *Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, pp. 1-5.

<sup>974</sup> See above, p. 205, n. 15, 16.

that might suggest she had some responsibility for these estates even during her marriage.<sup>975</sup>

Margaret's *vita* is similarly vague but provides slightly more information. Turgot comments that 'this prudent queen directed all such things as it was fitting for her to regulate; the laws of the realm were administered by her counsel; by her care the influence of religion was extended, and the people rejoiced in the prosperity of their affairs', and shows the queen sitting '...amidst the distractions of lawsuits, amidst the countless cares of state... [asking] profound questions from the learned men who were sitting near her'.<sup>976</sup> From this, it seems clear that she was a member of the Scottish *curia*, probably took part in its deliberations, and may have acted as regent or a judge subsidiary to her husband. If the learned men she cultivated were administrators of the type found in Henry I's court, rather than theologians, then Margaret may have played a role in the professionalisation of the Scottish bureaucracy along English lines.

The *vita* gives another clue as to Margaret's possible role in the Scottish realm: acting as a liaison between the Scots court and emissaries from other nations. She was, the *vita* asserts, responsible for raising the status of Scotland abroad:

The queen on her side, herself a noble gem of royal race, much more magnified the splendour of her husband's kingly magnificence, and contributed no little glory and grace to the entire nobility of the realm and their retainers. It was due to her that the merchants who came by land and sea from various countries brought along with them for sale different kinds of precious wares which until then were unknown in Scotland. And it was at her instigation that the natives of Scotland purchased from these traders clothing of various colours, with ornaments to wear; so that from this period, through her suggestion, new costumes were adopted... the elegance of which made the wearers appear like a new race of being. She also arranged that persons of a higher position should be appointed for the king's service, a large number of whom were to accompany him in state wherever he either walked or rode abroad... she introduced so much state into the royal palace, that ...the whole dwelling blazed with gold and silver...<sup>977</sup>

From this lengthy paean, Margaret emerges as the main force for progress in the Scottish kingdom. By bringing merchants into the kingdom, reforming dress habits, and making the Scottish court appear more 'regal', Margaret took an active role in making the Scottish court less of a traditional Celtic war band and more like the Hungarian and English courts in which she grew up. This, in

<sup>975</sup> *Vita Idae*, col. 439B-440A.

<sup>976</sup> Turgot, *Life of St. Margaret*, pp. 7, 10.

<sup>977</sup> Turgot, *Life of St. Margaret*, p. 11.

turn, bolstered Malcolm's power by making Scotland appear more prestigious and influential. It is entirely possible that this was a deliberate policy, aimed at rendering the Scottish court as courtly, and therefore as 'civilised' as its Anglo-Norman southern counterpart.<sup>978</sup> In pressing for modernisation in royal affairs, Margaret displayed an astute sense for the subtler political needs of her country. The fact that she could undertake them, moreover, suggests that she had a fairly significant influence on political affairs, one that is only hinted at in her *vita*.

The political role of Matilda of Scotland, on the other hand, is clear and substantial. Henry I's queen was an active, important member of his *curia*, witnessing about fifteen per cent of his *acta*; this made her one of the ten most frequent of her husband's attestors.<sup>979</sup> In fact, in all but one case (when her brother Edgar, then reigning king of Scots, attested with her) Matilda was one of the first two witnesses to every charter she attested, a powerful suggestion of her status within Henry's *curia*.<sup>980</sup> She also appears to have acted as an intermediary between the *curia* and the writing office on several occasions, ensuring that the written record of a judgment accurately reflected the court's findings.<sup>981</sup> The patterns of attestation for the charters she produced – a handful of prominent *curiales* witnessing for both king and queen while the queen's personal servants attested rarely for Henry – also suggests that that Matilda of Scotland played a significant, and perhaps supervisory, role in the royal administration.<sup>982</sup>

Matilda of Scotland perhaps bolstered her husband's authority most effectively through her formal use of intercession. The *Vita Gundulfi* demonstrates the opportunities Matilda exploited in carving a role for herself within Henry's *curia* by painting a picture of Bishop Gundulf '...as a kind intercessor [who] confidently approached the king or queen and often obtained from them some work of mercy or alleviation for those coming to him for help'.<sup>983</sup> As the professional bureaucracy

<sup>978</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 135-6; Wall, 'Margaret of Scotland', p. 37.

<sup>979</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 4, 73-4; Huneycutt, 'Proclaiming Her Dignity', pp. 155-8.

<sup>980</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, p. 80.

<sup>981</sup> *ibid*, p. 80.

<sup>982</sup> *ibid*, pp. 94-100.

<sup>983</sup> Cited in Huneycutt, *Matilda*, p. 78.

became more sophisticated and required less input from a member of the royal family, her role as a mediatrix between outsiders with problems and the *curiales* became more prominent and necessary. Courtiers and clerics thus vied for her queen's attention by employing flattery, often in the form of references to Queen Esther, in order to sway her to intervene; both Anselm and Pope Paschal II did so during the English investiture contest.<sup>984</sup> Eadmer comments that during an 1105 royal procession, Queen Matilda was reduced to tears at her inability to intercede with King Henry successfully on behalf of a group of poor parish priests fined for failing to put aside their wives.<sup>985</sup> The language of several of Henry's charters, notably that giving the nuns of Malling a weekly market, also make it clear that Matilda routinely influenced the king's decisions.<sup>986</sup>

The previous chapters make it clear that Matilda of Boulogne also took an active role in the political life of her husband's court. Like Adela of Blois, she attested all of the extant charters Stephen gave before his accession; this may, however, reflect the fact that Stephen was count of Boulogne *jure uxoris*.<sup>987</sup> Like Matilda of Scotland, she was one of her husband's most frequent attestors, although Henry's wife held a relatively higher rank among his witnesses, undoubtedly because the extended *pax Henrici* kept them in close contact; in contrast, the fighting of the Anarchy pulled Stephen and his wife apart.<sup>988</sup> Many of Matilda of Boulogne's most frequent attestors, including Richard de Lucy, were the most prominent of Stephen's *curiales*. This suggests that Stephen's wife had at least the same sort of intermediary duties Henry's had,<sup>989</sup> and possibly supervisory responsibility for the entire bureaucracy. Matilda also played a prominent role as an intercessor; Bernard of Clairvaux and Eugenius III both requested her help in quelling the *furere*

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<sup>984</sup> *ibid*, pp. 77, 82-3, 87; Huneycutt, 'Proclaiming Her Dignity', pp. 159-64.

<sup>985</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, p. 84.

<sup>986</sup> RRAN 2, no. 634 comments that the market was given '...for love of, and at the request of my wife, Queen Matilda'; Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 83-4.

<sup>987</sup> King, 'Stephen of Blois', 279-87, esp. 287.

<sup>988</sup> See above, pp. 98ff.

<sup>989</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, p. 80.

over the see of York, and one of her first acts as queen was to act as advocate for Holy Trinity Aldgate in a case before the *curia regis*.<sup>990</sup>

Finally, Matilda issued at least one grant, seising the canons of Arrouaise with the tithe of the vicomté of Merck, at the explicit behest of King Stephen, who sent her a writ to that effect. This suggests that she acted as a flexible, reliable lieutenant of the kind Stephen so desperately needed.<sup>991</sup>

The political role that a noblewoman played was dependent to a large degree on circumstance; it was easiest for her to be active, and observers would be most interested, in addressing the realm's most pressing needs. For Adela, that need was to broadcast the power and nobility of the house of Blois, on which she expended her symbolic capital in making Stephen-Henry appear great. In Margaret's Scotland, the relative backwardness of the country gave Margaret, an outsider from a relatively sophisticated court, the ability to act as a reformer by expending her symbolic capital. For Ida, the relative peace that Boulogne enjoyed during Eustace II's reign allowed her to concentrate on bearing and raising sons to succeed him. Matilda of Scotland homed in on the intercessory role traditional to English queens, and also became a crucial member of her husband's *familia*. This allowed her to participate in and influence the political life of the realm without dipping into her relatively small financial resources, while making the most of her status as a daughter of the house of Cerdic. Matilda of Boulogne's actions as queen suggest that she took charge of administering the royal bureaucracy to allow Stephen as much freedom of movement to quell imperial attacks as quickly as possible; it is hardly surprising, given the turmoil in England, that chroniclers of the time focused on this role. Once again, construction of a noblewoman's identity, and its presentation by narrative sources, depend to a great extent on the circumstances in which she found herself.

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<sup>990</sup> See above, pp. 27-27, 53.

<sup>991</sup> G. J. White, 'Earls and Earldoms', pp. 76-95; Hollister, 'Magnates of Stephen's Reign', 77-87; RRAN 25, 26.

### C: Regency

One of the most potent ways in which a noblewoman bolstered her husband's authority was by acting as his regent during his absence. In most cases, these absences were temporary and relatively short, although death could (as in Stephen-Henry's case) make it permanent, resulting in years- or decades-long rule on behalf of a son. Adela became countess-regent of Blois on Stephen's 1096 departure, a role she occupied (interrupted by Stephen-Henry's 1099-1100 return to Europe) until her retirement.<sup>992</sup> The shift in effective power was marked by a synod, called by Bishop Ivo on 26 October, 1096, to reconfirm the terms of the peace of God in his diocese. This strengthened the countess-regent's authority against any vassal who might be tempted to take advantage of the count's absence to disrupt comital order.<sup>993</sup> Adela wielded full comital authority from the very beginning of this period, as shown by her use of the comital seal and the contents of the period's *acta*.<sup>994</sup> Immediately after Stephen-Henry's departure, she convened a special session of the comital court at Coulommiers, where the bishops of Meaux and Troyes and the abbot of Lagny settled a long running dispute between the abbeys of Rebais and Ste. Foi, Conques – in fact, the churchmen invoked Adela's authority to help preserve the settlement.<sup>995</sup> On two separate occasions she disputed between Thibaudian vassals and Marmoutier. In 1105, she confirmed a grant of property by Sanche of La Ferté-Hubert to Micy, as his lady, and persuaded one of her sergeants, Gerald of the Tower, to give his garden to a priory of Ste. Foi, Conques.<sup>996</sup> In 1107, after both her eldest sons reached their majority, Adela mediated a compromise in a dispute between the houses of St. Pére and St. Martin du Val over the possession of a group of serfs. LoPrete describes Adela as '...virtual lay prior...' of the latter, suggesting that she felt a particular responsibility toward it.<sup>997</sup>

<sup>992</sup> LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 20, 26-7; LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 104, 135-6, 146-9, 172.

<sup>993</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 287-93; LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', p. 23; LoPrete, 'Adela and Ivo', 136-7, 141, 152.

<sup>994</sup> LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 22-5; LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 105-8.

<sup>995</sup> LoPrete, 'Adela and Ivo', 131; LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 137-8.

<sup>996</sup> LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 27-8.

<sup>997</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', p. 170.

Adela's authority as regent was far-reaching and widely acknowledged. Rather than stepping down when her eldest son William came of age in 1103, she set him aside in favour of his brother Theobald. Even after his 1107 majority, Theobald was only associated in the rule of his father's counties, as Adela did not totally relinquish the reins of governance until her retirement.<sup>998</sup> Stephen-Henry's brother, Count Hugh of Troyes, who could have made a justified play for control of the county or the role of *paterfamilias*, seems to have bowed to Adela's authority; in 1101 and 1102 he obtained her consent to his gifts to Molesme, and began fostering Theobald in 1103, thus making him the *de facto* heir to Troyes.<sup>999</sup> Clerics such as Ivo of Chartres and Hildebert of Le Mans also upheld her authority by praising it in settings of varying formality.<sup>1000</sup>

Finally, Adela used her authority as regent to engage her nuclear family in wider European political struggles involving her natal family. Between 1103 and 1105, she repeatedly attempted, with varying degrees of success, to mediate the quarrel between Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury, and her brother Henry I over investiture. The widening rift between church and state in England gave Henry's and Adela's brother Robert Curthose a perfect opportunity to assert his claims to England and Normandy, destabilising Normandy and Maine and threatening her control of Blois, as a female ruler with an inexperienced son. Adela's intervention gave Henry access to a wide network of family, allies, and powerful clerics that was critical to his takeover of Normandy.<sup>1001</sup> In the last decade of her regency, Adela threw in her lot with Henry against Louis VI of France, who was increasingly allied with the counts of Anjou; the flashpoint was Louis's attempts to fetter the countess-regent after the 1111 revolt of their joint vassal, Hugh of Le Puiset. While Theobald joined his uncle's men on the battlefield, Adela gathered allies and neutralised enemies behind the scenes, including Hugh of Le Puiset, Amaury de Montfort, and Hugh of Troyes. In 1119, she met with

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<sup>998</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 178-9; LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 25-6.

<sup>999</sup> LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', p. 25.

<sup>1000</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 27-9.

<sup>1001</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 182-96; LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 30-3.

Henry, Theobald, and her son Stephen to sway a local knight to the cause, and probably briefed Archbishop Thurstan on the conflict as well.<sup>1002</sup>

As was mentioned above, Ida of Boulogne acted as regent for her son during his crusading sojourn, though there is little evidence to illuminate her actions during that time.<sup>1003</sup> Margaret of Scotland probably held some kind of regency, at least during her husband's final, ill-fated raid; however, her *vita* glosses over any actions she might have taken, and her final illness was probably well underway at that time.<sup>1004</sup> Matilda of Scotland, however, acted as regent during Henry's frequent, relatively short absences in Normandy, from the time of their marriage until her death, dispensing justice and issuing writs in the king's name during his absence. This lends support to David Bates's theory that regents appointed from among royal kin took their authority directly from the king, wielded it on equal terms with him, and possessed a superior degree of power than royal bureaucrats. This would have been especially true, in fact, of a queen-consort, who was anointed in a manner parallel and similar to her husband.<sup>1005</sup>

Matilda of Scotland's regential documents also support Bates's theory. She presided over a Michaelmas Exchequer court during Henry's 1111 absence, and referred to it as 'my lord's and mine' in a writ issued in favour of Faritius of Abingdon. In other cases from that session Matilda referred to '...my justiciary', '...the firm peace of the king and me', and appended her seal as queen-consort to a writ.<sup>1006</sup> In contrast, a royal bureaucrat (such as Roger of Salisbury) was regent only as the king's subordinate, exerting only that authority explicitly allowed him by the king; vice-regal writs issued by a bureaucrat accordingly refer, almost universally, to a writ of the king's ordering or confirming the action taken.<sup>1007</sup> These bureaucrats were also temporary, and could be removed from their office. On the other hand, the queen-consort took on some of the king's divine authority in

<sup>1002</sup> LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 36-9; LoPrete, 'Anglo-Norman Card', 583-8.

<sup>1003</sup> See above, n. 55, p. 214.

<sup>1004</sup> Turgot, *Life of St. Margaret*, pp. 20-1.

<sup>1005</sup> D. Bates, 'The Origins of the Justiciarship', *ANS* 4 (1981), 11; Huneycutt, *Matilda*, p. 79.

<sup>1006</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 88-90.

<sup>1007</sup> *ibid*, p. 93.

partaking of his divine sanction, also, and in the process became a vital part of the monarchy's fabric.

Matilda of Boulogne also tended to the smooth running of the English government while Stephen was unavailable. In 1137, she issued a writ as regent, protecting property belonging to the abbot of St. Augustine's, Canterbury, until Stephen could return from Normandy.<sup>1008</sup> Several other of her charters, while not expressly regential, do show her taking steps to protect Stephen's throne, such as her mortgaging of Gamlingay, Cambridgeshire (probably to raise money for her post-Lincoln military actions).<sup>1009</sup> The presence of bureaucrats as her most frequent attestors, and her connections with the proto-chancery at St. Martin's also suggest Matilda acted as regent and supervisor of the royal bureaucracy. Her continuing presence in or near London allowed Stephen the freedom to travel the country putting down imperial breakouts, without worries about the continuity and efficiency of the administration. Her charters to Arrouaise, where she is described as countess of Boulogne, highlight Matilda's position as ruling countess and its associated responsibilities for meting out justice and supervising her patrimony.<sup>1010</sup> This position gave her the experience she needed to oversee the royal administration and the resources essential to her most extreme act as a familial regent and political helpmeet: her 1141 military sortie against the empress.<sup>1011</sup>

Interestingly, even women who engaged in long-term regency, like Adela of Blois, tended to be viewed positively by chroniclers; no authors castigate Adela for failing to step down when Theobald came of age. This suggests that medieval society had no problem with women who exercised authority, at least when it could be justified by their roles as wives and mothers. Similarly, other women regents, like Matilda of Scotland or Matilda of Boulogne, generally appear as interested, faithful, capable wives, rather than usurpers of power. However, it appears that

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<sup>1008</sup> A.

<sup>1009</sup> RRAN 243; cf. above, p.145.

<sup>1010</sup> RRAN 24, 26; above, pp. 19-24. Cf. RRAN 207b, 541, 550.

<sup>1011</sup> See above, pp. 38-43.

women who frequently or continuously acted as regents brought more financial capital to their marriage than those, like Margaret of Scotland and Ida of Boulogne, who did not. This may be because they had more opportunity to engage in administrative activities, or were expected to do so. In this regard, Although Matilda of Scotland brought very little money to Henry I, she was his preferred regent until her death, probably due to her status as mother of the heir. Moreover, her control of a number of dower estates as queen-consort could have given her the necessary administrative experience, while her symbolic capital as a member of the Anglo-Saxon royal house made Henry's queen a particularly apt choice of stand-in ruler.

#### **D: Aid to Clerics**

The second major responsibility of a medieval noblewoman was religious patronage. This could take a variety of forms, but any patronage tended to have one of two thrusts: gifts or connections to a specific holy individual, and those to a corporate body, usually a monastery or monastic order. Fostering personal connections was an idiosyncratic process, but one popular way to connect with a cleric was to give them presents of personally created or commissioned clothing and furnishings. Adela's judicious use of such handmade gifts may be reflected in Baudri de Bourgueil's poem *Vadis ut insolites*, in which he included a request for a gift of clothing.<sup>1012</sup> Ida of Boulogne's *vita* comments that she '...prepared useful and apt things for divine service and for its ministers with willing assiduity...'; this probably refers to vestments, altar hangings, and church furnishings such as candlesticks and chalices.<sup>1013</sup> Margaret of Scotland's biographer described her chamber as '...a workshop of sacred art: in which copes for the cantors, chasubles, stoles, altar-cloths, together with other priestly vestments and church ornaments of an admirable beauty, were always to be seen,

<sup>1012</sup> Van Houts, 'Latin Poetry', 49; LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 225-7.

<sup>1013</sup> *Vita Idae*, col. 440A-C: '...utilia et apta divinae servituti ac ejus ministris praeparabat libenti assiduitate...'

either already made, or in course of preparation'.<sup>1014</sup>

However, Matilda of Scotland was perhaps the most well-known for her gifts of needlework or metalwork to favoured clerics. In many cases, the queen's patronage took the form of a two-way exchange; knowing of her fondness for literature, a bishop would praise Matilda's pious generosity, ask for a gift, and send her another panegyric in return.<sup>1015</sup> In this way she provided Bishop Ivo of Chartres with a liturgical garment of *opus anglicanum*, a set of bells, and a new roof for his church; Westminster Abbey with a splendidly embroidered girdle; and Hildebert of Lavardin and Cluny with candlesticks – the latter provoking an outburst from Bernard of Clairvaux.<sup>1016</sup> While such splendid gifts made Henry's court a desirable destination, Matilda may have had an ulterior motive in her choice of art forms; since both her favoured crafts were associated with pre-Conquest England, her gifts laid stress on the queen's own exalted Anglo-Saxon lineage.<sup>1017</sup>

Matilda of Boulogne, on the other hand, had neither the motive nor the opportunity for such patronage. Although she had similar ties to the glorious Anglo-Saxon past, she had not been steeped in it from childhood as Matilda of Scotland had. Instead, she was conscious of her paternal family's glory as crusaders.<sup>1018</sup> It is also possible that changing religious tastes, or Matilda's friendly relationship with Bernard of Clairvaux, made such gifts rather inappropriate.<sup>1019</sup> Additionally, the constant fighting of the Anarchy meant that the royal *curia* was forced to reassume the fluid, informal nature of previous reigns, rather than the formal, 'courtly' atmosphere of Henry's. Stephen was constantly absent from London and the bureaucracy for military purposes, and travel to England was increasingly dangerous, meaning Matilda did not have her aunt's opportunities to draw promising clerics to herself.<sup>1020</sup>

<sup>1014</sup> Turgot, *Life of St. Margaret*, p. 8.

<sup>1015</sup> Huneycutt, 'Proclaiming Her Dignity', p. 159.

<sup>1016</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 159-60; Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 125-9.

<sup>1017</sup> Huneycutt, 'Proclaiming Her Dignity', pp. 164-5; Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 125-7.

<sup>1018</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 127-8.

<sup>1019</sup> Morris, *The Papal Monarchy*, pp. 252-3; Knowles, *Monastic Order in England*, pp. 210-26; above, p. 92.

<sup>1020</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 135-9.

The fighting also preoccupied the chroniclers of the reign (the only type of document that would mention this gift-giving, since Matilda's charters gave land) and coloured their presentation of the queen. Since the overriding concern of the era was the political turmoil engulfing the king, the typical portrayal of Matilda as a pious wife in the mould of her grandmothers was inappropriate; as a wife, her ideal was to aid and counsel her husband. In times of peace, this probably meant fostering good relations with clerics through gifts. During the Anarchy, however, the threats to Stephen's throne forced her to take more direct, specifically political action. This administrative activity may have left her too occupied to stitch robes for priests, and would have been of little interest to those writing about her.<sup>1021</sup> Adela of Blois, another woman caught up in the political needs of her realm, was not particularly well-known for her handcrafted gifts to clerics, certainly not to the extent Matilda of Scotland, Ida, or Margaret were. Once again, it is likely that those writing about her found her actions as regent much more compelling given that a long regency rendered the counties' political situation somewhat precarious.<sup>1022</sup>

Matilda of Boulogne instead engaged in other types of essentially personal patronage. Like her grandmother and aunt, she had a healthy respect for hermits and anchorites. Margaret was, or tried to be, particularly generous to the groups of eremitical Celtic monks known as *céli Dé*, who would set her a penitential task rather than accept her gifts.<sup>1023</sup> The abbey of Laurencekirk, where she made a famously unsuccessful visit, also began its life as a hermitage, and probably received patronage from Malcolm's queen.<sup>1024</sup> Matilda of Scotland had a similarly embarrassing interaction with the hermits William and Ernisius, who founded Llanthony Prima; she asked if she could feel William's undergarments and opportunistically slipped a purse full of gold into his shirt, to his great discomfiture.<sup>1025</sup> Matilda of Boulogne gave an acre of land next to a church to Helmid the nun,

<sup>1021</sup> LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 26-9, 30-8; Van Houts, 'Latin Poetry', 47-50; LoPrete, 'Adela and Ivo', 131-52.

<sup>1022</sup> See above, p. 220.

<sup>1023</sup> Turgot, *Life of St. Margaret*, p. 18.

<sup>1024</sup> A. MacQuarrie, 'An Eleventh-Century Account of the Foundation Legend of Laurencekirk, and of Queen Margaret's Pilgrimage There', *Innes Review* 47 (1996), 95-103.

<sup>1025</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, p. 107.

undoubtedly to allow her to withdraw from the world, and even had a disastrous visit to Wulfric of Haselbury, parallel to her grandmother and aunt. In all these cases, patronage was motivated by the belief that the anchoritic life was the most spiritually pristine possible, and that patronage was a means of sharing in it.<sup>1026</sup>

Noblewomen also seem to have cherished finding a spiritual mentor, often an abbot or bishop. Various women's networks overlapped, possibly for dynastic reasons, or because the clerics themselves sought out devotees. Adela of Blois had a long, friendly, and fruitful relationship with Ivo, bishop of Chartres. She also appears to have taken counsel from Hildebert of Lavardin and Archbishops Anselm and Thurstan, the latter of whom accompanied her to Marcigny.<sup>1027</sup> Ida obtained the aid of John bishop of Thérouanne in her foundation of La Capelle. His contribution of monks from the budding Cistercian movement may have prompted it to be the countess's favourite house.<sup>1028</sup> She also cultivated ties with Bishop Osmund of Astorga and St. Hugh of Cluny, as shown by the former's gift of Marian relics to La Capelle and the latter's staffing of St. Waast.<sup>1029</sup> Margaret's ties to Lanfranc of Canterbury, as shown in his letters, were heartfelt, and may have influenced her foundation of Holy Trinity church in Dunfermline.<sup>1030</sup> Matilda of Scotland took the first prior of Holy Trinity Aldgate as her personal confessor – a relatively rare beast before the mid twelfth century.<sup>1031</sup> She also received guidance from Hildebert of Lavardin and Ivo of Chartres, and viewed Archbishop Anselm as her spiritual father, even if he responded in far more distant terms.<sup>1032</sup>

Matilda of Boulogne gave both Archbishop Theobald and the papal legate Alberic of Ostia political assistance, and also used Theobald as a personal mentor, in the creation of Lillechurch

<sup>1026</sup> RRAN 157; above, pp. 66-67.

<sup>1027</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 192-200, 320, 326-40; LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 27-9, 32-3; LoPrete, 'Anglo-Norman Card', 581-9; D. Nicholl, *Thurstan Archbishop of York* (York, 1964), pp. 14, 72, 144, 194.

<sup>1028</sup> See below, p. 229.

<sup>1029</sup> Strickland, *Lives of Queens*, p. 234; de Gaiffier, 'Ide et l'Espagne', 72-9; Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', p. 274; 'De B. Idae Rebus Gestis Analecta ex Variis Auctoribus', *Patrologia Latina Database* (Chadwyck-Healey, 1995), col. 433.

<sup>1030</sup> Wall, 'Margaret of Scotland', pp. 31, 34; Baker, 'Nursery of Saints', p. 137; H. Clover and M. Gibson, *The Letters of Lanfranc Archbishop of Canterbury* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 160-3.

<sup>1031</sup> See above, p.90, n. 429.

<sup>1032</sup> Van Houts, 'Latin Poetry', 50-1; R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and His Biographer* (Cambridge, 1963), pp. 191-3.

priory is any indication. Prior Ralph of Holy Trinity Aldgate served as her personal confessor, gave her last rites, and guided her deathbed patronage.<sup>1033</sup> Bernard of Clairvaux became increasingly close to Stephen's queen over her tenure. As demonstrated by his letters, he attempted to guide her intercession and patronage, while different versions of his *vita* vividly portray her faith and affectionate high regard for him.<sup>1034</sup>

Fostering ties with influential clerics was expected of noblewomen, in part because those creating the records of their careers were clerics themselves. By engaging in a relationship of reciprocal flattery and gift-giving, a noblewoman could improve her own reputation, which would in turn increase her husband's prestige. The networks of mutual gratitude such gifts fostered also helped women achieve their own goals: Adela of Blois cultivated bishops and abbots in order to assure the safety of her lands from others taking advantage of her sole rule, while Ida used her clerical contacts to help build, staff, and beautify new foundations. Cultivating such ties also gave a noblewoman a means to construct and assert her own identity. Margaret of Scotland and her daughter, for instance, chose to highlight their connections to the Anglo-Saxon political and cultural world through gifts of metal- and needlework. In Matilda of Scotland's case, such patronage gave leverage with prominent writers, which she used to commission literary works highlighting her heritage and authority. Matilda of Boulogne, in contrast, aligned herself with humble anchorites, possibly to ensure the spiritual welfare of her family in precarious times, as well as influential churchmen like Theobald, Alberic, and Bernard; by championing their personal agendas, Matilda gained goodwill that she could spend getting their support for the royalist cause.

### **E: Eleemosynary Patronage**

Eleemosynary patronage of religious houses and orders was the other major religious duty of a

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<sup>1033</sup> See above, pp. 89-90; 92.

<sup>1034</sup> See above, p. 92.

medieval noblewoman. Founding and nurturing monks, canons, and nuns was a way to improve one's personal chances at salvation and make provision for one's family. Moreover, endowing a religious house allowed a magnate to assert authority painlessly through the ties of interdependence between patron and clients and broadcast status through conspicuous expenditure.<sup>1035</sup> Adela of Blois was not particularly remembered for her patronage, which tended to be relatively small gifts to existing houses, sandwiched between other comital duties.<sup>1036</sup> However, she was a driving force behind religious reform and renewal in her lands, who created parish churches and *leprosaria*, reformed a wayward nunnery and placed several houses of secular canons under rule.<sup>1037</sup> Many of the extant legal decisions she made feature a religious house on one or other side of the dispute, suggesting that she felt her obligation to protect the houses under her control strongly.<sup>1038</sup> Finally, both she and Stephen-Henry appear to have been long-standing patrons of the Cluniac order. Adela co-sponsored and probably prompted her husband's 1096 creation of a new priory for Marmoutier on her dower lands, while the couple brought Cluniac customs to St. Germain, Auxerre after his initial return.<sup>1039</sup> Finally, Adela lent her considerable prestige to the new Cistercian and Tironensian orders towards the end of her rule; the new monasticism gained in popularity through its links with such a powerful woman, while the countess cheaply expanded her influence.<sup>1040</sup>

Ida of Boulogne's reputation was built almost entirely on the religious houses she patronised – hardly surprising, given the hagiographical bent of the extant sources for her career. In 1070, when the college of canons at Lens burned to the ground, Ida and Eustace refounded it. In 1096, after selling her allodial land, Ida returned to Boulogne and founded, with her son Eustace III's help, the monastery of St. Wulmer, within the city's walls.<sup>1041</sup> Gerard, bishop of Thérouanne, helped

<sup>1035</sup> C. Holdsworth, 'The Piper and the Tune: Medieval Patrons and Monks', *1990 Stenton Lecture* (Reading, 1991), pp. 3-27.

<sup>1036</sup> LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', p. 26.

<sup>1037</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 33-4; LoPrete, 'Adela and Ivo', 143-6; LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 297-313.

<sup>1038</sup> See above, pp. 219-221.

<sup>1039</sup> LoPrete, 'Adela of Blois', pp. 21-2; LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 92-3, 114-22.

<sup>1040</sup> LoPrete, 'Female Ruler', pp. 403-22.

<sup>1041</sup> 'Comtesse Ide', p. 233; Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', p. 107; *Vita Idae*, col. 441.

her to purchase the site of her next foundation, the Cluniac monastery of St. Waast. Hugo described it as ‘...conspicuous by the antiquity of its possessions and by the felicity of its temporalities; but examined by the mass of its sins, had been reduced almost to nothing...[a] calumniated place...’.

After repairing the church and cloister and stocking the house with books and furnishings, she obtained the monks to staff it from St. Hugh of Cluny.<sup>1042</sup> It is tempting to see St. Waast as a familial necropolis, given Ida’s burial here; at the least she had great affection for it, as demonstrated by her successful request to ‘...become an adopted daughter, and inherit spiritually among the brothers’.<sup>1043</sup> Finally, around 1090, she built the monastery of La Capelle, in the Pas-de-Calais. John, bishop of Thérouanne, staffed her new monastery and Osmund, bishop of Astorga donated eleven of the Virgin’s hairs as a house relic.<sup>1044</sup> La Capelle appears to have been Ida’s favourite foundation, as she spent a great deal of time with the monks, living in a specially-built guesthouse, attending their services, and ‘...anxiously act[ing] for the refreshment of the brothers and paupers...’.<sup>1045</sup>

Because the traditional Celtic Christianity of Scotland did not emphasise organized communal life, Margaret’s patronage was personal and dramatic. She founded a church to the Holy Trinity at her marriage site, Dunfermline; although various scholars have assumed that this was a Benedictine abbey, it is worth remembering Derek Baker’s comment that in principle three monks cannot form a community.<sup>1046</sup> Aside from her patronage of traditional Celtic hermits, Margaret indulged in very dramatic acts of direct alms-giving: stealing money from the royal treasury to give to paupers; ransoming enslaved English captives; feeding and washing the feet of local indigents

<sup>1042</sup> *Vita Idae*, col. 441C: ‘*Locus autem ille antiquitate rerumque temporalium felicitate famosus exstiterat; sed, mole peccaminum exigente, pene ad nihilum redactus erat... ejusdem loci calumniata...*’

<sup>1043</sup> *ibid*, col. 442.

<sup>1044</sup> *ibid*, col. 443; ‘Comtesse Ide’, p.234. Cf. de Gaiffier, ‘Ide et l’Espagne’, 72-9; above, n. 1029, p. 226.

<sup>1045</sup> *Vita Idae*, col. 443B: ‘...*de fratrum et pauperum refectione sollicite agebat...*’. Cf. Nip, ‘Godelieve and Ida’, pp. 212-22; ‘Comtesse Ide’, p.234.

<sup>1046</sup> Wall, ‘Margaret of Scotland’, pp. 35-6; MacQuarrie, ‘Foundation of Laurencekirk’, 100-1; Clover and Gibson, *Letters of Lanfranc*, p. 160; Baker, ‘Nursery of Saints’, pp. 124-9, 136-7.

daily.<sup>1047</sup> She also built hostels on either side of the Forth, and established a ferry across the firth, to ease the journey of pilgrims to and from St. Andrews; all of these facilities were free to the devout travellers.<sup>1048</sup> Margaret's piety was forced to act within the channels available to it in eleventh-century Scotland. Unlike her counterparts in France and England, large-scale monasteries were not typical of Celtic Christianity, while acts of alms-giving, whether directly to the poor or indirectly by building hostels, hospitals, and the like, were a long-standing tradition.

Matilda of Scotland appears to have taken her mother's taste for dramatic alms-giving and blended it with the monastic patronage more common further south. Her brother remembered that she brought lepers into her personal quarters in order to wash their feet; she combined this with the building of *leprosaria*, bridges, and London's first public lavatories.<sup>1049</sup> She remembered her family and childhood in gifts to Wilton, where she was educated, Durham, where her parents and brother David were also patrons, and St. Botolph's priory, Colchester, in which her brother-in-law Eustace III of Boulogne had an interest.<sup>1050</sup> She also, like Adela, helped to boost the popularity of a new order, in this case the Augustinians. She made donations to St. Botolph's, Carlisle, and Llanthony Prima, and founded the priory of Holy Trinity Aldgate in 1107-8. Her London foundation, probably named to reflect her mother's Dunfermline church, spawned many of the order's later English houses.<sup>1051</sup> The new priory received a large income, which the first prior squandered, from her royal demesne land at Exeter, and its speciality in pastoral care of the urban laity quickly attracted the attention of other members of the *curia* and the capital's most prominent citizens.<sup>1052</sup>

Matilda of Boulogne's eleemosynary patronage shows signs of all the trends of her predecessors, save the flamboyant direct alms-giving of Margaret and Matilda of Scotland. Like Adela of Blois, she helped to protect houses with which she had connections. At Christmas 1136 or

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<sup>1047</sup> Turgot, *Life of St. Margaret*, pp. 16-20.

<sup>1048</sup> *ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>1049</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 104-6, 114-15.

<sup>1050</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 108, 118-19; Huneycutt, 'Public Lives, Private Ties', p. 303.

<sup>1051</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 108-9.

<sup>1052</sup> Huneycutt, *Matilda*, pp. 107, 109-112.

Easter 1137, she acted as advocate on Holy Trinity's behalf, in a dispute with Other custodian of the Tower of London alongside Algar bishop of Coutances, Roger of Salisbury, and some of London's most influential citizens.<sup>1053</sup> She remitted tolls to Coggeshall abbey within her comital domains, and repeatedly issued writs to help the canons of St. Martin-le-Grand protect their lands in Essex.<sup>1054</sup> Most intriguingly, perhaps, she helped broker an end to an intra-house conflict at Stratford-by-Bow nunnery in 1148 by founding the abbey of Lillechurch to house a group of rebels headed by her daughter Mary.<sup>1055</sup> Like Adela and Matilda of Scotland, she sparked the popularity of a new religious movement – in this case, the Templars.

Her patronage of the Templars also reflects her tendency to patronise houses and orders with which she had a familial connection. She specifically confirmed a land grant Ida made to Bec, possibly as a means of improving her standing with the monks there. Her grandmother's example probably prompted her acquiescence to Bernard of Clairvaux's request on La Chapelle's behalf as well.<sup>1056</sup> Matilda also renewed her aunt's gift to Waltham of freedom from gelds and scots; her patronage of Holy Trinity Aldgate further honoured Matilda of Scotland. Matilda of Boulogne's foundation of St. Katherine's hospital, which she subordinated to her aunt's priory, suggests that she shared Matilda of Scotland's bent for practical, useful service.<sup>1057</sup> Holy Trinity's status as the burial site for two of her children, reinforced by relatively rare mentions of these predeceased children in *pro anima* clauses of charters, implies that Matilda of Boulogne had considerable emotional ties to her mother's family.<sup>1058</sup>

Creating and patronising religious houses was another way for noblewomen to construct their identities and accumulate prestige as a generous donor, a trendsetter, or both. It also provided the opportunity to painlessly expand political influence. Founding a house on precariously tenured

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<sup>1053</sup> In RAN 506.

<sup>1054</sup> RAN 207b (Coggeshall), 530, 539, 541, 548, 550, 553, 557 (St. Martin's). Cf. Taylor, 'Ingelric, Eustace, and St. Martin's', 215-37, esp. 215-23.

<sup>1055</sup> See above, p. 49.

<sup>1056</sup> James and Kienzle (eds.), *Letters of Bernard*, ep. 376; RAN 76.

<sup>1057</sup> RAN 917; RAN 503, 509, 512, 513. Cf. RAN 499-502, 504-8, 510, 511, 515, 516, 517, 519, 520.

<sup>1058</sup> Cf. above, pp. 77-80.

land or fostering a new order created powerful ties of loyalty for a small investment, an important consideration for women in politically unstable situations, like Adela and Matilda of Boulogne. Such patronage also provided a flexible means of meeting social needs and of expressing one's personality. Margaret of Scotland, for example, found an outlet for her dramatic flair and concern for the poor through flamboyant acts of alms-giving. Matilda of Boulogne used patronage of houses connected with her aunt to help bolster the legitimacy of her husband's claim to the throne, while the eclecticism of her choices reflects her continuing quest for personal spirituality.

### *Part 3: Role Models and Emulation*

Although there were obviously societal expectations all noblewomen faced in common, it is more difficult to determine whether the commonalities in their careers were happenstance or reflect deliberate emulation. Noblewomen had some freedom of choice, able to decide which expectations to fulfil, and to what degree; a good example is Matilda of Scotland's literary patronage, which she seems to have found genuinely compelling. Differing circumstances also broadened or constricted a woman's horizons. When the family's existence was in danger, it was frankly impossible to engage in peacetime patronage. Many of the broad parallels in career, such as widespread patronage of the Cluniacs or assuming authority as a regent, are probably not deliberate. Rather, the Cluniacs had a near-monopoly on magnates' patronage for more than half a century in the eleventh and early twelfth century. Similarly, a family member – particularly a wife, who would have extensive knowledge of the bureaucracy, was, by definition, of age, and shared in her husband's charismatic authority – was the most desirable regent, since there were usually no thorny questions of loyalty or favouritism involved. Even extensive patronage of hermits and direct alms-giving probably reflect widely held norms of Christian belief: that the solitary contemplative life was the most spiritually profound, and that charity was an obligation on all Christians.

However, it appears that women were well aware of their predecessors and kinswomen, and

probably used their example as a model for their own careers. Matilda had a particularly fruitful set of role models spread out before her, and may have emulated different facets of individual careers. Adela of Blois, for instance, played a very similar political role to Matilda, who may have imitated her example. Both women took on the role of administrator for husbands who were actually or effectively absent, which gave them a great deal of leeway for independent action as well as a pressing need to use it. The differences in their lifecycles and circumstances may account for the differences in their careers. Matilda, as an heiress, had complete control of her Boulonnais patrimony, allowing her to alienate demesne for patronage purposes; the young age of her son and the vagaries of the Anarchy meant that she had to command troops on multiple occasions. Adela's widowhood, on the other hand, meant that her authority was untrammelled by the shadow of her husband's more immediately effective military direction. Moreover, her son's age when Blois became embroiled in Anglo-Norman political warfare probably ensured that she did not act as a commander.<sup>1059</sup>

Ida of Boulogne, a countess-consort, may not have been a particularly apt model for her granddaughter after 1135, when she became an anointed queen as well as a ruler of Boulogne in her own right. However, there is some evidence that Matilda of Boulogne wanted to emulate her before that time. Hugo, a monk of La Waast, Ida's burial site, wrote her *vita* between 1130 and 1135, after the countess's tomb was opened and her body found intact.<sup>1060</sup> Matilda herself, as Ida's sole direct descendant, was the most likely person to commission the text.<sup>1061</sup> She also had an example of a lay-commissioned *vita* at hand in the life of her grandmother Margaret, commissioned by her maternal aunt Matilda of Scotland.<sup>1062</sup> Like her aunt, Matilda of Boulogne had probably heard tales of her grandmother's piety, generosity, and wonder working and wished to have them at hand.<sup>1063</sup> In fact,

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<sup>1059</sup> See above, p. 220.

<sup>1060</sup> *Vita Idae*, col. 446.

<sup>1061</sup> Huneycutt, 'Perfect Princess', pp. 88-91; Nip, 'Godelieve and Ida', pp. 211-13.

<sup>1062</sup> See below, p. 234 n. 1065.

<sup>1063</sup> *Vita Idae*, col. 440-1, 446; Duby, *Medieval Marriage*, p. 39; Nip, 'Godelieve and Ida', p. 209; Tanner, 'Scylla and Charybdis', p. 263; 'Comtesse Ide', p. 233; de Gaiffier, 'Ide et l'Espagne', 67; above, pp. 125-126.

the *vita* itself corroborates Matilda's veneration of her grandmother; one of Ida's few posthumous cures suggests that Matilda tried to follow in her grandmother's footsteps:

...love of her kin, for which she living had been distinguished, did not desert Ida after death... when a relentless and grievous feverish illness bitterly assailed her son's daughter, the countess of Boulogne, Matilda by name, she, not a little worn down through a time of too much pain, at last presented herself to be cured with many others at the venerated tomb, confiding and anticipating in the sanctity of the most blessed Ida, as well as her own blood which descended from Ida: who, claimed the merits of the most blessed lady with devoted and multitudinous prayers, after a very short delay withdrew healthy and unharmed.<sup>1064</sup>

However, Stephen's assumption of the English throne, the movement of the Boulonnais comital family's interests away from the continent, and the turmoil of the Anarchy made Ida a poor choice for Matilda's emulation, which probably explains the failure of Ida's cult to spread beyond La Waast's immediate vicinity.

With Margaret and Matilda of Scotland, the evidence for emulation is more complex. It seems obvious, that Margaret's daughter consciously took her mother as a role model: Matilda of Scotland's dedicated of a religious house to the Holy Trinity; staffed that house with clerics who specialised in urban outreach; made dramatic and personal acts of alms-giving; and placed a priority she on the creation and donation of clerical garb and furnishings. Matilda also seems to have particularly valued the Anglo-Saxon heritage she received from her mother, as exemplified by the cloth and metalwork she commissioned. The author of Margaret's life claims Matilda commissioned it so that Margaret's example would be '...continually before your eyes in writing, that so, although you were but little familiar with her face, you might at least have a perfect acquaintance with her virtues'.<sup>1065</sup> Matilda of Boulogne appears to have venerated her maternal grandmother, and held great affection for her mother's family, as her aid to Alberic of Ostia shows. Her affinity for hermits may have come from Margaret as well, but the difference in time and space

<sup>1064</sup> *Vita Idae*, col. 448A-B: '...proximi generat amorem, quam vivens habuisse dignoscitur, post mortem etiam non deseruit... Contigit autem quod improba et misera infirmitas febrium, filii sui filiam, Boloniae comitissam, nomine Machtildem, acriter arripuit: ista vero non modicum per tempus nimiis attrita doloribus, tandem confidens atque praesumens de beatissimae Idae sanctitate, simul et ejus ex qua descenderat consanguinitate, sananda sepulcro venerando cum multis se praesentavit: quae, dum devotis et multiplicatis precibus beatissimae merita postulasset, post aliquantulum morae sana et incolumis recessit'.

<sup>1065</sup> Turgot, *Life of St. Margaret*, p. 3.

between the two queens may have made it difficult for Matilda to model her grandmother too closely; this is especially true given the vast difference in independent resources to which the two had access.

It is highly likely that Matilda of Boulogne took her maternal aunt as a role model. Like her, Henry's wife was queen of England. It is possible that the heiress of Boulogne spent significant periods of time in England, probably with the aunt who helped broker her mother's marriage, and these ties may have made Matilda of Scotland a particularly favoured model.<sup>1066</sup> Moreover, Matilda of Scotland's tenure was within living memory. Most importantly, Henry's wife was greatly loved by the English populace and was widely thought to be a saint. Modelling Matilda of Scotland would not only allow Stephen's wife access to the charismatic authority of her saintly grandmothers, but also to the fount of good opinion surrounding her aunt.<sup>1067</sup> This would give her authority an added boost. In fact, Matilda's emulation of a good, and therefore 'proper', queen who shared her Anglo-Saxon blood might well help make Stephen, whose authority in a time of civil war was controversial, a more 'proper' king. It is probably impossible to underestimate the importance of this indirect credibility boost to Stephen's cause. Given the constant and increasingly uphill battle to protect his throne from those who considered him a usurper, any way in which he could legitimate his rule was important.

Matilda's gifts to Holy Trinity Aldgate and Waltham and Stephen's transferral of oversight of Barking abbey to her, strongly suggest that she was taking on the mantle of queenship developed by Henry's first wife. Her foundation of St. Katherine's and its subjection to Holy Trinity Aldgate, Matilda of Scotland's foundation, similarly mirrors Matilda of Scotland's focus on practical aid to others. Matilda of Boulogne also seems to have taken her confessor from Matilda of Scotland's model, by turning to the prior of Holy Trinity Aldgate. Even her aid to Archbishop Theobald during

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<sup>1066</sup> Duby, *Medieval Marriage*, pp. 39-44, 54; Nip, 'Godelieve and Ida', pp. 214-15; above, p. 17.

<sup>1067</sup> Nip, 'Godelieve and Ida', pp. 212-13; Vauchez, *Beata Stirps*, pp. 396-7, 406-9; Klaniczay, 'Legends as Life-Strategies', pp. 102-3.

his conflict with Stephen in the late 1140s is reminiscent of Henry's wife's intervention on Anselm's behalf. However, the most potent evidence for Matilda of Boulogne's emulation of Henry's queen is the *vita* of Ida of Boulogne, which she almost certainly commissioned.<sup>1068</sup>

#### *Part 4: Conclusion*

The careers of Matilda's foremothers outlined above suggest several general expectations for eleventh- and twelfth-century noblewomen. Even a consort had the ability to be a potent power broker in her own right, since her influence at court was substantial and her consent to her lord's actions was considered highly desirable and perhaps necessary. Wives and mothers of rulers were also the preferred regents for an absent husband or father, often for extended periods. Adela's career suggests that the trope of regent-mothers giving up their authority as soon as a son came of age is misleading, since rule by a capable woman was preferable to that of an inexperienced man. Ruling ladies took their position seriously, gradually associating sons in rule. Religious patronage was a way to assert identity, to divide the family's burden of labour, to give men the freedom to concentrate on politics by helping ensure the family's salvation, and to bolster and extend authority. Churchmen were quick to turn to a noblewoman as an intercessor with husband or son, while the laywoman sought religious guidance and comfort. Perhaps most importantly, patronage was a means of building and strengthening the network of relationships that ensured trouble-free noble rule. For instance, Adela of Blois's relationship with Ivo of Chartres protected her rule, while Matilda's patronage of the Templars and houses in London helped bolster Stephen's rule in marginal or strategic areas. Together, the careers of these women suggest that rulership was much more of a family affair than previously suggested, an affair in which women, directly or indirectly, played a vital role.

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<sup>1068</sup> Huneycutt, 'Perfect Princess', pp. 88-91; Nip, 'Godelieve and Ida', pp. 211-13; R. H. C. Davis, 'The *Carmen de Hastingae Prolio*', *EHR* 93 (1978), 258.

### **Conclusion: Matilda of Boulogne under the Historical Spotlight**

The preceding review and examination of Matilda of Boulogne's career has shed light on her previously shadowy figure, and in the process made our knowledge of the Anarchy more nuanced and complete. There are several particularly important points that have emerged from this analysis. As the narrative of her career shows, Matilda made grants throughout her tenure as queen, which suggests that her ability to alienate land, and thus her authority, did not end with her son's assumption of the title of count of Boulogne c. 1147, or, indeed, her marriage in 1125. In this case, she seems to have a remarkable parallel in her mother-in-law, Adela, countess-consort of Blois. Queen Matilda was also a frequent attestor for her husband, and thus an active member of his *curia*, throughout his reign.

Her visibility in the historical sources drops off, however, after 1142, which may have to do with a desire to embrace the religious life, changes wrought by her lifecycle, or the fact that the civil war was becoming increasingly stalemated. Most importantly, however, it is clear that Matilda was viewed as a logical ambassador for her husband and guardian of his interests. This ability to act as a proxy king meant that she was particularly prominent in periods of crisis, particularly in 1141, and less visible when Stephen was better able to take command and control of the situation himself.

The queen's religious donations were an integral part of her career and her legacy, since they were tangible evidence of her devotion to God and lasting monuments to her memory. Generally, all her donations had the spiritual purpose of helping her attain salvation. They also had the more mundane purpose of serving to create a unified identity and memory for the nuclear family and nascent dynasty she created with Stephen. The couple appear to have coordinated their religious priorities and the family division of labour whereby Matilda was largely responsible for the family's spiritual well-being. This is particularly obvious in the case of those houses she founded, separately or jointly, but the inclusion of a large number of Boulonnais comital holdings in her

patronage suggests that she was anxious to ensure that this new identity included a strong remembrance of her roots.

In many cases, personal or dynastic considerations informed these decisions. In the case of the Templars, a desire to honour her father or connect to her family's history of crusading may have influenced her choice. Patronage to Holy Trinity Aldgate similarly served to connect her not only to previous Anglo-Norman queens, but also to the saintly reputations of her maternal relatives. The donation of contested estates to favoured clients and the continuation of older ties of patronage kept resources out of enemy hands while garnering much-needed support. However, the queen's remembrance of her dead children and her various heartfelt ties to religious mentors show her to be a thoughtful woman with a profound sense of spirituality, who spent a great deal of energy '...in search of a more personal holiness'.<sup>1069</sup>

Matilda's charters also document her interactions with the secular world. In general, she spent most of her time and conducted most of her business in three areas: the environs of London, Kent, and Essex. This is hardly surprising when her status as a major magnate controlling a vast swathe of this latter area is taken into consideration. It also suggests that she played an administrative or supervisory role for her husband, perhaps in a secular parallel to the division of labour discussed above, remaining in the vicinity of the capital to oversee Stephen's administration and acting as a relay between the king and his officials when he was away fighting. Tellingly, Matilda's aunt appears to have played a similar role in Henry I's administration.

Matilda of Boulogne appears to have issued relatively few confirmations, even for her own tenants. This may reflect random survival; her status as queen-consort as well as territorial magnate may have encouraged her tenants and vassals to use her connections with the king to obtain royal confirmations instead. Few of the queen's surviving charters can be dated before 1141, possibly due to the relatively high stability of the realm in the early years of her tenure. It also explains why few

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<sup>1069</sup> Crouch, *Reign of Stephen*, p. 318.

earls attest for Matilda, since they were distanced from the royal administration after Stephen's defeat and imprisonment. After 1141, the king became more and more involved in the fight to keep his throne, a fight that kept him on the move. Matilda may have become more active in the management of royal finance and order because of this.

The witness-lists of her charters make it clear that most of those who witnessed charters for the queen simply happened to be around when she gave a charter. However, a few groups of people attested much more frequently, making it possible to comment on Matilda's household and how it fitted into Stephen's. The queen herself had a very small number of household officials, most of whom were attached to her chapel. These men, or at least the higher-ranking among them, were frequently in attendance on the queen and so witnessed for her frequently. Only on rare occasions, did they do the same for the king, however. This strongly suggests that the personal servants of the king and queen were separate, and that the queen had a high enough status in her own right to attract – and to need – her own priests, clerks, and chamberlains. Her most frequent attestors were members of the king's *familia* and prominent royal administrators, implying that her involvement with Stephen's *curia* was deep. She probably held a place in his counsels and possibly some kind of administrative oversight. The fact that these men were also some of Stephen's most frequent attestors implies that the queen was a member of the king's *familia*, rather than a separate, and possibly conflicting, source of authority, prestige, and advancement.

Although Matilda of Boulogne was not a nexus of authority to others, she herself had a great deal of authority of varying types and origins. In some cases, this authority was as simple as possessing the personal charisma held to be inborn in specific noble families (of which Matilda's was one) or being the mother of the king's heir. In others her authority was highly formalised, and based on her offices of countess-regnant and queen-consort. In a way, it can be said truthfully that Matilda had several bodies – her personal one and a number of official ones. However, these various official bodies can ultimately be collapsed into the dual identities of countess and queen,

into which Matilda's forceful personality could be slotted at will. As countess, Matilda wielded authority in her own right, while her authority as queen was based in her status as Stephen's wife and was thus grounded in the authority that any woman gained from being a wife.

These various kinds of authority were not just theoretical, but real. Matilda could take decisive action, both as countess and queen, without having her ability to do so questioned, equal in this respect to a male counterpart. As countess, she issued writs restraining her officials and extending her peace without reference to her husband or son. She was probably considered to be a ruling countess, with the untrammelled authority such a position implied. As queen, though her authority was much less formal than that of a countess, she was still seen as the logical guardian of Stephen's interests, and thereby becoming the *de facto* head of the royalist faction in 1141, for instance.

Matilda of Boulogne was a shrewd political operator. Rather than taking an action using just one variety of authority, she tended to mix or blend these authorities together, using whatever means she could bring to bear on a problem. This allowed her to act far more effectively. For instance, she undertook the siege of Dover in 1138 as the king's wife and lieutenant, but used her Boulonnais comital authority to raise troops and a naval blockade to successfully press the siege. It also gave her far more leeway for action; this can be seen in her actions in 1141, when she attempted an emotional plea as the king's wife. When this failed, Matilda brought her personal charisma, her status as anointed queen, and her authority as countess to bear in order to gather an army and fight the empress. The queen's flexibility and prowess in taking action on behalf of her husband also allowed her to make a significant impact on the political situation of the day. This impact was heightened by the strategic value of her patrimony to Stephen, especially the English honour, which featured prominently in the struggle between the crown and Geoffrey II de Mandeville, earl of Essex.

Matilda of Boulogne was not alone in her ability to influence the political events of her day, nor was her assertion of authority and status within the king's *curia* unusual. A comparison between Queen Matilda and other ruling women of the era suggests that it was normal and expected for noblewomen not only to be prominent religious patronesses, as was Matilda's grandmother Ida of Boulogne, but also to take an active role in the administration of the realm where needed. In many cases, this meant that the careers of Matilda's predecessors, though seldom totally like her, had many parallels to hers. Matilda of Scotland, Henry I's wife and the younger Matilda's aunt, acted as a liaison between her husband's *curia* and his administration; Margaret of Scotland gave her granddaughter a role model not only of practical religious patronage, but also of influence over the court and nation itself, while Matilda's mother-in-law Adela spent several decades as ruling countess in the absence of her husband, even after her sons reached majority. In the case of Margaret and Matilda of Scotland, Matilda of Boulogne's lineal relations, the queen probably found concrete role-models on whom she consciously cast herself. This might explain some of her religious patronage, especially that to hermits and Holy Trinity Aldgate, as well as her ready acceptance as a leader by the English magnates.

It is this competence and authority that informs the eulogies of Matilda that appear in many modern books; scholars agree that she was one of Stephen's most trusted – and wisest – advisors. Her death, they concur, was a serious blow to his ability to hold on to and pass on his crown. In particular, her good relationship with Bernard of Clairvaux could have given the king's petition to have Prince Eustace declared his heir a more sympathetic hearing in the papal *curia*. Unfortunately, Matilda's death deprived him not only of a well-loved wife, but also of a shrewd politician whose counsels could balance out those of the war-weary magnates pressing for the king to come to terms with Henry of Normandy. It is possible that, had she lived, the queen would have been able to use her influence and friendship with various religious leaders to obtain a more favourable outcome for Eustace's bid. At the least, she could have continued her supervisory role in the administration,

which would have relieved some of the pressure on Stephen and prevented Eustace from rushing headlong into the military campaign on which he died. Although – given the circumstances – it is perhaps fortunate that Matilda of Boulogne, who had worked so hard to maintain and cultivate her family's nascent dynasty, died before she could witness its collapse, history might well have recorded a different outcome had she not.

**Table I: Charters Involving Matilda of Boulogne**

ID <sup>1070</sup>	Charter <sup>1071</sup>	Recipient	Action
RRAN 24	24	Arrouaise	Grant of Eustace de Legreth's land
RRAN 26	26	Arrouaise	Grant of tithe from Merck
RRAN 31	31	Barking	Stephen grants custody to Matilda
RRAN 76	76	Bec	Confirmation of Countess Ida's grant
RRAN 149	149	ChCh, Cant. <sup>1072</sup>	Confirmation of land-holding rights
RRAN 157	157	Helmid	Acre of land in Faversham to Helmid
RRAN 195	195	Clairmarais	Confirmation of land in Beaulo forest
RRAN 196	196	Clairmarais	Extension of grants in Beaulo forest
RRAN 198	198	Clairmarais	Permission for Clairmarais to stay on site
RRAN 207	207	Coggeshall	Foundation grant
RRAN 207b	207b <sup>1073</sup>	Coggeshall	Freedom from toll, transue, at various ports
RRAN 221	221	Lillechurch	Land exchange with St. John's Colchester
RRAN 224	224	Lillechurch	Geoffrey de Tregoz to swear fealty
RRAN 239b	239b	St. John's <sup>1074</sup>	Confirmation of gifts at Tey, Essex
RRAN 239d	239d	St. John's	Malcolm, Walter de St. Liz to reseise Tey
RRAN 243	243	G. de Cornhill <sup>1075</sup>	Mortgage Gamlingay, Cambridgeshire
RRAN 276	276	GM <sup>1076</sup>	Unknown: "lost charter of the queen"
RRAN 300	300	Faversham	Foundation grant
RRAN 301	301	Faversham	Grant of Tring, Herts.
RRAN 366	366	Godstow	Matilda gives 300 marks cash
RRAN 503	503	HTPA <sup>1077</sup>	Gives St. Katherine's to HTPA
RRAN 506	506	HTPA	Matilda acts as advocate for prior
RRAN 509	509	HTPA	Confirmation of chamberlain's gifts
RRAN 512	512	HTPA	Confirmation of land gifts at Braughing
RRAN 513	513	HTPA	Granting Braughing, Herts., church
RRAN 530	530	St. Martin's <sup>1078</sup>	Canons to hold Cripplegate soke
RRAN 539	539	St. Martin's	Witham priest Walter to swear fealty
RRAN 541	541	St. Martin's	Notification of grant of Witham church
RRAN 548	548	St. Martin's	Canons to hold Maldon marsh in peace
RRAN 550	550	St. Martin's	End of honorial suit over Mashbury, Ess.
RRAN 553	553	St. Martin's	Canons to hold Crishall, Essex, church
RRAN 554	554	St. Martin's	Grant of tithe of Crishall church
RRAN 556	556	St. Martin's	Letter granting her peace to chaplain Robert
RRAN 557	557	St. Martin's	Protecting Good Easter, Essex
RRAN 843	843	Templars	Grant of Cressing (Temple)
RRAN 844	844	Templars	Grant of land in Uphall
RRAN 845	845	Templars	Grant of Witham manor, half-hundred
RRAN 850	850	Templars	Grant of (Temple) Cowley, Oxfordshire
RRAN 915	915	Waltham	Matilda to have custody of Waltham
RRAN 917	917	Waltham	Waltham quit of geld and scots
A	Hardwick <sup>1079</sup>	St. Augustine's <sup>1080</sup>	Regential writ: holding goods, men
B	CR332 <sup>1081</sup>	St. Osyth's	Inspeximus of Edward I
C	CRR1666 <sup>1082</sup>	St. Bart. <sup>1083</sup>	Curia Regis case of Easter Term 1229
D	SJ D46.98 <sup>1084</sup>	Lillechurch	Letter notifying of Lillechurch's creation
E	SJ D46.6	Lillechurch	William de Warenne's confirmation
F	SJ D46.22	Lillechurch	Chirograph: Lillechurch and St. John's

<sup>1070</sup> This, and below, Table II, gives the reference by which charters will be cited through this work.

<sup>1071</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all charters are listed by their number in RRAN III. Numbers in italics denote charters not granted by Matilda: RRAN 31, 276, 300, 366, 506, 844, 915 by Stephen; RRAN 554 by her chamberlain Hubert; D by Archbishop Theobald; E by William de Warenne; F by Abbot Hugo of St. John's, Colchester. B and C survive as later mentions.

<sup>1072</sup> Christ Church, Canterbury; the college of St. Martin-le-Grand, and St. Bartholomew's Priory, in London.

<sup>1073</sup> R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, p. 167.

<sup>1074</sup> St. John's, Colchester.

<sup>1075</sup> Gervase de Cornhill, a prominent citizen of London. See above, p. 108, n. 513.

<sup>1076</sup> Geoffrey II de Mandeville, first earl of Essex.

<sup>1077</sup> Holy Trinity Priory Aldgate.

<sup>1078</sup> The secular college of St. Martin-le-Grand, in London.

<sup>1079</sup> See above, p. 9, n. 25.

<sup>1080</sup> St. Augustine's Abbey, Canterbury.

<sup>1081</sup> *Calendar of the Charter Rolls Preserved in the Public Record Office* (London, 1903), p. 332.

<sup>1082</sup> C. T. Flower et al. (eds.), *Curia Regis Rolls. Preserved in the Public Record Office* (London, 1922), no. 1666.

<sup>1083</sup> St. Bartholomew's Priory, London.

<sup>1084</sup> See above, p. 9, n. 26.

Table II: Charters of King Stephen Witnessed by Matilda of Boulogne

<i>ID</i>	<i>Number</i> <sup>1085</sup>	<i>Recipient</i>	<i>Action</i>
RRAN 34	34	Barking	Grant of Barnstaple Hundred
RRAN 35	35	Barking	Grant of Becontree Hundred
RRAN 36	36	Barking	Grant of Becontree Hundred – Extended
RRAN 162	162	St. Augustine's	Grant of annual summer fair
RRAN 184	184	Chichester Cath. <sup>1086</sup>	Grant of Pevensey chapelry
RRAN 185	185	Chichester Cath.	Confirmation of agreement with St. Martin, Séez
RRAN 204	204	Cluny	Grant of Letcombe Regis rather than 100 marks annually
RRAN 207a	207a <sup>1087</sup>	Coggeshall	Confirmation of foundation charter
RRAN 249	249	Crowland	General Confirmation
RRAN 284	284	Exeter Cathedral	Confirmation of various churches
RRAN 288	288	Eye	General confirmation
RRAN 312	312	Roger FitzMiles	Confirmation of the lands of Payn FitzJohn
RRAN 327	327	Fontevrault	Confirmation of 100 mark annual pension
RRAN 341	341	Glastonbury	Restoration of Uffculme
RRAN 402	402	St. Benet's <sup>1088</sup>	Grant of Flegg and Happing hundreds
RRAN 446	446	Lewes	Confirmation of William de Warenne's gifts
RRAN 471	471	Lincoln Cathedral	Enforcement of knight-service
RRAN 477	477	Lincoln Cathedral	Grant of North Kelsey church
RRAN 478	478	Lincoln Cathedral	Cathedral to get 14 pounds of tithe of city ferm
RRAN 479	479	Lincoln Cathedral	Grant of tithe of city ferm, confirmation of RRAN 477
RRAN 483	483	Lincon Cathedral	Grant of ½ carucate in Canwick, Lincs
RRAN 501	501	HTPA <sup>1089</sup>	Confirmation of William of Ypres' gifts
RRAN 505	505	HTPA	Writ: canons to hold English <i>Cnihtengild</i>
RRAN 506	506	HTPA	<i>Curia regis</i> case between HTPA and castellan of Tower
RRAN 508	508	HTPA	Grant 100 shillings of land at Braughing
RRAN 511	511	HTPA	Confirming gifts at Braughing
RRAN 538	538	St Martin-le-Grand	Confirming Newport church
RRAN 598	598	Mortemer	General confirmation, added grants
RRAN 633	633	Oseney	Confirmation of castle church at Oxford
RRAN 643	643	St. Frideswide's	Freedom from rent on Eightyards
RRAN 662	662	Polesworth	Confirmation of Robert Marmion's gift
RRAN 667	667	Ramsey	Grant of King's Ripton
RRAN 678	678	Reading	Protecting abbey's possessions
RRAN 694	694	Reading	Grant of Blewsbury
RRAN 718	718	Rochester Cath.	General confirmation
RRAN 743	743	St. Albans	Confirmation of Nigel d'Aubigny's grant of Eastwell
RRAN 757	757	St. Edmunds	Abbot's castle-guard at Bury St. Edmunds
RRAN 760	760	St. Edmunds	Abbey granted to Abbot Ordning
RRAN 829	829	Southwark	Grant of house belonging to William de Pont de l'Arche
RRAN 830	830	Southwark	Grant of tithe of royal ferm at Southwark
RRAN 846	846	Templars	Grant of manor and half-hundred of Witham
RRAN 921	921	Waverley	General confirmation
RRAN 944	944	Winchester Cath.	Grant of Bishop's Sutton for Steeple Morden
RRAN 945	945	Winchester Cath.	Restoring see's lands taken by William I
RRAN 946	946	Winchester Cath.	Restoring Crowcombe
RRAN 947	947	Winchester Cath.	Restoring East Meon
RRAN 948	948	Winchester Cath.	Restoring Wargrave
RRAN 949	949	Winchester Cath.	Restoring East Meon and Wargrave
RRAN 956	956	Winchester Cath.	Confirming lands bought at Southwark
RRAN 957	957	Winchester Cath.	Confirming lands to be held of Southwark
RRAN 960	960	Wix	Confirmation of foundation charter
G	V <sup>1090</sup> no. 6	Ickleton	Confirmation of lands and grant of fair
H	V no. 11	Stratford <sup>1091</sup>	Confirmation of £10 of land at Havering
I	C <sup>1092</sup> no. 2	Wenlock	Grant of various assarts

<sup>1085</sup> Unless noted, this is the charter's number in RRAN III.

<sup>1086</sup> Cathedral.

<sup>1087</sup> In R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen*, p.166.

<sup>1088</sup> St. Benet's, Holme.

<sup>1089</sup> Holy Trinity Priory, Aldgate.

<sup>1090</sup> In Vincent, 'New Charters of Stephen', pp. 899-928.

<sup>1091</sup> Stratford Langthorne priory.

<sup>1092</sup> In Cox, 'Unpublished Wenlock Charters', pp. 56-9.

**Table III: Matilda of Boulogne's Patronage by House Type**

House Type	No. charters	No. Land <sup>1093</sup>	No. houses	Per centage total <sup>1094</sup>
Benedictines <sup>1095</sup>	5	0	4	12
Cistercians <sup>1096</sup>	5	2	2	12
Augustinians <sup>1097</sup>	9	2	4	22
Secular <sup>1098</sup>	10	1	2	24
Nuns <sup>1099</sup>	5	0	2	12
Anchorites <sup>1100</sup>	1	1	1	2
Cluniacs <sup>1101</sup>	3	2	2	5
Templars	4	4	2	10

**Table IV: Charters of Matilda of Boulogne with *Pro Anima* Clauses**

Charter	Recipient	Type	No. beneficiaries
RRAN 24	Arrouaise	Augustinian	3
RRAN 26	Arrouaise	Augustinian	2
RRAN 157	Helmid	Anchorite	6
RRAN 195	Clairmarais	Cistercian	2
RRAN 196	Clairmarais	Cistercian	2
RRAN 207	Coggeshall	Cistercian	4
RRAN 301	Faversham	Benedictine	2
RRAN 503	HTPA	Augustinian	5
RRAN 512	HTPA	Augustinian	2
RRAN 513	HTPA	Augustinian	2
RRAN 541	St. Martin's	Secular	6
RRAN 843	Templars	Templars	4
RRAN 845	Templars	Templars	4
RRAN 850	Templars	Templars	1
RRAN 917	Waltham	Secular	2

<sup>1093</sup> Refers to the number of donations which gave original grants of land.

<sup>1094</sup> All figures here have been rounded to the nearest integer.

<sup>1095</sup> Canterbury Christ Church, Canterbury St. Augustine's, Colchester St. John's.

<sup>1096</sup> Coggeshall, Clairmarais: cf. Knowles, *Religious Houses of Medieval England*, p. 33.

<sup>1097</sup> Holy Trinity Aldgate, St. Bartholomew's, London, Arrouaise, St. Osyth's. It is unclear whether St. Barthelemew's is the priory or hospital.

<sup>1098</sup> Houses of secular canons. St. Martin-le-Grand, Waltham Holy Cross.

<sup>1099</sup> Godstow, Lillechurch.

<sup>1100</sup> Helmid the nun.

<sup>1101</sup> Faversham; Bec.

**Table V: Types of Documents Expressing Matilda of Boulogne's Patronage**

Charter <sup>1102</sup>	House	Type
RRAN 24	Arrouaise	Grant (land)
RRAN 26	Arrouaise	Grant (church)
RRAN 76	Bec	Confirmation
RRAN 149	ChCh, Cant	Confirmation
RRAN 157	Helmid	Grant (land)
RRAN 195	Clairmarais	Confirmation
RRAN 196	Clairmarais	Confirmation/grant
RRAN 198	Clairmarais	Grant (freedom)
RRAN 207	Coggeshall	Grant (land)
RRAN 207b	Coggeshall	Grant (freedom)
RRAN 221	Lillechurch	Exchange
RRAN 224	Lillechurch	Writ (command)
RRAN 239b	St. John's	Confirmation
RRAN 239d	St. John's	Writ (command)
<i>RRAN 300</i>	Faversham	Grant (land)
RRAN 301	Faversham	Grant (land)
<i>RRAN 336</i>	Godstow	Grant (money)
RRAN 503	HTPA	Grant (custody)
<i>RRAN 506</i>	HTPA	Other <sup>1103</sup>
RRAN 509	HTPA	Confirmation
RRAN 512	HTPA	Confirmation
RRAN 513	HTPA	Grant (church)
RRAN 530	St. Martin	Confirmation
RRAN 539	St. Martin	Writ (command)
RRAN 541	St. Martin	Grant (church)
RRAN 548	St. Martin	Writ (command)
RRAN 550	St. Martin	Writ (notification)
RRAN 553	St. Martin	Writ (command)
<i>RRAN 554</i>	St. Martin	Writ (command)
RRAN 556	St. Martin	Writ (command)
RRAN 557	St. Martin	Writ (command)
RRAN 843	Templars	Grant (land)
RRAN 844	Templars	Grant (land)
RRAN 845	Templars	Grant (land)
RRAN 850	Templars	Grant (land)
RRAN 917	Waltham	Grant (freedom)
<i>A</i>	St. Augustine's	Writ (command)
<i>B</i>	St. Bartholomew's	?Grant (land)
<i>C</i>	St. Osyth's	?Grant (land)
<i>D</i>	Lillechurch	Grant (land)
<i>E</i>	Lillechurch	Grant (land)

<sup>1102</sup> Numerals in italics denote charters not granted by Matilda of Boulogne: see above, Table I, p. 243.

<sup>1103</sup> This document reflects patronage in which the queen was indirectly involved as an advocate.

**Table VI: Comparative Data on *Pro Anima* Clause Beneficiaries**

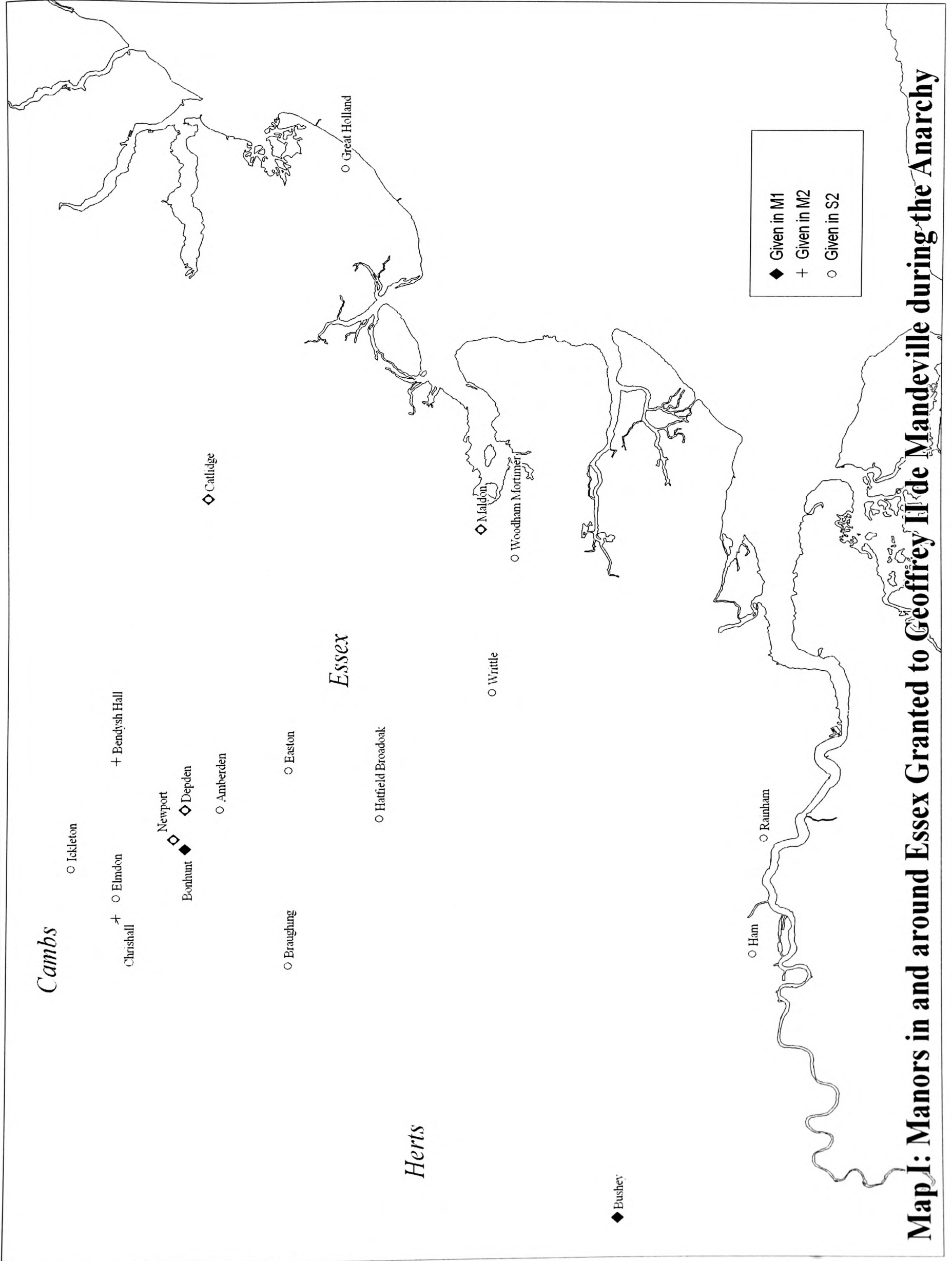
Beneficiary <sup>1104</sup>	No. MB <sup>1105</sup>	MB%	No. Men <sup>1106</sup>	Men%	No. Women <sup>1107</sup>	Women%
Self	13	87	93	65	14	67
Spouse	8	53	45	31	13	62
Father	3	20	61	43	5	24
Sons	3	20	16	11	5	24
Daughters	1	7	5	3	0	0
Children	3	20	5	3	0	0
Ancestors	6	40	41	29	5	24
Heirs	2	13	19	13	1	5
Relatives	2	13	39	27	5	24
Friends	2	13	4	3	1	5
Vassals	2	13	3	2	0	0
Realm	1	7	25	17	1	5

<sup>1104</sup> For 'children', B uses references to children in general; 'ancestors', B includes references to *ancestores* and *predecessores*; for 'relatives', B refers to *parentes*, M and W to Cownie's data on 'parents/kin'; for 'realm', M and W uses Cownie's data on 'king and royal family'.

<sup>1105</sup> This column and the next refer to, respectively: charters of Matilda of Boulogne in Table IV above, p. 245 (total 15); as a percentage of her total.

<sup>1106</sup> Respectively: charters given by men in Cownie, 155 (total 143); as a percentage of total.

<sup>1107</sup> Respectively: charters given by women in Cownie, 155 (total 21); as a percentage of total.

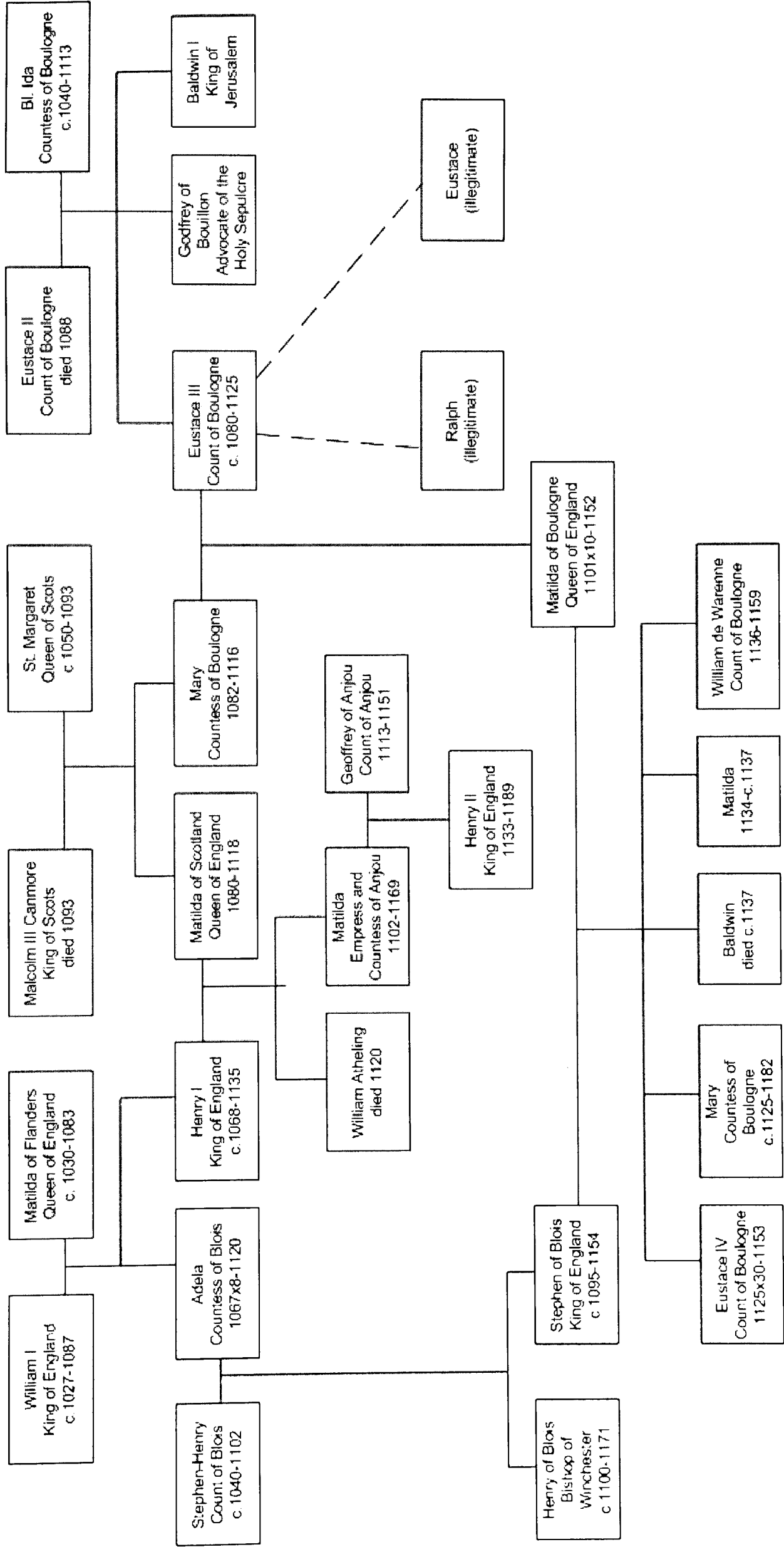


**Map I: Manors in and around Essex Granted to Geoffrey II de Mandeville during the Anarchy**



# Genealogy: Matilda of Boulogne and the Anarchy

Some children omitted for clarity



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