Emma O. Bérat / Rebecca Hardie / Irina Dumitrescu (eds.)

Relations of Power

Women's Networks in the Middle Ages

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Matthias Becher, Jan Bemmann und Konrad Vössing

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Contents

ISBN Print: 9783847112426 – ISBN E-Book: 9783847012429

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Series Editors' Preface

Two phenomena of socialisation lie at the heart of the Collaborative Research Centre (CRC) 1167 at the University of Bonn, '*Macht* and *Herrschaft*. Premodern Configurations in a Transcultural Perspective'. We place *power* and *domination* under the microscope and interrogate them with the tools of comparative research. Both phenomena have impacted human coexistence at all times and worldwide; as such, they are primary subjects of investigation for scholars in the humanities. Our multi-disciplinary research network aims to bring together the skills of many different participating fields as part of interdisciplinary cooperation, and to develop a transcultural approach to the understanding of power and domination.

Our selection of case studies from a wide variety of regions provides a fresh perspective on both similarities and differences across the different regions. In this series, we present collections of essays, which stem from workshops organised by our subprojects, as well as monographs that reflect on the main interests and research within individual subprojects.

It would not have been possible to publish the fruits of these important exchanges within this series without the generous financial support from the German Research Foundation (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*) and the continued commitment of the University of Bonn, which provided the necessary research infrastructure. We would like to express our sincere thanks to both.

Matthias Becher – Jan Bemmann – Konrad Vössing

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Emma O. Bérat / Rebecca Hardie

Introduction

This interdisciplinary collection of essays considers how women's networks, and particularly women's direct and indirect relationships to other women, constituted and shaped power from roughly 300 to 1700 AD, with a focus on medieval Europe and neighbouring regions. The volume arose out of the international workshop 'Between Women: Female Networks, Kinships and Power', hosted at the University of Bonn in June 2018, as part of the Collaborative Research Centre 1167, '*Macht* and *Herrschaft* – Premodern Configurations in a Transcultural Perspective'. Over an immersive two-day workshop, scholars from various fields explored the cultural, political, religious and material influence of women's contacts in premodern Europe, Central Asia and Eastern Africa. Half the papers in this collection grew out of those presented during the workshop, while the other half were added to expand the volume's range of approaches to and sources for medieval women's networks.

The essays in this collection juxtapose scholarship from the fields of archaeology, art history, literature, history and religious studies, drawing on a wide variety of source types. The volume's aim is to highlight not only the importance of networks in understanding medieval women's power but also the different ways these networks are represented in medieval sources and can be approached today. The concept of networks is loosely defined in this collection. Each essay works from its own conception of how women's relations to people and objects outside themselves shaped power in particular contexts, as well as how they actively constructed and curated these relations. Women's networks emerge across these essays as formed and facilitated through, for example, dream visions, the gifting of rings and the commissioning of liturgical books. They are revealed through the analysis of charters, genealogical diagrams, poetry and social network visualisations, among many other critical approaches. To extend the interdisciplinary conversation of the workshop, the contributors were invited to reflect on how their specific methodological approaches respond to, and offer possible solutions to, problems in the scholarly study of women's power.

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Scholarship on women's medieval networks, capaciously defined, has opened up diverse ways of identifying relationships, rethinking boundaries and understanding women's agency beyond overt and male-centric systems of power. Study of cross-cultural relations that noble and royal women forged through exile, intermarriage and pilgrimage is highlighting diffusive notions of geography and diplomacy that are not necessarily tied to regnal borders.[1] Female networks influenced language mixing and translation, challenging scholarly assumptions about 'national' languages.[2] The "itineraries" of women's luxury objects, which moved with or without their owners or senders, shaped culture and politics, as well as women's personal claims to authority, power and identity.[3] Recent studies have also explored women's power through networks at regional, municipal and domestic scales and across time, in processes of genealogy and succession.[4] A

1 There is a vastly rich field of scholarship on these topics. Foundational studies include Susan Groag Bell, Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture, in: Signs 7,4 (1982), 742–768; John Carmi Parsons, Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England, New York 1995; Elisabeth van Houts, Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900–1200, Hampshire/London 1999; June Hall McCash (ed.), The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women, Athens, GA 1996. Important recent studies include Elizabeth Tyler, England in Europe: English Royal Women and Literary Patronage, c.1000–c.1150 (Toronto Anglo-Saxon Series), Toronto 2017; Mary Dockray-Miller, The Books and the Life of Judith of Flanders, Farnham 2015; Rose Walker, Leonor of England and Eleanor of Castile: Anglo-Iberian Marriage and Cultural Exchange in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, in Maria Bullon-Fernandez (ed.), England and Iberia in the Middle Ages, Gordonsville, VA 2007, 67–87. Though on a later period, see also, Douglas Catterall/Jodi Campbell (eds.), Women in Port: Gendering Communities, Economies, and Social Networks in Atlantic Port Cities, 1500–1800, Leiden/Boston 2012.

2 For example, Jonathon Hsy, Mobile Language Networks and Medieval Travel Writing, in: postmedieval 4 (2013), 177–191; Ingrid Nelson, Premodern Media and Networks of Transmission in the *Man of Law's Tale*, in: Exemplaria 25 (2013), 211–230; Ian Short, Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England, in: Anglo-Norman Studies 14 (1992), 229–249; Susan Crane, Social Aspects of Bilingualism in the Thirteenth Century, in: Thirteenth Century England VI: Proceedings of the Durham Conference 1995 (1997), 103–115.

3 Tracy Chapman Hamilton/Mariah Proctor-Tiffany (eds.), Moving Women Moving Objects (400–1500), Leiden 2019; Jitske Jasperse, Medieval Women, Material Culture, and Power: Matilda Plantagenet and Her Sisters, Leeds 2020.

4 For example, see, Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Powers of Record, Powers of Example: Hagiography and Woman's History, in: Mary C. Erler/ Maryanne Kowaleski (eds.), Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages, New York 2003, 71–91; Kathryn Reyerson, Women's Networks in Medieval France: Gender and Community in Montpellier, 1300–1350, Basingstoke 2016; for approaches that examine how multiple, everyday networks intersect, see Ephraim Shoham-Steiner (ed.), Intricate Interfaith Networks in the Middle Ages: Quotidian Jewish-Christian Contacts, Turnout 2016. On cross-generational networks, see, for example, Emma O. Bérat, Transformative Genealogies: Childbirth and Crises of Succession in Athelston, in: Studies in the Age of Chaucer 42 (2020), forthcoming; Constance B. Bouchard, Three Counties, One Lineage, and Eight Heiresses: Nevers, Auxerre, and Tonnerre, Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries, in: Medieval Prosopography 31 (2016), 25–46; Alyssa Gab-

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focus on kinships and networks has also shed light on under-recognised female relationships and communities, such as disability networks, queer relations in manuscript production and sexual pedagogies.[5] The essays in this collection build on this wealth of scholarship, but they give particular attention to the nature of networks themselves, how women's relations are represented in medieval sources and the benefits – and limitations – of particular critical approaches to networks.

The essays in this collection, like previous scholarship on women's kinships and networks, engage with network theory to different degrees. Yet a brief – and selective – overview of a few key concepts in network theory highlights how it can provide an effective, interdisciplinary framework for examining women's power in the Middle Ages. The basic form of a network includes vertices (nodes) connected by links (edges); it involves multiple relationships and hence can draw attention to seemingly marginal characters and the influence of their relationships. As Franco Moretti puts it, examining networks allows us to "take the *Hamlet*-network, and *remove* Hamlet".[6] Intentionally or not, Moretti's phrase also points to the gender biases that studying networks – rather than principal, powerful and usually male characters (whether fictitious or historical) – can help to mitigate, as the first two essays in this collection by Julia Hillner and Máirín MacCarron and by Lucy Pick persuasively demonstrate. As medieval feminist scholars push to move beyond the study of exceptional women, the study of networks is also helping to shift focus from singular, 'exceptional' characters to highlight the relationships that women drew on and enabled.[7] In particular, Mercedes Pérez Vidal's contribution to this volume highlights how archival

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bay, Gender and Succession in Medieval and Early Modern Islam: Bilateral Descent and the Legacy of Fatima, London/Oxford 2020.

5 Christopher Baswell, Disability Networks in the Campsey Manuscript, in: Thelma Fenster/Carolyn P. Collette (eds.), The French of Medieval England: Essays in Honour of Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Cambridge 2017, 157–174; Lucy Allen-Goss, Queerly Productive: Women and Collaboration in Cambridge, University Library Ms Ff.1.6, in: postmedieval 9 (2018), 177–191; Laura Saetveit Miles, Queer Touch between Holy Women: Julian of Norwich, Margery Kempe, Birgitta of Sweden, and the Visitation, in: David Carrillo-Rangel/Delfi I. Nieto-Isabel/Pablo Acosta-García (eds.), Touching, Devotional Practices, and Visionary Experience in the Late Middle Ages, London 2019, 203–235; Carissa M. Harris, Obscene Pedagogies: Transgressive Talk and Sexual Education in Late Medieval Britain, Ithaca, NY 2018), 182; Rebecca Hardie, Male and Female Devotion in Three Texts of the Vercelli Book: Vercelli VII, XVII and *Elene*, in: English Studies 100 (2019), 273–290.

6 Franco Moretti, Network Theory, Plot Analysis, Stanford, CA 2011, 5.

7 For an overview of the state of feminist medieval scholarship, see Kathy M. Krause (ed.), Medieval Feminist Forum (Beyond Women and Power: Looking Backward and Moving Forward) 51 (2016).

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tracing of overlooked relations can tease out the many strands that made up medieval women's webs of political, cultural and ecclesiastical influence.[8]

Networks not only make visible 'non-exceptional' characters as sites of production and reception (nodes) but also draw attention to the nature and importance of transmission and communication (links). In both literary and historical sources, medieval women are often associated with intermediary states. They connect generations as childbearers, the king and the body politic as intercessors, potentially opposing families and kingdoms as peaceweavers or diplomatic wives and religious houses to royal or noble houses as abbesses, to give a few examples.[9] The importance of links in networks, therefore, often also places new emphasis on women, highlighting not only their presence but the ways in which they were connected – and connected themselves – to others.

In a study drawn on by several contributions in this volume, literary theorist Caroline Levine has emphasised the importance of attending to multiple networks, or "social forms", in narratives, as they "cooperate, come into conflict, and overlap".[10] Networks, she argues, include "an enormous variety of connectors that link people".[11] In Karen Dempsey's and Abigail Armstrong's essays in this volume, women's bonds interweave material objects, lineage, genealogical memory and affective ties, creating complex links across cultures, political borders and time. Moreover, as contributors Alyssa Gabbay and Jitske Jasperse show of Islamic patrilineal systems and Anglo-Iberian relations, respectively, even when women function as facilitators for male relations, they are rarely passive transmitters, instead asserting their own influence on and shaping relations. Indeed, medieval sources prompt nuanced reflections on how networks function when women and the objects attached to them can be both node and link simultaneously and under different circumstances.

Finally, approaching women's power through the study of networks accommodates – even assumes the presence of – change, mobility and unpredictability, which characterised many medieval women's lives. Negotiating the competing

8 For a useful overview of how recent social network theories and approaches, particularly within the digital humanities, have been applied to early modern history, see Kate Davison, Early Modern Social Networks: Antecedents, Opportunities, and Challenges, in: American Historical Review 124 (2019), 456–482. Majied Robinson's digital analysis of concubine networks in early Arabic texts highlights the utility of this method for correcting misconceptions about women's roles in familial networks, Majied Robinson, Statistical Approaches to the Rise of Concubinage in Islam, in: Matthew S. Gordon/Kathryn A. Hain (eds.), Concubines and Courtesans: Women and Slavery in Islamic History, New York 2017, 11–26.

9 For example, Kristen L. Geaman, Beyond Good Queen Anne: Anne of Bohemia, Patronage, and Politics, in: Heather J. Tanner (ed.), Medieval Elite Women and the Exercise of Power, 1100–1400, Cham 2019, 67–89.

10 Caroline Levine, Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network, Princeton/Oxford 2017, 10.

11 Ibid., 123.

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loyalties of daughter, wife, mother and widow and transitioning between familial, religious and political lives, women had to maintain, forge and integrate into new relations along the way. Network theorists, including Bruno Latour and Levine, have underscored the flexibility and dynamism of networks, which often lead in unexpected and inconclusive directions, both in actual, real-life contexts and in representational, artistic forms.[12] Alexander Galloway and Eugene Thacker suggest that "to be a network" means "to be capable of radically heterogeneous transformation and reconfiguration" – a statement that might equally be applied to the lives and influence of many medieval women.[13] At the same time, the studies by Stephanie Hollis and Lucy Pick in this collection warn against assuming that the power of women's relationships and networks was haphazard. While women's networks were often contingent on changing circumstances, they could also be long-established and authoritative means of transmitting power, deliberately and carefully represented in text, art and material objects.

The first two essays of this collection engage explicitly with social network theory. In the opening essay, Julia Hillner and Máirín MacCarron combine quantitative and digital network analysis with historical study to offer a new perspective on women's narrative functions in late antique and early medieval sources concerning exiled bishops, with a focus on Liberius of Rome and Wilfrid of York. This essay challenges the tendency in historical and literary studies to focus on negative portrayals of female characters in stereotypical roles, such as the biblical models of Eve, Jezebel and Herodias. Through digital network visualisations, the authors highlight the variety of roles afforded women in historical narratives, as well as their changing roles as stories are retold and adapted to shifting authorial, social and historical interests. Female networks in the narratives of exiled bishops are used to pass judgement on the bishop's moral integrity, orthodoxy or heresy and legitimacy as a rightful leader. Quantitative analysis and digital network analysis demonstrate how constellations of female characters are arranged according to political allegiances and highlight the characters' capacity to subvert male hierarchy, in accordance with the author's agenda.

Lucy Pick brings together historical and art historical analysis with network theory to challenge the older "master narrative" of the king as a uniquely sovereign subject and to demonstrate instead the king's participation in a host of overlapping and shifting networks. In this essay, social network analysis enables different visualisations, descriptions and representations of power relations. Pick compares two physical objects, both of which have royal daughters at their centre:

12 Bruno Latour, Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory, Oxford 2005, 12.

13 Alexander R. Galloway and Eugene Thacker, The Exploit: A Theory of Networks, Minneapolis 2007, 61.

ISBN Print: 9783847112426 – ISBN E-Book: 9783847012429

the first, a Spanish royal diploma from 1071, issued by a royal daughter, Urraca Fernández of León-Castilla, and the second, a painting by Diego Velásquez from 1656, now known as 'Las Meninas'. Through careful comparative work, Pick reveals how both objects represent power as spread unequally and asymmetrically across the networks of relationships they depict. Social network analysis, as an approach to historical studies, therefore needs to consider the many different types of networks depicted in a source – temporary and permanent, secular and divine – as well as the impact that assumptions about power and its transmission have upon the composition of network visualisations.

Jitske Jasperse also addresses questions of how to represent power and female relations in her study of material artefacts, particularly rings and precious stones, connected with the Plantagenet dynasty in the twelfth century. Genealogies of the Plantagenet family and the visual and written record connected to them often present power as something that passes between men along select kinship lines. By reconstructing "object biographies", however, this essay provides a fresh way of looking at sources such as chronicles, inventories and lists of expenses to consider women's complex roles within the networks that exist between objects, women and men. Jasperse draws upon diverse sources to reconstruct the biographies of rings and precious stones, apprehending rings as animated, powerful objects that transmitted history, emotion and protection throughout European networks. She demonstrates how women made use of these artefacts to help create, control and maintain the communication of identity within and about the wider Plantagenet dynasty.

Material artefacts are also of primary interest in Abigail Armstrong's contribution, which examines the material record for the relationships between Edward I of England and his Breton nieces, Marie and Eleanor. This relationship has been consistently overlooked in studies of Edward I's diplomatic network of extended female kin. Armstrong examines household expenditures and inventories of the royal treasury to provide a vivid account of the contrasting and shifting dynamics of Edward I's relationships with his two nieces. She contrasts two phases in the lives of Marie and Eleanor and their connections with Edward I, focussing on different types of expenditure across these phases, to reveal how spiritual gifts and favours (or the lack thereof) provide valuable evidence of affective ties, the reciprocity of affection, or the weakening of personal connection within kinship groups. Through a study of material artefacts, Armstrong demonstrates the shifting and adaptable nature of affective, spiritual, political and familial networks over time.

Likewise examining interwoven spiritual and material ties, Mercedes Pérez Vidal's essay highlights the roles women's book transmission had on religious reform in the Iberian Peninsula, and particularly Castile, from the mid-fourteenth to mid-fifteenth centuries. Studies of Observant reforms have tended to

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assume a model of exceptional charismatic endeavours by male individuals, with women implementing these endeavours at a local level. However, by tracing the transmission of liturgical and devotional books across male and female religious centres, Pérez Vidal shows how women – cloistered and uncloistered – helped shape the liturgy of reformist centres, therefore participating in influential ways throughout the Observant reforms. With a very wide range of documentary evidence, Pérez Vidal demonstrates that women's active roles in reform movements cannot be treated as a novelty but must be understood as the continuation of a longstanding tradition of male and female spiritual connections.

Stephanie Hollis also explores spiritual and material connections between religious women and their wider networks, but with a focus on how such relations extend across generations. Her essay argues for the importance of dream visions to creating dynastic continuity by examining the spiritual authority of such visions in the consecration of abbesses at the influential English abbeys of Wilton and Barking, particularly in the eleventh century. In this essay, Hollis introduces a new reading of dream visions as a distinctive genre, which medieval authors employed in nuanced ways. This method reveals the need to look more closely at the literary properties of dream visions, their imagery and structures of rhetoric across diverse texts, including hagiography and legislative documents. Using examples of the endowment of Alfgifu of Wilton, supported by a vision of St Edith, and the consecration of Alfgifu of Barking, prophesied in a vision of St Wulfhild, Hollis argues that such dream visions serve to convince the immediate female community that the elected abbess holds her office through the authority of spiritual ancestors.

The final two essays of the collection expand on this theme of remembering and re-envisaging connections to women across time. Alyssa Gabbay's essay investigates matrilineal ascription in Islam's early period by examining the case of Muʿāwiya, the first Umayyad caliph, and his mother, Hind bint ʿUtba. Gabbay notes that names in early Islamic texts are frequently composed of patronyms, which has led to the perception that Islam is, and always has been, fundamentally patrilineal. However, many examples of matrilineality exist in Islamic texts, including that of Muʿāwiya, who is often ascribed to his mother rather than father in historical chronicles and biographical dictionaries written between the eighth and tenth centuries. By contrasting these sources with others in which matrilineal ascription is downplayed or denied, Gabbay demonstrates how maternal ascription is a "normal part of early Islam". Whether used for positive or negative effect, matrilineal descent imputed a certain power to women that challenges misconceptions of their role as "mere vessels".

Karen Dempsey's essay revisits the volume's themes of object biographies and alternatives to female 'exceptionality' through an innovative approach to women's relations in castle studies. Dempsey focusses on an eleventh-century no-

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blewoman, Gundrada de Warenne, who may have been lady-in-waiting to Matilda of Flanders, queen of England. While recent studies of noble and royal women have done much to highlight the diverse roles they occupied, Dempsey asks how studies of castles, their architectural remains and remnants might shed light on such women's lived experience or patterns of daily life. Architectural evidence indicates how noble and royal women and men used materials to shape memory and social connections across several generations and multiple geographical sites. Focussing on material artefacts affiliated with Castle Acre in Norfolk, England, along with evidence from related sites in Normandy and Flanders, Dempsey demonstrates the complex domestic relationships between Gundrada, her objects and castle, which were instrumental in developing a community's ambitions, affective ties and responses to diverse daily concerns.

Taken individually, these essays offer fresh insights into how women's networks were a source of power in various European and neighbouring regions throughout the Middle Ages, highlighting the interrelationship of individual, communal and cultural identity with perceptions of power. Taken collectively, they emphasise the diverse roles of women, which were considered influential and noteworthy, including that of counsellor and advice-giver, political benefactress, noblewoman, lady-in-waiting, abbess, prophet and visionary, devotee and spiritual conduit, mother, daughter, niece and sister, translator, commissioner of texts, craftswoman, gift-giver (and ring-bearer) as well as owner of luxury items. These roles, moreover, are fluid and adaptable and best understood within networks of relationship and power, which are themselves shifting, overlapping and, at times, competing. Networks of women in these essays emerge as powerful sources of legitimisation and dissension, both revered and reviled, highlighted and elided. The relations they reveal move between women, men, objects and place and are not constrained by conventional national, geographical, regnal or temporal borders.

This volume demonstrates the range of questions and methods of approach that scholars with diverse source materials are using to uncover women's networks and rethink relations of power. By tracing women's contacts within literary texts, documents and material objects, the contributors make clear that women's networks were not only widespread but often openly acknowledged as important instruments in shaping political, familial and spiritual legacies.

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Julia Hillner / Máirín MacCarron

Female Networks and Exiled Bishops between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages: The Cases of Liberius of Rome and Wilfrid of York

Abstract

This essay brings together results from two research projects based at the University of Sheffield, The Migration of Faith: Clerical Exile in Late Antiquity (325–c. 600), and Women, Conflict and Peace: Gendered Networks in Early Medieval Narratives. The Migration of Faith uses quantitative approaches, such as social network analysis, to illuminate the role of late antique exiled clerics in disseminating ideas and practices through their personal and ecclesiastical networks. One outcome of this approach has been the identification of a far more prominent role for women, especially elite women, in these clerical networks than has heretofore been acknowledged. While this is an important observation, new approaches championed by the Gendered Networks project, in particular analysis of narrative networks created by literary texts, help to refine our understanding of this phenomenon further and to identify its rhetorical potential for late antique and early medieval authors. This essay examines how and why different stories about two high profile exile cases, Liberius, a fourth-century bishop of Rome, and Wilfrid, bishop of York (c. 634–709/10), highlight and change the roles of female characters in the networks they describe.

The late Roman and post-Roman worlds abound with stories of exiled bishops. This is partly because hundreds of clerics, mostly bishops, were banished in this period. Bishops' increasing legal status and social authority meant that exile – rather than another more humiliating penalty – became the prime method for rulers to manage conflicts involving the clergy, including the many theological disputes of the period. This development began with Constantine and continued into the post-Roman world.[1] Yet stories of clerical exile also abounded because, similar to early Christian martyr stories, they provided salutary tales of Christian vice and virtue for late antique and early medieval audiences: of persecution, cowardice and deception, as well as of steadfastness, sanctity and natural au-

1 Daniel Washburn, Banishment in the Later Roman Empire 284–476 CE. London 2013; Harry Mawdsley, Exile in the Post-Roman Successor States, 439–650, diss. Sheffield 2019. For numbers see Julia Hillner/Dirk Rohmann et al., Clerical Exile in Late Antiquity, http://www.clericalexile.org, (1 July 2018) and the appendices in Mawdsley 2019.

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thority.[2] In such stories, the exiled bishop – as hero or as villain – appears within a network of many other characters who support the flow of the narrative into one of these directions, such as persecutors, patrons, companions or beneficiaries of the protagonist's teaching. Within such narrative networks, women frequently appear.[3] This chapter discusses some narrative functions of women in late antique and early medieval exile stories.

Since the so-called "cultural turn" in patristic studies in the 1990s, scholarship has revealed the extent to which women were literary devices in Christian literature, used for the rhetorical constructions of orthodox and heretical identities. The focus here has been mostly on the negative portrayal of female characters, which meant that, especially from the fourth century on, "heresy literally becomes a woman" in many Christian texts.[4] This is also true for the interpretation of exile stories, often situated within larger Christian discourses around right belief. Much attention has been paid, above all, to the stand-off between exiled bishops and rulers' wives or other female relations, variably identified as incarnations of biblical models, including Eve, Jezebel or Herodias.[5]

While building on the insight that they were often literary constructs, this essay looks beyond negative portrayals at a variety of roles afforded to women in late antique and early medieval exile stories and, importantly, at changes in such roles every time a story was retold. It will suggest that such nuances could be due to differences in genre, authorial agenda and the changing social roles of women, or some types of women, over the period.

To demonstrate this variety and change, the chapter will focus on two case studies of exiled bishops, that of Liberius of Rome (352–366) and Wilfrid of York (c. 665–709/10). These two cases have been chosen because they frame the period under investigation (fourth to seventh century) so are a useful means of tracing continuities in Christian storytelling and gender constructions. Yet they have also been chosen because different versions of the circumstances surrounding their exiles exist for both. This is mostly because in both cases, exile led to schism

2 Washburn 2013, 129–131.

3 See Julia Hillner, Imperial Women and Clerical Exile in Late Antiquity, in: Studies in Late Antiquity 3 (2019), 369–412, here 370–371.

4 Caroline Humfress, 'Cherchez la femme!' Heresy and Law in Late Antiquity, in: Studies in Church History 56 (2020), 36–59, who discusses the relevant scholarship starting from Virginia Burrus's seminal The Heretical Woman as Symbol in Alexander, Athanasius, Epiphanius and Jerome, in: The Harvard Theological Review 84 (1991), 229–248. For negative portrayals of women in early medieval texts see Stephanie Hollis, Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate, Woodbridge 1992; and see further in section 2.

5 See, for example, for late Roman empresses: Krystyna Stebnicka, Jezebel and Eudoxia: Reflections of the History of the First Conflict Between John Chrysostom and Empress Eudoxia, in: Palamedes: A Journal of Ancient History 7 (2012), 143–154; for early medieval queens: Janet Nelson, Queens as Jezebels: The Careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History, in: Janet Nelson (ed.), Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe, London 1986, 1–48.

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and dissension, which generated additional anxiety around the legitimacy of the exiled bishop. In Liberius's case, these versions are chronologically distinct, so they allow for analysis of how the story, and the role of women within it, developed over a long time in response to new historical contexts. In Wilfrid's case, the two versions are nearly contemporary, which allows us to examine significantly differing presentations of the ruling elite, and specifically influential queens, from the more recent past.

The two case studies are analysed using both conventional historical analysis, such as setting the stories within their historical and literary contexts, and quantitative analysis. The latter includes simple statistics, such as number of characters in the respective stories, percentage of female characters, as well as digital network analysis. Unlike other historians' approaches to networks, we do not employ the term 'network' simply as a metaphor to think through issues of influence and power. Yet neither do we employ digital network analysis to reconstruct real social networks that existed in the past, an often fraught enterprise due to incomplete data or source bias.[6] Rather, we employ digital network analysis to investigate and reveal forms of storytelling in specific texts along the lines described above. Storytelling can be conceptualised as the construction of ever-changing and competing connections between a story's characters, whereby the appearance and disappearance of such connections, as well as their overlap and quality, aid the plot-building. This means that if data on characters and their connections captured from texts are investigated mathematically, we are able to draw out and visualise a story's narrative patterns and structural properties. In the following, we show how this approach aids us in adding nuance to the analysis of gendered representations and stereotyping in our late antique and early medieval texts.[7]

6 On both approaches, see Claire Lemercier, Formal Network Methods in History: Why and How?, HAL Working Papers Series (2011), https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-00521527v2.

7 For the concept of 'narrative networks' see Franco Moretti, Network Theory, Plot Analysis, in: New Left Review 68 (2011), 80–102; Caroline Levine, Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network, Princeton et al. 2015, 112–131; for recent work on 'character networks' see Vincent Labatut/Xavier Bost, Extraction and Analysis of Fictional Character Networks: A Survey, in: ACM Computing Surveys (in press), https://arxiv.org/abs/1907.02704. Digital network analysis has rarely been used to investigate the role of female characters in networks, either historical or narrative, but is central to the Leverhulme Trust project 'Women, Conflict and Peace: Gendered Networks in Early Medieval Narratives (RPG-2018–014)', which has funded underpinning research for this chapter. The project is preparing a substantial analysis of women's role as connectors in early medieval society.

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1. Women, Networks and the Return of Liberius of Rome

Liberius of Rome was a special exiled cleric. In 355, he was banished to Beroe in Thrace by Constantius II because he refused to sign a creed that was formulated at the council of Sirmium in 351 and sponsored by that emperor but widely considered as subscribing to the 'Arian' heresy. Yet, despite his original opposition to Constantius II, Liberius was already back at his see in Rome by 358.[8] Liberius had been allowed to return because during his exile he recanted and decided to sign a second creed of Sirmium, probably drawn up in 357.[9] This meant that, in the eyes of some, Liberius had caved to a "heretical" emperor's demand. An additional difficulty for Liberius arose from the fact that in Rome another bishop named Felix had been ordained.[10] A returned Liberius was therefore not only in danger of being considered a heretic but also, particularly in his home community, a schismatic.

As Liberius was bishop of Rome, one of the most important episcopal sees in the late antique Mediterranean and soon considered a focal point of 'orthodox' Christianity, the unusual and controversial nature of his return attracted much attention, turning it into a literary event throughout late antiquity. As we shall see, a desire to either clear or taint Liberius's memory influenced how subsequent authors reconstructed his return. To pursue their goal of praise or denigration, different authors connected Liberius to different individuals or groups of people, including women.

As Daniel Washburn has shown, Liberius's *volte-de-face* did not immediately lead to his recall by Constantius. Instead, Liberius had to cultivate patrons, gather intercessors with the emperor and go through the ritual motions to publicly advertise his contrition.[11] If we apply narrative network analysis to the case of Liberius, it becomes clear, however, that the ways in which the make-up of his network and the identity of these patrons were narrated changed over time.

If we consider all data drawn from all sources that record his exile, we are able to present Liberius's social network during the period between his trial and his return from exile as in Graph 1.

8 For the historical background see Timothy Barnes, Athanasius and Constantius: Theology and Politics in the Constantinian Empire, Boston 1993, 116–119.

9 See Barnes as in n. 8.

10 On Felix, see Luce Pietri/Charles Pietri, Prosopographie Chrétienne du Bas-Empire II: Prosopographie de L'Italie Chrétienne (313–604), vol. 1, Rome 1999, Felix 7, 770–771.

11 Washburn 2013, 156–157.

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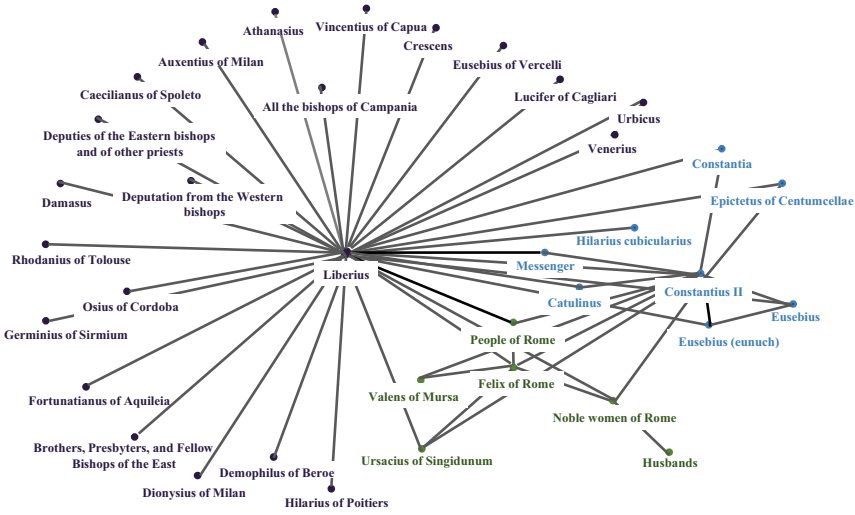

Graph 1: Liberius's network leading up to and during his exile[12].

One of the algorithms of the digital network software used to analyse and visualise the underlying data in this way is a so-called "cluster algorithm".[13] It

12 Based on: Liberius, epistula 3.1, ed. Vincent Bulhart et al. (Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 9), Turnhout 1957; Hilary of Poitiers, coll. Antiar. Paris., B VII, ed. Alfred Feder (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Christianorum 65), Wien 1916; Eusebius of Vercelli, Epistula 2.4.2, ed. Vincent Bulhart et al. (Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 9), Turnhout 1957; Athanasius, Historia Arianorum 36–41 and Apologia contra Arianos (=apologia secunda) 89, both ed. Hans-Georg Opitz (Athanasius Werke 2.1), Berlin 1935–1941; Ammianus Marcellinus 15.7.6–10, ed. Wolfgang Seyfarth (Bibliotheca Teubneriana), Leipzig 1978; Gesta inter Liberium et Felicem, (=Collectio Avellana 1), ed. Otto Guenther (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Christianorum 35), Wien 1895; Jerome, De Viris Illustribus 97, ed. Claudia Barthold, 2nd Edition, Mülheim 2011; Rufinus, Historia Ecclesiastica 10.23 and 28, ed. Theodor Mommsem (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schrifsteller 2.3), Leipzig 1909; Philostorgius, Historia Ecclesiastica 4.3, ed. Friedrich Winkelmann (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller 21, 3rd edition), Berlin 1981; Socrates, Historia Ecclesiastica 2.37.91–4, ed. Günther Christian Hansen (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller N. F. 1), Berlin 1995; Sozomen, Historia Ecclesiastica 4.11 and 15, ed. Günther Christian Hansen (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller N. F. 4), Berlin 1995; Theoderet, Historia Ecclesiastica 2.16–17, ed. Günther Christian Hansen (Die Griechischen Christlichen Schriftsteller N. F. 5), Berlin 1998; Liber Pontificalis 37, Vita Liberii, ed. Louis Duchèsne, Paris 1886; Gesta Liberii 46–48, ed. E. Wirbelauer, Zwei Päpste in Rom. Der Konflikt zwischen Laurentius und Symmachus (498–514), München 1993, 148–261; Passio Felicis (BHL 2857), cited in Giovanni Verrando, Liberio-Felice. Osservazioni e rettifiche di carattere storio-agiografico, in: Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia 35 (1981), 123; Inscriptiones christianae urbis romae, Nova series 9, n. 24831, ed. Giovanni Battista De Rossi et al., Roma 1922.

13 The graph was generated by the NodeXL software and laid out using the Harel-Koren Fast Multiscale Layout Algorithm. The graph's vertices were grouped by cluster using the Clauset-Newman-Moore Cluster Algorithm. The vertex sizes are based on degree values (i. e. how

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groups individual actors in the network by their connections. It is important to note that the algorithm groups actors purely by connection, not by further attributes such as membership in a particular late antique social group or reference in a particular late antique source. This is important because, as we will see, the groups that the algorithm detected are nonetheless, on a purely mathematical level, still both recognisably social (e. g. members of the imperial court) and literary (i. e. mentioned by a specific source). This allows us to draw conclusions about how different sources reported social connections and which social connections they prioritised in their stories.

At first glance, what we may take away from Graph 1 is that Liberius was in touch with many different, but among them unrelated, bishops about his case (group in black), as well as with a more closely knit group containing the emperor and individuals close to the imperial court (group in blue) and, finally, with an interconnected group of people based in Rome (group in green). Among the latter two groups were a number of women: noble women of Rome; the empress Eusebia, Constantius's wife; and Constantius's sister, here called Constantia. Looking at the graph in this way, as a reflection of social reality, we may conclude that Liberius was a skilled negotiator who engaged diverse, overlapping networks to support his case.[14]

Of course, as any historical actor, Liberius would have operated in such overlapping networks.[15] However, if we consider which sources mention which connections, a different picture emerges, demonstrating that different authors highlighted different networks for Liberius. In other words, the overlap of networks may not be a reflection of social reality, a social network so to speak, but at least partly a result of the retelling of his story over time. The graph is a reflection of how different late antique authors constructed the networks around Liberius.

The majority of the group in black either received or are mentioned in Liberius's extant letters, which are preserved in the fragmentary polemic by Hilary of Poitiers against the 'Arian' bishops Ursacius and Valens, written in 359/60.[16] These letters are, hence, contemporary documents. While they show that Liberius pursued a strategy of building up relationships with several influential bishops, the fact that these connections are reconstructed from Liberius's letter writing may give a skewed impression of the workings of this network, for there may have

many connections someone had, which shows that Liberius is, unsurprisingly, the most connected network actor, followed by Constantius). The graph is undirected.

14 As suspected by Jörg Ulrich, How to Gain Indulgentiam: The Case of Liberius of Rome, in: Dirk Rohmann/Jörg Ulrich/Margarita Vallejo-Girvès (eds.), Mobility and Exile at the End of Antiquity, Frankfurt 2018, 199–212.

15 An aspect of social interaction too little considered, see Levine 2015, 114–115.

16 Hilarius of Poitiers, coll. Antiar. Paris., B VII.

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been further contacts between these bishops that Liberius was either not aware of or did not mention (and, in fact, in some cases, we know there were).[17]

Except for Constantius II, the *cubicularius* Hilarius and the bishops Epictetus, Valens and Ursacius, Liberius himself did not write to or mention members of the blue, imperial group, and he did not mention any of the individuals in the green group based in the city of Rome in his letters. This also means that Liberius himself did not mention any female contacts. The 'Gesta inter Liberium et Felicem', written by a pro-Liberian and anti-Felician cohort in Rome after 368, records intervention for Liberius by the people of Rome during Constantius's visit to Rome in April to May 357.[18] The fifth-century church historians, Rufinus (in 401), Socrates (d. 440), Sozomen (d. c. 450) and Theodoret of Cyrrhus (in 449–50), as well as the heterodox church historian Philostorgius (d. after 431), also all record the intervention by the Roman people, and even sedition and bloodshed.[19] Yet again, no women appear in the 'Gesta' or in most of the church histories.

Among the church historians, it is only Theodoret of Cyrrhus who situates the Roman people's intervention within the operations of a larger network, which the algorithm clusters as the green and blue groups. It is also only Theodoret who adds female contacts to the group of intercessors who helped Liberius to regain his bishopric. He cites noble women, "wives of high-ranking men", who, after having failed to get their husbands to intervene with Constantius on behalf of Liberius, went to the emperor themselves and persuaded him to let Liberius return.[20] Theodoret is also the only one who reports on the attempts by Constantius's wife Eusebia and her chamberlain and eunuch Eusebius, to bribe Liberius before his exile in order to change his mind. Liberius rejected the attempt, suggesting the money be offered to the 'Arian' bishops Epictetus of Centumcellae and Auxentius of Milan instead, and rushed off to his place of banishment.[21] Graph 2 shows Liberius's network according to Theodoret only. As we can see, Theodoret does not spend much time with most of the bishops in the black group who could not be shown as being connected to the imperial court or to Rome (Auxentius of Milan is the only overlap with the bishops in the 'black' network that arises from Liberius's letters).

Some hundred years after Theodoret, the 'Liber Pontificalis', a series of papal biographies probably composed under pope Vigilius (537–546), retells the story

17 See Richard Flower, Witnesses for the Persecution: Textual Communities of Exile under Constantius II, in: Studies in Late Antiquity 3 (2019), 337–368.

18 Gesta inter Liberium et Felicem (= Collectio Avellana 1.3).

19 Rufinus, Historia Ecclesiastica 10. 28; Socrates, Historia Ecclesiastica 2.37.91–4; Sozomenus, Historia Ecclesiastica 4.11 and 15; Theoderet, Historia Ecclesiastica 2.17; Philostorgius, Historia Ecclesiastica 4.3.

20 Theoderet, Historia Ecclesiastica 2.17.

21 Theoderet, Historia Ecclesiastica 2.16.

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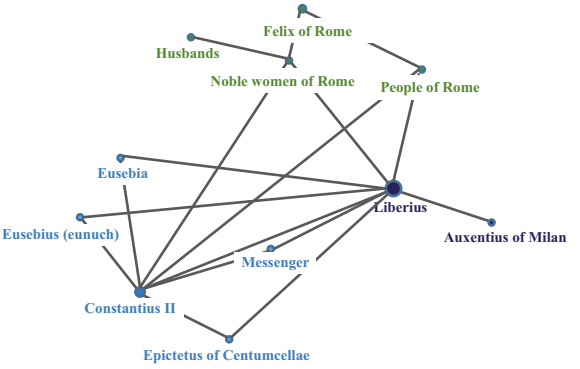
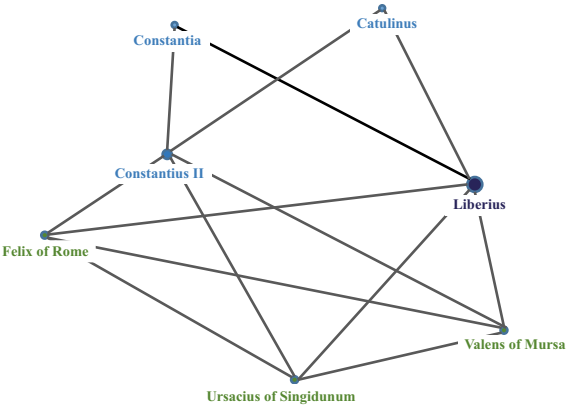


Graph 2: Liberius's network according to Theodoret of Cyrrhus.

again and adds a further element to Liberius's network. Liberius, even though having returned from exile on instigation of the 'Arian' bishops Valens and Ursacius, could not enter Rome at first. Instead, he lived at the 'cemetery' of St Agnes, with the sister of the emperor and asked for her intercession. However, 'Constantia', the sister of the emperor and *augusta*, refused intercession. Constantius, Ursacius and Valens summoned 'Arian' bishops and recalled Liberius nonetheless. When he had entered Rome, they held a council and deposed Felix who was later killed.[22] A hagiographical account, the 'Passio Felicis', of uncertain date, but in some way related to the 'Liber Pontificalis', has a similar story.[23] Graph 3 shows Liberius's network as imagined by these two sources.



Graph 3: Liberius's network according to 'Liber pontificalis' and 'Passio Felicis'.

22 Liber Pontificalis 37, Vita Liberii.
23 Passio Felicis (BHL 2857).

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The tightly knit groups including women, as shown in Graphs 2 and 3, hence only appear in sources much later than Liberius's exile itself. All connections attested to in fourth-century sources, in turn, have disappeared. This may be due to the narrative nature of these sources, which describe events ordered as a plot with interacting characters, rather than going through a list of Liberius's correspondents, as Hilary of Poitiers did. Even so, it is important to note that over the course of two centuries not only did more social connections between some of Liberius's contacts emerge, but the identity of these contacts, and in particular his intercessors with the emperor also changed, from bishops, to Roman people, to aristocratic women and, finally, to imperial women.

There are good grounds to believe that this change reflects how later authors wanted to represent Liberius's stance towards orthodoxy. Yet the changes may also reflect how they perceived, interpreted and internalised changes in Christian patronage, as well as the emergence of Christian groups that could present new challenges to ecclesiastical and secular leaders. Marianne Sághy has already argued as much, but her emphasis has been on the Roman people. Sághy explains that in order to remodel Liberius as a legitimate and Nicene bishop (difficult because he had subscribed to the creed of Sirmium), the fifth-century church historians pointed at his strong relationship with the Roman people as those who had elected him. Unlike these later church historians, Ammianus Marcellinus, a late-fourth-century author who had reported both on Liberius's deposition and on Constantius's visit to Rome in 357, had not mentioned the incident in the Roman circus, when the people allegedly shouted for Liberius's return. This throws at least some doubt over its authenticity.[24]

Yet, Sághy's reflections on the role of the Roman people in the stories around Liberius's return, as well as the sudden appearance of women in Theodoret's 'Church History' invite us to also question the female element of Liberius's network. This is not to say that there cannot be a kernel of truth in the role assigned to women in our sources, both noble and imperial. We know from Ambrose of Milan that Liberius was close to his senatorial family and consecrated his sister Marcella as a Christian virgin.[25] We also know that the empress Eusebia stayed in Rome around the time of Liberius's banishment.[26] However, the alleged hospitality that Constantius's sister 'Constantia' provided for Liberius

24 Marianne Sághy, The Adventus of Constantius II to Rome 357 A.D., in: Balázs Nagy/Marcell Sebők (eds.), The Man of Many Devices Who Wandered Full Many Ways: Festschrift in Honor of János M. Bak, Budapest 1999, 148–159. Constantius's visit is described in Ammianus Marcellinus 16.10.

25 Ambrosius, De Virginibus 3.1, ed. Jacques Paul Migne (Patrologia Latina 16), Paris 1845.

26 She may have arrived in Rome in 354 and stayed until 357, at least, see Julia Hillner, A Woman's Place: Imperial Women in Late Antique Rome, in: Antiquité Tardive 25 (2017), 75–94, here 90.

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at the 'cemetery' of St Agnes is more of a puzzle if we want to afford it historical truth. The sister referred to here could be the otherwise attested Constantina, the founder of the funerary basilica of St Agnes; yet, Constantina was already dead in 358 and buried in a mausoleum adjacent to the church.[27]

The last episode should remind us that circumspection about the authenticity of female intervention in this exile story is warranted due to the well-known tendency of late antique authors, mentioned in the introduction, to use female characters to pass judgement on the moral behaviour of a man. With regard to Liberius, his connections with women were later used to promote either his orthodoxy (by Theodoret) or his closeness to heresy (in the 'Liber Pontificalis' and the 'Passio Felicis'). In this regard, it did not necessarily matter if the action of the woman in question was assessed positively or negatively: both could be employed to comment on Liberius's integrity.[28]

The fact that Liberius's connections with women appear for the first time in Theodoret's version of his exile is therefore highly suggestive. It could be due to Theodoret's personal authorial preferences, for he was generally fond of inserting women into well-known exile stories for rhetorical purposes, where other church historians have none.[29] That women were important to him when reporting on Liberius's exile is shown, on a mathematical level, by the fact that in Liberius's network constructed by him, the group of noble women and Eusebia are among the four best connected actors, only outclassed by Liberius and Constantius. In digital network analysis, 'best connected' refers to those who connect otherwise isolated subgroups (so-called 'betweenness centrality').[30]

Yet the centrality of women to his version of events is also, of course, advertised through Theodoret's description of their actions. Theodoret put forward both positive female action, by the noble women, and negative, by the empress Eusebia, to reinsert Liberius into a Nicene narrative, branding Felix as the 'Arian'

27 See Julia Hillner, Constantina, Daughter of Constantine, Wife of Gallus Caesar, and Patron of St Agnes at Rome, in: Oxford Classical Dictionary, Oxford University Press 2018, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.8066 (open access). Jill Harries has suggested that Constantina's memory at the place was so powerful that even living near the tomb of this imperial woman could later be presented as living 'with' Constantina: Jill Harries, The Empresses' Tale, AD 300–360, in: Caroline Harrison/Caroline Humfress/Isabella Sandwell (eds.), Being Christian in Late Antiquity, Oxford 2014, 197–214, here 211–212.

28 On the various ways in which women could be employed as literary devices in late antique texts, see Elizabeth Clark, The Lady Vanishes: Dilemmas of a Feminist Historian after the 'Linguistic Turn', in: Church History 67 (1998), 1–31.

29 See, for example, the church historians' various versions about the banishment of Eustathius of Antioch (c. 326–328) where only Theodoret mentions the involvement of a prostitute: Socrates, Historia Ecclesiastica 1.24; Sozomen, Historia Ecclesiastica 2.19; Theodoret, Historia Ecclesiastica 1.20–21.

30 For further elaboration on these terms see section 2.

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sympathiser instead. The noble women intervened for the rightful bishop over Felix and, despite their assumed female weakness, put themselves in danger on his behalf (for, as their husbands themselves make abundantly clear, appealing to the emperor was a risky business). By morally upstaging their cowardly husbands, and winning over a powerful man, their behaviour reordered the male hierarchy, with Liberius, to whose authority they themselves submitted, coming out on top.[31] By casting Christian noble women in this role, Theodoret may have been reacting to the emergence of Roman noble women as Christian benefactors – including of banished clerics – from the later fourth century on, well documented both in late antiquity and now. In the mid-fifth century, stories like those of the Roman aristocrat Melania the Elder, who dressed up as a slave to minister to banished bishops in a Palestinian prison, were powerful advertisements of new influential patronage networks centred around wealthy lay women.[32]

By contrast, Theodoret's representation of Eusebia is, at the very least, ambiguous, as she offers support but requires Liberius to change his mind to access it. Theodoret also replaces the *cubicularius* Hilarianus, mentioned by Liberius, who disappears completely from the bishop's network, with another court figure, the eunuch Eusebius. This is more than a hint, since Eusebius appears in several other contemporary texts as an arch-heretic and supporter of 'Arians', with an unsavoury influence over Eusebia.[33]

The assessment of female imperial influence is equally ambiguous in the 'Liber Pontificalis' and 'Passio Felicis'. The 'Passio Felicis', which celebrates Liberius's rival Felix, is clearly anti-Liberian, but the 'Liber Pontificalis' is also fairly hostile, possibly because Liberius was seen as a promoter of schism.[34] Here Liberius's integrity is thrown into doubt by the suggestion that he needed the help of a woman to return to Rome and, more importantly, an imperial woman. Here it is important to consider how the imperial woman is named 'Constantia'. Scholars have been puzzled by this name, since the actual patron of St Agnes was called Constantina, to the extent of arguing for a copyist's mistake. Yet most manuscripts, and certainly the earliest ones, have the variant Constantia, so this tra-

31 See on this also Kate Cooper, Insinuations of Womanly Influence: An Aspect of the Christianization of the Roman Aristocracy, in: Journal of Roman Studies 82 (1992), 150–164.

32 On Melania: Palladius, Historia Lausiaca 46, ed. Cuthbert Butler, The Lausiac History of Palladius, vol. 1, Cambridge 1904, 134–135. On the emergence of Christian female aristocratic patrons from the later fourth century see Elizabeth Clark, Patrons not Priests: Gender and Power in Late Ancient Christianity, in: Gender and History 2 (1990), 253–273.

33 A. H. M. Jones, Eusebius 11, in: Jones, Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire I, AD 260–395, Cambridge 1971, 302–303.

34 See Kate Blair-Dixon, Memory and Authority in Sixth-Century Rome: The Liber Pontificalis and the Collectio Avellana, in: Kate Cooper/Julia Hillner (eds.), Religion, Dynasty and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300–900, Cambridge 2007, 59–76.

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dition is very strong.[35] In addition, elsewhere the 'Liber Pontificalis' makes a direct association between St Agnes and a woman called 'Constantia', who is not identical with Constantius's sister Constantina. The life of bishop Silvester (a Roman bishop at the time of Constantine) claimed that both Constantine's sister Constantia and his here-unnamed daughter had been baptised at St Agnes.[36]

This baptism story is anachronistic, for Constantia, the sister of Constantine died around 330 and St Agnes was not built before the 340s.[37] Yet, in terms of the imperial woman in Liberius's story, it may be significant that by the sixth century, when the 'Liber Pontificalis' and 'Passio Felicis' were written, there existed a very well-known tale concerning this very Constantia as a patron of an exiled heretic. All fifth-century church historians, from Rufinus to Theodoret, report how this Constantia was persuaded by an unnamed 'Arian' presbyter, who was a member of her household, that the heretic Arius's condemnation at Nicaea in 325 had been unjust. While she never actively pleaded with Constantine for Arius, she took the presbyter into her household and commended him to her brother on her deathbed, at which point he passed into the emperor's and then his son Constantius's household. In this way, he could, in some versions together with the eunuch Eusebius, corrupt Constantius II's mind against the champions of Nicaea. In short, there was a widely circulating story that imagined a network of heretics trying to spread false belief using an imperial woman who acted as the gatekeeper to the emperor.[38]

Of course, this story was also an obvious fabrication, but it was immensely popular and doubtlessly known to the compiler of the 'Liber Pontificalis', at the very least through Rufinus or Jerome, who were among his sources.[39] It can therefore not be excluded that this compiler was trying to invoke certain understandings of Liberius's behaviour through arranging the characters in the story in a way that mirrored the network in the 'Constantia' story. To be sure, both the 'Liber Pontificalis' and 'Passio Felicis' concede that, unlike the original 'Constantia', Constantius's sister refused to petition her brother on Liberius's

35 Timothy Barnes, Constantine: Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire, Oxford 2011, 152. On the manuscript variants see Duchèsne's edition (as n. 12), 207.

36 Liber Pontificalis 34.23, Vita Silvestri: *Eodem tempore fecit basilicam sanctae martyris Agnae ex rogatu filiae suae et baptisterium in eodem loco, ubi et baptizata est soror eius Constantia cum filia Augusti a Siluestrio episcopo.*

37 Hillner 2018.

38 On Constantia and this story see Julia Hillner, Constantia, Half-Sister of Constantine and Wife of Licinius, in: Oxford Classical Dictionary, Oxford University Press 2017, DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.8065 (open access).

39 On Rufinus and Jerome as sources of the 'Liber Pontificalis', Raymond Davis, The Book of Pontiffs (Liber Pontificalis): The Ancient Biographies of the First Ninety Roman Bishops to AD 715, 3rd Edition, Liverpool 2010, xiii. On Jerome and Constantia: Jerome, ep. 133.4, ed. Isidor Hilberg (Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum 56), Wien 1918.

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behalf. Yet again, readers may have picked up, or were invited to pick up, on this clear diversion from the original 'Constantia' story, which would have only emphasised Liberius's uncomfortable position: he remained cast in the role previously occupied by the 'Arian' presbyter, again morally upstaged by a woman who this time refused to facilitate her network for him. This only testifies that the compiler of the 'Liber Pontificalis' and the authors of the original 'Constantia' story shared an understanding of how heresy could spread – through contacts in informal, uncontrolled contexts, such as the networks of imperial women.

By the sixth century, then, everyone would have understood that being part of the emperor's sister's patronage network was what identified 'Arians'. Yet, the fact that Theodoret's version of Liberius's network also includes a scheming empress, Eusebia, suggests that the appearance of imperial women in Liberius's story responded to a larger social development than 'just' the circulation of the compelling 'Constantia' tale. What we witness in changes to Liberius's story is most likely the discomfort of Christian authors in the face of the rising political influence of the Christian empress since the late fourth century, especially under the Theodosian and then Justinian dynasties, which was often seen as competing with that of bishops. Such influence simply did not exist at the time of Liberius himself, as it is contingent on later historical developments. Unlike the power of aristocratic women, whom clerics often cultivated as patrons, that of the empress seems to have been more contentious, at least based on the many tales of conflict between imperial women and bishops in Christian literature, of which Theodoret's story about the relationship between Eusebia and Liberius is only one example.[40]

2. Presences and Absences of Women in Wilfrid of York's Network

Wilfrid of York (c. 634–709/10) was a controversial character in life and in death. He was a dominant figure in Northumbrian ecclesiastical and secular politics over several decades and appears to have attracted royal patronage and hostility in almost equal measures, and consequently spent much of his career in exile. Unusually for early medieval Britain, we have two surviving accounts of Wilfrid's life written within a couple of decades of his death, both by people who knew him and many of his contemporaries. The first, the 'Vita Wilfridi' (hereafter VW), was written within a few years of Wilfrid's death by Eddius Stephanus, a figure about whom we know very little, except that he was a member of Wilfrid's community

40 On the emergence of the late Roman empress, see Anja Busch, Die Frauen der Theodosianischen Dynastie. Macht und Repräsentation kaiserlicher Frauen im 5. Jahrhundert, Stuttgart 2015. For conflict stories, see above n. 5.

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and appears to have been with the bishop in his later exiles.[41] The second source, the 'Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum' (hereafter HE) by the Venerable Bede (c. 673–735) was completed in 731 and gives much attention to Wilfrid. Stephen's 'VW' was known to Bede and used by him in the 'HE', so we are also afforded a rare opportunity to witness Bede engaging with a surviving source.[42]

Our two accounts agree on the main details of Wilfrid's life and career: he entered the monastery of Lindisfarne as a young man, and later went on pilgrimage to Rome. On returning to Britain, he represented the Roman side at the Synod of Whitby in 664, after which he was appointed bishop of Northumbria. He was later exiled during the reigns of Kings Ecgfrith, Aldfrith and Eadwulf, and spent much of his career preaching and evangelising in both pagan and Christian kingdoms, in Britain and Northern Europe, and appealing to Rome about his ill treatment by successive archbishops of Canterbury and kings of Northumbria. He died in 709/10, having finally made peace with the secular and religious authorities.[43]

Despite this general agreement, Stephen's and Bede's presentations differ on the reasons for Wilfrid's troubles. Stephen's partisan account eagerly identifies kings, queens, bishops and abbesses as enemies of Wilfrid; in contrast, Bede is more circumspect but appears to support the reform efforts of archbishop Theodore of Canterbury (r. 668–90), who clashed with Wilfrid as Theodore wished to restructure enormous dioceses, such as Wilfrid's original see of Northumbria, into more manageable units.[44] Consequently, although Wilfrid

41 On the possible identity of Eddius Stephanus, hereafter referred to as Stephen, see, most recently, Alan Thacker, Wilfrid: His Cult and His Biographer, in: Nicholas Higham (ed.), Wilfrid: Abbot, Bishop, Saint: Papers from the 1300th Anniversary Conferences, Donington 2013, 1–16, esp. 3 and 13; on the date of Wilfrid's death and composition of the *Vita*, see Thacker 2013 and Clare Stancliffe, Dating Wilfrid's Death and Stephen's *Life*, in: Higham 2013, 17–26.

42 On Bede, Stephen and Wilfrid, see: Eric John, The Social and Political Problems of the Early English Church, in: Joan Thirsk (ed.), Land, Church and People: Essays Presented to Prof. H. P. R. Finberg (Agricultural History Review 18, Supplement), Reading 1970, 39–63; David Peter Kirby, Bede, Eddius Stephanus and the *Life of Wilfrid*, in: English Historical Review 98 (1983), 101–114; Walter Goffart, Bede and the Ghost of Bishop Wilfrid, in: Goffart, The Narrators of Barbarian History (AD 550–800): Jordanes, Gregory of Tours, Bede and Paul the Deacon, Princeton, NJ 1988, 235–328, esp. 307–313; Clare Stancliffe, Bede, Wilfrid, and the Irish, Jarrow Lecture 2003.

43 Stephen, Vita Wilfridi [hereafter VW], ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave, Cambridge 1927; Bede, Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum [hereafter HE], ed. and trans. by Bertram Colgrave/Roger Aubrey Baskerville Mynors, Oxford 1969, repr. 2001, books 3:13, 25, 28; 4:2–3, 5, 12–13, 15–16, 19, 23, 29; and 5:3, 11, 18–20.

44 See Sarah Foot, Wilfrid's Monastic Empire, in Higham 2013, 27–40. Bede's concern for church reform is well known and was most clearly expressed in his letter to Bishop Egbert of York: Epistola ad Ecgbertum Episcopum, ed. and trans. by Christopher Grocock/Ian Wood, The Abbots of Wearmouth and Jarrow, Oxford 2013, 124–161. See also Alan Thacker, Bede's Ideal of Reform, in: Patrick Wormald/Donald Bullough/Roger Collins (eds.), Ideal and Reality in Frankish and Anglo-Saxon Society, Oxford 1983, 130–153; and Scott DeGregorio,

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may have been treated harshly, he was not wholly innocent as presented by Stephen. One of the striking manifestations of our writers' different agendas concerns the role of women and female networks in Wilfrid's life.

Women are a more obvious and overt presence in Stephen's account, which has contributed to a prevailing view in modern historiography that Bede suppressed the role of women, in contrast to Stephen, who allowed women more expansive roles.[45] A combination of close textual analysis and quantitative assessments reveal, however, that women loom large in both accounts and, rather than indicating his misogynistic inclinations, Bede's silences present a more nuanced and subtle account of Northumbrian politics than Stephen's partisan presentation.

There are 72 women in Bede's 'HE' out of a total of 594 characters: that is, 12.12 % of the characters in the book are women. Stephen's 'VW' has 25 women out of 167 characters: 14.97 % of the characters. Numerically, then, the slightly higher proportion of women in Stephen confirms the existing historiography. However, a close examination of the data gathered from both texts using quantitative network analysis reveals that individual women were far more important in the overall structure of Bede's narrative than Stephen's. The quantitative measures under discussion here are 'degree' and 'betweenness centrality'. Degree measures the number of connections of every character. Betweenness centrality measures a character's importance in connecting others; that is, they may not have the highest number of personal connections, but they link those who do, and are essential to the functioning of the network.

For both measures, we have ranked characters from largest to smallest centrality. In examining the position of women, we compared the top twenty percent of characters for both measures in both texts, as this is a reasonable means for statistical comparison. Regarding degree, there are four women in the 'VW' and twelve in Bede's 'HE': that is, three times as many women are in the top twenty percent of characters ranked by degree in Bede as in Stephen. Betweenness centrality produces similarly interesting results, as five women are in the top twenty percent of characters in Stephen, compared to twelve women in the top twenty percent in Bede.[46]

'Nostrorum socordiam temporum': the Reforming Impulse of Bede's Later Exegesis, in: Early Medieval Europe 11,2 (2002), 107–122, and Scott DeGregorio, Bede's *In Ezram et Neemiam* and the Reform of the Northumbrian Church, in: Speculum 79 (2004), 1–25.

45 This view was most effectively asserted by Stephanie Hollis in her monograph 'Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church', published in 1992, and has greatly influenced all subsequent discussion of women in both Stephen and Bede, Hollis 1992. Cf. Clare Lees/Gillian Overing, Double Agents: Women and Clerical Culture in Anglo-Saxon England, Philadelphia, PA 2001; and Virginia Blanton, Signs of Devotion: the Cult of St Æthelthryth in Medieval England, 695–1615, Philadelphia, PA 2007, 1–63.

46 See Tables 1–4. This data was generated by the Gendered Networks project team, see note 7 above.

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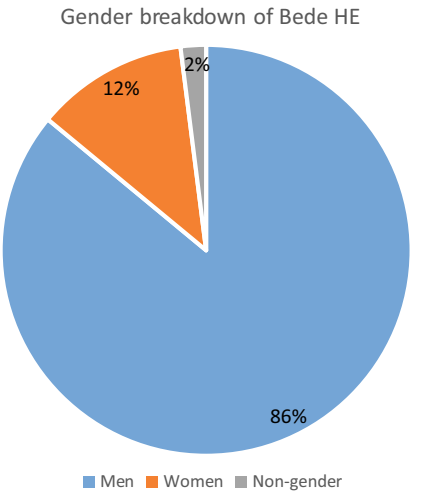

Chart 1: Gender breakdown of Bede's 'HE'.

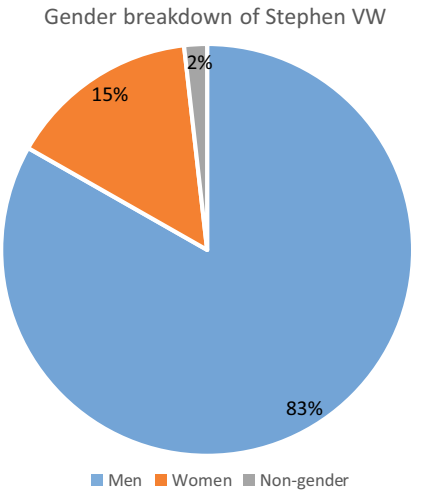

Chart 2: Gender breakdown of Stephen's VW.

Table 1: Women in Stephen out of top 20 % of characters ranked by Degree

Stephen VW – Degree	
Ranking	**Character**
14	Ælfflæd
14	Iurminburgh
17	Hild
22	Eanflæd

Table 2: Women in Bede out of top 20 % of characters ranked by Degree

Bede HE – Degree	
Ranking	**Character**
11	Hild
14	Eanflæd
27	Æthelburg of Northumbria
31	Etheldreda
50	Seaxburh
76	Ælfflæd
77	Ethelburh of Barking
77	Abbess Ethelhild
77	Osthryth
110	Mary
110	Eorcengota
118	Cwenburh

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Table 3: Women in Stephen out of top 20 % of characters ranked by Betweenness

Stephen VW – Betweenness centrality	
Ranking	**Character**
14	Attending women
19	Eanflæd
22	Cynithrith
32	Ælfflæd
33	Iurminburgh

Table 4: Women in Bede out of top 20 % of characters ranked by Betweenness

Bede HE – Betweenness centrality	
Ranking	**Character**
8	Hild
14	Etheldreda
16	Eanflæd
28	Osthryth
34	Ethelburh of Barking
41	Abbess Ethelhild
48	Æthelburg of Northumbria
66	Mary
79	Æbbe
81	Seaxburh
93	Eafe
110	Eorcengota

Table 5: Women connected with Wilfrid in Stephen and Bede

Women in Stephen VW	**Women in Bede HE**
Eanflæd	Eanflæd
Baldhild	Baldhild
Hild	Hild
Etheldreda	Etheldreda
Iurminburgh	X
Queen of Mercia	**Osthryth**
Queen of West Saxons	X
Queen of South Saxons	**Eafe**
Ælfflæd	**Ælfflæd**
Cynithrith	X
Niece of Dalfinus	Niece of Dalfinus
Mother of Wilfrid	Mother of Wilfrid

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Table 5 *(Continued)*

Women in Stephen VW	Women in Bede HE
X	Sister of Wilfrid
Stepmother	X
Attending women	X
Woman	X
Æbbe (Wife of Reeve Osfrith)	X
Nun	X

Notes to Table 5: X indicates characters who are in one source but absent from the other. Names in **bold** are women who appear in Bede but are not linked to Wilfrid in the *HE*.

It is significant that in both texts women are slightly more prominently represented for betweenness than degree. Betweenness indicates one's role in connecting others, a role often played by women in early medieval literature.[47] Women's importance in this regard is further underlined as women occupy three of the top sixteen places in Bede's network when characters are ranked by betweenness. We can see in Tables 2 and 4 that Hild moves from eleventh place in degree to eighth when we consider her betweenness; Eanflæd moves from fourteenth to sixteenth; and Etheldreda jumps from thirty-first to fourteenth place. In contrast, only one female character features in the top sixteen characters ranked by betweenness in Stephen's 'VW', despite the text having significantly fewer characters. These are the women in attendance at Wilfrid's birth in fourteenth position. These measures reveal the structural importance of women in Bede's character network, an importance that is underlined when compared with Stephen's 'VW', and challenge the premise that Bede suppressed the role of women in his book.

Bede's sophisticated treatment of women can also be seen when quantitative approaches are combined with a qualitative assessment of his presentation of women's connectedness to Wilfrid. In the 'VW', the protagonist is directly connected to seventeen of the twenty-four women in the text; these women include seven queens, three abbesses, four family members and three witnesses to his miracles. The remaining seven women include two Northumbrian abbesses to whom Wilfrid was not connected and references to biblical figures, often presented as exemplars, such as Jezebel, who will be returned to below. As noted, women are statistically more important in Bede's 'HE' than in Stephen's 'VW', but there are fewer women in Bede's account of Wilfrid himself. Bede directly connected Wilfrid to seven women: three queens, one abbess and three family

47 Women as peaceweavers is the most obvious example of such a practice, see e. g. Lillian Thomas Shanks/John A. Nichols (eds.), Medieval Religious Women, vol. 2, Peaceweavers, Kalamazoo 1987.

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members.[48] A quick glance at these figures indicates that queens and abbesses are more prevalent in Stephen's account of Wilfrid's life than Bede's and could confirm existing arguments that Bede suppressed the agency of women.[49] However, this would be too simplistic an interpretation, which overlooks the differing priorities of both writers, for a careful comparison of both works, in fact, reveals that several of Bede's omissions were women who were hostile to Wilfrid.

Stephen and Bede particularly differ in their presentation of Wilfrid's relationships with queens. Both acknowledge the important patronage of Eanflæd of Northumbria at the beginning of his career ('VW' 2–3; 'HE' 5:19). Her behaviour reveals the potential for queens to act independently of their husbands in this period. However, any influence and power that queens wielded appears to have terminated on the deaths of their husbands, and many former queens subsequently retired to monasteries.[50] Stephen and Bede also agree that Wilfrid was a close confidant of Etheldreda, Eanflæd's successor as queen of Northumbria ('VW' 19 and 22; 'HE' 4:19); and both show that his first brush with royal hostility was at the hands of Baldhild in Gaul ('VW' 6; 'HE' 5:19). However, Stephen also linked Wilfrid with Iurminburgh, the queen of Northumbria after Etheldreda, and the unnamed queens of Mercia, the West Saxons and the South Saxons. These four queens played a crucial part in Wilfrid's story as told by Stephen. The bishop was sent into exile twice by Ecgfrith and Iurminburgh, and on the second occasion he fled first to Mercia and then to the kingdom of the West Saxons but was driven from both by royal kinship networks: Æthelred of Mercia was married to Osthryth, Ecgfrith's sister, and the unnamed West Saxon queen was Iurminburgh's sister ('VW' 39–40). Wilfrid finally found relief in the kingdom of the South Saxons, where he won the support of King Æthelwealh and his unnamed queen, before evangelising the kingdom ('VW' 41).

According to Stephen, this network of queens successfully fomented hostility against Wilfrid, but it is entirely absent from Bede's account. However, while the network is missing in Bede, some of the women are present. The queens of Mercia and the South Saxons appear, though not in connection with Wilfrid, and interestingly Bede named both of them, Osthryth and Eafe, respectively. Stephen may not have known their names, but this seems unlikely in the case of Osthryth,

48 See Table 5 for the women connected to Wilfrid in both texts.

49 See note 45 above.

50 E. g. Eanflæd went to Whitby; Etheldreda established the community at Ely; and Iurminburgh became abbess at Carlisle. On the power and influence of queens in this period, see Hollis 1992; Stacy Klein, Ruling Women: Queenship and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Literature, Notre Dame, IN 2006; Máirín MacCarron, Royal Marriage and Conversion in Bede's *Historia Ecclesiatica Gentis Anglorum*, in: Journal of Theological Studies 68,2 (2017), 650–670.

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a Northumbrian princess and sister of Ecgfrith.[51] Bede's omission of a female network hostile to Wilfrid cannot, therefore, be interpreted as suppression of women, but it may be an effort to remove hostile women from the story. It is surely significant that the only persecuting queen who survives Bede's cull is Baldhild in Gaul, a figure unconnected with contemporary Northumbrian politics.

We see something similar in Bede's and Stephen's treatments of Hild and Ælfflæd, the influential, and successive, abbesses of Whitby. Both are hostile to Wilfrid in the 'VW', but again, their hostility is absent from the 'HE'. We know more about these women from Bede's 'HE' than any other source, and our quantitative analysis of the 'HE' network, outlined above, revealed the prominence of Hild in particular.[52] Bede did bring Wilfrid and Hild together at the Synod of Whitby (664), and they were on different sides, but this was not a cause of dissension between them. Ælfflæd, like Osthryth and Eafe, was never connected to Wilfrid in the 'HE'. There are also further examples of Bede cutting hostile women from his account of Wilfrid's life: for example, he never mentioned Wilfrid's stepmother, who mistreated him according to Stephen ('VW' 2). Bede did mention Wilfrid's sister and, in doing so, provided a glimpse into Wilfrid's family network when he noted that Wilfrid's clergyman, Beornwine, to whom he granted land on the Isle of Wight, was his sister's son ('HE' 4:16). Stephen omitted such information.

Bede's positive portrayal of women and especially queens differs greatly to Stephen, who consistently highlighted female hostility to Wilfrid and likened two queens to Jezebel.[53] Baldhild is a malevolent queen (*malivola regina*), who commanded the killing of nine bishops, just as Jezebel had the prophets killed ('VW' 6), and Stephen says of Iurminburgh:

> "Taking his usual weapons, he [the devil] sought the weaker vessel, the woman, by whom he has constantly defiled the whole world. […] Forthwith this sorceress [Iurminburgh] shot poisoned arrows of speech from her quiver into the heart of the king, as the wicked Jezebel did when she slew the prophets of the Lord and persecuted Elijah."[54]

With this analogy, Stephen appealed to the idea of woman as temptress of man, the ultimate archetype of which, in a Christian context, is Eve tempting Adam in

51 The 'Gendered Networks' project (as n. 7) is currently preparing an analysis of named and unnamed characters in early medieval narrative texts.

52 For further analysis of Hild's role in Bede's 'HE', see Sandra Prado et al., Gendered Networks and Communicability in Medieval Historical Narratives, in: Advances in Complex Systems 23 (2020), https://doi.org/10.1142/S021952592050006X.

53 See n. 5 above and esp. Nelson 1986 for this *topos*.

54 VW 24, 48–9: Consueta arma arripiens, vasa fragilia muliebria quaesivit, per quae totum mundum maculavit frequenter. […] Iamiamque de faretra sua venenatas sagittas venifica in cor regis, quasi impiissima Gezabel prophetas Dei occidens et Heliam persequens.

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the Garden of Eden; however, for women in positions of power, writers frequently resorted to Jezebel, Ahab's queen in 1 Kings 16–19.[55]

Likening the queens who persecuted Wilfrid to Jezebel is a relatively obvious *topos*. It is, therefore, more notable that Bede, who used Stephen's 'VW' as his main source for Wilfrid's life, avoided such an analogy. This may be in keeping with Bede's practices generally: throughout the 'HE', he preferred to celebrate good behaviour while paying little attention to bad behaviour, which gave rise to James Campbell's famous description of the work as a "gallery of good examples".[56] It is also worth noting that, despite Stephen's vicious condemnation of Iurminburgh as queen, he acknowledged that she was later a perfect abbess and mother of her community ('VW' 24), perhaps suggesting that Stephen specifically objected to women exercising power. Iurminburgh's later career may also provide further context for her absence in Bede's account of Wilfrid's travails, as he may have wished to protect the reputation of a former queen of Northumbria who later led a praiseworthy life.[57]

It is clear from this analysis of Stephen and Bede that although Stephen allowed greater agency to women, this primarily manifested as hostility towards Wilfrid, whereas Bede suppressed negative portrayals of the women who opposed Wilfrid. This is particularly apparent for women connected to the royal house of Northumbria, such as queens like Iurminburgh and princesses like Osthryth and Ælfflæd. This divergence speaks to the different agendas of the two writers. Stephen wrote shortly after Wilfrid's death at a time when the Wilfridian monastic federation may have been under threat and presents a glorious defence of his hero's many clashes with royal and ecclesiastical authority. In focussing on the behaviour of women, Stephen may be attempting to exculpate kings like Ecgfrith, whom he presents as overly influenced by his wife. Perhaps, to underline this, he claimed that Ecgfrith's reign was blessed due to his friendship with Wilfrid while he was married to Etheldreda; after she left him and the king remarried his relationship with Wilfrid broke down and the fortunes of the kingdom changed ('VW' 19). Bede wrote at least two decades after Stephen and with different purposes in mind. He was committed to Church reform and wished to inspire his readers, perhaps most notably his dedicatee, King Ceolwulf of Northumbria, to greater heights of virtue. Consequently, many potentially

55 Cf. Ps-Martyrius who likened the Roman empress, Eudoxia, who allegedly banished John Chrysostom, to Jezebel: Funerary Speech for John Chrysostom 36, trans. by Timothy Barnes/George Bevan, Liverpool 2013, 59–60.

56 James Campbell, Bede, in: T. A. Dorey (ed.), Latin Historians, New York 1966, repr. as Bede I, in: Campbell, Essays in Anglo-Saxon History, London 1986, 1–27, here 24.

57 It does remain curious that Bede never referred to Iurminburgh in the HE; she fleetingly appears, though unnamed, in his 'Vita Cuthberti', cc. 27–28, ed. and trans. by B. Colgrave, Two Lives of Saint Cuthbert, Cambridge 1940, 141–307, esp. 242–244 and 248.

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negative characters, especially from the ranks of the elite, are removed from his account, and Bede leaves one assuming there were no villainous queens on the island of Britain.

3. Conclusions

Throughout late antiquity and the early middle ages, there were real women, aristocratic, ascetic and imperial, who used their connections and spheres of influence to persecute or support exiled bishops. Yet, in late antique and early medieval discourses, examples of female behaviour, even where they really existed and these women did the things they were described as doing, were commonly used to 'personify' and 'critique' the extreme ends of male behaviour. In many cases, female networks constructed in stories about exile served to make a point about the protagonist's orthodoxy or heresy, or his legitimacy as a rightful bishop. Female contacts could be employed in this regard because, being outside the official male hierarchy, they had the potential of subversion. Crucially, however, authors considered this either a good thing or a bad thing, depending on whether they were aligning themselves with what was being subverted or not.

Quantitative approaches and mathematical analyses of networks allow us to draw out these rhetorical functions of female characters in late antique and early medieval exile stories.

In the case of Liberius of Rome, such approaches invite us to rethink his supposedly overlapping social networks. Liberius's 'network' was in fact continuously reconstructed over time, through the retelling of the story, based on different authors' changing concerns about who was connected to whom. Women appear in this 'network' only late, and with distinct roles, in response to larger developments over the course of late antiquity with regard to female power: the emergence of aristocratic Christian patrons, the rising power of the Christian empress and the backlash in Christian literature, particularly against the latter. The female elements appearing in the retelling of the Liberius exile story may, therefore, have been an invention of tradition and only a retrospective interpretation of the events of the fourth century.

In the case of Wilfrid, quantitative approaches invite us to see past the stereotypes and dominant discourses, as they allow us to reveal more accurately the intentions of the two contemporary writers that cover his life. Stephen frequently presented women in power as Jezebels who seek to destroy God's prophet, perhaps as a means of critiquing or excusing the worst excesses of male behaviour. In contrast, Bede suppressed references to most of the women hostile to Wilfrid, especially queens, and accentuated the bishop's positive connections with the Northumbrian elite, particularly Eanflæd and Etheldreda. The texts examined

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here reveal that the presentation of female networks in late antique and early medieval sources was complex and multivalent.

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Lucy K. Pick

Networking Power and Gender at Court: An Eleventh-Century Diploma and 'Las Meninas'

Abstract
Although we tend to cling to a view of royal power that persists in seeing the king as a uniquely sovereign subject, a better way to understand royal power is to view the king as a central node in a series of networks in which power is unevenly distributed. These networks include members of the royal family, including the king's daughters. The challenge that remains is how to represent or describe the power that members of the kings' networks, like royal daughters, were able to exert. Two physical objects, an eleventh-century royal diploma and a seventeenth-century painting, both with royal daughters at their centre, offer ways to address this challenge for medieval and Early Modern Spain. By attending to the networks in which these women were enmeshed, we come to understand not only more about their own power, but also how the monarchical system itself functioned.

Royal daughters of early medieval León-Castilla were not, as we might expect, married off in strategic alliances. Rather they were consecrated to religious life and were given (not given to) monasteries. We see them active during the lifetimes of their brothers, confirming royal charters, supporting royal policy, adjudicating claims to rule between different brothers, and as patrons of manuscripts, religious objects and architecture. They possessed the spiritual capital that came from their consecrated status, which allowed them to be appropriate custodians of family memory, imitators of the martyrs and intermediaries with the divine. But they were not abbesses or nuns. They possessed monasteries, not one but many, along with churches and other property.[1] The title used most often to describe them is lord – *domina*.[2] But how can we understand the power they wield in a way that gets us beyond measuring them against the kings in their lives to see how their power, authority and agency stacked up against his?

1 I discuss their activity in more detail in my book: Lucy K. Pick, Her Father's Daughter: Gender, Power, and Religion in the Early Spanish Kingdoms, Ithaca, NY 2017. I am very grateful to Daisy Delogu and Cecily Hilsdale for their comments on drafts of this essay.

2 Pick 2017, 10.

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Too often studies of powerful medieval women are viewed as merely tacking on an interesting curiosity to an uncomplicated narrative of male monarchy rather than changing the way we understand power itself. People who study the ways women, or indeed any group cast as marginal, have access to power are caught in a double bind. We are told there is not enough evidence, so we drown our readers in evidence. Then we are told we are too specific, too particular, that our one particular strong case, or cases, is exceptional and does not generate broader implications. These attitudes are difficult to cite, for they leave their traces in readers' reports or in hiring decisions, or in systematic silence about powerful women in discussions of medieval politics.[3] They are what inspired Laura Gathagan, Lois Huneycutt and Heather Tanner to organise a series of conference sessions, culminating with the "Beyond Exceptionalism" conference in 2015 and the recent publication of a volume of essays.[4] But despite careful and copious work done on medieval women and power in recent decades, the old master narrative of the sovereign king and the fantasy of uncomplicated male lordship has proven extremely resistant to more nuanced understandings of how power was construed, held and wielded in the Middle Ages.

When we attempt to theorise the role of royal daughters within the monarchical family, we come up short against a fantasy of absolute male royal power, of all-powerful sovereign subjects with perfectly realised agency and unquestioned authority. This construct is evident among political historians from Einhard to the present day, and it is found among contemporary critical theorists of the problem of the subject.[5] In this telling, the king becomes an imaginary perfect 'Ego', an 'I' whose self flows seamlessly through word and speech to act and result. We say, for instance, that Richard III killed (or did not kill) the princes in the Tower, not that he ordered someone to have them killed who then hired someone else etc. etc. Not only is this a deceptive and simplistic way to understand the power of the king, it makes it difficult to talk about anyone else doing anything – acting – in the ambit of a king. When measured against this construct, the women we study are unsurprisingly found wanting.

3 For example, the absence of gender as a category of analysis in Francis Oakley, Kingship: The Politics of Enchantment, Malden, MA 2006. For the opposite approach, see for instance, Theresa Earenfight, Without the Persona of the Prince: Kings, Queens and the Idea of Monarchy in Late Medieval Europe, in: Gender and History 19 (2007), 1–21, here 1–3.

4 Heather Tanner (ed.), Medieval Elite Women and the Exercise of Power, 1100–1400: Moving Beyond the Exceptionalist Debate, Cham 2019.

5 For example, "The political model of feudalism makes of all agents (except the king) simultaneously vassal and suzerain, simultaneously subject and Subject", Peter Haidu, The Subject Medieval/Modern: Text and Governance in the Middle Ages, Palo Alto 2004, 342.

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Power is often viewed as consisting in individual public authority or agency, the ability to act.[6] Instead, we might think of power not as a substance or thing that an individual has or lacks, but rather as something inhering in relationships between individuals that allows some to determine the conduct of others and to direct the allocation of resources.[7] We have these relations not with just one person, but with many and the power dynamic differs in each relationship. Power is thus something we exert, and others exert on us, based on our location in a range of overlapping networks. It becomes not a finite substance that resides only in the hands of the few, but something we all participate in to some degree.

It is misguided, then, to imagine the king as the ultimate free, sovereign subject with perfect agency, and to measure everyone else's power according to this yardstick. A fantasy of autonomy and illusion of independence for the king elides his participation in a host of networks that combine to both support and constrain his power. Power is spread unequally and asymmetrically across these networks of relationship, of course. The king may often be the node that possesses the most power, though not always, or for all kings. But he is dependent on the others in the network – as they are on him. As Norbert Elias showed, even in the age of absolutism, kingly power, though represented as a gift from God alone, depended in fact on the working in concert of a whole court of people, drawn together in networks of interdependencies, in which the king himself was likewise enmeshed.[8] That position could change, and it was as contingent as that of the other players in those networks. What is required, it seems, is not simply to argue for this noble or that queen possessing power; instead we must attempt to find new ways of understanding how power was transacted under monarchy in a way that emphasises the interdependence of all its actors, including the king.

The essay that follows proposes ways of dismantling the master narrative of male monarchy by showing how material culture can display the social networks that supported female power. It is a study, not only about power as such, but about the visual and written rhetorics of conveying and describing power both in the past by the historical actors we study, and in the present, by scholars seeking to understand the past. It centres on the discovery by us and representation by them of networks in which power was transacted through the evidence of two objects that represent social networks. Its primary focus is a charter from 1071, issued by a royal daughter, Urraca Fernández of León-Castilla, and what that document reveals about how daughters of early medieval kings of León-Castilla wielded power. The second object, the monumental 1656 painting by Diego

6 See, Mary Erler/Maryanne Kowaleski, Introduction, in: Women and Power in the Middle Ages, Athens, GA 1988, 1–17, here 1–2.

7 Michel Foucault, Omnes et Singulatim: Toward a Critique of Political Reason, in James D. Faubion (ed.), Power, trans. by Robert Hurley, New York 2001, 298–325, here 324.

8 Norbert Elias, The Court Society, trans. by Edmund Jephcott, Oxford 1983, 3–4.

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Velásquez, now known as 'Las Meninas', also has a royal daughter at its centre. The painting will help us see one way of visualising the charter, and the charter, I believe, has relevant things to teach us about how to interpret the painting: both are ways of representing power, even if the power they represent is not what we have been taught to see.

1. Social Networks and Medieval Documents

Social network theory provides some conceptual and, given the right kind of data, mathematical tools for weighing power exerted through networks. A key source of evidence for the women I study are documents that include them, along with others, as signatories, confirmants and/or initiators or beneficiaries. These documents recount property transactions, gifts or exchanges; rights or jurisdiction granted or taken away; or the fruits of medieval justice, and at the same time they record relationships between medieval actors. In this way, they provide the evidence for the networks in which the powerful in the Middle Ages were enmeshed, the people on whom they relied for support and who in turn relied on them, and the alliances they built and maintained and on which their continued secure hold on rule rested. Because charters preserve the memory of these ties, they can also serve as sources of data for network analysis.

Each document reveals a carefully calculated and presented image of a network as it comes together at a specific moment, often around particular properties or religious institutions.[9] Some parts of their configuration may be temporary, gathered for the particular purposes of the document, like the witnesses, there to later testify to their presence at the document's original performance. Others, like the royal family, churchmen, nobles and royal officials who confirm royal diplomas, represent more or less permanent members of long-lasting networks of power, identifiable over time by their central positions in a series of individual documents. Each document can thus be considered on its own for what it says about the particular moment in time and individuals that created it, and also read in the context of other documents to show networks of people growing, changing and pursuing particular strategies.

There are other less concrete networks that are more resistant to mapping than those between human actors. The documents I study connect royal women to divine networks, as well as secular ones. Royal diplomas in general appeal to a network of saintly and divine patrons in heaven, as well as the temporal powers on earth. Divine networks are invoked in order to authorise the power relations expressed in the document.

9 Pick 2017, 104–107.

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Thus, documents, including those issued by royal women, create and define a series of relationships, between heaven and earth, between allies; against enemies; between kings present and past; and between earlier diplomas, through what is included and what is left out. A diploma does not merely provide evidence for these relationships: it is the moment of their instantiation in public. It performs them in a spectacle of the court.[10] Finally, we must recall that the past actors we study were themselves aware of the networks in which they were enmeshed and in which they found power, and they themselves sought ways to represent and memorialise these graphically.

A collection of charters considered together can show how people are connected in networks over time. However, documents are difficult to use in a rhetorically effective way. Their force for those who study gender is how they show royal women performing the same kinds of authoritative acts and occupying the same central roles over and over again across generations. But the piling up of evidence that rebukes charges of exceptionalism for each individual woman rapidly becomes tedious to read. How might we use a mass of documents, not only to provide evidence for instances, but also to visualise and describe broader patterns?

I examined this question with respect to nineteen documents issued by Elvira Ramírez, a tenth-century royal daughter and consecrated virgin who ruled León with her five-year-old nephew after her royal brother's death. When these documents are brought together, they describe what is known as a two-mode affiliation network, a network that shows a group of actors, the first mode, who are connected to each other through a series of events, the second mode. In this case, the first mode is a group of people who were connected through their appearance in a series of documents, the second mode.[11] Each document has a different but overlapping list of signatories. Elvira Ramírez is the common denominator for all them. By visualising all of these documents together, we can see which nodes are the most prominent, that is to say, which individuals appear in

10 On the document as performance and performative, see Geoffrey Koziol, The Politics of Memory and Identity, Turnhout 2012, 1–7. See also Marco Mostert/P. S. Barnwell (eds.), Medieval Legal Process: Physical, Spoken, and Written Performance in the Middle Ages, Turnhout 2011, especially Hagen Keller, The Privilege in the Public Interaction of the Exercise of Power: Forms of the Symbolic Communication Beyond the Text, 75–108, originally published in German as Hulderweis durch Privilegien: symbolische Kommunikation innerhalb und jenseits des Textes, in: Frühmittelalterliche Studien 38 (2004), 309–321; Christoph Dartmann,/Thomas Scharff/Christoph Friedrich Weber (eds.), Zwischen Pragmatik und Performanz, Turnhout 2011; and, on Spain, Liam Moore, By Hand and Voice: Performance of Royal Charters in Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century León, in: Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies 5 (2013), 18–32.

11 On the description and representation of two-mode affiliation networks, see Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust, Social Network Analysis: Method and Applications, Cambridge, UK 1994, 291–305.

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the most documents and thus are the central members of Elvira's network over time. The assumption is that actors appearing in common events together have an underlying and enduring social tie.

The diagram that follows (fig. 1) shows in a very crude form the results of such a visualisation.[12] The network has been filtered to remove all the individuals that appear in only one document. The remaining individuals are sized by the number of documents in which they appear. The edges (the lines between nodes) link people who appear in the same documents (note all of them are connected to Elvira Ramírez) and the thickness of the edges, represent how often the same individuals appear in documents together.

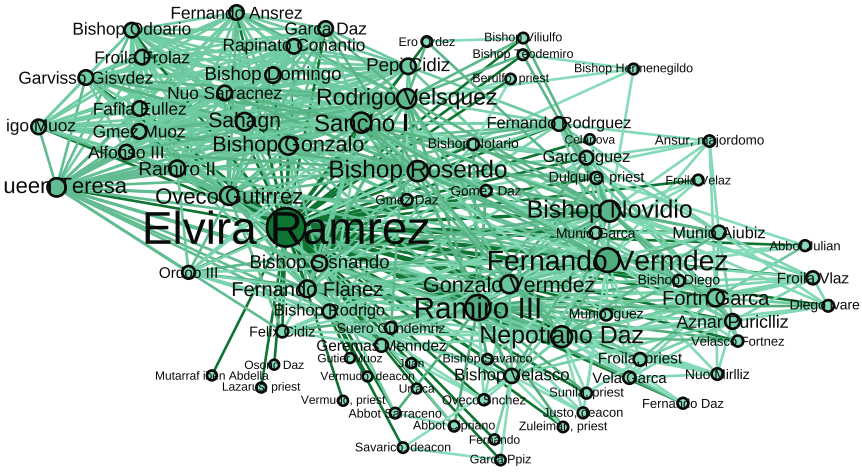

Fig. 1: Documentary Network of Elvira Rodríguez.

In the light of my own previous research on Elvira Ramírez, it became immediately apparent that the qualitative analysis of the charters served merely as a confirmation of what we already knew about her network of supporters, and this helped me evaluate its results.[13] I had put my thumb on the scale by including only those documents Elvira Ramírez issued. To avoid that, and in order to use this kind of analysis to study the networks of, for instance, Urraca Fernández, sister of King Alfonso VI, with a view to determining how powerful she was relative to others, one would need the input of a much larger set than just her

12 I am very grateful to James Reily for his help and to Robin Burke who put my data into three GEXF files from which he created this visualisation using GEPHI.

13 See Lucy K. Pick, *Dominissima, Prudentissima:* Elvira, First Queen-Regent of León, in: Thomas E. Burman/Mark Meyerson/Leah Shopkow (eds.), Religion, Text and Society in Medieval Spain and Northern Europe: Essays in Honour of J. N. Hillgarth, Toronto 2002, 38–69.

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documents – perhaps all of Alfonso VI's documents, or even better, all the documents issued during his reign. It is not clear to me such a study would be more effective than using more qualitative and small-scale analysis. The issue is not with the fact that our medieval data are inevitably partial, interested and incomplete. The problem is less what data we have available to put in; it is the assumptions we make as we put it in, and how this shapes what we get out of it.

For example, consider John Padgett's analysis of social and business ties between patrician families in Renaissance Florence, which is often used by social network theorists as a classic example of how a network of relationships can be graphed. Padgett became interested in Florentine power struggles during the age of the Medici, and analysed the marriage and business ties between sixteen prominent families. He found, for instance, that the Medici had the most bonds of marriage among these families, that is, six.[14] What goes unmentioned in descriptions of his study that use it as a test case are the implicit assumptions that undergird it. Before he created this network, Padgett assumed that marriage ties were bonds between patriarchal and patrilineal families, fathers marrying their children together, and that fathers were the preeminent measure of analysis. This may be a correct assumption, for Renaissance Florence, but a key point of methodology must be acknowledged: once that network is constructed, it becomes very hard to discover that one is wrong, that, say, marriage alliances were made between mothers, or even maternal uncles, based on their own lineages. Padgett's graph might look very different if he had shown bonds between maternal lineages. In what follows, I will discuss a case in my own research where Padgett's assumption would conceal a powerful network.

2. Urraca Fernández's Diploma for Túy

On 13 June 1071, royal daughter Urraca Fernández refounded the bishopric of Túy on the banks of Miño river in the far west corner of what had been her father's kingdom.[15] Urraca and her younger siblings were children of King Fernando I and Queen Sancha of León-Castilla. On Fernando's death in 1065, the

14 Dawn Iacobucci, Graphs and Matrices, in Wasserman and Faust 1994, 92–166, here 103–104; John F. Padgett/Christopher K. Ansell, Robust Action and the Rise of the Medici, 1400–1434, in: American Journal of Sociology 6 (1993), 1259–1319; John F. Padgett, Open Elite? Social Mobility, Marriage, and Family in Florence, 1282–1494, in: Renaissance Quarterly 63 (2010), 357–411.

15 Manuel Rubén García Alvarez, El diploma de restauración de la sede de Túy por la infanta Urraca, in: Cuadernos de Estudios Gallegos 17 (1962), 275–292, here 289–292. My discussion of the diploma here draws on my fuller investigation of it in Pick 2017, 108–123. All translations are mine unless otherwise stated.

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kingdom of León-Castile was divided between his three sons: Sancho II got Castille; Alfonso VI, León; and García, Galicia, where Túy was located. The two sisters, Urraca and Elvira, received "all the monasteries of the kingdom".[16] That is, they inherited from their parents the proprietary monasteries belonging to them. They were the *dominae*, or lords of these communities and their economic, political and spiritual clout rested on this title.[17]

Peace between the siblings lasted until the death of their mother Sancha, in 1067. In 1071, Sancho and Alfonso, assisted by their sisters, Urraca and Elvira, teamed up to defeat Garcia. He fled into exile in Seville, and his two brothers briefly shared rule over Galicia. Urraca Fernández's diploma is usually cited as evidence of the date by which Garcia had lost his kingdom to his brothers. But it is not merely incidental evidence providing a useful date *ante quem*. It is itself the demonstration of that defeat, in the way it draws together and displays the members of the new order, uniting local Galician nobility with Alfonso VIs own most loyal men, Urraca's allies, and divine patrons into a new network.

The physical object of the charter has this network inscribed on its surface; it is not an abstraction. Urraca's monogram, which confirms her gift, is at the exact centre of the parchment diploma, as she herself stands at the centre of what it enacts (fig. 2). The charter is large, 52 cm x 68 cm, roughly the size of a modern poster or bristol board. It is the perfect size to have been raised up for public display, perhaps on the anniversary of its issue in the church of San Bartolomeu in Túy, built in the eleventh century as Túy cathedral and still standing today. The top half of the parchment contains the text of the donation. The bottom half lists the confirmants, arranged in a series of vertical rows distinguished by their office: prelates, abbots, noble, clerics, witnesses. The parchment is carefully prepared and it is written in a highly legible Visigothic script, with regular ligatures. All but one block of witnesses (the "testes") and one or two words in the main body of text was written by the same scribe. The scribe, Pedro, the archpriest of Túy, inserts himself into the document, as customary, in a vertical line of script against the right margin stating that he wrote and confirmed the document, followed by his personal authenticating monogram.[18] It appears that the main text block and

16 Justo Pérez de Urbel/Atilano González Ruíz-Zorrilla (eds.), Historia Silense, Madrid 1959, 204–205. Cf. *Genitor meus, rex domnus Ferdenandus per scripturam concessit mihi Geloira et ad germana mea domina Vrracha predictum monasterium sancte Eolalie de Fingon cum cunctos monasterios regni sui per omnes prouincias et regiones.* Madrid Archivo Historico Nacional MS 1043B, fol. 69r.

17 Pick 2017, 10, 71–73, 77–78.

18 The scribe came to Túy from the monastery of Samos, where he copied a document in 1061 (AHN 1239/13). He used the same sign for his name in the 1061 charter as appears in the 1071 diploma: Anoa Castro, Writing in Cursive and Minuscule Visigothic Script: Polygraphism in Medieval Galicia, litteravisigothica.com, http://www.litteravisigothica.com/articulo/writing-in-cursive-and-minuscule-script-polygraphism-in-medieval-galicia (accessed 22 April 2020).

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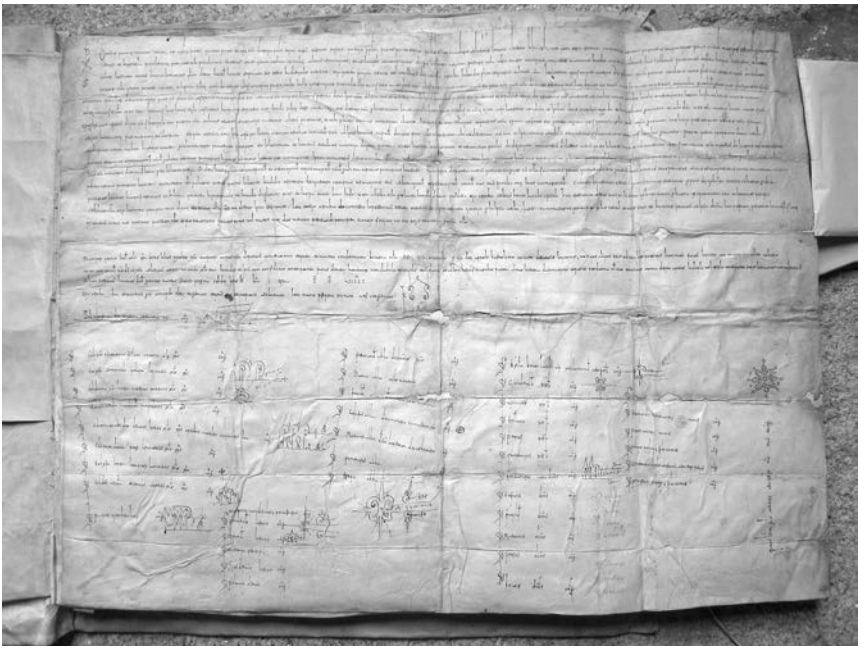

Fig. 2: Urraca Fernández's 1071 diploma restoring the see of Túy, AC Túy 1/2.

Urraca's confirmation were written ahead of time, while the remaining blocks of confirmations, including that of Alfonso VI, were added later. A diploma or charter reconstitutes the people and places described in it; the monograms of confirmants make them permanently present every time the document is viewed again.[19] A document of donation recalls its donor to the saintly patrons whose intercession she wishes to solicit, and becomes itself a kind of liturgical object. Moreover, it not only recounts the giving of a gift; the very parchment on which the act of donation is inscribed is itself a gift, a 'souvenir' or memory, as it were, of the moment of donation.

Urraca Fernández is the 'ego' who speaks throughout the charter. God is at the top, invoked in the persona of Christ, as is traditional, at the opening chrismon of the diploma. Less traditional is the highly gendered and sophisticated theological language in which Urraca theologises a divine genealogy that compares and associates Mary, Mother of God, with God the Father:

> "The Lord sent to his people a Son, created first, born from a woman,
> [The Son] existed before time, begotten of the Father;
> and at the end of time, arisen from a Virgin without conception from a father.

19 Koziol 2012, 36, 48.

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> Both generations were miraculous; the first without a mother; the second without a father.
> What was born from flesh made us, what was born from a mother redeemed us;
> arisen from the Father that we might be; born from a mother that we might not perish."[20]

The Holy Spirit is displaced in this Trinity by the Virgin. Humankind has a worthy lineage from both sides, Urraca declares, from both God the Father and Mary our heavenly mother, as does Urraca herself, as she also reminds us, from both her father Fernando, the prince, and her mother, Sancha the queen. Christ himself is named as immediate recipient of the diploma, not, as was more usual, the bishop and his own saintly patrons, as Urraca addresses him directly with the gift. Her evocation of Mary, and her imitation of Mary by interceding directly with Christ, puts her in a privileged position with respect to the kings of this world. The tone of the diploma is highly liturgical, citing hymns and psalms and the Nicene Creed, and it centres Urraca in her role as intercessor with access to the divine.

Some of the substantial properties Urraca gives to Túy come from her parents, but others come from women who are named in the diploma. To pay for food and clothing for those in the cathedral, Urraca gave Túy half of a monastery given to her by Domna Velasquita, who received it through inheritance. Domna Velasquita retained the other half of the monastery, and thus this gift created an ongoing relationship between Túy and the monastery through both Urraca and Velasquita, in which the monastery would provide the cathedral with goods in exchange presumably for some kind of protection.[21] Urraca also gave Túy the whole of the inheritance of Gutier Núñez that she received from his sister, Elvira Núñez, "whatever you are able to discover by its title, just as in Limia as in Portugal, and in Valdevez, and on the banks of the Miño, here and there, except for Vilela, which lies in Valdevez, and which I Urraca gave to the see of the blessed Saint James the Apostle".[22] Urraca's grant was vague, and not useful for establishing strict legal title over particular property, but it was extensive, and Elvira Núñez and her brother were people of considerable wealth.[23] After describing each of these gifts, Urraca explains why she received property from the woman, using similar vocabulary in both cases: "Because I helped her always in all her

20 García Alvarez 1962, 290.
21 García Alvarez 1962, 290.
22 Manuel Rubén García Alvarez, Catálogo de documentos reales de la alta edad media referentes a Galicia (711–1109), in: Compostellanum 11 (1966), 257–340, here, 291; García Alvarez 1962, 291.
23 Pick 2017, 117.

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causes and whatever she said to me, I did it".[24] Their gift to Urraca required a kind of counter-gift of action on behalf of these women.[25] Both inherited the property they give Urraca, and it seems she had been supporting their claims to inherit and in return received from them, in gratitude or payment, a share of what they received. Naming them here identifies and creates another set of linkages, a network with Urraca at the centre: the diploma testifies to these links, and emphasises her power to intercede for them effectively before the king. This intercession recalls the emphasis at the outset of the document on the Virgin Mary, who intercedes with Christ the King. It connects the cathedral of Túy to these women, members of the local elite on whom Túy will depend and with whom Túy must continue to negotiate, through the person of Urraca.

This helps explain why Alfonso, who confirms the document, needs Urraca to issue it. He cannot do it himself because she is the one with the property to give. Part of what she gives comes from the monasteries she and her sister inherit from their parents – a landed wealth that covers the whole kingdom in a way none of their brothers can separately match at this time. The other part consists of gifts she has received from a network of women for whom she has served as effective patron and intercessor at court. She has access to people and to property, in the region and out, that none of her brothers have, though they are kings and she is not.

Left out of Urraca's document is any mention of the deposed King García. Five months prior, he had attempted himself to restore the see of Túy with his own diploma.[26] The property that diploma grants is limited: one villa near Orense, which is the most he, without access to his sisters' resources, has access to. Its confirmants are few and are all unidentifiable: no bishops, five abbots whose sees cannot be found and three nobles whose lineage is unattested. Alfonso VI's confirmation was likely added well after the original document, as is discernable from its location in the document and from the royal titles used in it.

The people Urraca draws together in her gift to Túy are displayed in the bottom half of the original parchment. The total list of confirmants is impressive, and consists of a large group of abbots, bishops and nobles who are readily identifiable. The nobles who sign are drawn from the Galician nobility, or are men closely associated with the rule of Alfonso VI, and they form another network (fig. 3). Like the king's sister, they confirm many of Alfonso's documents, though in some cases their relationship with the king did not remain smooth. All but Pelayo Peláez confirmed a major gift from Alfonso VI to Urraca in the region

24 *Pro quo adiubaui ea semper in omnes actiones suas et quicquit mici dixit et ego illam feci*, with respect to Velasquita's gift; *Pro quo adiubaui illa semper in omnia quicquit mici dixit*, with respect to Elvira Núñez. García Alvarez 1962, 290–291.

25 Barbara Rosenwein, To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter, Ithaca, NY 1989, 110.

26 Alexandre Herculano, Portugaliae monumenta historica: Diplomatae et charta, Lisbon 1857, vol. 1, no. 494.

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of her monastery of Eslonza later in October of the same year, which was a reward and payback for Urraca's help in Galicia.[27]

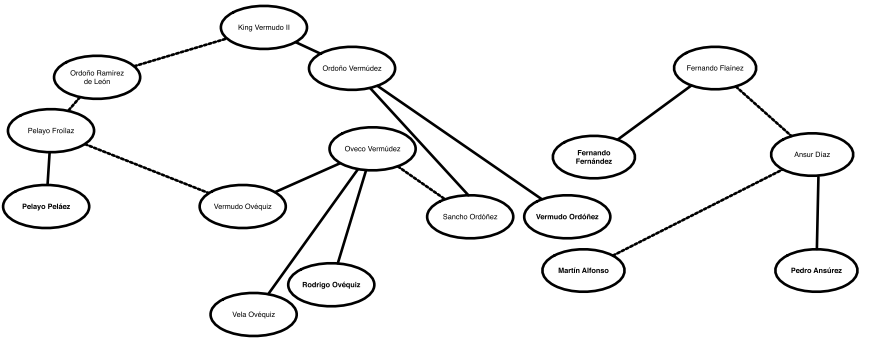

Fig. 3: Links between Noble Confirmants of AC Túy 1/2, Men Only. Bold text is the confirmants; solid lines connect fathers and sons; hashed lines connect fathers and sons-in-law.

The diagram shows how they connect to each other in a genealogy that is only interested in male lineage, like the graph of Padgett's Florentine families. The noble confirmants of the Túy diploma are in bold, and lines show connections between sons and fathers, while hashed lines connect fathers- and sons-in-law. The connections are not all that close, and based on this diagram, it would be reasonable to conclude that network owes its proximity primarily to its connections through Alfonso VI – that he is its main hub.

A fuller genealogy that attends to female lineage challenges that conclusion (fig. 4). Here, doubled lines show bonds of marriage. We learn from it that these men are in fact all members of a rather closely intermarried group, one that, significantly, is connected to an alternate royal line. The men are all descended from either of two children of Vermudo II, one legitimate the other illegitimate, rather than from his only legitimate son, from whom Alfonso VI and Urraca Fernández trace their own descent, through their mother. The bonds between these men are strongest through their women, an exceptionally closely connected group when we view their links through the matrilineal line (fig. 4).

By expanding our attention from exclusively patrilineal connections to encompass also matrilineal bonds, we see that, rather than thinking of a given court as one single network, we need to think of it as multiple overlapping and shifting networks.[28] These networks interpenetrate at many points, but we can see each as providing different ways – different channels or paths – of allowing their

27 Vicente Vignau y Ballester (ed.), Cartulario del monasterio de Eslonza, Madrid 1885, no. 5.

28 For another take on the importance of overlapping networks, see Caroline Levine, Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network, Princeton 2015, 114–15, 130–31.

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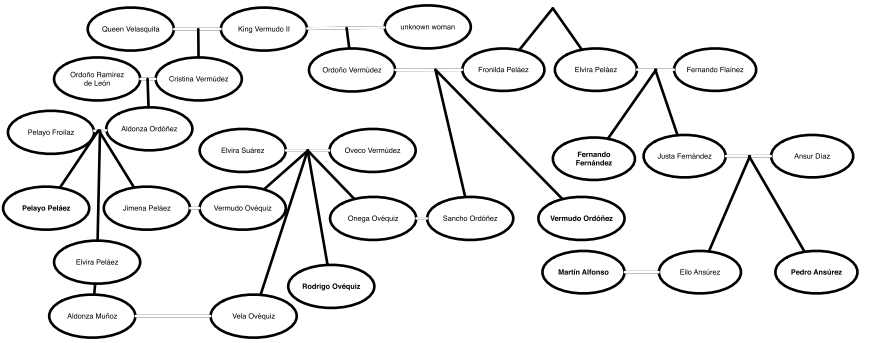

Fig. 4: Links between Noble Confirmants of AC Túy 1/2, Men and Women. Bold text is the confirmants; solid lines connect parents and children; double lines show marriages.

members influence. Power belongs to those who are best able to make use of these networks, to get those who may have very different interests to find some moment or point of self-interest. Those who confirmed Urraca's document did not merely confirm the gift; they also strengthened their association with Alfonso's royal court, their recognition of its authority, and their membership in new webs of patronage and alliance. They existed in their own networks, in which gender plays an important role.

3. Las Meninas

Elsewhere I have described Urraca's diploma as a snapshot of a network as it coalesces at a particular moment, but I have come to view the snapshot as an imperfect metaphor.[29] To the extent that one thinks of a snapshot as an improvised, serendipitous window onto a moment taken by one who is external to it, Urraca's diploma is, rather, a meticulously crafted object designed for permanent memorialisation of the intersection of powerful networks at a key historical moment. In this respect, it is the opposite of a snapshot. To elucidate the highly constructed nature of a royal document, I turn to a much more spectacular and well-known representation, Diego Velázquez's 'Las Meninas' (fig. 5), which is itself also frequently compared to a photograph or snapshot.[30] This complex painting represents the court of Philip IV and Queen Mariana in a room in the palace of the Alcázar in Madrid. Infanta Margarita stands at its centre, bathed in light while around her courtiers, maids, and fools seem to be caught, like her, in

29 Pick 2017, 105.

30 Fritz Stahl, Lectures, London 1957, 321; Svetlana Alpers, Interpretation Without Representation, or, the Viewing of *Las Meninas*, in: Representations 1 (1983), 31–42, here 31.

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mid-movement by something that has caused them to peer out from the canvas at the viewer. One of these courtiers is Diego Velázquez himself, who emerges from behind the large canvas he is painting to look out with the others. What has captured their attention, most critics agree, are the king and queen themselves whom we imagine standing where the viewer stands, and whose traces we find 'reflected' in the mirror above the infanta's head, which reveals their portraits, whether we believe the mirror shows us the image of the king and queen as the figures in the painting 'see' them, or as reflected from the canvas inside the painting.[31]

Fig. 5: Diego Velásquez, 'Las Meninas', The Prado, Madrid.

31 On the former position, cf. Michel Foucault, The Order of Things, New York 1970, 15; John R. Searle, Reflexions on *Las Meninas:* Paradox Lost, in: Critical Inquiry 6 (1980), 477–488, here 480; on the latter, Joel Snyder/Ted Cohen, Reflexions on *Las Meninas:* Paradox Lost, in: Critical Inquiry 6 (1980), 429–447, here 444, and Joel Snyder, *Las Meninas* and the Mirror of the Prince, in: Critical Inquiry 11 (1985), 539–572, here 548.

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This masterpiece was famously used by Michel Foucault in 'The Order of Things' to talk about epistemic shifts in the nature of representation. Foucault's Velasquez, as he steps out from behind his canvas, stands, we learn, at the cusp of the classical age, and points towards modernity.[32] Since Foucault, there has been sustained interest in, and considerable disagreement about how, and what, this painting represents and the nature of its innovation. My interest in it here is to read it back in time, rather than forwards, to argue that its manner of representation is in some manner similar to that of the diploma I discussed above. For the present purpose, I want to think of 'Las Meninas' as itself a kind of royal diploma that performs networks of power in a spectacle of the court, in much the same way Urraca's diploma does. The canvas, like my diploma, shows a scene or tableau of the court in action in a way that conceals, at least to modern viewers, the fact that we are looking multiple overlapping networks. Velásquez plays the role of recorder, the scribe, perhaps incongruously present in his own creation from the perspective of the seventeenth-century painting. He is not, however, so distant from Petrus, the scribe of the eleventh-century diploma, and his monogram flourish and identification of himself and his act of writing the charter along the right margin of the parchment. And both painting and document, like Padgett's Florentine families, are limited in what they show us by the questions we ask of them.

Both canvas and diploma likewise have Spanish infantas at their centres, infantas who tend to vanish from scholarly discussions of the objects that display them. Much as scholarly use of Urraca's diploma has been inclined to mine it for data while ignoring her role in its creation, critical discussion of 'Las Meninas' that includes her at all in a meaningful way invokes the Infanta Margarita only to minimise her. She is "a princess but at the same time, a little girl",[33] "the adorable little infanta".[34] And yet, seventeenth-century audiences knew that she was the subject of the painting. An inventory from 1666 calls the canvas, "The empress with her ladies and a dwarf" and Antonio Palomino's early eighteenth-century discussion of the painting, on whose catalogue of its characters all modern discussions rely, called the painting, "el Retrato de la Señora Emperatriz (entonces Infanta de España) Doña Margarita Maria de Austria" (the painting of the

32 Foucault 1970, ch. 1.

33 Alpers 1983, 39.

34 Laura Oliván Santaliestra, 'My Sister is Growing up Very Healthy and Beautiful, She Loves Me': The Childhood of the *Infantas* María Teresa and Margarita María at Court, in: Grace Coolidge (ed.), The Formation of the Child in Early Modern Spain, Farnham 2014, 165–187, here 165.

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Lady Empress [then, Infanta of Spain] Doña Margarita Maria of Austria).[35] What would it mean to interpret this painting with the infanta occupying the centre, not only of the canvas but of the networks represented on it? What pleasure or value would the king, in whose private apartments the painting hung, and whom we must thus imagine as its ideal audience, get from viewing this monumental work?

We must first recognise that the court scene we view consists of not one but at least three overlapping and interpenetrated networks, the households of the king, the queen and the infanta.[36] Velázquez, as chamberlain to the king, belongs to his household. He wears the cross of Santiago, into which order he would be inducted as a knight in 1659 with the king's support. His counterpoint is the man we see standing in a sunlit doorway at the back of the room at what appears to be the vanishing point of the painting, José Nieto Velázquez, the queen's chamberlain.[37] Flanking the infanta are two of her own ladies-in-waiting, Isabel de Velasco and María Agustina de Sarmiento de Sotomayor. The latter was the great-grand daughter of Leonor de Luna y Sarmiento, Countess of Salvatierra and the infanta's governess, in charge of the fiscal management of the household.[38] Isabel de Velasco was also daughter of an important count, and her mother had been lady-in-waiting to Isabel de Borbón, Philip IV's first wife. Also present are the dwarves Mari Bárbola and Nicolás Pertusato, probably members of Queen Mariana's household and important parts of the infanta's childhood. Marcela de Ulloa, in the back, was charged with the care of the infanta's half-sister, María Teresa, who is not pictured, and she talks with the *guardadamas*, whose role is, as his office suggests, to look after the women of the household.

This is not merely a courtly group; it is a female-dominated group all of whose members, apart from Velázquez himself, belong to the households of the queen and the infanta. This is not, however, to say that it is a private, purely domestic group. It is the 'other half', so often-overlooked by scholars, that enabled male-headed dynastic monarchy to continue. The noble members of this group have links to the leading men of the kingdom. It is a political group because, as Theresa Earenfight suggests, notwithstanding the persistent fantasy of a male king ruling alone with perfect sovereignty, monarchy is not unitary. Rather, it is both a political structure in which multiple actors have roles, albeit unequal ones, and

35 Norbert Elias, Introduction, in: Stephen Quilley (ed.), Involvement and Detachment (The Collected Works of Norbert Elias 8); Dublin 1987, 3–67, here 50; 5 Palomino de Castro y Velasco, El parnaso español pintoresco laureado, Madrid 1724, 342.

36 Elias 1987, 59–60.

37 Snyder/Cohen1980, 434–436; Snyder 1985, 548–550. But see Amy M. Schmitter, Picturing Power: Representation and *Las Meninas*, in: Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism 54 (1996), 255–268, here 258–260.

38 Oliván Santaliestra 2014, 174.

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also a "powerful kin group organized as a dynasty".[39] Links with the women of the dynasty were essential to this power structure. That's why, when the Count of Olivares dominated the court of Philip III, the infanta's grandfather, he took care that his wife become the governess of the royal children, and why Philip IV's favourites made sure to keep tabs on the well-being of the royal children.[40]

What do we find when we see this painting as representing a political moment the way Urraca's diploma does, instead of simply reflecting Velasquez's personal ambitions or Philip IV's respect for painters? What might that moment be? Philip IV was under enormous pressure in 1656, when the painting is conventionally dated. His first wife had died in 1644 and the death of his only son and heir, Prince Baltasar Carlos shortly after, in 1646, devastated him. He finally remarried in 1649 and his new bride gave birth to the Infanta Margarita in 1651, but by 1656 he still had no son and his putative heir was María Teresa, his daughter by his first wife. Philip was under internal pressure to provide a male heir, and was also under external pressure. He wanted to wage war on Portugal but was unable to because of his ongoing war with France. The French wanted him to marry his eldest daughter, María Teresa, to Louis XIV as the precondition for a peace treaty that would allow him to turn attention to Portugal, but until and unless Philip had a son, that would mean France could claim Spain on his death. Rumours spread in 1653, 1655, and 1656 that Philip was going to declare María Teresa as his heir, but he always backed away. Much of the last half of 1656 was consumed with marriage negotiations with France, which failed once again.[41]

We can see 'Las Meninas' as a response to this crisis. If Philip were able to negotiate the marriage with Louis, while removing María Teresa from the succession, then the Infanta Margarita could be his heir. When María Teresa did eventually marry Louis at the end of 1660, that very provision was indeed in their lengthy marriage contract, and she swore an oath of renunciation.[42] 'Las Meninas', a large-scale and complex work, would have taken many months to complete. I suggest it was painted in order to both display and argue for a reality in which Infanta Margarita became Philip's official heir.[43] When that failed to

39 Theresa Earenfight, The King's Other Body, Philadelphia, PA 2010, 24.

40 Alejandra Franganillo, The Education of an Heir to the Throne: Isabel of Borbón and Her Influence on Prince Baltasar Carlos, in: Grace Coolidge (ed.), The Formation of the Child in Early Modern Spain, Farnham 2014, 143–163, here 147; Oliván Santaliestra 2014, 175.

41 Silvia Mitchell, Queen, Mother, and Stateswoman: Mariana of Austria and the Government of Spain, University Park, PA 2019, 37–38.

42 Mitchell 2019, 40–41. The subsequent failure to pay María Teresa's dowry to France might have voided the oath, but since Philip eventually got his male heir, the question was moot.

43 Byron Ellsworth Hamann, The Mirrors of *Las Meninas:* Cochineal, Silver, and Clay, in: The Art Bulletin 92 (2010), 6–35, here 26, 27 argues likewise that the painting is designed to show the Infanta Margarita as heir to Philip IV, but since he neglects the Infanta María Teresa's

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materialize after the marriage negotiations collapsed yet again after months of deliberation, the painting became, perhaps, only the personal possession of a doting father, hung in his private apartments.[44]

The Infanta Margarita is central to 'Las Meninas' in a way that most commentators acknowledge only grudgingly. Standing in the foreground, she is the focal point of the painting. She glows with light, in a way that parallels Velázquez's much earlier depiction of the heir Prince Balthasar Carlos on horseback, and she gives the illusion of casting light onto the ladies-in-waiting who flank her. Her relationship to the reflection of her royal parents in the mirror behind and above her mimics a genealogical tree and emphasises her lineage, as Urraca Fernández did, six centuries before, naming herself in her documents as "daughter of Fernando the king and Sancha the queen". The setting is also significant. Velázquez has painted Margarita and her courtiers in a room that had belonged to Prince Baltasar Carlos. It had originally been two rooms, but the partition between them had been removed, probably when Baltasar Carlos took up residence in 1643. We see the east wall of the room at the back of the painting. Although Velásquez is depicted here in the act of painting, this cannot have been his normal studio, because the changing light from its south-facing windows would have been undesirable (indeed, there is no reason even to believe he painted 'Las Meninas' in the space it depicts).[45] Painting Margarita inhabiting the rooms of her brother, the prior heir, would help establish her in this new role.

Philip IV may not have been the only royal motivating force behind creation of 'Las Meninas'. Palomino tells us that, like the king, Queen Mariana often went down to see Velázquez paint, as did the infantas, Marïa Teresa and Margarita, and their ladies.[46] María Teresa was not Mariana's child; it would have been greatly in her interest to have her own daughter named as Philip's heir. We may also compare 'Las Meninas' to the later portrait of Mariana of Austria as a young widow, painted in 1666, the year Philip IV died, by Velázquez's son-in-law and protegé, Juan Bautista Martínez del Mazo. She is presented in one of the state apartments, and the painting is designed to show the legitimacy of her regency. She is seated in the Hall of Mirrors, dressed in the austere clothing and veil of a widow, with a view into the Octagonal room where the son for whom she is regent, Carlos II, is shown with servants and a governess who offers him a red cup

position as eldest daughter and expected heir, his argument is more that the painting is more a reflection of a reality than, as I suggest, an attempt to change or create it.

44 All evidence suggests Philip IV was very attached to his youngest daughter and that he, rather than Mariana, took the primary role in caring for her health and well-being: Oliván Santaliestra 2014, 181.

45 Stephen N. Orso, Philip IV and the Decoration of the Alcázar of Madrid, Princeton 1986, 166–167, 174.

46 Palomino de Castro y Velasco 1724, 343.

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in a scene that deliberately mimics Margarita and her lady-in-waiting in 'Las Meninas'.[47] I would argue that Martínez del Mazo chose to imitate 'Las Meninas' to display the young king because he understood Velásquez's painting as I do, and that these paintings exist in dialogue with each other in the same way as the royal diplomas, discussed above.[48]

Amy Schmitter invokes Ernst Kantorowicz's notion of the king's two bodies, natural and political, to think about this painting, and suggests that when Philip IV looked at 'Las Meninas', he saw Margarita as a manifestation of his own natural body.[49] If my interpretation is correct, it is not, or not only, his natural body he sees when he gazes upon Margarita, but also his body politic, and the promise that his office will continue after his own natural body is deceased. But Schmitter's understanding of how this painting represents comes closest to how I suggest we should read both 'Las Meninas' and Urraca's diploma. She reads representation in this case not as a visual symbolic substitution, but rather as a kind of credentialing power. She writes, "The king's representation is a 'force' or 'power', a manifestation of royal power that embodies, displays, and extends it. It is a representation that acts, that represents by presenting, exhibiting, or exposing titles and qualifications, by figuring them in painting, by being a sign, by bringing to observation, and by playing them in public".[50] If we replace the king with the infanta, I agree that this is how both 'Las Meninas' and Urraca's diploma work. To paraphrase her in the same place, these two objects do not simply describe a state of affairs; they bring it about.

Infanta Margarita has no agency, unlike Urraca Fernández, who has plenty, but they both have power. Even without agency, it is wrong to describe the infanta, as many scholars do of young princesses who are caught in the marital machinations of their parents, as a pawn, unless you also recognise that all the others inside the painting, or the diploma, are likewise pieces on the chess board with her, with greater or less ability to move, perhaps, but still dependent on each other's movements. The king is on the board too, making moves to the best of his ability amidst shifting networks, not standing outside it, playing the game.

47 Orso 1986, 179, Mitchell 2019, 59–60.

48 Jonathan Brown, In the Shadow of Velásquez, New Haven, CT 2012, 106–108, has recently suggested that 'Las Meninas' dates not to 1656, but rather to the period between 28 November 1659, when Velázquez finally attained his dream of being a knight in the Order of Santiago, and April 1660 when the painter went with the king to marry María Teresa to Louis XIV. If he is right, my argument changes little. María Teresa did foreswear her rights to the throne, and although Margarita did have a tiny brother at this time, he was epileptic and sickly and in fact died in 1661. It is plausible to think Philip would have wanted to emphasise that he did have a remaining healthy potential heir.

49 Schmitter 1996, 264.

50 Schmitter 1996, 266.

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I have brought together a charter and a painting to show the strategies they share for representing the overlapping networks that royal women had available to them, networks that are not the abstraction of the scholar but were vivid to their contemporaries, and visible in the artifacts that record and display them. These networks were the source of the power royal women like Urraca Fernández and Infanta Margarita held. Thinking of power as something we have and can use because of our situation in series of networks has contemporary implications. Looking at power itself not as a finite substance, as something some people have so others don't, but rather as something that we deploy in different degrees in our relationships with others can make us recognise our own power, the power of each individual, limited though it may be, even at times when we ourselves feel powerless. The power we each possess lies in the networks of relationships we build, the communities we are part of, the leadership we show in them, and the influence we wield.

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Jitske Jasperse

With This Ring: Forming Plantagenet Family Ties

Abstract

An abundance of rings and stones can be connected to the twelfth-century wider Plantagenet dynasty. We find them in the British Museum and the National Library of Wales, as well as in an illuminated manuscript, chronicles, charters and Pipe Rolls. An analysis of some of these artefacts and their material and immaterial qualities enables us to understand how Plantagenet women and men managed to create bonds amongst their relatives. Upon closer inspection of the written and visual record, women foremost appear as facilitators of the transmission of rings, though, in some cases, they also received and owned them. As nodes within networks, these rings were not merely expressions of existing ties but also instrumental to the creation and management of social fabric. Conceiving rings and stones and their emotive value as part of an intricate system that makes up a family network shows that people who may not have been at the heart of this specific network actually played key roles in the formation of ties. It is this observation that enables us to rewrite the Plantagenet story so that it is inclusive of women, rather than following the usual male-dominated narrative.

1. Introduction

In twelfth-century theological discourse, the unbroken shape of finger rings signified eternity, and, as such, rings were fitting items to express, as well as to establish and reinforce, bonds between people and/or institutions.[1] This idea seems also to be expressed in medieval genealogical diagrams, such as the

A heartfelt thanks is owed to Karen Dempsey as well as the editors Emma O'Loughlin Bérat, Irina Dumitrescu and Rebecca Hardie for their stimulating comments from which the content and structure of this text benefited greatly.

1 "Their roundness, therefore, signifies eternity, which is without beginning or end" wrote Pope Innocent III (d. 1216) when speaking of the four finger-rings he had sent to John, king of England. See Richard Thomson, An Historical Essay on the Magna Charta of King John, London 1839, 513–514. See also Rudolf Weigand, Liebe und Ehe bei den Dekretisten des 12. Jahrhunderts, in: Willy van Hocke/Andries Welkenhuysen (eds.), Love and Marriage in the Twelfth Century, Leuven 1981, 41–58, here 50.

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fourteenth-century 'Genealogical Roll of the Kings of England', in which the kings of England from the Heptarchy (fifth century) to King Edward I (d. 1307) are represented in interconnected roundels with royal portraits, including those of daughters.[2] On membrane six, containing the royal genealogy from Stephen to John, not only King Henry II's impressive offspring is shown (four daughters and four sons), but some of his most important grandchildren are represented too. Interestingly, their (grand)mother Eleanor of Aquitaine is not portrayed, nor is she mentioned in the text that accompanies the image of Henry II. Clearly, the emphasis on the Plantagenet monarchs meant that some elements of their history – that is, their spouses – were visually and textually left out.

So, while this genealogy – like modern ones that are often based on long-established models – helps visualise some aspects of the Plantagenet network, it does not include all of its members nor does it show how people within this network interacted. And, important for my argument here, such family trees fail to reveal how their members made use of artefacts that helped to create, control and maintain connections between people. Knowing that the Plantagenet sisters strategically employed artefacts to maintain and commemorate family ties, I decided to return to this royal household once more in order to study how objects and their material and immaterial qualities served the wider Plantagenet family – both women and men – to bond amongst themselves.[3]

In the visual and written record connected to the Plantagenets – including surviving signet rings, wax impressions, chronicles and administrative documents – rings frequently appear. Taken together, these sources give the impression that only men owned, gifted and treasured rings. Yet what I seek to demonstrate here is that, upon closer inspection of the written and visual record, women facilitated the transmission of rings and incidentally also received and owned them. The peripheral roles attributed to women in chronicles, inventories and lists of expenses should not be taken as straightforward evidence of their marginal roles in networks. In fact, viewing rings and what they represent, as well as people, as nodes that connect, I will show that neither the unbroken shape of the ring nor the branched shape of the tree does justice to understanding how and why family ties were formed, jeopardised and rerouted through women's participation.[4] As Caroline Levine has shown in her insightful discussion of the ever-

2 See London, British Library, Royal MS 14 B VI, http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Royal_MS_14_B_VI. For genealogical representations of kinship ties – including the Tree of Jesse – in the Middle Ages and Renaissance, see Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, The Genesis of the Family Tree, in: I Tatti Studies in the Italian Renaissance 4 (1991), 105–129.

3 Jitske Jasperse, Matilda, Leonor and Joanna: The Plantagenet Sisters and the Display of Dynastic Connections through Material Culture, in: *Journal of Medieval History* 43,4 (2017), 523–547.

4 Caroline Levine, Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network, Princeton 2017, 120.

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changing shapes of networks, "the absence of face-to-face contact" between people – women included – does not diminish the meaning of kinship networks.[5] We will see that the ring offers us a lens through which we can study how women, men and objects were interconnected, helping us to more accurately piece together the networks around the ring. It is this observation that enables us to rewrite the Plantagenet story so that it is inclusive of women, rather than following the usual male-dominated narrative.

2. Rings: Status, Senses and Animated Stones

Before investigating the rings connected to the Plantagenets and the networks they shaped and were part of in more detail, it needs to be stressed that these items were powerful objects that triggered the senses of sight and touch owing to their colourful stones and sometimes elaborate shapes. Importantly, rings were expressions of status and identity, not just because the impressive specimens were made of gold but also because the used stones came from far away and were therefore precious exotic objects.[6] Inscriptions and iconography were further means through which the communicative qualities of rings were enhanced.[7] Probably more often than not, rings and the stones that embellished them were considered animated objects that had protective qualities.[8] Yet, as we will see, stones were not only transformed into rings (or pendants) but were also considered precious enough to be given away as "raw" materials. A case in point is related to King Henry II. Upon hearing that Aquilina, the wife of Gilbert Bassett was in labour pain, the king delivered her all the gems and stones he had that were

5 Levine 2017, 123.

6 For the relationship between rings, identity and power, see Sandra Hindman and Scott Miller, Take this Ring: Medieval and Renaissance Rings from the Griffin Collection, Paris 2015; and John Cherry and Martin Henig, with a contribution from Arianna D'Ottone Rambach, Intaglios Set in Medieval Seal Matrices: Indicators of Political Power and Social Status, in: John Cherry/Jessica Berenbeim/Lloyd De Beer (eds.), Seals and Status: The Power of Objects (The British Museum Research Publication 213), London 2018, 104–113.

7 For iconographic rings, see Kathleen E. Kennedy, English Iconographic Rings and Medieval Populuxe Jewelry, in: Elisa A. Foster/Julia Perratore/Steven Rozenski (eds.), Devotional Interaction in Medieval England and its Afterlives (Art and Material Culture in Medieval and Renaissance Europe 12), Leiden 2018, 80–99; Alicia Walker, Numismatic and Metrological Parallels for the Iconography of Early Byzantine Marriage Jewelry: The Question of the Crowned Bride, in: Mélanges Cécile Morrisson (Travaux et Mémoires 16), Paris 2010, 849–863.

8 For small objects as social agents, imbued with power to impact people, see, for example, Henry Maguire, Magic and Money in the Early Middle Ages, in: Speculum 72,4 (1997), 1047–1054; Roberta Gilchrist, Magic for the Dead? The Archaeology of Magic in Later Medieval Burials, in: Medieval Archaeology 52 (2008), 119–159; Idem, Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course, Woodbridge 2012, esp. Chapter 6 (with many references); Ivan Drpić, The Enkolpion: Object, Agency, Self, in: Gesta 57,2 (2018), 197–224.

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presumed to assist in childbirth.[9] From this, we can infer that Henry II must have been familiar with the medical, physical and magical virtues of gems as promoted by Marbode of Rennes in his 'De lapidibus' ('On Stones', ca. 1090), whose treatise must have been well known in the twelfth century.[10] From two other examples connected to the Plantagenets, we can see the dynamic relationship that existed between these rings and stones and their owners/users, who understood the social and cultural value of these small and portable items.

The British Museum holds a gold ring set with a late antique intaglio, which is engraved with the figure of Mercury (fig. 1).[11] Around the gold bezel the legend reads *RICHARD RE[G?] P,* which has been interpreted as referring to Richard the Lionheart's private seal.[12] Antique intaglios (engraved gems) were luxury items, owned and gifted by people in the upper echelons of society who had them set in silver and gold. The chrome chalcedony, the stone employed for this ring, was widely used in Roman times. Even though we do not know whether its medieval owner had exact knowledge about its distant past, to an elite member of society, like Richard, the stone was likely valued for its ancientness.[13] The use of gems (and cameos) on reliquaries and book covers, as well as in seals and jewellery reveals that these antique objects were highly valued artefacts. The surface of Richard's ring – gem and bezel – has a diameter of about 15 mm, which is large enough to be noticed when worn, even though larger examples are known.[14] The dark colour of the stone is emphasised by its glistening gold setting, an expensive material that reflected light and therefore was believed to be the source of (divine) light. The relief of both stone and setting invite a closer view and entice touch to

9 Chris M. Woolgar, The Senses in Late Medieval England, New Haven 2006, 52. For the meaning stones held to medieval women, see also Dempsey in this volume, 169–196.

10 Marbode of Rennes' (1035–1123) De Lapidibus, considered as a Medical Treatise with Text, Commentary and C.W. King's Translation Together with Text and Translation of Marbode's Minor Works on Stones, ed. and trans. by John M. Riddle, Wiesbaden 1977, with on 131–138 a list of all the Latin and vernacular manuscripts he knew of in 1977. From the twelfth-century, twenty manuscripts survive.

11 Noël Adams/John Cherry/James Robinson (eds.), Good Impressions: Image and Authority in Medieval Seals (British Museum Research Publication 168), London 2008, 116, no. 7.2 (Signet ring of Richard I). Unfortunately, no dimensions, legend and literature references are given.

12 Ring, twelfth century (intaglio fourth century), dimensions, weight: 4.3 gram (max). London, British Museum, acc. no. 1962,1101.1. Supporting this identification are Peter E. Lasko, The Signet Ring of King Richard I of England, in: Journal of the Society of Archivists 2,8 (1963), 333–335; Paul D. A. Harvey and Andrew Mcguiness, A Guide to British Medieval Seals, London 2006, 36; Martin Henig, The Re-use and Copying of Ancient Intaglios set in Medieval Personal Seals, Mainly Found in England: An Aspect of the Renaissance of the 12th Century, in: Adams/Cherry/Robinson 2008, 25–34, here 27. Opposing the identification are Cherry and Henig 2018, 109.

13 Henig 2008, 25–34, Gilchrist doubts such knowledge, see Gilchrist 2012, 246.

14 See the examples given in Henig 2008, 25–34.

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help render legible the engraving and inscription, which are not immediately readable. Putting the ring on meant that the metal and stone would touch the finger's skin, making the wearing of a ring a sensory experience that would gain additional meaning if its wearer knew that chalcedony was supposed to inspire victory.[15] When applied as a seal stamp, the signet ring was impressed onto wax, which was an additional moment of touch, leaving a tangible impression of both Mercury and Richard. Displaying such an object on the finger (or hanging from a chain) would immediately signal the high rank of its wearer.

Fig. 1: Signet ring Richard the Lionheart, twelfth century (intaglio fourth century), diameter ca. 15 mm, weight 4.3 gram (max). London, British Museum, acc. no. 1962,1101.1.

The importance of rings and stones to regal apparel is further evidenced by Pipe Rolls entries, the annual financial records of the English Crown. In the year 1184/85, a little over £29 was spent on robes on behalf of King Henry II and Queen Eleanor, while a much higher sum of 29 marks was expended on rings, stones, clasps and other delights for the king.[16] In an entry for the next year, again dealing with costly objects bought for the king, £63 were paid for rings, costly stones, clasps and cloaks.[17] And a year later, the staggering sum of £108 13 s 8d was disbursed for cloth, cloaks and sable furs, as well as for rings, gold and stones.[18] The objects are described in general terms, no prices for specific items are given, and it is unknown who would have received or used the items (the king, the queen, their children, high-placed visitors or foreign royalty?). Nonetheless,

15 Marbode of Rennes' De Lapidibus, 43–44.

16 The Pipe Rolls of Henry II., ed. Pipe Roll Society, s.n., 1884–1925 (abbreviated as PR no. Hen II). PR 31 Hen II. (1184–1185), 44: *Et pro robis ad opus Regis et Regine .xxix. l. et .xx. d. per breve regis. Et pro anulis et lapidibus et firmalibus et aliis jocundiolis ad opus Regis .xxix. m. per breve regis.*

17 PR 32 Hen II (1185–1186), 197: *Et pro anulis et lapidibus preciosis et firmalibus et pennulis et pelliciis ad opus Regis . xliij. l. et .ij. s. et .vj. d. per breve regis.*

18 PR 33 Hen II (1186–1187), 19: *Et pro pannis et pennulis et sabelinis et anulis et auro et lapidibus ad opus regis .c. et .viij. l. et .xiij. s. et .viij. d. per breve regis.*

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some observations can be made. In the entries, rings are mentioned together with other metal items, such as brooches or gold, as well as with stones. We might entertain the possibility that the stones were purchased especially for the rings (or the metal they would be made of) and were only assembled after arrival at the king's court, perhaps to meet specific wishes concerning size and shape. Rings and stones clearly were an important part of elite appearance since the Pipe Rolls evidence that money was simultaneously spent on cloth, cloaks and sable furs.

The mentioned examples make clear that jewellery and stones were actually handled and noticed by people. Understood as signs of status, rings were bestowed on kings and queens, bought for and worn by them. Rituals such as inauguration – and marriage and gifting could be added – imbued rings with additional meanings. Because rings, and more specifically the stones adorning them, could possess magical qualities, moral properties and virtues due to ancient ancestry, these items were considered animated things that held working powers. In addition, some rings are vivid reminders of the importance of gift-giving in medieval society and show that medieval luxury objects were instrumental in the communication of identity and connections. Viewing rings and stones not merely as signs of status but also as carriers of histories and emotions as well as protective devices helps us understand the sort of ties these highly portable, and at times highly personal, items could forge.

3. Eleanor of Aquitaine: Friendship and Beyond

Matthew Paris's 'Liber Addimentatorum' (1250–1259), a collection of original literary treatises and historical documents that the Benedictine monk of St Albans assembled to support his research for his 'Chronica Majora', contains two folia in which thirteen gems and rings are listed.[19] Apart from eye-catching examples depicted in bird's-eye view, Matthew also recorded somewhat less spectacular rings, amongst them a so-called stirrup ring that, even though described as *De anulo Ricardi Animal*, has a multi-layered history in which Eleanor of Aquitaine features prominently (fig. 2).[20] The display of the golden stirrup-

19 London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero D. I, ff.. 146r and 146v. See also http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Cotton_MS_Nero_D_I. For an edition, see Matthæi Parisiensis, monachi Sancti Albani, Chronica majora, 7 vols., ed. Henry Richards Luard (Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores, or Chronicles and Memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages), London 1872–1882, vol. 6, 383–389. See also Suzanne Lewis, The Art of Matthew Paris in the Chronica Majora (California Studies in the History of Art 21), Berkeley 1987, 45.

20 For a similar finger-ring with sapphire, see a specimen in the British Museum, thirteenth to fourteenth century, outer diameter 37 millimetres. London, British Museum, acc. no. 1885,0615.1. https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_

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shaped hoop decorated with an intensely coloured oriental sapphire (lapis lazuli) renders visible the engraved letter "R", which was considered its most important feature.

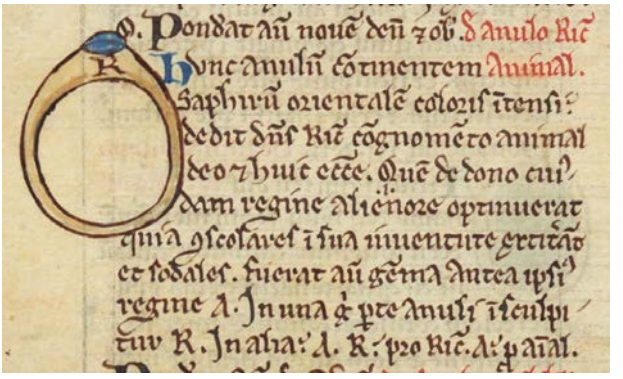

Fig. 2: Ring gifted by Eleanor of Aquitaine to Richard Animal who donated it to St Albans. Matthew Paris, 'Liber Addimentatorum', 1250–1259. London, British Library, Cotton MS Nero D. I, fol. 146v.

According to its accompanying text,

> "this ring containing an oriental sapphire of intense colour was donated by Lord Richard, known as Animal, to God and our church; it was given to him by Queen Eleanor I, who in his youth was his companion and fellow student. In the past, this gem belonged to Queen Eleanor. On one side of the ring, it is inscribed with an R, on the other side with an A, R for Richard and A for Animal. Its weight is worth ten denarii."[21]

Even though it remains unclear who exactly Richard Animal was, there is no doubt that the queen is Eleanor of Aquitaine, who was crowned queen of the English in 1154 after she had married Henry II in 1152. Eleanor's youth and her exact relationship with Richard are obscured due to a lack of sources, and the connection between Richard and St Albans also is unclear. We only have Matthew's word for it that Animal was Richard's cognomen. I suggest that interpreting the inscribed "A" as referring to Alienor may be equally possible, as such a reading would corroborate the story that Eleanor gave the gem (only the gem or the ring with the gem?) to Richard as a token of their friendship, with the letters A

object_details.aspx?objectId=49301&partId=1&searchText=medieval+ring+sapphire&page=1.

21 *De anulo Ricardi Animal. Hunc anulum continentem saphirum orientalem coloris intensi dedit dominus Ricardus cognomento Animal Deo et huic ecclesiae; quem de dono ejusdam reginae Alienorae I optinuerat, quia conscolares in sua juventute extiterant et sodales. Fuerat autem gemma antea ipsius reginae A*[lienorae]. *In una igitur parte anuli insculpitur R, in alia A, R pro Ricardo, A pro Animal. Ponderat autem decem denarios.* See Matthæi Parisiensis, vol. 6, 385.

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and R (inscribed by Eleanor or Richard?) as reminders of the initial giving and receiving parties involved.

The specific mention of Eleanor by Matthew Paris can be read as a strategy to further boost the status of Richard's donation to St Albans. Yet for the purpose of this article, I would like to stress that his description indicates that Eleanor and Richard once knew each other, and it is likely that Eleanor presented the ring to her companion as an expression of her fondness for him. Another possibility is that the heiress to the Duchy of Aquitaine presented the ring to Richard in return for something that he had offered to her, perhaps the kind of intellectual and practical support that students give each other. With this sapphire, Eleanor gave Richard the kind of item that, according to Marbode's 'De lapidibus', was considered only "for the fingers of kings to wear".[22]

The ring of Richard Animal suggests that Eleanor may have taken on several roles. First, she could have commissioned the ring or perhaps was its (first?) owner, then she gifted it to her dear friend, thus confirming and commemorating their bond, after which her memory (unknowingly?) was treasured at St Albans to which Richard donated the sapphire ring. The chain of gifting evidenced by this sapphire ring obscures our understanding of the personal meaning that may (or may not) have been attached to this artefact by Eleanor as well as Richard, but it does highlight that rings circulated, crossing the boundaries of their original network and by doing so established new ties.

4. Heirs and Heirlooms

Other examples indicate that women as donors and recipients played crucial roles as facilitators of familial networks, even when chronicles fail to mention so. In 1183, Henry II sent his dying eldest son, the Young King Henry, a precious ring that according to the chronicler Geoffrey of Vigeois had belonged to King Henry I (d. 1135).[23] Nicholas Vincent identified this item as a signet ring, which could mean that it was similar to his brother Richard's with its ancient gem in a gold setting.[24] While it is possible that Henry II received the ring from his grandfather during infancy (Henry II was two years old when his grandfather died), it seems more likely that the latter left it to his only surviving heir Matilda, who in turn

22 Marbode of Rennes' De Lapidibus, 42.

23 For the different chroniclers dealing with the Young King Henry's death, see Michael Staunton, The Historians of Angevin England, Oxford 2017, 205–209. See also Matthew Strickland, Henry the Young King, 1155–1183, New Haven/London 2016.

24 Nicholas Vincent, The Seals of King Henry II and his Court, in: Phillipp R. Schofield (ed.), Seals and their Context in the Middle Ages, Oxford/Philadelphia 2015, 7–34, here 17.

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presented the ring to her son, Henry II.[25] If we accept this suggestion, Matilda acted as a transmitter of this royal ring very much in the same way her father and son had done.

Her absence from Geoffrey de Vigeois's episode notwithstanding, historians have long emphasised Matilda's importance in the creation of the Plantagenet dynasty. In the *intitulatio* of her charters, she styled herself as "Matildis imperatrix Henrici regis filia" (Empress Matilda, daughter of King Henry), referring to her imperial ties through her first marriage to Emperor Henry V (d. 1125), as well as to her royal descent through which she claimed the lands and titles held by her father.[26] Matilda's titles bespeak women's realities in dynastic systems: women rather than men moved from one network to another through marriage, widowhood or separation and re-marriage.[27] To each new situation, they brought objects, prestige and political benefits with them that stemmed from already existing connections, which, in turn, had an impact on new or renewed affiliations. In Matilda's case, this is not only witnessed by the mentioned title of "empress", which she only started using after she had left Germany and returned to her father, but also by some moveable items she had transported. When leaving England for Germany in 1110 to marry Emperor Henry V (d. 1125), the nine-year-old carried 10,000 marks of silver along with many splendid gifts, which she delivered to her new husband.[28] The silver and precious items were not only meant to show off the princess's royal status but were also used to cement ties between England and Germany. In Emperor Henry V, the English king sought a supporter against the French king, his overlord in Normandy, whereas the emperor counted on English assistance in his conflict with Pope Paschal II over the right of investiture.[29]

After Henry V died in 1125, Matilda returned to her natal family, together with an impressive amount of valuable items, including at least two crowns and the hand of St James (feast day 25 July). She presented the relic to her father, who in

25 This hereditary gifting was not uncommon; King Afonso Henrique (r. 1128–1185), the first king of Portugal, left two rings to his son and heir Sancho I (r. 1185–1212), who in turn gifted them to his son, the future Alfonso II. All of Sancho's other rings were bequeathed to his daughter Sancha. See Ana Maria S. A. Rodrigues, Moneda, armas y objetos suntuarous: el tesoro de los reyes de Portugal en los primeros siglos de su existencia, in: Anales de Historia del Arte 24 (2014), 439–460, here 449.

26 Marjorie Chibnall, The Charters of the Empress Matilda, in: George Garnett and John Hudson (eds.), Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy. Essays in Honour of Sir James Holt, Cambridge 1994, 276–198, here 277.

27 See the recent publication Tracy Chapman Hamilton and Mariah Proctor-Tiffany (eds.), Moving Women Moving Objects (400–1500), Leiden/Boston 2019.

28 The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis, vol. 5: books IX and X, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall, Oxford 1969–1980, 200–201.

29 Joseph Patrick Huffman, Social Politics of Medieval Diplomacy: Anglo-German Relations, 1066–1307, Ann Arbor 2000, 39–45.

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return donated the holy remains to Reading Abbey, where he also wished to be buried.[30] Both Matilda and the relic can be viewed as nodes in the Plantagenet network. Through the empress, the hand arrived in England, where it then gained cult status because of its miracle-working powers, which prompted further support of the royal dynasty. In the Holy Roman Empire, the loss of the hand of St James and its incorporation into a new royal web had not gone unnoticed, as in 1157 Emperor Frederick Barbarossa pressed Henry II for the return of the hand, which belonged to the heritage of the Holy Roman Empire. Unwillingly, Matilda's gift had jeopardised the Anglo-German network, but fortunately her son's diplomatic skills helped to smoothen things. Although he did not return the hand, the English king underscored the emperor's high status when he sent him an impressive mechanical tent and a letter "full of honeyed speech", which were an acknowledgement of the status and power of equals who knew they would need each other for the benefit of their own territorial, church and even dynastic politics.[31] The gifts served as a vivid and continuous reminder of a relationship between equals that would always be fraught with some tension.

Even though Matilda was not included in Geoffrey of Vigeois's story on the Young King's ring, her plausible role in the transfer of the signet ring to her son Henry II, as well as her part in the transmission of moveable items to and from Germany, demonstrates the importance of women as nodes in dynastic webs, which they shaped as daughter, wives, mother and widows. Matilda was the key figure here because it was only through her that her son, Henry II, could claim the throne. In fact, Henry II followed in his mother's footsteps when he styled himself as *filius Matildis* ("Henry, son of Matilda") or *Henricus filius filie Regis Henrici rectus heres Angliae et Normanni(ae)* ("Henry, son of the daughter of King Henry rightful heir to England and Normandy").[32] Like the ring, the hand of St James too was imbued with royal and dynastic virtue, thereby placing it in a network that was larger than that of the nuclear family, which also was a royal network with an aura of sanctity that was transferred from one monarch to another, with the ring and hand serving as reminders.

That daughters did receive rings from their fathers is suggested by the no longer existing signet ring of Isabel of Gloucester (d. 1217), which is known

30 The most detailed analysis of the history of the hand of St James and Frederick Barbarossa's petition to get it back is still Karl Leyser, Frederick Barbarossa, Henry II and the Hand of St James, in: The English Historical Review 90 (1975), 481–506.

31 The tent (or pavilion) and letter are mentioned in Otto of Freising and his continuator, Rahewin, The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa, trans. and annot. with an introd. by Charles Christopher Mierow, with the collaboration of Richard Emery, New York 1953, 178–179. And see also Leyser 1975, 482–483 (letter) and 499 (tent).

32 Charity Urbanski, Writing History for the King: Henry II and the Politics of Vernacular, Ithaca, NY/London 2013, 79–80.

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through wax impressions.[33] Its gem was engraved with an eagle walking left, flanked by thin vertical objects, while above its head a bearded man in profile faces right is represented with on either side winged figures who are holding wreaths. The legend reads + *EGO SV'AQILA : CVSTOS* D'NE MEE (I am the eagle, the guardian of my lady, see fig. 3).[34] It is commonly accepted that the legend was an adaptation of her father's, Earl William of Gloucester (d. 1183), which read + *AQVILA SV'ET CVSTOS COMITIS* (I am the eagle and guardian of the earl).[35]

Fig. 3: Counterseal (signet) and seal of Isabel of Gloucester attached to a grant to Margam Abbey, 1217, green wax, 84 x 54 mm. The National Library of Wales, PM 104. The legend on counterseal reads […]*ESVAQ[…]EME[.]* and that on the seal […]*VM:ISAB[.]L:COMI*[…]*LOECEST[. .]E:ET: MOR*[…]. © The National Library of Wales.

Isabel was, however, not only part of her natal family's network but was also connected to the Plantagenets on several levels. Her grandfather, Robert of

33 Woolgar 2006, 53, ill. 18. I follow Woolgar's interpretation of the object as a ring, although I acknowledge that other scholars simply refer to the signet as a gem. See Robert B. Patterson, Earldom of Gloucester Charters: The Charters and Scribes of the Earls and Countesses of Gloucester to AD 1217, Oxford 1973, 24; and Susan M. Johns, Seals, Women, Gender and Identity, in: P. R. Schofield et al. (eds.) Seals and Society: Medieval Wales, the Welsh Marches and Their English Border Region, Cardiff 2016, 95–103, here 95.

34 Patterson 1973, 24 and plate XXXIe. For an image of the impression made by the signet ring (counter seal) and the pointed oval-shaped seal, see https://www.imprintseals.org/document/1290 (18. 09. 2019).

35 Patterson 1973, 24 and plate XXXIb. William's counterseal is known though the charters nos. 77, 97 (illegible), 104, 120, 122, 135, 136, 158 (illegible), 172.

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Gloucester, was the son of King Henry I and therefore the half-brother of Empress Matilda, whom he supported in her struggle for the throne. The blood ties between the Gloucesters and Plantagenets were not considered to be an obstacle when Isabel was betrothed to the future King John with whom she shared a paternal grandfather, Henry I. In 1199, shortly after John had acceded to the throne, he separated from Isabel, although she remained in his wardship. Isabel's family ties show the intricate nature of a medieval dynastic network, one that moreover suggests that while Isabel was an important node she herself had little control over the situation.[36] Yet that she was more than a replaceable node becomes evident when returning to Isabella's signet, which underscores her role in shaping her familial network.

We do not know when Isabel came into the possession of her father's ring (upon his death?) and had its legends (but not its iconography) changed, but that the alteration of the signet ring's legend was meaningful becomes clear when we look at Isabel's confirmations of several donations to Margam Abbey (Wales). The abbey had been founded by her grandfather, Earl Robert of Gloucester, in 1147 and supported by her father ever since.[37] It possessed at least five of the countess's confirmation charters to which her seal and a smaller counterseal were appended.[38] To the monks, it would have been perfectly clear that this counterseal was almost identical to that of her father, whose sealed charters the abbey also carefully curated.[39] And when examined together with her vessica-shaped seal, which shows her standing full face towards the viewer, wearing a gown with long, flowing sleeves while holding up a stylised lily in her right hand and a bird on her left hand and is inscribed with [section lost]*VM:ISAB[.]L:COMI*[section lost]*LOECEST[. .]E:ET:MOR*[section lost] (Seal of Isabel countess of Gloucester and Mortain; fig. 3), there was no doubt that the signet belonged to the countess.

By using what once had been her father's signet ring, Isabel showed that she was the rightful heiress of the Gloucester dynasty who supported the abbey founded by her grandfather by confirming her ancestors' grants. She impressed onto these parchment documents her seal and counterseal, which demonstrated and reconfirmed her lordship as countess of Gloucester. As items to be touched (as is evidenced by the fingerprints left in the green wax) and seen, the signet ring and its imprint as well as the seal matrix and its imprint played crucial roles in the formation and communication of Isabel's dynastic and monastic affiliations.

The two signet rings discussed here were strong expressions of familial ties that were maintained through different generations, with women acting as key

36 Levine 2017, 127.

37 See also Johns 2016, 95–103.

38 Patterson 1973, nos. 140, 144, 145, 146, 148, 149 (all concern Margam Abbey, Wales).

39 For charters regarding Margam Abbey to which the seal and counterseal are still attached, see Patterson 1973, nos. 120, 122, 135, 136.

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players. Precisely because these small objects functioned as heirlooms, they seem to have held dynastic as well as emotional value. The wax impressions left behind by Isabel's signet – as well as the hand of St James given to Reading Abbey – also show that dynastic bonds left their marks on religious communities that were part of the networks of elite men and women alike.

5. The Personal is Political: Family Ties and Political Allies

Apart from presenting rings to children as highly personal yet no less political heirlooms, the Angevins also donated them to dynastic allies who were part of the family, either through marriage or blood.[40] Gerald of Wales, who was a royal clerk and chaplain to King Henry II, narrates in his 'Vita Galfridi archiepiscopi Eboracensis' ('The Life of Geoffrey archbishop of York', ca. 1193) that shortly before Henry II passed away, he personally gave his illegitimate son Geoffrey, chancellor of England, two rings.[41]

> "And accepted this fine gold ring with 'pantera', which he had greatly treasured, and that he proposed to send to his son-in-law the king of Hispania, together with his extended blessing. The same king also gave him another outstanding ring, with a costly and excellent sapphire, which in its day was the largest held in the treasury."[42]

From this account, it follows that the ring with the high-quality sapphire was meant for Geoffrey, while the fine gold one was destined for Castile.

Sometime before 17 September 1170, Henry and Eleanor's second daughter Leonor had married Alfonso VIII of Castile.[43] Shortly before the couple celebrated their nuptials, Alfonso confirmed Leonor's *arras* (dower) and explicitly connected his future wife to her father as "daughter of the most unconquered and

40 For a discussion of the rings and other items King John presented to his nephew Emperor Otto IV, see Jitske Jasperse, Is It All about Empire? The Angevins through the Lens of Gift Giving, in: Stephen Church/Matthew Strickland (eds.) *The Angevin Empire. New Interpretations*, Woodbridge, forthcoming.

41 Nicholas Vincent, The Court of Henry II, in: Christopher Harper-Bill/Nicholas Vincent (eds.), Henry II: New Interpretations, Woodbridge 2007, 283 n. 3. For Gerald of Wales, see Staunton 2017, 95–107, esp. 100–101 on the 'Vita Galfridi'.

42 *Et accipiens annulum aureum optimum cum pantera, quam valde carum habebat, quem et regi Hispaniae genero suo mittere proposuerat, ei cum benedictione sua porrexit. Alium quoque annulum suum insignem, saphiro praeditum preciosissimo et virtuosissimo, quem pro magno diu thesauro habuerat, eidem dari praecepit. Giraldi Cambrensis opera: Speculum ecclesiae; De vita Galfridi archiepiscopi Eboracensis sive Certamina Galfridi Eboracensis archiepiscopi*, 7 vols., eds. John S. Brewer/James F. Dimock/George F. Warner, London 1861–1891, vol. 4, 371.

43 For the marriage negotiations and wedding, see Colette Bowie, The Daughters of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, Turnhout 2014, 71–75, 107–109.

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ever-triumphant king of England".[44] Later, in 1177, Alfonso turned to Henry with a request to mediate with his rival Sancho VI of Navarre.[45] The Pipe Rolls suggest further contact, for example when Henry's granddaughter Matilda – the daughter of Leonor's sister Matilda – travelled from England to Castile in order to visit her relatives there.[46] Henry's wish to bestow a ring upon his son-in-law is perhaps best understood as a way of acknowledging and cementing family ties, which were highly political as well as personal.

Nicholas Vincent interprets *annulum aureum optimum cum pantera* as a possible reference to a signet of Henry II engraved with a panther and regards the gift as proof of Henry's "own leonine pretensions" and "as a deliberate reference to Castilian rivalry with the neighbouring kings of León, themselves now represented by the lion".[47] There is good reason to believe that Henry II, like so many kings and highly placed noblemen of his day, would have likened himself to a lion, that fierce and kingly animal. Perhaps because of Henry's desire to be associated with a "leonine" power, the Catalan poet Ramón Vidal de Besalú – who was aware of Henry's reputation as a powerful king – mentioned the golden lion that was embroidered on Leonor's mantle. Ramón describes the entrance of Queen Leonor after the court was all gathered and just before starting the tale about Alfonso de Barbarstre and his wife Elvira, once told by a minstrel at the court of Alfonso VIII.

> "One couldn't really see her at all, for she came all enveloped in a mantle of fine and beautiful silk cloth, the kind that is called 'cisclaton'. It was red with a band of silver, and there was a golden lion embroidered on it."[48]

For those listening to Ramón's story, it must have been easy to visualise an impressive golden lion embroidered on the queen's red silk dress, which may have looked something like King Roger II of Sicily's red silk mantle decorated with two golden lions and camels. Whether real or imagined, Leonor's mantle covering her royal body was meant to impress, and the lion may have been interpreted as an animal that – like its wearer, Leonor – visualised the ties between England and Iberia.

Returning to the ring that Henry II bequeathed to his son-in-law, it is not necessary to interpret the panther as a lion in order to understand Alfonso VIII's appreciation of the ring. It seems more likely that the Iberian king considered the

44 […] *filie invictissimi et semper triumfatoris regis Anglie* […]. See El reino de Castilla en la epoca de Alfonso VIII., 3 vols, ed. Julio González, Madrid 1960, vol. 1, 192b.

45 Bowie 2014, 110.

46 PR 34 Hen II, 18.

47 Vincent 2015, 23.

48 Ramon Vidal de Besalú, The Chastising of the Jealous Man (Castía Gilos), trans. by Ross G. Arthur, Cambridge, Ontario 2000, 2, lines 18–22.

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item a personal gift through which the unconquerable and triumphant qualities of Henry II were transmitted.

There is one further, and more plausible, possibility to consider here, namely that when Gerald of Wales wrote about the *annulum aureum optimum cum pantera* he did not describe the ring's iconography, but its precious stone. According to Marbode's 'De lapidibus', there existed a stone called *panthero*, "marked like the beast [panther] that can the lion tame / the spotted gem obtains the self-same name".[49] This multi-coloured stone was believed to give the wearer unconquerable qualities, which would have been especially useful for kings like Henry II and Alfonso VIII. Rather than viewing the stone as a signet, I suggest we must regard it as the multi-coloured *panthero* stone that was given by Henry II to his son-in-law in order to acknowledge their familial and affective ties that were created through marriage politics. Yet it would be too simple to view this bond as one that only existed between and was maintained by men. In fact, elsewhere I have demonstrated that Leonor consciously curated the Anglo-Iberian network through textiles she commissioned and the use of her seal.[50]

The example of Alfonso and Leonor demonstrates that the dynastic network of the Plantagenets consisted of multiple affiliations that crossed well beyond the Anglo-Norman realm. While highly political, the sapphire ring donated to Alfonso seems to have carried both royal and personal meaning because it had been worn by his father-in-law himself. The ring can be considered a node in a widely cast web that was shaped and curated by men as well as women, with its working powers depending on the authority of its former owner, Leonor's father Henry II.

6. Conclusion: Material Items Shaping Ties

Through an analysis of a surviving signet ring, a signet impressed in wax, a drawn ring and references to rings and stones in written sources connected to the wider Plantagenet family, this article has shown that these highly mobile items and their material and immaterial qualities are instructive for understanding the formation and shape of networks to which women contributed as facilitators. As nodes within networks, objects are expressions of existing bonds as well as instrumental to the creation and management of social fabric, which should not be read as merely political but also as affective. Importantly, understanding artefacts and their emotive value as part of a complex system has brought to light that women who may not have been at the heart of a specific network, such as Eleanor at St Albans, in fact, helped to establish ties. Even if Eleanor may have had no immediate con-

49 Marbode of Rennes' De Lapidibus, 85.
50 Jasperse 2017, 523–547.

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nection to the monastic community of St Albans at the time of Richard Animal's donation of the ring, the way Matthew Paris recorded the history of the ring demonstrates that her presence, in fact, did matter to the monastery.

Through the lens of rings and stones, I have shown that the objects' itineraries as well as their materiality, which entails both their material and symbolic value, helped to create and sustain networks. A telling example is the history of Young Henry's sapphire ring, which I have suggested came into his possession because Empress Matilda acted as a transmitter. From personal experience, she knew the importance of dispatching personal items to support royal claims and promote the dynasty. And the picture of Isabel of Gloucester as a pawn in the hands of the Plantagenets shifts when we take into account that as heiress of Gloucester she used her father's signet and by doing so highlighted the importance of her natal family and its local political and monastic affiliations.

Seeing material culture as an essential part of the formation of family ties thus tells a different story from the typical male power we so often encounter. It is a narrative in which objects embody emotions, lay bare tensions, cement bonds and imprint lineage. It is also a story in which women appear as actors in and creators of overlapping networks.

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Abigail S. Armstrong

English Royal Family Ties: Edward I and his Breton Nieces

Abstract

This essay explores the relationship between English kings and their extended relatives and evaluates the political benefits of such bonds, both at court and in the church. It focusses on the relationship between Edward I of England (1272–1307) and his Breton nieces, Marie and Eleanor, the daughters of Edward's sister Beatrice and her husband John of Brittany. Both had different experiences of life in England and differing levels of interaction with their English royal kin. Marie was a constant companion of the English royal family, and Edward facilitated and financed her in her position as an elite woman at court. Conversely, Eleanor undertook a religious life at Amesbury priory, accompanied by her cousin and grandmother. These diverging paths had different consequences for their continued relationship with their English royal kin after both returned to the continent. During the Anglo-French conflict of the 1290s, Marie and Edward found themselves on opposing sides; however, their relationship continued. While Marie was not used to help broker peace, she continued to exchange gifts with her uncle and acted as a conduit for his saintly veneration. Eleanor, on the other hand, as nun of Amesbury and Fontevraud before becoming its abbess, had mixed relations with her English royal kin. She sought Edward's assistance to protect her personal rights, yet came into conflict with her cousins over the privileges of Amesbury priory, and was unafraid of refusing the requests of Edward II and Mary, nun of Amesbury.

The late-thirteenth-century Middle English romance *Havelok the Dane* opens with the death of good King Athelwold. His demise left his only child, his daughter Goldeboru, in the hands of the earl Godrich, who had been appointed as her foster parent and protector. Instead of fulfilling the dead king's wishes, Godrich steals the throne for himself and imprisons the princess at Dover castle.[1] The trope of the evil uncle or wicked stepmother was common in English romances, setting the hero on their path to reclaim their birth right.[2] While many

1 Havelok the Dane, in: Four Romances of England: King Horn, Havelok the Dane, Bevis of Hampton , Athelston, ed. Ronald B . Herzman/Graham Drake/Eve Salisbury, Kalamazoo, MI 1999.

2 See also the other Matter of England Middle English romances: Bevis of Hampton, King Horn and Athelston.

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romances contain elements of fantasy, they were often influenced by the times in which they were composed. Many of the Matter of England romances, to which Havelok belongs, used historical models or contemporary political contexts to shape their narratives and provide commentary on the real world.[3] The disinheritance experienced by Goldeboru had contemporary parallels; on occasion, English kings sought to nullify potential rival claimants. Eleanor of Brittany (d. 1241), the sister of Arthur – King John's rival claimant to the English throne and Angevin lands following the death of Richard I – was moved from castle to castle in England by both John and his successor, Henry III, until her death.[4] Gwenllian – the daughter and only child of Llywelyn ap Gruffudd, Prince of Wales, and his wife, Eleanor de Montfort, Edward I's cousin – was confined by the king at Sempringham nunnery.[5] Both royal women were detained by English kings to prevent them becoming rivals to rule or figureheads for Breton and Welsh discontent.

The treatment of these two women was exceptional, however, and the relationships between English royals and their extended kin were not always contentious. Henry III lavishly welcomed to court his Lusignan half-siblings, as well as the Savoyard kin of his wife, Eleanor of Provence, in the hope of securing allies to regain territories lost to the French king. Nevertheless, Henry's preferential treatment of these relatives sparked baronial discontent.[6]

The importance of kinship and family ties has received increasing scholarly attention as historians have sought to better understand the medieval family, dynastic structures, the role of women, marriage and inheritance practices. Moving away from Georges Duby's model of families, which focusses on patrilineal descent, aristocratic families are now viewed as dynamic, flexible networks that could adapt to changing circumstances.[7] Amy Livingstone, in her study of eleventh- and twelfth-century aristocratic family life in the Loire, found that extended kin could express affection towards each other, as well as interceding on behalf of one another and providing political support.[8] This essay looks at Ed-

3 Herzman et al., Four Romances of England, 6; Middle English Romances in Translation, ed. Kenneth Eckert, Leiden 2015, 18.

4 Gwen Seabourne, Eleanor of Brittany and Her Treatment by King John and Henry III, in: Nottingham Medieval Studies 51 (2007), 73–110.

5 J. B. Smith, Llywelyn ap Gruffudd: Prince of Wales, Cardiff 2014, 580.

6 David A. Carpenter, Struggle for Mastery, London 2003, 341–343.

7 Georges Duby, The Chivalrous Society, trans. by Cynthia Postan, London 1977; Joanna Drell, Aristocratic Economies: Women and Family, in: Judith M. Bennett/Ruth Mazo Karras (eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe, Oxford 2013, 327–342, here 329–330. See also, Theodore Evergates, The Aristocracy in the County of Champagne, 1100–1300, Philadelphia 2007; Amy Livingstone, Out of Love for my Kin: Aristocratic Family Life in the Lands of the Loire, 1000–1200, New York 2010.

8 Livingstone 2010, see chapter 2.

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ward I's diplomatic network of extended female kin, examining his relationship with two of the daughters of his sister Beatrice: Marie and Eleanor. It uncovers the time the young women spent in England and the two very different paths in life they led – one following the role as an elite noblewoman, the other a cloistered nun – and how this upbringing affected their later relationships, both political and spiritual, with the English royal family.

This study draws on the extensive records of Edward I's reign, particularly the household and wardrobe accounts of the late-thirteenth and early-fourteenth centuries. These records survive in far greater number for Edward I and his queen, Eleanor of Castile, than any other previous English monarch. They include a variety of books and rolls detailing expenditure within the departments of the household and inventories of the royal treasure. They document when Marie and Eleanor were at court, how the English king provided for them financially and materially, as well as recording gifts exchanged between Edward and his nieces. From these accounts of expenses and alms, as well as lists of gifts, plate and livery, we can uncover the relationships between Edward and his Breton nieces and their wider implications in English diplomacy.

As children, Edward and his siblings, Margaret, Beatrice and Edmund, were raised together in the royal nursery at Windsor.[9] When Edward and Beatrice departed England as part of Louis IX's ill-fated crusade in 1270, their children remained at Windsor in the care of their royal grandparents, the king and queen of England.[10] Edward and Beatrice's departure on crusade marked the starting point of close interactions between their two families.

Edward I's network of female kin has been studied to varying degrees. His queen, Eleanor of Castile – who gave birth a total of sixteen times, with only five daughters and a son reaching adulthood – has been the subject of extensive study, predominantly by her biographer John C. Parsons.[11] Margaret Howell has also discussed the relationship and influence of his mother, Eleanor of Provence.[12] The most substantial examination of Edward's daughters, and royal daughters generally, remains Mary Anne Everett Green's six-volume study 'Lives of the

9 Margaret Howell, Eleanor of Provence: Queenship in Thirteenth-Century England, Oxford 1998, 30.

10 Hilda Johnstone, The Wardrobe and Household of Henry, son of Edward I, in: Bulletin of the John Rylands Library 7 (1923), 384–420.

11 See John C. Parsons, Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England, New York 1995; John C. Parsons, Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power: Some Plantagenet Evidence, 1150–1500, in: John C. Parsons (ed.), Medieval Queenship, Stroud 1994, 63–78; John C. Parsons, The Year of Eleanor of Castile's Birth and Her Children by Edward I, in: Mediaeval Studies 46 (1984), 245–265.

12 Howell 1998.

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Princesses of England from the Norman Conquest'.[13] More recently, Louise Wilkinson has explored the relationship between Edward's five daughters and their father, finding that the daughters were prominent members of the king's court, who benefitted from his generosity.[14] The diplomatic roles of Edward's female kin have also been studied by Kathleen Neal, who has shown how Edward utilised his extended female kin at the French court during the Anglo-French conflict at the end of the thirteenth century.[15] Study of Beatrice's children and their ties to their uncle Edward has focussed on her second son John, who succeeded his namesake father as earl of Richmond, and fought for the English king in his conflicts with France and Scotland.[16] Yet Beatrice's daughters, Marie and Eleanor, who remain understudied, were also close to their English relatives; their relationship with the king forms the subject of study here.

On 22 January 1260, Beatrice married John of Brittany, heir to the duchy.[17] This marriage produced seven children: Arthur, John, Henry, Marie, Peter, Blanche and Eleanor, before Beatrice's death in 1275.[18] Arthur was born on 25 July 1262, John was born in 1266 and Marie in 1268.[19] Henry's date of birth is unclear. The only evidence for his existence is within the English sources, placing him at Windsor following the departure of Edward, Eleanor of Castile, Beatrice and John for the Holy Land. These records suggest he was born c. 1267.[20] As an infant, John, under the nickname 'Brito', can also be found at Windsor at this time, in the household of his cousins, Henry – Edward and Eleanor of Castile's heir – and his sister Eleanor.[21] I would suggest that Peter and Blanche were born on crusade. Eleanor of Castile gave birth on three occasions during their absence from

13 Mary A. E. Green, Lives of the Princesses of England from the Norman Conquest, 6 vols., London 1857.

14 Louise J. Wilkinson, Royal Daughters and Diplomacy at the Court of Edward I, in: Andy King/Andrew M. Spencer (eds.), Edward I: New Interpretations, Woodbridge 2020, 84–104. See also Kelcey Wilson-Lees, Daughters of Chivalry, London 2019.

15 Kathleen Bronwyn Neal, Royal Women and Intra-familial Diplomacy in Late Thirteenth-Century Anglo-French relations, in: Women's History Review (2020), https://doi.org/10.1080/09612025.2020.1827736.

16 Inna Lubimenko, Jean de Bretagne, Comte de Richmond: Sa Vie et son Activité en Angleterre, en Écosse et en France, Paris 1908.

17 A. S. Armstrong, Sisters in Cahoots: Female Agency in the Marriage of Beatrice of England and John of Brittany, in: Journal of Medieval History 44 (2018), 439–456.

18 Flores Historiarum, ed. Henry R. Luard, London 1890, III, 44.

19 Père Anselme, Histoire Généalogique et Chronologique de la Maison Royale de France, Paris 1725, 448–449.

20 The French histories do not name Henry in their lists of children produced by the marriage between Beatrice and John. Arnold Taylor suggests that Henry was born in mid-October 1267, and died just before his seventeenth birthday in September 1284: Arnold Taylor, Royal Alms and Oblations in the later 13th Century, in: Frederick Emmeson/Roy Stephens (eds.), Tribute to an Antiquary: Essays presented to Marc Fitch, London 1976, 93–125, here 122.

21 Johnstone 1922/3.

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England, making the birth of a further two children to Beatrice on crusade a possibility.[22] Beatrice's last child, a daughter named Eleanor, was born in England after their return, in 1275.[23]

This essay focusses on the eldest and youngest daughters. They both spent a considerable amount of time in England; however, their experiences with their English kin were very different. While Marie attended court, fulfilling her role as a member of the courtly elite, facilitated by her uncle the king, Eleanor entered the religious life at Amesbury priory, where her grandmother and namesake, Eleanor of Provence, had retired. As a result, the different paths Marie and Eleanor took strongly influenced their divergent relationships and interactions with the English royal family throughout their lives. This essay outlines the lives of both of Beatrice's daughters in England in turn. It then evaluates the extent to which their time in England shaped their continued interactions with, and diplomatic roles as intermediaries on behalf of, their English kin.

1. Marie: A Courtly Education

Marie was the fourth child and first daughter of Beatrice and John of Brittany. Born in 1268, the sources are silent about how much of her childhood was spent in the company of her uncle and cousins. Nevertheless, during the late-1280s, Marie regularly attended the English royal court. Her prevalence in the early wardrobe accounts of Edward's reign led Green to state that she was educated alongside the king's daughters and "treated, in every respect, with the same kindness and distinction as the princesses themselves".[24] While Green failed to divulge Edward's treatment of Marie any further, this section outlines how Edward facilitated his niece in every aspect of her courtly life and education, to ensure that she could fulfil her role as a member of the elite, just like his own daughters.

From her arrival in Gascony in November 1286 until late 1290, Marie was a constant figure at the English royal court.[25] Marie was integrated within the royal household and provided with her own wardrobe and chamber, financed by the king.[26] Some of Marie's expenditure included some substantial sums, such as £5

22 Parsons 1984, 260–261.
23 Anselme 1725, 449.
24 Green 1857, II, 268.
25 Records of the Wardrobe and Household 1286–1289, ed. Benjamin F. Byerly/Catherine R. Byerly, London 1986, no. 7.
26 For references to the existence of Marie's own chamber and wardrobe see, for example: London, British Library [Hereafter BL], Add. MS 60313, m.1; Wardrobe and Household 1286–1289, no. 528.

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4s. 5½d., which Edward provided for his niece to cover "all the necessary purchases for her use and all her private chamber expenses" during the winter of 1288–9.[27] He also sent her gifts to furnish her chamber, such as four silver flagons, "because she did not have any".[28] Evidently, Edward was concerned to ensure that his niece was suitably provisioned and provided for at his court. Moreover, as the English royal court was especially itinerant during Edward's reign, the English king also covered his niece's transportation costs. Marie accompanied the royal family in Gascony during 1287, as they spent time in Bordeaux, Oléron, Mauléon, Bagnères and Blanquefort.[29] During this period, the king paid all the costs in transporting Marie and her baggage to and from each location, purchasing carts, as well as new wheels for her carts, and other equipment necessary for travel.[30]

As an elite woman at court with her own chamber and wardrobe, Marie also required servants to attend to her and maintain her chamber, and these were provided by the English king. The head of Marie's household was Lady Marquess, who was described in the accounts as both *custodis* and *magistrisse*, guardian as well as mistress or teacher, of the king's niece.[31] While the exact nature of her role is unclear, the Lady Marquess held a great deal of responsibility for Marie's chamber, making almost £3 worth of purchases on her charge's behalf in January 1289.[32] A Lady de Laveran was also described as Marie's *magistram*, suggesting that Edward was concerned with the education of his niece.[33] Other household members included her tailors, Burgess, Nicholas and Colin Perche; John Picard, the custodian of her bed; grooms Philip and Janettus; Agnes, her laundress; Gillett, an outrider; Richard, her carter; Joan, who was designated as Marie's worker or "*operatrix*"; and at least two unnamed damsels and an unknown number of valets.[34]

Many of Marie's household attendants appear to have been provided for her from within the wider royal household. For example, a John Picard, who may also have been the custodian of Marie's bed, was described as the queen's baker in 1289–90.[35] Moreover, Marie's attendants were paid alongside the servants of the

27 Wardrobe and Household 1286–1289, nos 1681, 1703.
28 Ibid., no. 1871.
29 Wardrobe and Household 1286–1289, nos 213, 328, 455, 473.
30 Ibid., nos 343, 455.
31 Ibid., nos 1703, 1978.
32 Ibid., no. 1703.
33 Ibid., no. 1861.
34 Ibid., nos 1034, 2063, 2940; The Court and Household of Eleanor of Castile in 1290, ed. John C. Parsons, Toronto 1977, 130; London, The National Archives [Hereafter TNA], C 47/4/5 ff 4r, 9v.
35 London, TNA, C 47/4/4 ff 16v, 29v. This may have been the same 'John le Picard' who also looked after the wardrobe and household of John of Brabant, the betrothed of Edward's daughter Margaret, in 1287: Wardrobe and Household 1286–1289, no. 155. Also, a Gilletti son

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royal family and were also provided with livery. When covering the expenses of carters and coachmen in Gascony at Blanquefort, Marie's carter was paid alongside three carters of the king's wardrobe and eight carters of the queen's wardrobe.[36] Her servants also received summer and winter shoes, as well as money for new robes.[37] Additionally, two of Marie's damsels received gifts of a girdle each from the queen, Eleanor of Castile. The treatment of Marie's household members by the king and queen suggest that Marie and her household were considered a part of, or at least an extension of, the English royal household.

Edward not only provided Marie's attendants with robes, but he was also keen to ensure that Marie was suitably attired, especially for some of the most important events at court. For each of the major feast days Marie was provided with sumptuous clothing that befitted her elite status. For example, for Christmas 1288, furs, pelts and silk thread were purchased at a cost of 13s. 3d. for her tailor, Nicholas, to make her robes.[38] On a number of occasions, being suitably dressed for the festivities involved the creation of multiple sets of robes. For Pentecost 1289, Marie had three sets of robes made and repaired for her use, made of tiretaine, worsted and samite.[39] The following Pentecost of 1290, Marie's tailor, Colin Perche, was paid 25s. 8d. for making a tunic, two supertunics, a cape and a mantle for Marie. Notably, the most exquisite outfit Marie received for this feast was a robe of Tripoli cameline, given to her by the queen.[40]

It was not only on feast days that Marie was provided with costly new robes. Marie's presence at court in 1290 coincided with the weddings of two of her cousins: Joan and Margaret. In May 1290 at Westminster Abbey, Edward's daughter, Joan of Acre, was married to one of the most powerful English earls, Gilbert de Clare, the earl of Gloucester.[41] Marie's tailor seems to have been unprepared for the scale of the occasion and was required to hire four assistants in London for nine days for the making and sewing of certain things for a *cointise*, to ensure they were ready for Marie to wear at the wedding.[42] The second royal wedding of the year took place just over two months after Joan's nuptials, when her younger sister Margaret married John, heir to the duchy of Brabant, at Westminster Abbey in July.[43] On this occasion, Marie was elaborately dressed and provided with four different outfits to wear during the festivities, including two

of Gilletti, who may be Gillett, is named within the king's household in 1289–90: London, TNA, C 47/4/4 ff 16v, 29v.

36 Wardrobe and Household 1286–1289, no. 473.

37 Ibid., nos 2024, 2063, 2940; London, BL, Add. MS 60313, m. 8.

38 Wardrobe and Household 1286–1289, no. 1687.

39 Ibid., no. 1978.

40 London, TNA, C 47/4/5f. 9v.

41 Wilkinson 2020, 92.

42 London, TNA, C 47/4/5f. 9v.

43 Wilkinson 2020, 89.

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sets of robes, each comprising three garments of bluet and of indigo sindon, as well as additional robes of violet samite and a *cointise* of cloth of gold.[44] The luxury of Marie's wardrobe for Margaret's wedding was perhaps a result of the extravagance of the festivities themselves. Edward held a great, "incomparable feast", attended by the leading magnates of England, and their knightly retinues, with everyone dressed in precious clothes.[45] From the king's palace, knights and ladies paraded through the streets of London, dancing and rejoicing, accompanied by the fools, harlequins, harpers, violinists, trumpeters and minstrels that had been summoned from across England and the continent for the occasion.[46] Marie's attendance at both nuptials is indicative of her position within the heart of the English king's court and household, and the wardrobe and household accounts reveal Edward ensured that his niece was dressed fittingly for every occasion.

Another key aspect of noble life that Edward supported Marie in was her piety, sponsoring much of her almsgiving. On the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary 1289, the king paid for the alms of Marie, Isabella de Beaumont (wife of John de Vescy) and other ladies and damsels staying with the king's household at *Abos*.[47] The de Vescys, barons of Alnwick, were close associates with the king and queen, suggesting something of Marie's proximity to her aunt and uncle, as well as the elite nature of the circles in which Marie now found herself at court.[48] Edward also regularly included his niece in his personal devotion. In 1289, the king's almoner was provided with 5s. 3d. for the specific purpose of fulfilling the king's and Marie's Maundy Thursday obligations.[49] The 1290 Maundy Thursday acts of charity involved the distribution of 106 ells of cloth (worth £7 19s.) to the poor by the king, queen, Lord Edward, his four sisters and Marie.[50] Later that year, as part of the king's alms, 52 poor were fed on behalf of three of the king's daughters and Marie.[51] Twelve large pieces of Breton cloth, which had been purchased at Bordeaux at a cost of £9 17s. 5½d., were also given

44 London, TNA, C 47/4/5f. 12v.

45 Annales Monastici, ed. Henry R. Luard, London 1869, IV, 325; Bartholomew Cotton, Historia Anglicana, ed. Henry R. Luard, London 1859, 176–177.

46 Green 1857, II, 371–372.

47 Wardrobe and Household 1286–1289, no. 2491. The location of *Abos* or *Abbos* in Gascony is unclear: Itinerary of King Edward the First Throughout his Reign, A.D. 1272–1307, ed. Henry Gough, Paisley 1900, II, 54.

48 Keith Stringer, Nobility and Identity in Medieval Britain and Ireland: the de Vescy Family, c. 1120–1314, in: Brendan Smith (ed.), Britain and Ireland 900–1300: Insular Responses to Medieval European Change, Cambridge 1999, 199–239, here 204, 207–8.

49 Wardrobe and Household 1286–1289, no. 2519.

50 London, TNA, C 47/4/4f. 40r.

51 Ibid., f. 43r.

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to the poor by the king, queen and Marie.[52] These examples show that Marie was closely integrated in the charitable acts of the English royal family.

Marie also accompanied her kin on pilgrimage and was included in their oblations. In August 1289, the royal family was in Canterbury where offerings were made to St Thomas Becket on behalf of the king and queen, the king's son, his five daughters and Marie.[53] Oblations were also offered to the abbey church of St Augustine's Canterbury: 49s. were given to the shrine of St Adriana on behalf of Edward, the king's son, his five daughters and Marie, and 42s. to the shrine of St Mildred the Virgin on behalf of the king's five daughters and Marie.[54] Marie also accompanied the royal family to Chertsey Abbey and Caversham and was included in the oblations, totalling 63s. at each site, that were made by the king, queen and their children.[55]

The award of 7s. per person was common in the royal family's offerings, and in each of the records detailing these gifts and payments, Marie is explicitly named as a benefactor alongside the king, queen and their children. That Marie was included on these pilgrimages, and Edward contributed gifts of equal status on her behalf, further indicates that Marie was treated like one of the royal family. Edward's familial, affective sentiment towards his niece is perhaps most evident in his payment of 49s. 5d. to the monks of Greyfriars, London. This gift was made on Marie's behalf for the continued celebration of mass for the soul of her mother, Beatrice, who was buried in their church.[56]

Edward also appears to have been concerned for Marie's welfare and well-being. While Marie attended the itinerant English royal court, she often suffered from ill-health. Edward ensured that his niece was well cared for during these periods of infirmity. For example, as Marie convalesced at the abbey of Divielle in September 1288, Edward covered the expenses of her valets who remained with her.[57] Additionally, when Marie fell ill at Silverstone in September 1290, Edward purchased poultices and other medicines for her recovery from Richard Leuneyse, apothecary of Northampton.[58]

Edward treated Marie as if she was one of his own daughters. In all aspects of her courtly life, the English king provided for Marie both materially and spiritually: furnishing her with a chamber and equipping it with household staff and goods; financing her expenditure; ensuring she was dressed in exquisite clothing

52 Wardrobe and Household 1286–1289, no. 2528.
53 Ibid., no. 2542. Mary, nun at Amesbury priory, joined her parents and siblings on these visits.
54 Ibid., no. 2542.
55 Ibid., nos 2560 and 2562.
56 Ibid., no. 2560; Laura Slater, Defining Queenship at Greyfriars, c.1300–58, in: Gender & History 27 (2015), 53–76.
57 Wardrobe and Household 1286–1289, no. 1034.
58 London, TNA, C 47/4/5f. 12v.

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for the festivities; and supporting her pious acts. Edward's reasons for treating Marie so were probably manifold. As one of his sister's daughters, she was kin, and much like the relationships with his own daughters, the cultivation of these personal ties potentially could have been expected to have diplomatic and political benefits in the future.[59]

2. Eleanor: The Religious Life

The closeness between Marie and her uncle was not replicated with Beatrice's youngest daughter, Eleanor. Despite being born in England in 1275 and conceivably named after her grandmother, Eleanor of Provence, much of her relationship with her royal kin was shaped by the religious life she led from a young age. In advance of the retirement of the queen dowager to Amesbury priory, two of her granddaughters, Eleanor and Mary (Edward and Eleanor of Castile's daughter), entered the religious house.[60] According to the annalist Nicholas Trivet, who wrote his history at the instigation of Mary, Edward's daughter entered the religious community at Amesbury on the feast of the Assumption 1285, with the reluctant consent of her parents, but at the insistence of the queen mother, who took the veil there herself the following year.[61] He does not record the young Eleanor's entry to Amesbury and it is unclear when this took place. She may have been one of the thirteen young noble girls mentioned in the annals of Worcester as entering the nunnery as companions to Mary.[62] Yet, Green suggests that Eleanor was already at Amesbury before Mary joined.[63]

Just as her entry at the priory, Eleanor's life at Amesbury is sparsely documented. More is known about Mary her cousin, because she maintained her royal lifestyle, regularly returning to court and was provided with an annual income from her father.[64] Eleanor, on the other hand, does not appear to have enjoyed a peripatetic life as a nun, but rather remained at the priory. Nevertheless, her royal kin continued to support her as a cloistered royal woman. Her grandmother, Eleanor of Provence, granted the manor of Chaddleworth, Berkshire, with the

59 See Wilkinson 2020.
60 Howell 1998, 103; Green 1857, vol.2, 267.
61 Nicholas Trivet, Annales, ed. Thomas Hog, London 1845, 310.
62 Annales Monastici, IV, 491.
63 Green 1857, II, 408. Margaret Howell states that Eleanor entered Amesbury aged ten, with seven companions: Howell 1998, 300.
64 Green 1857, II, 404–442.

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advowson of Poughley, to Amesbury, to provide for Eleanor's maintenance during her life.[65]

As a result of the presence of the dowager queen, Mary and Eleanor, the English royal family regularly visited Amesbury.[66] Eleanor's sister Marie spent time at Amesbury visiting her grandmother in February 1290, for which Edward provided an escort and covered her travelling expenses.[67] Similarly, Marie joined the royal court visiting Amesbury between 15 and 18 April 1290.[68] Marie may also have returned to Amesbury later that year, as one of the king's servants was paid £20 for his expenses in conducting the king's niece to the queen mother at Amesbury.[69] Although Eleanor's attendance at these meetings is unrecorded, she would presumably have been present for these family reunions. The visits by Marie to her sister, cousin and grandmother suggest that there were close affective ties between Eleanor of Provence and her granddaughters. While Marie became close to her uncle the king, and her cousins, including the future Edward II, Eleanor, on the other hand, had a much more distant relationship with these kin. Instead, she was much closer to her grandmother and Mary, her similarly cloistered cousin. This distinction would shape her later interactions with the English royal family.

3. Peace-weavers and Intermediaries?

One of the expected roles of medieval women, particularly elite women, was to act as peace-weavers and intermediaries. As marriage became a key diplomatic tool in forging alliances and brokering peace,[70] women were at the heart of complex networks of dynastic relationships. Elite women, in their roles as daughters, wives and mothers, were expected to mediate between both their natal and affinal families.[71] Therefore, the creation and maintenance of good relationships with female relatives could prove politically important.

Marie and Eleanor's time spent alongside their English royal kin was, however, short-lived. The year 1290–1291 marked the end of the presence of both of Beatrice's daughters in England. In October 1290, Edward purchased packhorses,

65 *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England [hereafter PROME]*, ed. Chris Given-Wilson/Paul Brand et al., Woodbridge 2005, Original Documents: Edward I Parliaments, Roll 6, no. 16.

66 After Mary's entrance in August 1285 and before the end of 1290, the king visited Amesbury a further four times: Itinerary of King Edward, 297.

67 London, TNA, C 47/4/5f. 3v.

68 Itinerary of King Edward, 68; London, TNA, C 47/4/5 f. 3v.

69 London, BL, Add. MS 60313, m. 8.

70 See Martin Aurell, Stratégies Matrimoniales de l'Aristocratie (IX^{e}–XIII^{e} siècles), in: Michel Rouche (dir.), Marriage et Sexualité au Moyen Age, Paris 2000, 185–202.

71 See Theresa Earenfight, Queenship in Medieval Europe, Basingstoke 2013, ch. 3.

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equipment and baggage carts, totalling over £7, for Marie's return to Brittany.[72] Shortly after in 1291, following the death of her grandmother in June that year, her father, John of Brittany, requested that Eleanor move to Amesbury's mother house, Fontevraud abbey.[73] While Eleanor's departure was instigated by her father, the reason for Marie's departure is unexplained. Perhaps Marie had been recalled by her father to marry, although she was not wed until 1292. Or possibly the growing hostilities between England and France had made the Breton duke reluctant to have his daughter abroad.[74] Furthermore, 1290 witnessed the marriage of two of Edward's daughters, and John may have feared that the English king had designs for Marie's hand. Nevertheless, these are only suppositions, and the reason behind Marie's return remains unclear. Before Eleanor departed Amesbury, however, she was professed as a nun, conceivably to ensure that she headed to Fontevraud and was not recalled to Brittany by her father for marriage, as Marie appears to have been.[75] Despite the departures of Marie and Eleanor, both continued to interact with members of the English royal family to varying degrees.

4. Married to the Enemy

A little over a year and a half after Marie's return to Brittany, she was married to Guy IV de Châtillon, count of Saint Pol. The marriage contract for the union survives as a single-sheet confirmation dated July 1292, whereby Philip IV of France ratified the agreement made between her father, John II, duke of Brittany, and Hugh de Châtillon, count of Blois, Guy's brother.[76] As part of the contract Hugh, count of Blois, confirmed his concession of the county of Saint Pol to Guy. This endowment was made in 1291 following the death, without issue, of Joan, countess of Blois, their cousin, whose lands passed to the sons of Guy III, count of Saint Pol and Mahaut of Brabant, countess of Artois. When Hugh received the county of Blois, he then granted the county of Saint Pol, which he had inherited from their father, to Guy.[77] The county of Saint Pol was located in northern France, neighbouring the counties of Artois, Flanders, Boulogne, Ponthieu and

72 London, TNA, C 47/4/5f. 15v.
73 Howell 1998, 309.
74 Marie's older brother John became a steadfast adherent to the English king, fighting for his uncle against the French king in Gascony, before participating in the Scottish wars: Lubimenko 1908.
75 Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on Manuscripts in Various Collections, Volume 1, London 1901, 347–348.
76 Nantes, Archives Départementales Loire-Atlantique, E 7–3.
77 Chronique Latine de Guillaume de Nangis de 1113 à 1300, ed. Hercule Géraud, Tome Premier, Paris 1843, 280.

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Hainault. During the 1290s, as tensions rose between the kings of England and France, the northern counties and duchies of France and the Low Countries were divided in their allegiance. Edward assembled a continental alliance comprising the German king, the archbishop of Cologne and the count of Flanders, as well as the duchy of Brabant and the counties of Bar and Holland, secured through the marriages of his daughters, Margaret, Eleanor and Elizabeth in 1290, 1293 and 1297 respectively.[78] The count of Saint Pol would have made another useful ally if Edward had been able to maintain strong ties with Marie, yet her marriage secured Guy's position as count, as well as his promotion to the position of Grand Butler of France with 2000 livres of rent annually.[79] John's removal of his daughter from the company and influence of her uncle is perhaps indicative of the importance of the physical custody of female relatives. This act prevented Marie from being of any political use or advantage to her English kin, firmly placing her on the opposing side to Edward in the Anglo-French conflict.

Although Marie was aligned with the French king through her husband and father, it did not rupture all her ties to the English king, her uncle. 1297 witnessed the peak of the conflict between the French king and his allies – led by Robert II, count of Artois, and including Marie's husband, Guy IV, count of Saint Pol – against Guy Dampierre, count of Flanders, and Edward and his allies.[80] With the English king's arrival in Flanders delayed, the failure of his continental allies to materialise and the defeat of the count of Flanders, a truce was concluded between Edward and Philip IV on 9 October 1297.[81] This pause in the Anglo-French hostilities allowed the resumption of communication between Marie and Edward. In November 1297, while the English king was at Ghent, he appears to have been visited by Marie. She may also have been reunited with her cousins Eleanor, Margaret and Elizabeth, who attended the king's Christmas court at Ghent.[82] According to an inventory of jewels recorded in the wardrobe book of the 29th year of Edward's reign (20 November 1300–19 November 1301), Edward was given a pair of small knives with silver enamelled handles and a crystal fork by Lady Marie of Brittany, countess of Saint Pol, at Ghent on 20 November 1297.[83] It is unclear whether this gift was given in person; nevertheless, the circumstances are rather extraordinary. In an act that may have put Marie in a difficult position – in the middle between her uncle, and her husband and father – Marie's gift demonstrates the affection with which she held the English king, who had treated her like a daughter. That the gift was kept by Edward, rather than redistributed, is

78 Michael Prestwich, Edward I, New Haven/London 1997, 387–388.
79 André du Chesne, Histoire de la Maison de Chastillon sur Marne, Paris 1621, 276.
80 Guillaume de Nangis, 299.
81 Prestwich 1997, 393.
82 Wilkinson 2020, 101.
83 London, BL, Add. MS 7966 A, f. 148r.

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indicative of the reciprocation of this affection.[84] Marie could have been a useful intermediary for the treating for peace, yet none of her male relatives appear to have tried to use her in this regard as a peace-weaver. This may have been because of her lack of experience: throughout her time at the English court, Marie does not appear to have petitioned or interceded with her uncle on behalf of others, and there is no extant evidence of continued correspondence with her father in Brittany. Edward had also previously tried to use his female relations to prevent the outbreak of war with France without success.[85]

Edward and Marie's relationship after her departure from England appears to have been affective and spiritual. In the week preceding Marie's gift, on 12 November 1290, Edward gave Marie two gold brooches, worth 25 marks and 6 marks, to offer at the shrines of St Edmund of Abingdon at Pontigny and St Martin of Tours on the king's behalf.[86] Similarly, the following day, Marie was given a gold drinking cup by the king, which Edward himself had received from the countess of Provence, his aunt and Marie's great-aunt, to offer to the shrine of St Denis in Paris, again on his behalf.[87] These gifts suggest that Edward was employing Marie as a conduit for spiritual matters; using his niece, who was closely allied to the French king through her male relatives, to make his offerings at important cult sites on the continent during a time of war. While Marie was at the English court, Edward had helped to facilitate and include Marie in his alms and oblations; whereas now, the roles appear to have reversed, with Marie helping to facilitate Edward's saintly veneration.

These close religious bonds between uncle and niece are also apparent in British Library MS Egerton 745.[88] The miscellany contains illustrated French lives of St Eustace, St Denis and Edward the Confessor, among others. It also includes a miniature of a man kneeling, wearing the heraldry of the Châtillon family. From the combination of the saints' lives and the miniature, Judith Golden has concluded that Marie probably commissioned the manuscript for her son. The association of the sainted king of England, the patron saint of France alongside two Breton saints (Gildas and Martin of Vertou), emphasise Marie's position at the heart of a kinship network connecting the English royal family, the duke of Brittany and the count of Saint Pol.[89] This manuscript, as well as the offerings

84 Edward also kept gifts given to him by his daughters: Wilkinson 2020, 103.

85 For the importance of kinship, especially female kin, in diplomacy in the Gascon conflict, see Neal 2020.

86 London, BL, Add. MS 7965, f. 139r.

87 Ibid., f. 147r.

88 Judith K. Golden, Images of Instruction, Marie de Bretagne, and the Life of St. Eustace as Illustrated in British Library Ms. Egerton 745, in: Colum Hourihane (ed.), Insights and Interpretations: Studies in Celebration of the Eighty-Fifth Anniversary of the Index of Christian Art, Princeton 2002, 60–84.

89 Ibid., 73.

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made in both England and France, suggest a spiritual affinity between Edward and Marie. Although Edward was unable to make any sort of political gain through his close ties to his Breton niece, he did gain spiritual benefits, and their interactions suggest mutual affection.

5. Indifferent and Unbending

The closeness of Marie and her uncle was not mirrored in Eleanor's interactions with her English kin. Eleanor's relationship with the English royal family, which had been much more distant, was only called upon when needed following her withdrawal to Fontevraud. Despite her religious vocation, Eleanor was not approached in a spiritual capacity; many of her interactions were political in nature.

Eleanor's first encounter with the English king occurred in 1293, not long after her departure. At the Easter parliament, Eleanor petitioned her uncle to secure her rights to Chaddleworth manor, which her grandmother had assigned to be used for her maintenance for life, while Eleanor was at Amesbury priory.[90] This petition is the only extant evidence that states that Chaddleworth had been intended for the young nun's maintenance. The original grant of the manor to Amesbury had been made in 1284, before the entry of Eleanor, Mary or their grandmother, to help alleviate the priory's debts.[91] After Eleanor's departure, Chaddleworth had been leased to William of Claybrooke for three years. In response, Edward decided favourably on his niece's behalf. It was decided that the manor would remain with William until the agreed term was completed, and afterwards the manor, with all its appurtenances and the advowson of the priory of Poughley, would revert to the Fontevraud nun for life.[92]

Eleanor's election as abbess of Fontevraud in 1304, Amesbury's motherhouse, brought her back into contact with her English cousins.[93] Berenice Kerr describes Eleanor as a strong abbess, absolute in her rule, maintaining control over the abbey's dependant priories.[94] As abbess, Eleanor was resolute in her dealings with her cousins, Mary the nun at Amesbury and Edward II. During the early-fourteenth century, Mary had been performing the role of visitor in England; however, the commission lapsed. As a result, Edward II – probably prompted by his sister – wrote to Eleanor asking for Mary to be reinstated as a visitor to the order's houses. Edward does not appear to have received a response. The evidence of his

90 PROME, Original Documents: Edward I Parliaments, Roll 6, no. 16.
91 Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Edward I, 1281–1292, London 1893, 128.
92 PROME, Original Documents: Edward I Parliaments, Roll 6, no. 16.
93 Berenice M. Kerr, Religious Life for Women, c.1100–c.1350: Fontevraud in England, Oxford 1999, 99.
94 Ibid., 132.

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request exists in a further letter written to the dean of Angers, dated May 1317.[95] In this letter Edward stated that he had already written to the abbess, and asked the dean to induce his cousin to do what she had thus far delayed. Edward expressed his surprise at his cousin's inactivity, because she did not make the visitations herself as abbess. He also related that there was no better candidate for the role than Mary. In encouraging Mary's re-appointment, Edward stressed that Mary did not necessarily have to be a permanent appointment, but that the abbess could replace her at will. Moreover, in a suggestion perhaps indicative of why Eleanor seemed reluctant to restore Mary to a position of authority, Edward also made a rather odd remark that he had not heard that Mary had in any way deviated from proper conduct while previously executing visitations.

As Eleanor and Mary had been at Amesbury together from a young age, Eleanor was perhaps mindful of her cousin; conscious of the extravagant, royal lifestyle she maintained as a nun. Additionally, reports may have surfaced concerning Mary's behaviour as a visitor, which may have prompted Edward's remark and made Eleanor reluctant to appoint her cousin. This was not the first time Mary had sought her brother's intervention with their cousin the abbess. In 1309, Mary petitioned Edward, asking him to write to Eleanor to ensure the election of the convent's nominee as abbess, rather than some alien.[96] Mary believed that Eleanor's strong personal ties should have made her more amenable, as Eleanor had been raised and veiled among the nuns at Amesbury.[97] Yet Eleanor was dedicated to her post, not allowing familial sentiment to affect her judgement. She only appears to have relented following the English king's formal request.[98] Perhaps because Mary and Eleanor appear to have had very different experiences of cloistered life at Amesbury, little familial sentiment had been fostered between the pair. Moreover, Kerr suggests that the time Mary and Eleanor spent together helped the abbess to know how to manage her cousin.[99] Eleanor was determined in her interactions with her English royal kin after her arrival at Fontevraud; she protected her rights with support of her uncle, but refused to habitually bend to the will of her cousins.

95 Calendar of the Close Rolls, Edward II, 1313–1318, London 1893, 470.
96 Letters of Royal and Illustrious Ladies of Great Britain, Volume I, ed. Mary A. E. Wood, London 1846, 60–63.
97 Ibid., 62–63.
98 Kerr 1999, 133.
99 Ibid., 137.

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6. Conclusion: Political and Affective Ties

Different political, familial and affective ties bound the English king and his Breton nieces. Many of the interactions between Edward and Marie suggest an affection for one another, such as Edward's concern for Marie's health or the exchange of gifts. Moreover, their shared saintly veneration, and Marie's oblations on her uncle's behalf, indicate close spiritual bonds between the pair. Yet that is not to say that these acts were devoid of political overtones or motivations. At the elite levels of society, when both men and women had very specific roles, it is almost impossible to separate political relationships and affective ties. In the context of discussing the marriage of daughters to forge alliances, Kimberley LoPrete stated that if a daughter were to foster her natal family's interests in a new household, she would need to identify with them.[100] Anyone hoping to exploit their kinship network for political gain could only benefit from creating a common sense of interest and mutual obligations. Although some of Edward's actions can be seen to have been motivated by one factor or the other, both, essentially, go hand in hand. Nevertheless, although Eleanor, as abbess, appears to have responded more favourably to her kin when political concerns – rather than familial sentiments – were at the fore, this did not prevent her cousins from attempting to make use of these bonds.

In conclusion, Marie and Eleanor, the daughters of Beatrice, had close but differing relationships with their English royal kin. Marie was a constant companion of the royal court during the late 1280s, following the itinerant royal family to Gascony and around England, with her uncle financing her elite roles and lifestyle; nevertheless, these close ties could not be exploited for English political gain. The proximity of Marie to her uncle may have been a factor in her father's decision to recall her to Brittany and find her a husband. As a result, Edward could not use her in his conflict against the French king during the 1290s, or else decided against the attempt. Despite these familial tensions, Edward was still closely associated with his niece, exchanging gifts and asking Marie to help his veneration of saints at French locations, which he could not perform personally, suggestive of the close bond between the two. Conversely, Eleanor's childhood at Amesbury, alongside her cousin Mary, failed to foster strong familial ties. In fact, Eleanor's intimate knowledge of her cousin's behaviour as a nun seems to have made her reluctant as abbess to appoint Mary to a position of authority. These relationships – or lack of – between Marie, Eleanor, Edward I, Edward II and his sisters, could not – in the case of Marie, who was subject to the authority and allegiances of her father and husband – and would not – in the case

100 Kimberly A. LoPrete, Adela of Blois as Mother and Countess, in: John C. Parsons/Bonnie Wheeler (eds.), Medieval Mothering, London 1996, 313–33, here 315.

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of Eleanor, as abbess of Fontevraud – be allowed to be of political benefit to the English royal family. Instead, networks that had been forged with such potential between the English royal and Breton ducal families petered out. The examination of Marie and Eleanor's lives and their interactions with their English royal kin emphasises the differing roles and agency of elite women, as well as the tensions and limitations of kinship ties across the political divide.

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Mercedes Pérez Vidal

Female Aristocratic Networks: Books, Liturgy and Reform in Castilian Nunneries

Abstract

Recent studies have shown the necessity of adopting a gendered perspective, revising women's roles as agents in religious reform processes, in particular, through the networks established between royal and aristocratic women and female monasteries, clearly based on kinship. However, it has been also evinced that women did not act alone but intervened with other agents: bishops, regular clergy, nobility, monarchs and other lay patrons. Reform was normally a negotiated process and a collective endeavour, developed through different networks, and an overlapping interaction of networks was not only frequent but indeed the historical norm. The study of this interaction helps to define reform processes carried out at different moments.

In particular, this article focuses on the circulation of liturgical books through these networks and their role in the introduction of reform. Liturgy was at the core of reform processes, but liturgical and devotional books have traditionally been overlooked in the analysis of these complex phenomena. On the contrary, transmission and circulation of liturgical and devotional books have a special place in discussions of cultural exchange between noble and royal women. Not randomly, these objects and books promoted by women were linked to religious foundations, and many were connected to liturgical commemorative practices. In this way, women played an active role in the liturgy in their religious foundations, by choosing which books would be donated or by creating the liturgical manuscripts themselves. Liturgical books were used as political tools to promote the dynasty of the women who commissioned them. However, at the same time, these books were both visual and textual sources that constituted a vehicle in the implementation of any kind of reform, and they conveyed the idiosyncrasy of these renewals, shaping the collective identity of religious communities. This article shows how both objectives were achieved together and how women used these sources with this twofold goal.

The donation, commission, production of books, especially in the case of new foundations, operated, however, through different networks, in a complex interaction. The essay's first section, following the introduction, analyses these liturgical books as a product and vehicle of a confluence of female networks and those constituted by the religious orders at national and international levels. Several examples, from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, from Cistercian, Dominican and Franciscan female monasteries are considered.

The second section focuses on the role of these books in some early reformist attempts, carried out between the mid-fourteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries, in certain Poor Clare

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and Dominican nuns' monasteries in Castile. These reforms were promoted in most cases by women, either queens, noblewomen or abbesses. They have been traditionally overlooked, being seen as isolated endeavours that differed from the top to bottom movement that constitutes the last phase in the long-term Observant reform process. The fundamental role of liturgical and devotional books in these attempts, which has remained understudied, is here analysed through several examples. Finally, in some cases, despite the apparent absence of texts, artworks, like the sepulchre of Beatriz de Portugal, constitute solid evidence pointing to the actual existence of these manuscripts and to the circulation of Observant ideals at much earlier dates than hitherto considered.

1. Introduction

As Steven Vanderputten has argued, reforms of individual institutions have to be analysed and understood as processes, rather than "flashpoint events". Hence, they should not be seen as a result of a charismatic reformer's agency nor as the simple implementation of a reformist programme. On the contrary, reform is normally a long-term process, with different phases and in which the tension between structure and agency is a constant.[1] Thus, in many cases, the preconceived scheme provided by the traditional narrative about reform does not correspond with reality.[2]

Regarding female monasticism in the Iberian Peninsula, traditional historiography has approached reform from the perspective of the "official" reformers, offering a vision of false homogeneity.[3] In particular, most works about the Observant reform focus on the period coinciding with the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, though this was only the later phase of a long-term reform process. Moreover, although the role of these monarchs cannot be denied, they were not the only agents; rather, many others were involved (the pope, female patronesses, nuns, etc). Reform was not always introduced smoothly but, in many cases, faced strong opposition and had to be imposed by repressive means. On the contrary, in other cases, it was accepted with little resistance or fostered by the nuns themselves or by female patronesses. Recent studies focused on the Iberian

1 Steven Vanderputten, Monastic Reform as Process: Realities and Representations in Medieval Flanders, 900–1100, Ithaca/London 2013, 8–13.

2 As has been proved for the case of the Observant reform of the German Dominican Order by Claire Jones, Ruling the Spirit: Women, Liturgy, and Dominican Reform in Late Medieval Germany, Philadelphia 2017.

3 Tarsicio de Azcona, Reforma de religiosas benedictinas y cistercienses de Cataluña en tiempo de los Reyes Católicos, in: Studia Monastica 9 (1967), 75–166; Carmen Soriano Triguero, La reforma de las clarisas en la Corona de Aragón (XV–XVI), in: Revista de historia moderna 13–14 (1995), 185–198. A more general study on Poor Clares, focused not only on the Iberian Peninsula, is Bert Roest, Order and Disorder: The Poor Clares between Foundation and Reform, Leiden 2013.

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Peninsula, as well as in other territories, have shown the necessity of adopting a gendered perspective, revising women's roles as agents in these reform processes. In particular, the relationship between queens, the so-called "house of the queen", royal monasteries constituted wide and dense networks that evinced women's agency in these processes.[4] However, they have also evinced that women did not act alone but intervened with other agents: bishops, regular clergy, nobility, monarchs and other lay patrons.[5]

So, our analysis should consider gender's relationship with other markers of difference, such as social class, place, or, here, religious order. All these factors interesected, but they did so differently from one nunnery to another. Hence, their consequences in all aspects of monastic life also varied from one place to other, showing the complexity of these processes. Reform was normally a negotiated process and a collective endeavour, developed through different networks. These included not only the official network of the respective religious order but also many others operating at local, national, and international levels, such as aristocratic and royal networks, female networks, networks based on kinship and so forth. An overlapping interaction of networks was not only frequent but the historical norm.[6] Studying this interaction helps to define reform processes carried out at different moments.

Liturgy was at the core of reform processes. Thus, books, and particularly those used in liturgy, constituted a vehicle in the implementation of any kind of reform. I start by examining these understudied sources, their circulation through different interrelated networks and the function and meaning that they had for female promoters and within the religious communities. Several exam-

4 Felipe Pereda, Liturgy as Women's Language: Two Noble Patrons Prepare for the End in Fifteenth-Century Spain, in Therese Martin (ed.), Reassessing the Roles of Women as "Makers" of Medieval Art and Architecture, Leiden 2012, II, 937–88; María del Mar Graña Cid, ¿Favoritas de la corona? Los amores del rey y la promoción de la Orden de Santa Clara en Castilla (ss. XIII–XIV), in: Anuario de Estudios Medievales 44,1 (2014), 179–213; Mercedes Pérez Vidal, La reforma de los monasterios de dominicas en Castilla. Agentes, etapas y consecuencias, in: Archivo Dominicano 36 (2015), 197–237; Diana Lucía Gómez-Chacón, Religiosidad femenina y reforma dominicana. El sepulcro de Beatriz de Portugal en el monasterio del Sancti Spiritus de Toro, in: Anuario de Estudios Medievales, 47,2 (2017), 607–645; María del Carmen García Herrero/Ángela Muñoz Fernández, Reginalidad y fundaciones monásticas en las Coronas de Castilla y de Aragón, in: Edad Media: revista de historia 18 (2017), 16–48; Juan Antonio Prieto Sayagués, El mecenazgo femenino en los monasterios y conventos de Castilla (1350–1474). Poder y espiritualidad, in Miguel García-Fernández/Silvia Cernadas Martínez (eds.), Reginae Iberiae. El poder femenino en los reinos medievales peninsulares, Santiago de Compostela 2015, 193–211.

5 The complexity of these processes has been recently clarified in the case of Observant Dominican nunneries in northern and central Italy. Sylvie Duval, 'Comme des anges sur terre'. Les moniales dominicaines et les debuts de la réforme observante, Rome 2015. See also Lucía Gómez-Chacón 2017, 607–645.

6 Caroline Levine, Forms: Whole, Rhythm, Hierarchy, Network, Princeton 2015, 113.

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ples, from the twelfth to fifteenth centuries, from Cistercian, Dominican and Franciscan female monasteries are considered. Female networks, or those constituted by the religious orders are discussed, as well as the interaction between them, with particular focus on the relationship between religious men and women. In the second section, I focus on books, mainly liturgical and devotional, as a means to implement Observant ideals in some Mendicant female monasteries in Castile between the mid-fourteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries. Some royal and noblewomen promoted this circulation between different female houses under the control of their relatives. By doing so, they contributed to reinforcing these aristocratic female networks based on lineage and to assuring their power over these monasteries and beyond; at the same time, they promoted also religious reform.

2. New Sources, New Perspectives: Liturgical Books and Luxury Items

To offer a more nuanced and accurate analysis of these complex reform processes, we have to consider types of sources traditionally overlooked, such as liturgical and devotional books and other material sources, like images, artworks and other artefacts.[7] The transmission and circulation of liturgical and devotional books,[8] as well as some material items (jewelry, textiles, chalices and liturgical pieces),[9] have a special place in discussions of cultural exchange between noble and royal women. All these costly objects not only reaffirmed the

7 Indeed, the importance of reform movements within the religious orders and in relation to art and architecture has not been taken into consideration until recently. See for instance: Diana Lucía Gómez-Chacón, El monasterio de Santa María la Real de Nieva. Reinas y predicadores en tiempo de reforma (1392–1445), Segovia 2016.

8 Rose Walker, Leonor of England and Eleanor of Castile: Anglo-Iberian Marriage and Cultural Exchange in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries, in María Bullón-Fernández (ed.), England and Iberia in the Middle Ages, 12th–15th Century: Cultural, Literary and Political Exchanges, New York 2007, 67–87; Therese Martin/John Williams, Women's Spaces – Real and Imagined – in the Illustrated Beatus Commentaries, in: Arenal. Revista de Historia de las Mujeres 25,2 (2018), 357–396.

9 Therese Martin, Mujeres, hermanas e hijas. El mecenazgo femenino en la familia de Alfonso VI, in: Anales de historia del arte 1 (2011), 147–179, https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_ANHA.2011.37485; Jitske Jasperse, Matilda, Leonor and Joanna: the Plantagenet Sisters and the Display of Dynastic Connections through Material Culture, in: Journal of Medieval History 43,5 (2017), 523–547, https://doi.org/10.1080/03044181.2017.1378918; Jitske Jasperse, Between León and the Levant: The Infanta Sancha's Altar as Material Evidence for Medieval History, in: Medieval Encounters 25,1–2 (2019), 124–149. https://doi.org/10.1163/15700674-1234004; Ana Rodríguez, Narrating the Treasury: What Medieval Iberian Chronicles Choose to Recount About Luxury Objects, in: Medieval Encounters (2019), 39–58, https://doi.org/10.1163/15700674-12340038.

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women's power and status but were frequently used as political tools to promote the dynasty of the women who commissioned them.[10]

Not randomly, these objects and books promoted by women were linked to religious foundations, and many were connected to liturgical commemorative practices. For instance, two stoles, made between 1297–1298, were donated to San Isidoro by Leonor Plantagenet, in which she proudly claimed her lineage: "Alienora Regina Castelle Filia Henrici Regis Anglie Me Fecit".[11] Almost one century earlier, infanta Urraca (1033–1101) also donated to San Isidoro a chalice made of two antique sardonyx cups encircled by a gold-filigreed inscription *IN NOMINE D*[OMI]*NI VRRACA FREDINA[N]DI*, still extant today, as well as a now-lost monumental crucifix with a high-relief representation of the infant kneeling at the foot of the cross.[12] According to the so-called 'Historia Legionense', called 'Silense', (ca. 1118–1130), both these gifts must be understood as fitting the infanta's desire to adorn sacred altars and the vestments of the clergy with gold, silver and precious stones.[13] In particular, it is worth noting that the chalice with Urraca's name was intended to be placed on the altar, to which women had no access as a result of the monastic and ecclesiastical reforms of the tenth to twelfth centuries.[14]

The commission and use of liturgical furniture, priestly garments and other liturgical artefacts came to symbolise the power achieved by these women.[15] We should likewise interpret the donation of liturgical books to monastic foundations and the commission of new ones, as well as the production of liturgical manuscripts inside the female monasteries.[16] Women played an active role in the

10 Jasperse 2017. Also from the same author: Medieval Women, Material Culture, and Power: Matilda Plantagenet and Her Sisters, Leeds 2020.

11 Cristina Partearroyo Lacaba, Bordados heráldicos medievales, in: Anales de la real academia matritense de heráldica y genealogía 8,2 (2004), 861–888, here 875–876.

12 Therese Martin, Caskets of Silver and Ivory from Diverse Parts of the World: Strategic Collecting for an Iberian Treasury, in: Medieval Encounters 25 (2019), 1–38, here 21–22.

13 *In ornandis auro argentoue pretiosisque gemnis sacris altarisbus sacerdotalibsuque vestimentis desiderátum exercitium peregit*, Historia Silense. Edición crítica e introducción, eds. Justo Pérez de Urbel and Atilano González Ruiz-Zorrilla Madrid 1959, 122–123, cited in Martin 2019, 22.

14 Gary Macy, The Ordination of Women in the Early Middle Ages, in: Theological Studies 61 (2000), 481–507, here 495.

15 Mercedes Pérez Vidal, El espacio litúrgico en los monasterios de dominicas en Castilla (Siglos XIII–XVI), in: Francisco Rodilla León et al. (eds.), Sonido y espacio. Antiguas experiencias musicales ibéricas/Sound and Space: Early Iberian Musical Experience, Madrid 2020, 75–115.

16 In the Iberian Peninsula, we have the pioneering work of Paula Cardoso on manuscript production in Dominican Observant monasteries in Portugal. Paula Cardoso, Beyond the Colophon: Assessing Roles in Manuscript Production and Acquisition in the Observant Dominican Nunneries of Early-Modern Portugal, in Pecia. Le livre et l'écrit, 19 Outils et pratiques des artisans du livre au Moyen Âge (2016), 59–85; Paula Cardoso, Art, reform and

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liturgy of their religious foundations by choosing which books to donate or creating the liturgical manuscripts themselves, sometimes introducing original and specific offices, *historiae* or *sequentiae,* into the liturgy.[17] Moreover, liturgical books were both visual and textual sources that, as studies of other territories have shown, constituted a vehicle of implementation in any kind of reform; they conveyed the idiosyncrasy of these reforms and shaped the collective identity of communities.[18]

The donation, commission and production of books, especially in the case of new foundations, operates through various networks in complex interactions. The Cistercian monastery of Las Huelgas in Burgos constitutes a clear example in this regard. The books preserved there have different provenances. They circulated through different networks, such as that of the Cistercian Order, which operated at different levels and with different centres (both Citeaux and, in our case, Alcobaça), including through local networks created by relationships with other religious centres in the area. The books were also transmitted through royal and aristocratic networks, particularly those created by noblewomen or nuns. Some of them had a foreign origin and underwent a long journey before reaching this monastic institution, like the so-called Martyrology 1 that was actually a 'Liber Capituli' from Cîteaux.[19] The late-twelfth-century antiphonary (Ms. 10) had a different provenance. Jordan believes that it originated in North France or England, while Rose Walker suggests it was made near Burgos, probably at San Pedro de Cardeña.[20] More recent studies have shown how both its Clairvaux-modelled musical notation and artistic features point to the Cistercian mon-

female agency in the Portuguese Dominican Nunneries: Nuns as Producers and Patrons of illuminated manuscripts (ca. 1460–1560), PhD dissertation, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, 2019. See also Mercedes Pérez Vidal, Creación, destrucción y dispersión del patrimonio litúrgico de los monasterios de dominicas en España y Nueva España, in: Forma, Revista d'Estudis Comparatius. Art, Literatura, Pensament 12 (2015), 25–46.

17 Jeffrey F. Hamburger et al., Liturgical Life and Latin Learning at Paradies bei Soest, 1300–1425: Inscription and Illumination in the Choir Books of a North German Dominican Convent, Münster 2016, I, 231–280.

18 As Claire Jones has recently show for the German Dominican observant nuns, the Divine Office was at the core of their spirituality and was the means by which they could reform their communities. Jones, 2017.

19 Sánchez Ameijeiras proposed that it was made around 1220–1230 in Citeaux. The codicological analysis made by Ana Suárez González specified that it was made between 1236 and 1247 for Citeaux, where it was used, as marginal notes show. Later, the book travelled to Burgos, sometime between 1240 and 1287, probably during the ruling of the abbess Eva (1261–1262). Ana Suárez González, Un ex libris y algunas respuestas sobre el 'MS.1' de las Huelgas de Burgos, in: Cistercium 245 (2006), 587–614.

20 Weseley D. Jordan, An Introductory Description and Commentary Concerning the Identification of Four Twelfth-Century Music-Liturgical Manuscripts from the Cistercian Monastery of Las Huelgas. Burgos, Cîteaux: Commentarii cistercienses 44,1–4 (1992), 152–236; Walker 2007, 76.

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astery of Alcobaça as its probable origin. Its illumination shows affinities with other Portuguese manuscripts from female Cistercian monasteries, mainly two antiphonaries from Arouca and a Gradual from Lorvão. All of them seem to have been produced in Alcobaça whence they would have been disseminated to the Cistercian female foundations of Lorvão and Arouca.[21]

Although all these three monasteries were incorporated into the Cistercian Order in the second or third decade of the thirteenth century,[22] the agents or promoters of this circulation seem to have been different women of the Portuguese royal house who had a close relationship to these monasteries, as well as to the kingdoms of León and Castile. They were the infanta Mafalda (c. 1195–1256), who introduced Cistercian observance in Arouca, her sister, the infanta Teresa (ca. 1176–1250), who was patroness of São Mamede de Lorvão, a former male Benedictine foundation that was transformed into a Cistercian nunnery in 1206[23] and, finally, at a later date, the infanta Branca de Portugal (1259–1321), who was *senhora* of Lorvão in 1277 and later of Las Huelgas (from 1295 to her death in 1321). We have no evidence, but Branca may have donated the aforementioned antiphonary to Las Huelgas.[24] These female kinship and court networks overlapped with the Cistercian network, or they were even more important, reinforcing it and creating new relationships, bonds and intersections. Also, as we have seen, these networks extended to the neighbouring kingdom of Castile. Indeed, as Rodriguez Porto has pointed out, we can talk about a pan-European courtesan network.[25]

Among Dominicans, we also find examples of books that were a product and vehicle of this confluence of networks. For instance, a portable breviary from Santo Domingo de Toledo, to which I will return later, was a probable donation of

21 Fernando Galván Freile, El proceso de internacionalización de la miniatura en torno al año 1200 en la Península Ibérica. El antifonario de Las Huelgas Reales de Burgos, in: El monacato en los reinos de León y Castilla (siglos VII–XIII), Ávila 2007, 437–456.

22 Alfonso VIII placed Las Huelgas in direct affiliation with Cîteaux in 1199. Ghislain Baury, Les religieuses de Castille. Patronage aristocratique et ordre cistercien XIIe–XIIIe siècles, Rennes 2012, 145–149. Lorvão became officially Cistercian by pontifical determination in 1211, whereas Arouca was incorporated into the Order by the General Chapter in the decade of 1220s. Luís Rêpas, As abadessas cistercienses na Idade Média. Identificação, caracterização e estudo de trajectórias individuais ou familiar, in: Lusitania Sacra, 2,17 (2005), 63–91, here 65.

23 Luís Correia da Sousa/Adelaide Miranda, Confluências artísticas em torno de 1200: manuscritos iluminados cistercienses-Alcobaça e Las Huelgas Reales de Burgos, in Marta Poza Yagüe/Diana Olivares Martínez (eds.), Alfonso VIII y Leonor de Inglaterra. Confluencias artísticas en el entorno de 1200, Madrid, 2017, 423–443, here 430.

24 Manuel Pedro Ferreira, Early Cistercian Polyphony: A Newly-Discovered Source, in: Lusitania Sacra, 2ª série, XIII–XIV (2001–2002), 267–313, here 269.

25 Rosa María Rodríguez Porto, Tramas manuscritas. Difusión y fortuna de los modelos anglonormandos en la iluminación del libro castellano (1170–1369), in Amaia Arizaleta/Francisco Bautista, Los modelos anglo-normandos en la cultura letrada de Castilla (siglos XII–XIV), Madrid 2019, 137–154, here 142.

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queen Catherine of Lancaster (1373–1418), who acted as a "vector of cultural exchange" to this community of Dominican nuns (see fig. 1). Thus, kinship bonds not only connected these elite women to each other, with other women belonging to the so-called "house of the queen" and with their male relatives but also with monastic foundations.[26] They created veritable networks of nuns within and between monastic communities. Nuns used the sharing and gifting of books to build relationships with different purposes: political, spiritual, liturgical or intellectual.[27]

We must also consider the sharing of books between religious men and women, something that was very common but deserves further study in the Iberian Peninsula. This is documented by material evidence from the manuscripts themselves, such as colophons and possession notes, as well as by other documentary sources. For instance, Aldonza Manuel, prioress of Santa María de Medina del Campo, bought books from the prior of San Pablo in Peñafiel in 1419.[28] In the same way, in 1394, the prioress of Santo Domingo de Toledo, María de Castilla, bought a book of the Gospels and a book of the Epistles, which had been previously borrowed by the nuns from the friars of the nearby convent of San Pablo del Granadal.[29] In both cases, and as was common, the book's acquisition occurred during the monastery's first years of existence and was made by the prioresses. Another example is provided by a thirteenth-century Franciscan breviary held at the Biblioteca Nacional de España (BNE Ms/239) of uncertain origin that was originally created for a male community and shortly after adapted for use by a female monastery. This can be determined thanks to additions to the calendar (ff. 228–v234) and the mention of a certain *abbatissa*

26 María del Mar Graña Cid analysed the foundational processes of mendicant female monasteries in Castile through visible forms of interaction between sexes. María del Mar Graña Cid, Reinas, infantas y damas de corte en el origen de las monjas mendicantes castellanas (c. 1222–1316). Matronazgo espiritual y movimiento religioso femenino, in Blanca Garí (eds.), Redes femeninas de promoción espiritual en los Reinos Peninsulares (s. XIII–XVI), Roma 2013, 21–43; Graña Cid 2014. On the power of Iberian queens in the Middle Ages, see also the monographical number Ana Echevarría Arsuaga/Nikolas Jaspert (eds.), El ejercicio del poder de las reinas ibéricas en la Edad Media, Anuario de Estudios Medievales 46,1 (2016), https://doi.org/10.3989/aem.2016.v46.i1.

27 Melissa Moreton, Exchange and Alliance: The Sharing and Gifting of Books in Women's Houses in Late Medi eval and Renaissance Florence, in Virginia Blanton/Veronica O'Mara/Patricia Stoop (eds.), Nuns' Literacies in Medieval Europe: The Antwerp Dialogue, Turnhout 2017, 383–410.

28 Madrid, Archivo histórico Nacional, Clero regular, Dominicos, Medina del Campo, Leg. 7562, doc.14, cit. in María Luz Fernández Baizán, El Monasterio de Santa María de las Dueñas 'El Real' de la villa de Medina del Campo, también llamado Santa María de los Huertos en la Baja Edad Media, Madrid 1992, 44.

29 Toledo, Archive of Santo Domingo, Ms. 609, cited in Bernardo Fueyo Suárez, El 'Breviarium portatile' (ss. XIV–XV) de Santo Domingo el Real de Toledo, in: Toletana. Cuestiones de teología e historia 19 (2008), 161–188, here 184.

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Fig. 1: Santo Domingo el Real de Toledo, Ms.06/508. Portable breviary, Older part, beginning of the 14th century. Photo: M. Pérez Vidal with the authorisation of Santo Domingo el Real de Toledo.

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nostra (f. 311v). A cross-checked analysis with monastic inventories will help to establish its origin. Several breviaries are mentioned in the inventories of the sacristy from Sant Antoni i Santa Clara de Barcelona, and at least one is mentioned in the general inventory made in 1364 for Santa María de Pedralbes.[30]

Collaboration between nuns and friars or priest in book production is also documented in several cases, despite prohibitions issued by the religious authorities, such as the General Chapter of the Dominican Order, held in Trier in 1249. This forbade friars from ordering books from nuns or other women.[31] However, we have many examples, such as an antiphonary from the Cistercian female monastery of Almoster, 1472, now at the Museo Diocesano de Santarem, commissioned by the abbess and copied by Friar Bartolome, chaplain of the monastery.[32] In some cases, religious men translated works for nuns, as we will see later with the case of Pablo de Santamaría, bishop of Burgos, who translated at least one treatise for the prioress of Toro. Finally, some manuscripts were used by both nuns and chaplains. This happened for instance with the Customary from Las Huelgas de Burgos (Huelgas 6; 1390–1406), according to its rubrics, and the outstanding 'Las Huelgas Codex' (Huelgas 11), which was probably shared by nuns and clerics and was kept in the sacristy.[33] In the same way, the four books from Alcobaça (Ms. Alc. 459; Alc. 26; Alc 106 and Ritual de Salzedas) were used by the Cistercian monks in female monasteries belonging to the Congregation of Santa María de Alcobaça, especially in the nearby monastery of Santa Maria de Cós.[34]

Although a better knowledge of these exchanges and networks between male and female religious would contribute to a better understanding of the *cura monialium* and gender relationships in these institutions, they have not been studied systematically in the Iberian Peninsula.

30 Blanca Garí/Núria Jornet Benito, El objeto en su contexto. Libros y prácticas devocionales en el monasterio de Sant Antoni i Santa Clara de Barcelona, in Blanca Garí/Núria Jornet Benito (eds.), Clarisas y dominicas. Modelos de implantación, filiación, promoción y devoción en la Península Ibérica, Cerdeña, Nápoles y Sicilia, Firenze 2017, 487–507, here 502.

31 *Item. Fratres non faciant sibi scribi psalteria vel alia scripta per moniales, vel alias mulieres*, MOPH3 (1220–1303), Constitutiones et Acta Capitulorum Generalium Ordinis Fratrum Praedicatorum, 268 (cf. MOPH 3, 47).

32 Catarina Fernandes Barreira/Luís Miguel Rêpas, Um antifonário do Mosteiro de Santa Maria de Almoster, de 1472, in: Invenire. Revista dos Bens Culturais da Igreja. 14 (Julho/Dez. 2017), 32–36.

33 David Catalunya, The Customary of the Royal Convent of Las Huelgas of Burgos: Female Liturgy, Female Scribes, in: Medievalia 20,1 (2017), 91–160.

34 Catarina Fernandes Barreira, Do benzimento das monjas. A profissão monástica feminina nos códices de Alcobaça, in: Lusitania Sacra 37 (2018), 189–213.

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3. Sub Regularis Observantia: Circulation of Observant Ideals through Books and Artefacts

In this section, I will focus on the Observant reform and particularly on earlier attempts to introduce it to female monasteries in Castile between the mid-fourteenth and mid-fifteenth centuries, promoted by certain queens, noblewomen and nuns in Castile. These attempts have been traditionally overlooked, as not all the goals considered fundamental to the Observant reform in female monasteries, such as the observance of the enclosure, *cura monialium* through the presence of friars-vicars[35] or liturgical uniformity,[36] were present. However, all these goals characterised the last phase of this process – that led by the Catholic Monarchs. Earlier attempts were less homogeneous, and women played an outstanding role in them. As we will see, liturgy was not only at the core of the reform, but it was also a means of showing and reinforcing women's power over the nunnery and beyond. A careful analysis of lesser-known sources, such as liturgical books, can shed new light in this regard. I will focus here on the circulation of these manuscripts between female monasteries and the role of certain noblewomen and nuns in this exchange. The majority of the examples considered come from Dominican nuns' or Poor Clares' monasteries, as they were the most important religious orders at that time.

Due to the inclusion of some English saints and the use of French rubrics, the central and older fourteenth-century part of the aforementioned breviary of Santo Domingo in Toledo is thought to have been donated by Queen Catherine of Lancaster to her relatives María de Castilla and Teresa de Ayala. Both were prioresses of this nunnery between the late fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries.[37] Queen Catherine of Lancaster was devoted to the Order of Preachers, and Diana Lucía has recently pointed out her role as promoter of the Dominican Observance even before the Council of Constance (1414–1418).[38] She founded the male convent of Santa María la Real de Nieva in 1392 and the female monastery of San Pedro Mártir in Mayorga de Campos in 1394, and she was protector of and

35 Duval 2015, 572–573.

36 Jürgen Bärsch, Liturgy and Reform: Northern German Convents in the late Middle Ages, in: Elizabeth Andersen/Henrike Lähnemann/Anne Simon (eds.), A Companion to Mysticism and Devotion in Northern Germany in the Late Middle Ages, Leiden/Boston 2013, 21–46, here 22–23.

37 Fueyo Suárez 2008, 184.

38 Diana Lucía Gómez-Chacón, Reinas y predicadores: el Monasterio de Santa María la Real de Nieva en tiempos de Catalina de Lancaster y María de Aragón (1390–1445), in: María Dolores Teijeira Pablos/María Victoria Herráez Ortega/María Concepción Cosmen (eds.), Reyes y prelados: la creación artística en los reinos de León y Castilla (1050–1500), Madrid 2014, 325–340.

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made generous donations to other Dominican foundations, such as Santa Cruz de Segovia or Santo Domingo de Toledo.[39]

We know that Catherine of Lancaster donated to this last one her houses adjoining their nunnery in 1413[40] and probably also the oldest part of the portable breviary (Ms. 06/508). This book is of extreme importance because it is a *unicum*; that is, we do not know of other similar exemplars coming from the Dominican nunneries in Spain. It belongs to the group of unnoted liturgical books and was intended for the nun's personal use, rather than recitation in the choir. It contains three different parts, independent in origin but assembled later in a single volume. Two of them were made outside the monastery and probably came to Toledo through different networks. The older part – the psaltery with French rubrics and English saints – is considered a likely donation of Catherine of Lancaster. It was made at the beginning of the fourteenth century, as suggested by its calendar and the offices included. The second part had already been made in Castile, in Zamora, in 1382, and the newer (and more interesting) part was made for this specific Toledo nunnery, between 1460 and 1470. This is proven by the presence of the nunnery's anagram, the use of the feminine declension in the rubrics and the inclusion of local festivities and lessons related to the local liturgy,[41] for instance, the insertion of nine lessons taken from Ildefonsus's 'De Virginitate perpetua Sancte Marie' in the matins of the Office of the Virgin for Saturday (see fig. 2). These protracted lessons are an unusual feature of this breviary, linked to the celebration of the 'Expectatio Partus' in Spain on 18 December, substituting the Annunciation, as had been established by the Tenth Council of Toledo in 656. This was ordered because 25 March came either in the Lenten or Easter period and thus was unsuitable.[42] The relation between the

39 Cándido Aniz Iriarte/Rufino Callejo De Paz, Real Monasterio de San Pedro Mártir de Mayorga, fundación de la reina Catalina de Lancáster, Salamanca 1994; Ana Echevarría Arsuaga, Catalina de Lancaster, reina regente de Castilla (1372–1418), Hondarribia 2002; Sonia Caballero Escamilla, Palacios y conventos a finales de la Edad Media. La reina Catalina de Lancaster y Santa María la Real de Nieva, in: Anales de historia del arte no. extra 1 (2012) 267–283.

40 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Pergaminos, Carpeta. 3081, 4; Toledo, Archive of Santo Domingo, doc. 3112, cit. in: Mercedes Pérez Vidal, Arte y liturgia en los monasterios de dominicas en Castilla. Desde los orígenes hasta la reforma (1218–1506), Gijón (in press), 182.

41 Toledo, Archive of Santo Domingo, Ms. 06/508. Fueyo Suárez 2008; Bernardo Fueyo Suárez, Secciones Castellanas del Breviario 06/508 de Santo Domingo el Real de Toledo, in: Ciencia tomista 136,439 (2009), 363–398; Fueyo Suárez, Bloque primitivo del Breviario 06/508 de Santo Domingo el Real de Toledo, in: Archivo Dominicano 30 (2009), 103–144; Mercedes Pérez Vidal, The Art, Visual Culture and Liturgy of Dominican nuns in Late Medieval and Early Modern Castile, in: Sheila Barker/Luciano Cinelli (eds.), Artiste nel chiostro. Produzione artistica nei monasteri femminili in età moderna, Memorie domenicane 46 (2015), 225–242.

42 José Vives (ed.), Concilios visigóticos e hispano-romanos, Barcelona, 1963.

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Annunciation feast celebrated in December and Ildefonsus's 'De virginitate' is already found in the first Visigothic book known to contain this liturgy: an early eighth-century prayer book, now in Verona.[43]

We have evidence of other books donated to, commissioned for or made for other Dominican female monasteries by Catherine of Lancaster's female relatives. In a letter written between 1417 and 1424 to her cousin Maria de Castilla, prioress of Santo Domingo de Toledo, Queen Leonor de Alburquerque, requested to borrow an Ordinary of the Mass in the vernacular to order a copy *por donde mas rogar e nos guyar en las horas* [to pray for and guide us in the Hours].[44] Leonor of Alburquerque also donated her houses adjoining the female monastery of Santa María in Medina del Campo to this Dominican community in 1418, though she reserved part of them as private lodgings. There she lived until 1425, when she finally professed as a nun.[45] Therefore, I suggest that this copy was intended as a gift for this monastery.[46] Furthermore, we must remember that the Ordinary was a fundamental book, as any modification in it had to be approved by a General Chapter, like the Constitutions, to ensure the liturgical uniformity of the Order.[47] If my hypothesis is correct, this would mean that queen Leonor wanted to ensure this uniformity, at least with the liturgy of Santo Domingo de Toledo, a monastery ruled by her relatives. Therefore, in this case, liturgical migration[48] would have been determined by royal patronage and kinship ties between these noblewomen and particular nunneries.[49] Thus, liturgy was also a means to show women's power over religious foundations exerted through close kinship ties.

The above-mentioned prioress of Toledo, María de Castilla, was aunt of queen Catalina de Lancaster, who was also related to the prioress of Santo Domingo de

43 Margot E. Fassler, Mary in Seventh-Century Spain: the Mass Liturgy of Dec. 18, in Rosario Álvarez Martínez/Ismael Fernández de la Cuesta/Anna Llorens Martín (eds.), El canto mozárabe y su entorno. Estudios sobre la música de la liturgia viejo hispánica, Madrid, 2013, 217–236, here 227.

44 Toledo, Archive of Santo Domingo, Doc. 117. in Francisco De Paula Cañas Gálvez, Colección Diplomática de Santo Domingo el Real de Toledo. Documentos Reales (1249–1473), Madrid 2010, 172.

45 She kept for herself some dependencies in which she lived for five years, until she professed as nun, Juan López, Tercera parte de la historia de sancto Domingo y de su Orden de Predicadores, Valladolid, 1613 (ed. Facsímile Valladolid 2003), f. 28.

46 Pérez Vidal 2015, 230.

47 Raymond Creytens, L'ordinaire des Frères prêcheurs au Moyen Âge, in: Archivum Fratrum Praedicatorum 24 (1954), 108–188.

48 A phenomenon analysed in German territories by Gisela Muschiol, Migrating Nuns – Migrating Liturgy? The Context of Reform in Female Convents of the Late Middle Ages, in: Teresa Berger (ed.), Liturgy in Migration: Cultural Contexts from the Upper Room to Cyberspace, Minneapolis 2012, 83–100.

49 Pérez Vidal 2015, 230.

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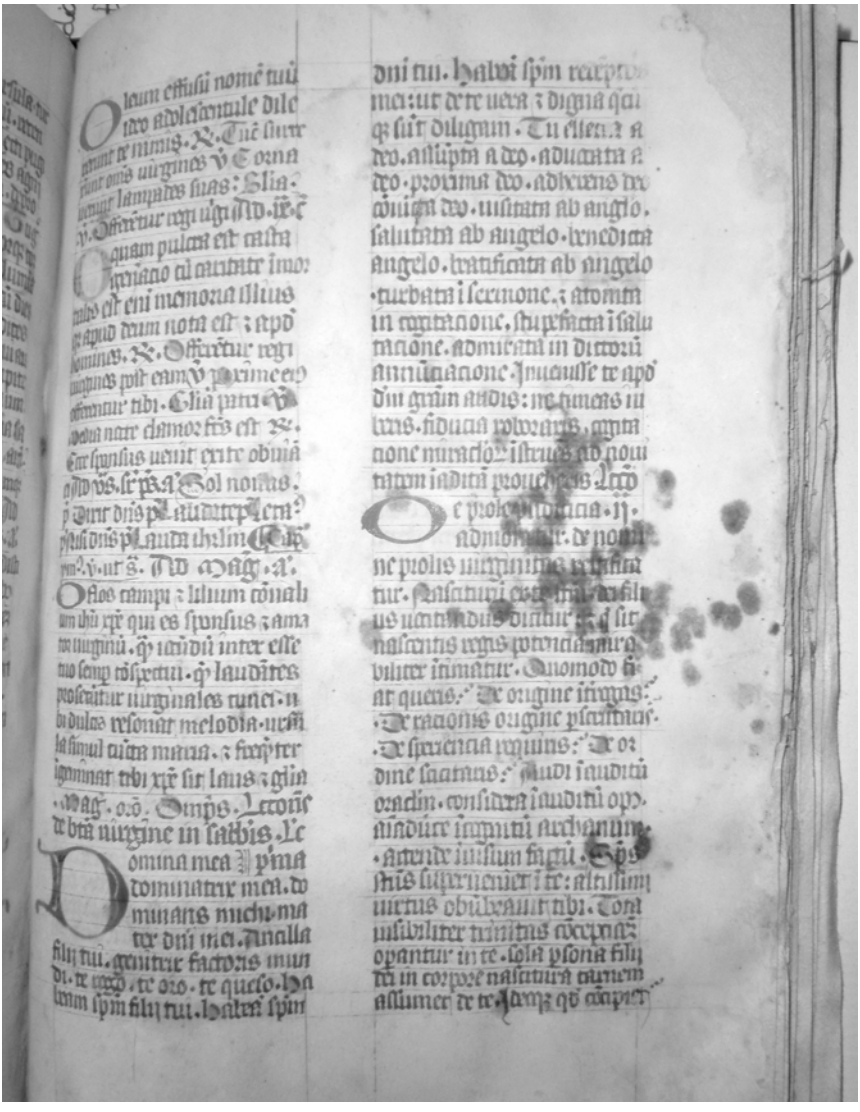

Fig. 2: Santo Domingo el Real de Toledo, Ms.06/508. Portable breviary, Lessons of the office 'De Beata Virgine in Sabbatis', ff. 343r–344v, ca.1460–1470. Photo: M. Pérez Vidal with the authorisation of Santo Domingo el Real de Toledo.

Madrid, Constanza de Castilla. The latter played a crucial role in the legitimation of her lineage, restoring the memory of her grandfather, king Pedro I. She also obtained licenses from prelates of the Order to conduct a life more like those of the *infantas* or *señoras* than an observant nun. She was authorised by the provincials Esteban de Sotelo and Luis de Valladolid in 1418 and 1419 to live in her

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own lodgings around a secondary cloister[50] and to leave the nunnery, when necessary, to visit her relatives or to address personal issues at the Royal Court.[51] Constanza authored the 'Libro de devociones y oficios' (BNE, Ms. 7495),[52] which was not exclusively intended for personal devotion. On the contrary, at least some parts, like the bilingual 'Oficio de los clavos' (see fig. 3), were performed in the nuns' choir, with authorisation of the pope and the General Master.[53] Moreover, Pope Nicholas V entrusted Constanza with the foundation of a new nunnery *sub regulari observantia* between 1449 and 1451.[54] In 1451 year, the provincial Esteban de Sotelo (1449–1454) authorised nuns of this new foundation, called *Mater Dei*, to recite the Divine Office on feast days in the way Constanza ordered.[55] All these facts prove Constanza's reputation as observant among Dominican superiors and the pope.

At this moment, in Castile, there was no contradiction between observance and aristocratic women living in their own lodgings in a convent, a custom that continued in Spain even after the Council of Trent.[56] We can quote many other examples of women living outside the enclosure but frequently connected to it: Juana Manuel and her sister-in-law Leonor de Castro in Santa Clara de Torde-

50 On the 5 April 1419, Constanza was authorised by friar Luis de Valladolid to build her lodgings in the former *corral de las porteras: cercandole todo de tapias bien honestamente e que podades cerrar la dicha huerta por un postigo que fagades desde una casa.* Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Clero, Libro 7296, Libro de las licencias y gracias que los sumos pontífices y los Maestros Generales de la Orden de Predicadores concedieron a la serenísima señora doña Constanza nieta del rey don Pedro y al monasterio de Santo Domingo el Real de Madrid donde fue priora 38 años, s/f. All these privileges were collected in this book.

51 For a further discussion and more detailed bibliography on the *señoras* and on their link with the earlier institution of the Infantado, see Mercedes Pérez Vidal, Legislation, Architecture and Liturgy in the Dominican Nunneries in Castile during the Late Middle Ages. A world of diversitas and peculiarities, in: Cornelia Linde (ed.), Making and Breaking the Rules: Discussion, Implementation and Consequences of Dominican Legislation, Oxford 2018, 225–252, here 246.

52 A complete modern edition of this text in Constance Wilkins, Constanza de Castilla: Book of Devotions, Exeter 1998; and a partial edition in María del Mar Cortés Timoner, Sor Constanza de Castilla, Selección de textos, Barcelona, 2015.

53 Ronald. E. Surtz, Las oras de los clavos de Constanza de Castilla, in Lillian von der Walde Moreno/Concepción Company/Aurelio González (eds.), Caballeros, monjas y maestros en la Edad Media. Actas de las V Jornadas Medievales, México 1996, 157–167.

54 The pope issued two bulls, the first on 5 July 1449 and the second on 18 May 1451. Roma, Archivio Generale dell'Ordine dei Predicatori, Serie XIV, Liber KKK, f. 574r; Toledo, Archive of Santo Domingo de Toledo, Doc, nº 1713; Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Clero, Pergaminos, 1365/15.

55 Archivo Histórico Nacional, Madrid, Clero, Libro 7296, Libro de las licencias y gracias que los sumos pontífices.

56 Elizabeth Lehfeldt, Religious Women in Golden Age Spain: The Permeable Cloister, Aldershot 2005.

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Fig. 3: Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, MSS/7495. Constanza de Castilla, 'Libro de Devociones y Oficios', Oficio de los Clavos, f. 44r. Photo: ©Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid.

sillas[57] and Beatriz de Manrique in Santa Clara in Medina del Pomar,[58] as well as, in the crown of Aragon, queen María de Castilla (1416–1459) in Santísima Trinidad in Valencia.[59] All of them were great supporters of Observant reform, in particular in Poor Clares monasteries.

Queen Juana Manuel promoted the Observant reform in Santa Clara de Tordesillas between 1376 and her death in 1381. She did so not alone but in collaboration with other women (her sister-in-law, her niece, the abbess and the nuns), as well as friar Pedro Fernández Pecha, founder of the Order of St Jerome.[60] Moreover, the founder of this monastery, infanta Beatriz, and her mother María de Padilla had already used the expression *regularis observantia* in documents addressed to their respective foundations of Poor Clares in Torde-

57 Leonor de Castro received authorisation by pope Gregory IX in 1376, whereas the queen was authorised two years later by Urbano VI. Cynthia Robinson, La Orden Jerónima y el convento de clarisas de Santa María la Real de Tordesillas, in: Reales Sitios 169 (2006), 13–33, here 26–27.

58 Will of Beatriz Manrique (Given on 6 September 1471), Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Nobleza, Frías 598/38/f. 5r, cited in Pereda 2012, 974–988.

59 García Herrero/Muñoz Fernández 2017, 37.

60 Robinson 2006, 13–33.

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sillas and Astudillo.[61] The foundation of the latter was approved in 1353 by the canons of Palencia and one year later by a papal bull issued by Innocent VI. The same pope issued a second bull, on 5 April 1354, authorising María de Padilla to visit monasteries of Poor Clares to inform herself about the ceremonies observed by the Order.[62] Thus, María de Padilla also acted as a *señora* in a similar way to her relative Constanza de Castilla one century later. Both women seem to have been in charge of the liturgical performance in their monasteries, and both promoted the memory of Pedro I as an important goal in the spiritual life of these religious foundations.[63]

Analysing the liturgical sources from Astudillo and Tordesillas would help to understand the aforementioned role of liturgy in both monasteries in introducing Observant reform ideals and strengthening female kinship networks. Unfortunately, some of these sources are still waiting for a detailed study. For example, we have preserved a fourteenth-century missal now in the BNE in Madrid, copied before 1390, whose marginal notes prove that it was used by the nuns of Astudillo.[64] It was probably the first missal of this foundation, but, as a detailed analysis of its liturgical contents and codicological aspects has yet to be done, we do not know when it came to Astudillo and how.

Another interesting and understudied manuscript from the BNE collection can also help us to understand the importance of books, and the complex interaction between different networks, in the introduction of Observant ideals. It is a miscellaneous volume from a Dominican monastery (see fig. 4), containing the following texts: a translation of the 'De eruditione religiosorum libri VI' (ca. 1260–1265) by the Dominican Guillaume Perault (ca. 1190?–1271), carried out by the bishop of Burgos, Pablo de Santa María with the title, 'Criamiento o enseñamiento de los religiosos'; an anonymous treatise on confession; a translation of the 'Horologium sapientiae' by Blessed Heinrich Seuse; and, finally, the

61 Graña Cid 2014,198.

62 *Ut cum tribus vel quator matronis honestis monasteria religiosarum inclusarum dicti ordinis infra Regnum predictum et dominium dicti regis consistentia, quibuscumque statutis et consuetudinibus monasteriorum et ordinum eorumdem ac quibuslibet constitutionibus contraris nequaquam obstantibus, semel in anno dumtaxat ex dicta causa libere ingredi valeas, dunmodo earum quae monasteriis ipsis prefuerint ad id accedat asensus et tu dictaeque matronae ibi non comedatis nec etiam pernoctetis, devotioni tuae tenore presentium indulgemus*, Astudillo, Archivo de Santa Clara, Leg, 1, fol. 2, ed. Francisco Simón y Nieto, El monasterio de Santa Clara de Astudillo: índice de su archivo. Nuevas noticias de doña María de Padilla, in: Boletín de la Real Academia de la Historia 29 (1896), 118–178, here 140.

63 María de Padilla established that the Poor Clares of Astudillo must pray for the life and health of Pedro I. Graña Cid 2014, 196.

64 Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Mss/9469. On the so-called Cancionero musical of Astudillo see Pedro Cátedra, Liturgia, poesía y teatro, Madrid 2005, 25.

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translation of chapter XX of the 'Summa de virtutibus et vitiis',[65] also by Perault.[66] The first part (ff.2r–100v), including the translation of Perault by Pablo de Santa María, was made in 1421 and dedicated to *soror doña Leonor priora del mosterio sic de santosprtossicde toro/ delas sus devotas sorores cuyo prior serasic,* as stated in the explicit (f.100v).[67] Both works of Perault were very popular and had a great diffusion both in manuscripts and printed exemplars (*incunabula*) in the late Middle Ages. They were also quite successful among Observants. The Dominican St Antoninus (Antonino Pierozzi, ca. 1440–1454), cited Perault's 'Summa de vitiis' as a source in his 'Summa theologica'.[68] Moreover, in his treatise to the Cistercian nuns, Friar Hernando de Talavera listed Perault's 'Enseñamiento de los religiosos' among the books to be read by nuns after complines: *otro capítulo de qualquier libro de los susodichos luego que salierdes de completes.*[69]

The 'Horologium Sapientiae' by Heinrich Seuse (1295–1366) was also very popular. Around five hundred manuscripts are known, including selections, adaptations and translations. Moreover, Seuse's devotional works were widely transmitted in communities of Observant nuns. For instance, they were copied at St Katherine in Nürnberg, after the introduction of the Observance in 1428.[70] However, in Castile, as pointed out by Pablo Acosta, we still need a systematic study of any early dissemination of 'mystical' literature in either secular or religious contexts.[71]

65 Perault published his treatment of the vices c. 1236 and put it in circulation together with his treatment of the virtues by 1249/1250. We can find them as separate works but also included in miscellaneous volumes, as in London, British Library, Harley, Ms. 3244.

66 Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Mss/21626. I am grateful to Silvia Bara Bancel for bringing this book to my attention.

67 Juan Carlos Conde, De nuevo sobre una traducción desconocida de Pablo de Santa María (y su parentela), in: Quaderns de Filología, Estudis Literaris 8 (2003), 171–188, here 173.

68 Antoninus, Summa theologica, ed. Innocenzo Colosio, Graz, 1959, I, prologus, cols 5–6, cited in Theresa Flanigan, Disciplining the Tongue: Archbishop Antoninus, the *Opera a ben viviere*, and the Regulation of Women's Speech in Renaissance Florence, in: Open Arts Journal, 41–60, here 45, http://dx.doi.org/10.5456/issn.2050-3679/2015w03.

69 Cécile Codet (ed.), Suma y breve compilación de cómo han de bivir y conversar las religiosas de Sant Bernardo que biven en los monasterios de la cibdad de Ávila de Hernando de Talavera (Biblioteca del Escorial, ms. a.IV-29), in: Memorabilia 14 (2012), 1–57, here 34. According to Pedro Cátedra, the book called 'Doctrina de religiosos', listed among the books to be read in the refectory in an account book from La Concepción in Toledo (1510–1515), could have been the same Perault's work. Pedro Cátedra, Lectura femenina en el claustro (España, siglos XIV–XVI), in: Dominique de Courcelles and Carmen Val Julián (eds.), Des femmes et des livres: France et Espagne, XIVe–XVIIe siècle, Paris 1999, 75, https://doi.org/10.4000/books.enc.993.

70 Jones 2017, 27–28.

71 Pablo Acosta García, On Manuscripts, Prints and Blessed Transformations: Caterina da Siena's *Legenda maior* as a Model of Sainthood in Premodern Castile, in: Religions 11,1 (2020), 33, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11010033. I am very grateful to Pablo Acosta for sharing this article with me before its publication.

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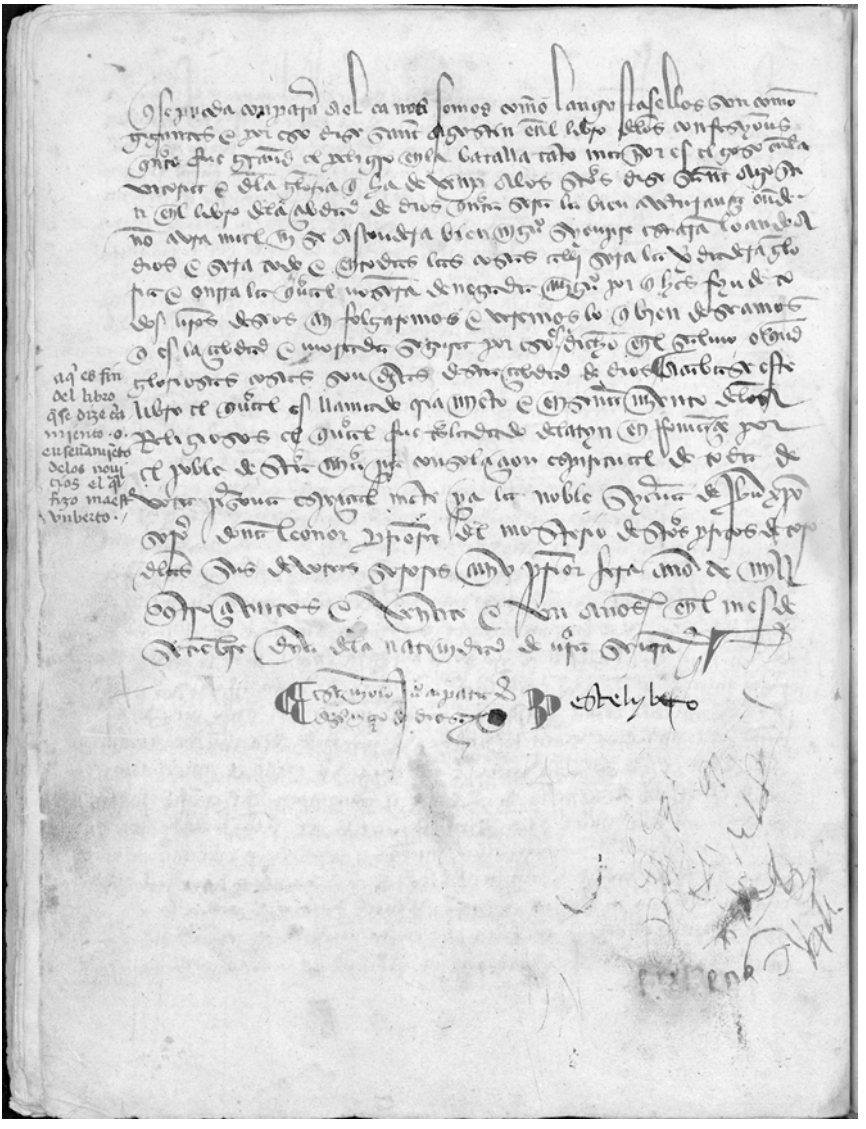

Fig. 4: Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, MSS/21626. Miscellaneous volume, f. 100v. Guillaume Perault, 'Libro del criamjento e enseñamiento de los religiosos', translated by Pablo de Santa María, dedicated to Sor Leonor, prioress of Sancti Spiritus de Toro. Photo: © Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid.

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The mentioned prioress from Sancti Spiritus in Toro was Leonor Sánchez de Castilla, illegitimate daughter of the infante Sancho de Castilla and prioress of this nunnery from ca. 1411 to 1444, as identified by Conde.[72] According to the 'Libro becerro' of Sancti Spiritus de Toro, she reformed the spiritual life of this Dominican monastery.[73] Moreover, Diana Lucía has suggested that Leonor was likely one of the ideologues of the iconographic programme of the tomb of Beatriz of Portugal (1373–ca. 1420), together with the queen herself. The sepulchre's decoration includes one of the first depictions in Castile of Catherine of Siena (see fig. 5), before her canonisation, receiving the *stigmata.* This would imply an earlier devotion to St Catherine in those territories than hitherto considered and the circulation of hagiographical texts of her life.[74] The 'Legenda maior' written by her confessor, Raymond of Capua, was finished in 1395,[75] and Tommaso da Siena claimed that he had sent copies of it to all the territories under Avignon obedience, including Catalonia, Castile and Aragon. Nevertheless, due to the lack of manuscripts known from Castile, Catalonia and the British Isles, Hamburger and Signori considered that the texts containing the life of St Catherine only arrived with the printing press.[76] The first translation into Castilian of the 'Legenda maior' by Raymond of Capua was done by friar Antonio de la Peña and promoted by Cardinal Cisneros. It was printed on the 26 June 1511 in Alcalá de Henares.[77] Almost at the same time, friar Tomás de Vesach, an observant Dominican from the Province of Aragon, did a translation into Valencian, *en nostra lengua valenciana*, printed on 17 September 1511 by Johan Jofré de Briansó. It is worth noting that it was dedicated to the prioress of the monastery of Santa Catalina de Siena in Valencia: Sor Anna Torroella.[78] However, a global study on the reception of the 'Legenda maior' in Iberia, focusing espe-

72 Conde 2003, 185.

73 Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Clero, Libros, 18314, Libro de Becerro para este Real Convento de Sancti Spiritus de Toro. A.1775. Leonor entered first Sancti Spiritus in Benavente where she made profession in 1393, and she subsequently moved to Toro.

74 Lucía Gómez-Chacón 2017, 629–630 and 634–636.

75 Raimondo da Capua, Legenda maior, ed. Silvia Nocentini, Firenze 2013.

76 Jeffrey Hamburger/Gabriela Signori (eds.), Catherine of Siena: the Creation of a Cult, Turnhout, 2013, 7 and 11.

77 It includes also the short lives of Vanna de Orvieto and Margherita da Castello. Pablo Acosta has recently analysed this version and, in particular, the reception of Catherina's *vita* in Castile, drawing on critical textual analysis and reception history. He has also offered an hypothetical reconstruction of the manuscript in Latin used by Fray Antonio de la Peña for the translation. Acosta García 2020.

78 *La vida de la seráphica sancta Catehrina de Sena ara novament per un devot affectat religios della complidamente arromançada e de moltes istories istoriada.* The edition has 36 engravings, including several scenes of the life of St Catherine. Álvaro Huerga, Santa Catalina de Siena en la historia de la espiritualidad hispana, in: Teología espiritual, 35–36 (1968), 165–228, 391–419, here 171–175.

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cially on the manuscript evidence before the printed versions, needs still to be done.[79] Proof of this previous circulation of manuscripts with the life of St Catherine is provided by a Catalan copy of the 'Legenda Maior', of unknown origin, now held at the BNE (Mss/8214): 'Ligenda de la merevellosa Santa Catherina de Sena sor de la penitencia de sent Domingo'. Moreover, although we have not preserved any text from Sancti Spiritus de Toro, the iconography of St Catherine in the tomb of Beatriz of Portugal constitutes further significant evidence of this likely circulation of manuscripts containing the life of St Catherine of Siena. Here, the bodily marks are invisible, something highlighted in the translation made by Antonio de la Peña,[80] following the original account of Raymond of Capua and the later 'Libellus de supplemento' promoted by Tommaso da Siena.[81]

Thus, all the facts presented here suggest a likely circulation of Observant ideals in Sancti Spiritus de Toro much earlier than previously considered, probably between the second and the third decade of the fifteenth century, during the priorate of Leonor Sánchez de Castilla.[82] Although at the current moment, our analysis is limited to few pieces of evidence: a manuscript, a sepulchre and a manuscript copy of the life of St Catherine that has likely disappeared, it seems clear that the circulation of these texts, and presumably others, was crucial to transmitting these ideals. This circulation occurred through different, intersecting networks: a female royal network based on kinship, and a religious network, involving nuns and male clerics, including the egregious bishop of Burgos, Pablo de Santa María.

79 Acosta García 2020, 3.

80 She received the stigmata while praying in front of a wooden crucifix in Pisa. The blood red of the rays changed into blinding brightness before they struck five spots on her body: the hands, the feet and the heart. Acosta García 2020, 11. Regarding the depiction of the stigmata, see David Ganz, The Dilemma of a Saint's Portrait: Catherine's Stigmata between Invisible Body Trace and Visible Pictorial Sign, in Hamburger/Gabriela Signori 2013, 239–262.

81 Tommaso da Siena, Caffarini, Libellus de supplemento, ed. Giuliana Cavallini/Imelda Foralosso, Rome 1974, 123.

82 Apart from by Diana Lucía, this hypothesis has been also accepted by César Olivera Serrano, Juicio Divino y reparación regia. Juan I de Castilla y Beatriz de Portugal, in Isabel Beceiro Pita (ed.), La espiritualidad y la configuración de los reinos ibéricos, (siglos XII–XV), Madrid 2018, 281–320, here 318.

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Fig. 5: Sancti Spiritus de Toro. Beatriz de Portugal's tomb, first quarter of the 15th century, detail of Saint Catherine of Siena. Alabaster (155x229x71 cm). Photo: courtesy of Diana Lucía Gómez-Chacón, with license CC-BY-SA-4.0.

4. Conclusion

As recent scholarship, and in particular the essays included in this volume, has shown, relationships between women helped to construct power in pre-modern times. As in other territories, in the Iberian Peninsula, and more specifically in Castile, women's relationships to other women still need further studies. Aristocratic women's networks, greatly based on kinship, overlapped with the networks of religious order, creating bonds and intersections. Among the different

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approaches that could have been adopted to explore these networks, I have chosen to focus on the relationship between liturgy, religious reform and power.

As we have seen, liturgy was a means, or a language, as Felipe Pereda has said, to show and reinforce women's power over a female monastery, but also beyond.[83] Although liturgy was at the core of the Observant reform, women's active role in it was not a novelty but a continuation and renewal of a long-lasting tradition. As we have seen, these women, from María de Padilla to Constanza de Castilla, by being in charge of the liturgy of their monasteries and promoting the lineage's memory, acted like a *señora*, as a continuation of the Spanish tradition of the *infantas*. The analysis of traditionally overlooked sources, such as liturgical and devotional books, has offered more accurate insight into these processes. These books were a product and a vehicle of this confluence of networks. Moreover, they were used by women with a twofold goal: to introduce reform and to assert their power over these religious foundations.

The reformist attempts here analysed, which were carried out from the mid-fourteenth century and promoted in most cases by women, either queens, noblewomen or abbesses, have been traditionally overlooked as they were seen as isolated endeavours. They differed from the top to bottom movement that constitutes the last phase in the long-term observant reform process in the second half of the fifteenth century. The circulation of books was fundamental to these processes; though, currently, this remains an understudied topic due to the scarce number of manuscripts preserved. Finally, in some cases, despite the apparent absence of texts, artworks, like the sepulchre of Beatriz de Portugal, constitute solid evidence of the actual existence of these manuscripts and of the circulation of Observant ideals at much earlier dates than hitherto considered.

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83 Pereda, 937–988.

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Stephanie Hollis

Dynastic Visions: Founder Abbesses of Wilton and Barking and their Eleventh-Century Successors

Abstract

This essay explores the posthumous relationships between the abbess-saints who re-founded the monasteries at Wilton and Barking and their eleventh-century successors, who were both called Alfgifu. It focuses on their visionary experiences. It is based on Goscelin of Saint-Bertin's Life of St Edith, the daughter of St Wulfthryth, who re-founded Wilton ca. 963 (which Goscelin wrote ca. 1080), and his Barking dossier, particularly his account of Abbess Alfgifu's translation of the monastery's three abbess-saints (ca. 1087), and her vision of St Ethelburg, the seventh-century founder of Barking, entitled 'Recital of a Vision' (ca. 1094). Alfgifu of Barking's vision represent a creative re-deployment of a distinctive genre of dream-visions seemingly originating at Wilton, which depicted a nocturnal encounter at the tomb of the founder abbess. In the visionary appearances of St Edith and her mother at Wilton, the dream-like imagery defines the chosen successor as both abbess and nun, reflecting her position within a line of matriarchal descent as both spiritual daughter and mother. In Alfgifu of Barking's vision of Ethelburg, Alfgifu's position as both a spiritual daughter descended from the founder saint, and as a mother of daughters who will include the next abbatical successor, is dramatically enacted. In a striking reversal of roles, St Ethelburg asks if she can lay her weary head against the breast of the abbess, and transforms herself into a baby girl. The inversion of hierarchy this involves (Goscelin compares the abbess to a humble nurse receiving the daughter of her royal master) evokes the apostolic ideal of an abbess as the servant, and not the ruler of her community, an ideal which figures elsewhere in his Barking dossier. Compared with the visions of St Edith depicting a ritually enacted transference of office to the next abbess, redolent with ecclesiastical and secular power and authority, Alfgifu of Barking's vision of St Ethelburg is more in the nature of a personally empowering subjective experience. But it also affords polemical support against the opposition from the local bishop and within the community that she was facing, as St Ethelburg authorises her translation of the abbess-saints, and confirms Alfgifu as her successor by the remarkable favour and affection she shows her.

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1. Introduction

This essay explores the posthumous relationships between the abbess-saints who re-founded the monasteries at Wilton and Barking in England and their eleventh-century successors. It focuses on the visionary experiences of two eleventh-century abbesses, who were both called Alfgifu. The earliest surviving narrative accounts of the two re-founded monasteries are by Goscelin of Saint-Bertin (aka Goscelin of Canterbury). His lives of St Edith and her mother, St Wulfthryth, were written at the request of Abbess Godgifu and the Wilton community (ca. 1080).[1] His dossier of texts for Barking, commissioned by Abbess Alfgifu and her community, included lives of two of the monastery's abbess-saints, St Ethelburg (died ca. 686) and St Wulfhild (died after 996), together with lessons for the feast of Ethelburg's immediate successor, St Hildelith (died ca. 716). The texts with most bearing on my discussion of Barking are the longer version of Goscelin's account of Abbess Alfgifu's translation of the monastery's abbess-saints (ca. 1087) and his account of her vision of St Ethelburg entitled 'Recital of a Vision' (ca. 1094).[2] Another of Alfgifu's visions of St Ethelburg was included in Goscelin's life of the saint.[3]

Barking and Wilton were re-founded in the 960s under the auspices of King Edgar (r. 959–975), ostensibly demonstrating his support for the Benedictine Reform. Wulfhild was made abbess of Wilton after resisting his efforts to force her into marriage. Shortly afterwards, he married her cousin Wulfthryth, who re-founded Wilton when their brief marriage ended. At both Wilton and Barking, a dynastic configuration of the tombs of former abbesses at the high altar of the abbey church took shape during the first half of the eleventh century, giving expression to their importance in the life of the community. Wilton, generously endowed by kings throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries, was also home to a significant number of women related to the royal family. Its definingly royal ethos was reflected in the dynastic line of descent from Wulfthryth, which was made visible by the burial of successive abbesses on either side of her. Goscelin's account of the re-founding of Barking, by contrast, relays a tradition of asceticism, apostolic egalitarianism, and independence from royal power. At Barking, the tomb of the original founder, St Ethelburg, was flanked by matching shrines of St Hildelith and St Wulfhild, making manifest a continuous line of descent

1 La légende de Ste Édith en prose et vers par le monie Goscelin, ed. André Wilmart, in: Analecta Bollandiana 56 (1938), 5–101, 265–307. Life of Wulfthryth is embedded in Translation of Edith, chapters 3–11.

2 Texts of Jocelyn of Canterbury which relate to the History of Barking Abbey, ed. Marvin L. Colker, in: Studia Monastica 7 (1965), 383–460.

3 Preserved only in a fourteenth-century abridgement, printed by Colker 1965, 396.

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from the original seventh-century founder that affirmed the monastery's uniquely long history.

Appearances of St Wulfthryth and her daughter, St Edith, in the dream-visions of two members of the Wilton community in 1040 gave authority to Alfgifu of Wilton's succession to the role of abbess in 1065. St Edith's investiture of her as a future abbess evokes the quasi-episcopal role of an abbess, more characteristic of the conversion period (seventh and eighth centuries) than of the centuries that followed the mid-tenth-century Benedictine Reform. It also evokes the designation of a successor as an aspect of king-making, Germanic in origin, but still resonating in 1066 when it was alleged that Edward the Confessor had designated Harold Godwinson as his successor.[4]

My essay builds on earlier discussions of the visions of Edith of Wilton and identifies mention of a similar kind of vision, in which Alfgifu of Barking was designated by St Wulfhild as the next abbess, some time before her appointment around 1052. It has been suggested that the visions of St Edith and her mother were intended to secure the election of Alfgifu of Wilton, or alternatively, that they show that "the idea of election of the abbess by the communities was sufficiently novel as to require saintly endorsement".[5] The visionary designation of Alfgifu of Barking appears to have been intended to counter interference by Edward the Confessor (r. 1042–1066) in the appointment of monastic heads, by identifying the abbess as the chosen successor of St Wulfhild instead of a royal appointee. Notwithstanding Wilton's dissimilar ethos, the same may have been true of the visionary designation of Alfgifu of Wilton, whom Edward appointed in 1065.

In the closing decades of the eleventh century, the nebulous power of St Wulfhild was called into question, and the authority of Alfgifu of Barking was challenged, both from without, by episcopal opposition to her translation of the three abbess-saints, and from within her community. Alfgifu's two visions of St Ethelburg represent a creative re-deployment of a distinctive genre of dream-visions seemingly originating at Wilton, which depicted a nocturnal encounter at the tomb of the founder abbess. In the visionary appearances of St Edith and her mother, the dream-like imagery defines the chosen successor as both abbess and nun, reflecting her position within a line of matriarchal descent as both spiritual daughter and mother. In the second of Alfgifu of Barking's visions of Ethelburg, her position as both a spiritual daughter descended from the founder saint and as a mother of daughters who will include the next abbatical successor is dramat-

4 The Life of King Edward who rests at Westminster, ed. Frank Barlow, 2nd Edition, Oxford 1992, 79.

5 Barbara Yorke, Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses, London/NY 2003, 88. Cf. Katie A. Bugyis, The Care of Nuns: The Ministries of Benedictine Women During the Central Middle Ages, Oxford 2019, 87–88, 115.

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ically enacted. In a striking reversal of roles, St Ethelburg asks if she can lay her weary head against the breast of the abbess and transforms herself into a child.

The inversion of hierarchy this involves, with Goscelin comparing the abbess to a humble nurse receiving the daughter of her royal master, evokes the apostolic ideal of an abbess as the servant, and not the ruler of her community, an ideal that figures elsewhere in his Barking dossier. Compared with the visions of St Edith depicting a ritually enacted transference to the next abbess of an office that resonates with ecclesiastical and secular power and authority, Alfgifu's second vision of St Ethelburg is more in the nature of a personally empowering subjective experience. But it also offers polemical support against opposition from the local bishop and within the community, as St Ethelburg authorises her translation of the abbess-saints and confirms Alfgifu as her successor by the remarkable favour and affection she shows her.

2. Contextual Background

Consanguinity was the basis of Anglo-Saxon society. Throughout the pre-conquest period, churchmen strove to replace ties of blood with the bonds of the spirit.[6] Ideally, monastic communities were *familiae* made up of the spiritual sons and daughters of the abbess or abbot who ruled them. Aldhelm, writing to the nuns being taught by Abbess Hildelith in the monastic school at Barking ca. 700, echoed John 1.12–14 in describing his addressees as "adoptive daughters of regenerate grace brought forth from the fecund womb of ecclesiastical conception through the seed of the spiritual word".[7] Abbess Hildelith, in other words, by her teaching of the nuns of Barking, gave birth to them as her spiritual daughters.[8]

In actuality, the double monasteries were generally ruled by formerly married royal women (widowed or divorced),[9] who, having been personally endowed by kings with lands to found monasteries, tended to treat them as micro-kingdoms. Like kings, they chose their successor (usually a daughter) and handed on to her rule of the monastery and possession of its lands. The Minster-in-Thanet foundation story tells how Domne Eafe gained the land for her monastery as *wergild* from her cousin the king of Kent for the murder of her brothers and

6 Joseph H. Lynch, Christianizing Kinship: Ritual Sponsorship in Anglo-Saxon England, Ithaca, NY 1998.

7 Aldhelm, The Prose Works, trans. by Michael Lapidge/Michael Herren, Cambridge 1979, The Prose Virginity, 59–132, here 59–60.

8 Acts 7.3.

9 The abbess ruled communities of the conversion period characteristically consisted of both men and women.

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appointed her daughter Mildrith to succeed her. Early Germanic kings took authorisation to rule the lands they had conquered from their genealogies, which generally went back to Woden, the god of war. In most of the surviving texts, the Minster-in-Thanet foundation story is preceded by a predominately female monastic genealogy of sainted queens and abbesses, which reaches back for its origins to St Augustine's first convert, Ethelberht of Kent.[10] At Ely, the formerly married but ever virginal St Athelthryth was succeeded by her sister Seaxburg, who was succeeded in turn by her daughter and grand-daughter.

The Benedictine Reform period, from the mid-tenth century onwards, aimed to bring the monasteries into conformity with the Benedictine Rule, which required communal ownership of property and prohibited heads of monasteries from nominating family members as their successors. With the installation of unmarried women as abbesses instead of widows and divorcees with daughters, there were decreasing opportunities to create female dynasties based on biological kinship. But the impulse to conceptualisation of successive abbesses as the spiritual daughters and inheritors of the founder remained strong, taking differing forms at Wilton and Barking in accordance with their distinctively different corporate identities.

As double monasteries were replaced with exclusively female communities subject to enclosure, abbesses lost much of the status and power they had shared with bishops in the conversionary church. The power of an abbess to elevate her predecessor to sainthood, for instance, which loomed large among Alfgifu of Barking's problems, was common practice in the double monasteries.[11] She was still able to preside over a translation of the monastery's three abbess-saints at the end of the eleventh century, but evidently by then needed visionary support from St Ethelburg to counter the opposition of the local bishop.

Despite advances in the implementation of the Rule in the late tenth and eleventh centuries, its precept requiring monastery heads to be elected by the community was seriously compromised.[12] *Regularis Concordia*, Bishop Athelwold's promulgation of an agreement between King Edgar and the monasteries (ca. 973), stated that the choice of an abbess or abbot was to be made in keeping with the Rule and with the consent of the king.[13] Edgar's intention to retain control of lands given to the monasteries as his predecessors had done, by appointing close relatives to rule them, is clearly reflected in Goscelin's report of

10 Stephanie Hollis, The Minster-in-Thanet Foundation Story, in: Anglo-Saxon England 27 (1998), 42–64, here 55–58.

11 Eric Waldram Kemp, Canonization and Authority in the Western Church, London 1948, 36–55.

12 The Rule of St Benedict, ed. Justin McCann, London 1952, chapter 64.

13 Regularis Concordia: The Monastic Agreement of the Monks and Nuns of the English Nation, ed. Thomas Symons, London 1953, chapter 9.

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Edgar appointing his daughter Edith abbess of three nunneries at the age of fifteen, and in Goscelin's accounts of the founding of Barking and Wilton.

Further interference in the affairs of female communities was legitimised in *Regularis Concordia* by the elevation of Alfthryth, the queen who displaced Wulfthryth as Edgar's third wife, to a position of oversight of the nunneries.[14] Her willingness to act in that capacity is illustrated in the Life of Wulfhild's report of her replacing Wulfhild as abbess of Barking and exiling her for twenty years.[15] Late-tenth-century female communities showed their hostility to the unprecedented powers given to Alfthryth by circulating attacks on her reputation.[16] Nor can they have been happy with the king claiming the power to veto a community's choice of abbess. Three of the nunneries founded during the Benedictine Reform possessed charters claiming that Edgar had given them the right to elect their own abbess.[17] Whether or not these were authentic, their existence demonstrates that far from being unfamiliar with the idea of an election, female communities were eager to re-claim their right to hold one. Edward the Confessor (r. 1042–1066) shows signs of the same inclination to control the monasteries as his predecessors. In 1051, around the time of Alfgifu of Barking's consecration, for instance, the abbess of Wherwell was Edward's sister.[18] Edward's wife Edith also appears to have wanted to inherit the powers granted by *Regularis Concordia.* In 1065, the year Alfgifu of Wilton was appointed, Queen Edith re-built the church at Wilton and re-dedicated it to St Benedict.[19]

3. The Visions of St Edith of Wilton

Notwithstanding the aspirations of the reform, the re-founding of Wilton ca. 963 by Edgar's second wife, Wulfthryth, harked back to the double monasteries. With the approval of Bishop Athelwold, Wulfthryth re-founded the monastery at Wilton, where she had been educated, with the aid of generous endowments from Edgar, and took with her their two-year-old daughter Edith (ca. 963–ca. 986). Unsurprisingly, Edith was her mother's heir apparent, but she died long before Wulfthryth.[20] Edith, then, never became abbess of Wilton. At the age of fifteen,

14 Regularis Concordia, chapter 3.
15 Life of Wulfhild, chapter 9.
16 Pauline Stafford, Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen: Gender, Religious Status and Reform in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century England, in Past and Present 63 (1999), 3–35.
17 Sarah Foot, Veiled Women II: Female Religious Communities in England, 871–1066, Aldershot 2000, 151–153. Yorke 2003, 88.
18 Barlow 1992, 95.
19 Life of Edward, I.7.
20 Life of Edith, chapters 2–4.

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however, her father Edgar instructed Bishop Athelwold to consecrate her as abbess of three other nunneries. Edith refused to leave her mother's community and appointed proxies, but the secondary relics of Edith (famous for dressing like the princess she was) included the abbatical alb she had embroidered for herself with gold and gems, and a staff of office with miraculous attributes.[21]

St Edith's cult was the creation of her half-brother King Ethelred and Archbishop Dunstan, a characteristic cooperation of church and throne in a move intended to add the lustre of sanctity to the royal house. Edith was elevated to sanctity by the archbishop some years after she died at the age of twenty-three, and her remains were translated to the south porch of the abbey church.[22] Wulfthryth, on the other hand, like the founder abbesses of the double monasteries, was elevated to sainthood by her community not long after her death (ca. 1000). She was buried in a position of honour before the high altar, and by 1067 her tomb was flanked on either side by the tombs of the four abbesses who succeeded her.[23] It was a distinctly dynastic configuration, reminiscent of the burial at Canterbury of St Augustine and the archbishops who succeeded him, and also of the burial of kings amidst their successors and progeny in royal mausolea.

Goscelin tells us nothing about Wulfthryth's two immediate successors, but the two buried at her right hand, Brihtgifu and Alfgifu, owed their place in the line of descent to putatively supernatural signs of having been chosen by St Edith as successors to her mother. Brihtgifu was born thirty days after Edith died; on the same day, Edith appeared to Wulfthryth in a vision announcing that she had been re-born in heaven. This conceivably suggested that Brihtgifu was a replacement, a sister even, to the daughter and successor Wulfthryth had lost. Edith, moreover, had been asked shortly before her death if she would be Brihtgifu's godmother. Edith had given an ambiguous answer, but when at her baptism Brihtgifu snatched the candle normally accepted by a god-parent on the infant's behalf, it was understood to mean that Edith had accepted Brihtgifu as her spiritual daughter, and the presiding bishop instructed her parents to give her to Wilton as a child oblate. So clear was it when she reached adulthood that Brihtgifu was the spiritual daughter of Edith that she became the third in succession to Edith's mother Wulfthryth. Likeness in life was followed by union in death. When Brihtgifu died, visions reported by members of the community confirmed the belief that Edith had gathered her into the company of heaven.[24]

21 Life of Edith, chapter 16.
22 Translation of Edith, chapter 1.
23 Translation of Edith, chapters 7–8, 20.
24 Life of Edith, chapter 26.

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Corroborating visions of St Edith designating Alfgifu as the future abbess of Wilton were reported by Alfgifu herself and by another member of the community, whose name was Alfhild. (The shared first-name element could mean that she was Alfgifu's biological sister.) The prophecy was fulfilled in its entirety twenty-five years later when Alfgifu briefly succeeded Brihtgifu as abbess of Wilton (1065–1067).These visions, then, took place in 1040, during the abbacy of Brihtgifu, perhaps at the time of her accession, in response to her claim to have been chosen by St Edith. The visions of Alfhild and Alfgifu represent a much more unambiguous and ritually enacted form of designation by St Edith.[25]

In Alfhild's vision, St Edith made her way to the right-hand of Wulfthryth's tomb where Alfgifu stood praying. She took off her own veil and placed it on Alfgifu's head, put a ring on her finger, and said: "Accept the blessing of this monastery and take faithful care of all this family. For you will be the ruler of this house in prosperity but indeed you will last only a short time; however, when you die you will be buried in peace in this place which I have measured out beside my mother".[26] In Alfgifu's vision, Edith likewise placed upon Alfgifu her own veil, but instead of a ring invested Alfgifu with her own armbands and bracelets. Afterwards, Alfgifu saw St Wulfthryth lying above the altar in the Archangel Gabriel chapel in the south porch where the relics of Edith were kept. She invited Alfgifu to lie beside her. Alfgifu cried out that she was not worthy, but Wulfthryth took hold of her and pulled her in to lie beside her.

St Edith's appearance in Alfhild's vision, standing before the altar while investing Alfgifu with responsibility for the spiritual daughters of the community, alludes to the episcopal rite for the consecration of an abbess. Edith's administration of a rite exclusively performed by bishops in the eleventh century recalls the quasi-episcopal status of abbesses in the double monasteries, whose sharing in the authority and sacramental powers of bishops is reflected in the hagiography and legislative documentation of that period, and residually preserved in consecration rites prior to the reign of Edward the Confessor.[27] Edith's words unmistakably identify the rite she performs with the consecration of an abbess. But, in a characteristically dream-like manner, the items she invests Alfgifu with simultaneously carry additional dimensions of meaning. In tenth-century con-

25 Translation of Edith, chapter 20.

26 Michael Wright/Kathleen Loncar, Goscelin's Legend of Edith, in: Stephanie Hollis (ed.) Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and Liber Confortatorius, Turnhout 2004, 23–96, here 88.

27 Stephanie Hollis, Anglo-Saxon Woman and The Church: Sharing a Common Fate, Woodbridge 1992, 127–130, 139–140, 162–165, 169–172, 174–178, 179–88, 196–207, 289–97; Gary Macy, The Hidden History of Women's Ordination: Female Clergy in the Medieval West, Oxford 2008; Katie A. Bugyis, The Development of the Consecration Rite for Abbesses and Abbots in Central Medieval England, in: Traditio 71 (2016), 91–144, here 96–98, 111–112, 125–126.

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secration rites abbesses were invested with a copy of the Rule together with a ring and/or a staff. From the reign of Edward the Confessor abbesses were invested only with a copy of the Rule, marking a further reduction in their authority and power.[28] It is the consecration rite for a nun that takes the form of investiture with a veil, symbolising the life of religion, and a ring, symbolising marriage to Christ, in contrast to the ring that, in the earlier consecration rites for abbesses, symbolised the power of office that they shared to some extent with bishops.[29]

In Alfhild's dream-vision, then, Edith consecrates Alfgifu both as a mother of the Wilton monastic *familia* and as a spiritual daughter of the founding abbess, passing on both roles to her by the transference of her own veil and ring. Simultaneous identity as both mother and daughter in a dynastic line of abbesses recurs in Alfgifu's vision. Here, too, Edith invests Alfgifu with her own veil, this time in conjunction with her armbands and bracelets. Owned by both men and women as a form of portable wealth, armbands and bracelets appear to have been worn only by warriors and figure in heroic literature among the rings (*beagas*) given by an overlord to members of his retinue in exchange for their oaths of loyalty. They have associations with royal consecration – Edward the Confessor's coronation regalia included a pair of armills – and are also reminiscent of the custom of a king bestowing his own armour to designate his successor.[30] More generally, they serve as symbols of the material possessions of the monastery, paralleling the pastoral care of the community that Edith bestows in Alfhild's vision. Whereas in Alfhild's vision Edith is passing on a model of abbatical rule that shares in ecclesiastical power, in Alfgifu's vision Edith conveys the secular power that she exercised both at the court of her father and, as her personal seal attests, in the reign of her half-brother(s).[31]

Identity with Edith in life is tantamount to union with her and her mother in death. In her visionary appearance to Alfhild, Edith prophesises that Alfgifu will be buried where she is standing at the right hand of Wulfthryth. Edith thus signifies that Alfgifu will occupy a place in the line of descent – figuratively in life and physically in death – that Edith herself would have occupied if she had lived to succeed her mother.[32] This is confirmed in Alfgifu's subsequent vision of

28 Bugyis 2016, 96–106, 115–121, 122–127, 129, 133, 137–138.

29 Bugyis 2019, 116–118.

30 Beowulf: An Edition, ed. Bruce Mitchell/Fred C. Robinson, Malden, MA 1998, lines 2152–2162, 2729–2732, 2809–2816.

31 Life of Edith, chapter 10. The inscription on Edith's personal seal describes her as "royal sister". T. A. Heslop, English Seals from the Mid Ninth Century to 1100, in: Journal of the British Archaeological Association 133 (1980), 1–16, here 2, 9.

32 Cf. Kathryn Maude, Writing Community: The Opportunities and Challenges of Group Biography in the Case of Wilton Abbey, in: Robert F. W. Smith/ Gemma L. Watson (eds.), Writing the Lives of People and Things, AD 500–1700: A Multi-disciplinary Future for Biography, Oxford/NY 2017, 245–258, here 250–251.

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Wulfthryth lying above the altar in the south porch where her daughter's relics were kept, magnificently dressed as a bride of Christ. Wulfthryth, pulling Alfgifu in to lie beside her, dramatically enacts the second half of Edith's prophecy. She also affirms that Alfgifu is worthy of union with her in the afterlife. In this vision, too, Alfgifu is defined as a spiritual daughter of the monastery's matriarch. Wulfthryth, reclining in a chapel dedicated to Gabriel, the Angel of the Annunciation, recalls contemporary representations of the Virgin Mary lying-in at the Nativity, and thus echoes the idea of giving birth to spiritual offspring by conception through the Word.

The visions of Alfgifu and Alfhild were fulfilled, Goscelin relates, when Alfgifu "by the appointment of King Edward, the nephew of St Edith, succeeded to the pastoral care".[33] This does not give the impression that the king merely accepted the community's choice. There is no mention of an election, although Goscelin does mention at this point how much Alfgifu was loved by the community and devoted to St Edith. What these visions affirm is that the authority and legitimacy of Abbess Alfgifu of Wilton derives directly from St Wulfthryth's biological and spiritual daughter and has been confirmed by St Wulfthryth herself. The degree of ecclesiastical and secular power embodied in St Edith is remarkable. It was conceivably consonant with the abbatical office as it was exercised at Wilton by Wulfthryth, and by Edith as the titular head of three monasteries, but not in the reign of Edward, when a community's right to choose its own abbess was in doubt.

The visionary experiences reported by Alfgifu and Alfhild undoubtedly had a high potential for uniting the community behind Alfgifu as their choice of abbess. They were no less apt for persuading the king that he should appoint the choice of St Edith, and in the context of the royal power of veto, the dramatic form of the visions is perhaps their most significant feature. The recorded visions of the tenth and eleventh century in England, like those of preceding centuries, characteristically take the form of disembodied verbal communications of saints or departed souls; less commonly they consist of a single self-explanatory visual image.[34] What the visions of St Edith's designation of the next abbess present is not a prophecy to be later fulfilled by the king but a *fait accompli.* Alfgifu has already been consecrated and invested with the care of the community and its material possessions by a power higher than Edward – his sainted aunt, no less – in a ceremony that echoes the king's own consecration.

33 Life of Edith, chapter 20.

34 Exceptions include Bede's 'Account of the Poet Caedmon', visions of the otherworld, and the Old English poem, 'The Dream of the Rood'.

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4. The Vision of St Wulfhild of Barking

Goscelin's Life of Wulfhild (based on an earlier Barking source) relates that King Edgar, shortly before marrying Wulfthryth ca. 963, tried to compel her cousin Wulfhild to marry him by attempting to rape her. Eventually persuaded of her monastic vocation by her strenuous resistance, Edgar endowed her with lands to re-found and re-build Barking, as an act of compensation for his assault. He also restored to her the family monastery at Horton. From the outset, the life affirms divine oversight of Wulfhild's vocation. In obedience to angelic visions, she was conceived by parents vowed to a chaste marriage and given to Wilton as a child oblate. Despite the fact, then, that Edgar exerted a controlling influence on the re-foundation of Barking as he did at Wilton, Barking's foundation story affirms independence of royal endowment by identifying the lands of Barking and Horton as Wulfhild's legal property. The life likewise counters the view that she became abbess of Barking and Horton as a mere appointee of the king. Alluding to the dove that alighted on her head during her consecration, it states: "by the grace of divine election, Edgar put her in charge of two monasteries".[35]

Like Wulfthryth, Wulfhild designated her own successor. Or as Goscelin puts it, she understood by her prophetic knowledge that Leoffled would succeed her. Wulfhild therefore taught Leoffled (abbess ca. 1018–ca. 1052) to be a leader who embodied, like her, the ideal of the abbess as a loving mother who served her community.[36] Leoffled elevated Wulfhild to sanctity shortly after her death by placing her tomb at the head of St Ethelburg, whose mausoleum stood before the high altar. Some thirty years later (ca. 1048),wanting to give Wulfhild a place of even greater honour, Leoffled translated her to the right hand of St Ethelburg, where she was housed in a shrine matching St Hildelith's. Leoffled's elevation of Wulfhild echoed the dynastic configuration that had begun to take place at Wilton, centred on Wulfhild's cousin Wulfthryth. But whereas Wulfthryth was the founder of a new dynasty, Leoffled created a dynasty of abbess-saints that established the monastery that Wulfhild re-founded as a continuation of St Ethelburg's original foundation. It made visible a line of descent that elevated Wulfhild to equality with St Ethelburg's immediate successor, shown by their identical proximity to St Ethelburg and the visual likeness of their shrines.[37]

Leoffled was succeeded by Alfgifu of Barking (abbess ca. 1052–ca. 1114). Like the account of Wulfhild's consecration, the account of Alfgifu's accession counters the implication that Alfgifu owed her position as abbess to the power of the king. As Goscelin tells it, she was chosen by God, and King Edward was a mere

35 Life of Wulfhild, chapters 1–4, 8.
36 Life of Wulfhild, chapters 7, 13.
37 Life of Wulfhild, chapters, 12–13.

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instrument of the divine will: "With the endorsement of divine revelation, she took up the administration of the monastery through King Edward as a girl of fifteen".[38] Here, as in Goscelin's report of the Confessor's appointment of Alfgifu of Wilton, there is no mention of an election, just an affirmation of how much her community loved her. Given Alfgifu's extreme youth – clearly at odds with the worthy manner of life and wise doctrine in an abbatical head called for by the Benedictine Rule – her consecration as Abbess of Barking appears to be as obvious an instance of royal interference as the consecration of Edith of Wilton at the same age.

Goscelin's statement that Alfgifu became abbess at the age of fifteen "by the endorsement of divine revelation" is followed by mention of two putatively miraculous events surrounding her consecration. In the nick of time, her own bishop returned as his surrogate was about to consecrate her, "thereby proving that her consecration was God's will". And the day before her consecration she discovered the long-lost relics of St Germanus. Only at the end of the narrative do we learn that the "endorsement of divine revelation" refers to a prophetic vision of St Wulfhild: "as we have recounted elsewhere, the blessed Wulfhild herself is known from a revelation to have delegated responsibility for the monastery to her".[39] Alfgifu, then, like Leoffled, was prophetically designated by the founder abbess, and her consecration was the fulfilment of a prophetic vision. The prophetic vision of St Wulfhild was evidently analogous to the visions of Alfhild and Alfgifu at Wilton. Wulfhild announced Alfgifu of Barking as her successor and, echoing the words of St Edith, entrusted her with responsibility for the monastery. But whereas St Edith designated Alfgifu of Wilton entirely on her own very considerable authority, the vision of St Wulfhild was a revelation of God's will.

Goscelin's failure to relate the contents of the vision that identified Alfgifu not as an appointee of the king but the choice of a higher power can scarcely have been accidental. He wrote at her request and was a highly partisan supporter of her against the Norman ecclesiastical hierarchy. The explanation probably lies in the reduced status of St Wulfhild in post-conquest England. Lanfranc, the first Norman archbishop (1070–1089), was foremost among those who did not consider that the native saints of England had been properly authorised.[40] So, too, was Maurice, bishop of London (1086–1107), whose refusal to authorise the three

38 The Translation and Elevation of Saints Ethelburg, Hildelith, and Wulfhild, Virgins, chapter 3. Translations of this text and Recital of a Vision are quoted from Michael Wright (forthcoming publication), with his kind permission. I have also consulted the translation of Recital of a Vision, chapters 2–3 in Vera Morton/Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Guidance for Women in Twelfth-Century Convents, Cambridge 2003, 153–155.

39 Translation and Elevation of Saints, chapter 12.

40 See now Jay Rubenstein, Liturgy against History: The Competing Visions of Lanfranc and Eadmer of Canterbury, in: Speculum 74 (1999), 279–339.

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abbess-saints of Barking by presiding over their translation to a nearby church during Abbess Alfgifu's re-building of the abbey church (ca. 1087) underlies her co-option of Goscelin's polemical skills to her cause.[41]

Relatively speaking, St Ethelburg had a strong claim to sanctity. Approvingly though briefly commemorated in Bede's History (completed in 731), she had the weight of his authority behind her and consequently had something like a national cult. She was also the sister of St Eorcenwald, the first bishop of London. Bede's account of Hildelith, however, was even shorter and less laudatory, and her cult, like Wulfhild's, was purely local.[42] Wulfhild, worse still in the eyes of those who took a dim view of native saints, was a "modern" saint (tenth century onward) and therefore inferior to those Goscelin terms "ancient" (dating from the conversion period). Fortuitously, during Abbess Alfgifu's translation of the three abbess-saints, St Wulfhild demonstrated, through the performance of an identical miracle, that she was equal in power to both Hildelith and Ethelburg.[43] William of Malmesbury ca. 1125 vouched for the subsequent improvement in her reputation: "Thanks to her holiness, Wulfhild makes up for being more recent than the rest".[44]

5. Alfgifu of Barking's Visions of St Ethelburg

Whereas the backing of St Wulfhild could serve Alfgifu of Barking as authorisation in the reign of Edward, her reputation had diminished by the late 1080s. At the same time, Alfgifu faced challenges to her authority both from without, in Bishop Maurice's opposition to the translation of Barking's three abbess-saints, and from within. Lanfranc, in a letter to Bishop Maurice ca. 1086–1089, instructed that all members of the Barking community were to accept the authority of the abbess and her prioress.[45] Alfgifu's visions towards the close of the eleventh century show her seeking closer association with St Ethelburg. Both visions feature a pedagogically characterised dream-guide, who teaches Alfgifu how to gain knowledge of the saint in order to become more like her. In the earlier vision, the dream-guide is the recently deceased Wulfrun-Judith, commemorated

41 As Goscelin reports it, diplomatically, Maurice and his senior clergy claimed that they were not worthy to translate Barking's abbess-saints. Translation and Elevation, chapter 4.

42 Bede's Ecclesiastical History of the English People, ed. Bertram Colgrave/Roger A. B. Mynors, Oxford 1969, IV.6–10.

43 Translation and Elevation, chapter 12.

44 William of Malmesbury, Gesta Regum Anglorum: The History of the English Kings, ed. Roger A. B. Mynors/Rodney M. Thomson/Michael Winterbottom, 2 vols, vol. 2, Oxford, 1998, 73.13.

45 The Letters of Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, ed. Helen Clover/Margaret Gibson, Oxford 1979, 174.

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in Goscelin's dossier as the pupil of Wulfhild and intimately associated with Wulfhild by the part she played in Abbess Leoffled's translation of her.[46] Conceivably, Wulfrun and the unnamed schoolmistress who occupies the role of guide in the later vision were one and the same person.[47] In the earlier vision, Alfgifu finds herself and Wulfrun sitting on opposite sides of the tomb of Ethelburg, which is open to reveal her body. Wulfrun, alluding to the eschatological Book of Life, instructs Alfgifu to unseal the writings attached to the hem of Ethelburg's clothing and read them. It was, the narrator concludes, as if she said: "You have looked for her life; this is it, imitate it with patience".[48]

In depicting Alfgifu's increasing knowledge of the saint as an educational process, her visions, particularly the later one, echo Goscelin's presentation of St Ethelburg as the founder of a dynasty in whose image succeeding abbesses and their spiritual daughters were formed by education and nurture. They therefore resembled her in their virtues and holiness as biologically descended children bear the physical likeness of their parents. Describing Ethelburg's education of her community, for instance, Goscelin (extending Aldhelm's figurative construction of the education of the nuns of Barking quoted above) says: "Whatever apostolic learning she acquired, either from her brother's mouth or from sacred reading, she turned to honey deep in the bowels of charity for those offspring of her own birthing, so that the worthy daughters presented the likeness of their worthy mother in the life-giving face of sanctity".[49] Concerning Ethelburg's education of Hildelith as her successor he writes: "Beautifully did the Lord multiply the generation of his virgin spouse Ethelburg through the succession and increase of St Hildelith[…]. St Hildelith, as a daughter resembles her mother, strove to be the image of St Ethelburg in her holy way of life and zealous concerns".[50]

The setting for both of Alfgifu's visions, like the visions of St Edith at Wilton, is the tomb of the founder, where Alfgifu was accustomed to pray alone at night. Like later medieval dream-vision poems, Alfgifu's visions identify her external circumstances and subjective state at the time they occurred, and these are refracted in the content of the visions.[51] Her second vision, we are told, took place seven years after she had translated the three abbess-saints to a temporary resting place (ca. 1087), when the time had come to move them into the newly completed

46 Life of Wulfhild, Prologue, chapters 13, 15.

47 Stephanie Hollis, Barking's Monastic School, Late Seventh to Twelfth Century: History, Saint-Making and Literary Culture, in: Jennifer N. Brown/Donna A. Bussell (eds.), Barking Abbey and Medieval Literary Culture: Authorship and Authority in a Female Community, York 2012, 19–42, here 47–48.

48 Revelation, 5.1–8; 20.12. Colker 1965, 396.

49 Life of Ethelburg, chapter 2.

50 Lessons on Hildelith, chapter 6.

51 For the earlier vision see further Hollis 2012, 47–48.

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church as the culmination of her ambitious re-building project (ca. 1094).[52] Close association of Alfgifu and St Ethelburg is central to Goscelin's narrative of the translation she carried out ca. 1087. He relates that she was reduced to tears by the bishop of London's refusal to preside over the translation of the abbess-saints, until one of the sisters suggested that the reason for his refusal was that the abbess-saints wanted to be moved by their own community. Visions of Ethelburg appeared the following two nights. Cannily, she did not appear to Alfgifu – medieval dream theory from its beginnings was conscious of the role of wish fulfilment – but to two male employees, the steward and the master builder, evidently strong supporters of her cause.[53] St Ethelburg's communications, however, were addressed to Alfgifu and expressed sympathy for her distress as well as authorisation for the translation of all three abbess-saints by Alfgifu and her community.

In Alfgifu's vision ca. 1094, St Ethelburg gives the abbess direct authorisation for the final translation of the three saints. But, going far beyond that, the vision enables her to experience subjectively her position in a dynastic line of abbesses, when St Ethelburg transforms herself from founding matriarch into a child and asks Alfgifu if she can lay her weary head on her breast. It is a graphic confirmation of her shared identity with the founder. She is united with her in an embrace of mutual affection, as a spiritual mother who continues the line of descent by the nurturing of spiritual daughters in the image of St Ethelburg, one of whom will be her chosen successor. But Alfgifu is also a spiritual daughter of St Ethelburg. Implicitly and understandably, she needs maternal comfort as she faces another round of opposition from the senior London clergy and consequent opposition from within her community. In the concluding reversal of roles, she becomes the embodiment of the maternal comfort she wants. The vision is, however, dualistic in structure. Alfgifu, Goscelin relates, was disturbed and advised by soothing *and* chiding visions. In keeping with its representation of an educational experience, the vision reflects Goscelin's stereotyping description of Torhtgyth, mistress of the novices in the time of Ethelburg, who "gave birth to" her spiritual daughters by correction *and* affection.[54]

The vision opens with Alfgifu encountering at the tomb of Ethelburg her former schoolmistress, who had loved her as a child for the grace of God she saw in her: "Behold", she said, "our mistress Ethelburg, whom you have always hoped to see, is here for you. Behold, you can see her and obtain from her what you want".[55] But, as Alfgifu lies prostrate at the right hand of the tomb of Ethelburg,

52 Recital of a Vision, chapter 2; Translation and Elevation of Saints, chapter 2.

53 Translation and Elevation of Saints, chapters 2, 5, 8. Anthony W. Spearing, Medieval Dream-Poetry, Cambridge 1976, 9–11.

54 Life of Ethelburg, chapter 7.

55 Recital of a Vision, chapter 2.

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she feels herself driven up against the wall by a sudden forceful movement of Ethelburg's tomb and is released only when she begs for mercy. It was as if, Goscelin explains, Ethelburg had said to her: "Learn from this constraint in which I confine you that you should bring me out from this cramped space". Although, actually, as he points out, anticipating the role reversal of the conclusion, it was the abbess and her community who were cramped and constricted while saying their offices by the presence of the tombs of the three abbess-saints around the altar.

Then, as Alfgifu sat on the lowest step of the altar, the hangings about the shrine shook violently and St Ethelburg rose from her tomb. She echoes the words of the school-mistress: "You see", she said, "the woman you hoped to see, one who aids your petition and consoles your sadness".[56] Descending to stand beside Alfgifu "in snowy brilliance and fitting stature", Ethelburg rebukes her for her slowness in removing her into the new church, and instructs her to delay no longer. The loving childhood schoolmistress, then, is replaced by a much more intimidating teacher (presumably the abbess as *magistra*), whose rebuke causes Abbess Alfgifu to tremble, beg for pardon, and promise to obey. We might expect that the conclusion will provide Alfgifu with the much-needed comfort that the narrator, the schoolmistress, and St Ethelburg seem to be promising she will receive. Instead, St Ethelburg turns into a baby girl and asks Alfgifu to hold her in her arms so she can lay her weary head on her breast. As Alfgifu stands holding the infant, "fondling the affectionate one in her embraces", she is surrounded by shrines, tombs and reliquaries of saints. Goscelin describes these as the relics of other saints awaiting translation into "the bosom of the new church by this protecting mother". The word he uses for them, echoing the concluding image of Alfgifu and the infant Ethelburg, is *pignora* ("children", and "descendants", as well as "relics").[57] He seems, then, to be directing his readers towards an allegorical interpretation of Alfgifu as the monastic house (or the Church) that encloses both the spiritual daughters of the community and the relics of their former spiritual mothers.[58]

The development of the vision enacts Goscelin's configuring of education, particularly in the Life of Ethelburg, as a process of becoming one with the image of St Ethelburg; or, to put that another way, through gaining familiarity with the saint's virtues, the nuns of Barking learned to resemble her and, in terms of Goscelin's figurative construction, were re-born as her spiritual daughters. Beginning in circumstances that recall Alfgifu being taught as a child oblate, she is

56 Recital of a Vision, chapter 3.

57 Recital of a Vision, chapter 3.

58 Cf. Bugyis 2019, 99–101. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, Saints Lives and Women's Literary Culture c. 1150–1300: Virginity and its Authorizations, Oxford/NY 2001, 197, interprets Alfgifu in the concluding image as "mother of the house that mothers her".

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pointed forward by her schoolmistress to greater knowledge of St Ethelburg and ultimately gains identity with the saint through the unexpected exchange of roles. As Ethelburg shrinks into a child, Alfgifu attains identity with her as a Mother, gaining mature adult stature. United with St Ethelburg in a mutual and loving embrace, she herself becomes the begetter of spiritual offspring in the image of the saint. The concluding reversal of the roles gives rise to a visual image that embodies the essential interchangeability of roles inherent in the creation of a female dynasty, the transformation from daughter to mother in whom the founding mother is reborn as daughter.

Modern readers, more accustomed to psycho-sexual analysis than the audience for whom Alfgifu asked Goscelin to record this vision, might be disposed to regard it as a vicarious experience of motherhood by a woman in her fifties vowed to virginity in her childhood. Goscelin offers an allegorical reading and emphasises the symbolic and surrogate nature of Alfgifu's motherhood: "Immediately the abbess, offering herself with huge delight to the lady who so humbled herself, spread her arms and took to her bosom the celestial girl in the form of an infant, just as a servant takes her lady or a humble nurse takes the royal daughter of her lord".[59] More aptly, I think, if we want a modern dream analysis, Alfgifu's vision lends itself to Jungian interpretation as a process of re-parenting the child-self.

In terms of the culture of late Anglo-Saxon female communities, the vision is centrally a confirmation of Alfgifu's place in the monastery's dynastic line of descent. Like Leoffled's translation of Wulfhild, the vision connects her, intimately, with her matriarchal origins and represents her role in continuing the line by nurturing her spiritual daughters in the image of St Ethelburg. No less emphatically than the designatory visions of St Edith, it marks Alfgifu out as the chosen successor. Shaped, however, by the differing cultural milieu of Barking, it recalls the apostolic ideal of the leader as a humble servant of the community evoked in Goscelin's depiction of Wulfhild as the teacher of her successor Leoffled. It also recalls the Virgin Mary as the mother and handmaiden of God chosen to give birth to the Christ child. As Goscelin describes Wulfhild's relationship to her community during her life: "She knew herself as their mother, not their queen, she exercised love, not tyranny. She bore all of them in her maternal womb, she suckled them all at the breasts of heavenly desire […]. By her profession she was turned from a noblewoman to a maidservant of Christ".[60]

59 Recital of a Vision, chapter 3.
60 Life of Wulfhild, chapter 4.

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6. Conclusion

Hagiography generally portrays the patron saints of monasteries in relation to society at large, as fierce protectors of monastic property and healers of pilgrim visitors. Goscelin's texts for Wilton and Barking, based on the communities' oral reports, afford glimpses of their role in shoring up the authority of the abbess in the eyes of her community and also against the impingement of royal and episcopal power.

Wilton led the way in making visible a dynastic conception of the founding abbess and her successors by the location of their tombs and in the associated development of an unusually dream-like form of visionary experience at the founder's tomb in which St Edith designated her mother's successor.[61] The corroborating visions of St Edith investing Alfgifu with the insignia of office appear to have arisen in response to Abbess Brihtgifu's identification of herself as a spiritual daughter of St Edith – conceivably Brihtgifu was the first successor to Wulfthryth not related to her by family ties.

Both developments were assimilated to the cultural milieu of Barking. At Barking, the translation of Abbess Wulfhild to a position equal to St Hildelith's at the side of the seventh-century founder affirmed a continuous line of descent from the dawn of Christianity in England, when St Ethelburg and her brother were taught by St Augustine's companion and spiritual descendant, Archbishop Mellitus.[62] Barking's unique character, as Goscelin depicted it, did not reside in the royal power and wealth that Wulfhild had shunned but in its role as a centre of learning that transmitted the knowledge of God brought by the first mission. Alfgifu of Barking's consciousness of this presumably underlies her later vision, which graphically enacts Goscelin's presentation of St Ethelburg as the founder of a dynasty in whose image succeeding abbesses and their spiritual daughters were (re-)formed by education, resembling her in their inner nature as biologically descended children bear the physical likeness of their parents.

Goscelin does not describe in detail the vision at Barking in which St Wulfhild announced her successor because, I suggest, the low esteem in which the Norman hierarchy initially held native saints, particularly those of the Reform period, encouraged Alfgifu to present herself instead as the successor to St Ethelburg. Nor does he say that St Wulfhild manifested herself to Alfgifu, and in view of the distancing from Alfgifu of the visions of Ethelburg that authorised her translation of the abbess-saints in ca. 1087, it seems more likely that Wulfhild made her visionary appearance to one of Alfgifu's supporters; her childhood school-

61 Thola's vision of Edith in her tomb resembled these in form but differs in polemical purpose; Translation of Edith, chapter 22.

62 Life of Ethelburg, chapter 1.

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mistress or Wulfrun-Judith are the obvious candidates. At a time when both the king and the queen claimed the right to interfere in the affairs of the monasteries, I have argued, the polemic thrust of the designatory visions at Wilton and Barking had less to do with winning an election than with enabling an abbess appointed by the king to present herself, in relation to her community and to the king himself, as holding her office through the authority of a higher power. The contrasting nature of these visions, as far as can be discerned, further illustrates the dissimilar ethos of the two monasteries, and perhaps also the unequal status of the abbesses of Wilton and their poor(er) relations at Barking. Whereas St Edith ritually endowed Alfgifu of Wilton with an office charged with ecclesiastic and royal power, St Wulfhild prophesied that Alfgifu of Barking would be consecrated by the local bishop in accordance with the will of God.

Alfgifu of Barking's creative deployment of the distinctive form of dream-vision encounter originating at Wilton echoes the simultaneous depiction of Alfgifu of Wilton as both mother and daughter in a line of dynastic descent from the founder. The dramatic role reversal in the conclusion of the vision of Alfgifu of Barking affirms her place in a line of descent from St Ethelburg and generates a visual image of the essential interchangeability of the roles of mother and daughter that are inherent in the creation of a female dynasty.

This vision, I have suggested, lends itself to interpretation as a self-empowering experience for Alfgifu of Barking at a time when she was facing a repetition of the episcopal obstruction and communal disharmony that marked her previous translation of the abbess-saints. The description of Alfgifu's dream-guide as the schoolmistress who had loved her as a child for the grace of God she saw in her is a poignant reminder that such teachers are likely to have been the only maternal comforters that a child oblate like Alfgifu encountered. Personal relationships between monastic teachers and their pupils were officially discouraged.[63] The mother-teacher figure is stereotypically presented by Goscelin as comforting but also stern, if not downright punitive. It is therefore cause for celebration that the embrace that unites Alfgifu with the saint, in contrast to the embrace that unites Wulfthryth with her Wilton namesake, is charged with mutual affection. But, over and above the personal and subjective aspects of the vision, there was polemical capital to be made from having the saint's direct, and evidently inarguable, demand for a second translation of the abbess-saints, and also from the visionary favour St Ethelburg showed to Alfgifu as the chosen mother of her spiritual daughters. That, presumably, was why she had Goscelin record it in his inimitable style years after he had completed the original commission.

63 Wogan-Browne 2011, 197.

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Alyssa Gabbay

Mothers, Liver-Eaters and Matrilineal Descent: Hind bint ʿUtba, Muʿāwiya and *Nasab* (Filiation) in Early Islam

Abstract

This article investigates the implications and contours of matrilineal ascription in Islam's early period by examining the case of Muʿāwiya, the first Umayyad caliph (r. 661–680), and his mother, Hind bint ʿUtba (d. 636). Historical chronicles and biographical dictionaries written between the eighth and the tenth centuries often ascribe Muʿāwiya to his mother rather than to his father, calling him Ibn Hind ("Son of Hind") or, more pejoratively, Ibn ākilat al-akbād ("Son of the Liver-Eater") in a reference to an infamous battle incident in which she took part. Though this ascription is sometimes uncomplimentary, it nevertheless elucidates how matrilineal ties functioned in Islam's first centuries and the uses to which they could be put, both positive and negative.

Lineage looms large in early Islamic texts.[1] People, particularly in Arabic-speaking cultures, defined themselves and others according to their relationships to their forebears: names were frequently composed of patronyms such as Aḥmad ibn Muhammad (Aḥmad son of Muhammad), and long recitals of genealogies often accompanied entries on famous men and women in biographical dictionaries. Though fathers and other male relatives receive the preponderance of attention in mentions of lineage in texts from Islam's early period (ca. 570–945 CE), matrilineal ties come to the fore on several notable occasions. The case of Muʿāwiya, the first Umayyad caliph (r. 661–80), and his mother, Hind bint ʿUtba (d. 636), offers a graphic if controversial example of such an occasion – one with the potential to shed significant light on the issue of matrilineal descent. Historical chronicles and biographical dictionaries written between the eighth and the tenth centuries often ascribe Muʿāwiya to his mother rather than to his father, calling him Ibn Hind ("Son of Hind") or, more pejoratively, Ibn ākilat al-akbād

1 See Franz Rosenthal, Nasab, in: Encyclopaedia of Islam, 2nd Edition, CD-ROM, version 1.1; also Adeel Mohammadi, The Ambiguity of Maternal Filiation (*nasab*) in Early and Medieval Islam, in: The Graduate Journal of Harvard Divinity School 11 (Spring 2016), 52–68, here 53–54.

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("Son of the Liver-Eater") in a reference to an infamous battle incident in which she took part. Though this ascription is sometimes uncomplimentary, it nevertheless elucidates how matrilineal ties functioned in Islam's first centuries and the uses to which they could be put, both positive and negative. In this paper, I explore several instances in poetry and prose in which Muʿāwiya was ascribed to his mother and attempt to make sense of the purposes this ascription served. I also compare these examples to others in which matrilineal ascription was downplayed or denied, including one involving Muʿāwiya's own daughter, Ramla. In undertaking this study, I hope to build on previous research demonstrating that, as scholar Adeel Mohammadi has stated, maternal ascription was a "normal part of early Islam", as well as emphasising the frequent ambiguity of such ascription, and to consider its implications for the status of women in these societies.[2]

In her otherwise excellent 1990 study of contemporary Moroccan ritual, 'Sacred Performances: Islam, Sexuality, and Sacrifice', anthropologist M. E. Combs-Schilling makes the sweeping claim that Islam is, and always has been, fundamentally patrilineal. She writes, "In Islam's cultural imagination, males carry basic sociobiological definition […] Essential being and essential affiliation pass down through the patriline – that is, from great-grandfather to grandfather to father to son. Enduring biological essence is seen to transfer from father to progeny and creates an inalienable tie, written in life-blood itself".[3] Conversely, females may "receive their basic definition from their fathers", but they are "dead ends for their patrilines" – mothers cannot transmit their lineages to their children.[4] Put into practice, the system outlined by Combs-Schilling would produce devastating consequences for women: relegated to the role of being merely vessels in the process of reproduction, their abilities to inherit from their natal families and to gain custody of their children in cases of divorce or death of the father are summarily curtailed.[5]

Though patrilineality does dominate most discussions of *nasab* (often translated as lineage or filiation) in early Islamic texts, many examples exist of matrilineality or of bilateral descent – cases in which descent is traced to both men and women.[6] The prominent Sunni scholar Ibn Saʿd (d. 845), as Ruth Roded

2 Mohammadi 2016, 59.

3 M. Elaine Combs-Schilling, Sacred Performances. Islam, Sexuality, and Sacrifice, New York, NY 1989, 61.

4 Combs-Schilling 1989, 61.

5 Such consequences can be found, in fact, in many Muslim majority countries (as in non-Muslim majority), but to speak about it in a monolithic sense is inaccurate. See Alyssa Gabbay, Gender and Succession in Medieval and Early Modern Islam: Bilateral Descent and the Legacy of Fatima, London 2020, 1–8.

6 See Ruth Roded, Women in Islamic Biographical Collections: From Ibn Saʿd to Who's Who, Boulder 1994, 12, 22; and Mohammadi 2016, 57–68.

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has pointed out, lists both paternal and maternal forebears in his entries on significant figures who lived during the time of the Prophet and his companions, as well as the next generation.[7] A companion known as ʿAmmār ibn Yāsir (d. 657) was sometimes called Ibn Sumayya after his mother, who was designated the first martyr in Islam.[8] Even though Hasan and Husayn, sons of Fatima and grandsons of the Prophet Muhammad, were known more commonly by their patronyms than their matronyms, they were typically recognised as belonging to their mother's (and maternal grandfather's) lineage, especially by Shiʿi scholars.[9]

A more controversial, and less-explored, example of bilateral descent in early Islam is that of Hint bint ʿUtba and her son, Muʿāwiya, the fifth caliph and the founder of the Umayyad Empire. Hind was infamous initially as a strong opponent to Islam during the first years of the religion's founding.[10] After Muslims killed her father, brother, uncle and son during the Battle of Badr (624), Hind swore vengeance against them.[11] She accompanied her husband, Abū Sufyān, and other "Meccans on their expedition against Medina in 3/625 [Battle of Uḥud], and was one of the most ardent in urging on the men to the fight", reportedly singing a poem that challenged them to "Smite with every sharpened spear!"[12] An Abyssinian slave named Waḥshī, known as an expert javelin-thrower, had been promised manumission from his master in exchange for killing Ḥamza, who had killed Hind's father at Badr; every time Hind passed Waḥshī, she would say, "Come on, you father of blackness, satisfy your vengeance and ours".[13] Waḥshī did succeed in killing Ḥamza, to Hind's delight.[14]

After the battle had ended, with Meccans inflicting many losses on the Muslims, Hind and other women reportedly took part in the grotesque exercise of mutilating their opponents' corpses. They "cut off their ears and noses and Hind made them into anklets and collars and gave her anklets and collars and pendants to Waḥshī […] She cut out Hamza's liver and chewed it, but she was not able to swallow it and threw it away. Then she mounted a high rock" and in a loud

7 Roded 1994, 12, 22.

8 Al-Dhahabī, Siyar a'lām al-nubalā', Beirut 1996, 1: 416; quoted in: Mohammadi 2016, 57–58; Muhammad Ibn Ishāq, Sīrat Rasūl Allah, trans. by Alfred Guillaume as The Life of Muhammad (Oxford 1955), 229.

9 See Gabbay 2020, 24–39.

10 For a penetrating treatment of Hind as the "*jāhiliyya* woman par excellence" who later undergoes rehabilitation as a Muslim, see Nadia Maria El-Cheikh, Women, Islam, and Abbasid Identity, Cambridge, MA 2015, 17–37.

11 Ibn Ishāq, Sīrat Rasūl Allāh, 371, 374, 385–386.

12 See Frantz Buhl, Hind bint ʿUtba, in: Encylopaedia of Islam, 2nd Edition, CD-ROM, version 1.1; also Ibn Ishāq, Sīrat Rasūl Allāh, 374.

13 Ibn Ishāq, Sīrat Rasūl Allāh, 371.

14 Ibid., 375, 385.

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voice taunted the Muslims for their loss, claiming that the Meccans had paid them back for Badr.[15] She also boasted of her gruesome exploits:

> "I slaked my vengeance on Ḥamza at Uḥud.
> I split his belly to get at his liver.
> This took from me what I had felt
> Of burning sorrow and exceeding pain.
> War will hit you exceeding hard
> Coming upon you as lions advance."[16]

Though she became known among Muslims as "insolent" and "vile" after this incident, Hind's reputation underwent a substantial rehabilitation in later years.[17] Originally "excluded from the general amnesty" that was extended to pagans after the Muslims occupied Mecca in 630, probably because of her role in the death of Ḥamza, she was forgiven by the Prophet and permitted to convert to Islam.[18] Six years later, she reportedly took part in the Battle of Yarmuk against the Byzantine Empire, where she and other Muslim women won praise for their bravery in exhorting the greatly outnumbered men to press on.[19] Hind, carrying a stick, sang one of the same songs she had sung at Uḥud.[20] According to one observer,

> "She came to the Muslim horsemen of the right-wing and called out, 'Why are you fleeing? Do you flee from Allah and Jannah when Allah is watching you?' When she saw her husband Abū Sufyān fleeing, she struck his horse in the face with a tent-peg and said, 'Where do you think you are going, O [Abū Sufyān] Ṣakhr? Go back to battle and put great effort into it until you compensate for having incited people in the past against [the Prophet]'."[21]

Hind's influence did not end with her participation in the Battle of Yarmuk. As indicated, her son Muʿāwiya became the fifth caliph and the founder of the Umayyad dynasty. Like his mother, Muʿāwiya is a rather controversial figure in early Islamic chronicles. Praised by some historians for his prowess as a statesman and warrior, he was pilloried by others for his role in the first civil war

15 Ibid., 385.
16 Ibid., 386.
17 Ibid., 386. See also El-Cheikh 2015, 25–34.
18 W. Montgomery Watt, Muhammad at Medina ,Oxford 1956, 68–69. Ibn Saʿd gives a different report of what happened when Hind pledged allegiance. See Abū ʿAbd Allah Muhammad Ibn Saʿd, Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt al-kabīr, vol. 8, trans. by Aisha Bewley as The Women of Madina (London 1995), 4–5; also Leila Ahmed, Women and the Advent of Islam, in: Signs 11 (1986), 665–691, here 686, and El-Cheikh 2015, 32–33.
19 Whether she participated in this battle is a matter of debate, but some historians do record it.
20 Muhammad ibn ʿUmar Al-Wāqidī, Futūḥ al-Shām, trans. by Sulaymān Al-Kindī as The Islamic Conquest of Syria, London 2005, 332.
21 Ibid., 332.

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(*fitna*).[22] This struggle, which pitted Muʿāwiya against ʿAli in a quest for the caliphate, centred largely upon the issue of revenge for the death of ʿUthman, the third caliph who had been murdered by supporters of ʿAli, who replaced him. Because Muʿāwiya, then the governor of Syria, belonged to the same clan as ʿUthmān, the Umayyads, he was charged with avenging his relative's death. His eventual success in defeating ʿAli and, in their eyes, usurping the caliphate earned him the perpetual hatred of proto-Shiʿites and Shiʿites.

Significantly, biographical dictionaries and historical accounts written between the eighth and the tenth centuries cite conversations and poems that ascribe Muʿāwiya to Hind in addition to his father, Abū Sufyān (Ṣakhr) ibn Ḥarb. Given the controversy associated with both Muʿāwiya and Hind, these mentions sometimes take the form of insults. For example, according to Ibn Saʿd, Muʿāwiya proposed to the Prophet's granddaughter, Umāma (she was also the widow of ʿAli; he had married her after Fatima's death). After an adviser, al-Mughīra ibn Nawfal ibn al-Ḥārīth, asked her, "Will you marry the Son of the Liver-Eater?" – *ibn ākilat al-akbād* – she turned the caliph down (and married al-Mughīra instead.)[23]

Poems zooming like arrows between participants in the first *fitna* often refer to Muʿāwiya as "Ibn Hind" in what appears to be an effort to invoke her warlike qualities. According to the Shiʿi chronicler Abū Faḍl al-Minqarī (d. 827), when a resident of Ḥims, a town in Syria, desperately tried to convince his uncle, the notable Shuraḥbīl ibn al-Simṭ al-Kindī, not to back Muʿāwiya, he cast Shuraḥbīl in a poem "as a feeble-minded Yemenite duped and bribed by the son of Hind, whose arrow would certainly kill him in the end".[24] By associating Muʿāwiya with his mother, the author of the poem ascribes to him her viciousness and aggressiveness, and implicitly calls up memories of her actions during the Battle of Uḥud.

In a similar vein, but with very different purposes, another Shiʿi chronicler, Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (d. 967) reports that ʿUthmān's brother, al-Walīd ibn ʿUqba, sounded the theme of Hind's vengefulness as a means of inciting Muʿāwiya – who he feared was faltering in his determination to act against ʿAli – to take revenge for the death of the murdered caliph:

> "By God, Hind will not be your mother if the day passes
> without the avenger taking revenge for ʿUthmān.

22 For an astute assessment of the statesman's image and how it changed over time, see Khaled Keshk, When Did Muʿāwiya Become Caliph?, in: Journal of Near Eastern Studies, 69 (April 2010), 32–34.

23 Ibn Saʿd, Kitāb al-ṭabaqāt, 8.28; also El-Cheikh 2015, 29–30, and Martin Hinds, Muʿāwiya I, in: Encylopaedia of Islam, 2nd Edition, CD-ROM, version 1.1. For other sources, see Roded 1994, 37.

24 Naṣr ibn Muzāhim Al-Minqarī, Waqʿat Ṣiffīn, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām Muhammad Hārūn, Cairo 1962; quoted in: Wilferd Madelung, The Succession to Muhammad: A Study of the Early Caliphate (Cambridge MA 1997), 201.

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> Can the slave of the people kill the lord of his household
> And you [pl.] do not kill him? Would your mother were barren!"[25]

Here, al-Walīd goads Muʿāwiya by saying that he is not worthy of Hind and her lineage if he does not take vengeance. In the first line, the poem symbolically threatens to sever ties between Muʿāwiya and Hind if he fails to act: "Hind will not be your mother". The poet grows harsher in the second line: if he dallies, it would have been better if Hind had been barren – a symbolic killing of the son. The poem thus ascribes great importance to the mother and to the link between her and the son. Ironically, by speaking of Hind's reputation for vengeance al-Walīd celebrates the very act that, according to some interpretations, nearly excluded her from the Muslim community and condemned her to spiritual death.

Elsewhere, however, associations with Hind exhibit a more benign quality. As reported by al-Minqarī, Kaʿb ibn Juʿayl, a bard of the tribe of Taghlib who inhabited the "northern Mesopotamian borderland of Syria and Iraq", and whose support Muʿāwiya desired, sent a poem to the leader criticising ʿAli and saying, "We are pleased with Ibn Hind, we are pleased".[26] And in a much later text penned by the Sunni historian Abū Jaʿfar Muhammad al-Ṭabarī (d. 923), Hind emerges in a strikingly positive manner in an episode describing the caliph Muʿāwiya's polite relieving of a governor of Basra from his post:

> When Ibn ʿĀmir took leave of him, Muʿawiyah told him, "Indeed I would ask three things from you, so say 'they are yours.'" He replied, "They are yours as I am Ibn Umm Hakim." [Muʿāwiya then asked Ibn ʿĀmir to return the position to him without being angry, and two other favors, which are granted.] Ibn ʿĀmir then said, "O Commander of the Faithful, I ask three things from you, so say 'they are yours.'" Muʿawiyah replied, "They are yours as I am Ibn Hind."[27]

Both men make their vows by invoking their mothers. Mothers, here, symbolise legitimacy.

Several factors may play a part in these texts' ascription of Muʿāwiya to his mother. Anyone seeking to disparage the caliph – a category of people in which we may group some of the figures cited in the texts as well as the Shiʿi historians writing about them – likely found Hind a convenient handle. Given her (to put it mildly) less-than-sparkling reputation before accepting Islam, and particularly her role in the death and mutilation of Hamza, she provided them with the mud with which to smear him.[28] Legitimacy also enters the equation here, for by

25 Abū al-Faraj AL-Isfahānī, Kitāb al-Aghānī (Cairo 1927–), 4:177; quoted in: Madelung 1997, 184; see also El-Cheikh 2015, 30.

26 Al-Minqarī, Waqʿat Ṣiffīn, 56–57; quoted in: Madelung, 1997, 202.

27 Abū Jaʿfar Muhammad Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh al-rusul wa al-mulūk, 18, trans. by Michael G. Morony as Between Civil Wars: The Caliphate of Muʿāwiyah, Albany, NY 1987, 69.

28 See El-Cheikh 2015, 30.

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linking Muʿāwiya to his mother, historians or their subjects may have sought to cast doubt on Hind's chastity and on Muʿāwiya's paternity, which Shiʿites often brought into question. Indeed, this effort embodies the negative side of maternal ascription: the assumption that it sometimes carries that a woman has been unchaste and that a child's paternity cannot be verified. Based on the doctrine of *al-walad li ʻl-firash* ("the child belongs to the bed" – that is, to the owner of the bed), a child born outside of wedlock or concubinage was normally ascribed to its mother.[29] Maternal filiation thus could mean illegitimacy and sexual impropriety; it bore a distinct "capacity for insult".[30]

In fact, a much later Shiʿi text records an exchange between Mu ʿāwiya and Ziyād ibn Abīhī, a general, in which Muʿāwiya called the latter "Ibn Sumayya" [his mother's name – not to be confused with the first martyr in Islam] so as to accuse him of illegitimacy. Ziyād replied "Muʿāwiya, you called me by the name of my mother Sumayya, so as to mock me. Well, if I am Ibn Sumayya, then you are Ibn Jamāʿat [roughly, the son of many fathers] as you were a product of combined *nikāḥ*" – that is, his mother had sex with many men and was unsure of who the real father was.[31]

Even the more complimentary uses of the term "Ibn Hind" by supporters of Muʿāwiya could be regarded as efforts to disparage the caliph if we take into account the Shiʿi tendencies of the chroniclers. Yet the positive example from al-Ṭabarī, a Sunni author known for his rectitude, is less easily explained away. Here we must entertain the possibility of a different justification: the idea that the Umayyads acknowledged female ties and saw women as able to represent and pass on their lineages, and even to represent legitimacy – a matter acknowledged by later chroniclers. Such is particularly the case if a woman had distinguished herself in some way, as in the case of Hind, or descended from a noble lineage. As both Adeel Mohammadi and Ruth Roded have demonstrated, evidence from early biographical dictionaries, including those dealing with the Umayyad period, bears out the notion that men were sometimes "filiated to their mothers because of some exceptional quality".[32]

29 See Ebrahim Moosa "The Child Belongs to the Bed". Illegitimacy and Islamic Law, in: Questionable Issue: Illegitimacy in South Africa, Sandra Burman/Eleanor Preston-White (eds.), Cape Town 1992, 171–184, here 173.

30 Mohammadi 2016, 55.

31 See Ibn Abī Al-Ḥadīd, Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha, 4:94 (chapter name: Mun Kitab Ziyad Ubayya); cited in: Shiʿa Pen, The 'True' Merits of Muʿāwiya bin Hind, in: *Muʿāwiya*, http://www.shiapen.com/comprehensive/muawiya/merits-of-ibn-hind.html (18.03.2020). The history of Ziyād's paternity is very convoluted. Apparently, in contrast to the stance adopted by Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd, Muʿāwiya himself attached Ziyād to his own lineage. See Mohammadi 2016, 61; Uri Rubin, "Al-Walad li–l-Firāsh", on the Islamic Campaign against "Zinā", in: Studia Islamica 78 (1993), 5–26, here 13–17; and Al-Ṭabarī, Tārīkh al-rusul wa al-mulūk, 18, 73–74.

32 Mohammadi 2016, 59.

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Indeed, other chronicles documenting events of the first *fitna* and after support the notion of the importance of matrilineal ties during the first century of Islam and, in particular, during the Umayyad dynasty. According to the Sunni historian Aḥmad ibn Yaḥya al-Balādhurī (d. ca. 892), Muʿāwiya's brother, ʿUtba, "proposed a duel with Jaʿda b. Hubayra [nephew of ʿAli], and Muʿāwiya approved, acknowledging that Jaʿda, a Makhzumite with a Hashimite mother, was a noble peer".[33] Because Jaʿda traced his lineage to two noble Quraysh clans, he was worthy of fighting ʿUtba. Similarly, when the notable Saʿīd ibn ʿUthmān put forth a claim to succeed Muʿāwiya (hoping to supplant Muʿāwiya's designated successor, his son Yazīd), he based his argument on his noble lineage (his father was the murdered caliph and his mother, Fatima bint al-Walīd, was a member of the Qurayshi clan of the Makhzumites): "Surely, my father is more excellent than Yazīd's father; my mother is more excellent than his mother, and I am better than he".[34]

Yet the never-quite-secure status of women in the lineage manifests in Muʿāwiya's response to Saʿīd, for the caliph first acknowledges, then minimises, the importance of a mother's ancestry: "You have said the truth in stating that your father is better than I and that your mother is better than his, for your mother is of Quraysh and his mother is a woman of Kalb. Yet sufficient it is for a woman to be of their decent women".[35] Ibn Hind here demotes mothers to their traditional role as vessels – no doubt a wise political move for the moment.

This ambivalence plays out elsewhere in chronicles of the Umayyads as reported by both al-Balādhurī and Muṣʿab ibn Zubayrī (d. 851), another Sunni historian. By marrying his daughter, Ramla, to ʿAmr, another son of the murdered caliph, Muʿāwiya had hoped to stave off any efforts from ʿAmr and his clansmen (the Banu Abī al-ʿĀṣī, descendants of ʿUthmān's grandfather) to challenge his caliphate.[36] But ʿAmr became a pawn in the hands of ʿUthmān's cousin, Marwān, who tried to incite him to "seek the reign".[37] Ramla learned of their plans, hearing a conversation in which Marwan egged on her husband and counted the men of the clan of Banu Abī al-ʿĀṣī – numbering among their ranks ʿAmr and Ramla's two sons, ʿUthmān and Khālid – and said that they were greater in number than the clan of Ḥarb, Muʿāwiya's clan. Distressed, she reported the conversation to her father during a visit to him, saying, "He went on enumerating

33 Madelung 1997, 236.
34 Aḥmad ibn Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-ashrāf, 5, ed. Shelomo Dov Goitein, Jerusalem 1936, 118; quoted in: Madelung 1997, 343.
35 al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-ashrāf, 5:118; quoted in: Madelung 1997, 343.
36 See Madelung 1997, 341–342.
37 Madelung 1997, 342.

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the surplus of men of Abī al-ʻĀṣī over the Banu Ḥarb, even counting my son ʻUthmān and and my son Khālid from ʻAmr. I wished they had died".[38]

Marwan's inclusion of her sons in the ranks of her husband's clan rather than her own lineage infuriates Ramla, who would rather sacrifice her children than see them used as pawns against her father's clan.[39] Her view of her children's allegiances clashes with that of Marwan, as evidenced by her use of the term "my son" [*ibnī*] from "'Amr" – yet another sign that affiliations were by no means unilaterally drawn. Ramla's fierce loyalty to her clan and willingness to use violence (even metaphorically) to defend it calls up her paternal grandmother, Hind, even as her tenuous tie to her sons throws into relief the contrasting solidity of the bond between Hind and Muʻāwiya (or, for that matter, between Fatima, Hasan, and Husayn).

Shiʻi attitudes towards bilateral descent during this period display similar ambivalence. As I have demonstrated elsewhere, Shiʻi recognition of Hasan and Husayn as belonging to their mother's (and maternal grandfather's) lineage was widespread and manifestly positive, and ultimately led to more egalitarian inheritance laws for daughters and their children, among other outcomes.[40] Yet as we have already seen, Shiʻites during the founding centuries of Islam did not hesitate to use maternal ascription in a negative way for *others* – as a means of casting doubt on an enemy's paternity or attempting to portray him as possessing his mother's negative qualities (or both). Thus, just as Muʻāwiya (see above) reportedly did, Hasan ibn ʻAli addressed the general Ziyād ibn Abīhī by his mother's name so as to highlight "the doubts in the former's lineage; he uses the maternal *nasab* because, in his view, there is no certainty in identifying Ziyād's father. Without a doubt, it is meant as an insult".[41]

Nor can we ignore the hadith found in the collection of the leading Shiʻi scholar Abū ʻAbd Allah Muhammad ibn al-Nuʻmān, known as al-Shaykh al-Mufīd (d. 1022), in which the Prophet reportedly informed ʻAli: "When the Day of Reckoning will dawn, all people will be called by their mothers' names, except your Shiʻas, who will be called by the names of their fathers, confirming their legitimacy".[42] The association of illegitimate birth with matrilineal attribution in this report casts a negative light indeed upon bilateral (or matrilineal) descent.

38 Muṣʻab Al-Zubayrī, Kitāb nasab Quraysh, ed. Evariste Levi-Provencal, Cairo 1953, 109–110; also Al-Balādhurī, Ansāb al-ashrāf, 4:1, 46, 58; quoted in: Madelung 1997, 341–342. See also: Roded 1994, 57.

39 See Roded 1994, 57.

40 See Gabbay 2020, 24–39, 80–81.

41 Mohammadi 2016, 61, and Rubin 1993, 16–17. See also Ibn Abī Al-Ḥadīd, Sharḥ nahj al-balāgha, 4:94 (cited in Shiʻa Pen, The 'True' Merits of Muʻāwiya bin Hind), for a much later example.

42 Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Nuʻmān Al-Mufīd, Kitāb al-amālī, trans. by Asgharali M. M. Jaffer as Al Amaali: The Dictations of Sheikh al-Mufid (Stanmore, London 1998), 292. See

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How could Shi'i authors reconcile these negative connotations with their own beliefs about Hasan and Husayn? First, despite the fact that they were seen as being part of Fatima's (and therefore the Prophet's) lineage, Hasan and Husayn were rarely called Ibn Fatima even in Shi'i texts; they were most often known by their father's name – Hasan ibn 'Ali and Husayn ibn 'Ali.[43] Moreover, the impeccable quality of Fatima's character helped justify the implicit attribution. Shi'i authors emphatically portrayed her as the ideal Muslim woman according to the standards of the time: gentle, maternal, obedient and, above all, chaste.[44] Hasan and Husayn's own reputations would only gain lustre, not lose it, by being attributed to her. Once again, maternal ascription appears as a double-edged sword.

Hind is of another make entirely. As the raging, vengeful woman, she personifies the worst traits of women as portrayed by male Muslim authors, and especially those of the pre-Islamic era, or Age of Ignorance [*jāhiliyya*], when unnatural women took part in battles and manifested violence rather than maternal gentleness.[45] The power imputed to her turns her into a sort of demonic female who acts as a harbinger of chaos and spiritual death, similar to the figure of Lilith in Judaism or that of Taromaiti (Contempt, Scorn) in Zoroastrianism, who represents "direct confrontation, through disobedience, with the social system sanctioned by Zoroastrianism."[46] Indeed, as Choksy has written, Taromaiti "together with the female demons Drug and Pairimaiti, presented aspects of the dangerous feminine – an allegorical image of deceit, contemptuousness, disobedience, and active rebellion against masculine domination [… a concept that] has close parallels with, and perhaps influenced, the Islamic notion of *fitna*, 'calamity, discord, disorder,' which by the ninth century C.E. became synonymous with women".[47]

A parallel figure of disorder and rage appears in the shape of al-'Uzza, the female goddess worshipped by the pre-Islamic Quraysh and other tribes, as depicted by the Muslim author Hishām ibn al-Kalbī (d. 819). As Ibn al-Kalbī writes, al-'Uzza "was a she-devil which used to frequent three trees in the valley of Nakhlah. When the Prophet captured Mecca, he dispatched [the warrior] Khālid ibn al-Walīd" to

also Matthew Pierce, Twelve Infallible Men: The Imams and the Making of Shi'ism, Cambridge, MA 2016, 140, and Mohammadi 2016's discussion of a version of this hadith, 63–64. The latter suggests an interpretation that downplays the shamefulness of maternal filiation in the hereafter.

43 Gabbay 2020, 36.

44 Gabbay 2020, 128.

45 El-Cheikh 2015, 30.

46 Jamsheed K. Choksy, Evil, Good, and Gender: Facets of the Feminine in Zoroastrian Religious History, New York 2002, 34.

47 Ibid., 35.

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that valley, telling him to cut down the trees.[48] Khālid cut down the first two trees but saw nothing. When, ordered to return to the valley by the Prophet, he arrived to cut down the third,

> he found an Abyssinian woman with disheveled hair and her hands placed on her shoulder[s], gnashing and grating her teeth […] Turning to the woman, he dealt her a blow which severed her head in twain and lo, she crumbled into ashes. He then cut down the tree and killed Dubayyah the custodian, after which he returned to the Prophet and reported to him his exploit. Thereupon the Prophet said, "That was al-'Uzza. But she is no more. The Arabs shall have none after her. Verily she shall never be worshipped again."[49]

Al-'Uzza, here, represents a threat to the Islamic social order as exemplified in female demonic power; she must be recognised ("That was al-'Uzza") and summarily defeated. Similarly, Hind's egging on of Waḥshī and attempts to eat Hamza's liver in the Battle of Uḥud exemplify direct confrontation against and disobedience of the social system sanctioned by Islam and, until the Prophet permitted her conversion, seemed destined to assure her a place in Hell. A faint echo of these depictions of women as threats to social systems later occurs in descriptions of the participation of 'Ā'isha, a wife of the Prophet, in the Battle of the Camel, which took place in 656 during the first *fitna* and pitted those seeking revenge for 'Uthmān's assassination against 'Ali and his supporters. Though far less egregious, 'Ā'isha's involvement in the battle earned her much criticism, and sometimes saw her portrayed as the very embodiment of the disorder and chaos represented by the word *fitna* – a prime example of the "capacity of all women to destroy political order".[50]

Was Muslim maternal ascription as a holdover from pre-Islamic times – a vestige, in fact, of the *jāhiliyya?* Some signs point in that direction. The scholar W. Montgomery Watt, for example, argued that pre-Islamic Arabia was mostly matrilineal and that it was "in the process of changing, around the time of Muhammad's birth (ca. 570 CE), from a matrilineal to a patrilineal society – a change that Islam was to consolidate".[51] If early Muslim authors and personages critical of Muʿāwiya understood matrilineality in that light, their ascriptions of the caliph to his mother would have multiplied in negative force, especially given Hind's association with the *jāhiliyya*.

48 Hishām ibn Al-Kalbī, Kitāb al-aṣnām, trans. by Nabih Amin Faris as The Book of Idols, Princeton 1952, 21–22.

49 Al-Kalbī, Kitāb al-aṣnām, 22.

50 Gabbay 2020, 127–128; Denise Spellberg, Politics, Gender and the Islamic Past. The Legacy of 'A'isha bint Abi Bakr, New York 1994, 142–143, 148–149.

51 W. Montgomery Watt, Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman, Oxford 1961, 152; Ahmed 1986, 667.

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Yet the picture is far less clear. More recent evidence argues for both matrilineality and patrilineality in pre-Islamic Arabia.[52] In its social reforms, the Qur'an at times seems to be inveighing against patrilineal practices, not matrilineal ones – or at least has been interpreted in that light by commentators.[53] And, as we have already seen, matrilineality (or bilateral descent) sometimes was regarded as very Islamic. Just as Fatima is distinctly seen as transmitting her lineage to her sons, so is the Virgin Mary, another exemplar of womanhood in Islam; Jesus is frequently known as "Ibn Maryam".[54] That both of these women are seen as exemplars of female piety and devotion in Islam further substantiates the idea that matrilineality (or bilateral descent) could be not only acceptable, but desirable. As this evidence demonstrates, more research is needed to understand the full implications and contours of matrilineal ascription in Islam's early period. Yet it is nevertheless apparent that the recognition of matrilineal descent, both positive and negative, imputed a certain power to women that belies the stereotypical view of them as mere vessels. Forceful and yearning for vengeance, Hind stalks the pages of early Islamic texts as the personification of the angry female – one who, despite her flaws, is forever her son's mother.

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52 Ahmed 1986, 667; Gabbay 2020, 41–42, 82–85.

53 Gabbay 2020, 82–85.

54 See, for example, Qur'an 43:57. In fact, Shi'ites often adduced the example of the Virgin Mary and Jesus to prove that Hasan and Husayn did, in fact, belong to their mother's lineage. See Gabbay 2020, 33, 37–38, 47.

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Karen Dempsey

Herstory: Exploring the Material Life of Gundrada de Warenne

Abstract
Scholarly work on castles draws on multiple sources from history, archaeology, art and architectural history to literary and religious studies. This places it in a unique position to be able to bring different threads together to tell full stories of women's lives. But a challenge exists to explore medieval women's gendered roles and their lived experience without falling prey to the trap of inserting women into traditional narratives of male power. As a first step in response to my own call for fuller archaeological accounts of women's lived experiences, this article focuses on one elite woman – Gundrada Oosterzele-Scheldewindeke, later de Warenne (d. 1085). It endeavours to capture her world through an examination of the material connections and relationships of her life. While people and places are important in this, the emphasis here is placed on our knowledge of the things that shaped Gundrada's life and death. These range from castle architecture, her much-discussed Tournai stone tomb-slab, an assemblage of hairpins and a devotional text, the Crowland Psalter, as well as an archaeological object with possible amuletic properties. Drawing these different strands of evidence together shows how we can foreground women, not by marking them as exceptional but to highlight that they were part of and participative within the networked material world.

1. Introduction

In castle studies, stories about women typically revolve around those who held stereotypical male power. This desire to highlight particular female figures and their deeds was a necessary step taken by second-wave feminist archaeologists and historians to demonstrate the *presence* of women as one way of subverting the patriarchal narratives within and about society in the European middle ages. While this works to highlight the diverse roles that elite women occupied, these analyses often overshadow the ways in which women exercised their own particular, gendered agency. They do little to shed light on elite women's lived experience or patterns of daily life, including their emotive and sensorial worlds. Recent work in cognate disciplines has shown that many of these aspects can be

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approached through female literary, visual and cultural networks.[1] Scholarly work on castles already draws on multiple sources from history, archaeology, art and architectural history to literary and religious studies. It is in a unique position to be able to embroider women's lives – both elite and ordinary.

As a first step in response to my own call for fuller archaeological accounts of women's lived experiences, this article focuses on one elite woman – Gundrada de Warenne (d. 1085). It endeavours to capture her world through an examination of the material connections of her life.[2] The local landscape of this paper is primarily Castle Acre, Norfolk but also stretches southwards into Normandy and Flanders. Our knowledge of the things that shaped Gundrada's life and death range from castle architecture, her much-discussed tomb slab, an assemblage of hairpins and a devotional text, the Crowland Psalter, to the more tenuous (sensorial) interpretations of an archaeological object, discussed here as an amulet.[3] Key people include Matilda of Flanders (d. 1083) and her husband William I (d. 1088). William of Blois, Count of Boulogne (d. 1159), and his uncle Bishop Henry of Blois (d. 1171), a noted medieval patron, play smaller but still significant roles.[4] Some members of the extended de Warenne family, such as Isabelle (d. 1203), as well as the successive de Warenne lords, feature briefly.

1 Diane Watt, Women, Writing and Religion in England and Beyond, 650–1100. Studies in Early Medieval History. Bloomsbury Academic, London 2019; Susan Groag Bell, Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture, in: Signs 7,4 (1982), 742–768; Jitske Jasperse, Matilda, Leonor and Joanna: The Plantagenet sisters and the display of dynastic connections through material culture, in: *Journal of Medieval History* 43,4 (2017), 523–547; Elizabeth L'Estrange, Holy motherhood: Gender, dynasty, and visual culture in the later Middle Ages, Manchester 2008; Kathleen Nolan, Queens in stone and silver: The creation of a visual imagery of queenship in Capetian France, New York 2009; Therese Martin (ed.). Reassessing the roles of women as "makers" of medieval art and architecture, Leiden 2012. Elisabeth van Houts, Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe 900–1200, Medieval Culture and Society, Buffalo, NY 1999.

2 Karen Dempsey, Gender and Medieval Archaeology: Storming the Castle, in: Antiquity 93 (2019): 772–778.

3 John G. Coad/Anthony D. F. Streeten, Excavations at Castle Acre Castle, Norfolk, 1972–77, in: Archaeological Journal 139 (1982), 138–301; Rebecca Rushforth, The Crowland Psalter and Gundrada de Warenne, in: The Bodleian Library Record 21 (2008), 156–68; George Zarnecki/Janet Holt/Tristram Holland, English Romanesque Art 1066–1200. Catalogue of an Exhibition Held at Hayward Gallery, London, 5 April–8 July 1984. Arts Council of Great Britain 1984; Fiona Anderson, Uxor Mea: The First Wife of the First William of Warenne, Sussex Archaeological Collections 130 (1992), 107–819; Elisabeth van Houts, Epitaph of Gundrada of Warenne, in: Andreas Bihrer/Elizabeth Stein (eds.), Nova de Veteribus, Mitel- und neulateinische Studien für Paul Gerhard Schmidt, Munchen Leipzig 2004, 366–378.

4 William I, Count of Boulogne was son of King Stephen and nephew of Henry of Blois. Henry was the grandson of William I, nephew of Henry I, bishop of Winchester and abbot of Glastonbury. See Edmund King, Blois, Henry de (c. 1096–1171), Bishop of Winchester. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, 2004.

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This paper takes a relational and feminist approach that enmeshes people, places and things of various scales within the same narrative. In doing so, the interwoven threads of Gundrada's personal, political, familial and spiritual relationships are captured.[5] When grappling with disparate and impartial evidence to reveal the material and networked life of Gundrada, some of the narrative will be somewhat speculative, but the connections made here demonstrate the strength of engaging with a variety of sources.[6]

2. Who was Gundrada de Warenne?

Gundrada was a Flemish noblewoman from the family Oosterzele-Scheldewindeke, hereditary advocates of St Bertin at St Omer.[7] In the late nineteenth century, she was of great interest to historians/genealogists, who tried to establish if she was a daughter to William I (d. 1087), also known as the Conqueror, and/or Matilda of Flanders (d. 1083).[8] It became clear that this genealogy was based on misunderstandings of historical documents.[9] Despite not being immediately related to this royal couple, it appears that she was deeply connected to Matilda, which is evidenced in particular by the gift of the manor of Carlton, Cambridgeshire in England from the queen to Gundrada.[10] This has been understood as indicative of a close relationship – perhaps that of a lady-in-waiting, a role that can sometimes be akin to that of a surrogate daughter.[11] There are also suggestions that Matilda and Gundrada were possibly related, if only distantly.[12] Unfortunately, little is known of Gundrada's early life. But if we accept that she was part of Matilda of Flanders' immediate circle, then perhaps through a brief examination of her life, we can know more of Gundrada.

5 Elisabeth van Houts, The Warenne View of the Past 1066–1203, in: Anglo-Norman Studies XXIV, Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2003 26 (2004), 103–121.

6 Ruth Tringham, Giving Voices (Without Words) to Prehistoric People: Glimpses into an Archaeologist's Imagination, in: European Journal of Archaeology 22,3 (2019), 338–353.

7 The Warenne (Hyde) Chronicle, eds. and trans. Elisabeth van Houts/Rosalind C. Love, Oxford 2013.

8 Edward A. Freeman, The Parentage of Gundrada, Wife of William of Warren, in: The English Historical Review 3,12 (1888), 680–701; Mary Anne Everett Green, Lives of the Princesses of England: from the Norman Conquest (1849–1855), vol. 1, London 1857, 72–82.

9 Van Houts/Love 2013; Anderson 1992; William Farrer/Charles Travis Clay, Early Yorkshire Charters Volume 8: The Honour of Warenne, Cambridge 1949, 40–45.

10 Van Houts 2004; Joanna Green, The Aristocracy of Norman England, Cambridge 1997. Gundrada later gifted this to Lewes Priory, discussed below.

11 Van Houts/Love 2013; Jennifer Ward, English Noblewomen in the Later Middle Ages, New York 1992.

12 Van Houts 2004, 104.

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As a Flemish noble, Gundrada may have spent some time at the court of Baldwin V (d. 1067) and Adelda (d. 1079), Count and Countess of Flanders, who were Matilda's parents. Matilda I married c. 1051, which coincided with the approximate date of Gundrada's birth. If Gundrada was a lady-in-waiting, she may have joined Matilda's new household as young as five years old.[13] While we don't know exactly where Gundrada spent her time as part of Matilda's household, we do know that as a noblewoman, the material context of her life would have been rich; she likely visited churches and cathedrals with ornate architecture, as well as experiencing life in a castle surrounded by tapestries, silks, cloth and fine bed clothes, as is documented for Matilda.

Queen Matilda was known to have placed an emphasis on learning at court and for her children.[14] She founded the Abbey of Sainte-Trinité, Caen in Normandy, where she was later buried. This nunnery, also known as the Abbaye aux Dames, was thought specifically to have fulfilled the educational needs of her daughters.[15] One of whom, Cecelia (d. 1126), went on to become the abbess of this Benedictine Abbey.[16] How does this relate to Gundrada? Within the royal household, noblewomen often provided childcare and served as nursemaids.[17] Given the frequency of international marriages, language learning must have been an important part of growing up.[18] So it may be that ladies-in-waiting, who themselves had likely been educated at court, were expected, once old enough, to share their knowledge, perhaps including languages, if they were involved in childcare or companionship.[19]

As a woman, there were certain societal expectations placed on Gundrada. These gendered roles of medieval women were many, including care and nurture

13 Ward 1992; Barbara Harris, English Aristocratic Women, 1450–1550, Oxford 1992.

14 Lisa Hilton, Queens Consort: England's Medieval Queens, London 2009; Van Houts 1992.

15 The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni, ed. Elisabeth van Houts, Oxford 1992.

16 Laura L. Gathagan, "Mother of Heroes, Most Beautiful of Mothers". Mathilda of Flanders and Royal Motherhood in the Eleventh Century, in: Carey Fleiner/Ellie Woodacre (eds.), Virtuous or Villainess? The Image of the Royal Mother from the Early Medieval to the Early Modern Era, New York 2016, 37–63.

17 Ward 1992; Michael Clanchy, Did Mothers Teach Their Children to Read?, in: Conrad Leyser/Lesley Smith (eds.), Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe, 400–1400, London 2016, 147–172.

18 Ian Short, Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England, in: Anglo-Norman Studies 14 (1991), 229–249; Clancy 2016; Elizabeth M. Tyler, Crossing Conquests: Polyglot Royal Women and Literary Culture in Eleventh-Century England, in: Elizabeth M. Tyler (ed.), Conceptualizing Multilingualism in Medieval England, c800–c1250 (2011), 171–96.

19 Mary Lewis, Work and the Adolescent in Medieval England ad. 900–1550: The Osteological Evidence, Medieval Archaeology 60,1 (2016), 138–171; Jeremy P. Goldberg, Women, Work, and Life Cycle in a Medieval Economy, Oxford 1992. Both texts discuss working ages of young people from eight years old and up.

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for their households and beyond, as well as the patronage of religious institutions, which was wrapped up in their own expressions of religious devotion.[20] The queen and her ladies-in-waiting likely took part in celebrations at court, whether in Flanders, Boulogne or Normandy, most of which revolved around the church calendar.[21] Daily life, aside from eating, likely involved praying and reading homilies from a personalised prayer book, weaving or some form of textile work, performing hospitality and, for some women, administration of the household.

Gundrada was about seventeen years old when she married William de Warenne (d. 1086) soon after the Battle of Hastings in 1066, which ultimately meant her leaving Matilda's household. We know little about Gundrada's migration to England, but she and her brother Frederick (d. 1070?) held lands in southern England prior to the Conquest.[22] Owing to the successful battle campaign, William de Warenne was richly rewarded with estates in the area of modern Sussex. Interestingly, his new territory appeared to complement that of Gundrada, who inherited further lands after her brother Frederick's death. It has been suggested that Gundrada held these particular estates throughout her life; one manor continued to be known as Frederick's, and in 1086, this was listed as belonging to the Abbey of St Bertin in Flanders.[23] Was this a gift to the Abbey from Gundrada in memory of her brother? If so, it could be considered an early indication of her desire to curate the memory of her family. At the same time, it would reaffirm a connection with Flanders.

3. A Home from Home? Castle Acre in Context

Castle Acre (Norfolk) and Lewes (Sussex) were the main seats established by William and Gundrada in England shortly after 1066.[24] Castle Acre is now understood as one of the largest earthwork castles in England. However, archaeological excavation has shown that at the time Gundrada was living here, its morphology was different as it did not yet have the surrounding large ditches and banks that are visible today (Fig. 1). Initially, the Castle Acre complex comprised

20 Martin 2012; Kim M. Phillips, A Cultural History of Women in the Middle Ages, Sydney 2016.

21 Roberta Gilchrist, Medieval Life. Archaeology and the Life Course, Woodbridge 2012 notes that the church calendar was entwined with life in the Middle Ages.

22 Van Houts/Love 2013; Lewis C. Loyd, The Origins of the Family of Warenne, in: Yorkshire Archaeological Journal 31 (1934), 97–113.

23 Van Houts/Love 2013; Loyd 1934; George E. Cokayne, The Complete Peerage, vol. 4, London 1916, 670.

24 Lewes Castle was the first castle founded by the married couple. It too was originally an earth and timber castle with a later masonry focal building.

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a circular chalk bank likely surmounted by a wooden palisade, complete with a timber gatehouse to the south. Enclosed within this was the primary focal building, a two-storeyed structure with accommodation in two ranges.[25] The relative simplicity of the residential building does not imply it was insubstantial – there is evidence for high-status elements, such as a wall fireplace, one of the earliest examples in England.[26]

Fig. 1: Castle Acre, Norfolk from south. Showing earthworks and masonry remains. Author's own.

Direct parallels for this elite residence are not immediately obvious, as few known contemporary buildings survive; though Bletchingley, Surrey and Walmer, Kent could be contenders, as well as the twelfth-century Wolvesey Palace, Winchester.[27] However, the style of Castle Acre's architecture, with its dual upper levels and wall fireplaces, can be linked back to elite residences in Normandy, including the early castle at Caen, Ivry-la-Bataille or Avranches. While Château de Caen did not become the seat of power for Matilda and William until c. 1060,[28]

25 Coad/Streeten 1982.

26 Margaret Wood, The English Medieval House, London 1965.

27 Michael W. Thompson, Keep or Country House? Thin-walled Norman "proto-keeps", in: Fortress 12 (1992), 13–22; Michael Thompson, Another "Proto-Keep" at Walmer, Kent, in: Medieval Archaeology 39 (1994), 174–176.

28 Edward Impey/John McNeill, The Great Hall of the Dukes of Normandy in the Castle at Caen, in: John A. Davies et al. (eds.), Castles and the Anglo-Norman World, Barnsley 2016, 75–97; Lucien Musset, Les Actes de Guillaume le Conquérant et de la Reine Mathilde pour les Abbayes Caennaises, in: Mémoires de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie 37 (1967), 59–62; Michel de Boüard, Le Château de Caen, Caen 1979; Bénédicte Guillot, Caen (Calvados). Castle, in: Medieval Archaeology 43 (2013), 256–257.

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it is possible that Gundrada aspired to capture aspects of Matilda's domestic arrangements for herself in Castle Acre. This was not unusual; many Norman castles in England drew on pre-existing architectural styles. The masons who constructed these new buildings would also have been brought from Normandy since there was no tradition of stone building of large-scale domestic architecture in early medieval England. The family of Gundrada's husband, William, also originated in Normandy, and perhaps it was necessary or even comforting to draw upon familiar architecture to create a new home.

Castle Acre, and other high-status estates, became part of the material network of the de Warenne family belonging to successive generations, all of which began with Gundrada. For centuries, these castles were occupied by high-ranking nobles, as well as ladies-in-waiting, male attendants, saddlers, laundresses and cooks who lived, worked or visited there. Castle Acre was a place where many grand stories played out from the period directly after the Norman Conquest to the turbulent times of the mid-twelfth century and onwards; kings and queens visited, daughters made marriage alliances and land was confiscated and returned.[29] The archaeological evidence from the castle captures this macroscale but also highlights the smaller stories of daily life. It shows that people made butter, carved bone instruments, consciously buried coins and tokens in building foundations as special deposits to commemorate their creation and even etched female figures into the lower courses of an interior wall.[30] This was the material world of Gundrada, who was a central node within the daily running and decision making of the castle household.

4. Creating Connections: From Caen to Cluny and Castle Acre

Female patronage of religious houses was one aspect of the gendered role of elite medieval women that was also interlinked with their devotional activities of prayer on behalf of their family.[31] Following in the footsteps of other generous sponsors, such as Matilda I and her mother Adela of France, Gundrada was interested in performing her appropriate role as benefactor.[32] This is most visible in her joint patronage of the first Cluniac Priory in England at Lewes, Sussex c. 1077 with her husband William. This was constructed at the established shrine of St Pancras, from which it took its name. Gundrada donated a portion of her dower lands to the abbey, which included the manor of Carlton previously gifted

29 Coad/Streeten 1982.
30 Ibid.
31 Martin 2012.
32 Also recognised is her potential donation of Frederick's manor to St Riquer. See Van Houts 1995.

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to her by Matilda.[33] She is listed on its foundation charter as '*Gundrede uxoris W. de Warenna*', where an "X" represents her signature, at the lower left of the document (Fig. 2).[34] The foundation charter of this religious house was co-signed by Matilda and William I. This signed document is a tangible demonstration of the close relationship between these four individuals: *Signum Willelmi regis Anglorum. Signum M. regine Anglorum. S. Willelmi comitis filii regis. Signum Willelmi de Warenna. S. Gundrede uxoris W. de Warenna.*[35]

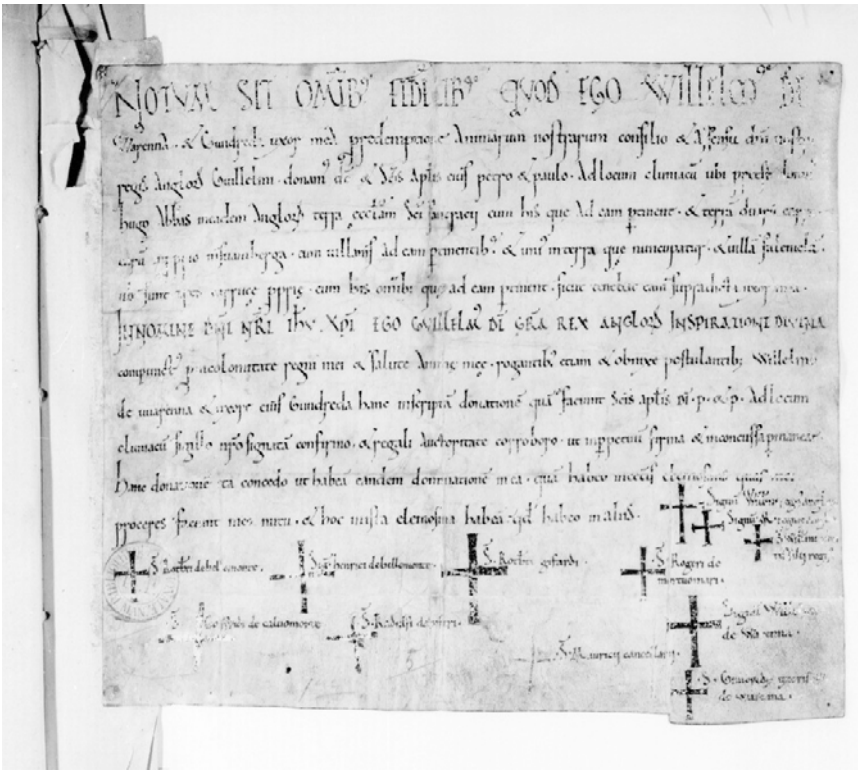

Fig. 2: Foundation Charter of Lewes Priory. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Département des manuscrits. Bourgogne 78. https://www.europeana.eu/en/item/9200519/ark__12148_btv1b10034022p.

33 Farrer/Clay 1949, 43; George F. Duckett, Charters of the Abbey of Cluni: More particularly affecting its Affiliated Priory of St Pancras, at Lewes, in: Sussex Archæological Collections 34 (1886), 121–126.

34 Freeman 1888, 686; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Bourgogne 78, http://archivesetmanuscrits.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cc92402h/cd0e1553.

35 Ibid; Green 1857, 77, noted that Gundrada's seal was affixed. Future research will ascertain if the original charter retains any wax seal impressions.

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Close to c. 1080, a sister house of Lewes was constructed at Castle Acre. The original establishment was located within the extent of the castle, where a small community of monks were housed within a possible pre-Conquest church.[36] It was not until the next generation – William de Warenne II (d. 1138) and Isabel de Vermandois (d. 1131) – that the priory's most elaborate size and scale were fully realised. This monastic complex was re-located to the east, bookending the town with the castle (Fig. 3). Its church was modelled on those of both Lewes and Cluny. It comprised Caen stone, which was common building material at this date, but the precise location of the quarry at the new Norman seat of power is significant. Gundrada was connected to these places, as was her husband William, perhaps indicating that their material choices and those of their descendants reflect the networks of kinship and political allegiances that they were embedded within and endeavouring to maintain.

Fig. 3: Castle Acre Priory from northwest showing church and west façade. Author's own.

How this interlinked web of Cluny, Lewes and Gundrada, as well as William and Matilda, occurred deserves further attention. Gundrada's brother Gerbod accidentally killed his liege lord, Arnulf III (d. 1071), in battle in Flanders.[37] He fled first to Rome, then subsequently to Cluny, where Abbot Hugh allowed Gerbod to take a monastic vow and live out his life as a monk.[38] It seems that Gundrada and William travelled to Cluny to broker a deal whereby, as repayment for the reprieve of her brother, the married couple would establish a monastery firstly at

36 Edward Impey, Castle Acre Castle and Priory. English Heritage Guidebook, London 2008.
37 Anderson 1992.
38 Van Houts 1999.

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Lewes and later at Castle Acre. It is likely that there may have been pressure on the abbot to accommodate this request as Matilda, Queen of England, was aunt to Arnulf and also related distantly to Gerbod.[39] The couple's confirmation of the foundation of St Pancras Priory, Lewes, as well as their gifts, is recorded within Cluny charters, as is a note that the abbot would carry out their request.[40] The royal couple, along with Gundrada and William, became signatories on the foundation charter, an act that tied them together more strongly. The patronage of Lewes Priory as a form of penance by Gundrada on behalf of her brother should not be too surprising as medieval women often completed these tasks, acting as intercessors or "bridges".[41] In this way, women were key links in the chain to facilitate penance or mediate difficult relationships, whether familial or church-related. As we will see in the next section, this process did not end with death.

5. The Curious Case of Gundrada's Tomb Slab: Memory, Materiality and Marriages

Orderic Vitalis, writing in the twelfth century, recorded that William de Warenne was buried in the chapterhouse at Lewes; he noted that the tomb was white with an epitaph, which he transcribed.[42] The "white tomb" was likely constructed from Caen limestone, also used as part of the decorated stonework at Lewes Priory during the twelfth century. However, he does not describe or mention anything in relation to Gundrada. In fact, he mistakenly notes that she was William's widow, despite the fact that she had died three years earlier. The Cartulary of Lewes, in an entry dated to c. 1175, noted her death:[43] *obiit domina Gundrada 30 hu[iu]s loei 28 comitissa.*[44]

Neither of these original tombs survives today; however, a decorated grave slab of Tournai stone was discovered in Isfield Church, Sussex, c. 1775, which contained an epitaph commemorating Gundrada.[45] Its ornamentation included two

39 Van Houts/Love 2013.

40 Van Houts/Love 2013, 99 note 40.

41 Jitske Jasperse pers. comm.; Birgit Sawyer, Women as Bridge-Builders: The Role of Women in Viking-Age Scandinavia, in: Ian Wood/Niels Lund (eds.), People and Places in Northern Europe 500–1600: Essays in Honour of Peter Hayes Sawyer, Woodbridge 1991; Lindy Grant, Blanche of Castile, Queen of France, London 2016.

42 Orderic Vitalis (1075–1142), The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy, transl. by Thomas Forester, vol 2, London 1980, 471–474.

43 Van Houts/Love 2013.

44 The Annals of Lewes Priory, ed. Felix Liebermann, in: The English Historical Review 17,65 (1902), 83–89.

45 See Zarnecki et al. 1984 for a description; Van Houts/Love 2013, Appendix 1.

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bands of palmette-like plant motifs, springing from carved feline heads (Fig. 4). The inscription runs along the four sides of the tombstone, as well as lengthways through the middle.

Fig. 4: Plaster cast of tombslab of Gundrada de Warenne, probably made in London, c. 1845–47. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

"Gundrada, offspring of dukes, glory of age, noble shoot,
Brought to the churches of the English the balm of her character
As a Martha
She was to the wretched; a Mary she was in her piety
That past of Martha [in her] died; the greater part of Mary survives
O, pious Pancras, witness of truth and justice
She makes you her heir, may you in your clemency accept the mother

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The sixths days of the kalends of June, showing itself
Broke the alabaster containing her flesh".[46]

Later during the construction of a railway line c. 1845, which transected Lewes Priory, two lead caskets were revealed by workers. Both were inscribed with names: *GVNDRADA* and *WILHELMUS*. The caskets were surrounded by fragments of Caen stone; however, it is not clear if this represents the remains of the tomb described by Orderic. But what we can say is that at some point the original tombs were destroyed and the remains of Gundrada and William were reinterred or translated.[47] The lettering on the lead caskets and the Tournai grave slab indicate a twelfth-century date, suggesting that they are contemporary.[48]

The origin of both the Tournai tomb slab and inscription has been subject to much debate. Art historical studies suggest that the tomb slab dated to the mid-twelfth century.[49] Parallels for it are drawn with other notable works, such as the blue lias capitals at Glastonbury Abbey, material from Wolvesey Palace and the sculptures from Lewes Priory.[50] Elisabeth van Houts has dated the epitaph to the time of Gundrada's death, highlighting its contemporary authorship by the reference to motherhood.[51] This reference served the dual purpose of acknowledging her death in childbirth whilst emphasising her role as benefactor or as a "mother" to the monastery.[52] It also contained a somewhat oblique reference to the penance she paid on her brother's behalf. This suggests that Gundrada's earlier epitaph on the white Caen stone tomb was re-inscribed on a new Tournai tomb slab, which was likely created c. 1147 as part of the dedication of the new church at Lewes Priory immediately before William Warenne III (d. 1148) went on crusade.[53] What happened in the time between the original inscription of the epitaph, and the later creation of the Tournai tombstone and lead caskets?[54]

46 Van Houts 2004.

47 Roberta Gilchrist/Cheryl Green, The chapter house, in: Cheryl Green and Roberta Gilchrist Glastonbury Abbey: Archaeological Investigations 1904–79, London 2015, 175 noted that "the remains [of some socially important individuals] were 'translated' – meaning that they were deliberately removed from their original resting place and reburied in a reverential manner".

48 Lowes 1846; William. H. Blaauw, XXXII. Account of Two Leaden Chests, containing the Bones, and inscribed with the Names, of William de Warren and his wife Gundrada, founders of Lewes Priory in Sussex, discovered in October, 1845, within the Priory precinct, in: Archaeologia 31 (1846), 438–442.

49 Zarnecki et al. 1984.

50 Ron Baxter, The Medieval Worked Stone Assemblage: Romanesque Carved Stones, in: Roberta Gilchrist/Cheryl Green (eds.), Glastonbury Abbey: Archaeological Investigations 1904–79, London 2015, 347–358, here 357.

51 Van Houts/Love 2013.

52 Ibid.

53 Ibid., Anderson 1992.

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It is of further interest that the tombstone of Gundrada appears to be similar to that of Matilda of Flanders, whose was constructed from Tournai marble and was also rectangular in shape, with the same style of inscription, though without decoration (Fig. 5).[55] Matilda died in 1083, two years before Gundrada. Matilda was buried at the Benedictine foundation of Chapelle aux Dames, Caen that she had founded. Similarly, Gundrada's final resting place was at Lewes Priory, her foundation, which was sponsored by Matilda. Tournai marble, the material of the tombstone, was associated with Flanders – both women's natal home.

Fig. 5: Matilda of Flanders, Tombslab, Chapelle aux Dames, Caen, Normandy. Note similarities to that of Gundrada. Author's own.

Jumping forward in time from 1080s to the twelfth century, Isabelle de Warenne (d. 1203), the great-granddaughter of Gundrada, inherited the de Warenne estates c.1147. She married William of Blois (d. 1159), whose great-grandmother was Matilda of Flanders. He was also the son of King Stephen (d. 1154) and, therefore, nephew to Bishop Henry of Blois (d. 1171). Henry is considered the person to have introduced and popularised Tournai marble in England and much has already been written about his architectural patronage.[56] However, the concentration on those elite male networks has obscured the female connections indicated by Gundrada's tomb. The point made here is that the tomb slab, its material, style and (re)inscription reveals of the intentions of an individual (Isabelle?) or a group such as a monastic community at Lewes who were concerned with memory making and highlights a connectedness whether socially or dynastically to Gundrada and Matilda. Gundrada's tomb slab suggests that her

54 This sort of memory-making fits within the broader cultural context e.g. Arthur's tomb at Glastonbury. See Philip Lindley, Tomb Destruction and Scholarship: Medieval Monasteries in Early Modern England, Donnington 2007; Gilchrist/Green 2015, 175.

55 Van Houts 1999.

56 Zarnecki 1984, 148; Baxter 2015. Much has already been written about his architectural patronage.

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influence covered several generations, affecting figures from the highest nobility including queens, kings and bishops.

6. Fashion and Politics: Who Wears Castles in their Hair?

Addressed so far are how Gundrada's life and death are part of wider traditions of patronage. But it is less straightforward to reveal her daily life, or indeed that of other elite women, living in castles. Biases in scholarship have a role in this, and it remains the case that the past has defaulted to a male experience.[57] Difficulties in interpreting source material also play a role as material culture is largely multivalent.[58] However, there are certain objects or assemblages that are typically associated with women.[59] One example is a collection of 24 ornate bone pins revealed during excavation at Castle Acre.[60] Unfortunately, they do not come from a securely dated archaeological context but cover the period c. 1085–1140, a time of change within the castle that involved the construction of especially large earthworks. More broadly, these pins are thought to date to the eleventh/twelfth century but are not overly common in the archaeological record. The Castle Acre pins were interpreted by the excavator as hairpins as they are not large enough for clothing (Fig. 6).[61] If so, these pins were either worn pushed through a plait or styled around the face – perhaps even sewn together with gold thread through the hair.[62] This means that they were designed to be highly visible.

The Castle Acre pins are not a homogenous group. They are small – between 3 mm and 4 mm – comprising shafts with looped heads (e. g. perforated at the top of the pin), hipped heads with no loop and figurative heads. At least two of these are "castellated", meaning their heads have a jagged appearance and may reference the crenellations of a castle wall. There are other examples of these pins, most of which are found in the East Anglian or Fenland areas, including Norwich; though examples occur in Northampton and Pleshey Castles and are also known from Beverly Minster, E. Yorks and St Albans.[63] The majority of the pins are

57 Dempsey 2019; Karen Dempsey et al., Beyond the Martial Façade: Gender, Heritage and Medieval Castles, in: International Journal of Heritage Studies, 26,4 (2020), 352–369.

58 Ruth Tringham, A Plea for a Richer, Fuller and More Complex Future Archaeology, in: Norwegian Archaeological Review 51 (2018), 57–63.

59 Gender correlates can be problematic; see Eleanor R. Standley, Spinning Yarns: The Archaeological Evidence for Hand Spinning and its Social Implications, c AD 1200–1500, in: Medieval Archaeology 60,2 (2016), 266–299.

60 Coad/Streeten 1982.

61 Unfortunately, despite my best effort, the only available image is a drawing from the excavation report.

62 Sue Margeson, Worked Bone, in: Coad/Streeten 1982, 241–253.

63 Margeson 1982, 241–253.

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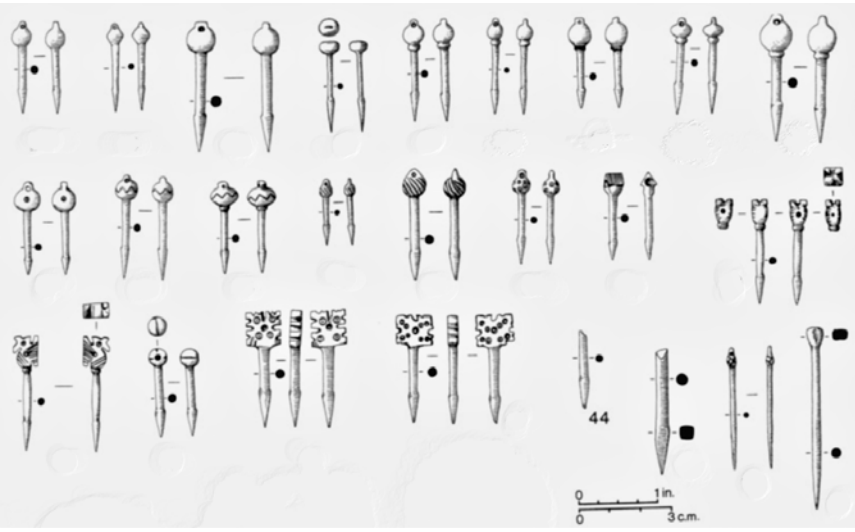

Fig. 6: Castle Acre Hairpins after Coad & Streeten 1982, 252.

carved from animal bone, specifically pig fibula. However, there is also one copper alloy example from Castle Acre, and others are known from Winchester.[64] More recently, an unusual silver example was found in Edgefield, Norfolk.[65]

One further example stands out: a very accomplished carved pin with a spherical head was found embedded into the mortar of Scolland's Hall, Richmond Castle, North Yorkshire (Fig. 7).[66] The absence of other similar items or habitation detritus within the mortar suggests that its inclusion was no accident. The deliberate placement of particular objects in particular places is not uncommon in medieval England and fits into a wider European ritual practice of making "special deposits".[67] What made this particular pin so important that a single example was included within the walls of this early castle building at Richmond? Is there something significant in its use or social meaning? The castle at Richmond was constructed by Alan Rufus whose partner was Gunnhild of Wessex (b. 1054), a noblewoman, daughter of Harold Godwinson (d. 1066) and Edith Swannesha (d. 1086).[68] Is there a link here that speaks to the merging of

64 Martin Biddle, Artefacts from Medieval Winchester: Object and Economy in Mediaeval Winchester (Winchester Studies), Oxford 1990, 554, fig. 150, nos. 1437–1438.

65 HER 44094, Treasure Annual Report 2005/6, 132, no. 559. Kindly shared with me by Dr Will Wyeth, English Heritage.

66 Thanks to Will Wyeth of English Heritage for drawing my attention to this.

67 Helena Hamerow, "Special deposits" in Anglo-Saxon settlements, in: Medieval Archaeology 50 (2006), 1–30; Duncan Garrow, Odd deposits and average practice. A critical history of the concept of structured deposition, Archaeological Dialogues 19 (2012), 85–115.

68 William Wyeth, pers. comm.

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differing regional identities and customs that became embodied within expressions of personal ornaments and also wider social practices?

Fig. 7: Medieval bone hair (or dress?) pin c.11th century from Scolland's Hall, Richmond Castle, N. Yorks. (Accession number: 81014104) © Historic England.

The use of these pins straddles the time from the kingdoms of Edward the Confessor (d. 1066) and Harold Godwinson (d. 1066) to that which emerged under William I (d. 1086). Bone pins start to disappear after the early thirteenth century, and it has been suggested that they could not compete in finesse with metals pins, which were essential for fastening veils.[69] However, the pin from Scolland's Hall, Richmond surely indicated that this is not true. The change to metal examples might equally demonstrate that it was no longer appropriate for elite women to wear pins constructed from pig bones. It has been argued that there was a shift in pig husbandry away from pannage towards a more sty-based regimen, which perhaps affected how these animals were socially perceived.[70]

But who wore the castellated pins from Castle Acre? Can we imagine an elite lady wearing "castles in her hair" during the period 1080 to 1147? It is possible that the hairpins belonged to Gundrada de Warenne, her ladies-in-waiting or descendants.[71] Gundrada appears to have wanted to embed herself into the local landscape of her new home as is evidenced by the creation of new sites on pre-existing centres, both at Castle Acre Castle and St Pancras Priory, Lewes. This

69 David Hinton, Gold and Gilt, Pots and Pins. Possessions and People in Medieval Britain, Oxford 2006.

70 Julie Hamilton/Richard Thomas, Pannage, Pulses and Pigs: Isotopic and Zooarchaeological Evidence for Changing Pig Management Practices in Later Medieval England, in: Medieval Archaeology 56,1 (2012), 234–259. Pannage is where pigs were loosely managed and seasonally driven into woodland (Hamilton/ Thomas 2012, 235).

71 Roberta Gilchrist, The materiality of Medieval Heirlooms: From Biographical to Sacred Objects. In: Hans Peter Hahn/Hadas Weiss (eds.), Mobility, Meaning and Transformations of Things: Shifting Contexts of Material Culture through Time and Space, Oxford 2013, 170–182.

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indicates a desire for dominance and power but also to communicate stability to the wider populace in a time of change or political upheaval. Her use of potentially regionally specific pins may have operated in the same way. The pins could be considered as "intermediaries": local objects framing the face of the new ruling elites, who lived in a building constructed on a pre-existing power centre. If so, this may have communicated a degree of security not only in political and religious practices but also in farming and craftwork. The pins may speak to ongoing connections between elite families both pre-and post-Conquest; they might even suggest a network of shared material culture of women that sought to bridge the divisions that must have been present in eleventh-century society.

7. 'Binding' Books: The Crowland Psalter

There has been much recent work on women's book use in material, affective, devotional and literate terms.[72] But the use of books is not something that has not been discussed in relation to castles within medieval archaeology. This is somewhat surprising as a castle household contained clerks to write letters and compile household accounts; the absence of discussions on this topic is perhaps a missing link in a larger web of differing aspects of literary traditions. There is much more to be added to this interlinked network of book ownership and women's lived experiences from an archaeological perspective. It is fortunate for this article that Rebecca Rushforth has argued that Gundrada, for a time, possessed an illuminated manuscript, commonly known as the Crowland Psalter that appears to have been created in East Anglia.[73]

The definite provenance of the manuscript is unknown, but it likely originated in Crowland Abbey as the psalter specifically venerates saints of this fenland area. The psalter is written in Latin on parchment and decorated with a full-page miniature, a historiated initial and coloured capitals (Fig. 8).[74] It dates to the eleventh century, perhaps before 1060.[75] A number of additions were made after this date that are of interest to the story of Gundrada and her political and religious landscape. These included obits relating to St Pancras Priory Lewes and Cluny, as well as the insertion of dedications to the saints Faith, Katherine and Giles. This grouping does not occur together in England prior to 1050, and when it does, it is only in texts associated with Bishop Giso (d. 1088) and Leofric (d.

72 See Watt 2019 for overview.

73 Rushforth 2008. Psalter, eleventh century, 27 x 17 cm. Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 296, 133 fols. Thanks to Professor Jocelyn Wogan-Browne for sharing this information with me.

74 Bodleian Library Summary Catalogue no. 21870.

75 Rushforth 2008.

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1072), who had Flemish connections.[76] Finally, a course of the Hours of the Holy Trinity was added.[77] These prayers were designed for everyday use, but the example in the Crowland Psalter has been written using feminine forms of Latin. Together, these indicate the possibility that a high-status lady who was living in the Fens with Flemish connections may have owned this book.

If, as Rushforth so convincingly argues, Gundrada owned the Crowland Psalter for a time, what does this tell us about her? This book might have been a material guide that facilitated private devotional practice.[78] We must consider that she was literate with a basic knowledge of Latin.[79] She was at least familiar with text owing to her "X" (if she made it) on the foundation charter of Lewes. What is of special interest here is exploring Gundrada's relationship to this object. How did she come to own it? How did the book feel to her? It was at least fifty years old when she received it and would have been touched by the hands of others. Interestingly, the manuscript does not appear to have indications of wear; the digital version is still bright and full of colour with much gold leaf throughout. The addition of the Hours of the Holy Trinity indicates it was intended for daily use, but this seems to have left little impact on the book. Perhaps the book was well cared for? Binding strips were found at Castle Acre, indicating it was possible that the book (or other manuscripts) could have been repaired or decorated there. The binding strips are similar in style to others found at Castle Rising, Norfolk and Bramber in Sussex,[80] suggesting that objects related to literacy were not uncommon at castles.

To address Gundrada's acquisition of the manuscript, we must include Hereward the Wake (d. 1072) in the story. He was a nobleman and tenant of Crowland Abbey in the eleventh century before the arrival of the Normans. Hereward led or was part of a resistance movement against the Normans during which time he reportedly killed Gundrada's brother Frederick.[81] It seems that Hereward knew Frederick having met him in St Omer around 1067, where the Oosterzele-Scheldewindeke family were hereditary advowsans.[82] Perhaps he gifted this illuminated manuscript to Gundrada as a gesture of sorrow or as part

76 Ibid.

77 Ibid. 2008. This personalisation was completed by other noblewomen, notably Queen Margaret of Scotland (d. 1091), who was a major monastic patron and a contemporary of Gundrada. See Joanna Huntington, St Margaret of Scotland: Conspicuous Consumption, Genealogical Inheritance, and Post-Conquest Authority, in: Journal of Scottish Historical Studies 33,2 (2013), 149–164.

78 Jitske Jasperse, pers. comm.

79 Clanchy 2016, 147–172.

80 Coad/Streeten 1982.

81 Elisabeth van Houts, Hereward and Flanders, in: Anglo-Saxon England 28 (1999), 201–223; van Houts/ Love 2013. As noted earlier, on his death, Gundrada's landholding grew.

82 See van Houts 1999 for further connections with Flanders.

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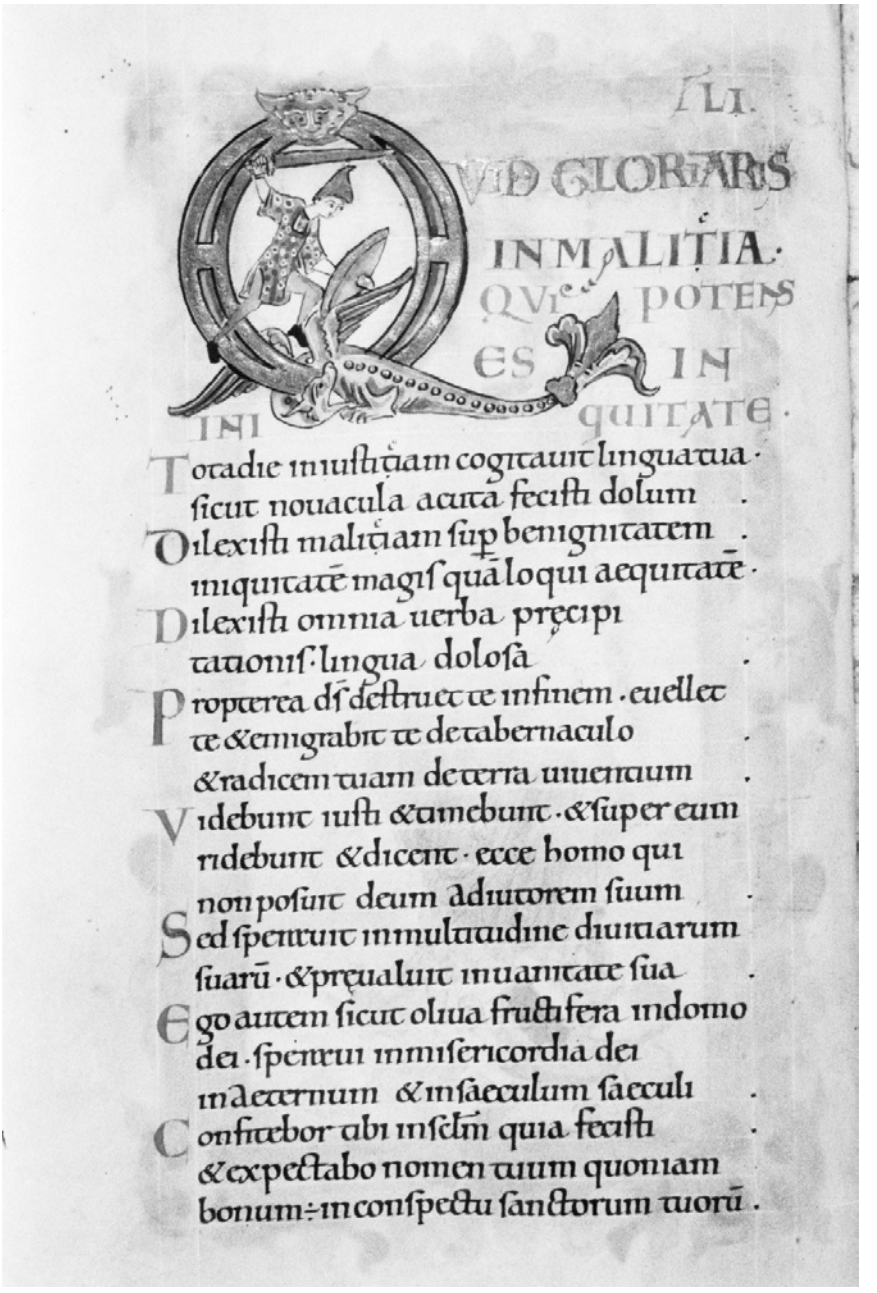

Fig. 8: The Crowland Psalter. Bodleian Library MS. Douce 296, fol. 040v. Photo: © Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, https://digital.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/inquire/p/c28192fe-74a6-4df8-8628-0f963b877e20.

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of a plea of forgiveness over Frederick's death. Equally, it could have been a type of compensation.[83] Both these examples show how medieval elite women could act as intercessors within disputes. It is also possible that the book was acquired during looting carried out in retribution for her brother's death and the uprising more generally. However, owing to the excellent condition of the book, this seems unlikely.

The local provenance of the book coupled with dedications to local saints would have acted as a way to create a tie between Gundrada, her new lands and the people who lived there. It would also have linked her to the former owner of the book as well as the older literary traditions of East Anglia that created it. This could be considered as a way through which she communicated her respect of the past traditions of the wider pre-Norman community, with which, no doubt, she was already quite familiar. Moving beyond the local, Gundrada's book ownership, and her devotional observances, embedded her within a much broader European network of women who displayed power and piety through similar texts.[84]

8. Senses of the Past: Protective Charms and Anxieties of Childbirth

In patronage and wider religious practice as well as personal adornment, it is clear that Gundrada was part of a wider European cultural network. But this is also evident in her more intimate life. Gundrada already had three children before she died giving birth at Castle Acre in May 1085.[85] In dying as Gundrada did, she was one of generations of women in this same position. How did they cope with or alleviate their concerns? Is it possible to try to understand Gundrada's experience as a worried (and expectant) mother through the material culture excavated at Castle Acre?

83 Compensation in this manner is not unusual. Joanna Plantagenet's son gives silver (or gold) to an abbey to compensate for the inflictions he brought upon the abbey. William I apparently founded Battle Abbey, Sussex to atone for his mis-deeds in war.

84 Bell 1982; L'Estrange 2008. Very contemporary with Gundrada, was Judith of Flanders (c. 1032–1094), who possessed a gospel book from England. She was aunt to Matilda but also connected to England through her marriage to Tostig (d. 1066) of Northumbria, son of Harold II. See Mary Dockray-Miller, The Books and the Life of Judith of Flanders, Farnham 2015.

85 Martin Lowes, Lately Found at Lewes. Report on the Antiquities, in: Journal of the British Archaeological Association 1 (1846), 353–357. In this report, Lowes uses the phrase *vi partus cruciata* meaning in the pangs of childbirth, but this was not used in her obit, likely written in 1147. It was reported that an infant's remains were found with those of Gundrada; it is not currently possible to test the veracity of this statement.

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By the time Gundrada married at age seventeen, we assume that, as a noble person, she had been at a noble court for a number of years. She may have been prepared for marriage, taught about childbirth and care as well as witnessing the running a household by her mother, a mother figure or peer group. Are there certain material objects that could inform us of this knowledge exchange? The 'Sachsenspiegel', a Saxon law book written in German c. 1220, may shed some light on this (Fig. 9).

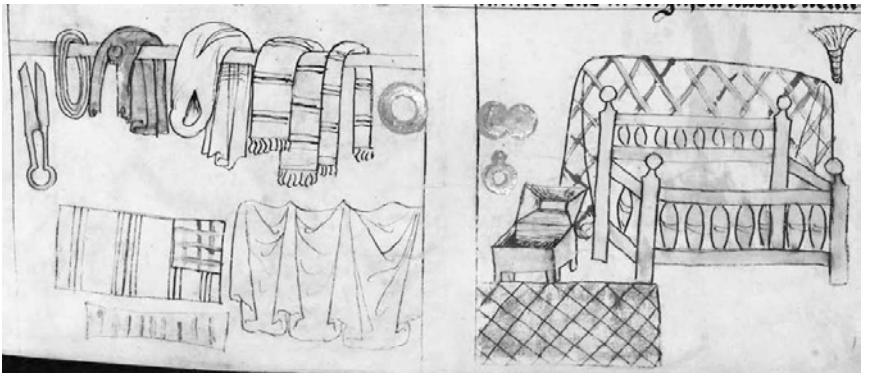

Fig. 9: The Sachsenspiegel and the Saxon (Cod. Guelf. 3.1 Aug. 2 °; Heinemann no. 1642), http://diglib.hab.de/mss/3-1-aug-2f/start.htm.

> "Woman's property" consists of all sheep, geese, chests, all yam, bedding, coverlets, pillows, linen-clothes, table-clothes, hand-towels, bath-towels, washbasin, brass candle sticks, linen and all female dresses, rings, bangles, head adornments, psalm books and all books used in worship which women are apt to read, thereto armchairs, chests, rugs, bed-hangings, tapestries, and all fillets […] Many small items also belong to it such as brushes, scissors, and mirrors, but I have not listed them.[86]

While this is from a somewhat different cultural context, in terms of historic analogy, it is still a valuable source. It contained details of certain items of women's property that were often passed from mother to daughter.[87] Two iron scissors (or shears) – featured examples – were found at Castle Acre and similar items are known from the nearby Castle Rising and further away at many other sites.[88] Scissors were thought to be representative of a woman's role within her household.[89] In medieval England, images of shears were depicted on grave

86 Der Sachsenspiegel und das sächsische Lehnrecht, Herzog August Bibl. Wolfenbüttel, Cod. Guelf. 3.1 Aug. 2° f63 17r. Available at http://diglib.hab.de/mss/3-1-aug-2f/start.htm?image=00063.

87 Bell 1982.

88 Coad/Streeten 1982.

89 Aleks McClain, Cross Slab Monuments in the late Middle Ages: Patronage, Production, and Locality in Northern England, in: Sally Badham/Sophie Oosterwijk (eds.), Monumental

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markers for women. There is one example of a twelfth-century Sheela-na-gig from Egremont, Cumbria with a medieval shears.[90] These were highly versatile objects, used for many things from textile work to gardening to obstetrics.[91] They are intimately associated with women if we choose to read their materiality in that way.

Doubtlessly women shared objects like the psalm book, rings and bangles mentioned in the 'Sachsenspiegel', passing them from mother to daughter or among peer networks.[92] These likely performed a variety of functions, including personal entertainment and ornament, but also some, especially heirlooms, may have had an apotropaic function.[93] More obvious protective objects or amulets are less common in the archaeological record, but they were not unusual.[94] During excavations at Castle Acre, a small pebble was revealed that was interpreted by the excavator as a possible rubbing stone.[95] It was smooth, tapered and could easily fit into a person's hand. The stone type was silica, which comprised quartz, chalcedony and opals. Medieval lapidaries – books of stones – explain that these opaque stones were considered powerful things. Marbode, the writer the most popular lapidary in the late eleventh century, considered chalcedony to bring victory and offer protection.[96] The properties of these stones suggest that the pebble had a special meaning or magical properties for the

Industry: The Production of Tomb Monuments in England and Wales in the Long Fourteenth Century, Spalding 2010, 37–65; Roberta Gilchrist, Sacred Heritage: Monastic Archaeology, Identities, Beliefs, Cambridge 2019.

90 McClain 2010, 46; Richard Bailey, Apotropaic Figures in Milan and North-West England, in: Folklore 94.1 (1983), 113–117. A Sheela-na-gig is a figurative stone carving of a naked female figure with an exaggerated vulva found on many medieval buildings including cathedrals, churches and castles.

91 Gilchrist 2012; Karen Dempsey, Tending the "Contested" Castle Garden: Sowing Seeds of Feminist Thought, in: Cambridge Archaeological Journal, 2020.

92 Gilchrist 2013. Although later in time to Gundrada, it seems that Alice Chaucer (d. 1475) had special birthing textiles and tapestries on display in her chamber that were on loan from the Duchess of Gloucester. See: Rachel M. Delman, Gendered Viewing, Childbirth and Female Authority in the Residence of Alice Chaucer, Duchess of Suffolk, at Ewelme, Oxfordshire, in: Journal of Medieval History 45,2 (2019), 181–203.

93 Gilchrist 2013.

94 Gilchrist 2012; Roberta Gilchrist/Barney Sloane, Requiem: The Medieval Monastic Cemetery in Britain, London 2005.

95 Coad/Streeten 1982, 264 and 192. Its exact deposition location is difficult to pinpoint as the Small Finds are not mapped within the report. The stone was either originally deposited in the area of the south arch of the original upperward gatehouse or part of a soil dump in that location during the later 1140s alterations.

96 Comm Jitske Jasperse: De lapidibus (On Stones, ca. 1090) written by Marbode of Rennes (1035–1123), De Lapidibus, considered as a Medical Treatise with Text, Commentary and C.W. King's Translation Together with Text and Translation of Marbode's Minor Works on Stones, ed. and transl. by John M. Riddle, Wiesbaden 1977, including a list of all the Latin and vernacular manuscripts he knew of in 1977 (pp. 131–138).

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person who held it. Could "victory" mean using this stone as an amulet to triumph over a difficult event, such as childbirth? There certainly were anxieties about birth as seen through the widespread cult of St Margaret, patron saint of childbirth and expectant mothers. An exceptionally rare *material* example of this devotional practice comes in the form of a birthing amulet found in France that had been in use up to the nineteenth century.[97]

While we cannot be certain, it remains possible that the chalcedony stone, found in an archaeological context, once belonged to Gundrada or her broad contemporaries, one of whom may have deposited the stone intentionally at Castle Acre.[98] Special deposits of this sort are not uncommon in the medieval world.[99] Of course, the stone could have been present in any number of hands, used as an amulet or even a toy, with its meaning different to each. The chalcedony pebble may not have been widely circulated but can be understood as one part of a network of care within women's peer groups.

9. Material Lives

This paper has concentrated on Gundrada Oosterzele-Scheldewindeke, later de Warenne, to tell her story from a material perspective. Her life was entangled with the biographies of many things, including buildings such as Castle Acre castle and St Pancras' Priory, Lewes, where some of the things that made her world were kept and curated, from hairpins, books and scissors to possible amulets. She was part of a community involved in sponsorship, memory making and keeping, as well as religious devotion. What is very clear is that elite women and men were aware of the materiality of things. This is most visible in the way that they understood particular materials, such as Caen or Tournai stone in monumental construction, to be particularly potent. These materials, among many others, were used (or not) to make visible the ties of the interconnected web of the ruling elite.

The de Warennes appealed to both familial and cultural connections particularly in relation to the curation of dynastic stories. This is visible in Gundrada's epitaph, where she is styled as "offspring of dukes, glory of age, noble shoot". Its deliberately ambiguous phrasing connects her to the past, present and future. This concern with temporal connections is especially apparent in how elite women and men considered how they and their families were perceived by both

97 Louis Carolus-Barré, Un nouveau parchemin amulette et la légende de sainte Marguerite patronne des femmes en couches, In: Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres (1979), 256–275.

98 Gilchrist 2013.

99 Hamerow 2006.

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their contemporaries and by future audiences, through the materials they used but ultimately left behind. In a reductive fashion, this might be understood as the material statement of their power, wealth and prestige. Certainly, this was part of it, but taking their likely choice of Caen stone for their tombs or Gundrada's ownership of the Crowland Psalter suggests that more than being concerned solely with material prestige, they wanted to be culturally connected to people and places in both their immediate and wider world.

To capture these links, I have endeavoured to move beyond the tension that exists between the need to faithfully represent the fragmentary evidence of the medieval archaeological record and a desire to tell a material story of women's lives. While some of this narrative is necessarily speculative, it is a starting point to engage with material culture, to bring people, especially women, into the story of the castle. It shows how we can foreground women, not by marking them as exceptional but by highlighting that they were part of and participative within the networked material world. Gundrada may not have been the daughter of Matilda of Flanders and William the Conqueror, but she was a central node in the wider material network of Norman nobility during the central Middle Ages.

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