QUEENSHIP AND POWER

Norman to Early Plantagenet Consorts

Power, Influence, and Dynasty

Edited by
Aidan Norrie · Carolyn Harris
J.L. Laynesmith · Danna R. Messer
Elena Woodacre

palgrave
macmillan

Queenship and Power

This series focuses on works specializing in gender analysis, women's studies, literary interpretation, and cultural, political, constitutional, and diplomatic history. It aims to broaden our understanding of the strategies that queens—both consorts and regnants, as well as female regents—pursued in order to wield political power within the structures of male-dominant societies. The works describe queenship in Europe as well as many other parts of the world, including East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Islamic civilization.

Aidan Norrie • Carolyn Harris
J. L. Laynesmith • Danna R. Messer
Elena Woodacre
Editors

Norman to Early Plantagenet Consorts

Power, Influence, and Dynasty

palgrave
macmillan

Editors
Aidan Norrie
University Campus North Lincolnshire
England, UK

Carolyn Harris
University of Toronto
Toronto, ON, Canada

J. L. Laynesmith
University of Reading
Reading, UK

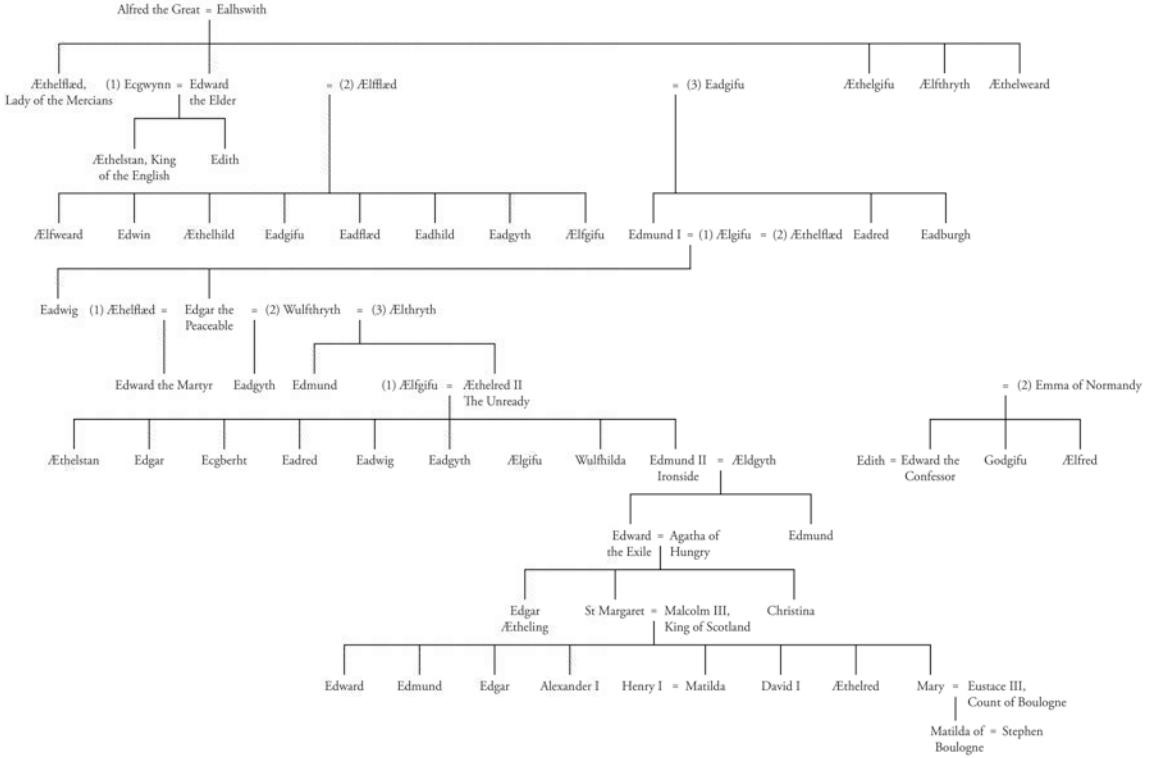
Danna R. Messer
York, UK

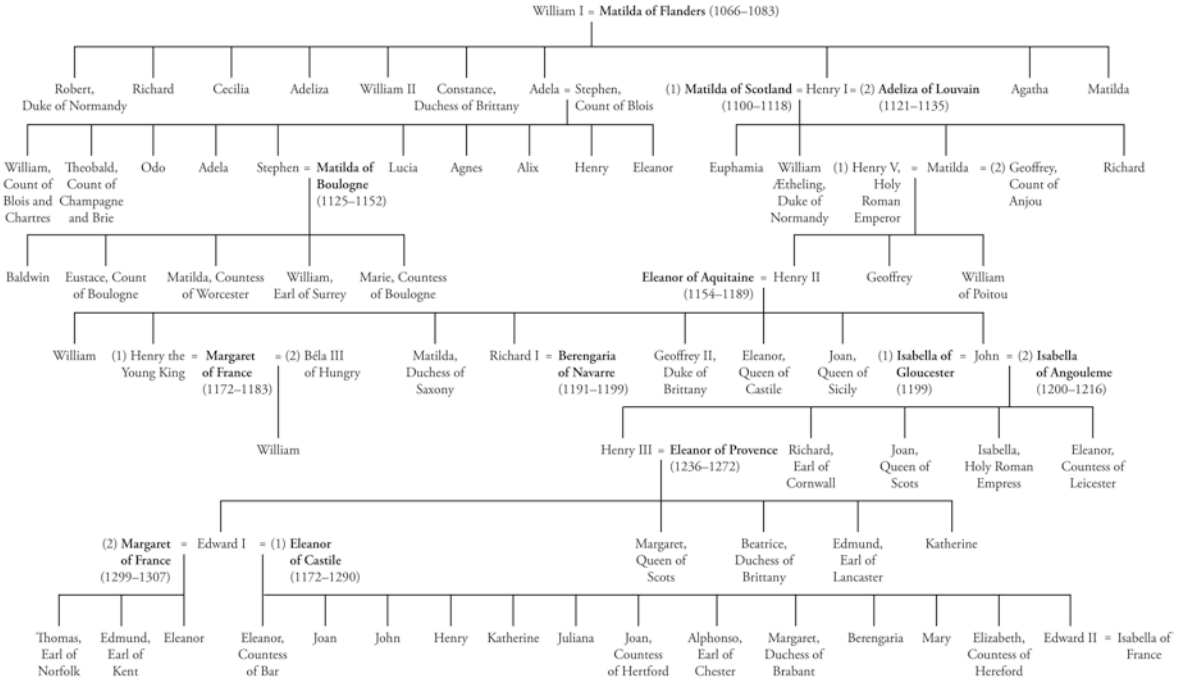
Elena Woodacre
University of Winchester
Winchester, UK

ISSN 2730-938X ISSN 2730-9398 (electronic)
Queenship and Power
ISBN 978-3-031-21067-9 ISBN 978-3-031-21068-6 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-21068-6

Cover Image by: Daniel Smith at Aspect Design

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland


Alfred the Great = Ealhswith
Æthelflæd, Lady of the Mercians
(1) Ecgwynn = Edward the Elder
= (2) Ælfflæd
= (3) Eadgifu
Æthelgifu
Ælfthryth
Æthelweard
Æthelstan, King of the English
Edith
Ælfweard
Edwin
Æthelhild
Eadgifu
Eadflæd
Eadhild
Eadgyth
Ælfgifu
Edmund I = (1) Ælgifu = (2) Æthelflæd
Eadred
Eadburgh
Eadwig
(1) Æthelflæd = Edgar the Peaceable
= (2) Wulfthryth
= (3) Ælthryth
Edward the Martyr
Eadgyth
Edmund
(1) Ælfgifu = Æthelred II The Unready
= (2) Emma of Normandy
Æthelstan
Edgar
Ecgberht
Eadred
Eadwig
Eadgyth
Ælgifu
Wulfhilda
Edmund II Ironside = Ældgyth
Edith = Edward the Confessor
Godgifu
Ælfred
Edward the Exile = Agatha of Hungry
Edmund
Edgar Ætheling
St Margaret = Malcolm III, King of Scotland
Christina
Edward
Edmund
Edgar
Alexander I
Henry I = Matilda
David I
Æthelred
Mary = Eustace III, Count of Boulogne
Matilda of Boulogne = Stephen


William I = Matilda of Flanders (1066–1083)
Robert, Duke of Normandy
Richard
Cecilia
Adeliza
William II
Constance, Duchess of Brittany
Adela = Stephen, Count of Blois
(1) Matilda of Scotland (1100–1118) = Henry I = (2) Adeliza of Louvain (1121–1135)
Agatha
Matilda
William, Count of Blois and Chartres
Theobald, Count of Champagne and Brie
Odo
Adela
Stephen = Matilda of Boulogne (1125–1152)
Lucia
Agnes
Alix
Henry
Eleanor
Euphamia
William Ætheling, Duke of Normandy
(1) Henry V, Holy Roman Emperor = Matilda = (2) Geoffrey, Count of Anjou
Richard
Baldwin
Eustace, Count of Boulogne
Matilda, Countess of Worcester
William, Earl of Surrey
Marie, Countess of Boulogne
Eleanor of Aquitaine (1154–1189) = Henry II
Geoffrey
William of Poitou
William
(1) Henry the Young King
Margaret of France (1172–1183) = (2) Béla III of Hungry
Matilda, Duchess of Saxony
Richard I = Berengaria of Navarre (1191–1199)
Geoffrey II, Duke of Brittany
Eleanor, Queen of Castile
Joan, Queen of Sicily
(1) Isabella of Gloucester (1199) = John = (2) Isabella of Angouleme (1200–1216)
William
Henry III = Eleanor of Provence (1236–1272)
Richard, Earl of Cornwall
Joan, Queen of Scots
Isabella, Holy Roman Empress
Eleanor, Countess of Leicester
(2) Margaret of France (1299–1307) = Edward I = (1) Eleanor of Castile (1172–1290)
Margaret, Queen of Scots
Beatrice, Duchess of Brittany
Edmund, Earl of Lancaster
Katherine
Thomas, Earl of Norfolk
Edmund, Earl of Kent
Eleanor
Eleanor, Countess of Bar
Joan
John
Henry
Katherine
Juliana
Joan, Countess of Hertford
Alphonso, Earl of Chester
Margaret, Duchess of Brabant
Berengaria
Mary
Elizabeth, Countess of Hereford
Edward II = Isabella of France

Acknowledgements

This project has been supported by a number of grants and awards. We gratefully acknowledge the Dr Greg Wells Research Award provided by the Centre for the Study of the Renaissance at the University of Warwick, which covered the costs of producing the family trees for this volume. The Department of History at the University of Warwick employed Joshua Baumring-Gledhill as a research assistant for the project, and the Institute of Advanced Study at the University of Warwick funded the project's incomparable editorial assistant, Luke Holloway, and we are grateful for this support.

I also thank my valiant and indefatigable co-editors, who enthusiastically agreed to work with me on this project (a project that ended up consuming their lives for a significant amount of time), and whose insight, patience, and camaraderie have made this project much stronger than it might otherwise have been.

Aidan Norrie

Praise for *Norman to Early Plantagenet Consorts*

"This book is a treasure trove for medievalists working on women's history and the Anglo-Norman realm. It does a tremendous job in foregrounding the multiple ways royal consorts ruled (or did not rule) next to, and in collaboration with, their spouses. Each consort is brought to life through subtle discussions of themes such as upbringing, resources and their administration, intercession, and different kinds of patronage. Astutely written, the authors' different perspectives and their critical assessment of the primary sources showcase how consortship and queenship can be fruitfully studied."

—Jitske Jasperse, *Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany*

Contents

Notes on Contributors

Abigail S. Armstrong obtained her PhD from Canterbury Christ Church University in 2019. Her thesis was a study of the daughters of Henry III of England and Eleanor of Provence. She is a postdoctoral researcher within the Collaborative Research Centre 933 at the University of Heidelberg. As part of sub-project "B10: Rolls for the King," her research investigates the materiality of the administrative records of the nobility in late medieval England.

Martin Aurell is Professor of History of the Middle Ages at the University of Poitiers, where he is the director of the Centre d'Etudes Supérieures de Civilisation Médiévale. He studies power, kinship, and political culture in the tenth to thirteenth centuries. His books include *The Plantagenet Empire, 1154–1224* (2007); *The Lettered Knight: Knowledge and Aristocratic Behaviour in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries* (2017); and more recently, *Excalibur, Durendal, Joyeuse: la force de l'épée* (2021).

Paul Dryburgh is Principal Records Specialist at The National Archives with responsibility for medieval records. He is also a qualified archivist. His research interests are in kingship (particularly the reign of Edward II), government, warfare, and the economy across the British Isles in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. He is also Joint General Editor of the Pipe Roll Society, Honorary Secretary of the Lincoln Record Society, and President of the Mortimer History Society.

Matthew Firth is a researcher of early medieval English history and literature. His published works focus on England's pre-Conquest kings and queens and their legacies, with particular interest in how these were

transmitted, adapted, and memorialised of in the histories of later medieval writers.

Laura L. Gathagan is Associate Professor of History at State University of New York, College at Cortland, and the editor of the *Haskins Society Journal*. She publishes widely on Mathilda of Flanders and Anglo-Norman history. Her latest publication is "'Audi Israel': Apostolic Authority in the Coronation of Mathilda of Flanders," *Anglo-Norman Studies* XLIII (2021). Her book project is entitled *Embodying Conquest: The Queenship of Mathilda of Flanders*.

Carolyn Harris is an instructor in History at the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies. She received her PhD in History from Queen's University at Kingston in 2012. Carolyn is the author *Magna Carta and Its Gifts to Canada* (2015); *Queenship and Revolution in Early Modern Europe: Henrietta Maria and Marie Antoinette* (2015), which won the 2016 *Royal Studies Journal* book prize; and *Raising Royalty: 1000 Years of Royal Parenting* (2017).

Lois L. Huneycutt received her PhD from the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she studied English political history with C. Warren Hollister and church history with Jeffrey Burton Russell. After a brief stint at the California State University at Hayward, she came to the University of Missouri, Columbia, where she has been a member of the history faculty since 1996. She is the author of many articles on medieval queenship in the central medieval period in England, Scotland, France, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, and the Kingdom of Georgia as well as a biography of Matilda of Scotland. She is working on a comparative study of the Empress Matilda and Matilda of Boulogne.

J. L. Laynesmith is a visiting research fellow at the University of Reading. She is the author of *The Last Medieval Queens: English Queenship, 1445–1503* (2004) and *Cecily Duchess of York* (2017), as well as numerous articles on queenship and medieval noblewomen. She has taught at the universities of Oxford, York, Reading, and Huddersfield, and is researching the politics of royal adultery in early medieval Britain.

Liam Lewis is Lecturer in French at the University of Liverpool. He has also taught at the University of Oxford and the Sorbonne-Nouvelle in Paris. Alongside his research into Anglo-Norman literary cultures, his work on medieval literature, language, and sound challenges some of the

theoretical assumptions in discussions of animality and sound by showing how medieval texts speak to modern notions of multilingualism and the environment.

Danna R. Messer is Acquisitions Editor for Arc Humanities Press and the Executive Editor for *The Encyclopedia of the Global Middle Ages* (Arc Humanities Press and Bloomsbury Academic). Her specialism is native Welsh queenship, and she is a contributor to both the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography* and the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* on the subject of the wives of Welsh rulers and Marcher noblewomen. Dr Messer is the author of *Joan, Lady of Wales: Power and Politics of King John's Daughter* (2020).

Aidan Norrie is Lecturer in History and Programme Leader at University Campus North Lincolnshire and the Managing Editor of *The London Journal*. Aidan is the author of *Elizabeth I and the Old Testament: Biblical Analogies and Providential Rule* (2023) and has co-edited several collections, including *Women on the Edge in Early Modern Europe* (2019; with Lisa Hopkins), and *From Medievalism to Early-Modernism: Adapting the English Past* (2019; with Marina Gerzic).

Márta Pellérdi is Associate Professor at the Institute of English and American Studies, Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest. She holds a PhD in American Literature and an MA in History from Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest. She has published on Jane Austen, Washington Irving, George Moore, Frank O'Connor, R.L. Stevenson, Vladimir Nabokov, and recently, the travel writer John Paget, in various journals and edited volumes.

Sally Spong is a postgraduate researcher in the School of History at the University of East Anglia, supervised by Professor Stephen Church. Her PhD thesis is a study of the two wives of John, Count of Mortain and King of England, Isabella of Gloucester and Isabella of Angoulême. Both women were the heirs to important lordships. Her thesis explores their lives, agency, and experience through the lens of evidence taken from chronicles, Chancery Rolls, extant charters, legal documents, and religious practice, and her thesis explores their lives, agency, and experience through this lens.

Gabrielle Storey is a historian of Angevin queenship, with a particular interest in familial relations and the exercise of power and authority. Her wider interests focus on gender and sexuality in the medieval period in Western Europe. She is working on the production of a monograph from

her PhD thesis, which is a comparative study of Angevin queens, focusing on co-rulership, competition, and co-operation with their royal husbands and sons. She is also producing a biography of Berengaria of Navarre, which is forthcoming.

Heather J. Tanner is Associate Professor of History at The Ohio State University. Her work focuses on elite women's exercise of power, lordship, administration, law, and custom, as well as emotions. She is the author of *Families, Friends and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c.879–1160* (2004) and the editor of *Medieval Elite Women and the Exercise of Power: Moving Beyond the Exceptionalist Debate* (2019). Her book, *Lordship and Governance by the Countesses of Boulogne (1160–1260)*, will be published by Arc Humanities Press in 2023. Dr Tanner has won several prestigious fellowships, including a National Endowment of Humanities Fellowship and Coca Cola Critical Difference grant.

Katherine Weikert is Senior Lecturer in Early Medieval European History and was the 2018–2019 University Early Career Research Fellow. She has published extensively on Anglo-Norman and early English history, with her first monograph, *Authority, Space and Gender in the Norman Conquest Era, c.900–c.1200*, released in 2020. Her main areas of research examine the connections between gender, space, and authority in England and Normandy *c.*900–1200, female hostageships in the central Middle Ages, and the political uses of the medieval past.

Louise J. Wilkinson is Professor of Medieval Studies at the University of Lincoln. She was co-investigator of the AHRC-funded Henry III Fine Rolls and Magna Carta Projects, and has published widely on royal and aristocratic women in thirteenth-century England. Her most recent book is *The Household Roll of Eleanor de Montfort, Countess of Leicester and Pembroke, 1265*, Pipe Roll Society new series 63 (2020). She co-edits Routledge's Lives of Royal Women series with Elena Woodacre.

Elena (Ellie) Woodacre is Reader in Renaissance History at the University of Winchester. She is a specialist in queenship and royal studies and has published extensively in this area. Elena is the organiser of the 'Kings & Queens' conference series, founder of the Royal Studies Network, Editor-in-Chief of the *Royal Studies Journal*, and co-edits the Gender and Power in the Premodern World series and the Lives of Royal Women series.

List of Figures

List of Tables

Preface

Royal consorts have played an important role throughout English (and British) history. Yet, their lives and tenures have been treated unevenly by successive generations of scholars and popular historians. This volume, along with its three companions, aims to redress this uneven treatment.

As the success of the *Penguin Monarchs* series has shown, there is much interest in more analytical biographies of royals—for academics and interested readers alike. While the last two decades have seen the publication of a plethora of both scholarly and popular biographies on England's consorts, there is no single, scholarly compendium wherein all the consorts since the Norman Conquest can be consulted: it is this curious lacuna that these volumes seek to fill. In bringing together an international team of experts, we have endeavoured to create a vital reference work for scholars, students, and the wider public.

While all consorts held an equal position—that is, they were all spouses of a reigning monarch—their treatment by both history and historians has varied considerably. Some, like Eleanor of Aquitaine, Margaret of Anjou, Anne Boleyn, and Prince Albert, have been the subject of countless biographies, articles, and cultural works and adaptations. On the other hand, non-experts could be forgiven for not being aware of Berengaria of Navarre, Isabella of Valois, Catherine of Braganza, or Adelaide of Saxe-Meiningen. Certainly, the surviving evidence for the tenures of each consort differs greatly, and other factors must be examined—it is no coincidence that each of these four 'unfamiliar' consorts was not the mother of their husband's successor. Nevertheless, these volumes treat the

consorts as equitably as possible, offering biographies that provide an insight into how each consort perceived and shaped their role, and how their spouse and subjects responded to their reign. While all occupying the same office, each consort brought their own interpretation to the role, and by contextualising a consort's tenure against both their predecessors and successors, these volumes illuminate some fascinating continuities, as well as some unexpected idiosyncrasies.

In putting these volumes together, numerous—and sometimes competing—factors were carefully considered. On the one hand, we erred on the side of inclusivity throughout, hence the inclusion of Margaret of France, Elizabeth Cromwell, and Dorothy Cromwell—the wives of Henry the Young King, and Lords Protector Oliver Cromwell and Richard Cromwell, respectively. There can be no doubt that these women all functioned as a consort in the 'traditional' sense of the term during their husband's period in power. Conversely, we have not included Geoffrey V, Count of Anjou, or Guilford Dudley—husbands of Empress Matilda and Lady Jane Grey, respectively. There is much more to be said on the issue of monarchical succession in England: scholars especially still have yet to really come to terms with how to conceptualise the succession when it deviates from the 'ideal'—that is, when the deceased king (yes, king) was succeeded by his eldest son. The absence of Geoffrey and Dudley here should not be taken as an endorsement of the view that their wives did not rule England: rather, we acknowledge that regardless of the political power their wives wielded, they themselves did not function as consorts to their wives. It is for this reason, and this reason alone, that they do not appear within these pages. These men certainly supported their wives—indeed, much more could be said about the 'soft power' they exercised—but like Sophia Dorothea of Celle and Wallis Simpson, they themselves did not serve as the consort of a reigning monarch.

In addition to the biographies of the consorts, the volumes contain several thematic essays, which present cutting-edge research on specific groups of consorts, showing the value in considering them both individually and collectively. Such chapters are an important corrective to older, and in some places still engrained, notions that because most consorts were women, they were only concerned with producing heirs, gossiping, embroidery, and courtly entertainments. Such views, thankfully, are no longer in the mainstream, due particularly to the burgeoning work in the field of queenship studies. As these thematic essays and the biographies themselves show, a successful consort had to juggle multiple roles,

including shrewd financial management, effectively overseeing diplomacy and court intrigue, dealing with political upheaval, balancing the needs of their natal family against those of the English monarchy, and of course navigating pregnancy and childbearing—all the while ensuring that they retained good relationships with their spouse and their subjects. These chapters all demonstrate—to varying degrees—that a 'successful' reign as monarch often correlated with a consort who was able to successfully juggle the diverse roles expected of them.

The women and men whose lives are detailed in the following pages occupied a unique position at the side of their spouse. While the roles, rights, and privileges of a monarch have been understood and largely defined (although of course these have been fiercely debated and contested), the position of their consort has, and continues to be, far less regularised, and much more nebulous. These biographies show that a monarch's consort could have a profound effect on the nation—for both good or ill—and that the role was ultimately shaped by its incumbent in ways far more significant than have been previously recognised.

Aidan Norrie

CHAPTER 1

The Emergence of the Queen Consort in England, 1066–1307: Power, Influence, Dynasty

Danna R. Messer

Every student of British history knows that the year 1066 was "the big one," results of which are the shape and structure so familiar to us today in how England is often perceived and recognised. It was the year that laid the foundations of a ruling monarchy with the longevity of nigh on 1000 years. For all the trials and tribulations, individual and even successive monarchs have faced during this millennia, the institution itself has remained firmly entrenched—even the Commonwealth lasted a mere eleven years (1649–1660), with the Restoration marking a new, yet old, chapter in how England was to be ruled.

As familiar as 1066 and the British monarchical institution are to us, so too are the enduring images associated with the traditional personas of both king and queen: the king wielding public power and authority, while the queen supposedly wielded "womanly" agency "behind the scenes." But, as recent research on medieval queenship and royal studies have

D. R. Messer (✉)
York, UK

A. Norrie et al. (eds.), *Norman to Early Plantagenet Consorts*, Queenship and Power,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-21068-6_1

shown, the power and authority consorts exerted during their tenures was far more than "behind the scenes."[1] In fact, it is unarguable that the role of the English consort, whether in 1066 or 2023, is one that has always been visible and public. The women who found themselves in the role of the English consort starting in the later eleventh century were cast into the public fray—if nothing else, as the visible female representation of established male power and authority, the consort's connection to the King as wife was the most obvious manifestation of this. The Queen was the foremost direct and legitimate path to the King. That status alone ensured that any woman in such a position would remain visible in the eyes of their contemporaries, whatever activities they carried out.

The recognition of a royal woman's status as directly linked to her marital relationship with a King was nothing new in 1066. Although concubinage was common practice in early medieval England, the increased need to secure legitimate (male) successors in the name of the dynastic hegemony meant that the status of consorts who became the mothers of heirs rose. Increasingly, Christian ideals of monogamy and the Church's push towards formal marriage (and thus the legitimisation of heirs) grew in strength and popularity, and the status of a royal consort became to be defined by her legally recognised union with the King.

In pre-Conquest England, coronation ceremonies in regard to queens were rare, as Matthew Firth discusses. The crowning of Judith of Flanders as queen in 856 upon her marriage to Æthelwulf of Wessex was an unusual step, especially for the kingdom of Wessex where, traditionally, royal wives were not designated as queens. Judith's status as a Frankish princess, and as a member of the Carolingian dynasty, precipitated the act. It was over 100 years later that another royal woman was finally crowned and anointed queen, in the person of Ælfthryth, wife of Edgar the Peaceable. Crowning

[1] See, for example: *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. A.J. Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997); Theresa Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); *Women and Sovereignty*, ed. L.O. Fradenburg (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992); Lois L. Huneycutt, "Images of Queenship in the High Middle Ages," *The Haskins Society Journal: Studies in Medieval History* 1 (1989): 61–71; L.L. Huneycutt, "Medieval Queenship," *History Today* 39, no. 6 (1989): 16–22; J. Carmi Parsons, *Medieval Queenship* (Stroud: Sutton History, 1998); Elena Woodacre, *Queens and Queenship* (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2021); *A Companion to Global Queenship*, ed. Elena Woodacre (Leeds: Arc Humanities Press, 2019); *The Routledge History of Monarchy*, ed. Elena Woodacre, Lucinda H.S. Dean, Chris Jones, Russell E. Martin, and Zita Eva Rohr (London: Routledge, 2019).

and anointing did not signify queenly status, however: legitimate union with the King did.

The convergence of the rise in importance of formal marriage practices and the expected legitimacy of successors influenced performances of early queenship; the agency of royal women as wives became more and more determined by the principal expectation that they would produce heirs. Indeed, it is an expectation that continues to this day. Dynastic issues have always lain at the heart of monarchy, and the gradual shift in focus on the royal woman's lifecycle from wife of a king to potential mother of a king also prompted a gradual, more organic move to better define queenship, both sacral and institutional. Even the formal terms we still use to define the different stages of queenship—"queen consort," "queen regent," and "queen dowager"—are heavily influenced by traditional tripartite-tropes related to the female lifecycle: the wife, the mother, the widow. Nevertheless, queenly lifecycle stages also directly related to the agency, the office, and influence, power, and authority each consort assumed. Roles and duties, both symbolic and literal, were individualised, defined by the necessities of governance and dynastic affairs, as well as by social and cultural influences and expectations. A fluidity of evolving definitions of queenly power and authority was the result.

Governance and Queens Consort

It is little wonder that the changes in how queenship was enacted pre- and post-Conquest also precipitated the rise in the visibility of the queen consort. From securing dynastic bonds and important networks via marital alliances and acts of patronage, to acting as regents, royal adjudicators, issuing their own acta, and administering their own lands and lordships, visible declarations of queenship took many forms. Arguably, in all their many guises, the myriad of roles that the medieval queen played can be characterised, by sheer definition, as governance: the act or process of governing or overseeing the control and direction of something (such as a country or an organisation). Continuing to broaden our understanding of what "governance" actually entailed in high medieval England, we develop a better awareness of how the "art of governing" was nuanced and that all the roles queens played were critical to the success or failure of the English monarchy.

William the Conqueror's wife, Mathilda of Flanders, was a decisive figure in the Norman invasion and occupation of England, as Laura Gathagan's

chapter shows. Without her financial support, or the political alliances she fostered, the outcome of the Battle of Hastings may have been very different. The aftermath of the Norman Conquest was tumultuous, but it was within this sphere of uncertainty and newness that Norman England's first queen, Mathilda, fostered a remit of visible governance, privileges, and prerogatives for the neoteric office of the royal consort.

Mathilda's power and influence was cemented when she was crowned and anointed queen on 1 May 1068. A sceptre and the ring of the Church symbolised her office, and the praise imparted in the imperial-style *laudes regiae* used in her coronation liturgy all worked to establish a queenly reign defined by political governance and active lordship. Mathilda, who was a descendant of the House of Wessex and the House of Capet, was of greater pedigree than her husband, and her lineage was fundamental to her identity as Queen of England. Influences stemming from her Ottonian ancestry on her mother's side, in particular, provided her models of female lordship and queenship that she espoused during her marriage to William, as Duchess of Normandy, and as Queen of England. Drawing on her heritage likely played a part providing her the autonomy to be active in the governance of Norman England.

There is no evidence of Mathilda acting in the traditional queenly role as intercessor. But, crucially, her visibility at the head of jurisprudence during William's long absences in Normandy helped demarcate the role and expectation of the English Queen as an administrator of justice. Going far beyond the traditional role of the Queen as intercessor, the wielding of Mathilda's own authority as a figure of justice, whether on her own or at William's side, ensured that her visibility was a mainstay in cultivating the reputation and status of her dynasty. The innovative undertakings by Mathilda of Flanders as the first Norman consort laid the foundations for how English queenship was to be enacted for generations.

By the time Mathilda's son, Henry I, came to power in 1100, England had begun to settle under the new regime. It was within this landscape and shortly after his coronation that Henry took Matilda of Scotland as his first wife. As a woman of both Scottish and Anglo-Saxon royalty, Matilda of Scotland's lineage, like that of her predecessor, was key to further boosting Henry's authority as King of England. Matilda was crowned queen on the same day of her marriage to Henry, 11 November 1100, and it was during her tenure that the administrative characteristics of the English queenly office were further moulded. Drawing on the experiences of her mother, St. Margaret of Wessex, Queen of Scotland, known for her acts of

piety, charity, and moral authority, Matilda was active throughout the kingdom and enjoyed significant influence in the royal court.

Becoming one of Henry's vital regal administrators, she gained power and agency by aligning secular and ecclesiastical politics through her advocacy for the Church. This advocacy, in turn, earned her further support. Examples from succeeding generations of English queens show that sponsorship and promotion of ecclesiastical institutions via the persona of the Queen largely beginning with Matilda of Scotland became a politically legitimate and long-standing practice for English queenship, a practice that fell comfortably within the realms of court hierarchy. When it came a time for her to act in Henry's absence as queen regent—including issuing writs and other acta with royal authority—she did so with expertise and insight. She also did so with the assertiveness that it was her right to help govern, referring to the royal court as "my lord's and mine." As Lois Huneycutt's chapter shows, by the time of Matilda's death in 1118, she was Henry's visible partner in governance; her administrative participation and widespread influence were accepted, respected, and expected.

Like her predecessor, the advances of Matilda of Scotland laid foundations for how Norman queenship was practised and defined by her successors. The combined legacies of England's first two Norman queens who assumed queenly duties and prerogatives within the judicial branch of government, becoming partners in justice with their husbands and claiming royal authority themselves, are in sharp contrast to the activities Adeliza of Louvain, a queen whose existence and influences are often marginalised when it comes to discussions on English consorts.

With the death of William Aetheling in 1120, the only son by Matilda of Scotland, Henry I was left without a legitimate male successor. The King's marriage to Adeliza of Louvain a year later was a response to the situation both he and his realm found themselves in. Although there was a thirty-five-year age gap between queen and king, Adeliza was often at Henry's side after her coronation on 30 January 1121, but their fourteen-year marriage remained childless. As Liam Lewis's chapter suggests, her childless status as queen may have had an impact on how, and even when, she is remembered. Although she did not fulfil the expected role as a royal progenitor, or play the explicit political roles that her predecessors and immediate successors did, Adeliza's visibility in terms cultural patronage show her true forms of royal governance.

Not many exist, but Adeliza did issue and attest charters as Henry's consort and was gifted a number of tax-exempt estates to oversee. Her

tenure, however, can be largely defined through her acts of patronage focused on the cultural translation and advancement of the French language in England, through the written word. In fact, Adeliza may well have established herself as the leading progenitor of English queenly patronage and its relationship to how cultural and social memory were formed. As queen, she played a strong role in terms of overseeing both the construction and direction of how national and cultural history were to be defined and remembered.

When Henry I died in 1135, the English monarchy faced its first succession crisis. Nine years earlier, when it seemed unlikely that the King and Queen Adeliza would produce an heir, Henry made an executive decision to declare his daughter by Matilda of Scotland his successor. As visible as queens consort were in various aspects of co-governing the realm, the reality of a woman ruling as queen regnant in her own right was a step too far for many. Though support for Stephen of Blois to be King was rife, his cousin, the Empress Matilda, Lady of the English, spent her life fighting for her right to rule England as sovereign. Lasting a very long, dark, and bloody fifteen years, England's first civil war, the Anarchy (1138–1153), was an unusual period in medieval English history in which two women as contenders to the office of the Queen of England came head-to-head.

For Matilda of Boulogne, a descendant of Scottish and Anglo-Saxon dynasties, her share in the governance of Stephen's realm was similar to that of her predecessors, Mathilda of Flanders and Matilda of Scotland. Crowned on 22 March 1136, and later described by a contemporary as "a woman of subtlety and a man's resolution,"[2] Matilda was Stephen's most powerful supporter during the civil war, providing economic, military, and jurisdictional assistance in the fight against the Empress Matilda.

As Heather Tanner notes, Matilda's authority over the lordship Boulogne as Countess gifted her significant independence and helped her procure much-needed networks and allies for their cause. She summoned troops from abroad and successfully besieged Dover Castle in 1138. When Stephen was captured by the Empress Matilda's forces at the Battle of Lincoln in 1141, it was Queen Matilda who raised and commanded armies to liberate him. Her activities as a diplomat included organising a treaty with the King of Scotland and, more significantly, agreeing with the Empress Matilda to an exchange of prisoners—the King for the Empress's most powerful supporter, Robert of Gloucester (her half-brother). The

[2] *Gesta Stephani*, ed. K.R. Potter (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), 122–123.

exchange put Stephen back in power. Matilda maintained her visibly active role in the administration of English governance throughout these troubled times, also participating in the royal curia, judging lawsuits, witnessing writs and issuing acta. Queen Matilda garnered a reputation for political intelligence and generalship and was the second of four queens consort before the fourteenth century to rule as regent in the King's absence.

Though Stephen often had a tenuous grasp on power, he and Matilda remained the reigning monarchs. The death of Matilda and Stephen's eldest son and heir apparent, Eustace, in 1153, effectively ended the Anarchy. Through the Treaty of Winchester, Stephen recognised the Empress Matilda's son, Henry, as his successor, rather than any of the royal couple's surviving children. It was a decision that changed the course of English monarchy and gave rise to the Angevin, or Plantagenet, Empire.

Henry II became King of England on 19 December 1154 and his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, former Queen of France, was crowned Queen of England two months later. The art of governing undertaken by Eleanor of Aquitaine meant that she was a very visible and active player as queen consort on the European political stage, as Martin Auell's chapter shows. She aggressively participated in not just one or even two, but four different royal governments from two different kingdoms—in her position as, first, a wife to the King of France, second, as a wife to the King of England, and third, as queen mother to her sons, kings Richard I and John. Eleanor is the only Queen of England from the Norman and Plantagenet era to have been the Queen of another kingdom, thus bringing to her role first-hand knowledge and experience of the power and privileges of medieval queenship.

As the heiress of the duchy of Aquitaine, Eleanor had widespread influence and personal wealth. The administration of her French lands is where she exercised the most power in the first half of her reign, particularly through her patronage of letters and arts. As Queen of England, her reign was largely defined by her motherhood. Henry's determination to take Aquitaine under his own authority resulted in a revolt by Eleanor and their sons in 1173. Consequences for the Queen were severe, landing her in royal custody for almost sixteen years. She enjoyed limited freedom shortly before Henry's death in 1189, but when her son Richard I came to power, Eleanor exercised true political governance in England—as queen mother. She ruled as England's regent while Richard was in the Holy Land and assembled the extortionate funds needed to secure his freedom when he

was taken hostage by the Duke of Austria. For her son, John, she advocated for his succession and was a formidable figure of political and economic support at the beginning of his reign. The large role of queen mother and queen dowager that Eleanor played fighting to secure not only her own power, but that of her dynasty, in such an overt way, marks the start of a shift in English queenship, where the interplay between the duties and roles of the Queen started to become more determined by expectations of motherhood and wider-familial politics.

Widowhood may have strengthened Eleanor's own power and authority further, but it also weakened those of her daughters-in-law, who, too, reigned as queens of England. Like Adeliza of Louvain, the four consorts contemporary to Eleanor—Margaret of France, Berengaria of Navarre, Isabella of Gloucester, and Isabella of Angoulême—happen to be the least explored of this era. A combination of short reigns, a paucity of surviving evidence for their tenures—including lack of commentary by chroniclers—and for all but Isabella of Angoulême, childlessness, have impacted on how (and likely even when) they have been remembered.

Margaret of France, daughter of King Louis IV and Constance of Castile, is unique in the line of early English consorts on two important fronts. First, she spent her entire tenure as consort as a junior Queen of England. Married to Henry II and Eleanor's eldest son and heir, Henry the Younger, opportunities for Margaret to exercise forms of governance were hindered as she reigned in tandem with her more experienced mother-in-law. Margaret's ability to undertake official queenly duties were also hampered further by the policies of her father-in-law. In 1170, Henry II made the decision to secure the right of his eldest son as successor via a pre-emptive coronation—the first and only time since 1066. In theory, when Henry the Younger was crowned at Westminster in 1170, England came under the rule of two kings. Nevertheless, Henry the Elder was reluctant to impart real power and wealth upon his designated heir and wife of ten years. Margaret was crowned on 27 August 1172, and the couple remained titular Queen and King until Henry the Younger's death in 1183.

As junior Queen of England, Margaret was stuck in a three-pronged struggle between three kings: her husband, her father-in-law, and her father. The position she held in both the English and French courts meant that her role as conciliator was symbolically important, especially as any children by her would have been in line to both the English and French

thrones.[3] Within this framework, she carried out a more informal role as intercessor between her natal and marital families.

As Márta Pellérdi argues, the uniqueness of Margaret of France is not only defined by her junior queenship, but also by the fact that she is the only English consort to subsequently become queen of another kingdom. Widowed and consigned to the status of England's queen dowager in 1183, Margaret married Béla III of Hungary in 1186. Contemporary sources contend that the Hungarian King was eager to marry Margaret, having heard himself of her piety and wisdom. It was in her role as Hungarian consort that Margaret undertook real queenly activities, hinting at the types of roles and authority she may have embraced as Queen of England had she been afforded the opportunity. As Queen of Hungary, she displayed power and influence through cultural patronage and political governance, and undertook a public role as a conciliator in the context of sibling rivalries surrounding the Hungarian throne—a situation all too familiar to her.

As the daughter of Sancho VI, King of Navarre and his wife Sancha of Castile, Berengaria of Navarre was aware of the royal duties expected of her when she became Queen of England, on 12 May 1191. However, as Gabrielle Storey details, during her nine years as queen consort, she spent both little time with her husband, Richard I, and little time in England. She also had to contend with the fact that Eleanor of Aquitaine was made regent, rather than her, while Richard was on crusade. The combination of these factors meant occasions for her to execute her duties of office, whether as patron, intercessor, or administrator, were severely limited.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that it was during her dowager years that Berengaria truly exercised independent power, influence, and authority as a woman of royal status. As queen dowager, Lady of La Mans, and *femme sole*, she displayed an aptitude for diplomatic negotiation, intercession, and patronage. She was known for her piety and almsgiving, and had a reputation as a prestigious benefactor. Berengaria's involvement in ecclesiastical disputes, protecting and defending her rights and income as dowager, is illustrative of her character. She may be an overshadowed and forgotten queen in the historiography of English monarchy, but the choices she made as Richard's I widow—negotiating for her dower, negotiating for rights to rule Le Man, and to remain single—are indicative of her awareness that her status as a Queen of England was lifelong,

[3] Her only child, a son, was born in 1177 and died shortly after.

permeating her decisions and influencing her diplomatic relationships with a host of rulers. Her status as queen dowager provided her independence to govern with authority.

A wife, but not properly a queen, Isabella of Gloucester is arguably the least known English consort of the medieval period. She wed John in 1189 when he was Count of Mortain and remained his partner for ten years, including his first year as king. She was never crowned, and her marriage to John was annulled within a year of his accession, at the King's own request. Why John pressed to have his marriage to Isabella annulled is unknown. The couple remained childless during their marriage, and it may have been the prospects of a greater, intercontinental marriage that led to the annulment in May 1200. By right of marriage to John, however, Isabella was his first real consort and is why she is included here. Isabella's whereabouts in 1199–1200, when she was technically queen through her marriage to the King, are unknown as are any activities related to this time. Nevertheless, evidence from her time as heiress of Gloucester, which includes records of patronage, intercession, and her management of her wealthy lordship, draws attention to the nature of the authority and power she held as an Anglo-Norman aristocrat. As Sally Spong notes, such demonstrations of influence across her vast patrimony are suggestive of how Isabella may have governed as a queen consort had she the opportunities to do so.

Being linked to both Henry I and Charlemagne, Isabella brought her own dynastic credentials and royal legitimacy to her marriage to John. Such descent protected her status and authority, and offered security to her husband's family. Through Isabella, John became *suo jure* Earl of Gloucester, but Isabella continued to make her own, independent mark as Countess. She exhibited governance through the issuing of grants and awards, using her own seal, and directing how religious patronage, in particular, was shaped. The privilege and wealth of her position as Countess of Gloucester and Mortain gave her distinct authority and influence. It was this status she drew on during the First Barons' War (1215–1217). Isabella and her second husband, Geoffrey de Mandeville, Earl of Essex, revolted against King John, with witness lists intimating her direct involvement. Her reticence to acknowledge the powers of the King continued for a short time into Henry III's reign, though she eventually offered him fidelity and service.

The activities she undertook during her lordship emulated patterns of royal intercession fitting to her status. Isabella's charter history shows us not only how she manoeuvred within the expectations and activities in her