

“A NEW SENATE OF WOMEN”: ECCLESIASTICAL REFORM AND THE REIMAGINING
OF FEMALE SECULAR LORDSHIP, C. 1050-1125 CE

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ABSTRACT

Alexandra Locking: “A New Senate of Women”: Ecclesiastical Reform and the Reimagining of Female Secular Lordship, c. 1050-1125 CE
(Under the direction of Marcus Bull)

This study examines the impact of the eleventh-century ecclesiastical reform movement on ideologies and representations of female secular authority. The well-known reform movement redrew the boundaries between secular and ecclesiastical spheres across Europe and initiated an intellectual debate over conceptions of lay and religious rulership. Traditionally, scholars have seen the reform program as an oppressive force which sought with varying degrees of success to limit women’s participation in ecclesiastical affairs and to marginalize their presence in broader society. However, scholars have underestimated the significant presence of lay noblewomen in reform activities. This study locates women as key participants in the reform program, a surprising discovery given the strong associations made by many clerical supporters of reform between women and pollution, above all due to their sexuality. The dissertation takes a wide geographical focus, examining the impacts of the reform movement on female lordship across Latin Christendom in order to explore both similarities and differences in experience rather than search for a single model of female lordship. By focusing on textual representations of female agency and authority in contemporary narrative histories, letters, and hagiographical texts, the pages below demonstrate that the reform movement witnessed a period of creativity in the construction and representation of gendered secular authority, particularly in relation to the performance of power by laywomen. This study contributes to the growing scholarship focusing on the role of

gender and women in religious and cultural history. Its main goal is to create a synthesis between studies of medieval lordship, church reform, and gender and women's history.

To my parents, for believing I can conquer the world.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Albert of Aachen, <i>Historia Ierosolimitana</i> , ed. and trans. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007).
AASS	<i>Acta Sanctorum Bollandiana</i> , ed. Société des Bollandistes, 3 rd edn., 62 vols (Brussels, 1863-1925).
Anselm, <i>Opera</i>	Anselm of Canterbury, <i>Opera Omnia</i> , ed. F.S. Schmitt, 6 vols (Stuttgart: Fromann, 1968).
CCCM	<i>Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis</i> , ed. Academic Board of Corpus Christianorum (Turnhout: Brepols, 1966-).
Cosmas, <i>Chronik</i>	Cosmas of Prague, <i>Die Chronik der Böhmen</i> , ed. Bertold Bretholz, <i>MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum Nova series 2</i> (Berlin: Weidmann, 1923).
Eadmer, <i>Historia</i>	Eadmer of Canterbury, “Historia Novorum in Anglia,” in <i>Historia Novorum in Anglia, et Opuscula Duo de Vita Sancti Anselmi et Quibusdam Miraculis Ejus</i> , ed. Martin Rule, RS 81 (London: Longman, 1884), 1-302.
Frutolf, <i>Chronik</i>	Frutolf of Michelsberg, “Chronica,” in <i>Frutolfs und Ekkehard's Chroniken und die Anonyme Kaiserchronik</i> , ed. Franz-Josef Schmale and Irene Schmale-Ott, <i>Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters 15</i> (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), 47-121.
Gregory VII, <i>Register</i>	Gregory VII, <i>Das Register</i> , ed. Erich Caspar, <i>MGH Epistolae Selectae 2</i> , 2 vols (Berlin: Weidmann, 1955).
GM	Geoffrey Malaterra, “De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae comitis et Roberti Guiscardi ducis fratris eius,” ed. Ernesto Pontieri, <i>Rerum Italicarum Scriptores</i> , vol. 5, pt. 1 (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1925-8), 1-108.
Herman of Tournai, <i>Liber</i>	Herman of Tournai, <i>Liber de restauratione S. Martini Tornacensis</i> , ed. R.B.C. Huygens, CCCM 236 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2010).
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica inde ab anno Christi quingentesimo usque ad annum millesimum et quingentesimum auspiciis societatis aperiendis fontibus rerum germanicarum medii aevi</i> , ed. G.H. Pertz <i>et al.</i> (Hanover, 1826-).

<i>MGH Lib. de Lite</i>	<i>MGH Libelli de Lite Imperatorum et Pontificum Saeculis XI. et XII. Conscripti</i> , ed. Ernst Dümmler <i>et al.</i> , 3 vols (Hanover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1891-97).
OV	Orderic Vitalis, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica</i> , ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980).
Peter Damian, <i>Briefe</i>	Peter Damian, <i>Die Briefe</i> , ed. Kurt Reindel, 4 vols, <i>MGH Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit</i> 4 (Munich: Monumenta Germaniae Historica, 1983-93).
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series Latina</i> , ed. J.-P. Migne, 221 vols (Paris, 1844-64).
PR	<i>Pontificum Romanorum, qui fuerunt inde ab exeunte saeculo IX usque ad finem saeculi XIII, Vitae: ab aequalibus conscriptae, quas ex Archivi pontificii, bibliothecae Vaticanae aliarumque codicibus adiectis suis cuique et annalibus et documentis gravioribus</i> , ed. Johann Matthias Watterich, 2 vols (Aalen: Scientia Verlag, 1966 [Leipzig, 1862]).
RHC	<i>Recueil des Historiens des Croisades</i> , ed. Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 16 vols (Paris, 1841-1906).
RS	Rolls Series: Chronicles and memorials of Great Britain and Ireland during the Middle Ages, published under the direction of the Master of the Rolls (London, 1838-96).
<i>V. Idae</i>	"Vita Idae Comitissae," <i>AASS Aprilis</i> 2, 139-46.
<i>V. Margaretae</i>	"Vita Sanctae Margaretae Scotorum Reginae," in <i>Symeonis Dunelmensis opera et collectanea</i> , ed. H. Hinde, <i>Proceedings of the Surtees Society</i> 51 (Durham: Andrews and Co., 1868), 234-54.
<i>V. Mathildis</i>	Donizo, <i>Vita Mathildis</i> , ed. Paolo Golinelli and Vito Fumagalli, <i>Biblioteca di cultura medievale</i> 823 (Milano: Jaca Book, 2008).
William, <i>Gesta Regum</i>	William of Malmesbury, <i>Gesta Regum Anglorum</i> , ed. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

INTRODUCTION

At the Synod of Worms in 1076, twenty-four German bishops allied with Henry IV of Germany (d. 1106) in order to renounce Pope Gregory VII (d. 1085). The synod had been prompted in large part by Gregory's mounting conflict with the king and imperial bishops over issues of church reform. Gregory, the great "reformer pope," had spent the first years of his pontificate promoting the authority of the apostolic see, often at the direct cost of German bishops' local administrative and judicial control. At the same time, the pope had been clashing with Henry over the archbishopric of Milan, with each naming his own candidate to the post.¹ For Gregory, the authority of the apostolic see was consummate and unquestionable; Henry IV and his loyal bishops were guilty of blatant disobedience. In contrast, the imperial party believed Gregory had greatly overstepped the limits of his position, which during Henry III's reign had effectively been in the emperor's gift.² The synodal participants released an official

¹ For a summary of the synod, see H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 135-7.

² Augustin Fliche's and Gerd Tellenbach's early seminal works formed much of the basis of modern scholarship of the reform movement. Fliche argued that before the earliest efforts towards monastic reform at Cluny, ecclesiastical institutions suffered under the abusive control of local lay lords. Reformist attitudes spread to Rome over the tenth and eleventh centuries, where Gregory VII, or so Fliche argues, proved to be the most effective in enforcing reform. Tellenbach argued that the reform movement was most concerned about different kinds of authority, a debate which came to a head over the issue of lay investiture. More recently, scholars like Maureen Miller and Rudolf Schieffer have questioned this focus on lay investiture as the most crucial element of the "Investiture Crisis." For an overview of the reform movement see Augustin Fliche, *La réforme grégorienne*, 3 vols (Bureaux: Spicilegium sacrum Lovaniense, 1924); Gerd Tellenbach, *Church, State and Christian Society at the Time of the Investiture Contest*, trans. R.F. Bennett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1940) and *The Church in Western Europe from the Ninth to the early Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Brian Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State, 1050-1300* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964); Richard Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990); I.S. Robinson, *Authority and Resistance in the Investiture Contest* (New York: Holmes and Meir Publishing, 1978); Rudolf Schieffer, *Die Entstehung des päpstlichen Investiturerbots für den deutschen König*, Schriften der Monumenta

decree, addressed to “brother Hildebrand,” whom they no longer recognized as pope. The decree begins by calling Gregory a usurper and accuses him of tearing apart the peace and unity of the Roman Church through his own overweening pride, desire for personal power, and “profane innovations” (*profana novitate*).³

The bishops end the decree with the following remarks:

In addition, you have filled the entire Church with the stench of the gravest of scandals of your intimacy and cohabitation with another’s wife who is more closely integrated into your household than is necessary. In this matter, our sense of shame is more troubled than our legal case, although the general complaint resounds everywhere that all judgments and all decrees are enacted by women in the Apostolic See, and ultimately that the whole orb of the Church is administered by this new senate of women [*feminarum novum senatum*].⁴

The woman with whom Gregory was supposedly having an affair was Countess Matilda of Tuscany (d. 1115). Matilda was also unquestionably a member of the “new senate of women” that, according to the German bishops, ruled the Church during Gregory’s pontificate. This passage represents more than simple rumormongering on the bishops’ part in order to undermine Gregory’s position. The bishops’ decree of 1076, the first anti-Gregorian polemic of the Investiture Controversy, reveals the fundamental issue of the conflict between Rome

Germaniae Historica 28 (Stuttgart: Anton Hiersemann, 1981); Ute-Renata Blumenthal, *The Investiture Controversy: Church and Monarchy from the Ninth to the Twelfth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1988); Maureen Miller, “Masculinity, Reform, and Clerical Culture: Narratives of Episcopal Holiness in the Gregorian Era,” *Church History* 72.1 (2003), 25-52; Kathleen G. Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century: Spirituality and Social Change* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005).

³ “Absageschreiben der deutschen Bischöfe an Gregor VII,” in *Die Briefe Heinrichs IV*, ed. Carl Erdmann, *MGH Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit* 1 (Leipzig: Verlag Karl W. Hiersemann, 1937), 65-7.

⁴ Ibid., 68; Eng. trans. Theodor E. Mommsen and Karl F. Morrison, in *Imperial Lives and Letters of the Eleventh Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), 149; translation slightly revised: “Ad hoc quasi fetore quodam gravissimi scandali totam ecclesiam replesti de convictu et cohabitatione aliene mulieris familiariori quam necesse est. In qua re verecundia nostra magis quam causa laborat, quamvis hec generalis querela ubique personuerit: omnia iudicia, omnia decreta per feminas in apostolica sede actitari, denique per hunc feminarum novum senatum totum orbem ecclesie administrari.” Please note: bibliographical information for English translations has been provided when an available translated edition was particularly useful for the completion of this dissertation; I have noted when I revised the available translation.

and the imperial cause: in a society in which political and religious powers were indelibly intertwined and interdependent, who held the ultimate authority?⁵ For the German bishops, Gregory had surrendered the authority of the apostolic see to a group of women.

The inclusion of this complaint in the Synod of Worms is hardly surprising. Matilda of Tuscany and her mother Beatrice (d. 1076) played an instrumental and highly visible role as supporters of the reform papacy, along with Empress Agnes of Poitou (d. 1077), the mother of Henry IV. These three women made up a significant portion of the “senate of women” imagined by the German bishops.⁶ In the years following the synod, Matilda frequently waged war against imperial forces in defense of reformer popes, including both Gregory and Urban II. Most famously, the countess helped mediate between Gregory and Henry IV during the short-lived papal victory at Canossa in 1077. Thanks to her actions during the Investiture Controversy between empire and papacy, Matilda captured the attention of contemporary witnesses and modern scholars, as have Beatrice and Agnes, albeit to a lesser extent.⁷ Indeed, Matilda has become the dominant female actor in the story of the Investiture Controversy. As

⁵ I.S. Robinson, “‘Periculosus Homo’: Pope Gregory VII and Episcopal Authority,” *Viator* 9 (1978), 103-4.

⁶ Cowdrey identified Beatrice and Matilda of Tuscany and Agnes of Poitou as the “senate of women.” David Hay has added Countess Adelaide of Turin, Henry IV’s mother-in-law, to this list as well. See Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 137; David Hay, *The Military Leadership of Matilda of Canossa, 1046-1115* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 63.

⁷ Matilda has captured the attention of biographers for centuries. Donizo of Canossa began to compose her *Vita* before her death in 1115; the most recent Latin critical edition can be found in the *Vita di Matilde di Canossa*, ed. Vito Fumagalli and Paolo Golinelli (Milan: Jaca Book, 2008). For modern biographies, see Nora Duff, *Matilda of Tuscany: La Gran Donna d’Italia* (London: Methuen and Co., 1909); Hay, *Military Leadership of Matilda of Canossa*; Vito Fumagalli, *Matilde di Canossa: Potenza e solitudine di una donna del Medioevo* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1996). For Beatrice and Agnes, see Elke Goetz, *Beatrix von Canossa und Tuszien: eine Untersuchung zur Geschichte des 11. Jahrhunderts* (Sigmaringen: Jan Thorbecke Verlag, 1995); Mechthild Black-Veldtrup, *Kaiserin Agnes (1043-1077): Quellenkritische Studien* (Köln: Böhlau, 1995); Jean-Marie Sansterre, “Mère du roi, épouse du Christ et fille de Saint Pierre: Les Dernières années de l’impératrice Agnès de Poitou. Entre image et réalité,” in *Femmes et pouvoirs des femmes à Byzance et en Occident (Vie-Xie siècles)*, ed. Stéphane Lebecq, Alain Dierkens, Régine Le Jan, Jean-Marie Sansterre (Villeneuve d’Ascq: Centre de recherche sur l’histoire de l’Europe du Nord-Ouest, 1999), 163-74.

the current study will show, however, clerical concerns regarding gender and authority in the reform movement went far beyond the involvement of any one woman.

The decree at Worms in 1076 is one of many testimonies to women's actions and men's reactions during the reform movement, an aspect of the "Gregorian Reform" that has been neglected by modern scholarship. This dissertation therefore examines the cultural and religious influences surrounding ideologies of female secular lordship in late eleventh- and early twelfth-century Western Europe. From 1050 to 1125 lay noblewomen appear as important actors with surprising frequency in texts referring to efforts to reform Latin Christendom. Moreover, lay noblewomen's involvement in such crucial ecclesiastical affairs provoked a great deal of commentary and a wide range of reactions from their clerical contemporaries; one such reaction can be seen above in the complaint of the German bishops loyal to the imperial cause. Scholars such as Mechthild Black-Veldtrup, Lois Huneycutt, Kimberly LoPrete, David Hay, Catherine Keene, and Bernard F. Reilly have already produced noteworthy studies of individual secular noblewomen from this period.⁸ For the most part, however, these studies are essentially biographical, and approach the subjects' participation in the contemporary church reform movement as a discrete component of their larger careers. This dissertation, on the other hand, uses the reform as the lens through which to explore the

⁸ Black-Veldtrup, *Kaiserin Agnes*; Lois Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland: A Study in Medieval Queenship* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003); Kimberly LoPrete's work on Adela of Blois: "Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship," in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 7-43; "The Gender of Lordly Women: The Case of Adela of Blois," in *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women: Pawns or Players?*, ed. Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 90-110; "Gendering Viragos: Medieval Perceptions of Powerful Women," in *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women 4: Victims or Viragos*, ed. Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 17-38; *Adela of Blois: Countess and Lord (c. 1067-1137)* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007); Hay, *The Military Leadership of Matilda of Canossa*; Catherine Keene, *Saint Margaret, Queen of the Scots: A Life in Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Bernard F. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca, 1109-1126* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982).

attitudes and discourses surrounding ideologies of female lordship during an era when the actions and positions of women were being closely scrutinized and judged within the wider context of Christian practice and governance. The actions that lay noblewomen took on behalf of the reform (or in opposition to it), and how members of the clergy addressed their participation varied widely, creating a much more complex and rich venue for the performance of female lordship than hitherto presumed.

By examining the participation of secular noblewomen in reform affairs and the discourses surrounding them, the present study seeks to create a synergy between three main fields of inquiry: studies of the church reform movement, of lordship and power, and of gender and women's history. As we saw with the Synod of Worms above, the reform movement presents an especially useful point of entry for the study of lordship, both secular and ecclesiastical. Religious reformers of this era, including the popes, sought to "purify" and reorganize Christian society. Under the pressure of various reform efforts, virtually every sphere of medieval life faced a potential transformation. Reformers denounced married priests, fought with secular rulers for control of clerical offices by forbidding the practices of lay investiture and simony, cracked down on local "heresies," and made calls for crusades, all with the aim of removing pollutants from the Latin Church and the wider society of Christian Europe.⁹ The reformers' agenda provoked in particular a heated debate over the nature of authority and the performance and prerogatives of secular and clerical powers, a debate which modern scholars of both church reform and medieval lordship have frequently addressed.¹⁰

⁹ For the social conceptualization of pollution, see Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970); for concepts of pollution within a medieval religious context, see, for example, Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (New York: Zone Books, 1992); Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies: Pollution, Sexuality, and Demonology in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

Reformers ultimately wanted to restore the spiritual well-being of the Church and the broader Christian community, but they could not treat these spiritual anxieties as separate from the concerns of the secular world. Instead, religious reformers had to work with the specific goal of making the real world reflect more truly an idealized spiritual vision.

The connection between spirituality and worldly matters was certainly not new to the period of the reform movement. In fact, well before the mid-eleventh century, Christian morality and religious practice had been integrated into ideologies of secular power and authority, as can be seen in the Carolingian and Ottonian models of rulership. Yet efforts towards church reform in the eleventh century inevitably affected ideas concerning the appropriate governance of a Christian community. Moreover, the secular and religious spheres existed in a system of co-dependency. The laity looked to religious institutions for their spiritual needs as well as for the prestige and potential political support they could win through advantageous relationships with local religious institutions. Monasteries and churches in turn relied on the laity for defense and economic support. As John Howe has suggested, this co-dependency was even more important in moments of religious reform: “Nobles, acting both for high spiritual goals and for their own immediate earthly interests, played an essential role in reviving and restoring the churches under their control and even in promoting more general programs of ecclesiastical reform.”¹¹ In short, it was impossible to separate the lay nobility

¹⁰ For a useful summary of the historiography on reform and lordship, see Henk Teunis, “Negotiating Secular and Ecclesiastical Power in the Central Middle Ages: A Historiographical Introduction,” in *Negotiating Secular and Ecclesiastical Power: Western Europe in the Central Middle Ages*, ed. Arnoud-Jan A. Bijsterveld, Henk Teunis, and Andrew Wareham (Turnhout: Brepols, 1999), 1-18. Notable studies include Tellenbach’s discussion of the fight for the “right order” in his seminal work *Church, State, and Christian Society*; Robinson’s *Authority and Resistance*; and, more recently, Thomas Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 190-210.

¹¹ John Howe, “The Nobility’s Reform of the Medieval Church,” *American Historical Review* 93:2 (1988), 321.

from religious affairs, no matter how closely clerical reformers clung to the idea of a perfectly “pure” Church.

Nevertheless, eleventh-century reformers did manage to change the dynamics of the relationship between the lay nobility and the Church. In the process, reformers and their opponents, perhaps unintentionally, found themselves rewriting traditional definitions of rulership and governance. Pope Gregory VII, for example, is famous for his promotion of papal authority over other powers.¹² Henry IV, Gregory’s main political opponent, interpreted Gregory’s often innovative conception of power as an attack on imperial and royal authority. He and his supporters responded with a reiteration of the belief that royal and imperial power had its roots in divine providence.¹³ The reform thus threw into confusion traditional ideologies of authority and lordship. Nor was the fight over authority limited to the empire. Similar conflicts over secular and ecclesiastical lordship spread throughout most of Western Europe, and most noticeably into England and France. In this period of political and cultural dysfunction prompted by attempts to implement the reform agenda, members of the Church and the secular nobility alike had to adapt old ideas of rulership or propose new ones in an effort to advance whichever worldview—reformed or otherwise—they supported. Moreover, reformers and their rivals needed to persuade others to join their cause in order to implement their goals. Countless synods, royal councils, public declarations, letters, theological treatises, and other texts sought to do just that, and in doing so recorded the fight to reorder Latin Christendom.¹⁴

¹² Gregory’s views on papal authority are most clearly expressed in the *Dictatus Papae*; Gregory VII, *Register*, no. II.55a, i. 202-8.

¹³ For examples, see Henry IV’s letters of 1076, *Die Briefe Heinrichs IV*, nos. 10-11, 10-14.

Within the historiographical spheres of lordship and reform, few scholars have explored the issue and impact of the widespread participation of lay noblewomen in reformist activities, although many have identified the period of reform as a crucial turning point in the status of women in Western Europe. According to a dominant school of thought, as part of their efforts to purify society, clergymen increasingly demonized women, especially secular women, as the weaker, polluting sex, barring them from positions of influence in both secular and religious institutions. In the 1970s and 1980s, scholars such as Georges Duby and Jo Ann McNamara argued that a key part of this marginalizing process was a greater privileging of the masculine over the feminine than previously seen in Carolingian or Ottonian cultures. Duby, for example, claimed that ecclesiastical reformers thought women were incapable of wielding *potestas* because of the weakness inherent to their gender. Women could, instead, wield what Duby termed power of “immaterial order”: “the love which their sons bore them and which secured respect for them and the assurance of being heard in their old age; the desire they instigated in men, and which softened men; the fear also which they evoked, for men were persuaded that womanhood was invested with mysterious power, that women maintained touch with invisible forces.”¹⁵ Jo Ann McNamara, in her discussion of the enforcement of clerical celibacy, claimed that “the Gregorian revolution aimed at a church virtually free of women at every level but the lowest stratum of the married laity.”¹⁶ In other words, many scholars have

¹⁴ The explosion of writing which accompanied the reform movement has led one scholar to refer to the Investiture Controversy as “the first public debate in medieval Europe;” Leidulf Melve, *Inventing the Public Sphere: The Public Debate during the Investiture Contest (c. 1030-1122)*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2007), i. 4.

¹⁵ Georges Duby, “Women and Power,” in *Cultures of Power: Lordship, Status, and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Thomas Bisson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 84.

¹⁶ Jo Ann McNamara, “The ‘Herrenfrage’: The Restructuring of the Gender System, 1050-1150,” in *Medieval Masculinities: Regarding Men in the Middle Ages*, ed. Clara Lees (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 7.

suggested that reformers saw women as the lowest, the weakest, and the most potentially dangerous members of society.

There is some truth to the argument that the eleventh-century ecclesiastical reform had a detrimental effect on women, both secular and religious. Certainly many of the clerical reformers demonstrated strong misogynistic tendencies in their writings.¹⁷ In fact, Valerie Garver has suggested that Carolingian clerics were generally less misogynistic in their writings than later eleventh- and twelfth-century ecclesiastical authors.¹⁸ Several scholars have pointed to the reform's enforcement of clerical celibacy as a major cause for this apparent demonization of women. Dyan Elliott has argued that clerical reformers showed a "manifest indifference to women's material and spiritual welfare," as demonstrated most clearly by the physical expulsion and spiritual condemnation of clerical wives.¹⁹ Elliott and Nancy Caciola have also connected the reform movement to later developments in medieval religion, including the female mystic movement of the later twelfth century and onwards. Elliott and Caciola suggest that the reform movement's concern over questions of sexuality and pollution led directly to the gradual demonization of female religious figures in the Later Middle Ages.²⁰ In a similar

¹⁷ Humbert of Silva Candida and Peter Damian are perhaps the most well known for their tendency to demonize women, particularly with reference to the sexual dangers inherent in the female body.

¹⁸ Valerie Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 8. See also D.M. Stenton, who argued that women in England were nearly equal partners in their marriages, a status which ended with the Norman Conquest: *The English Woman in History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1977 [originally published 1957]), 28. Stephanie Hollis suggests, in contrast, that the decline in women's positions in England began as early as the eighth century, rather than as a sudden change initiated by the Norman Conquest. See *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 7.

¹⁹ Dyan Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage: Sexual Abstinence in Medieval Wedlock* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 102-10.

²⁰ Dyan Elliott, *Fallen Bodies; The Bride of Christ Goes to Hell: Metaphor and Embodiment in the Lives of Pious Women, 200-1500* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Nancy Caciola, *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003). For further work on questions of gender and the body in high medieval religion, see also Megan McLaughlin, *Sex, Gender, and Episcopal Authority in an Age of Reform, 1000-1122* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); and Jo Ann

vein, Ruth Mazo Karras claims that the reformist goal of clerical celibacy made women's sexuality all the more threatening in the eyes of the clergy by emphasizing the act of sexual intercourse as both sin and pollutant.²¹ As such scholarship highlights, reformers' preoccupations with pollution and sexuality could have a potentially damning influence on contemporary understandings of women's status in Christian society.

Much of the work done by these and other historians has focused specifically on theological or liturgical texts written by high-profile male ecclesiastics. While these sources are of critical importance, they also frequently rely on highly polemical and misogynistic language to emphasize their arguments. In many cases, this language is not echoed in other source types, even in different texts written by the same authors. For example, Peter Damian, one of the most fervent supporters of clerical celibacy, frequently referred to priests' wives as concubines and prostitutes, citing them as sources of pollution in religious rituals.²² However, he was also deeply involved in recruiting secular noblewomen to the papal reform movement, as can be seen in his letters to women such as Empress Agnes of Poitou and Adelaide of Turin.²³ Scholarship on women in the reform has tended to focus on particularly problematic groups such as clerical wives, but reformers' responses to the wives of priests should not be projected indiscriminately onto the experiences of all women living during the period of the reform. Elliott, for example, argues in her monograph *Spiritual Marriage* that male clerical

McNamara, "Canossa and the Ungendering of Public Man," republished in *Medieval Religion: New Approaches*, ed. Constance Hoffman Berman (New York: Routledge, 2005 [originally published 1995]), 92-110.

²¹ Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 40-5, 116; see also Katherine L. French, "Religion and Popular Beliefs: Choices, Constraints, and Creativity for Christian Women," in *A Cultural History of Women in the Middle Ages*, ed. Kim M. Phillips (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 59-84.

²² Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 114, iii. 295-306.

²³ *Ibid.*, nos. 104, iii. 141-58; 114, iii. 295-306; 124, iii. 408-11; 130, iii. 434-6; 144, iii. 525-7; 149, iii. 547-54.

reformers were trying to remove women from direct involvement in ecclesiastical affairs, including limiting their monastic opportunities: “Women were the ‘matter’ that was out of place in the reformer’s vision, the ‘dirt’ that imperiled sacerdotal purity. And so, like dirt, they were ruthlessly swept to one side.”²⁴ This emphasis on such misogynistic language has tended to place the reform movement within a scholarly narrative of a Western Europe that was becoming increasingly more hostile towards women and the concept of female agency over the course of the High Middle Ages.

It is true that the polemicists of the reform often spoke damningly of women as filthy and polluting creatures and sought to rid the sacred spaces of the Church of their presence, but only of certain women, at certain times, and in certain places. Equally prominent are images of women interacting with the Church in meaningful and often innovative ways.²⁵ The reform movement’s role as a major factor in the decline of aristocratic laywomen’s status and power from the ninth through the end of the twelfth century needs to be reconsidered. Scholars have naturally identified Matilda of Tuscany and Agnes of Poitou as important political players in the Investiture Controversy; Anselm’s regular correspondence with women such as Queen Matilda II of England and the countesses Adela of Blois and Ida of Boulogne has also garnered

²⁴ Elliott, *Spiritual Marriage*, 102; Douglas, *Purity and Danger*, 12-15.

²⁵ Indeed, in recent years some scholars have begun to push back against the downwards-trajectory of the dominant teleological model of the history of medieval women. In relation to church reform studies, excellent work has already been done to complicate the accepted view of the effects of the reform movement on the lives and status of women belonging to religious houses. See, for example, Fiona Griffiths, “Women and Reform in the Central Middle Ages,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, ed. Judith Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 447-63; and “The Cross and the *Cura monialium*: Robert of Arbrissel, John the Evangelist, and the Pastoral Care of Women in the Age of Reform,” *Speculum* 83:2 (2008), 303-30; see also Barbara Newman, “Liminalities: Literate Women in the Long Twelfth Century,” in *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and John van Engen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 354-402.

attention from modern historians.²⁶ In general, however, the involvement of secular female lords in the reform has been surprisingly neglected or, in the case of Matilda of Tuscany, dismissed as a highly unusual case in contrast to the typical experience of lay noblewomen in the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

This study is, therefore, not just an attempt to retell the story of the church reform movement with a greater emphasis on women's agency, though it does point in that direction. Rather, the guiding questions are: first, how did female lords attempt to engage with reform efforts and express their identities as Christian rulers; and, second, how did responses to their actions fashion and influence contemporary ideologies of power and authority. Lay noblewomen could be formidable allies of ecclesiastical reformers; the reformers themselves clearly realized this. At the same time, both opponents of the reform and some of its most prominent supporters balked at the presence of women and their supposedly polluting female bodies in ecclesiastical affairs. The actions of female lords on behalf of the reform therefore presented a problem for those who wanted to make reformist ideals a reality. One issue addressed in the following pages is how female lords and ecclesiastical authors attempted to reconcile the conflict between reform ideals and real-world necessity.

At its core, this dissertation is a work of cultural history. It is most interested in the formation and evolution of images, conceptions, and representations of female secular lordship within a political and religious arena framed by conflicting lay and ecclesiastical ideologies.

²⁶ Sister Prudence Allen, *The Concept of Woman: The Aristotelian Revolution, 750 BC-AD 1250* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997 [originally published in Canada, 1985]), 262-70. Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders, 1095-1131* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 45-7; Amy Linvingstone, "Aristocratic Women in the Chartrain," in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 60-1; Sally Vaughn, *St Anselm and the Handmaidens of God: A Study of Anselm's Correspondence with Women* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2002), 2-5, 119-50, 204-59; Heather J. Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c. 879-1160* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 123-4.

Because of this focus on cultural conceptions, “female lordship” is defined here not just as the holding of a position of authority by a female agent. More importantly, female lordship refers to the manner in which female agents performed within their positions of secular authority, as well as to the manner in which textual representations of authoritative female agents deliberately incorporated gendered actions, images, customs, or ideals deemed suitable for an aristocratic woman.²⁷ This focus on the performance and conception of female lordship within the context of the reform is appropriate for two reasons. First, some of the reform movement’s most original discourse on rulership and authority appears in narrative sources, such as hagiographical texts and chronicles. These texts interpret and represent their secular and ecclesiastical subjects with reference to carefully selected symbols of authority and divine grace. Moreover, as Brian Stock has argued, historical reality and literary retellings of it did not exist separately from each other. Instead, “the two aspects of the experience work together: the objectivity of the events spills over into the subjectivity of the records, perceptions, feelings, and observations. The transcribed experience also feeds back into the lived lives.”²⁸

Secondly, the majority of scholarship on secular lordship and interactions between the laity and the clergy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries has focused predominantly on charter evidence.²⁹ The study of medieval women’s power (or lack thereof) has also depended heavily

²⁷ As Natasha Hodgson has pointed out in her study on women in crusade narratives, focusing on the perceptions or constructions of women within narrative texts allows the sources to be used to the best advantage. The truth of certain textual passages becomes less important than what the creator of the text was attempting to demonstrate; see *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 5.

²⁸ Brian Stock, *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 29.

²⁹ Some key examples of this scholarship: Barbara Rosenwein, *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny’s Property, 909-1049* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); Emma Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England 1066-1135* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998); Amy Livingstone, “Aristocratic Women in the Chartrain,” and *Out of Love for my Kin: Aristocratic Family Life in the Lands of the Loire, 1000-1200* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010).

on diplomatic evidence of land-holding and legal constraints.³⁰ This traditional focus may be in part a result of the meteoric rise in the number of extant charters beginning in the eleventh century. Such scholarship has created a crucial picture of the relationship between authority and land-holding, and of the ties created between individuals, families, and institutions through the exchange of property. However, the multiple ideologies surrounding medieval conceptions of lordship relied on more than an individual lord's receiving, granting, or selling of land or other property. The present study is less concerned with the donations and property agreements evidenced in charters than it is with what some scholars have called the "projection of power"—the creation and promotion of a carefully crafted cultural style or discourse intended to illustrate the multifaceted nature of medieval Christian lordship.³¹

The years of 1050 to 1125 witnessed a particularly eloquent and often heated discourse surrounding the reform movement. These dates have been chosen with care. Scholars now commonly recognize that the so-called "Gregorian Reform" had its roots in earlier shifts in social and religious practices, including tenth-century efforts to reform monastic life at Cluny and Gorze and the sporadic councils of the "Peace of God" movement in the late tenth and early eleventh centuries.³² The significance of these earlier developments should not be

³⁰ Goetz and Black-Veldtrup, for example, focus predominantly on the administration of land and wealth in their studies on Beatrice of Tuscany and Empress Agnes. See also Claire de Trafford, "Share and Share Alike? The Marriage Portion, Inheritance, and Family Politics," in *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women: Pawns or Players?*, ed. Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 36-48; Susan M. Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 3-13.

³¹ Simon MacLean and Bjorn Weiler have pointed out that this "projection of power" was even more significant in periods of political institutional weakness or uncertainty. The ecclesiastical reform movement, which directly challenged traditional prerogatives of the secular nobility, and particularly of secular rulers, certainly contributed to such a period of uncertainty. See their introduction to their edited volume *Representations of Power in Medieval Germany 800-1500* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 1-14.

³² Amy Remensnyder, "Pollution, Purity, and Peace: An Aspect of Social Reform between the Late Tenth Century and 1076," in *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 280-3; Frederick Paxton, "History,

underestimated. However, the period of 1050 to 1125—that is, the period of the reform defined most prominently by papal leadership—experienced an intensification of reform fervor. The great “reformer popes,” including Leo IX, Gregory VII, and Urban II, provided the various widespread efforts towards religious reform with a prominent leading figure. The emergence of papal reformers also created an increasingly centralized polemical discourse, in its written forms penned largely by men closely connected to the papal *curia*. This does not mean that after 1050 there was a single working definition of church reform, decided upon by an individual pope and promoted faithfully by his circle. On the contrary, there were many different and dissenting voices within the reform camp. But once the late eleventh-century popes began to direct religious reform more closely, wider reforming efforts did coalesce around a small but crucial set of closely defined goals. Under the papacy’s influence, the issues of simony, lay investiture, and marriage reform for both the clergy and the laity began to dominate the conversation. These issues also served to widen the fissure between novel reform ideologies and more traditional lay expectations of secular-religious interactions. The well-known clash over lay and ecclesiastical authority across Western Europe in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries resulted.

In addition, the present study’s chronological focus on the seventy-five year period between 1050 and 1125 reflects the corresponding emergence of a relatively brief but crucial moment of creativity in the imagining, enactment, and representation of female secular authority. This creativity occurred as a direct result of the heightening of reformist efforts. Much of the scholarship on the reform movement’s impact on women and women’s status in western Europe has approached the period specifically with an eye towards future

Historians, and the Peace of God,” in *The Peace of God*, 21-40; T.J.H. McCarthy, *Music, Scholasticism and Reform: Salian Germany, 1025-1125* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 11-15.

developments in the mid to late twelfth century. The rise of misogynistic language in monastic and clerical texts of the later twelfth and thirteenth centuries may indeed have roots in the earlier Gregorian era. Nevertheless, that does not mean that the systematic marginalization and demonization of women was a conscious or even unconscious goal of clerical reformers' agenda between 1050 to 1125. The current study therefore focuses on the immediate response to interactions between aristocratic laywomen and currents of religious reform. An attempt to trace the impact of reformist beliefs on conceptions and representations of female lordship over a course of, say, two hundred years—from the reform's earliest ninth-century grassroots origins to its ambiguous resolution with the 1122 Concordat at Worms or beyond—would lend itself all too easily to over-generalization.

The narrow chronological parameters of the dissertation have the additional benefit of permitting a wider geographical exploration of reform discourse as it bore on female lordship. Two main geographical areas frame the approach taken in the following chapters. The first consists of those lands that felt most strongly the lasting impact of Carolingian influence. This area, stretching from lowland Britain to central Italy, retained a “natural centrality” following the dissolution of the Carolingian empire.³³ It also corresponds to those polities most concerned with the specific issues of the Investiture Controversy, including Germany, northern Italy, France, and the Anglo-Norman kingdom. This core part of Western Europe provides the geographical focus of the first three chapters. Chapter Four addresses the second major area, the new frontiers of Latin Christendom. These frontiers included Christian Spain, central Europe, Norman Italy, and the Latin East. Reformers of the Latin Church viewed these frontier polities as both outliers and integral parts of the larger political entity they recognized as Latin

³³ Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 20.

Christendom. As will be discussed in the final chapter, these border polities provide a useful vantage point for exploring intersections of religious reform and conceptions of female lordship. Religious reformers faced different challenges in their attempts to bring frontier cultures more closely in line with Latin Christian practices. Supporters of the reform movement had to adapt accordingly, particularly in their dealings with the rulers of frontier polities. Examining these challenges can allow for a greater understanding of the process and motivation behind the creation of particular models of female lordship.

In addition to the geographical and chronological parameters, a word needs to be said here about the types of women who provide the subject matter for the dissertation. First, they were all members of the lay nobility. Some were more elite than others, being heiresses and landowners in their own right, as was Matilda of Tuscany, or born the daughters of kings, such as Adela of Blois. A few women crossed the line between the secular and religious spheres by joining religious houses towards the ends of their lives. Monastic retirement was a common trend for aristocratic women, particularly those with grown sons who were old enough to rule on their own, without a mother's guidance—or interference. The monastic life was intended to give such women a chance for a quiet life of contemplation and devoted prayer. One issue to be dealt with below, however, is that some women who took the veil refused to cut all of their ties to worldly affairs. The following chapters therefore focus on activities which took place outside of the monastery for those women who attempted to wear the mantles of both female lords and professed religious.

Queens represent another special category of female lords. In some ways, medieval and modern authors alike consider queens to be a group separate from other noblewomen. By the eleventh century, formal coronation and anointing were becoming more common for queens,

and were beginning to carry a religious significance similar, if not yet equal, to a king's coronation rite.³⁴ A queen also had potentially greater resources at hand and a correspondingly greater range of influence than other noblewomen. These differences were crucial to a queen's position, and care has been taken in the following pages to build an understanding of a queen's unique authority into the broader analysis. But the queens of this period—including Matilda of Flanders, Matilda of Scotland, and Agnes of Poitou—should not be left out of the discussion entirely. The extant source material naturally gravitates towards such high profile and visible women, just as reformers themselves identified queens as particularly salient in their effort to spread their ideas and enforce their goals. Moreover, queenship was not yet a fully defined and discrete institution. In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, the status and authority available to a queen still depended in large part on the individual woman's relationship with her husband or her son. In fact, the reign of only one queen regnant falls within the parameters of the current study, that of Urraca of León-Castile (r. 1109-1126). Urraca's experiences foreshadow the later twelfth-century careers of Empress Matilda, Lady of the English, and Melisende, queen of Jerusalem, in that all three met extreme resistance and uncertainty in their attempts to rule as, in effect, female kings. Therefore, while the consecration of a queen set her above other female lords, she still faced similar limitations and the poorly defined boundaries

³⁴ See Pauline Stafford, "The Portrayal of Royal Women in England, Mid-Tenth to Mid-Twelfth Centuries," in *Medieval Queenship*, ed. John Carmi Parsons (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1993), 143-67; Sarah Lambert, "Queen or Consort: Rulership and Politics in the Latin East, 1118-1228," in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 153-72; Janet L. Nelson, "Early Medieval Rites of Queen-Making and the Shaping of Medieval Queenship," in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, 301-16; and "Queen as Jezebels: The Careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History," in *Debating the Middle Ages: Issues and Readings*, ed. Lester K. Little and Barbara H. Rosenwein (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 219-53; and Theresa Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 2-27, 84-6.

of authority around which noblewomen of lesser rank had to maneuver, and was also expected to adhere to the same set of cultural norms.³⁵

The study of medieval women, even women of the nobility, presents a number of methodological difficulties. Perhaps the most pressing problem is the issue of gaining access to a medieval woman's point of view that has not been mediated in some way by a male voice.³⁶ Indeed, sources written by men portraying women far outweigh sources composed by women themselves. There is no easy solution to this problem. In order to address it to the greatest extent possible, we must seek a balance between the discourses that surrounded lay noblewomen and the lived experiences of individual women, when surviving sources allow access to real-world situations. Narrative sources, such as historiographical and hagiographical texts (including the *Vitae* of Matilda of Tuscany, Ida of Boulogne, and Margaret of Scotland), provide key examples of the reform era's discourses concerning women and female lordship. Letters, composed by both aristocratic women and clerical reformers, offer at least limited access to the lived experiences and ideas of women participating in reform affairs. Letter writing could be as much a work of intellectual creativity as the composing of a chronicle, as attested by, for example, Marbod of Rennes' poems and by Peter Damian's epistolary treatises. Yet a letter also served as the immediate representation of the sender's wishes, an attempt by the sender to influence some ongoing concern.³⁷ The registers of prominent clerical reformers,

³⁵ Laura Gathagan gives a useful overview on the connotations of a queen's coronation ceremony in her article, "The Trappings of Power: The Coronation of Mathilda of Flanders," *Haskins Society Journal* 13 (2004), 21-40.

³⁶ For the issue of textual "voice," see Catherine Mooney, "Voice, Gender, and the Portrayal of Sanctity," in *Gendered Voices: Medieval Saints and their Interpreters*, ed. Catherine Mooney (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 1-15; Diane Watt, *Medieval Women's Writing: Works by and for Women in England, 1100-1500* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), 1-14.

³⁷ Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 100-13.

including Gregory VII and Anselm of Canterbury, preserve a significant body of letters sent to and from lay noblewomen.³⁸ These letters, used carefully, reveal the ways in which women became involved in reform affairs. They can also provide a privileged view of lay noblewomen's self-fashioning as members of a Christian ruling class coming increasingly under the pressure of new religious and cultural paradigms.³⁹

The sources used here represent a range of genres but also share a number of key characteristics. For example, the majority of the sources have composition dates that have been reliably dated to the period 1050 to 1125. There is extensive reference, mainly in the first chapter, to texts from the Carolingian and Ottonian periods, but these serve a comparative purpose, in order to study the tension between continuity and change in late eleventh-century discourses. Except for a few notable exceptions, the project does not include texts written after the terminus date of 1125. Some of these exceptions include Orderic Vitalis's *Historia Ecclesiastica* and the *Historia Compostellana*, both too valuable to be excluded.⁴⁰ Moreover,

³⁸ Martin Camargo has identified the period of the Investiture Controversy as an "especially important stimulus" to the study and production of letters in medieval Europe for propaganda purposes. See *Ars Dictaminis Ars Dictandi*, *Typologie des sources du Moyen Age occidental* 60 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1991), 31-2; Giles Constable, likewise, refers to a golden age of medieval epistolography which developed in the eleventh century and matured into a full rhetorical art by the end of the twelfth; *Letters and Letter Collections*, *Typologie des Sources du Moyen Age occidental* 17 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1976), 31-2.

³⁹ It is assumed that, even if a woman did not physically write a letter herself, she at the least dictated and approved the final message.

⁴⁰ Orderic's modern editor, Marjorie Chibnall, suggested that Orderic began composing his chronicle as early as 1114/5 and continued to work on it until shortly before his death in c.1142. See Marjorie Chibnall, "General Introduction," in *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, 6 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), i. 32-6. The *Historia Compostellana* was written by multiple authors, beginning as early as 1107 and continuing after 1140. The portion of the *Historia* that covers Urraca's reign was most likely written by 1140 at the latest. For further details on the dating of specific portions of the *Historia*, see Bernard F. Reilly, "The *Historia Compostellana*: The Genesis and Composition of a Twelfth-Century Spanish Gesta," *Speculum* 44:1 (1969), 78-85. Other notable texts with dates post-1125 include histories by Herman of Tournai and Henry of Huntingdon, both composed before 1150; the following chapters also make occasional reference to William of Tyre's chronicle, completed by c. 1184. See R.B.C. Huygens, "Introduction," in Herman of Tournai, *Liber*, 5-7; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); and William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, 2 vols, ed. R.B.C. Huygens, *CCCM* 63-63A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986).

the majority of these later texts still fall easily within living memory of the height of the reform movement, with composition dates before 1150. Such attention to date of composition seems warranted in order to achieve the goal of exploring the immediate interplay between reform discourse and contemporary concepts of secular female lordship. This dating precision also connects to a second key characteristic shared by the sources: Clerical and monastic authors writing during this period all display some level of awareness that they were living in a moment of transformation. Some, including monastic chroniclers such as Sigebert of Gembloux and William of Malmesbury or senior clerics such as Ivo of Chartres and Anselm of Canterbury, directly addressed issues of ecclesiastical reform and the Investiture Controversy. Others, including Cosmas of Prague and Geoffrey Malaterra, do not overtly focus on the fight between pope and secular leaders over issues of investiture, clerical marriage, and simony. Nevertheless, these authors do betray a preoccupation with the wider concerns of the reform movement, including an adherence to appropriate religious practices and issues of personal moral behavior, particularly in relation to marriage and the ethics of familial interactions.

Each individual source—whether it be a letter, a chronicle, or a saint’s life—formed part of a larger textual culture that emerged as both symptom and catalyst of the reform movement.⁴¹ Medieval producers of texts drew upon a set of shared linguistic resources and practices. It is possible, therefore, to trace patterns or shifts in the textual culture of reform discourse. In addition, the focus on cultural trends and ideologies helps in the effort to avoid

⁴¹ In this the dissertation is informed by Gabrielle Spiegel’s *The Past as Text*. Spiegel argues that the postmodern dilemma—what she calls the “growing awareness of the mediated nature of perception, cognition, and imagination, all of which are increasingly construed to be mediated by linguistic structures cast into discourses of one sort or another”—has served to emphasize the basic position of medieval texts as being both a (questionable) representation of a culture as well as, and perhaps more importantly, a product of that culture, rather than the older, more positivist notion of certain medieval texts as being categorized as either fact or fiction. See Gabrielle Spiegel, *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1997), 29.

the pitfalls of the uneven survival rate of eleventh- and twelfth-century texts. For example, some of the female lords discussed throughout the following chapters enjoy a relative abundance of references in contemporary texts. This is especially true in the case of queens, who, naturally enough, more easily commanded the attention of political and religious leaders. Thus, figures such as Matilda II of England and Agnes of Poitou appear frequently in the following pages, while some of their lower-ranking contemporaries receive only one or two brief mentions in the extant sources.

The variety of source types poses a further methodological challenge. Although representative patterns may be traced across different kinds of sources, medieval authors arrived at these representations through very different methods. The anonymous author of Ida of Boulogne's *Vita*, for example, granted the countess divinely inspired visions and miraculous powers in his effort to establish her status as an ideal Christian noblewoman. Anselm of Canterbury, on the other hand, emphasized, in a 1077 letter to the same countess, Ida's generosity and almsgiving as the true mark of her position.⁴² No single methodological approach can successfully encompass the variety of experience and discursive range found in the evidence. Multiple approaches are needed to work with the grain of the sources. In this, gender plays a central methodological and conceptual role. As the following chapters will discuss, clerical reformers deployed social conceptions of gender to articulate their own concerns and ideas about how a Christian society should run. At the same time, the reform also created shifts in traditional gender models, both within and outside the Church itself. There is a rich and valuable field of scholarship on the "gender crisis" caused by the eleventh-century church reform movement. McNamara wrote extensively on what she termed the *Herrenfrage*,

⁴² Anselm, *Opera*, no. 82, iii. 206-7.

the masculine identity crisis of the early twelfth century, provoked by the Latin Church's move towards celibacy.⁴³ Many other scholars, responding to and building on McNamara's research, have emphasized reformers' remarkable preoccupation with issues of gender.⁴⁴ As Judith Butler has argued, gender has never been a stable concept, but rather an historicized and constructed identity that needs to be acted out in order to create what she refers to as the "illusion of an abiding gendered self."⁴⁵ Butler's model of gender as both historical construct and performance provides a useful starting point. The following chapters accordingly explore the ways in which the reform movement promoted a highly gendered discourse of authority and how that discourse—or construction—came to be reflected in conceptions of female secular authority. This discourse did not exist, isolated, within texts. Rather, such discourse was a response to, a push against, or an attempt to shape what was occurring in the real world. To bridge the gap between discourse and lived reality, the following chapters therefore also draw upon aspects of performance studies and cultural anthropology. As historians have frequently noted over the last few decades, methods adapted from these two fields can prove particularly useful for examining the connections between words and actions, the meanings

⁴³ Jo Ann McNamara, "The *Herrenfrage*," 3-29. See also McNamara's other articles, "An Unresolved Syllogism: The Search for a Christian Gender System," in *Conflicted Identities and Multiple Masculinities: Men in the Medieval West*, ed. Jacqueline Murray (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), 1-24; and "Canossa and the Ungendering of the Public Man," 102-22.

⁴⁴ Jacqueline Murray has argued that the reform movement closed the traditional avenues by which men could prove their masculinity, through sexual intercourse and military activity. To provide new outlets of masculine expression, she claims, monastic rhetoric began to promote the image of a masculinized battle to maintain chastity and control lust; see "Masculinizing Religious Life: Sexual Prowess, the Battle for Chastity and Monastic Identity," in *Holiness and Masculinity in the Middle Ages*, ed. P.H. Cullum and Katherine J. Lewis (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2004), 24-42. Kimberly LoPrete discusses the use of the term "virago" by several eleventh- and early twelfth-century authors, including Peter Damian and Geoffrey Malaterra, as a way of side-stepping the problems presented by women wielding "masculine" powers; see "Gendering Viragos," 17-38. Megan McLaughlin has studied reformers' deliberate gendering of the Church itself, in the figure of "Mother Church" and "Bride of Christ," and the resultant influence such images had on corresponding ideas of episcopal status and spiritual connection to the institution of the Church (*Sex, Gender, and Episcopal Authority*).

⁴⁵ Judith Butler, "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theater Journal* 40:4 (1988), 519-20.

behind symbols and rituals, and the transformative power of performance in creating, or subverting, commonly accepted cultural codes.⁴⁶

The combination of methodologies that the current project employs also reflects the clear reliance on the part of medieval authors on a set of discursive tools in their attempts to promote or denigrate the widespread reform of Latin Christendom. Each of the following chapters focuses on the application of one particular tool employed by medieval writers to represent or create a specific vision of female authority wielded within the context of church reform. Chapter One offers an overview of the fundamental models of authority and agency used by female lords and reformers to defend or dismiss women's participation in ecclesiastical affairs. It begins with the basic question whether the reform had an impact on contemporary conceptions and enactments of secular female lordship. In this vein, the chapter examines Carolingian and Ottonian depictions of aristocratic noblewomen found in hagiographical texts, political treatises, and, most importantly, Dhuoda's *Handbook*. These earlier models of female lordship are then compared to and contrasted with concepts developed in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. Gregory VII's letters to aristocratic laywomen provide a key case-study for examining the shift in conceptualizing female lordship. A discussion follows of how ecclesiastical reformers of the late eleventh century did, in fact, mobilize rhetoric taken from popular ninth- and tenth-century archetypes of female lordship. They did so, however, in order to mask the novel nature of the tasks they assigned to their own female contemporaries under a veil of accepted and vaunted tradition.

⁴⁶ For the benefits of cultural anthropology in historical studies, see Natalie Davis, "Anthropology and History in the 1980s: The Possibilities of the Past," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 12.2 (1981), 267-75; Mayke de Jong, "The Foreign Past: Medieval Historians and Cultural Anthropology," *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 109 (1996), 323-39. See also *Handbook of Methods in Cultural Anthropology*, ed. H. Russell Bernard (Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1998); John Monaghan and Peter Just, *Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). For a useful and recent introduction to performance studies, see Mehmet Şiray, *Performance and Performativity* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

Chapter Two explores how and why ecclesiastical and secular reformers created a discourse concerning the nature of power and authority so strongly dependent on the use of highly gendered language. The greater part of the chapter is dedicated to the discussion of the intersections between a gendered and sexualized rhetoric and the real-world conceptions of and reactions to women wielding power. Reformers' prevalent use of anthropomorphizing and feminizing language in relation to the Church serves as a key example for how clerics employed traditional gender roles to explain complicated ideological goals. By relying on and promoting images of the Church as Holy Mother and Bride of Christ, clerical reformers also, the chapter argues, created an opportunity for thinking about and changing broader conceptions of female gender roles in general. The chapter therefore examines how the use of gendered models of authority to describe the ecclesiastical hierarchy encouraged a new corresponding awareness of both the potential good and evil found in the female gender—and what real women, defined by these conceptions of gender, had the potential to achieve.

While Chapter Two focuses on the more intellectual and internalized aspects of the reform movement's influence on female lordship, Chapter Three moves on to examine a more external—or externalizing—aspect. This chapter explores the specific question of the performance of female lordship in the ecclesiastical reform movement. The chapter begins by discussing the significant impact of “public”—that is, visible and publicized—performances by clerics and secular lords alike on the continued momentum of the reform movement and its efforts to reshape the society of Latin Christendom. The meeting at Canossa in 1077, for example, is one instance of such a performance. The chapter also uses as a case-study the career of Queen Matilda II of England as an unusually well documented example of a female lord performing on the behalf of religious reform efforts. The chapter argues that female lords

could, and did, take on much more visible roles within the context of enforcing religious and cultural reforms than they had in the Carolingian and Ottonian periods.

The fourth and final chapter moves the focus away from the core of Latin Christendom to the expanding edges. This chapter explores the intersections of reform and female lordship in Christian Spain, central Europe, Norman Italy, and the Latin East in order to study the process by which cultural expectations of lordship associated with the core spread and interacted with local traditions and models. The chapter looks especially at the roles that women played in strengthening the often tenuous cultural and political ties that, in theory, connected the apostolic see to the far reaches of the Latin Church's sphere of influence. As Chapter Four will demonstrate, conceptions of female lordship in frontier areas tended to differ greatly from contemporaneous ideas in the core. These differences, in turn, strongly affected how women interacted with currents of religious reform taking place so far from Rome. The final chapter therefore provides a vantage point for reflecting more fully upon the creativity evident in the core of Western Europe. The chapter also provides a final demonstration of the paradoxical adaptability and inflexibility of medieval conceptions of female lordship.

To summarize, scholars have already identified the late eleventh and twelfth centuries as a period which witnessed the emergence of a number of impressively influential, powerful, and popular female lords, ranging from countesses to queens, but this development has not been fully explored.⁴⁷ A large number of prominent women came to the foreground of medieval Christian society not by coincidence of birth and timing but in large part as a result

⁴⁷ Jean Truax points out the high number of positive representations of powerful women in early Anglo-Norman histories but does not offer an explanation for why authors such as William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon would have been able to conceive of women in such a manner; "From Bede to Orderic Vitalis: Changing Perspectives on the Role of Women in the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Churches," *Haskins Society Journal* 3 (1991), 35-52.

of the ecclesiastical reform movement. The participation of lay noblewomen in the affairs of the reform movement from c. 1050 to 1125 prompted a need for new conceptions of female lordship. As a result, the reform movement stimulated a period of creativity on the parts of both clerical male authors and female lords themselves in the construction of gendered secular authority. This creativity resulted in a discursive convergence of multiple strands of cultural and religious pressures relating to the performance of power by laywomen. The following pages thus seek to demonstrate the complexity and variety of medieval female lordship during a period of major cultural and religious transformation.

CHAPTER ONE: TRADITION AND INNOVATION IN LAY FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN ECCLESIASTICAL REFORM

In June 1074 Pope Gregory VII sent a letter to Agnes of Poitou, the dowager empress of Germany and mother of Gregory's greatest secular rival, Henry IV. It was a letter of gratitude, praising Agnes for her good deeds as empress and as a friend to the papacy. At the height of this acclaim, Gregory wrote to Agnes, "Through you a new example of an ancient joy—through you, I say, the women who once sought the Lord in the tomb often return to us in memory."¹ Gregory's praise is understandable, for in many ways Empress Agnes seems to have embodied his perceptions of the ideal noblewoman: pious, educated, charitable, a dedicated mother, and a chaste widow who spent her final years as a nun. In terms of defining female societal roles, these traits were nothing new in the late eleventh century. They can easily be traced back to biblical exemplars, as Gregory did—"ancient joys," indeed.² But what Gregory asked Agnes to do within the boundaries of these traditional roles was quite new. Agnes had taken the veil in c. 1062, retiring to Fruttuaria in northern Italy. Rather than encouraging her in her monastic isolation, Gregory instead enlisted her help in his negotiations with her recalcitrant son. The empress spent several years traveling between Italy and

¹ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. I.85, i. 122. Eng. trans. H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Register of Pope Gregory VII 1073-1085: An English Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 90; translation revised: "Per vos itaque novum exemplum antique letitie, per vos, inquam, ille mulieres olim querentes Dominum in monumento sepe nobis ad memoriam redeunt."

² John 20:1-18.

Germany, appearing at synods, working with papal and imperial bishops, and otherwise taking on a remarkably visible role for a retired monastic.³

This chapter is concerned with this combination of old and new—of old cultural models and new patterns of female action and agency—that emerged during the reform era of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries.⁴ While the following chapters address the specific ways in which reform-era writers represented shifting trends in secular female authority and agency, this chapter seeks first to establish the old norms against which new models came to be juxtaposed. These norms established the baseline for secular women’s engagement with the Church and with society as a whole. The traditional models developed during the ninth through early-eleventh centuries continued to be deployed by later clerical reformers as part of an overall program of “return” that marked the reform movement itself. Reformers wanted to go back to the *Vita apostolica*—to a pure Church untouched by polluting influences such as simony and lay investiture.⁵ The superficial continuity and emulation of past, traditional models, however, masked a radical change in clerical conceptions of secular authority and its proper relationship with the Church. The old examples of secular and ecclesiastical authority continued to be deployed but were increasingly reconfigured over the course of the reform.

³ For an overview of Empress Agnes’s career, see Mechthild Black-Veldtrup’s biography, *Kaiserin Agnes (1043-1077): Quellenkritische Studien* (Münster: Böhlau Verlag, 1995). For her role as a papal envoy, see I.S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany, 1056-1106* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 108, 125-34.

⁴ Marcus Bull has highlighted the paradox of western European society’s reaction to new cultural and religious developments by framing novelty in terms of traditional experience. See “Views of Muslims and of Jerusalem in Miracle Stories, c. 1000-c. 1200: Reflections on the Study of First Crusaders’ Motivations,” in *The Experience of Crusading Volume One: Western Approaches*, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 17-18.

⁵ For a discussion of reformers’ desire to “return” to past ideals, see Kathleen Cushing, *Reform and the Papacy in the Eleventh Century: Spirituality and Social Change* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), 19-25 and 91-107. See also Amy Remensnyder, “Pollution, Purity, and Peace: An Aspect of Social Reform between the Late Tenth Century and 1076,” in *The Peace of God*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 280-307.

It is impossible to understand the impact of reformist discourses on the roles and actions of lay noblewomen without first understanding the traditional categories that informed eleventh-century expectations of women. Clerical reformers and their opponents inherited a textual culture that tended to look to the past for models of good and bad behavior for the benefit of contemporary audiences. Biblical exegesis, early saints' lives, the writings of the Church Fathers, and even a few classical texts—these genres, among others, created a common referential past for eleventh- and twelfth-century writers. The pressing concern to return again and again to this shared past was in part a result of the paradoxical combination of new agendas and belief in tradition that lay at the heart of the reform movement itself. How aristocratic laywomen drew upon, rejected, or redefined customary female roles that had been the ideal since the Carolingian period, and perhaps earlier, influenced the responses of their contemporaries and shaped resulting perceptions and representations of female authority and power during a period that reconfigured the society of Latin Christendom.

To explore the merging of traditional forms of secular female authority with the newly defined social, political, and cultural expectations introduced by the eleventh-century ecclesiastical reform, this chapter will provide a three-part chronological overview of particularly important developments in lay female agency. The first part will focus on the immediate pre-reform era, c. 850 to 1000. This period provided the clergy and women of the later reform era with the foundational paradigms of aristocratic femininity. The second section features the early decades of the papal reform period, roughly corresponding to Leo IX's pontificate through that of Urban II (1049-1099). These years saw an undeniable surge of religious and cultural reformist activity, now largely directed by the papacy itself, which centered particularly on questions of authority and social order. Aristocratic women, like their

male contemporaries, were swept up by the shifting boundaries and conflicts between ecclesiastical and secular power, a development which this portion of the chapter will explore through a study of Gregory VII's frequent correspondence with lay noblewomen, such as the letter considered above. The final segment of the chapter focuses on later developments in the reform and their impacts on the interests and actions of aristocratic women, from c. 1090 to 1130.

By exploring the shifts in female roles prior to the reform, during its height, and in relation to its later broader cultural and social consequences, it will become clear that although reform-era writers emphasized traditional roles of female agency—most especially those of intercessor, family caretaker, and patron—the reform itself introduced new ways through which secular women could interact with the Church and, through their involvement with ecclesiastical affairs, with wider political and social concerns. As a result, such typical, and often limited, feminine roles were frequently redefined or reconfigured in complementary and contradictory ways to better rationalize the authority with which secular noblewomen claimed they could act in male-dominated spheres.

Early Medieval Origins of Traditional Roles for Secular Women

As discussed above, scholars such as Georges Duby, Jo Ann McNamara, Valerie Garver, and others have argued that the early medieval West witnessed a “golden age” for female power and agency, when women could be heiresses and landholders.⁶ Even if they did not own land themselves, they could still wield impressive influence within their households as wives and mothers. As female inheritance became less common over the eleventh and

⁶ See above, 8-10.

twelfth centuries, some would argue, the window of opportunity for aristocratic women closed with it.⁷ This supposed decline of female agency and power has come under increasing scrutiny, however, as scholars have begun to explore other aspects of lordship and authority, such as rhetorical constructions of power, symbolic or performative representations, and broader cultural uses of authoritative displays.⁸ In fact, rather than a decline in secular female authority, many of the ideals formed within Carolingian, Anglo-Saxon, and Ottonian courts concerning a woman's place in society continued to shape the actions and perceptions of women in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, albeit in new ways. Nor was this continuity a coincidence. Recent scholarship has shown how clerical authors and secular lords alike looked back upon the famed age of Charlemagne as a period of immediate cultural and political relevance. As Anna Latowsky argues, stories, legends, and texts from the pre-1000 period were remembered and reimagined in subsequent centuries, creating a sense of continuity that was nonetheless modulated and transformed to fit immediate contexts and needs.⁹

⁷ Georges Duby, *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest: The Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983 [originally published in French, 1981]), 99-106; Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple, "The Power of Women Through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500-1100," in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 1988), 83-101.

⁸ Pauline Stafford has dismissed outright the common idea that Anglo-Saxon England witnessed a golden age of female power: see "Women and the Norman Conquest," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* series 6, vol. 4 (1994), 221-49. For other scholarship exploring different types of female power in the post-Carolingian era, Holly S. Hurlburt, "Public Exposure? Consorts and Ritual in Late Medieval Europe: The Example of the Entrance of the Dogaresse of Venice," in *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2003), 174-89; Laura L. Gathagan, "The Trappings of Power: The Coronation of Mathilda of Flanders," *Haskins Society Journal* 13 (2004), 21-40.

⁹ Anne A. Latowsky, *Emperor of the World: Charlemagne and the Construction of Imperial Authority, 800-1229* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 19-58, 99-138; Matthew Gabriele, *An Empire of Memory: The Legend of Charlemagne, the Franks, and Jerusalem before the First Crusade* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 97-115. Pseudo-Turpin's chronicle, written in the mid-twelfth century offers one prominent example of the borrowing and reimagining of Carolingian themes. The chronicle is available in English translation: *Chronicle of Pseudo-Turpin*, ed. and trans. Kevin R. Poole (New York: Italica Press, 2014).

In the years of 850 to 1000, certain cultural models of lay aristocratic femininity strongly influenced the narrative descriptions of early medieval female lords. The models themselves could and did vary according to place, time, and the individual women involved. Despite this variety, the set of norms that appears is nevertheless dominated by a common idea: that a secular noblewoman's place was defined foremost by her status in her immediate family—whether that family was biological or marital.¹⁰ This focus on the familial is particularly clear in Jonas of Orléans' *De institutione laicali*, his *speculum* for the laity.¹¹ Jonas was an influential cleric at the court of Louis the Pious (d. 840), a court also known for its religious and moral reforming efforts. For Jonas, marriage as a moral practice made up a key component of lay aristocratic identity, especially for aristocratic men.¹² In the *De institutione laicali*, women's corresponding roles in marriage were to strengthen their male partners.¹³ For example, Jonas gives four reasons for why women were desirable: "ancestry, prudence, wealth, and beauty."¹⁴ Jonas drew heavily upon earlier sources of authority for his *De institutione laicali*. Most of his ideas concerning women and marriage he derived from Isidore of Seville's seventh-century *Etymologiae*. Isidore listed the same four attributes that men found attractive when looking for a potential wife, but then lamented that beauty and wealth were considered more important than a woman's moral uprightness. Isidore had a rather negative view of

¹⁰ Lisa M. Bitel, *Women in Early Medieval Europe, 400-1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 178-96.

¹¹ Jonas' *De institutione laicali* serves as a good representational text for the genre of Carolingian *specula*. For a background of the text, see Francesco Veronese, "Contextualizing Marriage: Conjugality and Christian Life in Jonas of Orléans' *De institutione laicali*," *Early Medieval Europe* 23:4 (2015), 436-8.

¹² Rachel Stone, *Morality and Masculinity in the Carolingian Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 306-7.

¹³ As Veronese has pointed out, Jonas wrote the *speculum* with a predominant focus on male aristocrats as the intended audience. See Veronese, "Contextualizing Marriage," 444-6.

¹⁴ Jonas of Orléans, "De institutione laicali," *PL* 106: "genus, prudentia, divitiae, et pulchritudo."

women in general, claiming that it was right for women to be controlled by men because of their *levitas animae*—the fickleness of their minds/spirits.¹⁵ Writing almost two centuries later, Jonas of Orléans seems to have been more favorable towards women, though when he addressed them in the *De institutione laicali*, it is invariably in the context of their relationship with men.

For laywomen, marriage was key in Jonas's eyes. Drawing upon the Bible and the early Church Fathers to discuss the necessity of marriage as a way for the laity to avoid carnal sin, Jonas emphasized the common theme of marriage as a means of procreation, of continuing family lines. Marriage also formed a way for both men and women to avoid the dangers of sexual desire.¹⁶ Moreover, the tenth and eleventh centuries saw an increasing desire to delineate between legal wives and concubines, putting even more pressure on the idealization of the marital family.¹⁷ A woman's four attributes—ancestry, wealth, prudence, and beauty—could all be tied to this focus on marriage and the family. As Valerie Garver points out, aristocratic women served “to enhance the status of men as members of the elite” through affirming inter-familial connections, displaying a family's status through shows of opulence and generosity, overseeing the moral habits of their households, and acting as physical symbols

¹⁵ Isidore of Seville, *Etymologiae*, ed. W.M. Lindsay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1911), IX.vii: v.29-30.

¹⁶ A large portion of the second book of Jonas of Orléans's *De institutione laicali* focuses on secular marriage, its purpose, and the roles and appropriate actions of both husband and wife within the confines of a marital bond. See especially Book II, chapters I-XIII and XVI. Marriage reform was also one way in which Louis the Pious differentiated his court from Charlemagne's; Charlemagne had earned censure for his relationships with concubines towards the end of his reign. See Veronese, “Contextualizing Marriage,” 445.

¹⁷ James A. Brundage, “Concubinage and Marriage in Medieval Canon Law,” *Journal of Medieval History* 1:1 (1975), 6-7; Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001 [first edition 1997]), 74; Eric J. Goldberg, “*Regina nitens sanctissima* Hemme: Queen Emma (827-876), Bishop Witgar of Augsburg, and the Witgar-Belt,” in *Representations of Power in Medieval Germany 800-1500*, ed. Björn Weiler and Simon MacLean (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 60-70.

of their male kin's influence and authority.¹⁸ Garver correctly insists that aristocratic women were not passive bodies onto which men could project their needs and desires. Rather, women performed within the limits of their designated familial roles in such a way that they influenced how they were perceived by their male contemporaries and how those ideal roles, in turn, were being defined.

The prominent place of aristocratic secular women within their families appears in a variety of sources, but in the majority of cases this familial position takes on a private or sometimes even passive quality. In the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, for example, women appear as links between ruling families, politically important but not independent actors themselves. Most of the chronicle's recensions, for example, describe the prestigious marriage in 856 between Æthelwulf of Wessex and Judith of Flanders, daughter of Charles the Bald, as a way of heightening not only Æthelwulf's status as a successful and respected king, but also the status of his descendants through association with the Carolingian dynasty.¹⁹ The various scribes of the chronicle briefly covered Continental events, continually reaffirming the association created through the figure of Judith as daughter of a Carolingian king and wife of an Anglo-Saxon king. She appears again, for instance, in the entry for 886: "...Charles, king of the Franks, died. He was killed by a boar, and a year previously his brother, who had also held the western kingdom, had died....He was the son of that Charles whose daughter Æthelwulf, king of the West Saxons, had married."²⁰ The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* does not

¹⁸ Valerie L. Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009), 2.

¹⁹ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, ed. and trans. Dorothy Whitelock, David C. Douglas, and Susie I. Tucker (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1962), 43-4. Whitelock used recension C for the main body of her translation of the chronicle.

²⁰ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition, Volume 5, MS. C*, ed. Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2001), 64: "...Carl Francna cing 7 hine ofsloh an efor. 7 ane gere ær his broðor

make much more mention of Judith other than this, despite her importance as the connecting link in the alliance between the Carolingian and Anglo-Saxon ruling houses.²¹

Even women rulers such as Queen Seaxburh of Wessex (d. c. 674) or Æthelflæd (d. 918), Lady of the Mercians, who outlived their royal husbands and ruled alone—in Æthelflæd's case for several years—receive little attention in comparison to their male counterparts from the authors of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*.²² Æthelflæd is of particular interest. The so-called *Mercian Register*, which now exists in fragments incorporated into recensions B, C, and D of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, records briefly Æthelflæd's lordly activities: the construction of fortified boroughs in the Danelaw and directing military activities.²³ The depiction of the Lady of the Mercians in this local source is that of an active and successful ruler.²⁴ Later, however, Æthelflæd would be reimagined as a legendary figure. Writing in the early twelfth century, William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon both depict Æthelflæd as a warrior-heroine. William calls her a *virago*, a “terror of the enemy” (*pauor hostium*), and comments that “It is not possible to see whether luck or virtue had a better claim in making a woman the protector of her household men and the terror of others.”²⁵

forðferde se hæfde eac þæt westrice...se wæs ðæs Carles sunu þe Æðelwulf Wessexena cing hys dohtor hæfde him to cwene.” Eng. trans. Whitelock, 51.

²¹ For the alliance, see Michael J. Enright, “Charles the Bald and Æthelwulf of Wessex: The Alliance of 856 and Strategies of Royal Succession,” *Journal of Medieval History* 5:4 (1979), 291-302.

²² Stacy Klein has highlighted the fact that the Anglo-Saxon corpus features few contemporary queens but many biblical or ancient female rulers; *Ruling Women: Queenship and Gender in Anglo-Saxon Literature* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006), 4.

²³ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition Volume 5*, 74-6; Eng. trans. Whitelock, 64-6. See also A.E. Redgate, *Religion, Politics and Society in Britain, 800-1066* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 145.

²⁴ F.T. Wainwright, “The Chronology of the ‘Mercian Register,’” *English Historical Review* 60:238 (1945), 385-6.

²⁵ William, *Gesta Regum*, i. 198; revised translation: “Non discernas potiore fortuna an uirtute ut mulier uiros domesticos protegeret, alienos terreret.”

Henry of Huntingdon closely echoed William's language in the poem he dedicated to Æthelflæd, even as he lifted her to new (and historically incorrect) heights. Henry reconstructed her identity from a capable consort to that of a heroic virgin queen: "O virgin, the terror of men, conqueror of nature, worthy of a man's name...You were a mighty queen and king who won victories."²⁶ Henry's decision to portray Æthelflæd as a virgin ruler is an interesting one. Although he had access to at least one recension of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (but possibly not one that contained excerpts from the *Mercian Register*), Henry nevertheless mistakenly lists Æthelflæd as Æthelred of Mercia's daughter rather than as his wife.²⁷ It is impossible to know whether this was a genuine mistake on Henry's part, or his deliberate attempt to recast Æthelflæd as a virginal—and therefore asexual—figure.

Despite this quirk in Henry's account, what is notable is that he granted Æthelflæd the nature of a woman and the power of a man—she became both "queen and king." Henry's close contemporary, John of Worcester, likewise depicts Æthelflæd as a vigorous ruler, a key player in her brother Edward the Elder's reign.²⁸ John was probably drawing on a now-lost recension of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which may have included excerpts from the *Mercian Register*.²⁹ William, Henry, and John, writing about Æthelflæd centuries after her death, were perhaps more comfortable, in the context of the events of the early twelfth century, with acknowledging the presence of a woman wielding a type of power and influence normally associated with

²⁶ Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 308; revised translation: "O terror uirgo uirorum, victrix naturae, nomine digna uiri...Tu regina potens rexque trophea parans."

²⁷ William of Malmesbury, on the other hand, correctly records her marriage and the birth of her only daughter. See William, *Gesta Regum*, i. 198.

²⁸ *The Chronicle of John of Worcester Volume II: The Annals from 450 to 1066*, ed. R.R. Darlington and Patrick MacGurk, trans. Jennifer Bray and Patrick MacGurk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), ii. 378-80.

²⁹ Dorothy Whitelock, "Introduction," in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Translation*, xiii.

men. Æthelflaed's closer contemporaries, however, tended to ignore her. As F.T. Wainwright pointed out, the West Saxon version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* is silent regarding Æthelflaed, despite an otherwise highly detailed account of the early tenth century.³⁰ Wainwright and Stafford have suggested that Edward the Elder, Æthelflæd's brother and king, was responsible for her omission from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, as part of Edward's campaign to integrate Mercia more fully into his kingdom. Recognizing his sister's accomplishments as an independent ruler may have undermined his own control over the region, especially since Edward overthrew his sister's daughter, Ælfwynn, in 918 to become ruler of Mercia himself.³¹ Notably, even the *Mercian Register* does not memorialize Æthelflaed with the same creative flair as her twelfth-century admirers. She acted like any other male ruler, fortifying boroughs and ordering military raids. Her gender is not an apparent issue in the *Register*, whereas for William of Malmesbury and Henry of Huntingdon, the fact that she was a woman made her accomplishments all the more remarkable.

The relative reticence of contemporary sources regarding women like Seaxburh and Æthelflæd may also have been a result, at least in part, of the ambiguous position of an early medieval queen.³² There were no institutional structures for queens; in many cases "queen" simply meant the king's wife. She might benefit from her husband's status, she might even influence him privately in political or social matters, but the question of whether a queen

³⁰ F.T. Wainwright, "Æthelflaed, Lady of the Mercians," in *New Readings on Women in Old English Literature*, ed. Helen Damico and Alexandra Hennessey Olsen (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 44.

³¹ Wainwright, "Æthelflaed," 46-7; Pauline Stafford, "'The Annals of Æthelflaed': Annals, History and Politics in Early Tenth-Century England," in *Myth, Rulership, Church and Charters: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Brooks*, ed. Julia Barrow and Andrew Wareham (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008), 101-16.

³² Æthelflaed was never a crowned queen, but it is interesting that later sources interpreted her as such, or, at the very least, as wielding authority equal to a queen's.

herself had any clear right or source of independent authority remains murky.³³ Early medieval queens often held land in their own name, granting them an economic and political base of support. Yet textual representations of queens tended to focus on their roles in the palace, as if the palace itself were merely a larger household like those which lower-ranking aristocratic women were expected to help maintain.³⁴ For the Carolingian court, for example, Hincmar of Reims (d. 882) clearly separated the internal affairs of the palace from the external affairs of the kingdom. A queen, working in conjunction with the chamberlain, was expected to oversee the giving of gifts to men of the household, the ornamental garb of the king, and other affairs involved with running a large household. At the same time, Hincmar states that a queen had to be permitted by the king to deal with matters such as foreign emissaries that came to the palace—into the queen’s household. This separation of palace household management in theory freed the king to focus on wider affairs of the kingdom.³⁵ In short, a queen’s immediate duties were very similar to those of other noblewomen, simply writ large across a more extensive sphere of influence.

For both queens and lower-ranking aristocratic women, bearing male heirs was perhaps the most crucial duty and most effective source of influence and authority. Aristocratic mothers were clearly expected to hold some form of authority over their children, especially young children. Jonas of Orléans instructed both parents to oversee their children’s education and successful induction into a broader Christian society.³⁶ Women did this best through what has

³³ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, 192-5; Janet L. Nelson, “Early Medieval Rites of Queen-Making and the Shaping of Medieval Queenship,” in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne Duggan (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1997), 301-16.

³⁴ Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, 107.

³⁵ Hincmar of Reims, *De ordine palatii*, ed. Thomas Gross and Rudolf Schieffer, *MGH Fontes iuris Germanici antiqui in usum scholarum separatim editi* 3 (Hanover: Hahnsche, 1980), 72-6.

been termed the “performative instruction through outward display of appropriate behavior.”³⁷ Much of the Christian education which defined an aristocratic child’s upbringing centered on instructions for a moral life. Women, according to Garver, increasingly became the policers of the moral well-being of their households, not only through providing early education to their children, but also by serving as living exemplars of upright aristocratic behavior.³⁸ Although Garver emphasizes the potential impact this type of moral exemplarity could lend to female authority, it cannot be denied that most male authors still saw even this performative role as very private in nature. In his *Opus Caroli*, for example, Theodulf of Orléans denied women any right to a more public presence: “but she will be permitted prudence and to be an example of living well, but she will be permitted to do this neither in a church nor in an assembly nor in a synod, but rather she may reject in private the moral vices she notices in the household once she has the experience and maturity of long life.”³⁹ Perhaps because of this relegation to the household, motherhood took on special importance.

The few female “voices” that have survived from the Carolingian era corroborate this focus on the family, and the maternal in particular. Dhuoda, of course, is the most famous and prominent example.⁴⁰ Her *Liber Manualis* (commonly called *Handbook for William*) was not

³⁶ Jonas of Orléans, “De institutione laicali,” II.XIV.

³⁷ Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture*, 159.

³⁸ Ibid., 123-63

³⁹ Theodulf of Orléans, *Opus Caroli regis contra synodum*, *MGH Concilia* 2-1, ed. Ann Freeman (Hanover, 1998), 388-9: “...sed prudentiam et bene vivendi/ exempla permiserit, nec eas id facere in/ ecclesia neque in conventu neque in synodo,/ sed privatim longeve aetatis experientia/ et explosis propter aevi maturitatem/ vitiorum incentivis inter domesticos/ permiserit...”

⁴⁰ The scholarship on Dhuoda is extensive. For some recent approaches, see: M.A. Claussen “Fathers of Power and Mothers of Authority: Dhuoda and the Liber Manualis,” *French Historical Studies* 19:3 (1996), 785-809; Clella Jaffe, “Dhuoda’s ‘Handbook for William’ and the Mother’s Manual Tradition,” in *Listening to Their Voices: The Rhetorical Activities of Historical Women*, ed. Molly Meijer Wertheimer (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1997), 177-98; Thomas Noble, “Secular Sanctity: Forging an Ethos for the Carolingian

widely circulated, but it remains a key source as it is the only work written by a Carolingian woman to survive. Dhuoda presents a particularly interesting case for, in many ways, she was denied the normal opportunity for developing the maternal authority and influence over her two sons that she saw as her duty and prerogative. Although married to a powerful nobleman, Bernard of Septimania, Dhuoda saw her marital family fall from grace during the changing of regime between Louis the Pious and his rebellious son Charles the Bald. Her husband had opposed Charles' rebellion; when Charles eventually came to power in 840, Bernard had to send his older son William to the royal court as a hostage. Bernard apparently chose to take his younger son away from Dhuoda's care in Septimania while he was still an infant, perhaps in an effort to hide the child away and preserve one heir from Charles' clutches. Dhuoda's husband and oldest son met unhappy ends, the former being executed on the king's order a few years after Dhuoda was writing, and the latter dying in an attempt to avenge his father.⁴¹

Whether Dhuoda was alive to witness her husband's and son's deaths is unknown. What is known is how keenly she regretted her forced separation from her family. She wrote the *Handbook for William* as a type of textual replacement for what she perceived as the normal physical presence of a mother in her son's life: "I have observed that most women in this world take joy in their children. But, my son William, I see myself, Dhuoda, living separated and far away from you...I am happy, therefore, to address this little book to you, which is transcribed in my own name. It is for you to read as a kind of model. Even though I am absent in body,

Nobility," in *Lay Intellectuals in the Carolingian World*, ed. Patrick Wormald and Janet L. Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 8-36; Janet L. Nelson, "Organic Intellectuals in the Dark Ages?," *History Workshop Journal* 66:1 (2008), 1-17; Fernando Martin de Blassi, "El testimonio del Liber Manualis Dhuodane: educación y virtud doméstica en el alto Medievo," *Signum* 12:2 (2011), 36-52.

⁴¹ See Marcelle Thiébaux, "Introduction," in *Handbook for her Warrior Son: Liber Manualis*, ed. and trans. Marcelle Thiébaux, Cambridge Medieval Classics 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 35-7.

this little book will be present.”⁴² As a window into secular female authority and familial relationships, Dhuoda’s handbook is indispensable. Throughout the text Dhuoda reiterates her position as a mother—and thus, as an educator and moral compass, roles which aligned with Carolingian expectations of noblewomen.⁴³ Her continuous invocations of William’s immediate relationship with her—“oh my son,” “my son William”—serve to constantly remind her intended reader of the maternal authority granted to her. “I, Dhuoda, although of the frail sex and living unworthily among women who are worthy,” she asserts near the beginning of the text, “I am still your mother.”⁴⁴ According to the highly Christian ideals which she is determined to pass on to her son, William owes his mother respect and obedience.

He is also supposed to learn not only from Dhuoda’s example but from her written words about how to live the morally upright life of an aristocratic layman in the Christianized society of the Carolingian world. Using biblical references, Dhuoda’s greatest emphasis in this moral education is her son’s obligations to his family. According to Dhuoda, William’s highest secular superior ought to be his father, Bernard, rather than the emperor, whose worldly power holds an unarticulated but clear source of dangerous allure in the eyes of a devout Christian woman.⁴⁵ Inherent, too, in Dhuoda’s emphasis on family is her own immediate situation: physically separated, her family is in danger of having its emotional and experiential ties

⁴² Dhuoda, *Handbook* 42: “Cernens plurimas cum suis in saeculo gaudere proles, et me Dhuodanam, o fili Wilhelme, a te elongatam conspiciens procul...hoc opusculum ex nomine meo scriptum in tuam specie tenus formam legendi dirigo gaudens. Quod si absens sum corpore, iste praesens libellus...”

⁴³ Régine Le Jan, “L’Épouse du Comte du IXe au XIe siècle: Transformation d’un modèle et idéologie du pouvoir,” in *Femmes et pouvoirs des femmes à Byzance et en Occident (Vie-Xie siècles)*, ed. Stéphane Lebecq, Alain Dierkens, Régine Le Jan, Jean-Marie Sansterre (Villeneuve d’Ascq: Centre de recherche sur l’histoire de l’Europe du Nord-Ouest, 1999), 65-70.

⁴⁴ Dhuoda, *Handbook*, 46; translation slightly revised: “Dhuoda quanquam in fragili sexu, inter dignas vivens indigne, tamen genitrix tua.”

⁴⁵ Ibid., 88. As Rachel Stone points out, Dhuoda’s belief that William owed greater loyalty to his father than to the king would not have been appreciated by the king; Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, 212.

dissolved altogether. As wife and mother, it falls to her to attempt some type of reinforcing of traditional family bonds under unusual circumstances.

Although the *Handbook* addresses her family's situation specifically, Dhuoda did not intend for William to be the only audience. Indeed, she refers several times to other potential readers, usually other young men who would have been in William's circle of acquaintances at the royal court.⁴⁶ Because of this awareness of a wider audience, Dhuoda's text is particularly helpful for identifying broader trends and ideals in aristocratic education and Christian lordship which emerged during the cultural and religious reforms of the Carolingian era. For Dhuoda, Christian faith and secular lordship were deeply intertwined: "If you have fraternal compassion for your neighbors, if you devote yourself to hospitality, and tirelessly comfort the poor and grieved, you will have the spirit of piety. Persist in the fear and love inspired by loyalty to your father and your lord, to your great leaders and all your peers, and to those who are both senior and junior to you."⁴⁷ Appropriate piety held the key to the practice of moral and just secular power, and Dhuoda saw it as a mother's duty and right to advise her children in such matters.

In fact, aristocratic women acted as important participants in Carolingian religious and cultural reform. Although secular women were not permitted a voice in official church synods or councils, they proved to be key patrons of reformed religious institutions and active

⁴⁶ See, for example, the beginning of Book One of the *Handbook*. The fact that Dhuoda intended her text to be read by an audience beyond her son undermines the traditional scholarly assertion of the overwhelmingly private nature of the *Handbook*. See Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages: A Critical Study of Texts from Perpetua to Marguerite Porete* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 40-1; Suzanne Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500-900* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 90-5.

⁴⁷ Dhuoda, 136; translation slightly revised: "Si compassionem erga proximos habueris fraternam, et hospitalium sectator, pauperumque et moerentium consolator assiduus fueris, habebis spiritum pietatis. Si timorem et amorem, ex findelitis industria, circa genitorem et seniore tuum, vel circa optimates ducum et cunctos pares tuos, maiorumque sive et iuniorum..." See also Stone, *Morality and Masculinity*, 240-1.

transmitters of reformist ideals. Acts of religious patronage or extraordinary displays of piety earned lay noblewomen respect and praise from male contemporaries, sometimes even in the form of sanctification and hagiographical commemoration.⁴⁸ Even those women who did not achieve saintly recognition were still expected to promote the cause of the Church, especially to their social inferiors—the “weak” of medieval society, the poor, sick, widows, and orphans—mostly through charitable acts.⁴⁹ Historians have highlighted women’s patronage of religious houses as a particularly important means of potential influence, a trend which continued well beyond the twelfth century. Patronage of monasteries benefited noble families by establishing their reputations and creating important economic and social ties between the nobility and local religious institutions.⁵⁰ Monasteries also played a key role in developing and maintaining community memories of noble families.⁵¹ Religious patronage gave the nobility an opportunity to shape their local religious landscapes leading into the tenth and eleventh centuries. In exchange, monasteries could encourage their own form of spiritual asceticism as an expression of religiosity amongst the laity.⁵² Acts of private donations and charity were

⁴⁸ Jane Tibbetts Schulenburg, “Female Sanctity: Public and Private Roles, ca. 500-1000,” in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. Erler and Kowaleski, 105-7.

⁴⁹ Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture*, 123-5.

⁵⁰ Barbara Rosenwein’s seminal monograph on Cluny discusses at length the personal ties which donations to the monastery created and strengthened. See *To Be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: The Social Meaning of Cluny’s Property, 909-1049* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).

⁵¹ Patrick Geary argues in *Phantoms of Remembrance* that remembering the past became an exclusive practice of reformed monks in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Elisabeth van Houts, on the other hand, emphasizes the interdependent relationship between monks and the laity in the ways in which collective memories were constructed in texts and objects. Van Houts has identified the Ottonian queens of the tenth and eleventh centuries as particularly active preservers of the past and of family history. See Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 64; Elisabeth van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 13-14, 65-8.

⁵² Mary Skinner suggests that the Carolingian laity strove for ideals of sanctity preserved and expressed in monastic tradition; these ideals in turn shaped the spirituality and moral reasoning behind texts such as Jonas of Orléans’ *De institutione laicali* and Dhuoda’s *Handbook*. Mary S. Skinner, “Lay Sanctity and Church Reform in

meant to provide an example to the broader Christian society of what members of the elite should do to incorporate Christian ideals more directly into their way of life. These patterns of religious and monastic reform that emerged during the Carolingian renaissance gave secular aristocratic women an opportunity to maneuver within their expected familial roles to interact with wider cultural and social concerns.

Towards the end of the tenth century and the beginning of the eleventh, clerical authors were still attempting to confine secular female authority to a domestic sphere, while simultaneously publicizing particularly good deeds performed by high-ranking individual women in an attempt to provide exemplars for their peers. Even a sainted queen, a woman recognized by official clerical authorities as someone remarkable, had to follow the clearly delineated roles that were deemed acceptable for secular women. For example, two hagiographical texts concerning Matilda of Ringelheim (d. 968), wife of Henry I the Fowler, have survived. Each draws on both hagiographical and cultural traditions established in the early Middle Ages, though to different extents. The “Older Life of Mathilda,” written c. 973, relies heavily upon Venantius Fortunatus’ *Vita* of the Merovingian queen Radegund, sometimes lifting sections verbatim.⁵³ This copying was not due to a lack of creativity but rather to a desire to situate Mathilda within a traditional and recognized line of holy queens. Following the pattern set by Venantius’ *Vita*, the “Older Life” emphasizes Mathilda’s disdain for worldly affairs and her desire for religious isolation, describing her as more “Christ’s

Early Medieval France,” in *Lay Sanctity, Medieval and Modern: A Search for Models*, ed. Ann W. Astell (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2000), 32-8. See also Valerie Garver, “The Influence of Monastic Ideals upon Carolingian Conceptions of Childhood,” in *Childhood in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance: The Results of a Paradigm Shift in Mentality*, ed. Albrecht Classen, Klaus von Heusinger, and Christoph Schwarze (Boston: De Gruyter, 2005), 67-85.

⁵³ Sean Gilsdorf, “Introduction,” *Queenship and Sanctity: The Lives of Mathilda and the Epitaph of Adelheid*, ed. and trans. Sean Gilsdorf (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2004), 32.

partner” than “her husband’s companion.”⁵⁴ According to the anonymous author, Mathilda’s greatest actions were her founding and supporting of numerous monasteries and acts of extreme charity, going as far as to wash the limbs of poor women.⁵⁵ But the author constantly reiterates Matilda’s desire to avoid crowds and attention in these pious acts. As a result, although she is an exemplar of piety and compassionate authority, she is an exemplar only to her family and immediate household.⁵⁶ In the end, it is her private religious devotion which has made her a saint.

The second, later *Vita* for Mathilda, written after the turn of the eleventh century, presents a different picture of her sanctity. This version, addressed to her great-grandson Henry II and adjuring him to emulate the holy queen, focuses on Mathilda’s more worldly affairs rather than depicting her as trying to escape the secular world, as the “Older Life” had done.⁵⁷ Her outward role as a queen and her inner piety reach a clearer balance in this second *Vita*. The *Vita* shows Mathilda primarily in the roles of wife and mother. As a wife, she was responsible for tempering the king’s anger. She accomplished this task mostly, according to Henry I’s deathbed statement in the *Vita*, through the giving of advice and interceding on behalf of the weaker members of society so that the king would always be sure to rule justly.⁵⁸ This role as intercessor was well established in Carolingian and Ottonian courts, for both men and women.

⁵⁴ “*Vita Mathildis reginae antiquior*,” in *Die Lebensbeschreibungen der Königin Mathilde*, ed. Bernd Schütte, *MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum* 66, 118; Eng. trans. Gilsdorf, *Queenship and Sanctity*, 75: “plus participata Christo quam sociata coniugio.”

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 127-8.

⁵⁶ Towards the end of the *Vita*, the anonymous author of the “*Vita antiquior*” states clearly that he intends Mathilda to be an example to her family specifically. See *ibid.*, 139: “...exemplum boni operis posteris relinquens, soboles suas atque ex eis videns nepotes usque in quartam generationem...”

⁵⁷ “*Vita Mathildis reginae posterior*,” 145.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 159.

In fact, intercession was seen as an obligation for anyone holding a position in the king's court, to facilitate interactions between the king and his subjects.⁵⁹ But the king's wife was seen as a particularly effective enabler of intercession because of the intimate relationship shared between husband and wife.⁶⁰ This gave women such as Mathilda an important voice in their immediate political environment, but, although intercession formed one of the queen's main duties, it was dependent on her marital status rather than any independent source of authority.

Mathilda's role as a mother in the "Later Life," on the other hand, offered a more direct route to wider influence. She showed her subjects a kind of "motherly love" (*matris caritas*) that won her honor and respect.⁶¹ Likewise, "She supervised pilgrims, widows, and orphans like a mother with her children."⁶² This emphasis on maternal care connects Mathilda neatly to broader ideas and enactments of Christian charity and compassion while still keeping her within the well-worn boundaries of a domestic figure. In this way the queen could step onto a wider public stage without undermining popular concerns about the dangers of women in public. Her position of authority here remains safely rooted in the language of the emotional bonds that tied a family together: Mathilda simply chose to share those maternal emotions with a wider group of social inferiors. Thietmar of Merseburg, writing about a decade after the author of the "Later Life," offers a similar image of Mathilda ensconced within the boundaries of family ties. The chronicler emphasizes her usefulness to Henry I in that she bore him three sons. Thietmar highlights, too, Mathilda's generosity towards the poor and towards

⁵⁹ Sean Gilsdorf, *The Favor of Friends: Intercession and Aristocratic Politics in Carolingian and Ottonian Europe* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 90-5.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁶¹ "Vita Mathildis reginae posterior," 154.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 179; Eng. trans. Gilsdorf, *Queenship and Sanctity*, 111: "Peregrinis, viduis et pupillis preerat, sicut mater filiis."

monasteries, a generosity influenced by her desire to provide spiritual intercession for her husband and sons.⁶³

Mathilda's dependence on her role as a maternal figure has echoes in the lives of other early medieval queens. Odilo of Cluny memorialized her daughter-in-law, Empress Adelaide (d. 999), as a mother dedicated to guiding first her son and then her grandson (Otto II and III) in appropriate behavior for Christian kings.⁶⁴ In pre-Conquest England, Emma of Normandy, queen to both Æthelred the Unready (d. 1016) and Cnut (d. 1035) and mother of Edward the Confessor (d. 1066), commissioned the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, written sometime in 1042/3. Although the *Encomium* was not widely circulated, it provides a useful example of how influential and lingering the ideals of the previous centuries concerning the roles of secular women could be. When Emma first appears in a meaningful way in the text, it is as a mother first and foremost. Despite Cnut's attempts to court her because of her ties to the throne of England and the powerful rulers of Normandy, Emma refuses to marry him "unless he would affirm to her by oath, that he would never set up the son of any wife other than herself to rule after him, if it happened that God should give her a son by him"⁶⁵ Indeed, it is her maternal role which is constantly emphasized and which provides the surest route for her to influence

⁶³ Thietmar of Merseburg, "Chronicon," in *Die Chronik des Bischofs Thietmar von Merseburg und ihre Korveier Überarbeitung*, ed. Robert Holtzmann, *MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum: Nova series* 9 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1955), 15, 26-7.

⁶⁴ Odilo also tends to highlight Adelaide's almsgiving as her particular mode of sanctity; *Die Lebensbeschreibung der Kaiserin Adelheid*, ed. Herbert Paulhart, *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung* 20.2 (Graz and Cologne: Böhlau, 1962). David Warner had translated the epitaph; see "Epitaph of the August Lady, Adelheid," in *Medieval Hagiography: An Anthology*, ed. Thomas Head (New York: Routledge, 2001), 255-71.

⁶⁵ *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, ed. and trans. Alistair Campbell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998 [reprint]), 32-3: "nisi illi iusiurando affirmaret, quod numquam alterius coniugis filium post se regnare faceret nisi eius, si forte illi Deus ex eo filium dedisset."

political events.⁶⁶ Following Cnut's death and her own deposition from power, Emma flees to her sons on the Continent, using her maternal authority to encourage them to action.

Although she has a prominent presence in the *Encomium*, Emma's "power" is represented mainly through her influence over her sons by Cnut. As further support for this point, though the *Encomium* does not discuss her relationship with her children by Æthelred, recensions C, D, and E of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* highlight Emma's apparent un-maternal actions towards Edward the Confessor. Following his coronation, we are told, Edward took all of the land and treasures Emma had owned, because she had been too hard towards him.⁶⁷ The *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, written from a Danish perspective, never addresses the issue of Emma's relationships with her children from her first marriage, nor even the queen's abrupt shift of allegiance from Æthelred to the invading Cnut and her new focus on the success of her half-Danish son at the expense of the older Anglo-Saxon princes. Perhaps the author, or Emma herself in commissioning the work, recognized that she had not acted in a way entirely appropriate for an aristocratic mother.

As seen in the *Encomium*, by the middle of the eleventh century an aristocratic woman's position in her family was still the major deciding factor in representations of her influence and authority. The private bonds between wives and husbands, and mothers and sons, defined the boundaries of a woman's agency. She was expected to work for the betterment of her family, both in terms of secular status and spiritual well-being. She served as a bridge between the socially weak and the powerful through acts of charity and intercession, which drew on culturally acceptable conceptions of maternal compassion and nurturing. These

⁶⁶ Clare A. Lees and Gillian R. Overing, *Double Agents: Women and Clerical Culture in Anglo-Saxon England* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2009), 121-3.

⁶⁷ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, 116; Eng. trans. Whitelock, 106-7.

boundaries did not disappear under the pressure of social and religious reforms in the eleventh century. They continued to be dominant influences in not only how female authority was represented by male clerical authors but also in how women portrayed or spoke about their own actions. But, as we shall see, the reforms of the late eleventh and early twelfth century helped to draw anew these traditional boundaries in patterns of secular female authority.

Enlisting “Princes” of the World: Secular Nobility as Religious Reformers

Around the turn of the twelfth century, Clementia of Burgundy, countess of Flanders, sent a letter to Abbot Hugh of Cluny regarding her desire to reform a local monastery.⁶⁸ In the letter, the countess declares, “Indeed, no work would be more valued by our creator than the work we do here, in a place that up to this point was clearly a church of the wicked, that as a result of heavenly regard must become a glorious lodging for the servants of God...I will not turn aside from such holy work and such a pious intention as long as I live.”⁶⁹ This same woman who professed such pious intentions in this letter of 1099/1100 had, only a year or two earlier, threatened to unleash her wrath upon the clerics of Thérouanne for an unspecified wrong.⁷⁰ These two letters present a clear tension in Clementia’s interactions with the Church. In the first, she appears as a proponent of reform; in the second, she is an angry lord, capable of wreaking her own vengeance against local clergy. This tension in Clementia’s attitude and approach towards the ecclesiastical sphere reveals one of the great contradictions of the

⁶⁸ Karen S. Nicholas, “Countesses as Rulers in Flanders,” in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 117-19.

⁶⁹ “Epistolae diversorum ad S. Hugonem et S. Petri Damiani,” *PL* 159, no. 12, 939C: “Nullum enim opus gratius Creatori nostro fore existimo quam ut hic operam demus, quatenus locus, qui huc usque plane erat ecclesia malignantium, ex superni respectus immutatione fiat gloriosa habitatio Deo servientium...a tam sancto opere, tamque pia intentione, quoad vixero, unquam declinabo.”

⁷⁰ “Epistolae Lamberti episcopi Atrebatensis et aliorum ad ipsum,” *PL* 162, no. 45, 664D-65A.

eleventh-century reform movement. Ecclesiastical reform grew out of the increasing desire to liberate the Latin Church from secular influence, even as the success of the reform depended in large part on powerful members of the laity for promoting and enforcing reformist ideals.⁷¹ How, then, could this problem be resolved?

Clerical reformers seemed well aware of the necessity for relying upon secular authority. Some of the most active and progressive reformers corresponded frequently with members of the laity, identifying nobles of all ranks as potential allies in the reform movement. To name just a few, Peter Damian, Ivo of Chartres, Anselm of Canterbury, Hildebert of Lavardin, and Popes Gregory VII, Urban II, and Paschal II all sent out numerous calls for aid to the secular aristocracy, exhorting laymen and women across Europe to join their cause. In 1065/6, for instance, Henry IV received a letter from Peter Damian, who used Henry's coming of age as an opportune moment to remind the young king that royal and sacerdotal powers were meant to work in unity with each other. According to Peter, the king bore the sword that would protect the Church; the Church, in return, prayed for the king and his people.⁷² In some cases clerical reformers successfully convinced secular lords of the need for reform. For example, Henry I of England launched a strict campaign against clerical marriage in 1105, instituting fines and prison sentences for married clergymen who refused to give up their wives.⁷³ Sancho I of Aragon and Richard of Capua both offered themselves to Gregory VII as

⁷¹ John Howe, "The Nobility's Reform of the Medieval Church," *American Historical Review* 93:2 (1998), 328.

⁷² Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 120, iii. 385-92.

⁷³ Eadmer, *Historia*, 141-4. See also Henry Mayr-Harting, *Religion, Politics and Society in Britain 1066-1272* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education, 2011), 72; and Norman F. Cantor, *Church, Kingship, and Lay Investiture in England 1089-1135* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), 162-6.

milites s. Petri, promoting an acknowledgement of papal sovereignty over Aragon and Aversa and Capua, respectively.⁷⁴

The leaders of the Latin Church thus depended greatly on the support of powerful secular lords and their families, but lay participation in ecclesiastical affairs nevertheless presented a problem for the ecclesiastical hierarchy. Reformers believed that secular lords exerted too much authority and influence over their local religious institutions, particularly in the forms of lay investiture, proprietary churches, and the collection of tithes and revenues from religious houses. Contemporary sources praise those clerics who attempted to limit interference by the laity—or even to limit the very presence of laypeople in sacred spaces. For example, Herman of Tournai commended Odo, the abbot of St. Martin’s, for the strict discipline he introduced to the monastery, barring all laymen, even the “exceedingly powerful castellan of the city,” from the cloister.⁷⁵ The local lay authorities had been used to holding trials in the abbey’s cloister. By denying them entrance to this inner sanctuary, Odo upheld and emphasized the sacred nature of the space and deprived the local laity of what was, to Herman and Odo both, unacceptable interference in the workings of the abbey.⁷⁶ Odo notably later became the bishop of Cambrai, but he was denied possession of his see in 1105 by Henry IV

⁷⁴ Sancho became a papal vassal of Gregory VII in 1068; Richard of Capua in 1073, possibly as a way to take advantage of the breakdown of the relationship between Gregory and Robert Guiscard. See Joseph F. O’Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 202; G.A. Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (New York, Longman Publishing, 2000), 199; Maureen Miller, “Italy in the Long Twelfth Century: Ecclesiastical Reform and the Legitimization of a New Political Order, 1059-1183,” in *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and John van Engen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 120-4. Robinson points out that in Gregory VII’s eyes, and in the eyes of his supporters, the laity who held political clout were all meant to be the instruments—working out in the real world—of the Roman papacy, as the seat of religious authority. I.S. Robinson, “Gregory VII and the Soldiers of Christ,” *History* 58:193 (1973), 169-92.

⁷⁵ Herman of Tournai, *Liber*, 38: “potentissimum eiusdem urbis castellanum.” Eng. trans. Lynn H. Nelson, *The Restoration of the Monastery of Saint Martin of Tournai* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 16; translation slightly revised.

⁷⁶ Herman of Tournai, *Liber*, 38.

for refusing to accept investiture at the hands of the emperor and again by Henry V in 1110. Odo's continued refusal to participate in lay investiture notably serves as an exemplar of clerical reformers' rejection of what had been traditional secular influence over important church affairs. Herman admired Odo's stance against such powerful secular lords, saying, "There was nothing that Odo was scared of less than the unjust anger of the rich and powerful, and he used to say that it was a great dishonor for a man of learning to stray even slightly from the path of rectitude for the favor or gratitude of princes."⁷⁷

In this atmosphere of an increasing desire to be liberated from secular influence, the lay aristocracy found their approved methods of participation in ecclesiastical matters severely curtailed. Acts of Christian piety had formed a key element of secular lordship since the Carolingian renaissance, with roots going even further back. Nobles won prestige and support from local religious institutions through frequent displays of religious devotion, but with the eleventh-century reform the boundaries of lay religiosity were being more strictly delineated. Religious patronage continued to be seen as the special duty—even the special prerogative—of the lay nobility. In the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, for example, Orderic Vitalis has Thierry, abbot of Saint-Évroul, list the duties expected of a monk. In his speech, Thierry explicates the differences between a monk and a layman: "...you cannot scatter generous alms to feed the poor when you yourselves have no worldly wealth, nor build great churches like kings and other princes of the world when you live enclosed in monastic seclusion and have no earthly power."⁷⁸ Later in the *Historia*, Orderic again emphasizes the importance of the support the

⁷⁷ Herman of Tournai, *Liber*, 38: "Nichil enim minus quam iniustas divitum vel potentium iras pertimescebat magnumque dedecus viri sapientis esse dicebat, si pro favore vel gratia principum vel modicum a tramite rectitudinis declinet." Eng. trans. Nelson, *Restoration*, 16-17; translation slightly revised.

⁷⁸ OV, ii. 52: "...largis sustentare pauperes eleemosinis non potestis, quoniam terrenas opes non habetis; nec ingentia templa sicuti reges alique potentes saeculi faciunt erigere potestis, qui regularibus claustris septi omnique potestate priuati estis..."

laity could provide for the Church, declaring it the duty of “princes of the world” to make gifts to churches and to support monks and the impoverished.⁷⁹ Generous donations of material goods, funds, and land therefore formed the foundation of lay religiosity.

Even powerful rulers noted especially for their piety were sorted into the fundamental category of patron, a role that allowed for the distancing of the lay donor from the physical religious space. William the Conqueror, hailed by some Anglo-Norman chroniclers as the restorer of the English Church to proper norms, was described by William of Malmesbury as a “practicing Christian *as far as a layman could be* [emphasis mine], to the extent of attending mass every day and every day hearing vespers and matins. He built two monasteries, one in England and one in Normandy.”⁸⁰ While William is in general more well known for his military and administrative exploits rather than his religious zeal, this limited definition of acceptable secular religiosity is echoed even in the description of a ruler like Stephen of Hungary, who was canonized for his efforts to convert his kingdom to Christianity. Herman of Reichenau summed up Stephen’s many religious efforts following his conversion with the laconic statement “he had built many churches and bishoprics.”⁸¹ The construction of such religious infrastructure would be of great importance for encouraging the incorporation of the kingdom of Hungary into Latin Christendom, but the picture of lay devotional practices even from a saintly king demonstrates a relatively narrow definition of “proper” lay involvement in church affairs.

⁷⁹ OV, iii. 262.

⁸⁰ William, *Gesta Regum*, i. 492-3: “Religionem Christianam, quantum secularis poterat, ita frequentabat ut cotidie missae assisteret, cotidie uestertinos et matutinos himnos audiret. Monasteria, unum in Anglia, alterum in Normannia construxit.” See also Orderic’s similar statement about William’s monastic foundations: OV, ii. 10.

⁸¹ Herman of Reichenau, “Chronicon,” *MGH Scriptores* 5, ed. Georg Pertz (Stuttgart, 1844), 123: “...ecclesiasque multas et episcopatus construxisset.”

If aristocratic male lords found themselves under new pressure from ecclesiastical reformers to limit the range of actions they could take regarding religious affairs, their female counterparts were equally and, in some ways, more bound by changing expectations of secular-religious interactions. Female lords could and did donate to religious institutions, but there were many ecclesiastical spaces and rituals which were forbidden to women simply because of their sex.⁸² The perception that the safest and most appropriate place for a noble laywoman was within the family household remained a dominant motif during the eleventh-century reform movement. Yet even this traditional secular female arena was being reconfigured by reforming ideals. One of the major issues of the reform was the institution of marriage—and not only of the banning of clerical marriage. Many reformers focused on marriage among the laity, particularly through the passage of conciliar decrees regarding permissible degrees of consanguinity and the processes couples needed to follow in order to marry lawfully in the eyes of the Church. The Council of Rouen in 1072, for example, forbade secret marriages. Instead, husband and wife should be united in a church by a priest—but only after consanguinity within seven degrees of relation had been ruled out through careful investigation of lineage.⁸³ Ivo of Chartres emerged as a particularly fervent supporter of marriage reform, clashing frequently with Philip of France over his adulterous and bigamous relationship with Bertrade de Montfort.⁸⁴ He also chastised Adela of Blois for trying to intercede on behalf of

⁸² Hildebert of Lavardin, for example, made explicit reference to Matilda of Scotland's gift of gold candelabra as an appropriate stand-in for her presence, since she herself could not administer the Eucharist as a woman. See "Ven. Hildeberti Epistolae," *PL* 171, no. 9, 160C-162A. For an overview of women's exclusion from sacred space, see Penny Schine Gold, *The Lady and the Virgin: Image, Attitude and Experience in Twelfth-Century France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 76-110.

⁸³ OV, ii. 288. For the issue of clandestine marriage in canon law, see Brundage, "Concubinage and Marriage," 7-11.

⁸⁴ OV, iv. 260-2; Christof Rolker, *Canon Law and the Letters of Ivo of Chartres* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 16, 234-6.

another adulterous couple, Adela's cousin Adelaide and William of Breteuil.⁸⁵ Like reforms focusing on clerical marriage and lay investiture, the new rules regarding marriage aimed to impose better moral habits for a more perfect Christian society. Marriage reform also had the intended effect of bringing what had been a mostly secular institution under the ordinances of the Church.⁸⁶

The fear of sexual pollution had a particularly strong impact on these marriage reforms. Sexual intercourse and physical feelings of lust were unquestioningly condemned by the Latin Church. At the same time, one of an aristocratic woman's most important duties—for many, *the* most important—was to provide her husband with an heir. Monogamous marriage had presented the only feasible solution for the laity for most of the Christian tradition. Despite the acceptance and even promotion of marriage, married women still found themselves caught by negative views of their own physical urges. They were expected to abhor the sexual act itself. Indeed, the actions of women within marriage came under close scrutiny during the reform movement. Like Jonas of Orléans a few generations earlier, Guibert of Nogent lamented the idea of sexual proclivity in marriage: “God, you know how difficult, indeed almost impossible, it would be for the chastity of former days to be preserved among women today...both the fact of and the appearance of matronly restraint has evaporated.”⁸⁷ Guibert praised his own mother because “she cherished her widowhood as if she had always shrunk from the unbearable duties

⁸⁵ LoPrete suggests Adela tried to intercede for Adelaide for political reasons. For Ivo's letter, see Ivo of Chartres, *Correspondance*, ed. Jean Leclercq (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1949), no. 5, 14-16. For Kimberly LoPrete's discussion of Adela's motivations, see *Adela of Blois: Countess and Lord (c. 1067-1137)* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007), 135.

⁸⁶ James Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 179-99.

⁸⁷ Guibert of Nogent, *Autobiographie*, ed. Edmond-René Labande (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1981), 78: “Deus, tu scis quam difficile, imo quam nullomodo pene in foeminis hujus temporis id servaretur, cum pudicitia in illis tanta diebus extiterit...et res et species custodiae matronalis extabuit.”

of the marriage bed.”⁸⁸ For many women, a monastic vow of virginity must have seemed like the better option to the inescapable dangers of the marital bed. But for aristocratic laywomen, taking the veil was often not an option because of political and familial pressures.

Growing ecclesiastical scrutiny of secular family life intersected with shifts in conceptions of lay lordship, especially in the representations of secular female authority which emerged during the reform. The Church was no stranger to using women as transmitters of religious reform and practice, particularly to the lower classes of society, but previously secular women appear to have been ideally restricted to reforming their immediate households. The reform of the late eleventh century changed that. Beginning c. 1060-1070, proponents of the papal reform in particular found themselves depending to a great extent on immediate lay support, perhaps even more so than did clerical reformers of the Carolingian era. The reformers did not turn just to kings, princes, counts, and other male lords. Instead, they enlisted the help of secular noblewomen so vigorously that by the Synod of Worms in 1076 imperial bishops envisaged a “new senate of women.”⁸⁹

Aristocratic noblewomen across Western Europe became deeply involved in issues of ecclesiastical reform, both as supporters and opponents. Their actions varied greatly. Sometime between 1070 and 1089, Queen Margaret of Scotland (later sainted in 1250) cooperated with Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury to reform the church of the Holy Trinity in Dunfermline.⁹⁰ During her time as regent, Empress Agnes earned the condemnation of reformers by supporting

⁸⁸ Guibert of Nogent, *Autobiographie*, 146: “ita viduitatem coluit, ac si maritalia semper debiti cubilis impatiens horruisset.”

⁸⁹ “Absageschreiben der deutschen Bischöfe an Gregor VII,” in *Die Briefe Heinrichs IV*, ed. Carl Erdmann, *Deutsches Mittelalter 1* (Leipzig: Hierseemann, 1937), 66.

⁹⁰ Lanfranc of Canterbury, *Letters*, ed. and trans. Helen Clover and Margaret Gibson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 161; Catherine Keene, *Saint Margaret, Queen of the Scots: A Life in Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 71.

the imperial anti-pope, Cadalus of Parma, although later she became a staunch friend of Cadalus's rival, Gregory VII.⁹¹ Peter Damian wrote to Adelaide of Turin in 1064, instructing her to be "a virago of the Lord" by renouncing those married priests and their "prostitute" wives practicing within her counties in northern Italy.⁹² In addition to her role in the Investiture Contest, Matilda of Tuscany interceded on behalf of the exiled Anselm of Canterbury with Pope Paschal II, asking the pope to continue to support Anselm in his fight with the English king over investiture.⁹³ Adela of Blois, on the other hand, intervened on Anselm's behalf with her royal brother, Henry I.⁹⁴ Henry's wife and queen, Matilda of Scotland, became deeply involved in the English Investiture Contest, exchanging multiple letters with Anselm and Paschal during the early years of her reign.⁹⁵ These are only a few brief—and certainly not the most colorful or interesting—examples of women's actions in the reform movement. The important point to recognize when looking at each of these varied instances is that the women involved were motivated by the intertwined threads of religious piety and worldly power, the hallmarks of the secular Christian lordship models that they had inherited.

Gregory VII's episcopal register provides a particularly illuminating body of evidence for exploring the combination of tradition and innovation that marked female lords' participation in the reform movement. Gregory seems to have been especially cognizant of the

⁹¹ Bonizo of Sutri, "Liber ad amicum," *MGH Lib. de lite*, i. 594-5; Robinson, *Henry IV*, 42-4.

⁹² Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 114, 295-306.

⁹³ Anselm, *Opera*, no. 350, v. 289-90. Anselm later sent Matilda a treatise on devotion to the Virgin Mary in response to her request; Benedicta Ward, "Anselm of Canterbury: A Monastic Scholar," in *Signs and Wonders: Saints, Miracles and Prayers from the 4th Century to the 14th* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 1992 [originally published 1973/90]), 13.

⁹⁴ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Pontificum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. M. Winterbottom with R.M. Thomson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), 182-4.

⁹⁵ Matilda's participation in the conflict forms a case-study in Chapter Three, below, 160-4.

potential cultural and political authority and influence that lay within the grasp of noblewomen. The pope was not the only clerical reformer to work directly with secular women or to be concerned about their roles in Latin Christendom, but thanks to the survival of his register, we have access to a rich correspondence exchanged with aristocratic women throughout Western Europe.⁹⁶ Unfortunately, in many cases the letters that women wrote to Gregory have not survived, but the register does preserve his responses to their reports or queries. Therefore, his letters to and concerning secular noblewomen can be used to reveal the ways in which the reform itself offered new routes for the enactment of female authority. As the study of this material reveals, through his letters Gregory appealed to “traditional” forms of female agency—intercession, familial obligation, and religious patronage—in order to encourage secular noblewomen to act for the spiritual benefit of Latin Christendom in new and often radical ways.

Gregory’s alliance with one female lord, Matilda, countess of Tuscany, is famous and rightly so.⁹⁷ Gregory depended on Matilda more than any other secular ruler for supporting his papacy and reformist efforts, especially in Italy. A number of his letters to Matilda (often co-addressed to her mother, Beatrice) survive from the early years of his pontificate, up to the pope’s great if temporary reconciliation with Henry IV at Canossa in early 1077. The countess

⁹⁶ Gregory’s is the only papal register to survive from this period. Among the letters preserved in the register, over twenty are addressed directly to secular noblewomen, sometimes in conjunction with their husbands but more often just to the women themselves. Gregory makes significant reference to aristocratic female lords in almost thirty other letters written to male correspondents (both clerical and lay).

⁹⁷ Nora Duff, *Matilda of Tuscany: La Gran Donna d’Italia* (London: Methuen and Co, 1909); McNamara and Wemple, “The Power of Women Through the Family,” 95-7; Patrick Healy, “*Merito nominetur virago*: Matilda of Tuscany in the polemics of the Investiture Conflict,” in *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women 4: Victims or Viragos?*, eds. Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 49-56; David J. Hay, *The Military Leadership of Matilda of Canossa 1046-1115* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008); Thomas Bisson, *The Crisis of the Twelfth Century: Power, Lordship, and the Origins of European Government* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 123-5.

was involved in a wide range of ecclesiastical and political activities. With Gregory's urging, Matilda worked against simoniacal bishops in Lombardy; participated in councils in Rome; provided protection for those traveling to and from the papal court; and settled local disputes between bishops and lower-ranking lords.⁹⁸ Gregory also requested her aid for his "proto-crusade" of 1074 and fully expected her to travel with the gathered forces to "distant parts."⁹⁹ Moreover, Gregory kept her abreast of political and social concerns that exercised him more generally. He informed her of certain key episcopal elections, such as Anselm II's appointment as bishop of Lucca, or judgments he had passed concerning local lords, including a case of uncanonical marriage.¹⁰⁰

Matilda's involvement in reform efforts cost her dearly. Henry's invasion force defeated her troops at the battle of Volta Mantovana in October 1080. The following year, Henry IV found her guilty of treason, releasing her vassals from their oaths of fealty.¹⁰¹ Despite this setback, Matilda continued to fight for the reform papacy long after Gregory had died. Frutolf of Michelsburg tells us that Matilda assisted in raising Abbot Desiderius of Montecassino to the papal throne as Victor III.¹⁰² Over the course of the later 1080s and early 1090s, Matilda met imperial forces in battle several times. In 1092, she decisively defeated Henry IV's army near Canossa; the following year, she helped Henry's rebellious son, Conrad,

⁹⁸ See, for example, Gregory VII, *Register*, nos. I.11, i.17-19; I.40, i.62-3; I.50, i. 76-7; I.77, i. 109-11.

⁹⁹ Gregory VII, *Epistolae Vagantes*, ed. H.E.J. Cowdrey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), no. 5, 10-12. For Gregory's "proto-crusade," see H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII's 'crusading' plans of 1074," in *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem*, ed. B.Z. Kedar et al (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1982), 27-40.

¹⁰⁰ Gregory VII, *Register*, nos. I.11, i. 17-19; II.9, i. 138-40.

¹⁰¹ Patrick Healy, "*Merito nominetur virago*," 50.

¹⁰² Frutolf, *Chronik*, 94.

become king of Italy.¹⁰³ Three years later, at the Council of Piacenza, Matilda convinced Empress Eupraxia to denounce Henry IV as a sexual pervert.¹⁰⁴ Matilda's biographer, Donizo of Canossa, even claims that the countess directed the rescue mission which freed Eupraxia from imprisonment in Verona.¹⁰⁵ The countess allied with a French crusader army in 1097 to restore Urban II to Rome, then held by the anti-pope, Guibert of Ravenna.¹⁰⁶ Matilda spent the first decade of the twelfth century reestablishing her rule over cities that had rebelled against her, following her break with Henry IV in the early 1080s.¹⁰⁷ In short, the countess of Tuscany proved zealous in her dedication to the reform papacy and in reinforcing her own power in Italy.

It is no wonder, then, that Gregory VII turned to Matilda as his "almost inseparable companion" (*pene comes individua*).¹⁰⁸ Gregory constantly referred to her as a friend, political ally, and spiritual daughter in his correspondence with other lords and ecclesiastical leaders. Most notably, he consistently cast her in the traditional role of intercessor. In September 1073, for instance, when instructing Anselm of Lucca to reject the king's attempt to invest him, Gregory asserted that Matilda was working to mediate with the king on the papacy's behalf in order to resolve the issue.¹⁰⁹ He again emphasized Matilda's role as intercessor in his letters to

¹⁰³ Valerie Eads, "The Last Italian Expedition of Henry IV: Re-reading the *Vita Mathildis* of Donizone of Canossa," *Journal of Medieval Military History* 8 (2010), 28-30.

¹⁰⁴ Hay, *Military Leadership of Matilda of Canossa*, 65.

¹⁰⁵ *V. Mathildis*, 180.

¹⁰⁶ Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1913), 148.

¹⁰⁷ Hay, *Military Leadership of Matilda of Canossa*, 160-80.

¹⁰⁸ Lampert of Hersfeld, "Annales," in *Opera*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, *MGH Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum* 38 (Hanover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1894), 288.

¹⁰⁹ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. I.21, i. 34-5.

the Milanese knight Erlembald Cotta, writing, “Besides, do not greatly fear the bishops trying to support your enemy, since Beatrice and her daughter Matilda altogether favor the Roman church and with the king’s greatest lords are working to unite our mind with the king’s.”¹¹⁰ Matilda’s involvement in the affairs of the Patarene movement is particularly interesting, considering the role the Patarnes played in the initial break between Gregory and Henry IV.¹¹¹ In a similar vein, Gregory assured the king himself that “Our daughters who are most faithful to you, Countess Beatrice and Matilda her daughter, gladdened us in no small amount by writing to us of your friendship and sincere love, which we gladly accepted.”¹¹² Henry, in return, acknowledged Matilda and Beatrice’s advantageous positions as mediators for the pope. He also took care to mention his own ties of kinship to the women, whom he called aunt and cousin.¹¹³

Matilda’s prominence in Gregory’s political maneuvering can be attributed in great part to her position in Italy. Decades earlier, Emperor Henry III of Germany had created a strong

¹¹⁰ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. I.26, i. 43: “Episcopos preterea inimicum vestrum fulcire conantes non multum metuatis, cum Beatrix ac filia eius Mathildis Romane ecclesie penitus faventes cum quibusdam maximis regni proceribus laborent nostrum atque regis animum firmiter unire.” Eng. trans. Cowdrey, 31; translation slightly revised.

¹¹¹ The Patarnes of Milan were fervent reformers, determined to cleanse their city of the sins of clerical marriage and simony. They found an ally in Gregory VII, an alliance which in itself signaled a shift in Milanese political culture. Before the Patarnes gained influence, Milan had looked to its own archbishop rather than to Rome for ecclesiastical leadership. By turning to Gregory, the Patarnes took the first important step of realigning the city’s religious loyalties. For the history and impact of the Patarnes movement, see H.E.J. Cowdrey, “The Papacy, the Patarnes and the Church of Milan,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 18 (1968), 25-48; Henry Teunis, “The Failure of the Patarnes Movement,” *Journal of Medieval History* 5:3 (1979), 177-84; Helmut Gritsch, “Die Pataria von Mailand (1057-1075),” *Innsbrucker historische Studien* 3 (1980), 7-42; John A. Dempsey, “From Holy War to Patient Endurance: Henry IV, Matilda of Tuscany, and the Evolution of Bonizo of Sutri’s Response to Heretical Princes,” in *War and Peace: Critical Issues in European Societies and Literature, 800-1800*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Nadia Margolis (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2011), 217-52.

¹¹² Gregory VII, *Register*, no. II.30, i. 164: “Filie quoque nostre, fidelissime vestre, Beatrix comitissa et filia eius Mathildis, non modice nos letificaverunt scribentes nobis de amicitia et sincera dilectione vestra, quod libentissime accepimus.”

¹¹³ Henry IV, *Briefe Heinrichs IV*, no. 7, 10-11.

tie between the imperial and papal courts through his actions at the 1046 Synod of Sutri. Several popes, including the first reformer pope Leo IX (d. 1054), depended on imperial influence to promote religious reform throughout Germany and Italy. When Henry III died unexpectedly in 1056, his son and heir was still a child. Henry IV's minority was marked by two unpopular regencies (first under his mother, Empress Agnes, and then under Archbishop Anno of Cologne) and by the German princes' rising dissatisfaction with the Salian dynasty.¹¹⁴ As the German monarchy weakened under these strains, the popes turned instead to the growing might of Italian lords, especially the nexus joining Tuscany and Lorraine, forged through Beatrice of Tuscany's second marriage to Duke Godfrey III of Lower Lorraine.¹¹⁵ Matilda, as the only surviving heir to the Tuscan line, was certainly born into a privileged position. Indeed, scholars have tended to emphasize the relative rarity of a female inheritor of such a prominent noble family, citing the circumstances of her birth and position as countess in her own right as the main reason for Gregory's reliance on a woman.¹¹⁶

While the importance of Matilda's social status should not be underestimated, the idea that her involvement in political and ecclesiastical affairs—and Gregory's reliance on her—was particularly unusual needs to be reconsidered. Considering the reform party's concerns with purity and sexuality, Gregory could have decided that he had every reason to avoid fraternizing with such a powerful laywoman. Indeed, his emphasis on Matilda's ability to act independently as an agent of mediation between the papal and imperial courts contrasts sharply with other contemporary verdicts. Some contemporary historians tried to force Matilda into

¹¹⁴ Horst Fuhrmann, *Germany in the High Middle Ages c. 1050-1200*, trans. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 43-55; Robinson, *Henry IV*, 28-54.

¹¹⁵ Robinson, *Henry IV*, 24-6; Bisson, *Crisis of Power of the Twelfth Century*, 122-5.

¹¹⁶ Hay, *Military Leadership of Matilda of Canossa*, 7-9; McNamara and Wemple, "The Power of Women through the Family," 95.

the acceptable mold of a dutiful wife, keeping a watchful eye on her husbands' spiritual well-being. Bernold of St. Blasien did exactly this in his *Chronicon*. A supporter of the Gregorian cause, Bernold evinces a high opinion of Matilda in the chronicle, yet he casts her in the supporting role of wife, a role hearkening back to earlier models of female agency. Specifically, Bernold described Matilda's troubled second marriage to the much-younger Welf V of Bavaria in terms of conjugal endearment and advice: "Welf, duke of Italy, suffered conflagrations and depredations from King Henry, who entered Lombardy in this year [1090]; but at the encouragement of his dearest wife, the lady Matilda, he strove manfully to resist that same Henry and to persist in his faithfulness towards St. Peter."¹¹⁷ Gregory, on the other hand, tended to ignore Matilda's marriage in lieu of discussing her role as a very visible intercessor.

Moreover, Gregory's register, rather than portraying Matilda as a singular entity, illustrates that the countess was part of a surprisingly wide network of lay noblewomen whom Gregory attempted to muster to the cause of the reform movement. This network consisted of powerful female lords around the empire, including, in addition to Beatrice and Matilda, women such as Empress Agnes of Poitou and Marchioness Adelaide of Turin. The network also extended outside imperial territory. Further afield, for example, Gregory trusted Matilda of Flanders to encourage her husband, William the Conqueror, to obey the leaders of the Church like a dutiful son.¹¹⁸ He instructed Countess Adela of Flanders to replace priests guilty of fornication with those who led chaste lives.¹¹⁹ Notably, the letters sent to these two women

¹¹⁷ Bernold of St. Blasien, "Chronicon," in *Annales et chronica aevi Salici*, ed. Georg Pertz, *MGH Scriptores* 5, 450: "Welfo dux Italiae multa incendia et depraedationes a Heinricho rege hoc in anno Longobardiam ingresso patitur; sed adhortatu domnae Mathildis suae karissimae coniugis eidem Heinricho resistere, et in fidelitate sancti Petri persistere viriliter contendit."

¹¹⁸ Gregory VII, *Register*, nos. I.71, i. 102-3; VII.26, ii. 507.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, no. IV.10, i. 309.

were paired with letters sent to their male kin at the same time.¹²⁰ By addressing, respectively, husband and wife and mother and son in separate correspondence, Gregory was able to convey the message that both the leading male and female lords in those areas needed to act upon the needs of the reform. In this way, Matilda and William, and Adela and her son, Robert, were cast as partners working in tandem in Gregory's grand scheme of restoring the Latin Church. This sense of partnership finds echoes in his letters of pastoral care to two successive queens of Hungary, Judith and Adelaide. Gregory offered them spiritual succor and entreated them to act as a civilizing force for the "rough and unknown people" of the recently-Christianized Hungarian kingdom.¹²¹ In each letter, the pope emphasized the need for the respective queens to work with and on behalf of their royal husbands.

In his efforts to recruit female lords to his cause, Gregory therefore continuously drew upon traditional models of female agency that centered on marital and familial roles. This can be seen especially in the letter which opened this chapter. In it, Gregory emphasized Empress Agnes's obligations as a mother to justify her continued actions as an intercessor in political affairs despite her monastic retirement. It was Agnes's maternal bond with Henry IV which made her such an effective mediator between the papacy and the imperial court in spring 1074. Gregory drew upon images of emotional, familial ties to describe the empress's actions as intercessor: "Of these things the one that is the greatest and the most closely conjoined to the unity of love you have accomplished already—namely, that your son King Henry is restored to the communion of the church and that at the same time his kingdom is freed from a common

¹²⁰ Gregory VII, *Register*, nos. I.70, i. 101-2; IV.11, i. 310-11.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, nos. II.44, i. 80-2; VIII.22, ii. 564-5.

danger.”¹²² Agnes’s status as a mother, as a traditional source of moral guidance, lent weight to her efforts to advise her son on ecclesiastical affairs. But Gregory extended that maternal bond to others, referring to Matilda of Tuscany in the same letter as his and Agnes’s “common daughter” (*communis filia*), while Matilda’s real mother, Beatrice, was relegated to the role of Agnes’s devotee “in all things.”¹²³ By describing Matilda and Beatrice in such a way, Gregory portrayed Agnes in a position of authority over the two other women, a position which emphasized spiritual and moral guidance rather than Agnes’ imperial status. At the same time, Gregory created familial, emotional bonds between his network of supporters and his rival, Henry IV, through the figure of the empress.

Through this reliance on the well-worn model of maternal affection and guidance, Gregory built up Agnes’s influence and position to portray her as “calling forth others to the aid of an oppressed church.”¹²⁴ By interceding on behalf of the papacy, her maternal role takes on religious connotations through her association with reform efforts. It is this juxtaposition of the maternal, intercessory model and the new reform agenda which Gregory deploys in his efforts to warrant Agnes’s involvement. In many ways, Gregory blatantly disregards Agnes’s monastic vows, insisting instead that the empress can best serve the spiritual needs of both the Church and her family through continued participation in political developments. In an implicit admission that what he was requesting was unusual, Gregory pressed Agnes to continue to serve as a mediator, writing:

Now, although we do not doubt that your poverty is ready for other things that are of less weight, yet through the confidence that we have in Christ we are impelled in a

¹²² Gregory VII, *Register*, no. I.85, i. 121: “Quorum quidem quod maximum est et unitati dilectionis coniunctissimum, iam peregritis, videlicet filium vestrum Heinricum regem communioni ecclesie restitui simulque regnum eius a communi periculo liberari.” Eng. trans. Cowdrey, 89; translation slightly revised.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, i. 121-2.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, i. 122: “...ceteros ad suffragium laborantis ecclesie provocatis.”

manner to exhort your honor, for the sake of the manifestation of your joy, that you press on continually with such holy endeavors; we are writing to you and informing you with all assurance that your counsels and your merits have brought great benefit to your aforementioned son...¹²⁵

The successful reconciliation between Henry IV and Gregory VII thus becomes Agnes's "manifestation of joy," the height of her spiritual activity, rather than the life of isolated prayer and contemplation she must have been expecting when she took the veil over a decade earlier.¹²⁶

In fact, the novelty of Gregory's attitude towards secular female lords is nowhere more apparent than in this matter, the question of monasticism as a means of spiritual expression for the lay nobility. For Gregory, Agnes's usefulness and power lay not at Fruttuaria but in the secular imperial court. He tells her nothing less than that she can best serve the Church—and best fulfill her own pious impulses—by bending the rules of the cloistered life. This idea that a woman could satisfy both her own and the Church's spiritual needs, not through a monastic vow but through intercession in the temporal world, appears elsewhere in Gregory's register. Earlier in 1074, upon hearing that both Beatrice and Matilda wanted to retire to monasteries, Gregory pleaded with them to reconsider: "[I]f someone existed who would come to the aid of wretched and oppressed churches and would be of service to the universal church, I would be at pains to advise that you should leave the world with all its cares. But because you do not, like many princes, thrust God from your palace...we ask you and urge you as most dear

¹²⁵ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. I.85, i. 121-2: "Ad cetera vero que leviora sunt licet paupertatem vestram promptam esse non dubitemus, per fiduciam tamen quam in Christo habemus gloriam vestram, ut iugiter tam sanctis studiis instet, propter revelationem gaudii vestri quodammodo exhortari impellimur scribentes vobis et sub omni certitudine notificantes prefato filio vestro vestra consilia vestraque multum merita profuisse..." Eng. trans. Cowdrey, 89-90; translation slightly revised.

¹²⁶ Fridolin Dressler, *Petrus Damiani: Leben und Werk* (Rome: Pontificum Institutum S. Anselmi, 1954), 165-7.

daughters that you bring to a perfect end the good thing that you have begun.”¹²⁷ Here, Gregory not only includes Beatrice and Matilda among the ranks of ruling “princes.” He also places them in a privileged position achieved through their continued dedication and obedience to the apostolic see.

The unusualness of Gregory’s gentle rejection of the monastic life for such powerful lay rulers becomes even clearer when looking at other responses to Empress Agnes’ actions. For some clerical reformers, Agnes’ monastic vow was her crowning spiritual achievement. Peter Damian, who became her close friend during her retirement, sent her several letters encouraging her in her new life. Peter meant for the earliest of these letters to be widely circulated, using Agnes as an exemplar for other noblewomen: if she, an empress, could gladly give up all her worldly power and possessions for richer rewards, who would dare question the benefits of the monastic life?¹²⁸ But Agnes’ continued involvement in court affairs added a wrinkle to Peter’s perfect model. Agnes returned to Germany in 1067 at the request of the archdeacon Hildebrand (later Gregory VII), in order to recruit imperial aid against the Normans in southern Italy, who threatened papal territory. Two of Peter’s letters to Agnes survive from the time of this trip. In each, he begs her to return to Rome and the cloister. He warns her away from the dangers of the court, to reject the splendor she must find there in favor of the ascetic poverty she chose instead to embrace. He even advises her to forget her own noble family, the

¹²⁷ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. I.50, i. 77: “...esset, qui miseris et oppressis ecclesiis vestra vice subveniret ac universali ecclesie deserviret, ut seculum relinqueretis cum omnibus eius curis, monere procurarem. Sed quia de vestra aula, ut multi principes, Deum non abicitis...rogamus vos et ut karissimas filias ammonemus, bonum quod cepistis ad perfectum finem perducatis.” Eng. trans. Cowdrey, 56; translation slightly revised.

¹²⁸ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 104, iii. 141-58; see also Black-Veldtrup, *Kaiserin Agnes*, 346-7. Similar sentiments can be found in letters written by clergymen to other noblewomen who became nuns late in their lives. See, for example, Anselm of Canterbury’s letter to Adela of Blois, written c. 1106-1109, in *Opera*, no. 448, v. 395.

link that still tied her to worldly affairs. In other words, Peter Damian feared the empress would relapse into the contagion of a secular life, at the terrible cost of her spiritual health.¹²⁹

Two German chroniclers betray a similar sense of unease towards Agnes' less than cloistered life. Lampert of Hersfeld tried to reveal Agnes' own reasoning. In the *Annales*, we are told that Agnes thought it would be "neither too inconsistent with her way of life nor contrary to the functions of the Church" if she tried to be a guiding influence in her son's actions. After all, Lampert carefully asserts on Agnes' behalf, she was working for the "common good" (*commune commodum*), not for any real desire for worldly power.¹³⁰ Berthold of Reichenau, likewise, seems to have struggled to reconcile Agnes' vow with her actions. Berthold includes a lengthy eulogy for the empress in his chronicle. Most of it focuses on her extraordinary piety, established immediately by a statement concerning the eighteen years she spent as a nun. The majority of the following passage focuses on traditional pious activities—prayer, fasting, almsgiving, and an extreme asceticism. After thus establishing her holy manner, Berthold briefly alludes to her continued involvement in secular affairs. He records her violent opposition to nicholaites and simoniacs, and uses this opposition as justification for her journey to German territories. Once there, Berthold explains, she tried to correct her son's errors in such matters, but in vain. So the empress turned her back, once again, on the "manifold insanities" (*multifarias insanias*) of her son's court and returned to Rome, where she promptly gave away all of her property to the poor.¹³¹ In Berthold's eulogy, Agnes' journey to Germany

¹²⁹ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, nos. 144, iii. 525-7; 149, iii. 546-54.

¹³⁰ Lampert of Hersfeld, "Annales," 138: "...nec a proposito tamen suo nimium abhorreere nec ab ecclesiastica functione alienum..."

¹³¹ Berthold of Reichenau, "Chronicon," in *Die Chroniken Bertholds von Reichenau und Bernolds von Konstanz 1054-1100*, ed. I.S. Robinson, *MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum: Nova series* 14 (Hanover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2003), 303-8.

feels like an interruption of her otherwise perfect monastic career. Both chroniclers apparently felt a need to explain and justify Agnes's continued interactions with the imperial court. Like Gregory VII, they couched her efforts within the framework of her personal piety, so that she might appear as wielding her worldly influence on behalf of the Church she had chosen to serve.

The political motivations on Gregory's part that prompted a turn away from the cloistered life for women like Agnes, Beatrice, and Matilda are clear. However, the suggestion that to exercise secular female authority—to act like “princes of the world”—was not only a permissible but preferable method of interaction with the Church introduced an important shift in conceptions of female agency. In many cases, Gregory was not asking his female correspondents merely to fulfill traditional duties by encouraging their husbands and sons to religious obedience behind closed doors, in the privacy of the family household. Nor was simple prayer or charity enough. Instead, Gregory and other reformers called upon secular women to act as “daughters of St. Peter,” not only to spread the ideas of the reform movement but to enforce it within their own lands—even if that meant going against the wishes of their male kin. By encouraging the active participation of lay noblewomen in such an unusual manner, the reform created a unique opportunity to redraw the limits and perceptions of secular female authority. What resulted was not a single dominant concept of female power/agency for the length of the reform. Rather, images of female power evolved over the last years of the eleventh century and the first quarter of the twelfth as the reform itself changed.

The Evolution of Reforming Currents and Female Agency

One of the major underlying currents of the reform movement was the desire for a *societas christiana*, a concept that had its roots in the Carolingian reforms of the ninth century.

This idea of a single Christendom provided a structure for the papacy's arguments over what Gerd Tellenbach referred to as the "right order" in the world—in a Christian society, would not the spiritual sword hold precedence over the temporal?¹³² In the attempt to free and separate religious institutions from secular influence and polluting acts, however, the reform inadvertently prompted a reconsideration of how the laity could participate in spiritual affairs, often in a very broad sense, precisely because their older forms of interaction were being rejected or restricted. Although the Investiture Contest, the major hallmark of the reform movement, continued until its formal resolution in 1122 at the Concordat at Worms (earlier in France and England), the reform period witnessed other contemporaneous movements that demonstrated new trends in the symbiosis of the secular and sacred spheres. These trends included, most notably, the laity's eager response to Urban II's call for the First Crusade, as well as the development of new forms of religiosity that focused overwhelmingly on issues of pastoral care.¹³³ To engage with and incorporate aspects of these broader developments, conceptions of secular female authority changed right alongside its male counterpart.

For example, Jonathan Riley-Smith has identified lay noblewomen as important transmitters of crusading ideals between families, much as they served as transmitters of the earlier Cluniac reform.¹³⁴ Responding to the common portrayal of women as inhibitors of crusading fervor in many sources, he suggests "it may be that the influence of women on

¹³² Gerd Tellenbach, *Church, State, and Christian Society at the Time of the Investiture Contest*, trans. R.F. Bennett (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1940 [first published in German in 1936]), 126-50.

¹³³ Giles Constable, *The Reformation of the Twelfth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 208-10; William J. Purkis suggests that the ideals of the *Vita apostolica* were integral to the lay response to the First Crusade. See *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c. 1095-c. 1187* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 30-58.

¹³⁴ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders 1095-1131* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 97-100.

recruitment was more indirect, perhaps by the way they brought about changes to the ethos of a household by introducing chaplains of a particular kind.”¹³⁵ For Riley-Smith, women’s roles in creating marital ties between what he refers to as “crusading families” and other members of the aristocracy was the most influential form of female participation in the crusading movement, especially following the success of the First Crusade. While this focus on the genealogical ties that bound the European aristocracy together is useful, it tends to underestimate the different ways in which women were connected to the events of the First Crusade in particular. Women do, as Riley-Smith asserts, often appear in crusade-related texts as impediments—wives begging their husbands not to leave, prostitutes on the pilgrimage itself staining its holy purpose.¹³⁶ However, lay noblewomen especially appear not infrequently as important enactors or supporters of the early crusading movement. Adela, wife of Count Stephen of Blois, is the most famous example of a woman’s direct, positive influence over events of the First Crusade. When Stephen abandoned the crusade, it was Adela who convinced him to return to the east and fulfill his vow.¹³⁷ Adela was not, as Riley-Smith suggests, the one exception to the narrative portrayals of women as inhibitors of the masculine lay religiosity that helped define the First Crusade.¹³⁸ Several clerical writers, for example, attributed the successes of Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin I of Edessa, the first two western rulers of the crusader kingdom of Jerusalem, at least in part to the actions of their mother, Ida of Boulogne.¹³⁹

¹³⁵ Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, 99.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 97-8.

¹³⁷ OV, v. 324.

¹³⁸ Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders*, 98.

¹³⁹ See below, 108-10.

The First Crusade, with its emphasis on relieving Christian brethren in the east and liberating Jerusalem, serves as just one manifestation of the currents of religious and cultural reform that emerged in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries. It developed in many ways as part of a growing concern for the common welfare of Latin Christendom. After the turn of the twelfth century, especially, the period also witnessed important developments in other new practices of lay piety, including a heightening concern with both spiritual wellbeing and bodily health. One physical manifestation of this new attention came in the form of hospitals and leprosariums. The early twelfth century witnessed the most active phase of hospital foundations during the Middle Ages, and roughly one-fifth of these hospitals began as leprosariums.¹⁴⁰ Lay noblewomen were often at the heart of this new concern for the Christian community, and many founded these hospitals with the expectation that their relationship with the foundations would continue throughout their lives.¹⁴¹ Matilda of Scotland, Henry I of England's queen, for example, provided an annual income for her foundation, the Hospital of St. Giles in London.¹⁴²

Matilda was also deeply involved in the promotion of the Augustinian canons in England. Among the new religious orders which appeared in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, the budding Augustinian Order was particularly popular, arguably because of its attention to the importance of communal pastoral care. Augustinians canons were much more

¹⁴⁰ Carole Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2006), 106-7. See also R.I. Moore, *The Formation of a Persecuting Society: Authority and Deviance in Western Europe, 950-1250* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 42-56.

¹⁴¹ Sheila Sweetinburgh, *The Role of the Hospital in Medieval England: Gift-giving and the Spiritual Economy* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 43.

¹⁴² Lois Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland: A Study in Medieval Queenship* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 105-6.

closely involved in their neighboring societies than their monastic cousins.¹⁴³ The Augustinians took on numerous roles, serving in cathedral churches and priories, running hospitals, acting as parish priests for smaller localities, or performing other acts of pastoral care in their communities.¹⁴⁴ The order was, in a way, the formalization and institutionalization of the ideology behind pastoral care. This form of religious life originated in southern France and Italy in the mid-eleventh century as a result of efforts to revive Carolingian precedents, and it spread rapidly, reaching northern France, Germany, and even England by the first decades of the twelfth century.¹⁴⁵

Matilda and her sister-in-law Adela of Blois were active supporters during the Augustinians' early formation. Matilda and her husband Henry I founded some of the earliest Augustinian houses in England, where they became so popular so quickly that by the end of the twelfth century they were the most widespread forms of religious institution in the kingdom, with almost 300 houses.¹⁴⁶ Matilda founded the priory of Holy Trinity, Aldgate, in London c. 1108 and specifically requested that canons from the first Augustinian house established in England, St. Botolph's, come to London to instruct the new priory in the Augustinian Rule. She also donated generously to Merton Priory in Surrey, founded by one of

¹⁴³ J.C. Dickinson, *The Origins of the Austin Canons and their Introduction into England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1951), 190-3; Elizabeth M. Hallam, *Capetian France 987-1328* (London: Longman, 1980), 148; Richard Southern, *Western Society and the Church in the Middle Ages* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 141-9; Frances Andrews, *The Other Friars: The Carmelite, Augustinian, Sack and Pied Friars in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 99-119; Brian Patrick McGuire, "Monastic and Religious Orders, c. 1100-1350," in *Christianity in Western Europe, c. 1100-1500*, ed. Miri Rubin, *The Cambridge History of Christianity* 4 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 62-3.

¹⁴⁴ Donald F. Logan, *History of the Church in the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 137.

¹⁴⁵ Allison D. Fizzard, *Plympton Priory: A House of Augustinian Canons in South-Western England in the Late Middle Ages* (Boston: Brill, 2008), 2.

¹⁴⁶ C.H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (New York: Longman, 2001), 164.

Henry I's sheriffs. Matilda's popularity and prestige at court ensured that other Anglo-Norman nobles copied her actions, so that Holy Trinity, Aldgate, and Merton Priors by 1150 headed almost a dozen daughter houses.¹⁴⁷ Henry I granted another Augustinian house, Waltham Abbey, to Matilda, most likely around the time of their marriage in 1100. Eight charters concerning the queen's interactions with Waltham have survived, in which she showed her continuous generosity, freeing the canons from a tithe they had previously paid for the building of Durham Cathedral and granting them the rights to hold a fair on the feasts of the Holy Cross, among other matters.¹⁴⁸ In the county of Blois, in 1101/2, Ivo of Chartres requested Adela's aid for a collegiate church which Kimberly LoPrete has identified as St-Jean-en-Vallée, to the north of Chartres.¹⁴⁹ Ivo had recently instituted the Augustinian Rule there, and one of the new canons had become embroiled in an argument over property with his former monastery. "I ask therefore," Ivo pleaded, "for the salvation of your soul that you love the church of St. John the Baptist, where with God's help we have introduced a regular life, and that you defend the things pertaining to that church against attackers and usurpers as much as you can."¹⁵⁰ Adela not only agreed to support the canon's claim, she also later donated land to St-Jean.¹⁵¹

Adela's and Matilda's interest in the Augustinians (and reformers' encouragement of such interest) becomes easy to understand in light of the order's reputation as pastoral

¹⁴⁷ J.C. Dickinson, *The Origins of the Austin Canons*, 111-26. See also Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 108-9.

¹⁴⁸ See Rosalind Ransford, *The Early Charters of the Augustinian Canons of Waltham Abbey, Essex 1062-1230* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1989), Charters 3, 5, and 15.

¹⁴⁹ LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, 249.

¹⁵⁰ "D. Ivonis Epistolae," *PL* 162, no. 91, 112: "Rogo autem pro remedio animae vestrae ut ecclesiam beati Joannis Baptistae, in qua regularem vitam Deo donante ordinavimus, diligatis, et res ad ipsam ecclesiam pertinentes contra insidiantes et incursantes pro posse vestro defendatis."

¹⁵¹ LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, 249.

caretakers. Although some Augustinian houses mimicked monastic observances much more closely by living in seclusion, most were well known for their public acts of service and charity, especially concerning the sick and the poor. Adela and Matilda, along with other female lords, shared this interest in attending to the needs of all members of their communities. Aristocratic women were expected to perform acts of charity as part of their traditional roles, but the reformed religiosity of the early twelfth century demanded more than almsgiving from enactors of Christian lordship. In fact, by the beginning of the twelfth century, female lords were being portrayed more and more frequently as active protectors, guardians, or even avengers of the Latin Church and its members. Matilda and Adela, like their near contemporaries in Tuscany and Germany, had the potential to extend their influence in religious affairs far beyond the boundaries of their households.

Conclusion

Ecclesiastical reformers of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries saw themselves in a battle for the fate of the Church, and, through the Church, for the fate of Christians everywhere. They envisaged the laity as playing a key role in that battle, either as soldiers of the Church or as her foes. During the widespread effort to recruit lay support for the reform, clergymen realized that aristocratic women had the power and potential to act as very public and influential agents for a larger cause: in this instance, the protection of the Latin Church and its cultural and religious ideals. This important realization had roots in the Carolingian empire, when the culture of lordship began to adhere strongly to Christian moral behavior and practice. As we saw in the works of Jonas of Orléans and Dhuoda, aristocratic women became models of piety and generosity for their husbands and sons. The papal reform movement of the later eleventh century brought new pressures to bear on these traditional, household-centered

models of female Christian lordship. Women could now act on behalf of the reform with a greater level of visibility and acknowledgement, under the guise of caring for the “common good.” They could also, crucially, adapt to meet the various needs of the reform movement. Matilda of Tuscany was a fierce military commander and a compassionate intercessor. Agnes of Poitou was, by turns, nurturing mother and pious nun. Clementia of Burgundy could be both an ardent reformer and a wrathful lord. Matilda of Scotland, as Chapter Three discusses below, combined the roles of queen, wife, reformer, and handmaiden of God in a masterful performance of Christian rulership.

Thanks to the influence of the eleventh-century reform movement, female lords faced new forms of traditional duties, along with an increased wariness of their actions both as laypeople and as women. In the immediate context of the reform movement, the more personal, private religious reflection and practice that marked early medieval laywomen gave way in the face of an emerging need for powerful, visible, and obedient daughters of the Church. By the second decade of the twelfth century, clergymen could visualize lay noblewomen whose reputations and associated influence stretched across vast territories. Such power in the hands of a woman offered not a threat to the Church but a boon—if that power were used well. Take, for example, Hildebert of Lavardin’s words to Matilda of Scotland, whom he held up as an exemplar of a ruler who preserved the laws and status of the Church.¹⁵² Hildebert reminded Matilda of the responsibilities she bore as the price of her position as queen, delineating between Matilda as an individual and the role of the queen: “You did not deserve to be born noble, and you were born of royal blood; you did not labor, and you were made rich. You did not reach for power, and, behold, you were placed over the heads of the sons of men...These

¹⁵² “Ven. Hildeberti Epistolae,” *PL* 171, no. 11, 289D-290B.

works were done by the Lord God...[U]se your delights for the queen, not for yourself.”¹⁵³ In short, secular noblewomen did have a place in the reformers’ Church, if they used their positions as members of the ruling class for the benefit of the Church. The trick, as the next chapters explore, lay in how to describe and promote such appropriate uses of power.

¹⁵³ “Ven. Hildeberti Epistolae,” no. 7, 153C-155C: “Non meruisti nobilis nasci, et regius sanguis nata es; non laborasti, et dives facta es. De potentia nihil movebaris, et ecce super capita filiorum hominum posita es...Haec opera operatus est Dominus Deus...deliciis pro regina utere, non pro te.”

CHAPTER TWO: GENDERING SECULAR AUTHORITY DURING THE ECCLESIASTICAL REFORM

When writing their treatises or eliciting support through their letter campaigns, reformers selected their words with care. And by describing their goals in terms of purifying that which had become polluted, as we shall see, ecclesiastical reformers employed a highly gendered and sexualized rhetoric in their effort to improve the society of Latin Christendom. This rhetoric proved particularly significant in conversations on the nature of secular and religious authorities. Because the two spheres of secular and religious were both separate from and codependent upon each other, defining the authority of secular rulers in relation to that of ecclesiastical leaders was a difficult but crucial task, especially in light of the goals of the eleventh-century reform movement. This chapter explores the manner in which reformers went about this task. To do so, the chapter begins with a discussion of the ways in which reform polemicists deployed gendered metaphors as metonyms for their new conceptions of complex religious and social realities. Next, the chapter explores the resultant intersections between conventional representations of femininity and the highly gendered ideologies that emerged from the reform movement. The final section will address how reformers and their allies applied a carefully constructed gendered worldview as a way to provide a base—a building block, in a sense—for their reimagined ideals of Christian rulership. In short, developing a repertoire of gendered textual paradigms to represent their conceptions of power helped

ecclesiastical reformers, their opponents, and the lay nobility to debate and defend the nature of such conceptions.

Megan McLaughlin has recently demonstrated the importance of reformers' reliance on a gendered and sexualized rhetoric in her discussion of representations of episcopal authority in the late eleventh century. McLaughlin highlights the defining role played by ecclesiastical reformers' reliance on a selective set of gendered familial metaphors in their efforts to explain their positions within the Church and the spiritual relationship which existed between a cleric and holy Church. Citing the increased use of "Mother Church" and "Bride of Christ" imagery in eleventh-century polemical texts, McLaughlin claims that reformers saw a clear connection between the "right order" of Latin Christendom as a whole and the "right order" within an individual household.¹ Latin Christendom, in other words, appeared in many reformist polemics as a family falling under the combined parental/marital authority of the ultimate types of father/husband and mother/wife: God and his Church. Reformers took the rhetoric of this divine parental or marital pairing and applied it to real world positions and connections—between a priest and his congregation, a bishop and his see, and, at the utmost level, between the pope and all of Latin Christendom. The cultural and social meanings associated with notions such as bride and bridegroom, or father and mother, offered reformers a set of ideological constructions that they could adapt with great effect to a demonstration of

¹ McLaughlin argues convincingly that although the use of bride and bridegroom imagery had been used in Western Europe since the Carolingian period, it was during the papal reform of the eleventh century that these terms took on special significance. She suggests that it was the Gregorian reformers who first saw the Church as a true "bride" in their attempts to delineate between secular and spiritual relationships. She also notes that the more conservative clergy much more rarely employed images of sexual pollution and a female Church; see *Sex, Gender, and Episcopal Authority in an Age of Reform, 1000-1122* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 3-5, 51-66. In a similar vein, Rachel Stone argues that while the Carolingian period used masculine language, the language of femininity was relatively rare. The surge in gendered language in the eleventh century was therefore a new development; see Stone, "In what way can those who have left the world be distinguished?: Masculinity and the Difference between Carolingian Men," in *Intersections of Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Cordelia Beattie and Kirsten A. Fenton (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 19-21.

their own imagining of the connections between the material world and the spiritual. At the same time, the very use which reformers made of such metaphor affected the associations attached to key symbolic words or phrases. For example, McLaughlin argues convincingly that the use of the “language of the household” in describing episcopal authority mirrored and affected contemporaneous efforts to emphasize to a new extent the sacred nature of marriage.²

While McLaughlin and others have explored the effects of reform rhetoric on religious institutional ideology, less attention has been paid to the effects of the same rhetoric on ideologies and representations of secular authority. Reformers often applied to their secular counterparts, logically enough, the same rhetorical associations found in metaphors of family and social relations that illustrated conceptions of their own sacred authority. While scholars have begun to explore the reform’s effects on male authority and agency, little attention has been paid to the impact of such discourses on representations of female authority, especially for women within the secular sphere. Yet female rulers were as surely caught up in the reform movement’s reimagining of ideologies of power as their male counterparts. The question to be asked now, then, is what kinds of representations of secular female lordship emerged from this wider, heavily gendered discourse of the reform movement.

Woman-Church as a Reflection of Female Authority Types

In the first year of his pontificate, Pope Gregory VII sent a public letter to the faithful of Lombardy, urging them to boycott the simoniacal Archbishop Godfrey of Milan. According to Gregory, Godfrey had, by the act of purchasing his office, prostituted the Church itself: “Godfrey...called archbishop of Milan, now presumed to buy, like a cheap slave girl, the

² McLaughlin focuses primarily on the influence of marriage reform on discourses of episcopal authority (*Sex, Gender, and Episcopal Authority*, 16-49).

church...evidently attempting to prostitute the bride of Christ to the devil and to separate her from the catholic faith, he has labored to taint her with the crime of heresy.”³ Gregory continued his letter with a call for the Christians in Lombardy to defend their “mother” and “mistress of all Christendom”—in other words, the Latin Church.⁴ The Woman-Church, the ultimate authoritative female figure, could thus take on multiple forms, as Gregory’s letter demonstrates. These depictions ranged from an embattled, enslaved, vulnerable figure in need of male protection to the domineering *mater ecclesia* and *domina* who demanded obedience from her “sons” and “daughters.” These portrayals of an anthropomorphized Church were more than simple rhetorical devices, however. Rather, they reflected their authors’ conceptions of what it meant to be female in the society of Latin Christendom.

The feminized Church appears in texts most frequently within a familial context: as wife, mother, or widow. These roles emphasized the connections which bound the Church to the broader Christian society of eleventh-century Europe. As the Bride of Christ, the Church (and presumably the ecclesiastical hierarchy which oversaw its affairs) stepped into a position of marital and parental authority. The faithful of the Church, as children of God and his “bride” on earth, were represented as owing a type of filial obedience to the Church—and thus to her representatives. For example, in 1102 Anselm of Canterbury wrote to Clementia of Burgundy, the countess of Flanders, praising her for her role in encouraging her husband to give up lay investiture. In describing the couple’s adherence to the new sanctions on such actions, Anselm

³ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. 15, i. 24: “...Gotefredus...dicto archiepiscopo Mediolanensi eandem ecclesiam...nunc quasi vilem ancillam presumpsit emere, sponsam videlicet Christi diabolo prostituere et a catholica fide temptans eam separare nisus est symoniace heresis scelere maculare.” For another significant example of the Church as bride and mother metaphor in Gregory’s letters, see his public letter of 1084, no. 54, in *The Epistolae Vagantes*, trans. and ed. H.E.J. Cowdrey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 128-30.

⁴ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. 15, i. 24; the passage reads: “mater vestra et totius christianitatis, sicut scitis, magistra.”

called them “true children” (*veri filii*) of the “spouse of God” (*sponsa dei*). Anselm went on to proclaim the duty of all Christian princes to be that of defending and honoring their “mother,” and Clementia’s duty specifically to encourage her husband to be not the Church’s “step-son but her son” in the biological sense.⁵ The emphasis on these metaphorical relations is crucial to understanding the connection Anselm was trying to forge between his written words and the real world actions he was encouraging Clementia and Robert to perform. Anselm offers an obvious contrast to his correspondent between the positions of step-son and biological son. The former carries associations suggesting a lack of strong connection, attachment, or loyalty. The latter, on the other hand, suggests a deeper, truer relationship. In this way, the familial metaphor of mother and son serves as the means through which Anselm expressed the appropriate service by a layman to the church: to obey this sacred mother as he would, presumably, obey his own biological mother.⁶

Anselm frequently made use of the *sponsa dei* image in his writings, using it as a didactic tool with which he could easily express the duties of the Christian faithful to the Church. In another letter, this one to Matilda II of England, Anselm used the term *sponsa dei* to refer to both a bride and a widow. The Church was God’s chosen bride, but, by existing in the material world, she was separated from her divine husband, and thus became a widow until the day of their reunion. It was the treatment of this widowed—and implicitly vulnerable—Woman-Church that would decide the fate of all Christians:

If you wish to render these [thanks] properly, well, and effectively by your deeds, consider that queen whom it pleased God to choose for himself as his bride from this

⁵ Anselm, *Opera*, no. 249, iv. 159-60: “non privignum sed filium.” Orderic Vitalis uses a similar metaphor of stepsons and sons to describe the Frankish crusaders’ devotion to the city of Jerusalem; OV, v. 156.

⁶ Orderic Vitalis, Eadmer of Canterbury, and Hugh the Chanter are some of several other writers who employed similar metaphors to describe the laity as the children of Mother Church. See, for example: OV, 60; Eadmer, *Historia*, 32; Hugh the Chanter, *The History of the Church of York 1066-1127*, ed. and trans. Charles Johnson (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1961), 78.

world...Now consider, I say, how this woman is like an exile and pilgrim, and groans and sighs like a widow with her true children, waiting for her husband...until he returns, and, taking her to his kingdom, repays everyone according to what they did to his mistress, whether good or evil. Those who honor her will be honored in her and with her; those who trample her will be trampled outside of her. Those who exalt her will be exalted with the angels; those who suppress her will be suppressed with the demons. Exalt, honor and defend her so that with her and in her you may please her spouse, God, and live, reigning with her, in eternal beatitude.⁷

Using the *sponsa dei* image as a way to instruct lay noblewomen such as Clementia and Matilda would not have been a useful exercise if Anselm had not been drawing from preconceived notions of marital and maternal ideologies. At the same time, portraying the church itself as queen, spouse, and mother helped to reinforce reformers' image of marriage in multiple situations as a religious as well as a social and political bond between man and woman.

Secular women may have been particularly receptive to such figurative language, as the roles of wife and mother had, as discussed in the previous chapter, been their fundamental sources of authority for centuries. The selective use of such language was widespread, however, suggesting a basic assumption that this type of gendered rhetoric would be easily understood. For example, Eadmer, Anselm's secretary and biographer, referred to the English Church as a widow during the reign of William Rufus (d. 1100), alluding to the king's delay in appointing a new archbishop of Canterbury.⁸ In a sense, the English Church was an actual widow—her earthly husband, Archbishop Lanfranc, had indeed died. Here the term widow

⁷ Anselm, *Opera*, no. 243, iv. 153-4: "Quas si recte, si bene, si efficaciter ipso actu vultis reddere: considerate reginam illam, quam de hoc mundo sponsam sibi illi placuit eligere...Hanc, inquam, considerate quomodo exsul et peregrina et quasi vidua ad virum suum cum veris filiis suis gemit et suspirat, exspectans...veniat, et eam ad regnum suum transferendo omnibus qui eidem amicae bona vel mala fecerint, prout quisque gessit, retribuatur. Qui hanc honorant, cum illa et in illa honorabuntur; qui hanc conculcant, extra illam conculcabuntur. Qui hanc exaltant, cum angelis exaltabuntur; qui hanc deprimunt, cum daemonibus deprimuntur. Hanc exaltate, honorate, defendite, ut cum illa et in illa sponso deo placeatis et in aeterna beatitudine cum illa regnando vivatis." Eng. trans. Walter Fröhlich, *The Letters of Canterbury*, 3 vols. (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1990), ii. 226; translation revised.

⁸ Eadmer, *Historia*, 32.

evokes both sorrow and weakness: sorrow over the death of the previous archbishop and a sense of vulnerability without the presence of an appropriate “bridegroom.” Nor was the simple lack of a husband figure the only thing that could harm the Woman-Church. The German chronicler Berthold of Reichenau decried the act of simony as defiling “the dovelike beauty of holy mother Church with its festering contagion.”⁹ The implication is clear: simoniacal clerics are not only unfit partners for the Church but put her at risk of catching their own “disease”—the pollution of religious ritual and space. This focus on the associations of vulnerability that accompanied the feminization of the Church cast the Church’s loyal and obedient followers in the positions of protector and champion. Thus, Orderic Vitalis has William the Conqueror in his deathbed speech boast of fulfilling his duty to “our mother,” the Church.¹⁰

In referring to the Church as a woman, authors picked up not only on the potential influence inherent in the roles of wife and mother but also on the uncertainty of a woman’s power, which rested in large part on the willingness of men to recognize that power. When men failed to do so, what resulted was not only the undermining of the Church’s female authority but also the upsetting of the perceived right order that dictated interactions between the secular and religious spheres. In many instances the Woman-Church appears wounded, ugly, or in rags, imaginative representations of the wrongs committed against the authority of the ecclesiastical hierarchy. The anonymous author of the Anglo-Norman *Warene Chronicle*, for instance, described the dire circumstances in which the English Church found itself under William Rufus’ rule by relating a monk’s vision of the king’s impending death. In the vision,

⁹ Berthold of Reichenau, “Chronicon,” *Die Chroniken Bertholds von Reichenau und Bernolds von Konstanz 1054-1100*, *MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum: Nova series* 14, ed. Ian Robinson (Hanover: Hahnsche, 2003), 208: “...columbinam sancte matris ecclesie pulchritudinem purulentie sue contagiis...”

¹⁰ OV, iv. 90; see also OV, vi. 60.

the Church appeared as a beautiful young girl in the position of a supplicant at Christ's knees. The English king, the girl lamented, had torn her apart with his "dogs and wolves" and she asked for Christ himself to avenge her—which he did, through the hunting accident that ended William Rufus's life.¹¹ William's "dogs and wolves" stand for the officials responsible for confiscating ecclesiastical revenues; and once again a clerical author demonstrates the slippage between a figurative representation—the Church being hunted by dogs and wolves—and a literal event, William's death.

This vision demonstrates a number of the perceived connections between secular and religious authority. The depiction of the Church as a young girl conjures up corresponding images of innocence, purity, and frailty. She is begging for help, for protection, and for revenge; luckily, as Christ's bride on Earth, this envisioned Church has recourse to a divine avenger, whereas real world churches could only pray for such a miraculous intervention. The threat of heavenly wrath comes through clearly in this passage, but what is more telling is the chronicler's judgment of the king. According to the *Warene* author, William Rufus would have been a great king if not for his crippling lack of religious devotion. The author describes the king as "the defender of the country...but he was not suitable enough as a provider of the Church. For if he were as eager for religion as he was about vain curiosity, surely no prince should be compared to him."¹² In other words, although William Rufus sufficiently fulfilled the secular duties of his kingship, he failed to address appropriately his religious obligations as a Christian ruler. If he had been a successful Christian king, the Church would never have

¹¹ *The Warene (Hyde) Chronicle*, ed. and trans. Elisabeth van Houts and Rosalind C. Love (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2013), 42.

¹² *Ibid.*, 35; translation slightly revised: "defensor quidem patrie...sed non satis ydoneus procreator ecclesie. Si enim ita studeret religioni quam uane curiositati nullus ei profecto deberet princeps comparari."

had to turn to miraculous intervention for aid, and it was his failure to protect the Church's rights which provoked his death.

Indeed, the use of feminine language to describe the Church was often accompanied by an overtly masculine language of defense. Portraying religious institutions or ideologies within a highly masculinized linguistic framework long pre-dated and outlasted the eleventh-century reform, as scholars have recognized.¹³ However, it is important to note that clerical reformers were more than capable of gearing their language to fit a model that they believed would be accessible to their audience—or to emphasize a particular point. Peter Damian, for example, appears to have been particularly fond of drawing on masculine archetypes to discuss contentious situations of all types.¹⁴ In a 1040/1 letter addressed to a secular nobleman who requested his aid in developing an argument against Jewish beliefs, Peter used the language of war to describe his addressee's obligations as a good Christian: "But if you wish to be a soldier of Christ and to fight with manly vigor for him, as a famous warrior take up arms against vices of the flesh, against the schemes of the devil, enemies, certainly, who never die..."¹⁵ The

¹³ In her study on Carolingian monastic masculinity, Lynda Coon points out the competitive nature of monastic masculinity, where monks competed to be more virile than their companions, in terms of resisting bodily desires. The corollary to this monastic masculinity, according to Coon, was an attempt by monastic authors to effeminize laymen: see Coon, *Dark Age Bodies: Gender and Monastic Practice in the Early West* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 9-12. For the masculinizing of Gregorian reform rhetoric, see Conrad Leyser, "Custom, Truth, and Gender in Eleventh-Century Reform," *Studies in Church History* 34 (1998), 75-91; Robert Swanson, "Angels Incarnate: Clergy and Masculinity from Gregorian Reform to Reformation," *Masculinity in Medieval Europe*, ed. Dawn M. Hadley (Essex: Longman, 1999), 160-77; Maureen Miller, "Masculinity, Reform, and Clerical Culture: Narratives of Episcopal Holiness in the Gregorian Era," *Church History* 72:1 (2003), 25-52; James A. Brundage, "Crusades, Clerics and Violence: Reflections on a Canonical Theme," in *The Experience of Crusading Volume One: Western Approaches*, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 147.

¹⁴ Maureen Miller suggests that reformers' use of masculinized language is a sign of their attempt to offer an alternative route to secular masculinity while still remaining within its defining boundaries. See "Masculinity, Reform, and Clerical Culture," 27-35.

¹⁵ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 1, i. 65-6: "Sed si Christi miles esse et pro eo viriliter pugnare desideras, contra carnis vicia, contra diaboli machinas insignis bellator arma potius corripe, hostes videlicet, qui numquam moriuntur..." Eng. trans. Owen J. Blum, *Letters*, 6 vols., (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1989), i. 38; translation revised.

warrior imagery invoked here must have been partly a result of Peter's awareness of his audience; later in the letter, he refers specifically to the differences in education of his lay correspondent and a clerical scholar such as himself. Yet Peter did not confine such masculinized descriptions to a secular audience. In the *Liber Gratissimus*, Peter created an image of martial strength and physical warfare by describing Henry III of Germany and Constantine the Great as winning, notably through ecclesiastical synods rather than actual battle, a victory over enemies of the Church: "The latter wore down the doctrine of the Arian sect with the weapons of the orthodox faith; the former, by trampling avarice underfoot, destroyed the plague of simoniacal heresy."¹⁶ Following his appointment to the bishopric of Ostia in 1057, Peter wrote to his fellow cardinal bishops, once again describing the protection of the Roman Church, but this time by the cardinals themselves. Even though this letter referred to only clerical actors and readers, he still used the language of the knightly class: "The guards on the watchtowers and turrets of a castle, in order to show their greater willingness, often call out to each other in turns as they stand watch in the dead of night. Thus while each wakes up the other, they certainly keep themselves more vigilant at carrying out their night watches."¹⁷ By employing the language of soldiers and castles, Peter was able to articulate his perceptions of the Church as under threat of an attack, an attack against which the cardinals, second only to the pope in the ecclesiastical hierarchy, were obligated to defend.

Peter Damian's use of such masculine language, while not new, was certainly more than a mere rhetorical trope. The language of violence, of soldiers and battles, best served

¹⁶ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 40, i. 503: "Ille nimirum Arrianae secte dogma orthodoxae fidei armis attrivit, iste symoniace hereseos pestem avaritiam calcando delevit." Eng. trans. Blum, ii. 208; translation revised.

¹⁷ Ibid., no. 48, ii. 53: "Castrensium specularum turriumve custodes, ut se promptius exhibeant, intempesta nocte pervigiles clamosas sibimet invicem sepe dirigunt voces. Sic itaque dum alios excitant, semetipsos utique ad peragendas excubias vigilantiores servant." Eng. trans. Blum, ii. 263; translation revised.

Peter's purpose in these letters, which were themselves calls to arms to defend the rights of the Church. Likewise, reformers' employment of feminine language must also have resulted from a particular situation or goal that needed to be addressed. This reliance on feminine and masculine language displayed by Peter Damian, Gregory VII, Anselm of Canterbury, and other reformers clearly demonstrates the gendered lens through which socio-political and religious ideologies were projected. Such language helped to fit reformers' ideals into a wider, culturally familiar worldview. The Woman-Church figure drew on not only well-worn concepts of maternal authority but also on feminine vulnerability and obedience. The Bride of Christ, first of all, was granted her position of authority by right of association with her divine husband. She was a partner in this divine "marriage," but the subordinate partner. As a result, the Woman-Church was easily attacked and defamed. It was up to soldiers of Christ—both lay and clerical—to protect and defend her. Such actions, with their associations of military strength, usually could not be enacted by the feminized and thus vulnerable Church as she appears in most reformist texts (with a few notable, but relatively rare, exceptions). Reformers were dependent upon a dominant dichotomy of gendered roles: the feminine as compassionate, gentle, and nurturing; the masculine as physically strong and just.¹⁸

But the eleventh-century reform is not just a story of continuity, however much reformers themselves claimed to be returning to past traditions. The use of familiar gendered

¹⁸ Ruth Mazo Karras argues that this dichotomy defined how medieval authors viewed gender and sexuality. She suggests that even those individuals who transgressed the boundary between masculine and feminine were seen merely as deviants, not as non-women or non-men as some scholars have suggested. Duby, for example, argued that prominent women, including Matilda of Tuscany, had to abandon their female gender and adopt male characteristics to participate in the public sphere. However, the sources seem to support Karras's thesis more than Duby's—women such as Matilda, as will be discussed below, were often described as acting in a man-like manner, but their femininity was rarely in doubt. See Ruth Mazo Karras, *Sexuality in Medieval Europe: Doing Unto Others* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 4-5; Georges Duby, "Women and Power," in *Cultures of Power: Lordship, Status, and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Thomas Bisson (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 69-85, especially 78.

language aided reformers in their efforts to introduce their reimagining of the right order of Christian society. Placed within the context of the reform, this gendered language takes on new meanings and affiliations. The language of war employed by the likes of Peter Damian reflects the frequently aggressive nature of reformers' actions—calling for the boycott, imprisonment, and ejection of those clerics who polluted the Church through the sins of simony, lay investiture, and clerical marriage. It also reflects, as Amy Remensnyder and others have pointed out, efforts to better incorporate the male warrior aristocracy into a Christianized society, providing them a way of using their military prowess for the good of the Church.¹⁹ The reliance on the language of the household—the traditional language of women—reflected a similar shift in conceptions of the secular female aristocracy. After all, by portraying *ecclesia mater/sponsa dei* as a positive female figure of authority, even if such authority was often threatened, reformers were also implicitly endorsing the idea of a woman in a position of power. As we shall see, this association of the feminine with authority helped to incorporate lay noblewomen into the new discursive models of Christian rulership that emerged during the reform era—whether or not this was always the clerical reformers' intent.

Conflicting Conceptions of Secular Female Authority and Agency

Scholars have pointed to movements such as the Truce and Peace of God and the call for crusade in 1095 as, in part, clerical attempts to reconcile new ideals of Christian religiosity

¹⁹ Amy G. Remensnyder, "Pollution, Purity, and Peace: An Aspect of Social Reform between the Late Tenth Century and 1076," in *The Peace of God: Social Violence and Religious Response in France around the Year 1000*, ed. Thomas Head and Richard Landes (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 291-2. See also Andrew Cowell, *The Medieval Warrior Aristocracy: Gifts, Violence, Performance, and the Sacred* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2007) for a study of the necessity of violence for the creation and maintenance of social authority among the warrior aristocracy; and H.E.J. Cowdrey's article for the blending of holy and just war leading up to and through the first century of crusading: Cowdrey, "Christianity and the Morality of Warfare during the First Century of Crusading," in *The Experience of Crusading: Western Approaches*, ed. Bull and Housley, 175-92.

with the objectives of the secular warrior elite and ideologies of lay masculinity. Reconciling lay femininity must have been, in many ways, a trickier task. While the Woman-Church image offered an example of an overall positive combination of femininity and authority, the feminine also had strong negative connotations—particularly within the context of the eleventh-century ecclesiastical reform. Ecclesiastical authors often saw women and femininity as dangerous and unwanted. Since sexual interactions among both clergy and laity were of great concern to reformers, this concept of women as potential threats to the right order of Church and lay society was only strengthened. For example, in a long passage detailing a knight's deathbed vision, Symeon of Durham invoked the horrors of hell for married priests and their wives. The knight, upon seeing a great crowd of women, was told by his visionary guide that "Eternal woe and the atrocious torment of the flames of hell awaits these miserable women and those who were consecrated for offering sacrifice to God but yet were not afraid to involve themselves in the carnal affairs of the flesh."²⁰ Gerd Tellenbach argued that in many cases the perceived problem of married priests was both the question of sexuality and the concern over parishes inherited by priests' children.²¹ For Symeon of Durham, however, the issue was entirely one of the polluting influence of sexuality. In another instance, the Durham chronicler provided an example of the priest Feoccher celebrating mass after sleeping with his wife the night before.

²⁰ Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio atque Procursu Istius, Hoc est Dunhelmensis Ecclesie*, ed. and trans. David Rollason (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 250: "Has...miserabiles et illos qui ad sacrificandum Deo consecrati sunt, nec tamen illecebris carnalibus inuolui metuerent, ue sempiternum et gehennalium flammaram atrocissimus expectat cruciatus." For other examples of negative portrayals of women in Symeon's narrative, see *Libellus de Exordio*, 104-8, 172.

²¹ See the discussion on clerical marriage in Gerd Tellenbach, *The Church in Western Europe from the Tenth to the Early Twelfth Century*, trans. Timothy Reuter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 163-5.

During the mass, the Eucharist became deformed while the wine changed to the color of pitch.²² Both had been contaminated by the priest's sexualized/polluted touch.²³

The language of sexual danger, especially in terms of female sexuality, was widespread among reformers. Peter Damian, despite several friendships with women, often betrayed a misogynistic streak in his treatises and letters. Indeed, Peter directly connected the declining state of Latin Christendom to rampant promiscuity, which he associated with the female body. In a letter to Pope Alexander II, Peter declared that a woman's body, the object of man's sexual desire, should be seen as "the worms, the filth, the intolerable stench."²⁴ The letter continues by condemning women for marrying multiple times, luring each husband into a false sense of permanence in this world by providing physical pleasure even as they "are not faithful" to previous husbands.²⁵ This condemnation of serial monogamy highlights the importance Peter placed on marital chastity and fidelity, particularly for wives, while also emphasizing the temptations of the female body. In his later letter to Countess Guilla of Monte S. Maria, a secular noblewoman whom he otherwise seemed to admire, Peter Damian again addressed the dangers inherent in male-female interaction: "it is safer for me to converse in writing with young women in whose presence I am afraid. Certainly, I who am already an old man can boldly and safely look at the face of an old woman plowed with wrinkles, wet with the flow from her bleary eyes; but I guard from fire my eyes like [I guard] children [from fire] at the

²² Symeon of Durham, *Libellus de Exordio*, 172.

²³ Dyan Elliott has used narrative treatments of priests' wives as a prime example of clerical fear of the polluting effects of sexual intercourse in her article, "The Priest's Wife: Female Erasure and the Gregorian Reform," in *Medieval Religion: New Approaches*, ed. Constance Hoffman Berman (New York: Routledge, 2005), 123-55.

²⁴ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 96, iii. 59: "vermes, saniem, intolerabilemque foetorem."

²⁵ *Ibid.*, iii. 60.

sight of more beautiful and made-up faces.”²⁶ This backhanded compliment to the countess’s beauty demonstrates the continual danger posed by the female body for members of the clergy: even the sight of a pretty face could be too much.

The sense of sexual danger held true for laymen, as well, at least according to some ecclesiastical writers. Wives using their bodies to lure men away from righteous wars was a fairly common occurrence. Orderic Vitalis describes such an instance following the Norman Conquest of England. The wives left back home in Normandy wrote to their husbands in England, demanding their return; if the husbands did not return, the women threatened to take other men into their beds. Notably, the women in Orderic’s tale were confined to Normandy by the warfare in England, which the author describes as constant and bloody. In the masculine/feminine tradition, the wives could not be expected to cross into an arena of such hyper-masculinity.²⁷ Instead, they forced their husbands to abandon that arena, sacrificing their reputations as warriors—as men—in the process, in order to prevent the wives from “polluting” their marriage beds with adultery.²⁸ Orderic’s description of the Norman wives also reflects a deeper concern over the nature of marital obligations and the importance of mutual conjugal support. Wives were allocated a number of important rights under canon law.²⁹ These two concepts—the woman as sexual temptation and the strength of a marital

²⁶ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 143, iii. 522: “...iuvenculis mulieribus, quarum formidamus aspectus, tuto litterarum praebemus alloquium. Ego certe qui iam senex sum, anus quidem faciem rugis exaratam ac lipientium oculorum fluoribus madidam securus intueor, licenter attendo, a venustioribus autem atque fucatis sic oculos tanquam pueros ab igne custodio.” Eng. trans. Blum, v. 143; translation revised.

²⁷ At another point in his narrative, Orderic mentions that William the Conqueror sent his wife, Matilda of Flanders, back to Normandy in order to remove her from the fighting taking place in England. OV, ii. 222-4.

²⁸ Orderic uses the verb *polluere*, echoing the tone found in reformist tracts on pollution and purity: OV, v. 219.

²⁹ For the treatment of married women under medieval canon law, see Elizabeth M. Makowski, “The Conjugal Debt and Medieval Canon Law,” *Journal of Medieval History* 3:2 (1977), 99-102; James Brundage, “Sexual Equality in Medieval Canon Law,” in *Medieval Women and the Sources of Medieval History*, ed. Joel T.

vow—naturally could, and did, come into conflict with each other. For example, the men who departed on the First Crusade were often praised for their strength and dedication in being able to abandon their wives in favor of fighting for Christ.³⁰ The language used to describe a crusader leaving behind wife and family deliberately echoes the language of a professed religious retreating from the secular world and all of its sins—a notable and praiseworthy act, therefore.³¹ At the same time, the protections placed on crusaders' lands and families implies an awareness of the potential danger families and households would face during the absence of their leading male authority figures.

Besides the danger of sexual pollution, sources of the eleventh and twelfth centuries attest to a general acknowledgment of an inherent weakness in the female gender when it came to wielding political authority. Wipo of Burgundy described the Empress Chunegunda's efforts to support Conrad II's claim to the German throne in the early eleventh century as going as "far as the authority of her sex."³² The anonymous author of Emperor Henry IV's biography suggested that the German nobility revolted against Agnes's regency because they could not stand falling under the authority of a woman, a sentiment echoed by Frutolf of Michelsberg.³³

Rosenthal (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1990), 66-79 and "'Allas! That evere love was synne': Sex and Medieval Canon Law," *Catholic Historical Review* 72:1 (1986), 1-13.

³⁰ Fulcher of Chartres emphasized the emotions of husbands and their wives, depicting the women as fainting from grief while the men departed joyously: *Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1913), 163. Robert the Monk's record of Urban II's speech at Clermont has the pope discussing the abandonment of their families as a demonstration of the crusaders' devotion to Christ: *Historia Iherosolimitana*, ed. D. Kempf and M.G. Bull (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 6.

³¹ Natasha Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 109-13.

³² Wipo of Burgundy, "Gesta Chuonradi II Imperatoris," *Die Werke*, ed. Harry Bresslau, *MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi* 61 (Hanover: Hahn, 1915), 19: "...quantum huius sexus auctoritatis est..."

³³ The author of the *Vita Heinrichi IV Imperatoris* described the German princes' reasoning as "non decere regnum administrari a femina." See *Vita Heinrichi IV Imperatoris*, ed. Wilhelm Eberhard, *MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum separatim editi* 58 (Hanover: Hahn, 1899), 14. Frutolf suggests that the princes

Other German chroniclers defamed Agnes's role as regent precisely because she was a woman. The imperialist Sigebert of Gembloux stated that Agnes was unable to govern like a man (*non viriliter*).³⁴ Bonizo of Sutri complained that "with feminine audacity she did much that was against the law."³⁵ Admittedly Bonizo had a very mixed opinion of Empress Agnes, thanks in large part to her initial support of the anti-pope Cadalus of Parma, Alexander II's imperial rival.³⁶ When she became a stalwart supporter of Gregory VII, however, Bonizo took a far more favorable view of her, referring to her as "the glorious empress."³⁷ But the fact that Bonizo attributed the faults of her short regency to "feminine audacity" suggests how easy it was for clerical authors to suspect the authority of women.

In a remarkable example of a woman attempting to assert her authority over that of a man, Orderic Vitalis depicts the woman falling back on her maternal rather than political influence. According to Orderic, Matilda of Flanders, William the Conqueror's wife and queen, insisted on sending money and men to their eldest son Robert Curthose, despite his open rebellion against his father and king. William had ordered Matilda to stop, but she refused and confronted her furious husband with the following speech:

My lord, do not wonder that I love my first-born child with tender affection. By the strength of the Most High, if my son Robert were dead and buried seven feet deep in the earth, hidden from the eyes of the living, and I could bring him back to life with my own blood, I would shed my blood for him and suffer more anguish for his sake than,

were led by envy and stole Agnes's authority over the kingdom when they staged Henry IV's kidnapping. Frutolf described Agnes as ruling wisely and actively; see Frutolf, *Chronik*, 72.

³⁴ Sigebert of Gembloux, "Chronica," ed. Georg Pertz, *MGH Scriptores* 6 (Hanover: Impensis Bibliopolii Aulici Hahniani, 1844), 360.

³⁵ Bonizo of Sutri, "Liber ad Amicum," in *MGH Lib. de Lite*, i. 593: "Que multa contra ius feminea faciebat audacia."

³⁶ Agnes later renounced Cadalus as a display of religious piety. For the election of Cadalus as Pope Honorius [III], see Mary Stroll, *Popes and Anti-popes: The Politics of Eleventh Century Church Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 133-49. See also Black-Veldtrup, *Kaiserin Agnes*, 373-7.

³⁷ Bonizo of Sutri, "Liber ad Amicum," i. 601.

weak woman that I am, I dare to promise. How do you imagine that I can find any joy in possessing great wealth if I allow my son to be oppressed by dire poverty? May I never be guilty of such hardness of heart; all your power gives you no right to demand this of me.³⁸

There is no sense of Matilda's authority as a consecrated queen in this passage, though the speech makes specific reference to William's own power; in fact, Orderic has the queen herself acknowledge the weakness of her sex. Instead, Matilda must rely on her authority as a mother, an authority that was driven by emotion and a tie of blood rather than any form of institutionalized authority. Moreover, the mother fails in her attempt to help her son. William orders the imprisonment and blinding of Matilda's messenger, leaving Matilda with no other recourse than an intercessory prayer for the salvation of her son.³⁹ This passage is particularly interesting because Orderic's sympathies seem to lie with Matilda, whom he tends to portray in a flattering light. Yet here Matilda appears as an icon of loyal and determined maternal influence but is ultimately ineffective. Her plight, caught between father and son, suggests how much even a woman of the highest rank must depend upon the support of her male kin to enforce her own goals.

Ecclesiastical reformers were clearly aware of these more negative cultural models of femininity, which in turn influenced how they approached the question of secular female authority. Indeed, interactions between male clerics and secular women were particularly

³⁸ OV, iii. 102-4; translation slightly revised: "Ne mireris domine mi obsecro si ego primogenitam prolem meam tenere dilego. Per uirtutem Altissimi si Rodbertus filius meus mortuus esset, et in imo terrae septem pedibus ab oculis uiuentium absconditus esset, meoque sanguine uiuificari posset cruorem meum pro illo effunderem, et plusquam feminea imbecillitas spondere audet paterer anxietatem. Quanam putas ratione, ut me delectet diuitiis abundare, filiumque meum nimia patiar opprimi egestate? Procul absit a corde meo tanta duricia nec uestra debet hoc michi iubere potentia."

³⁹ In fact, Matilda sought out the aid of a famous hermit in her attempts to pray for her son's and husband's salvation and reconciliation. As soon as she made her request, the hermit was sent a divine vision that foretold William's death and the dire fate of Normandy under Robert's subsequent rule. This ominous prediction ends with an assurance for Matilda herself that she will predecease her husband and never see her homeland ruined by her son's ineptitude. Her "peaceful" death appears almost like a divinely granted boon in the passage. See *ibid.*, iii. 104-6.

dangerous for reformers, who purportedly desired to free the Church from polluting influences. Reformers' reliance on secular female support left them vulnerable to accusations of impropriety. In their denunciation of Gregory VII, the imperial bishops implied that the pope was involved in an inappropriate relationship with Matilda of Tuscany, a relationship that was presumably sexual in nature.⁴⁰ Such an accusation tainted Gregory with one of the very sins that he was trying to abolish, while undermining Matilda's social position and reputation by claiming she was an adulteress. It was apparently all too easy to presume the occurrence of wrongdoing when clerics and women interacted with each other. In 1064, Peter Damian wrote to Adelaide of Turin, mother-in-law to Henry IV, asking for her help in encouraging reform efforts to stamp out clerical marriage in northern Italy and Burgundy. The letter had apparently been delayed, by Peter's own confession, because of his fear of criticism for inviting a woman to act upon such matters:

Whatever I wrote to the venerable bishop of Turin about the harm done to chastity, which this same queen of virtues suffers at the hands of clerics, I had previously determined to write to you, except that I feared the calumny of these same insulting clerics. Indeed, they would have complained and said, 'See, how shamefully and inhumanely he acts while preparing to destroy us, he who is unwilling to discuss this matter cautiously and discreetly with bishops or with other men of the Church, but brazenly publicizes to women what should have been handled in the sacristy.' Therefore, fearing this eventuality, I altered the name of the addressee, and what I had planned to write to you, I sent to him instead. He, however, is bishop of only one diocese, but in your lands, which lie in two expansive kingdoms, Italy and Burgundy, there are many bishops holding office. And so it did not seem improper that I should write especially to you on the incontinency of clerics, since I felt that you possessed adequate means to correct the situation.⁴¹

⁴⁰ See the imperial bishops' 1076 decree: "Absageschreiben der deutschen Bischöfe an Gregor VII," in *Die Briefe Heinrichs IV*, ed. Carl Erdmann, Deutsches Mittelalter 1 (Leipzig: Hiersemann, 1937), 66.

⁴¹ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 114, iii. 296-7: "Quicquid de castitatis iniuria, quam eadem regina virtutum a clericis patitur, venerabili Taurinensi episcopo scripsi, tibi scribendum ante decreveram, nisi eorundem clericorum insugillantium calumpniam formidasse. Expostularent enim ac dicerent: Ecce, quam inpie, quam inhumane parat nos iste confundere, qui non cum episcopis, non cum aecclesiasticis viris super nostro negotio caute vult ac modeste disserere, sed quod in sacrario tractandum erat, non veretur feminis publicare. Hoc itaque metuens personam mutavi, et quod tibi concoeperam, illi potius destinavi. Ille tamen unius aecclesiae cathedram tenet, in ditione vero tua, quae in duorum regnorum Italiae scilicet et Burgundiae porrigitur, non breve confinium plures

In the end, Damian clearly decided that Adelaide's potential authority and influence as an ally of the reform party outweighed the danger of the attacks he was expecting from his opponents. What is particularly significant about this example is the strong sense of uncertainty that it suggests existed among both supporters and opponents of the reform over the participation of women in affairs that should be "handled in the sacristy." Indeed, this issue lay at the heart of the imperial bishops' complaint that Gregory VII had allowed the church to be run "by a new senate of women." The threat of women like Adelaide was twofold: she could become a source of both lay interference and female pollution in a Church trying to rid itself of both.

Nor was Peter Damian the only member of the reform party worried about the uncertain combination of women and the sacred. Cardinal Humbert of Silva Candida is perhaps most well known among reformers for his unbending stance on removing female influence not only from the Church but from positions of authority in general. In his treatise *Adversus Simonicos*, Humbert dedicated a chapter to the "presumption of women." He claimed that the interference of lay women in ecclesiastical affairs as well as that of lay men was to be condemned. In fact, the involvement of women in actions such as lay investiture or influencing episcopal elections was particularly odious because secular women "should be permitted neither to speak in church nor to rule over man."⁴² With this declaration, Humbert reinforces the idea of women as passive, silent creatures with no place in the public arena.

episcopantur antistites. Ideoque non indignum videbatur, ut tibi potissimum de clericorum incontinentia scriberem, cui videlicet ad corrigendum idoneam sentio non deesse virtutem." Eng. trans. Blum, iv. 294-5; translation revised.

⁴² Humbert of Silva Candida, "Adversus Simonicos," *MGH Lib. de Lite*, i. 212: "...quibus nec loqui in ecclesia permittitur nec dominari in virum..."

The presence of female actors in ecclesiastical affairs in general and the reform movement in particular thus presented what many saw as a conflict of interests: the purification of the Church on one hand, and the deliberate introduction of potential pollution into that Church on the other. Reformers and lay aristocratic women had to find some way to maneuver around these contradictory perceptions. In order to justify and encourage secular female involvement in the reform movement, reformers and laywomen created representations of female authority and lordship that drew heavily from the same discursive elements employed in reform polemical texts. By using the popular tools of reform rhetoric, ecclesiastical writers were able to apply the same ideological framework to women that they used to construct their overall reimagining of the society of Latin Christendom.

One of the most common and logical of these was the widespread mobilization of the language of the household, but with a renewed and increased emphasis on the authority of marital and parental positions and the dynamics of familial interactions. As discussed in the previous chapter, Gregory VII was particularly fond of couching his requests in terms of maternal and marital intercession.⁴³ In the two letters addressed to Matilda of Flanders which are preserved in Gregory's register, the pope reiterated the importance of Matilda's spousal duties to her husband. These duties included, above all else, to provide William with a constant reminder of his religious obligations. Indeed, Matilda was meant to "arm" her husband with her own weapons of charity and love.⁴⁴ Each of Gregory's two letters were in response to missives sent to him by the queen, first in 1074 and later in 1080.⁴⁵ More significantly, each

⁴³ See, for example, the discussion above of Gregory's dependence on Agnes of Poitou as a papal ambassador to Henry IV's court, 67-70.

⁴⁴ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. I.71 and VII.26, i. 102-3 and ii. 507.

⁴⁵ Matilda's letters have been lost; their contents are unknown.

letter to Matilda has an accompanying letter Gregory sent to her husband. When taken together, these two pairs of letters represent Gregory's pastoral advice to a royal couple. In the letters to William, the pope urges obedience to God's Church above all else, to display "the affection of a good son—the affection of a son who loves his mother from the heart."⁴⁶ Loyalty and support for the pope figures large in Gregory's understanding of this pious "affection." Gregory's approach to Matilda, in contrast, rests not on a call for her obedience but rather stresses her role as William's wife, as the king's appropriate guide in the performance of proper Christian acts. In a similar vein, a generation later Anselm of Canterbury addressed Matilda's daughter-in-law, Matilda of Scotland, encouraging her to lead her husband, Henry I, away from the "counsel of princes" and to "God's counsel."⁴⁷ In emphasizing the women's spousal duties, Gregory and Anselm tapped into a discourse both of wives as protectors of their husbands' spiritual health and of women as exemplars of Christian charity.

In their attempts to recruit women to the cause of the reform movement, clerical writers frequently referred to historical and biblical examples of active female defenders of the Church. Old Testament heroines proved to be particularly popular models of female agency for reformers. Turning to biblical women such as Esther, Ruth, Judith, and Deborah allowed reformers to incorporate their female allies into the wider discourse of returning to a better, purer past that in large part shaped the goals of the papal reform.⁴⁸ Biblical analogies also granted additional levels of meaning to the actions of lay noblewomen, who became new actors in the continuing saga of Christian salvation.⁴⁹ Moreover, clerical writers deployed Old

⁴⁶ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. I.70, i. 101: "affectum boni filii, affectum filii matrem ex corde diligentis."

⁴⁷ Anselm, *Opera*, no. 246, iv. 156.

⁴⁸ Alcuin Blamires, *The Case for Women in Medieval Culture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 171-4.

Testament heroines as role models almost solely in conjunction with a contemporary female actor. Peter Damian, for example, drew upon Old Testament female exemplars sparingly throughout his letters. When he did employ them, however, he did so in letters addressed to women, including his sisters, who were nuns, but also to two laywomen.⁵⁰ Moreover, the women of the Old Testament provided clerical reformers with a wide variety of examples of female participation in social and religious crises. For example, Ida of Boulogne and Margaret of Scotland were both compared to the Hebrew queen Esther in their *Vitae*, emphasizing their roles as intercessors on behalf of their subjects.⁵¹ Figures such as Judith and Deborah, on the other hand, served as clear examples of women participating in the masculine activities of warfare and administration.

The Old Testament prophetess Deborah proved a highly influential model for the purposes of reform rhetoric. One of the strongest and most active female actors in the Old Testament, Deborah served as a judge of Israel and incited the successful rebellion against Jabin of Canaan and his general Sisera, resulting in a long period of peace for the Israelites.⁵² Deborah's example covered a wide gamut of actions in a positively narrated fashion, ranging from the traditional female role of adviser and counselor to her far more unusual military activities against Sisera. It was these latter actions that seemed to have made her a popular

⁴⁹ Jennifer A. Harris, "The Bible and the Meaning of History in the Middle Ages," in *The Practice of the Bible in the Middle Ages: Production, Reception and Performance in Western Christianity*, ed. Susan Boynton and Diane J. Reilly (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 92-8.

⁵⁰ Guilla of Monte S. Maria and Adelaide of Turin, specifically. See Peter Damian, *Briefe*, nos. 94, 114, 143, iii. 31-41, iii. 295-306, iii. 521-5.

⁵¹ *V. Idea*, 142; *V. Margaretae*, 239; Lois Huneycutt, "Intercession and the High-Medieval Queen: The Esther Topos," in *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women*, ed. Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 126-46.

⁵² Book of Judges 4-5.

archetype among reform writers. Fighting for the righteous and oppressed tied neatly into the language of war and defense employed by major reform polemicists such as Peter Damian. And Deborah provided both encouragement and justification for the inclusion of (wise and pious) women in the ecclesiastical arena which was frequently constructed as an overtly masculine space. She also proved to be a malleable model.

In 1064, for example, Peter Damian told Adelaide of Turin to look to Deborah for inspiration, for, like Deborah, Adelaide ruled her land “without a man’s help.”⁵³ Peter used the specific example of Deborah and Barak going into battle together to encourage Adelaide to work with the bishop of Turin to ban clerical marriage:

As a woman you are as strong as a man, and more richly endowed with good will than with earthly power. Therefore, because in the words of the pagan poet, ‘My champion has need of a man to fight for him,’ I beg you and encourage you to join with the lord bishop, so that through your mutual efforts of defense you may take on the fight against the forces of impurity that are attacking Christ...Therefore, like this man and woman, namely, Barak and Deborah, who by assisting one another, entered the battle against Sisera and destroyed him and his forces armed with nine hundred chariots equipped with scythes, so should you and the bishop of Turin take up arms against Sisera, the leader of impurity, and slay him with the sword of chastity for having oppressed the Israelites, that is, the clerics of the church. Thus the bishop, in fact, all the bishops who live in the lands that you administer, should enforce episcopal discipline on the clerics, and you should apply the vigor of your worldly power to the women.⁵⁴

In this letter, Peter Damian uses the example of Deborah to emphasize the importance of the alliance between cleric and female lord. Together, the two have the power to reform an entire

⁵³ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 114, iii. 297: “... sine virili regis auxilio.”

⁵⁴ Ibid., iii. 298-9: “...cum virile robur femineo regnet in pectore, et ditior sis bona voluntate quam terrena potestate. Unde quia iuxta poetae gentilis eloquium, *Opus est huic tutore, quem defensorem paro*, hortor et peto, ut tu domno iungaris episcopo, quatinus mutuae virtutis fulti munimine furentis in Christum luxurie valeatis aciem debellare...Quapropter sicut vir ille cum femina, Barach videlicet cum Debborra, mutuis se fulciantes auxiliis contra Sisaram praelium susceperunt, eumque cum suis agminibus et nongentis falcatis curribus funditus debellarunt, ita vos, tu scilicet et Taurinensis episcopus, contra Sisaram luxurie ducem arma corripite, eumque in filios Israel, hoc est in clericos aecclesiae dominantem, mucrone pudicitiae iugulate. Quatinus et episcopus, immo omnes episcopi, qui in amministrationis tuae finibus commorantur, sacerdotali clericos disciplina coercent, et tu in feminas vigorem terrenae potestatis.” Eng. trans. Blum, iv. 296-7; translation revised.

region, freeing the local population from the contamination of clerical marriage. At the same time, Peter has used the example of Deborah to represent Adelaide's actions as being distanced from the ecclesiastical sphere. Barak and Deborah are two parallel but separate forces; likewise, while the bishop of Turin watches over his fellow clergymen, Adelaide finds herself relegated to a circle of women. In this way Peter brings Adelaide into the sphere of a masculinized defense of the Church while still keeping her femininity safely contained.

Paul of Bernried, writing in 1128, on the other hand, used the model of Deborah to defend the agency and power of good Christian female lords, even over men. In his *Vita* of Gregory VII, Paul emphasizes the crucial combination of secular authority and religious feeling by identifying three women as particularly important to Gregory's pontificate, Agnes of Poitou, Beatrice of Tuscany, and her daughter Matilda. He describes Agnes primarily in terms of her religious vow.⁵⁵ Agnes thus appears as an exemplar for abdicating her secular authority, a common theme in written praises of the empress. The countesses of Tuscany, on the other hand, are characterized far more forcefully: "[A]lthough they carried out the worldly duties of dukes and governed Italy, they were made like Deborah, who, when she judged Israel, scattered Jabin with all his men in the torrent Kishon, that is, they often confounded the wicked and ground them down."⁵⁶ Paul uses Deborah in her role as both warrior and judge, and it is noteworthy that she appears without her male counterpart, Barak. This combination encourages the interpretation of Beatrice and Matilda as powerful Christian lords in their positions as administrators of justice. The placement of Paul's use of the Deborah simile in the *Vita* is

⁵⁵ Paul of Bernried, "Vita Gregorii VII papae," *PR* I, 506.

⁵⁶ Ibid.: "quae licet mundana cura ducum officium, Italiam gubernando, gesserint, ut Debbora nimirum effectae, quae iudicans Israel Iabin cum suis omnibus in torrente Cison dispersit, hoc est, iniquos multotiens confusibiles contriverunt."

particularly interesting. It appears as part of a short passage addressing Gregory's alliance with these three particularly powerful women. Paul seems to offer the passage as a defense of Gregory's interactions with the women, stating that he has brought their involvement in Gregory's affairs to the reader's attention in order to prove false the accusations against Gregory for having had immoral relations with his female allies. In other words, Paul offers here, through the Deborah example, a rationalization for Gregory's reliance on female agents, which act had cast his "innocence" in doubt. It is notable, therefore, that Beatrice and Matilda in particular do not appear limited to a female sphere of influence. In fact, like Deborah, Paul portrays them as strengthening "the state of the kingdom" through war-like actions by grinding down the wicked.

Paul of Bernried was not the first clerical commentator to compare Matilda of Tuscany to Deborah. Her earliest biographer, Donizo of Canossa, also found Deborah to be a useful model.⁵⁷ Matilda appears as a new Deborah late in Donizo's narrative. In 1093, Donizo tells us, Matilda learned that Henry IV's second wife, Eupraxia of Kiev, had been imprisoned in Verona, where Henry was in the habit of sexually mistreating her.⁵⁸ Eupraxia, "trembling with fear, secretly sought Matilda's protection, asking that she separate her from the enemy. Matilda, the new Deborah, perceiving that the time, the moment, was at hand to prostrate him as the other prostrated Sisera, secretly sent troops to Verona."⁵⁹ The troops free Eupraxia and bring her back to Matilda's lands, where she eventually reveals Henry's crimes at the 1095

⁵⁷ Patricia Skinner argues that Donizo, lacking useful models of female rulers, played down Matilda's gender; *Women in Medieval Italian Society 500-1200* (New York: Longman, 2001), 139-41.

⁵⁸ For Eupraxia's imprisonment and later rebellion against Henry IV, see I.S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany, 1056-1106* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 289-91.

⁵⁹ V. *Mathildis*, 180: "Cumque timore tremit, furtim munima quaerit/ Mathildis, poscens ut eam disiungat ab hoste/ Aspiciens Debora nova tempus inesse vel horam/ Hunc ut prosternat Siseram, clam quippe catervam/ Veronam misit..."

Council of Piacenza.⁶⁰ According to Donizo, Matilda's actions had dealt a mighty blow against Henry, like Jael piercing Sisera's temple with a tent peg.⁶¹ Interestingly, Donizo does not often allude to biblical models. That he should choose to equate Matilda with Deborah in this context—as the protector of another woman—is therefore particularly interesting. Moreover, he conflates Matilda with both Deborah and Jael. As a new Deborah, the countess commanded troops; but as a new Jael, she herself struck directly against Henry, Donizo's Sisera.

The war-like model of the Old Testament prophetess is only one example of a potentially masculinized discourse of secular female authority constructed by some of the reform writers. Like both lay and clerical men, women were frequently called upon to “defend” the Church and “attack” its enemies. One particularly striking shift in language during the reform era involved the adaptation of a traditional rhetorical trope to match the proactive nature of many reformers' goals. The terms *orphani* and *viduae* had long been common indicators of the weaker members of society. Moreover, treatment of such social groups reflected strong Christian moralistic ideologies that are constantly reaffirmed in scriptural and patristic texts.⁶² Clerical writers used these terms as a rhetorical ploy to explain appropriate actions for different classes; for secular lords, textual representations of their treatment of *orphani* and *viduae* spoke loudly about their perceived status as Christian rulers. Textual tradition on the whole dictated that male rulers were to be both protective of and generous to these “defenseless” groups. For

⁶⁰ V. *Mathildis*, 180-2.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 180.

⁶² The evolution of charity to less fortunate groups as a hallmark of medieval Christianity has frequently been addressed by scholars. See Eliza Buhrer, “From *Caritas* to Charity: How Loving God Became Giving Alms,” in *Poverty and Prosperity in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Anne Scott and Cynthia Kosso (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012), 113-28; and Mary Sirridge, “The Wailing of Orphans, the Cooing of Doves, and the Groans of the Sick: The Influence of Augustine's Theory of Language on Some Theories of Interjection,” in *Vestigia, Imagines, Verba: Semiotics and Logic in Medieval Theological Texts*, ed. Costantino Marmo (Turnhout: Brepols, 1997), 99-116.

example, the author of the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* described King Cnut as a defender of wards and widows and a supporter of orphans.⁶³ In the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, Richard III of Normandy is called a “sustainer of paupers, guardian of orphans, a devout defender of widows, and a generous redeemer of captives.”⁶⁴ In describing Conrad II’s excellence as a Christian king, Wipo has Conrad abruptly stop the royal procession on the way to his own consecration in order to hear the pleas of a farmer, an orphan, and a widow.⁶⁵ Despite the protests of the attendant princes at the delay, Conrad insisted judging the cases on that very spot. “Thus the king in such causes,” Wipo declared, “for which the regal authority is wont to be solicited most of all—that is, for the defense of churches, widows, and orphans—prepared for himself that day the way to the remaining affairs of government.”⁶⁶ In the 1060s Peter Damian still relied on this popular formulation to justify the necessity of violence in certain cases. It appears in a letter of reprimand Peter sent to the duke of Lotharingia, Godfrey III (the Bearded). Godfrey, the cardinal bishop complained, had been too compassionate in his lordly duties by neglecting his role as judge and enforcer of the law. For Peter, the use of violence was required in the maintenance of proper order: “Indeed, what sweeter sacrifice can one offer to God than to release orphans from the hands of violent men, to protect widows, to put the

⁶³ *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, ed. and trans. Alistair Campbell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 35-7.

⁶⁴ *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, ed. Elisabeth van Houts, 2 vols, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), i. 134: “...pauperum sustentator, ophanorum tutor, uiduarum pius defensor et captiuorum liberalis redemptor.”

⁶⁵ This depiction of the king as an accessible source of justice to all of his subjects is a notable theme in texts concerning early medieval kings.

⁶⁶ Wipo of Burgundy, “Gesta Chuonradi II Imperatoris,” 27: “Ita rex in talibus causis, pro quibus maxime regia auctoritas interpellari solet, hoc est pro ecclesiarum, viduarum, orphanorum defensione, ad reliqua regimina sibi ea die viam praeparavit.”

down and out on their feet again, and to restore the lost title to those who were robbed and cheated of their property?”⁶⁷

Lay aristocratic women were also frequently connected to orphans, widows, and other symbols of the weak in a wide variety of texts. Before the height of the reform movement in the late eleventh century, though, this connection usually consisted of displays of generosity and charity without the corresponding language of defense used for their male counterparts. To return briefly to the Carolingian examples discussed in Chapter One, the tenth-century saintly queen Matilda of Ringelheim appears in the second version of her *Vita* as a mother to orphans and widows, emphasizing her compassion and support.⁶⁸ Dhuoda instructed her son to be generous towards these same groups by offering his hospitality to those in need.⁶⁹ In the *Encomium*, “the poor mourned [Emma’s departure from England], by whose continual generosity they were defended from the burden of want; the widows mourned with the orphans, whom she had freely enriched when they were taken from the holy baptismal font.”⁷⁰ Here, even though the author of the *Encomium* draws upon a verb of defense, it appears in a context of almsgiving. The Carolingian and Ottonian authors were, in turn, drawing on similar themes from early medieval hagiographical texts: the saintly queen Radegund, for example, was

⁶⁷ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 68, ii. 291: “Quod utique suavius Deo sacrificium valet offerri, quam de violentorum manibus pupillos eripere, viduas defensare, oppressos erigere, spoliatos et abiectos in amissos proprii iuris titulos reformare?”

⁶⁸ “Vita Mathildis reginae posterior,” 154.

⁶⁹ Dhuoda, *Handbook for her Warrior Son: Liber Manualis*, ed. and trans. Marcelle Thiébaux, Cambridge Medieval Classics 8 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 150. For a similar example, see the depiction of Empress Theophano as an almsgiver in the *Vita* of Saint Adalbert, in *Vitae Sanctorum Aetatis Conversionis Europae Centralis (Saec. X-XI)*, ed. Gábor Klaniczay, trans. Cristian Gașpar and Marina Miladinov (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2013), 128-30.

⁷⁰ *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, 50: “...dolebant pauperes eius recessione, cuius diutinis largitionibus e ab aegestatis defensabantur onere; dolebant uiduae cum orphanis, quos illa extractos sacro fonte baptismatis non modicis ditauerat.”

famous for her charity. Generosity towards the emblematic groups of *orphani* and *viduae* was thus an expected action of aristocratic laywomen in Christian society.

In the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, however, several writers applied the *orphani* and *viduae* formula to their new conceptions of secular female authority. Rather than emphasizing solely the need for good Christian women to commit acts of charity, some writers presented women in the role of protectors of these two vulnerable groups. In doing so, the same masculine discourse of defense that had shaped the understanding of a male lord's relationship with the poor and the weak came to be applied to female lords, as well. For instance, Gregory VII told Adelaide of Swabia, queen of Hungary (d. 1090), that defending "paupers, orphans, widows, and all who are oppressed unjustly" was part and parcel of her obedience to the holy Church.⁷¹ Orderic Vitalis claimed that Adela of Blois taught her young sons how to defend the Church.⁷² During his 1103 journey to Rome, Anselm of Canterbury wrote to Queen Matilda II to ask that she treat the churches of England "as orphans of Christ" and bring them under "the wings of her protection."⁷³ The timing of this letter suggests that Anselm was asking the queen to take up at least part of his role as the defender of the English Church during his absence. This was also the same Matilda whom the author of the *Warene Chronicle* described as a "fortress of safety to all taking refuge with her."⁷⁴ Clearly, Matilda developed a reputation as a source of protection during her reign.

This shift in the *viduae/orphani* formula was not by any means universal. Margaret of Scotland's biographer, writing in the early twelfth century at the behest of Margaret's daughter,

⁷¹ Gregory VII, *Register*, no.11, i. 18: "pauperes orfanos viduas omnesque iniuste oppressos defendere."

⁷² OV, vi. 42.

⁷³ Anselm, *Opera*, no. 288, iv. 207-8: "quasi orphanis Christi...sub alis protectionis suae..."

⁷⁴ *Warene (Hyde) Chronicle*, 49: "omnibus se fugientibus in quantum...presidium"

the above-mentioned Matilda II, emphasized the more traditional charitable displays.⁷⁵ Each morning Margaret would feed a horde of “infant orphans” and both the “native poor” and “members of almost every nation” who, according to the author, flocked to the Scottish court after hearing about Margaret’s generosity and compassion.⁷⁶ In a similar vein, the unknown author of Ida of Boulogne’s *Vita* also chose to reiterate the more traditional focus on almsgiving. In one version of the text, Ida surrounds herself with widows, orphans, and the needy, whom she diligently clothes.⁷⁷ These different uses of the widow/orphan paradigm to signify types of female agency can be explained at least in part by the authors’ different contexts and purposes. The biographers of Margaret of Scotland and Ida of Boulogne were constructing narratives centered on the more traditional visions of female agency within the household, much like the hagiographer of St. Matilda of Ringelheim. Margaret and Ida both emerge from the page overwhelmingly as maternal figures, both in terms of compassionate attributes and in their roles as nurturers and instructors. The image of Margaret feeding infant orphans is echoed in a similar passage detailing the attention she devoted to her biological children—an attention to which the author attributes her children’s good reputations as Christian lords.⁷⁸ She is also a font of Latin Christian cultural knowledge in a somewhat “barbaric” court. Her biographer depicts her schooling her husband, King Malcolm III of Scotland, in the importance and ritual of prayer and almsgiving; under her gentle and loving

⁷⁵ For the manuscript tradition of the *Vita*, see Catherine Keene, *Saint Margaret, Queen of the Scots: A Life in Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 5-6.

⁷⁶ *V. Margaretae*, 238.

⁷⁷ *V. Idae*, 141-6. The *Vita* was almost certainly written by a monk of St. Waast, one of Ida’s own monastic foundations; Heather J. Tanner, *Families, Friends and Allies: Boulogne and Politics in Northern France and England, c. 879-1160* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 140.

⁷⁸ *V. Margaretae*, 240.

influence Malcolm is led to the path of Christian kingship.⁷⁹ Thus, it is Margaret's agency as a maternal and instructive authority which proves to be the defining trait of her character in the biography.⁸⁰ Ida of Boulogne's biographer, on the other hand, did not need to portray his subject as a civilizing and Christianizing force. Like Margaret, Ida's maternal role as a teacher and nurturer is emphasized, not only in terms of passing on her own pious feelings to her three famous sons, but also in terms of her interactions as countess with the people of Boulogne. In the text, Ida's generosity to the widowed and poor bolsters her overall reputation for extraordinary maternal compassion; she cares for them, clothes them, supports them, and prays for them.⁸¹ Her people even refer to her as "*Mater! Mater!*"⁸² Her biographer makes her the most pious figure in a Christian society that can be led to even greater spiritual heights through emulation of the mother-countess.

The application to female action of the more masculine language of defense, on the other hand, appears most often in letters exchanged between reformers and their secular allies, and understandably so. In the cases cited above, the clerical reformers were asking female lords to act in a way that tested the traditional boundaries of their agency and influence. Although Gregory and Anselm were both addressing women in the particularly privileged position of queen-consort, their adaptation of the *viduae/orphani* formula is all the more notable for the

⁷⁹ V. *Margaretae*, 237; see also Keene, *Saint Margaret*, 59-61.

⁸⁰ Notably, Margaret's daughter, Matilda of Scotland, commissioned the *Vita* in the early twelfth century. The author wrote the work in part as a mirror for Matilda in her role as queen of England; see Lois Huneycutt, "The Idea of the Perfect Princess: The Life of St. Margaret in the Reign of Matilda II (1100-1118)," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 12 (1989), 81-97. Turgot's emphasis on Margaret's maternal image may also be a result of his desire for Matilda to follow in her mother's footsteps as a show of filial obedience and emulation.

⁸¹ Duby suggested that Ida's function in the *Vita* was to demonstrate the fulfillment of feminine roles in marriage; "The Matron and the Mis-Married Woman: Perceptions of Marriage in Northern France circa 1100," in *Social Relations and Ideas: Essays in Honor of R.H. Hilton*, ed. T.H. Aston, P.R. Cross, Christopher Dyer, and Joan Thirsk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 90-1.

⁸² V. *Idae*, 144.

prominence these women would have had in their respective courts. Adelaide of Swabia was queen of an area which had only recently been Christianized. Gregory's instruction to defend orphans, widows, and the weak appears as part of a broader pastoral lesson on the nature and necessity of Christian rulership. Adelaide was not the only Hungarian queen consort whom Gregory identified as a force for the "civilizing" of the Hungarian court.⁸³ As Hungary was better incorporated into the sphere of Latin Christendom, the figure of the foreign queen consort could serve as a crucial model of general Christian lordship, much like the figure of Saint Margaret in Scotland.

Anselm of Canterbury, too, identified the position of the queen as an idealized exemplar, though his alliance with Matilda of Scotland was prompted in large part by her husband Henry I's refusal to give up lay investiture—in other words, by the king's failure to adapt to the new models of Christianized secular authority. Anselm needed Matilda to pick up the neglected duties of the royal defense of the church. The anonymous *Warrenne* chronicler went even further in his depiction of Henry's queen. In the chronicle, Matilda appears as the heroine and the main stabilizing force of Henry's reign. Her description as a "fortress of safety" is followed immediately by the statement that "It is agreed that by her merits King Henry ruled and the kingdom of the Norman-English grew in manifold ways."⁸⁴ Later in the narrative, the chronicler describes the sorrow and troubles which afflicted England following Matilda's death in 1118: "Moreover, in order that it may be shown that England was made strong by her merits and that King Henry reigned by her prayers, within eight days of her burial, a new and

⁸³ Gregory also wrote to Judith of Swabia (Adelaide's sister), the queen consort of Solomon of Hungary (r. 1063-74), cousin to Adelaide's husband, Ladislaus I (r. 1077-95). For Gregory's letter to Judith, see *Register*, no. 44, i. 180-1.

⁸⁴ *Warrenne (Hyde) Chronicle*, 48: "Cuius meritis constat regem Henricum regnasse et regnum Normananglorum multipliciter excreuisse."

apparently inextinguishable conflict rose against him.”⁸⁵ So Matilda becomes the bedrock, the true source of authority for Henry’s reign. She was not only a protector of the weak and poor, according to the chronicler. Instead, she was a shield even for the king, thanks in large part to her “two-fold love”: the combination of religious devotion and secular influence which the chronicler claims defined her approach to rulership.⁸⁶

Queens were not the only ones called upon to act in a man-like manner in defense of the poor or weak. One particularly intriguing example is Peter Damian’s letter to Guilla of Monte S. Maria (dated sometime before 1067). The countess had only recently married Rainerius II, a man for whom Peter held very little respect after hearing his confession. Moreover, Rainerius refused to fulfill the penance Peter had set for him, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem.⁸⁷ It appears Peter turned to Rainerius’ new wife as a natural substitute for fulfilling the count’s duties as a Christian lord. The *viduae/orphani* paradigm appears in the letter as a lesson on what she should not do: Peter warns Guilla against mistreating orphans and widows as her husband had done.⁸⁸ Indeed, Peter saw Rainerius as such a failure as a Christian lord that he informed Guilla it was up to her “to reform the manners of your house, suppress violence and violations of the peace, and through discipline curb the administration of your estate that has gone unchecked”⁸⁹ and to dispose of her duties “according to the will of God.”

⁸⁵ *Warene (Hyde) Chronicle*, 66: “Cetereum ut ostenderetur ius meritis Angliam ualuisse et regem Henricum eius precibus regnasse, infra dies octo deposicionis eius orta est contra eum noua quedam et quasi inextinguibilis discordia.”

⁸⁶ See the chronicler’s eulogy of Queen Matilda: *Warene (Hyde) Chronicle*, 64-6.

⁸⁷ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 151, iv. 1-5

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 143, iii. 522-4.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, iii. 525: “...domus tuae mores institue, rapinas pacis et violentias reprime, ministeria diffrenata sub disciplina compesce.”

Such law-keeping actions should have fallen squarely in Rainerius's sphere of authority, but Peter places Guilla in this position instead, telling her to act, in short, like a male lord—because her husband, apparently, did not.⁹⁰

Applying a discourse of defense to women actors seems therefore to signal a shift in certain ideologies of secular female authority. Defending the church, the poor, the orphaned, and the widowed drew on more active associations of fighting and guarding, traditional male activities. But this masculinized language of defense was also being used to describe the activities and actions of the clerical reformers, another group marked in part by its theoretical distance from the realm of warfare; Matilda of Scotland herself employed such language in describing Anselm's service as archbishop.⁹¹ The rhetoric of attack and defense in relation not only to the Church but also to Christian society in general helped to justify the changes introduced by the reform movement; Latin Christendom was being freed from chains of pollution and oppression. Participation in such a righteous cause was both praiseworthy and necessary, perhaps to such an extent that even the "arming" of secular women could be vindicated.

Viragos, Amazons, and Princes: Blurring the Gendered Boundaries of Secular Lordship

The use of more masculine terms of war and agency in relation to women begs the question whether female lords were being told to be, in a sense, men rather than women, to forget the feminine in favor of the privileged masculine. Some, like Georges Duby, have

⁹⁰ Patricia Ranft suggests that Peter's letter to Guilla demonstrates his belief in the spiritual equality of men and women, even as he accepts women's inferior positions in secular affairs, but this interpretation does not seem to capture fully the import of Peter's exhortation for Guilla to take up her husband's role. See Ranft, *The Theology of Peter Damian* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 194.

⁹¹ The letter was collected in Anselm's register: see *Opera*, no. 242, iv.150-2.

argued in favor of this hypothesis, which has in part led to a sense of exceptionalism in historiographical discussions of prominent and powerful medieval women.⁹² Kimberly LoPrete, however, uses her study of the term *virago* to refute this argument. LoPrete suggests that the term, which can be translated in various ways to mean a man-like or heroic woman, denoted an author's awareness of a woman taking on traditional male activities without surrendering her own femininity.⁹³ Such women "were still expected to adhere to the same behavioral standards as all other lay women and were judged largely in terms of traditionally 'female' virtues."⁹⁴ The sources of the reform era align much more closely with LoPrete's formulation than with the idea of women becoming non-women. Textual representations of man-like women in the reform do more than just identify "women of distinction," as LoPrete refers to them. As this section will argue, the adaptable nature of the gendered rhetoric to describe these women reinforced the discursive conceptions of authority which reformers deployed in their attempts to restructure the society of Latin Christendom. Secular lordship, for clerical reformers, served as the intersection of multiple ideologies: of concepts of order and justice, of violence and peace, of the masculine and the feminine. In order to achieve a perfect model of Christian lordship, a balance had to be maintained, even if that required a blurring of traditional gendered spheres of activities.

A good illustration of this blurring of gendered paradigms is Peter Damian's 1064 letter to Adelaide of Turin. Peter coupled the term *virago* with a summary of the Old Testament

⁹² Duby, "Woman and Power," 78.

⁹³ Kimberly LoPrete, "Gendering Viragos: Medieval Perceptions of Powerful Women," in *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women 4: Victims or Viragos?*, ed. Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 17-38.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 21.

heroines, including Deborah, Jael, Judith, Esther, and Abigail.⁹⁵ Each woman appears in a context of war and danger, the same context into which Peter places Adelaide: “Act therefore, be a virago of the Lord...For such victory makes God very happy who triumphs sometimes through women with quite glorious praise...You also can avert the sword of divine fury from your home and from those in the regions you rule.”⁹⁶ The combination of Old Testament figures which the author brings into his letter is particularly interesting. Deborah, Jael, and Judith appear as agents of physical violence—participants in war and the killing of men. Esther and Abigail, in contrast, draw upon the more traditionally “female” acts of interceding with the dominant male authorities, but there is no sense in the letter of these latter two being more feminine in nature. The presence and participation of Deborah, Jael, and Judith in arenas of violence were necessitated by the threats to their immediate circumstances, threats which, in the later interpretations by eleventh-century reformers, reflected the oppression and destruction of Christian morals and appropriate forms of political institutions. Adelaide of Turin, according to the reformist ideals of Peter Damian, possessed the necessary attributes to become another champion of God in this period of religious and social crisis: the practice both “of piety and of justice.”⁹⁷ Like the Old Testament models set before her, Adelaide offered a crucial combination of effective agency and religious devotion.

John of Mantua also used the term *virago* to describe an aristocratic woman acting on behalf of the Church. He dedicated his commentary on the Song of Songs to Matilda of

⁹⁵ The term *virago* appears relatively rarely in texts of the reform era. LoPrete suggests it was used more often in verse than in prose, for metrical purposes; “Gendering Viragos,” 21-4.

⁹⁶ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 114, iii. 299-300: “Age ergo, esto virago Domini...Talis enim victoria Deum valde laetificat, qui aliquando per feminas gloriosiori laude triumphat...Tu quoque a domo tua et ab his, quibus premnes regionibus, gladium poteris divini furoris avertere.” Eng. trans. Blum, 297; translation revised.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, iii. 305-6.

Tuscany, whom he addresses directly throughout the text.⁹⁸ In one key passage, John refers to Matilda as a *virago* multiple times. At the same time, he instructs her to bear arms against heretics and other enemies of the Church. Matilda, John writes, needs to bear the sword of the world in cooperation with the sword of heaven wielded by clergymen.⁹⁹ Like Adelaide, therefore, Matilda needed to bear arms like a man for a religious cause. Although these women's sex problematized their presence in male spheres of activity, the nature of their authority is displayed in the writings of Peter Damian and John of Mantua as a balance of two parallel types working in harmony. Matilda and Adelaide were not women undermining the male sphere, but women working within the boundaries of male activities in order to uphold a concept of social order that was applicable (at least in theory) to all of Latin Christendom.

The theme of a woman acting in a man-like fashion or having manly virtues appears frequently in a variety of source genres from the reform period. For example, Peter Damian described Anne of Kiev (d. 1075), queen of France, as having "virtue of manlike proportions" in "the heart of a woman."¹⁰⁰ These virtues included generosity to the poor, dedication to prayer, and exacting "strict penalties from those who use violence against others."¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ Patrick Healy has identified John of Mantua as part of a "powerhouse of intellectual inquiry" at Matilda's court; "*Merito nominetur virago*: Matilda of Tuscany in the polemics of the Investiture Contest," in *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women 4: Victims or Viragos?*, ed. Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 53.

⁹⁹ John of Mantua, *In Cantica Cantorum et de Sancte Maria Tractatus ad Comitissam Matildam*, ed. Bernhard Bischoff and Burkhard Taeger, Spicilegium Friburgense 19 (Freiburg: Universitätsverlag, 1973), 51-2. Robinson places John's commentary within the context of the wider discourse on violence and the bearing of arms which was prevalent at Matilda's court. See Robinson, *Authority and Resistance in the Investiture Contest: The Polemical Literature of the Late Eleventh Century* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1978), 102-3. See also Vito Fumagalli, *Matilde di Canossa: Potenza e solitudine di una donna del Medioevo* (Bologna: il Mulino, 1996), 27-32. John was part of a larger group (including Anselm of Canterbury) of clerical authors who commented with increasing frequency on the Song of Songs, as part of a growing interest in devotion to the Virgin Mary; E. Ann Matter, *The Voice of My Beloved: The Song of Songs in Western Medieval Christianity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1990), 158-60; Miri Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (New York: Allen Lane, 2009), 134-6.

¹⁰⁰ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 64, ii. 226: "quia in femineo pectore virile vivere virtutum robur."

Interestingly, this letter dates to 1059, before Henry I of France's death and the start of Anne's regency in mid-1060. The descriptions which Peter Damian uses to describe the French queen's actions seem to imply that Anne was particularly active in her husband's court. Anne's contemporary, Agnes of Poitou, who also served as regent after her husband's death, was described in a similar manner: the author of the *Vita Henrici IV* wrote that Empress Agnes was a woman of manly disposition.¹⁰²

Some authors invoked images of military prowess to emphasize the capability of their female subjects. Occasionally these militarized descriptions appear, logically enough, within a context of war or battle. Orderic Vitalis described Isabel of Conches, a noblewoman in the Évrechin, as comparable to "other warlike Amazon queens" because "in war she rode armed as a knight among knights."¹⁰³ William of Malmesbury used the same Amazonian image to describe Matilda of Tuscany's efforts to install Urban II in Rome:

So on the death of Hildebrand, of which I have spoken, and the election of Urban by the cardinals, the emperor stood firm in his determination to promote Wibert and call him pope, and then to drive out his rival and establish him in Rome; but what was thought the better cause was supported by the troops of the Marchioness Matilda who, unmindful of her sex and a worthy rival of the Amazons of old, led into battle, woman as she was, the columns of men clad in mail. With her support Urban at a later date achieved the Apostolic throne, and held it in peace and quiet for eleven years.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 64, ii. 226: "...pro violenter oppressis vim disctrictionis exerere..."

¹⁰² "Vita Heinrici IV Imperatoris," 13.

¹⁰³ OV, iv. 212-4: "In expeditione inter milites ut miles equitabat armata...aliasque reginas Amazonum bellatrices..."

¹⁰⁴ William, *Gesta Regum*, i. 522; translation slightly revised: "Porro Hildebrando papa, ut dixi, mortuo et Urbano a cardinalibus electo, imperator hesit in proposito ut Wibertum preferret et papam dictitaret, Romaeque altero expulso inferret. Sed aequiori, ut uidebatur, causae affuit militia Mathildis marcisae, quae oblita sexus nec dispar antiquis Amazonibus ferrata uirorum agmina in bellum agebat femina. Eius suffragio Urbanus posteriori tempore thronum indeptus apostolicum securum per undecim annos actitauit otium."

Although both Orderic and William referred to Amazon queens as an ancient model for warrior women, the tones of these two passages are very different. Orderic's Amazonian Isabel emerges from the text as a cruel, envious, and tyrannical figure, who dominated her husband and oppressed her vassals.¹⁰⁵ Isabel's bitter rivalry with another woman, Countess Helwise, plunged the Évrecin into an unnecessary civil war. She adopts the actions and dress of a knight out of avarice and political ambition; if a man had been the actor instead, such actions would still be condemned. The fact that the actor is a woman makes the situation all the more jarring and unacceptable. Isabel's assumption of male characteristics without what Orderic deems a worthy cause makes her, therefore, one of Orderic's many representations of a wicked woman.¹⁰⁶ William's Matilda, on the other hand, is a warrior woman in service of the Church, a cause which both excuses and justifies her presence in a sphere of action regarded as being masculine in nature. The fact that she was a woman leading men into battle clearly makes her unusual in terms of the norms of female agency, but the tone of the passage is unquestionably one of praise.

In these examples of women acting like men, though phrases such as "forgetful of her sex" are common, women were not *becoming* men. Instead, such examples reinforce common gendered conceptions of agency and authority through the very act of highlighting the crossing of boundaries between male and female spheres of activity. Moreover, this crossing worked both ways; men could act like women as often as women acted like men. In many cases woman-like men were seen as a problem for reform-era authors. Peter Damian, William of

¹⁰⁵ Orderic writes of Isabel and her rival, Helwise: "...suisque maritis imperabant, subditos homines premebant"; OV, iv. 212.

¹⁰⁶ For a similar "bad woman" archetype in Orderic's history, see his descriptions of Mabel of Bellême; OV ii. 48, ii. 54, ii. 122-4, iii. 136.

Malmesbury, Orderic Vitalis, and others complained about “effeminate” men destroying the culture of Latin Christendom. But again, these were not men becoming women but rather acting like women by adopting female traits. Peter Damian equated effeminacy with lust, weak men giving into their own biological urges.¹⁰⁷ William of Malmesbury referred to the courtiers of William Rufus’s reign as men with long hair, luxurious garments, and soft bodies prone to promiscuity.¹⁰⁸ Orderic’s effeminates were similar creatures who “rejected the traditions of honest men...grew long and luxurious locks like women, and loved to deck themselves in long, over-tight shirts and tunics.”¹⁰⁹ These descriptions of gendered misbehavior by men mirror the common representations of female weaknesses: uncontrollable sexual desire, vanity, and lack of physical strength.¹¹⁰ Similar to Isabel of Conches, effeminate men were taking on the more negative attributes of the opposite gender. Their fault was reified not just by acting like women, but by acting like bad women.

There were praiseworthy “female” virtues in the textual tradition of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, however. During the reform, more feminine virtues such as compassion, kindness, and nurturing were occasionally applied to male actors. For instance, in the letter to Godfrey of Lotharingia cited above, Peter Damian outlined a twofold vision of authority. One half was the masculinized representation of justice, punishment, and discipline, the half which Godfrey needed to follow. The other half, however, was more compassionate and merciful in nature. Peter provided an example of a priest acting like a mother: “All the members of the

¹⁰⁷ For example, see Peter’s letter to Abbot Hugh of Cluny; *Briefe*, no. 103, iii. 138-41.

¹⁰⁸ William, *Gesta Regum*, i. 558-60.

¹⁰⁹ OV, iv. 188: “longos crines ueluti mulieres nutriebant, et summopere comebant, prolixisque nimiumque strictis camisiis indui tunicisque guadebant.” See also OV, vi. 64.

¹¹⁰ Robert Bartlett, “The Symbolic Meanings of Hair in the Middle Ages,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 4 (1994), 49-52.

Church are not assigned to the same office, for one duty is proper to a priest, another to a judge. The former must be the soul of compassion, and in maternal mercy always gathering the Church's children to her breast and nourishing them with the richness of her teaching."¹¹¹ Such compassionate language fit more easily with depictions of holy men, particularly professed religious. Pope Leo IX's biographer, for example, emphasized his mercy and loving nature above all of his other virtues.¹¹² Applying positive feminine traits to secular men, however, required a careful approach. Secular lords in particular could not afford to be too soft, as Peter Damian warned Godfrey the Bearded. One good illustration of the danger of a secular lord being overly gentle is Edward the Confessor. Before his full reimagining in the later twelfth century as a saintly king, Edward's earlier reputation was a good deal more ambiguous. William of Malmesbury remarked that "at home and abroad all was peace and quiet, a result all the more surprising in that he was so gentle, and could not bring himself to utter a harsh word against even the lowest of mankind."¹¹³ Even as William praises the king for his religious devotion, he subtly criticizes Edward for not incorporating enough masculine virtues into his style of rulership. The image of a gentle lord reflects the more feminine ideals of compassion and mercy. William even interprets Edward's mostly peaceful reign as an example of God favoring the English kingdom because of Edward's piety, not as an example the king's capability as a ruler. Edward's extraordinary religious devotion in this way becomes the stabilizing force for his reign. This was not, in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries, a

¹¹¹ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 67, ii. 282: "Non omnia membra aecclesiae uno funguntur officio, alius nempe sacerdoti, aliud competit iudici. Iste siquidem visceribus debet pietatis affluere et in maternae misericordiae gremio sub exuberantibus doctrinae semper uberibus filios confovere."

¹¹² "Vita Leonis IX Papae," *PR* 1, 135-6.

¹¹³ William, *Gesta Regum*, i. 348.

normal model of male secular lordship, which focused on the more masculinized virtues of discipline and warfare.¹¹⁴

One of the few noble laymen who, to near universal agreement, successfully combined masculine and feminine characteristics was Godfrey of Bouillon, hero of the First Crusade and first ruler of what became the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem. Indeed, clerical authors emphasized the dichotomous nature of Godfrey's rulership. Ekkehard of Aura described Godfrey as exercising power with "paternal zeal" and "maternal tenderness."¹¹⁵ Ralph of Caen traced his capabilities to two parallel sources. From his father Godfrey inherited his fighting skills; from his mother, Ida of Boulogne, his religious piety and mercy.¹¹⁶ Guibert of Nogent similarly separated Godfrey's attributes into these sets of male and female virtues, again emphasizing his inheritance of his father's military prowess and his mother's compassionate Christian attitudes.¹¹⁷ Godfrey thus became the embodiment of the intersection of Christian ideology and secular warfare.¹¹⁸ It is crucial to understand that Ida, a secular woman, was believed to have served as the channel through which the all-important virtues of compassion, mercy, and

¹¹⁴ Edward the Confessor's reputation went under a distinct transformation in the twelfth century. He was reimagined as a saintly king, thanks in large part to rumors of his marital chastity. These rumors may have initially begun as an attempt to excuse Edward from any blame for failing to provide England with a clear successor; see Edina Bozoky, "The Sanctity and Canonisation of Edward the Confessor," 178-90, and Stephen Baxter, "Edward the Confessor and the Succession Question," 84-5, in *Edward the Confessor: The Man and the Legend*, ed. Richard Mortimer (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2009).

¹¹⁵ Ekkehard of Aura, "Chronica," in *Frutolfs und Ekkehards Chroniken und die Anonyme Kaiserchronik*, ed. Franz-Josef Schmale and Irene Schmale-Ott, *Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters* 15 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), 160: "quem paterna sollicitudine curabat, materna pietate fovebat."

¹¹⁶ Ralph of Caen, *Gesta Tancredi*, ed. Eduardo D'Angelo, CCCM 231 (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011), 18.

¹¹⁷ Guibert of Nogent, *Historia quae inscribitur 'Dei gesta per Francos'*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens, CCCM 127A (Turnhout: Brepols, 1996), 194-6.

¹¹⁸ Heather Tanner has identified the "union of traits" presented by Ida, her husband Eustace II, and their sons as the source of twelfth-century perceptions of the Boulonnais family as a model of lordly Christian excellence. See *Families, Friends, and Allies*, 245-80.

piety were passed down to Godfrey. Without these virtues, Godfrey's military successes would have meant little in the idealized imagining of Latin Christendom society.

In many ways textual representations of Godfrey of Bouillon serve as a counterpoint to the female secular lords identified by clerical reformers as allies of the Church. In describing Godfrey in terms of highly gendered virtues, Ralph of Caen and Guibert of Nogent drew from and reinforced contemporary discourses of secular authority. Successful Christianized authority needed the balance of male and female virtues. In some cases this implied a union of two people, of a man and a woman. Such a union could take the form of marriage in which wife and husband worked as a team, each player with his or her own particular set of skills. Or, in the case of Adelaide of Turin and the local bishop, it could relate to the alliance between secular and religious authorities. Sometimes, however, the balance of virtues and authority could manifest itself in a single person, such as Godfrey of Bouillon—or Matilda of Tuscany, Agnes of Poitou, and Matilda of Scotland. By adopting masculine activities that fit within the broader framework of reimagined Christian lordship—just as Godfrey was marked in part by feminine characteristics—women who participated in the male spheres of warfare or public debate could sometimes successfully transcend the traditional boundaries that separated male and female authority.

To conclude, in the struggle to redefine the right order of Latin Christendom, ideologies of lordship became malleable. Clerical reformers' dependence on a gendered discourse illustrates the manner in which authority, both ecclesiastical and secular, was imagined and represented by the written word. Such representations were subtle, complex, and often contradictory. Having recourse to a set of culturally embedded terms and phrases granted reformers the opportunity to construct new interpretations of traditional conceptions of power

and authority. Under the pressure of the resultant gendered discourse, representations of secular female authority had to be adapted to correspond to contemporary discussions of purity and pollution, peace and violence, attack and defense. The presence of the feminine was not negated by the late eleventh-century reform movement; if anything, discussions of femininity, of different versions of femininity, became one of its most prominent features.

CHAPTER 3: PERFORMING FEMALE LORDSHIP IN THE REFORM MOVEMENT

At some point following Henry IV's capture of Rome in 1082, Matilda of Tuscany sent a public letter to the people of Germany.¹ The letter, copied into Hugh of Flavigny's chronicle, warns the Germans about Henry's theft of the papal seal and commands them to ignore whatever decrees Henry or the anti-pope Clement [III] might publish under the stolen seal: "Therefore if you hear anything that differs from our legation, judge it false...Trust no one ever who dares to say differently than us."² The letter does not survive in its original form, and Hugh neglects to tell us how he or his monastery obtained a copy, or how widely disseminated the letter was. Nevertheless, that Matilda made some attempt to forestall erroneous use of the papal seal points to the importance of such symbols and displays of authority. Additionally, the letter itself gestures towards the important connection between words and performances of power. The theft of the seal was a dangerous blow against the Gregorian papacy. One of the most important symbols of papal authority, the seal effectively represented the pope's wishes and verified the authenticity of attached documents.³ It is no wonder, then, that Matilda was concerned about what Henry and his anti-pope might accomplish with the seal in their possession. She undoubtedly intended her letter to undermine imperial efforts to use the seal

¹ This is the only surviving letter in her name, and Patrick Healy suggests it may have been composed for her by Anselm II of Lucca; "*Merito nominetur virago*: Matilda of Tuscany in the Polemics of the Investiture Contest," in *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women 4: Victims or Viragos?*, ed. Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 49, 54.

² Cited in Hugh of Flavigny, "Chronicon," *MGH Scriptores* 8, 463: "Unde si quid audieritis quod discordet a nostra legatione, falsum arbitramini...Nulli umquam credatis, qui aliter quam nos dicere audebit."

³ Brigitte Bedos-Rezak, *When Ego was Imago: Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 27-8.

by making the theft public knowledge. But Matilda does not simply reveal the theft to the German public in this letter. She conflates her personal authority with that of the papacy. In the absence of the seal, Matilda herself becomes the authenticating force behind Gregory's position. The circulation of the letter, the words chosen for it, even the decision to compose the letter in the first place—together, these steps make up a performative act on Matilda's part, an act meant to display her privileged position as Gregory's most powerful and trustworthy ally.

This chapter investigates the connection between texts and performances of power, such as that seen in Matilda's letter. Performativity offers a useful approach to the question of the reform movement's impact on female lordship. In a soft sense, performativity signifies the playing out of socially and culturally resonant ideas. At the same time, as J.L. Austin and Judith Butler have discussed, performativity is also the attempt to use discursive utterances—written or oral—to effect change in the world.⁴ Performances of power during the reform movement were often attempts to bring forth the new ideas of the reform itself. Moreover, performativity overlaps with important categories of social action and meaning, including ritual, ceremony, and other symbolic display.⁵ Such visible acts were key components of both ecclesiastical reform and of lordship, embodied no more perfectly, for example, than in the issue of lay investiture. Although it is impossible for us to see firsthand the actions of laywomen and

⁴ Scholarship on performance and performativity is extensive, particularly in the philosophical and anthropological fields. The following works were particularly influential for this project: J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962); Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Richard Bauman and Charles L. Briggs, "Poetics and Performance as Critical Perspectives on Language and Social Life," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 19 (1990), 59-88; Mehmet Şiray, *Performance and Performativity* (New York: Peter Lang, 2007).

⁵ As David Crouch has pointed out, a medieval aristocrat was defined not just by wealth and birth but also by "looking the part." See Crouch, *The English Aristocracy 1070-1272: A Social Transformation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 193.

reformers, we can see, in the extant sources, a recognition of the potential impact of performative acts.

This chapter therefore explores how and why letters and narrative texts represent aristocratic laywomen as performing in carefully staged and highly visible ways during the reform movement. First, the chapter briefly surveys how clerical reformers viewed visibility and public display as important for achieving their goals. Next, the discussion moves on to the ways in which aristocratic women could benefit the reform through certain public displays—or how they could harm reform efforts and their own positions. The final part of the chapter presents a case study of an unusually well documented woman, Matilda of Scotland. Not only does Matilda make significant appearances in key Anglo-Norman historical texts, but several of her own letters have been preserved in Anselm of Canterbury’s episcopal register. Thanks to this source base, it is possible to reconstruct at least some of the ways in which Matilda incorporated public display and ceremonial acts into her performance as a pious Christian queen.

In recent years, scholars of medieval Europe have begun to adapt modern theories of public debate and the concept of a “public sphere” to fit premodern contexts.⁶ Leidulf Melve,

⁶ These recent studies have resulted in a push back against Jürgen Habermas’ theory of the public sphere as having its initial roots among the eighteenth-century European and American bourgeoisie. According to Habermas, the concept of a public sphere did not exist during the Middle Ages, when monarchical and “feudal” institutions were the norm. André Vauchez suggests, however, that in the early eleventh century the common masses became an important social force, particularly in the development of the social organization model of the three orders. While Vauchez overstates the tension between the common people and the clerical hierarchy in his discussion of lay religiosity, he is correct to point out senior clerics’ increasing awareness of the impact of large audiences in church affairs; *The Laity in the Middle Ages: Religious Beliefs and Devotional Practice*, ed. Daniel E. Bornstein, trans. Margery J. Schneider (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1993), 28-35. Karl Leyser also highlighted the mobilization of crowds in the reformers’ fight against simony and clerical marriage; see his article, “On the Eve of the First European Revolution,” in *Communications and Power in Medieval Europe: The Gregorian Revolution and Beyond*, ed. Timothy Reuter (London: The Hambledon Press, 1994), 2-3, 13-14. In her study of medieval theatrical productions in Arras, Carol Symes has identified the common stage as an early manifestation of a “public sphere,” formed without Habermas’ defining literary hallmarks of the Enlightenment era. Leidulf Melve, on the other hand, suggests that medieval European society had a plurality of public-sphere figurations, which used written, aural, and oral modes of communication. See Jürgen Habermas, *Strukturwandel*

for example, has argued that for the eleventh-century reform movement, the literate public was a crucial and influential force on the construction of reform polemics. In support of this claim, Melve cites an apparently increasing awareness or inclusion of a broader popular audience in reform polemical texts, beginning especially after c. 1070. Although Melve frames his study in terms of a public sphere and a public debate, he focuses mainly on polemical reform treatises, and especially on how one polemical text offered a response or a refutation to another. Interactions between reformers themselves and public audiences outside of these texts do not figure greatly in his study. Melve does, however, gesture towards an important underlying theme of the reform movement itself: the Investiture Conflict and other reform matters were far more than points of contention between members of the intellectual elite. Instead, the ecclesiastical reform program, apropos of its goal of reshaping the entirety of Latin Christendom, was at its core a matter for public concern. Some scholars have pointed to the Peace of God movement and the Patarenes as examples of widespread participation in monastic and ecclesiastical reform efforts at the local, communal, level.⁷ Moreover, in the latter half of the eleventh century, the reform papacy targeted issues—such as clerical marriage, lay investiture, and simony—that boiled down to a fear that one individual’s personal sins could pollute the spiritual wellbeing of the wider community.

der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft (Luchterhand, 1962); an English translation by Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence is available, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989). See also Carol Symes, *A Common Stage: Theater and Public Life in Medieval Arras* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); Leidulf Melve, *Inventing the Public Sphere: The Public Debate during the Investiture Contest (c. 1030-1122)*, 2 vols (Leiden: Brill, 2007), i. 8-10.

⁷ Charles Connell, “Origins of Medieval Public Opinion in the Peace of God Movement,” in *Fundamentals of Medieval and Early Modern Culture: War and Peace*, ed. Albrecht Classen and Nadia Margolis (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2010), 171-92.

Reformers' concern for communal spiritual welfare accentuated the need to reach large audiences. Because the sources of the reform program themselves focus to such an extent on a handful of individual actors, it is often easy to lose sight of the much larger picture of the reform movement's impact on western culture. The ban on clerical marriage, for example, had the potential to affect parishes small and large.⁸ Likewise, the excommunication of a king changed not only the king's position, but also threatened the stability of his kingdom.⁹ Clerical reformers were well aware that they were not fighting to change the mindset of only one or two kings or to restore a mere handful of churches and monasteries. Their goal was to reform Latin Christendom. To do so, they had to convince as many people as possible that religious and cultural reform were both necessary and good. Letter campaigns, such as Matilda's letter to the German people, offered one solution. Public—or, at least, publicized—events offered another. Indeed, the enforcement or rejection of reform efforts often emerge from the narrative sources as carefully staged, even theatricalized events. For example, the reconciliation at Canossa represents a masterful manipulation by its participants of both a public stage and wider public opinion.¹⁰ The flood of letters which preceded and followed Canossa invited all followers of St. Peter and “all the faithful of Germany” to witness and participate in Gregory VII's denunciation of royal authority.¹¹ It was partly through the witnessing and discussing of

⁸ Guibert of Nogent recorded the reactions of crowds of people who called out for their local married priests to be removed from the church. See the *Autobiographie*, ed. Edmond-René Labande (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1981), 42-4.

⁹ Timothy Reuter claims that Henry IV's excommunication, coupled with the Saxon revolt, provoked a crisis among the German nobility regarding their confidence in the Salian monarchy; “Past, Present and No Future in the Twelfth-Century *Regnum Teutonicum*,” in *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth Century Europe*, ed. Paul Magdalino (London: The Hambledon Press, 1992), 19-22.

¹⁰ See below, 134-9.

¹¹ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. II.1, i. 313. For scholarly treatments on Canossa, see: H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 156-63; I.S. Robinson, *Henry IV of Germany, 1056-1106* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 143-70; Jo Ann McNamara, “Canossa and the Ungendering of

highly visible turning points like this that supporters and opponents of the reform movement tried to convert their ideals into real-world action. Even the focus on prominent male and female rulers seen in surviving sources served this greater need. Depending on their actions, individual lords could become the embodiment of reform ideologies. If a lone secular female lord—say, Matilda of Tuscany—were to serve as a useful agent of reform, she needed to be seen and heard by a significant body of people, even if only through the medium of the written word.

The question of public and private spaces and actions surfaces frequently in reform texts. The sources attest to a clear differentiation between private moments and those taking place with a public audience. For instance, William of Malmesbury summarizes the Investiture Conflict by saying that Gregory VII “brought out into the open that which men had been whispering about by excommunicating elected men who received the investiture of their churches from the hand of a layman by ring and staff.”¹² This sense of the openness of condemning acts of pollution like lay investiture has echoes in other texts. Berthold of Reichenau accused Henry IV of not following the appropriate public procedure for deposing a simoniacal bishop. The bishop in question, Carloman, had paid his way into the see of Constance, an easy feat for, according to Berthold, at that time simony ruled “not as previously in secret, but rather publicly and with shameful power over our men everywhere.”¹³ The

Public Man,” republished in *Medieval Religion: New Approaches*, ed. Constance Hoffman Berman (New York: Routledge, 2005 [originally published 1995]), 92-110; Hanna Vollrath, “Sutri 1046—Canossa 1077—Rome 1111: Problems of Communication and the Perception of Neighbors,” in *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and John van Engen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 145-55.

¹² William, *Gesta Regum*, i. 490; translation revised: “Hic quod alii mussitauerant palam extulit, excommunicans electos qui inuestituras aeclesiarum de manu laici per anulum et baculum acciperent.”

¹³ Berthold of Reichenau, *Chronica*, second version, ed. I.S. Robinson, *MGH Scriptores: Nova series* 14, 208: “non ut olim clandestina, quin potius publica et inreverenti maiestate undique nostratibus.”

cathedral chapter complained about Carloman's installation first to the king, who commanded them to accept Carloman; the canons next went to Pope Alexander II. Alexander brought the matter to the ecclesiastical council held in Mainz in 1071, where the canons of Constance formally accused their new bishop of simony. Carloman "was cast out in confusion from the see which he obtained through money—although not, as was proper, by public deposition. The king supported him as much as he was able and Carloman gave back the episcopal staff not in the synod but in the king's chamber, still with a hardened heart, rebellious and reluctant."¹⁴ In short, Carloman fails to publicly acknowledge his sin.

Berthold's discussion of Carloman and the cathedral church of Constance serves in the *Chronica* as an example and warning to those guilty of practicing simony. It is for this reason that Berthold places so much emphasis on the propriety and performance involved in deposing a bishop. The canons of Constance are never at fault. Henry foists Carloman upon them in an open act of financial corruption, even though the canons had—following proper canonical rules—freely elected their own candidate for the bishopric. Likewise, the Council of Mainz legally deposes Carloman; Berthold even takes care to mention that the council followed synodal procedure.¹⁵ Readers of the *Chronica* come away with the knowledge that it is King Henry who disrupts this carefully scripted performance. Instead of supporting the council's decision, he usurps the publicity of the event, physically removing Carloman from the synod and retreating to his private chamber. The passage seems to suggest that Carloman surrenders the physical signs of his office not to a representative of the Church he has wronged, but rather

¹⁴ Berthold of Reichenau, *Chronica*, 212: "...ecclesiam scilicet per pretium adeptus, de sede, quam symoniace invasit, confusus abiciebatur, non tamen publica, ut oporteret, depositione. Rex quippe, quantum maxime poterat, ipsi favebat, cui etiam virgam episcopalem non in concilio synodali, sed in camera sua, adhuc corde indurato rebellis et invitus, reddiderat."

¹⁵ Ibid.

straight back to Henry, who had granted the episcopal staff illegally in reformers' eyes in the first place. By "protecting" Carloman in this way, Henry denied the Church its chance to condemn publicly a simoniacal bishop and thus undermined the authority of the ecclesiastical council. Moreover, by extending royal protection to a man found guilty of simony, Henry undermined one of the key efforts of the reform program in general.

Reformist efforts like the one depicted in the deposition of Carloman of Constance thus depended on public performances of authority, both ecclesiastical and secular. Councils and synods figure prominently in the reform movement, often becoming turning points in the development of the reform program, such as at the Lenten Synod of 1076 or the Council of London in 1102. Pope Gregory, in particular, used councils to subject bishops to papal authority, which frequently earned him the enmity of local bishops, particularly in Germany.¹⁶ Papal councils often proved to be contentious in reality, but in theory they were intended to represent a communal consensus that upheld papal authority. The decisions made in these councils were witnessed by sometimes hundreds of people, ensuring that there was nothing secret or private about the affairs discussed. Additionally, the success of synodal decrees depended in many cases on support from the laity. In 1073, for example, Gregory VII published a public letter to Lombardy, enlisting the local laity's aid in the deposition of Archbishop Godfrey of Milan. In the letter, Gregory emphasizes the ecclesiastical consensus against Godfrey by rooting his own personal command to the Lombards in the decision of a "council called together from diverse regions" and "supported with the consent of many priests and

¹⁶ Councils provided one route for Gregory and later reformer popes to intercede in local affairs, either by summoning clergymen suspected of offense to Rome, or by sending papal legates to conduct local councils as representatives of the pope. Cowdrey identifies Gregory's reliance on councils as one of the main points which drove the German bishops to reject his authority, which threatened their control over local matters. See H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 119-20; see also John Gilchrist, "Gregory VII and the Juristic Sources of his Ideology," *Studia Gratiana* 12 (1967), 3-37; Kriston R. Rennie, "Collaboration and Council Criteria in the Age of Reform: Legatine Councils under Pope Gregory VII," *Annuario historiae conciliorum* 38:1 (2006), 95-114.

diverse orders.”¹⁷ But while the agreement of the council bolsters the pope’s authority to depose Godfrey, Gregory claims that it is up to the Lombards to enforce the decision: “We warn and encourage you, dearest brothers, that you in no way consent to this previously named heretic Godfrey...But by whatever way you are able, as sons of God resist him, and altogether defend the Christian faith by which you should be saved.”¹⁸ Gregory’s entreaty to the Lombards, Matilda’s warning to the Germans, and even something as large scale as Urban II’s call for crusade are all symptomatic of the effort to encourage widespread participation in church reform.

This general trend of parallel performances by ecclesiastical and secular forces to bring about the goals of the reform greatly influenced the ways in which secular lords interacted with reform currents. While larger lay groups such as the Patarenes in Milan occasionally do emerge from the sources, it is unsurprisingly members of the nobility who dominated the secular stage of the reform. As a result, secular lordship had to be adapted to fit the increasingly public nature of the reform debates, at least to the extent that written sources so permit. As we shall see, female lords were often placed in highly visible and contentious situations. Their ecclesiastical allies saw them as potential cultural models with which they could demonstrate new ideals of Christian lordship. The women themselves, on the other hand, found—and took—opportunities to promote their own public influence and authority under the guise of promoting various aspects of reform.

¹⁷ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. I.15, i. 24: “congregato e diversis partibus concilio multorum sacerdotum et diversorum ordinum consensu fulta.”

¹⁸ Ibid.: ...monemus vos, fratres karissimi, hortamur atque precipimus, ut nullo modo predicto heretico Godefredo consentiatis....Sed quibus modis potestis, ut filii Dei ei resistite et fidem christianam, qua salvandi estis, omnino defendite.”

Aristocratic Women Performing Reform

Aristocratic laywomen had been incorporating displays of piety into their roles as noble wives, mothers, and widows for centuries before the eleventh-century ecclesiastical reformers began to ask for their support. But, as we shall see, the reform movement placed a new pressure on this traditional expression of secular female piety. Patronage of local religious houses, attendance at mass, and acts of charity remained crucially important, along with the more intimate, private influence wives could hold over husbands, or mothers over sons. These established forms of pious behavior can be seen in the way Gregory VII addressed Matilda of Flanders, identifying her primarily as William the Conqueror's wife and consort, instructing her to fulfill her wifely duties of safeguarding her husband's spiritual health and to continue her own pious works for the benefit of her family's well-being—not necessarily as a part of her queenly position.¹⁹ But these more private forms of religious devotion could no longer entirely fulfill all of the needs of clerical reformers. The reformers needed secular lords sympathetic to their cause, both male and female, to take prominent positions at the head of the reform efforts. Aristocratic women had a great deal of potential as models of behavior and practice. The reform movement offered them a venue for performing as such models. The relationship between performances of reform ideas and performances of female lordship was therefore mutually supportive: to demonstrate certain reformed practices gave women a reason to act in a highly visible manner; and women's performances supported and promoted reform ideals.

Performative moments ranging from synods, trials, marriage ceremonies and coronations, to monastic professions marked key moments of transition in both the lived

¹⁹ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. I.71, i. 102-3.

experiences of lay noblewomen and in the reform movement itself. The sources of the reform are full of representations of such events.²⁰ In many of these instances, a performative moment served explicitly to either establish, reinforce, or subvert a woman's (or a man's) claim to authority. For example, Herman of Reichenau used the imperial consecration of Henry III and Agnes of Poitou as the symbolic moment which united the papacy and the German court in 1046. Indeed, Herman depicts the consecration ceremony as the culmination of the Synod of Sutri, which resolved through imperial intervention the fight over the Roman see.²¹ According to Herman, Clement II's first act was to crown Henry and Agnes as emperor and empress, mere hours after his own consecration. Together, the new pope, emperor, and empress "set out with great glory for the Lateran palace, to the wonder of all the Roman citizens, each of whom according to his ability showed them honor as they passed by."²² This procession served as the public announcement and acknowledgment of the new papal and imperial authorities, here performing in perfect harmony.

For women, the emphasis on visibility and display could mean a greater opportunity for appearing and participating in crucial public arenas. The reconciliation at Canossa in early 1077 offers the most important example, not only for the actions of laywomen in the reform but also for the textual interpretations of their actions after the event. The basic story of

²⁰ Several sources record in elaborate detail the marriages of aristocratic women; see *V. Ida*, 142; OV, v. 182, v. 201. Peter Damian described Agnes of Poitou's entry into Fruttuaria as a carefully staged performance, in which she cast aside the trappings and symbols of the imperial office in favor of the habit. See Peter, *Briefe*, no. 104, iii. 147. For a similar instance, see also Hugh the Chanter's description of Adela of Blois' arrival at Marcigny; *The History of the Church of York 1066-1127*, ed. and trans. Charles Johnson (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1961), 92.

²¹ Herman of Reichenau, "Chronicon," *MGH Scriptores* 5, 125-6; see also Hanna Vollrath, "Sutri 1046—Canossa 1077—Rome 1111," 137-40.

²² Herman of Reichenau, "Chronicon," 126: "...ad Lateranense palatium cum ingenti gloria proficiscuntur, cunctis civibus Romanis mirantibus honoremque singulis quibusque pro facultate obiter impendentibus."

Canossa is well known: Henry IV, backed into a corner by the combined threat of excommunication and his princes' rebellion, traveled to Matilda of Tuscany's castle at Canossa to ask Pope Gregory's forgiveness in late 1076/early 1077. Initially Gregory refused to see him, until his advisers—Matilda of Tuscany, Adelaide of Turin, and Hugh of Cluny—successfully interceded on Henry's behalf.²³ Henry promised to obey the apostolic see in the future and Gregory received him back into the Church. At that point, Canossa must have seemed like a definitive victory for the reform faction, but, as time would tell, it was a short-lived one.

Three sources provide especially illuminating descriptions of Canossa, particularly in how they handle Matilda of Tuscany's presence at such a key event. The first extant report of the events at Canossa is Gregory's own letter describing the confrontation, addressed to the bishops and lay princes of Germany. The letter is a masterful manipulation of both the narration of a staged performance and public opinion. In it, Henry IV waits in the snow at the castle gate for three days, weeping, barefoot, and naked of any royal adornment. Gregory relates how he at first remains unmoved by this pitiful picture until his most influential advisers at Canossa intervene on Henry's behalf. Indeed, according to Gregory's account, these advisers intercede for the king with "many pleas and tears," wondering at the "tyrannical brutality" of Gregory's continued refusal. Eventually, however, Gregory relents in the face of their continued cries for mercy and allows Henry back into the graces of the Church.²⁴ The letter itself is an invitation for people absent from the event nevertheless to witness and participate in this denunciation of royal authority. By mentioning his own initial refusal to admit Henry into his presence,

²³ Robinson, *Henry IV*, 160-5.

²⁴ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. IV.12, i. 313.

Gregory ensures that the king's humiliation continues to be drawn out and well known—not only by Gregory's supporters in the castle but also, significantly, by Henry's followers after the event.

But Henry should not be seen as a mindless puppet dancing to Gregory's tune in the letter. Rather, he, too, comes across as putting on a performance in order to achieve his own goals. He is the prodigal son whose return heralds the reunification of a family, or, in a more literal sense, the restoration of the imperial and papal alliance. Gregory, on the other hand, acts in this tableau as a figure of righteous fury and stern justice, and, more importantly, as unquestionably the dominant power. It is, in the end, wholly his decision to offer the German king a reprieve. The three intercessors serve as embodiments of Christian compassion and mercy through their mediation, tempering Gregory's harsher emotions. As this scene appears in Gregory's description, it is clearly intended to represent a hard-won but happy conclusion to a bitter battle. It is the both the culmination and enforcement of the very particular scripts which Gregory expected faithful Christian rulers to follow: obedience and loyalty to the Church and her decrees, and the wielding of authority through both discipline and compassion.

Immediately, then, Gregory, Henry, Matilda, Adelaide, and Hugh dominated the stage at Canossa, but the meeting itself and the letter campaign which followed had a much greater impact outside the walls of Canossa and even outside the immediate papal and imperial courts.²⁵ Lampert of Hersfeld, writing shortly after the fact, closely copied Gregory's letter in his own description of the event.²⁶ He seems to have been most concerned with the backlash

²⁵ Indeed, the battle between pope and emperor features frequently in chronicles written beyond the regional boundaries of Germany and Italy. For instance, just a few decades after Gregory's death, William of Malmesbury used the Investiture Conflict as an example of poor Christian kingship to contrast with his idealization of William the Conqueror as a good Christian ruler. See William, *Gesta Regum*, i. 490-2.

Henry faced in Germany for debasing royal authority in so dramatic a manner, rather than with Canossa itself. But what is intriguing about Lampert's account is how he prefaces the episode. In the narrative, Lampert's discussion of Matilda of Tuscany's relationship with Gregory immediately precedes the confrontation at her castle. According to the author, Henry IV and his supporters had spread the rumor of Matilda's passionate affair with Gregory far and wide—the same scandalous rumor brought up at the Synod of Worms in 1076. Lampert dismisses the rumor, but the way he does so is of particular interest. First, Lampert calls the rumor unavoidable because Matilda had been so distant from her first, deceased husband, and so close to Gregory. He then argues that the rumor is ridiculous because Gregory himself was far too virtuous to do such a thing.²⁷ His final comment dismissing the issue is not a corresponding statement of Matilda's virtue. Instead, he writes, "if Matilda committed any indecency, she could never have hidden it in a very busy city [Rome] and amidst so great a crowd of servants."²⁸ Lampert's intent in the passage is not to defend or praise Matilda; indeed, her actions at Canossa itself receive only a cursory mention. Lampert clearly identified her as a blemish on Gregory's reputation, even as he acknowledged her devotion to the pope. But her presence at Gregory's side needed to be explained—and dismissed.

²⁶ Lampert most likely composed his chronicle in 1077/1078. The meeting at Canossa is one of the last events he records. See I.S. Robinson, "Introduction," in *The Annals of Lampert of Hersfeld*, trans. and ed. I.S. Robinson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 31-2.

²⁷ Lampert's assessment of Gregory is an interesting one, considering his own view of Gregory's pontificate. Lampert was a staunch opponent of Henry IV's reign, but he was not a wholehearted supporter of the ecclesiastical reform agenda. In fact, his chronicle contains a sharp criticism of Gregory's ban on clerical marriage, suggesting that the pope was setting men up to fail. Lampert also points out that the rumor of Gregory's affair with Matilda would have been especially harmful for so vigorous a proponent of clerical chastity. See Lampert of Hersfeld, "Annales," in *Opera*, ed. Oswald Holder-Egger, *MGH Rerum Germanicarum in usum scholarum* 38 (Hanover: Impensis Bibliopolii Hahniani, 1894), 198-9, 288.

²⁸ Lampert, "Annales," 288: "...et illa in urbe celeberrima atque in tanta obsequentium frequentia obscenum aliquid perpetrans latere nequaquam potuisset." Eng. trans. I.S. Robinson, *The Annals of Lampert of Hersfeld* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), 350; translation revised.

In contrast, Donizo of Canossa depicted the confrontation as Matilda's great entrance into the affairs of papacy and empire. Donizo composed most of the *Vita Mathildis* before Matilda's death in 1115, initially intending to present it to her as a gift.²⁹ The *Vita* consists of two books: the first covers the history of Matilda's family, the Attonid dynasty; book two focuses on Matilda herself. Notably, the meeting at Canossa opens the second book. Unsurprisingly, Matilda appears as a far more influential actor in Donizo's account than in Lampert's earlier annals. Considering the ways in which matters developed after Canossa, Matilda's decision to intercede for Henry might have seemed like a mistake in retrospect. Yet there is no suggestion in the *Vita* that Matilda was wrong to trust Henry, whom Donizo describes repeatedly as a serpent.³⁰ Donizo instead creates a portrait of Matilda as a lord responding, rightfully, to the request of a weaker supplicant. He emphasizes Matilda's dominant position over Henry IV. In the *Vita*, Matilda's intercession does not come easily. Henry's request for help is first refused by Hugh of Cluny; the king then turns to the countess, on bended knee, and cries out, "Unless you help me greatly now, I cannot keep fighting, because the pope has punished me. Powerful cousin, speak well and forcefully of me!"³¹ Henry's dramatic plea and reference to their ties of kinship persuade Matilda to intercede. She in turn convinces Pope Gregory of the sincerity of the king's words.³² Henry is then permitted

²⁹ Valerie Eads suggests that Donizo intended the *Vita* initially to be a heroic poem, geared towards convincing Matilda to be buried at Canossa, like most of her ancestors. See Valerie Eads, "The Last Italian Expedition of Henry IV: Re-reading the *Vita Mathildis* of Donizone of Canossa," *Journal of Medieval Military History* 8 (2010), 31.

³⁰ For example, Donizo describes Henry as being as cruel as a serpent; *V. Mathildis*, 106.

³¹ *V. Mathildis*, 130: "Tu nisi me multum iuveris modo, non ego scutum ulterius frangam, mulctavit me quia papa. Consobrina valens, fac me benedicere valde."

³² Noteworthy, too, is the absence of any other intercessors in Donizo's version; even Hugh bows out of the moment.

to prostrate himself in front of the pope, who receives him back into the Church. And, as soon as Henry leaves Canossa, he betrays both Gregory's and Matilda's trust by conspiring with the anti-pope Guibert of Ravenna to capture them.³³ In Donizo's autograph manuscript, an illumination accompanies the passage, depicting Henry kneeling before Hugh and Matilda.³⁴ In the illumination, which is clearly part of the original textual design, Hugh points to the countess while Henry gazes up at her. Matilda sits under a columned arch. The seat, arch, and Matilda are clearly elevated over the figure of Henry, providing visual support to the passage's message: that a king begged on his knees before the countess as a suppliant. Matilda's performance at Canossa provides the thematic structure for the rest of Donizo's *Vita*. She functions as an ally and a protector of the true pope, who trusts and heeds her advice. She is also a powerful ruler, more powerful than Henry, that deceitful snake of a man; later in the text, Donizo asserts that the countess "conquered kings."³⁵ Naturally Donizo's account is by nature biased in Matilda's favor; he could hardly insult her in her own panegyric. Nevertheless, his decision to use Canossa as Matilda's main entrance into the narrative, so to speak, illustrates the perceived impact that the event itself had on contemporary observers.

As these three accounts of Canossa demonstrate, such events became symbols of wider ideological concerns. Gregory, writing in the immediacy of the moment, imagined a true reconciliation. Lampert was most concerned with the denunciation of kingly authority. And Donizo saw Canossa as a confirmation of Matilda's power and influence. Canossa thus provides a useful case study for examining how medieval authors could reconstruct major

³³ *V. Mathildis*, 132.

³⁴ Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat.lat.4922, fol. 49r. A digital image is available at http://digi.vatlib.it/view/MSS_Vat.lat.4922?sid=3edb1c8d3a35a58c2c1ef7f1b34e8ad1; accessed February 5, 2017.

³⁵ *V. Mathildis*, 230: "Vicisti reges."

events with a particular intent in mind. But it should not be forgotten that Canossa was also a real-world moment in which secular female participation was both encouraged and crucial to the unfolding of the event.

Nor was Canossa the only such phenomenon. By 1076 Gregory VII had targeted the church in Flanders as in desperate need for reform. In November of that year, the pope wrote two separate letters to Count Robert I of Flanders and his mother, Countess Adela of France, instructing them both to work against clerical marriage and simony. Gregory clearly meant for Robert and Adela to be partners in reforming the Flemish church. At the same time, however, the letters offer a fascinating contrast in approach. Gregory's letter to Robert focuses on the theme of obedience. He tells Robert that, since unchaste and simoniacal priests do not obey the commands of the apostolic see, he, in turn, should not obey them. The letter ends with an exhortation for Robert to encourage all clergy and laymen to speak out the truth against such sinful priests.³⁶

To Adela, on the other hand, Gregory sends the command to block and drive out priests guilty of fornication: "We order you by apostolic authority that you accept none of those abiding in sin to celebrate the sacred mysteries but that you obtain from wherever you are able those who serve God chastely to celebrate masses."³⁷ Robert and Adela thus appear as possible public voices of ecclesiastical reform, but Adela comes across as the more active agent while the letter to Robert appears more cautious. To Robert, Gregory grants permission to disobey rebellious local clerical authority, but in the act of doing so, Robert's obedience to the apostolic

³⁶ See Gregory VII, *Register*, no. IV.11, i. 310-311.

³⁷ Ibid., no. IV.10, i. 309: "Unde apostolica tibi auctoritate precipimus, quatenus nullos eorum, qui in scelere perdurant, ad sacrum misterium celebrandum suscipiatis, sed, undecunque poteris, tales ad missas celebrandas acquiratis, qui caste Deo deserviant." Eng. trans. H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Register of Pope Gregory VII 1073-1085: An English Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 219-20; translation slightly revised.

see is proven. Adela gains the authority to remove and replace priests as necessary. As a result, Adela implicitly takes on a position that places her firmly in public, sacred spaces as no less than the defender of those spaces. Unfortunately, little is known about Adela, other than that she did achieve a general reputation for holiness through such pious acts as founding the Benedictine convent at Messines, near Ypres.³⁸ It may have been this reputation that prompted Gregory to visualize a more active role for Adela in cleansing the Flemish church. On the other hand, encouraging a secular male lord such as Robert with such provocative and inflammatory commands as physically throwing out priests may have seemed risky. Perhaps it would have been too easy for Robert to become disobedient to all religious authority, not just those Gregory deemed unfit.

The reputation of individual lords was a key factor in their importance and worth as participants in the reform movement. Nor were supporters of the reform the only ones aware of the impact a good reputation could have. Clerical reformers were predominantly the ones who recruited lay female participation in the reform. However, there is one particularly fascinating case of a woman's public prominence being encouraged by members of the imperial faction. In 1080, Bishop Benzo of Alba decided that the imperial court needed to recruit Countess Adelaide of Turin to their cause.³⁹ Adelaide (d. 1091) was Henry IV's mother-in-law and a powerful secular ruler in northwestern Italy.⁴⁰ If Benzo could convince her to side with the imperial faction, her influence would serve to offset the Tuscan-papal alliance and

³⁸ Francis de Simpel, "Aux origines de Messines, XI siècle," *Mémoires de la Société d'histoire de Comines-Warneton et de la région* 26 (1996), 17-34.

³⁹ It is possible Benzo identified Adelaide as a potential imperial supporter because she had previously supported Guido, the deposed archbishop of Milan, over the Paterene candidate. See Alexander II's letter to Adelaide, sent c. 1066/7, in *Epistolae pontificum Romanorum ineditae*, ed. Samuel Loewenfeld (Graz: Akademische Druck, 1959), 56.

⁴⁰ For Henry's marriage to Adelaide's daughter, Bertha, see Robinson, *Henry IV*, 60-1.

given Henry IV a prominent voice in the region. The timing of Benzo's letters is particularly telling. In March 1080, Gregory excommunicated Henry IV for the second time. The excommunication considerably strengthened the position of Rudolf of Swabia, who had rebelled against Henry and had had himself crowned in 1077. After defeating Rudolf in October 1080, Henry invaded Italy.⁴¹ The exact dates of Benzo's letters to Adelaide are not known, but they were sent during a period in which Henry was clearly trying to fortify his position in both Germany and Italy.

Four of the letters have survived, and each promises to place the countess in a position of unparalleled superiority within the imperial court. Despite the cajoling nature of the letters, Benzo's message and intent remain clear: to tell Adelaide that she can increase her own power by supporting what Benzo saw as the true cause of the Church. Consider, for example, what Benzo writes in the first letter: "You will sit with tranquility under the king in the seat of royal majesty, and you will see before you dukes and princes, administering the wealth of the lands of the earth for you."⁴² According to Benzo, Adelaide will be second in power only to the king, raised, through this alliance, to supremacy over Italy. The letters that follow are all works of flattery, playing on Adelaide's name as a derivation of the biblical name "Adam," calling her a "handmaiden" of God and a protector of the Church against the reformers, who sought to add the pope as "a fourth person to the Trinity."⁴³ It is crucial to recognize that what Benzo offers her as an inducement for supporting the imperial cause is a position of even greater prominence than the one she already holds. This is not a plea to a pious woman's private sense of

⁴¹ Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 194-9.

⁴² Benzo of Alba, "Ad Heinricum IV. imp. libri VII," ed. Karl Pertz, in *MGH Scriptores* 11, no. 10, 654: "cum tranquillitate sedebis sub rege in solio regifice maiestatis, et videbis ante te duces cum principibus, orbis terrarum opes tibi ministrantibus."

⁴³ *Ibid.*, nos. 10-11, 654.

spirituality. Rather, it is an acknowledgment of her potential as an influential public authority if she should appropriately combine her secular and spiritual obligations. The alliance Benzo suggests would have been mutually beneficial. Adelaide would gain a greater prominence in Italy and Benzo and the rest of the imperial bishops would have an exemplar of their own to hold up as a model of female lordship, as Gregory had Matilda of Tuscany. By framing Adelaide's authority within the role of service to the Church, Benzo thus justifies her participation in the fight between empire and papacy.

Such public recognition of a position of authority was all the more necessary for lay noblewomen because they were often vulnerable to criticism. Nor were they perfect. Aristocratic laywomen did make mistakes in their attempts to participate in ecclesiastical affairs. Female lords were expected to adhere to the same rules of obedience to the Church as their male counterparts. Indeed, it could be suggested that the bond of obedience tied lay noblewomen to religious authorities even more strongly than men, because women so often needed a male connection to verify their own authority. Many women reinforced this bond by professing their obedience in their letters to their "spiritual fathers." If they failed to act within the appropriate bounds dictated by the reform's reimagined views of Christian lordship, however, they were strongly censured and expected to make some show of penitence. In 1074, for example, Matilda and Beatrice of Tuscany arrested the bishop of Strassbourg as he returned from a pilgrimage to Rome where he had been reprovved for the sin of simony. The bishop had performed his penance with alacrity: he "fell on his face for his sins," fasted, and otherwise impressed the clergy in Rome with his humble contrition. His resultant seizure at the hands of the Tuscan countesses angered Gregory, who wrote to the women, accusing them of failing in their duty to protect pilgrims journeying to Rome. He also chastised them for undermining his

own position by threatening the safety of someone whom he had promised to protect. Gregory told the women that to correct their wrong they should conduct the bishop safely to Milan “with all kindness and a manifest display of charity.”⁴⁴ Another female lord who erred in her dealings with the Church had to make a similar display of formal apology. In 1109 the monks of Bonneval killed a vassal of Adela of Blois and her son Theobald. In retribution, Adela levied a tax on the town despite earlier agreements between the counts of Chartres and the monastery that promised freedom from any such exactions. Ivo of Chartres, a longtime adviser and frequent correspondent of Adela’s, intervened on behalf of the monks.⁴⁵ Adela’s eventual penitence and cancellation of the tax took the form of a two part performance: first, the countess “came before the altar and offered a pledge, confessed before those who were present, and promised it would not be done any more.”⁴⁶ This initial public promise was followed by the granting of a charter confirming Adela’s cancellation of the tallage, an act which was a performance in itself as well. The first half of this penitential act, the pledge at the altar in front of the monks, served as Adela’s personal show of humiliation to the monks she had wronged. The second half, the charter, was a different kind of display, one that extended beyond Adela’s immediate circumstances to encompass her successors and future monks of Bonneval. Interestingly, in his letter of intercession to Adela, Ivo does not focus solely on the countess’ spiritual well-being and former attestations of pious feelings. He also twice mentions the danger to her reputation (*fama*) as a lord should the monks’ complaints against her spread any further. If she failed to change her actions, Ivo suggests, Adela’s reputation as a generous

⁴⁴ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. I.77, i. 110: “...cum omni benivolentia et manifesta caritatis exhibitione eum...”

⁴⁵ See Ivo of Chartres, “Epistolae,” *PL* 162, no. 187, 190.

⁴⁶ In the Bonneval cartulary, transcribed by Kimberly LoPrete, available on “Epistolae: Medieval Women’s Letters,” <https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/75.html>, accessed February 1, 2017.

benefactress of religious houses would change to that of an intolerably severe and oppressive ruler.⁴⁷

Reputation was thus a double-edged sword, a reward and a threat. But if a lay noblewoman could win public approval for her exercising of authority, she could be lifted into the sphere of idealized cultural models. Clerical authors frequently refer to the reputation of certain female lords and to the memorialization of their actions through the written word. Baldric of Bourgueil, apparently impressed by Adela of Blois' reputation as a pious woman and a patron of the Church, dedicated several poems to her. In one, he explains that the reason he writes the poems is to extend her reputation: "Our song will make you greater, by our songs you will be spread through the wide world, so that Cyprus and the far Thule may know you, Ethiopians, Indians, Moroccans, and any island."⁴⁸ Margaret of Scotland's biographer claimed it was appropriate to record the story of her life because she offered such an instructive example of Christian rulership.⁴⁹ In a similar manner, Peter Damian, Gregory VII and Jean de Fécamp told Agnes of Poitou that she should act as a model for other "noble matrons."⁵⁰ Celebrating the actions of pious laywomen was not new, but celebrating the actions of individuals such as Adela, Margaret, and Agnes was one way of promoting new performances of female lordship which focused on the public exercise of female secular authority for the benefit of the broader society of Latin Christendom.

⁴⁷ See Ivo of Chartres, "Epistolae," *PL* 162, no. 187, 190.

⁴⁸ Baldric of Bourgueil, *Les Oeuvres poétiques*, ed. Phyllis Abraham (Paris: Slatkine, 1926), 153: "Te quoque majorem formabunt carmina nostra,/ Carmine tu nostro latum spargeris in orbem,/ Ut te nosse queat et Ciprus et ultima Tile,/ Aethipes, Indi, Getulus et insula quaeque."

⁴⁹ V. *Margaretae*, 223.

⁵⁰ Peter Damian, *Briefe*, no. 104, iii. 141-58; Gregory VII, *Register*, no. I.85, i. 121-3; Jean de Fécamp, in *Un Maître de la vie spirituelle au XIe siècle, Jean de Fécamp*, ed. Jean Leclercq and Jean-Paul Bonnes (Paris: Vrin, 1946), 211-17.

Matilda of Scotland: Performing Christian Queenship during the English Investiture Conflict

Matilda of Scotland, queen of England from 1100 to her death in 1118, knew well the importance of public display and performance in fashioning her identity as a ruler. Her reputation as a pious woman, in particular, helped to open channels of influence that had impressive reach. As we shall see, Matilda seems to have deliberately incorporated certain activities that were meant to be seen by a wide audience into her performance of queenship. Her intention through such activities was to promote her image as not only a pious woman but also a fierce and powerful ally of the Church. By aligning herself with the Church, she could reinforce her secular position as queen. Through her own mode of self-fashioning, and through the ways in which her contemporaries portrayed her, Matilda embodies many of the performative paradigms discussed above. Although her position as queen set her somewhat apart from her other female contemporaries, here it serves us well. As a queen, she had a potentially larger audience who would be willing to listen to her. Moreover, in the early Anglo-Norman period, the monarchs wielded far more influence over the workings of the English Church than did the distant papacy.⁵¹ Matilda, therefore, naturally engaged with the reform movement as it began making inroads in England in the last decades of the eleventh century.

When framed within the context of the reform movement, Matilda's form of queenship takes on an even greater importance. The reign of her husband, Henry I, witnessed the first serious attempts to enforce papal reform in the English Church. Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury spearheaded the efforts, which frequently brought him into conflict with the kings

⁵¹ Norman F. Cantor, *Church, Kingship and Lay Investiture in England, 1089-1135* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), 24; H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII and the Anglo-Norman Church and Kingdom," *Studi Gregoriani* 9 (1972), 94; Martin Brett, *The English Church under Henry I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), 6, 34-45; Margaret Gibson, *Lanfranc of Bec* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 135; Olivier Guillot, "A Reform of Investiture before the Investiture Struggle in Anjou, Normandy, and England," *Haskins Society Journal* 3 (1991), 81-100.

of England. The English Investiture Conflict became a defining feature of the early part of Henry I's reign, until its resolution in 1107. Henry, like many secular lords, supported some aspects of the papal and monastic reform programs, including the enforcement of clerical celibacy and the promotion of reformed religious houses. But the English king balked at surrendering the traditional royal prerogative of lay investiture.⁵² William the Conqueror had established lay investiture as a key tool for exerting royal control over religious institutions, and his sons and successors followed in his footsteps.⁵³ In 1099, however, Anselm heard firsthand Urban II's decree against investiture at the Council of Rome; upon his return to England, he began to fight with Henry over the issue.⁵⁴

Church reform presented a peculiar problem for the Anglo-Norman monarchy. William I justified his conquest of England in 1066 in part through formal papal sanction. Pope Alexander II probably granted him the right to carry the papal banner into battle, in return for William's promise to restore the English Church to Roman standards and practices.⁵⁵ The papal banner could serve as a powerful symbol, but religious reform probably did not rank highly among William's motivations for invading England. Nevertheless, later Anglo-Norman

⁵² Sally N. Vaughn, "Henry I and the English Church: The Archbishops and the King," *Haskins Society Journal* 17 (2007), 137-40.

⁵³ Eadmer of Canterbury, for example, made the fight over lay investiture the central conflict of the *Historia Novorum*, writing in the preface, "From the time that William, Duke of Normandy, conquered England and subdued it, no one was ever made a bishop or abbot there without first being made the King's man and receiving from the King investiture by the presentation of the pastoral staff." Eadmer, *Historia*, 2: "Ex eo quippe quo Willelmus Normanniae comes terram illam debellando sibi subegit, nemo in ea episcopus vel abbas...qui non primo fuerit homo regis, ac de manu illius episcopatus vel abbatiae investituram per dationem virgae pastoralis susceperit..." See also Cantor, *Church, Kingship, and Lay Investiture*, 130; Henry Mayr-Harting, *Religion, Politics and Society in Britain 1066-1272* (New York: Pearson, 2011), 49-50.

⁵⁴ Mayr-Harting, *Religion, Politics and Society*, 50.

⁵⁵ Catherine Morton, "Pope Alexander II and the Norman Conquest," *Latomus* 34:2 (1975), 362-82; Frank Barlow, *The English Church 1000-1066*, 2nd edn. (New York: Longman, 1979), 308; Mayr-Harting, *Religion, Politics and Society*, 28.

chroniclers retroactively imposed the goals of religious reform upon the events of the Norman Conquest and the reign of the Conqueror. For example, William of Malmesbury wrote contemptuously of the state of the English Church before the Norman Conquest in order to construct an image of the current Anglo-Norman regime as a favorable alternative:

What shall I say of all those bishops, anchorites and abbots? Does not the whole island gleam with so many relics of its own natives that you can scarcely pass through any town of note without hearing the name of a new saint....But zeal both for learning and for religion cooled as time went on, not many years before the coming of the Normans. The clergy, content with a mere smattering of knowledge, scarce bleated out the words of the sacraments; a man who knew any grammar was a marvel and a portent to his colleagues. Monks, with their finely-woven garments and their indiscriminating diet, made nonsense of their Rule. The nobles, abandoned to gluttony and lechery, never went to church of a morning as a Christian should; but in his chamber, in his wife's embrace, a man would lend a careless ear to some priest galloping through the solemn words of matins and the mass....⁵⁶

In contrast to this image of English impiety, William suggests, the invading Norman rulers brought with them a sudden and radical renewal of religious practice. A more accurate portrayal of the pre- and post-Conquest English Church would be that of subtle shifts—of English institutions and religious behavior brought more into line with Continental models.⁵⁷ But William of Malmesbury and other clerical writers wanted to promote the image of the new

⁵⁶ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum*, i. 457-59: “Quid dicam de tot episcopis, heremitis, abbatibus? Nonne tota insula tantis reliquiis indigenarum fulgurat ut uix aliquem uicum insignem pretereas ubi noui sancti nomen non audias....Veruntamen litterarum et religionis studia aetate procedente obsoleuerunt, non paucis ante aduentum Normannorum annis. Clerici litteratura tumultuaria contenti uix sacramentorum uerba balbutiebant; stupor erat et miraculo ceteris qui grammaticam nosset. Monachi subtilibus indumentis et indifferente genere ciborum regulam ludificabant. Optimates gulae et ueneri dediti aecclesiam more Christiano mane non adibant, sed in cubiculo et inter uxoris amplexus matutinarum sollemnia et missarum a festinante presbitero auribus tantum libabant.”

⁵⁷ Emma Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo-Norman England 1066-1135* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1998), 152, 207; Charles Duggan, “From the Conquest to the Death of John,” *The English Church and the Papacy in the Middle Ages*, ed. C.H. Lawrence (Surrey: Sutton Publishing, 1999), 63-78; Robert Bartlett, *England under the Norman and Angevin Kings, 1075-1225* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 390-400; John Gillingham, “A Historian of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance and the Transformation of English Society, 1066-ca. 1200,” in *European Transformations: The Long Twelfth Century*, ed. Thomas F.X. Noble and John van Engen (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2012), 47-9, 53-4; A.E. Redgate, *Religion, Politics and Society in Britain, 800-1066* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 19-26.

Anglo-Norman monarchs as particularly devoted to the needs of the Church.⁵⁸ The actions of the rulers themselves, however, undermined such an image. William the Conqueror and his successors were meant to be agents of reform, but in reality they obstructed some of the reform movement's key goals.⁵⁹ In spite of this conflict between ideal and reality, the reconstruction of the Norman Conquest as a move towards religious reform nevertheless brought a great deal of pressure to bear on successive monarchs to adhere to the expectations of clerical reformers.

In order to understand Matilda's role in the English ecclesiastical reform movement, it is crucial to recognize the paradoxical claim of ecclesiastical reform as a central component of the early Anglo-Norman monarchy. As Henry's wife and queen, Matilda was a natural target for reformers' growing network of potential secular allies, much like the German empress Agnes of Poitou or Henry's sister, Adela of Blois. Matilda's career as queen ultimately intersected with multiple currents of reform. These included, most notably, the papal bans on lay investiture and clerical marriage, shifting views of marriage practices among the laity, and active and widespread monastic reform. Matilda would have been introduced to the reforming mentality at an early age. Her mother, St. Margaret, worked to reform aspects of the Scottish Church.⁶⁰ We know that Matilda looked to Margaret as a model, since she commissioned a *Vita* of her mother from Margaret's confessor, Turgot, in the early twelfth century.⁶¹ Lois

⁵⁸ See especially Antonia Gransden's discussion of Orderic Vitalis' attitude towards the Norman Conquest, in *Historical Writing In England c. 550 to c. 1307* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), 153; Rodney Thomson, *William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 46; Björn Weiler, "William of Malmesbury on Kingship," *History* 90 (2005), 8-9.

⁵⁹ David C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: The Norman Impact upon England* (Berkeley: The University of California Press, 1964), 325-38.

⁶⁰ Margaret herself was probably influenced by the culture of the Hungarian court, where she spent her childhood as the daughter of an exiled Anglo-Saxon prince. See Gibson, *Lanfranc of Bec*, 127; Catherine Keene, *Saint Margaret, Queen of the Scots: A Life in Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 19-26.

Huneycutt, Matilda's modern biographer, suggests that there is no evidence to suggest Matilda herself was ever a fervent supporter of papal reform, although she was careful not to alienate the archbishop of Canterbury or the reform papacy.⁶² True, Matilda did not leave behind a clear statement of her feelings towards the papal reform movement, at least not one that has survived. Nevertheless, she demonstrated a keen awareness of the importance of reform affairs and seems to have been eager to reconcile Church and monarchy.

Matilda married Henry in late 1100 and was crowned and anointed as queen at the same time. The very act of becoming Henry's queen threw her into a maelstrom of religious and political controversy. Through her mother's lineage, Matilda was an Anglo-Saxon princess; her father, on the other hand, was King Malcolm of Scotland. By marrying her, Henry strengthened his own claim to the English throne by associating himself with the former Anglo-Saxon dynasty. He was also able to ensure peace with his historically troublesome northern neighbor.⁶³ Henry needed this alliance with the English and Scottish lines. The youngest son of William the Conqueror, Henry ascended to the throne following his brother William Rufus's sudden death in August 1100, but his oldest brother, Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, fought him for the English throne. At the same time, the king also became embroiled in the English Investiture Conflict. As a result, Henry found himself fighting a two-front battle: first,

⁶¹ Turgot's *Vita* of Margaret also served as a *speculum* for Matilda; Lois Huneycutt, "The Idea of the Perfect Princess: The Life of St. Margaret in the Reign of Matilda II (1100-1118)," *Anglo-Norman Studies* 12 (1989), 81-97.

⁶² Lois Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland: A Study in Medieval Queenship* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 75, 123.

⁶³ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 9. William of Malmesbury relates several instances in which Scottish kings invaded England during William the Conqueror's and William Rufus' reigns, or offered aid and sanctuary to exiled Anglo-Saxons against the incoming Normans. For example, William writes that Malcolm, Matilda's father, warmly welcomed Anglo-Saxon exiles, both because he had married an Anglo-Saxon princess (Margaret) and to annoy William the Conqueror by constantly raiding northern England; *Gesta Regum*, i. 462-3.

to legitimize and cement his claim to the English throne; and second, to incorporate England and its existing institutions more fully into a Continental religious culture that was itself in the process of development and reformation.⁶⁴

Henry's politically savvy choice of a consort met with an early impediment.⁶⁵ The new king asked Anselm of Canterbury to oversee their marriage and consecrate Matilda as queen, partly as a gesture of reconciliation to the archbishop, whom Henry had recalled from exile almost immediately following his own coronation. Anselm refused the request and advised Henry to find a different wife, for, as a child, Matilda had been sent to Wilton Abbey to be educated and while there, it was reported, had worn a nun's veil. In his initial reaction to Matilda's situation, and in an earlier, similar case, Anselm judged that the simple act of wearing a veil was tantamount to the taking of a religious vow; marriage would necessarily break that vow, a consequence which Anselm condemned as unacceptable.⁶⁶ The king and the archbishop agreed to send the case to an ecclesiastical council for further investigation and a final ruling. As a result, Matilda's very suitability as queen-consort became the subject of a public debate. In addition to Anselm's letters regarding Matilda's trial, three chroniclers writing before 1150 provide detailed descriptions of the case, and offer three very different interpretations. From these sources what emerges is an example of how different threads of ecclesiastical reform could intersect and interact within a single moment. The trial therefore provides an example of how different currents of reform could be brought to bear upon a single noblewoman.

⁶⁴ Sally Vaughn suggests that Anselm shrewdly timed his fights for church reform to coincide with moments of political crisis during Henry I's reign, such as the king's war with Robert Curthose. See "St. Anselm of Canterbury: The Philosopher-Saint as Politician," *Journal of Medieval History* 1:3 (1975), 295-8.

⁶⁵ Judith A. Green, *Henry I: King of England and Duke of Normandy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 55-7.

⁶⁶ For a discussion of this earlier case, see Lois Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 26-30.

The most detailed account of the trial is given by Eadmer of Canterbury in his *Historia Novorum*, most likely completed a few years before his death in 1126. Eadmer states repeatedly that he was a witness not only to the trial but also to many of the interactions between Henry, Matilda, and Anselm. In fact, Eadmer identifies Anselm's relationship with the queen as one of particular significance. On the one hand, the friendship that grows between Matilda and Anselm becomes an important symbol in Eadmer's work for the parallel and codependent powers of the English throne and the see of Canterbury. The queen, more than anyone else, rejoices upon Anselm's final return from exile upon the resolution of his conflict with Henry I.⁶⁷ On the other hand, Eadmer depicts Anselm's eventual (if reluctant) approval of Matilda's marriage and consecration as a potential black mark on his career. He begins his discussion of the marriage trial by writing, "Although the matter of this union has, as some may perhaps think, no bearing on the intended purpose of this work, yet, as it was handled by Anselm...I think I ought briefly to describe how this came about. I am particularly anxious to do this because quite a large number of people have maligned Anselm saying, as we have ourselves heard them do, that in this matter he did not keep to the path of strict right."⁶⁸ Eadmer's justification for including a description of the trial in the narrative is important, as the work as a whole serves primarily as a defense of Anselm's position and actions during his conflicts with William Rufus and Henry I. He needed to ensure that his readers would trust Anselm's judgment in any situation.

⁶⁷ Eadmer, *Historia*, 183.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 121: "Negotium itaque ipsius copulae licet propositi operis intentionem, ut quibusdam forte videtur, haud quaquam respiciat, tamen quia per Anselmum administratum fuit...brevis autumo describendum qualiter actum sit. Hoc autem ea re nobis maxime in voluntatem cecidit, quoniam Anselmum in hoc a rectitudine deviasse nonnulla pars hominum, ut ipsi audiimus, blasphemavit."

Interestingly, Eadmer is the only author who suggests that it was Matilda herself—notably acting alone—who asked for Anselm to reconsider the matter.⁶⁹ Moreover, Eadmer also provides the only description of her personal testimony at the trial. According to Eadmer, Matilda confessed to wearing a veil but adamantly rejected the taking of a religious vow:

But that I did wear the veil I do not deny. For when I was very young, and frightened of the rod of my Aunt Christina [the abbess], whom you knew well, she, in order to protect my body from the lust of the Normans raging at that time to attack a woman, used to put a little black garment on my head and, when I threw it off, she often had the habit of tormenting me with sharp blows and excessively ill words, as well as disgracing me. I bore that garment in her presence, moaning and trembling; but, soon creeping out of her sight, I tore it off and threw it on the ground and crushed it under foot. And, seething with hatred for it, however foolishly, I became accustomed to venting my rage. In no other way, as my conscience bears witness, was I veiled.⁷⁰

Whether or not Matilda uttered these exact words is beside the point. What is important is that here Eadmer depicts Matilda as demanding a say in her own fate, in her own choice to become queen of England. By having her be the actor behind the move to a trial by council, and by having her reject so absolutely the idea of the life of a vowed religious, Eadmer successfully emphasizes the secular nature of her chosen career. There is no room for ambiguity in this account of Matilda's early life in the convent; indeed, her professed boiling hatred of the veil and all it symbolized offers a sharp contrast to the normal pattern of secular noblewomen viewing the monastic life as a more perfect alternative.⁷¹ Eadmer's attention to Matilda's

⁶⁹ Considering Eadmer's close relationship to Anselm, it is possible he was correct in saying this. Eadmer, *Historia*, 121.

⁷⁰ Eadmer, *Historia*, 122: "Attamen me velum portasse non abnego. Nam cum adolescentula essem, et sub amitae meae Cristinae quam tu bene novisti virga paverem, illa, servandi corporis mei causa contra furentem et ejusque pudori ea tempestate insidiantem Normannorum libidinem, nigrum panniculum capiti meo superponere, et me illum abjicientem acris verberibus et nimium obscenis verborum convitiis saepe cruciare simul et dehonestare solebat. Quem pannum in ipsius quidem praesentia gemens ac tremebunda ferebam, sed mox ut me conspectui ejus subtrahere poteram arreptum in humum jacere, pedibus proterere, et ita quo in eum odio fervebam quamvis insipienter consueveram desaeuire. Isto non alio modo, teste conscientia mea, velata fui."

⁷¹ For example, Ida of Boulogne, Agnes of Poitou, and Adela of Blois all retired to monastic houses; Matilda and Beatrice of Tuscany wanted to take up religious orders but were instructed not to by Pope Gregory VII.

testimony and to the progress of the trial clearly reflects contemporary debates on the nature of religious vows and the question of the role of consent in the making of those vows. It seems as if Eadmer would like to suggest that the case was really quite simple: Matilda had not given her consent and therefore had never taken a religious vow even if she wore the traditional symbols of it. However, the length of the trial passage and the careful detail Eadmer employs suggest rather that this case was truly contentious and a defining moment for Anselm and the king and queen.

Indeed, in the *Historia Novorum*, Matilda's trial is immediately followed by her consecration, which takes the form of a public staging of her assumption of power. Eadmer relates that the coronation took place in front of "all the nobility of the realm and the people of lesser degree." Anselm himself stands before the doors of the church at Canterbury, announces the council's judgment in favor of Matilda, and asks that should anyone in the crowd know of some reason that the union should not go forward to speak out then and there. The crowd, in response, "cried out with one accord that the matter had been rightly decided and that there was now no ground on which anyone, unless possibly actuated by malice, could properly raise any scandal."⁷² This particular reconstruction of the trial and the resultant marriage portrays Matilda's career as being centered foremost on her public reputation. Moreover, in this passage Eadmer manages to defend and confirm the authority not only of his superior, Anselm, but also of Matilda herself. Because her right to be married to Henry and crowned was contested, her success in achieving both those aims strengthens her authority as queen; the highest clerics in England, including Anselm, as well as "all the nobility of the realm" have been forced to acknowledge publicly her claim to queenly power.

⁷² Eadmer, *Historia*, 125: "Ad quae cunctis una conclamantibus rem juste definitem, nec in ea quid residere unde quis nisi forte malitia ductus iuro aliquam posset movere calumniam."

The justification of Matilda's role as queen also informs William of Malmesbury's account of the trial, written at the latest by 1126, less than a decade after the queen's death. William mentions the dispute over Matilda's marriage to Henry only briefly, as part of a longer eulogy. According to William, Matilda, whose intelligence he praises, "in order to reject the ignoble marriages offered by her father more than once, wore the veil, the sign of the sacred profession. Wherefore, when the king wished to receive her in marriage, the matter came to dispute."⁷³ Upon being reassured that Matilda wore the veil only to escape these "ignoble" suitors, Anselm agreed to the marriage. William's depiction of the trial is but one component in his overall description of the queen. It follows the assertion that Matilda was a daughter of "an ancient and illustrious line of kings." Thus, the unsuitable suitors would have sullied her family line; her decision to wear the veil becomes a clever escape mechanism.

At the same time, it suggests a flaw in Matilda's character in that she did not always recognize the consequences of her actions, a theme continued later in the eulogy. William's Matilda emerges from the *Gesta Regum Anglorum* in general as kind and pious, and a generous patron. But he also accuses her of being too liberal with her riches, especially to foreign visitors with "sweet voices". This liberality resulted in Matilda "ignoring the wrongs of her own people," a judgment which William immediately qualifies by attributing her own sins to the "poisoned whispers" of her servants, "who like harpies seized with their talons all they could."⁷⁴ William's rather mixed appraisal of the queen and his effort to distance Matilda from

⁷³ William, *Gesta Regum*, i. 754; slightly revised translation: "Unde, ut ignobiles nuptias respueret plusquam semel a patre oblatas, peplum sacratae professionis index gestavit. Quapropter, cum rex suscipere uellet eam thalamo, res in disceptionem uenit." Orderic also provides a list of Matilda's potential suitors, including Alan the Red and William of Warenne. Orderic does not mention the trial, despite being familiar with Eadmer's *Historia*; he does mention Matilda's presence at Romsey, saying her mother Margaret sent her there, along with her sister Mary, to be educated; iv. 272; Marjorie Chibnall, "Women in Orderic Vitalis," *Haskins Society Journal* 2 (1990), 109-10.

her own faults can be explained in part by his awareness of a potential royal audience. William sent copies of his histories to King David of Scotland, Matilda's brother, and to her daughter, Empress Matilda, instructing both to use the *Gesta* as a mirror for princes. To undermine Matilda's position as queen through questioning the suitability of her marriage would have been insulting to both her brother and daughter, so William quickly acknowledges and as quickly dismisses the apparently drawn-out trial that surrounded her marriage. But to highlight both her good characteristics and her bad must have served as a useful didactic tool. Therefore, the lesson from the eulogy becomes clear: to be clever, pious, kind, and generous like Matilda of Scotland, but to avoid listening to corrupt advisers.

The third chronicler to address the issue of the trial also used it as a teaching device. Writing c.1142, Herman of Tournai seems to have been particularly interested in defining appropriate relationships between the laity and the clergy. Throughout the *Liber de restauratione monasterii Sancti Martini Tornacensis*, Herman depicts the clergy as the guides and advisers of the laity, the caretakers of their well-being. Those laymen foolish enough to ignore their clerical advisers invariably come to a bad end in the text. Henry I is one such unlucky secular lord, as becomes clear in Herman's treatment of Matilda's trial. Notably, Matilda herself is absent in Herman's account. Instead, the abbess of Wilton speaks on her behalf, stating that she veiled the girl to protect her from William Rufus, who had come to the abbey looking for a potential bride. Matilda's father, the abbess continues, upon seeing his daughter wearing a veil during his next visit, "tore the veil into pieces, threw them on the

⁷⁴ William, *Gesta Regum*, i. 756; the passage reads in full: "Sed haec qui recte iudicare uolet, consiliis ministrorum imputabit, qui, more arpiarum, quicquid poterant corripere unguibus, uel infodiebant marsupiiis uel insumebant conuiuiis; quorum feculentis susurris aures oppleta neuum honestissimae menti contraxit, de reliquo factis omnibus approbanda et sancta."

ground, and trampled them under his feet.”⁷⁵ Herman then claims that the council finds in favor of Henry because Matilda at the time was under age and thus still under the legal control of her father, so the Scottish king’s rejection of his daughter’s veiling serves as the defining factor, rather than Eadmer’s or William of Malmesbury’s focus on Matilda’s personal consent.⁷⁶

Even more importantly, Herman identifies this trial and Henry’s determination to marry Matilda as the root cause of the later disastrous Anarchy. Anselm, according to Herman, continued to advise Henry to find a different bride even after the council’s decision. Faced with Henry’s obstinacy, Anselm prophesizes, “Lord king, you are ignoring my counsel, and you are going to do what you please, but as long as you live, you will not see England rejoice for long because of a child that might be born of her.”⁷⁷ Henry’s ill-advised marriage to Matilda is then immediately connected to their son’s death in the White Ship disaster, their daughter’s childless—and thus unsuccessful—marriage to the German emperor Henry V, and Stephen’s usurpation of the English throne in 1135. Herman concludes his discussion of the resultant Anarchy with one final condemnation of the marriage between Henry I and Matilda of Scotland: “In accordance lord Anselm’s second prophecy, England did not rejoice for long because of the offspring of the queen whom Henry had married after she had worn the nun’s

⁷⁵ Herman of Tournai erroneously identifies Matilda’s father as King David of Scotland, who was actually her brother. The close echoing between the king’s reaction and Matilda’s testimony in Eadmer’s account suggests that the violent rejection of Matilda’s veiling was a common theme. See Herman of Tournai, *Liber*, 53: “iratus velum conscidit et ad terram proiectum pedibus suis conculcavit.” Eng. trans. Lynn H. Nelson, *The Restoration of the Monastery of Saint Martin of Tournai* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1996), 32; trans. slightly revised.

⁷⁶ Herman of Tournai, *Liber*, 52-4.

⁷⁷ Herman claims to have heard Anselm say this; no such condemnation of the marriage is found in contemporary Anglo-Norman texts, however. In fact, more often than not, Henry’s marriage to Matilda is seen as the successful unification of the Anglo-Saxon and Norman houses, which reaches full fruition in their grandson, Henry II. See Herman of Tournai, *Liber*, 54: “Vos quidem, domine rex, consilio meo pretermisso, facietis quod vobis placuerit, sed qui diutius vixerit puto quod videbit non diu Angliam gavisuram de prole que de ea nata fuerit.” Eng. trans. Nelson, *Restoration*, 33; translation slightly revised.

veil...The words of wise men and of prelates of the Church are therefore not to be condemned but rather venerated and feared.”⁷⁸ Henry’s sin is thus twofold: one, for marrying a woman who had even hinted at being a nun; and two, more damningly, for ignoring Anselm of Canterbury. Indeed, Herman connects Henry’s willful rejection of Anselm’s advice directly to the sins of another secular lord, Baldwin VI of Flanders. Baldwin, like Henry, married a woman despite being warned against it. His wife, Richeldis, was too closely related to him according to the new prescriptions on consanguinity; Pope Leo IX warns Baldwin that no good will come from the marriage. Baldwin ignores both pope and canon law and marries Richeldis; Herman, as in Henry’s case, connects this sinful marriage to the eventual murder of Baldwin’s son Arnold III at the hands of his own brother, Robert the Frisian.⁷⁹

These three versions of Matilda of Scotland’s marriage trial illustrate the different pressures that could be brought to bear on contemporary constructions of power and order in the reimagined Latin Christendom. For Eadmer of Canterbury, Matilda was one part of the system of parallel power in England—of royal and archiepiscopal authority working together. Her trial served to confirm both her own and Anselm’s positions on the nature of rulership, marriage, and monastic vows. William of Malmesbury saw the trial as just one example of the queen’s intelligence and rather proactive nature, both characteristics which he praised—to a certain extent. Herman of Tournai, on the other hand, did not even see Matilda; instead, he saw yet another secular lord refusing to obey ecclesiastical authority. Despite the differences

⁷⁸ Herman of Tournai, *Liber*, 55: “secundum prophetiam domni Anselmi non diu gavisam esse Angliam de prole illius regine, que post velum portatum regi Henrico nupserat...Non ergo contempnenda, sed potius veneranda et timenda sunt verba sapientium et ecclesie prelatorum.” Eng. trans. Nelson, *Restoration*, 34; translation revised.

⁷⁹ See Herman of Tournai, *Liber*, 52, 55.

between these versions, they do share a common concern: the defining and performance of proper authority.

Matilda herself was well aware of the performative nature of her position. She had relatively few official powers as a queen, other than those granted to her by her royal husband, but she still wielded a great deal of influence in English affairs through unofficial channels. Matilda seems to have identified her most likely route of influence as being through acts of intercession, especially during the English Investiture Conflict. As soon as the conflict broke out, the queen presented herself as a constant mediator between the warring parties, exchanging a series of letters with leading clerical reformers, including Anselm of Canterbury and Pope Paschal II, among several others. Matilda's contemporaries most likely viewed the role of intercessor as a traditional one for a king's wife in the Anglo-Norman court. Before the Norman Conquest, an Anglo-Saxon queen had very little institutional power outside of the palace; her main source of influence came from her direct access to the king.⁸⁰ The Anglo-Normans, however, placed a much greater emphasis on the role of a queen, even if they did not provide her with direct methods of power. Anglo-Norman queens went through an elaborate coronation ceremony in which a bishop (usually the archbishop of Canterbury) anointed the new queen as a divinely-designated ruler. Although the text for Matilda's coronation *ordo* has not survived, Henry's wife probably used a version of Matilda of Flanders' *ordo* from thirty years earlier. Matilda's *ordo* proclaimed not only that she had been placed by God among the English people

⁸⁰ Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 1997), 55-60, 119, 159; Maia Sheridan, "Mother and Sons: Emma of Normandy's Role in the English Succession Crisis, 1035-42," in *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women 4: Victims or Viragos?*, ed. Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 48.

to work on their behalf, but also that she must necessarily share in her husband's royal power to do so.⁸¹

Both Henry and Matilda hoped to repair the damaged ties between the throne and the English Church, though for their own reasons. As an opening gesture of reconciliation, the king and queen worked closely with Archbishop Anselm, together calling the Council of London in 1102, which banned clerical marriage, simony, and the farming out of churches, and enacted new marriage reforms, including sanctions against consanguinity.⁸² It appears that Matilda desired to work with Anselm in a genuine effort to better herself as a Christian ruler by emphasizing her connections with the Church. Indeed, Matilda saw a clear spiritual connection between herself and Anselm. In a letter written to him in 1102/3, Matilda said, "By your blessing I was consecrated in lawful marriage; through your anointing I was raised to the dignity of earthly rule; through your prayers I shall be crowned in heavenly glory, by God's grace."⁸³ Matilda's words illustrate an idealization of the connections between secular and religious power. She roots her own authority—both through her marriage and her coronation—in Anselm's power and actions as archbishop. At the same time, her authority as queen cannot be denied because of its ecclesiastical approval. As a result, she and Anselm become intertwined forces.

Matilda's apparent awareness of the benefits of ecclesiastical alliances made her an ideal candidate as mediator between Anselm and Henry when their political relationship collapsed. When Henry had first recalled Anselm from his exile in France in 1101, the king

⁸¹ Laura Gathagan, "The Trappings of Power: The Coronation of Mathilda of Flanders," *Haskins Society Journal* 13 (2004), 21-40; Green, *Henry I*, 256.

⁸² Eadmer, *Historia*, 150-51.

⁸³ Anselm, *Opera*, no. 242, iv. 150-52: "...cuius sum benedictione in legitimum matrimonium sacrata, cuius ordinatione in terreni regni dignitatem sublimata, cuius precibus in caelesti gloria deo annuente coronanda."

asked Anselm to pay him homage, as any other English cleric had to do. When Anselm refused, declaring that to pay homage to a secular figure would require disobeying the decrees of the papacy, Henry was “greatly perturbed.”⁸⁴ Not wanting to risk the fragile peace they had only recently restored between Church and throne, the king and the archbishop asked the papacy to grant a dispensation that would allow lay investiture and clerical homage to continue in England. Paschal II refused, calling such practices “abhorrent to God.” The pope tried to soften the blow by assuring the king that he had no “wish to diminish aught of your sovereignty or to claim for ourselves any additional right” and promising that, if he gave up such practices, “then anything you ask of us, which we could do with God’s approval, we shall be most willing to grant you, and your dignity and majesty we shall be most anxious to promote.”⁸⁵ Caught between the king’s wrath and the pope’s unyielding stance, Anselm fled to the Continent to begin his second exile. In his absence, he turned to Matilda to be one of his representatives in England.

The queen immediately began to intervene on Anselm’s behalf with her incensed husband. In 1102, shortly after the Council of London, Anselm wrote to Matilda, saying, “I give thanks to God and to your Highness for the good will which you have for me and for the Church of God....I also pray that God may cause your good intention to progress in such a way that through you the heart of our lord the king may turn away from the counsel of princes

⁸⁴ Eadmer, *Historia*, 126. Pope Urban II had proscribed all clergymen from paying homage in 1095; see Green, *Henry I*, 53. The loss of ecclesiastical homage would present a grievous financial blow to the English king. The see of Canterbury alone, for example, supported one hundred knights. See Cantor, *Church, Kingship, and Lay Investiture in England*, 69.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 130: “Inter isto, rex, nullius tibi persuasion profana surripiat, quasi aut potestati tuae aliquid diminuere....Immo si ab hoc propter Deum desistas quod contra Deum esse manifestum est, quod cum Deo, nec tu exercere, nec nos concedere aut eum nostra seu tua salute possumus, quicquid deinceps postulaveris, quod cum Deo possumus, libentius indulgebimus, et honori tuo et sublimationi propensius insitemus.”

which the Lord rejects and be made to follow God's counsel which stands firm forever."⁸⁶ In later letters, Anselm continued to acknowledge the queen's attempts to "soften the heart" of the king, and encouraged her in her efforts even as he reassured her that surely she would reach a happy end in the next life by doing so. In 1103, for example, the archbishop thanked the queen profusely for her continued love and support, writing, "Wherefore I fervently pray, and by praying I desire, that God Himself may repay you in my stead for what I am unable to do myself and that as far as He knows it to be expedient He may bring His love for you and yours for Him to perfection."⁸⁷

Paschal II joined Anselm in his efforts to encourage the queen's intercession. Paschal was clearly aware of Matilda's influence in not only the English royal court, but in important matters of state, as well. He alluded to her participation in important ecclesiastical matters in a letter in 1105, stating, "We do not believe that you are unaware of what this husband of yours promised the almighty Lord in faithful devotion when he first accepted the royal crown." Later in the same letter, Paschal begged the queen to "turn [the king's] heart away from wrong counsel so that he will not continue provoking God's fury so greatly against himself."⁸⁸ Unlike Anselm, Paschal did not offer any promise of eternal rewards for the queen herself should she continue to aid the reformers. Instead, he portrayed the queen as Henry's last hope for spiritual

⁸⁶ Anselm, *Opera*, no. 246, iv. 156: "Gratias ago deo et celsitudini vestrae pro bona voluntate, quam erga me habetis et erga ecclesiam dei.... Oro etiam ut sic faciat vestram bonam intentionem proficere, quatenus per vos cor domini nostri regis avertat a consiliis principum, quae reprobant, et consilio suo, quod in aeternum manet, adhaerere faciat."

⁸⁷ Ibid., no. 288, iv. 207: Quapropter desideranter oro et orando desidero, ut deus quod ego per me non valeo, ipse vobis pro me retribuatur, et quantum scit expedire, suam erga vos dilectionem et vestram erga se perficiat. Eng. trans. Walter Fröhlich, *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, 3 vols. (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1990), ii. 301; translation slightly revised.

⁸⁸ Ibid., no. 352, iv. 292: "Non enim ignorare te credimus, quid idem vir tuus omnipotenti domino in prima regiae coronae acceptione sub fidei devotione promiserit...cor illius a consiliis pravis avertere, ne tantopere velit dei adversus se iracundiam provocare." Eng. trans. Fröhlich, iii. 87; translation slightly revised.

salvation, ending his letter with a blatant threat of excommunication against the king: “We can no longer endure it without smiting him and his counselors, and those who unrightfully take possession of churches through him, with perpetual anathema.”⁸⁹ Paschal clearly placed Matilda in the role not only of a political ambassador, but also of a spiritual one.

Matilda herself spoke often of her own attempts to intervene with the king in her letters. In many cases, she saw herself as a successful mediator. In 1104 she wrote to Anselm, first thanking him for his letters and for his promise to continue to try to return to England (implying that he would continue working towards a reconciliation with the king, thus ending his exile). Matilda then says, “Similar promises come to me from the trust that I have in the prayers of good people, and from the kindness that arises in the heart of my lord [Henry I]—as I infer, after having sagaciously made inquiries. For his spirit is better disposed toward you than many people think. With God’s favorable influence and my prompting him insofar as I can, he will grow more accommodating and more friendly toward you.”⁹⁰ The wording she chose in this letter is especially illuminating. By dismissing the beliefs that “many people think,” Matilda depicts herself as being in an advantageous position for knowing the king’s inclinations. Furthermore, her insistence that her “prompting” would lead to a change in the king’s attitude for the better effectively show her self-confidence in her abilities as a mediator between the king and the ecclesiastical reformers.

Matilda also saw herself as the guardian of her kingdom’s spiritual needs, not just the needs of her husband. The queen often pleaded on behalf of the English people for Anselm to

⁸⁹ Anselm, *Opera*, no. 352, iv. 292: “...alioquin ulterius pati non possumus, quin ipsum cum consiliariis suis, et eos qui per ipsum ecclesias invadunt, perpetuo anathemate feriamus.”

⁹⁰ Ibid., no. 320, v. 248-9: “Spondet autem itidem confidentia quam in orationibus bonorum hominum habeo, et benevolentia quam ex corde domini mei solleter investigans perpendo. Est enim illi erga vos animus compositior quam plerique homines aestiment, qui deo annuente et me qua potero suggerente vobis fiet commodior atque concordios.” Eng. trans. Fröhlich, iii. 31; translation slightly revised.

return and restore peace in the English Church. “See your brothers, your fellow servants, the people of your lord,” she wrote to Anselm in another 1104 letter, “already enduring shipwreck, already slipping down into death. But you do not help, nor do you extend your right hand, nor do you interpose yourself between us and the danger... Therefore, good lord, pious father, blunt this severity and—pardon what I say—soften the steeliness of your heart!”⁹¹ The queen meant to chastise Anselm for overlooking the religious needs of the English people in his political battles with Henry. She tried to remind him that he, like her, must first be concerned with their spiritual well-being rather than with symbols of power. Her one extant letter to Paschal II, asking him to allow Anselm’s return to England despite the continued conflict with the king, followed a similar vein. The queen compared England to a flock of sheep that had lost its shepherd, saying that “there is nothing left but the shepherd who—hungry for food—weeps with many a groan, the sheep that hungers for its grazing, and the lamb that longs for its udder. As long as the greatest shepherd, namely Anselm, is absent, not only is each one deprived of each of these things, but rather all of them are deprived of everything.”⁹² In both of these letters, the queen puts herself in the role of a spiritual protector of the faithful of England.

Matilda sometimes found herself caught between conflicting currents of the reform program and royal authority. In 1105, a royal procession had just begun to make its way through London when a group of two hundred married priests, barefoot and dressed in their stoles, barred the king’s way. The gathered priests, according to Eadmer, begged the king to

⁹¹ Anselm, *Opera*, no. 317, v. 244-6: “Vides, ecce vides fratres tuos, conservos tuos, populum domini tui iam naufragia sustinentem, iam labantem in ultimis, nec succurris, nec porrigis dexteram, nec obiectas te discrimini.... Flecte itaque, bone domine, pie pater, severitatem hanc, et ferreum—pace tua dixerim—pectus emolli.” Eng. trans. Fröhlich, iii. 24; translation revised.

⁹² Ibid., no. 323, v. 252-4: “Cum haec igitur secus cesserint omnia, reliquum aliud nihil est, nisi gemitu plurimo clamet quaeritans alimentum pastor, pascuum pecus, ubera fetus. Ubi dum maioris absentia pastoris, praesertim Anselmi, praedictis singulis fraudulentur singula, seu vero potius omnibus omnia...” Eng. trans. Fröhlich, iii. 34; translation revised.

rescind the exorbitant fines he had placed upon all married clergy in England. Three years earlier, the Council of London had banned clerical marriage, but for various reasons there had been no concerted attempt to enforce the council's decrees. In 1105, however, Henry I began a reinvigorated effort to stamp out clerical marriage. The English ruler ordered all married clergymen to put aside their wives, or, if they refused to do so, to face heavy fines and penalties. Many priests lost their parishes and were thrown into prison; some were even tortured when they could not afford to pay the fines.⁹³ So the crowd of priests begged the king to be more lenient, but in vain. Eadmer tells us that the king, "untouched with any pity at their prayers, or at any rate in some way considering them as men devoid of any religion, undeserving of the courtesy of an answer, ordered them to be quickly driven from his sight."⁹⁴ Rejected by Henry, the priests turned next to the queen. They implored her to intercede on their behalf, but she, although sympathetic to their suffering, burst into tears, claiming that she was "too frightened to intervene."⁹⁵ Reports of Matilda's piety and sympathetic nature must have led the priests to approach her in hopes that she would intervene with the implacable king. The priests' troubles, however, came about because of one of Henry I's few attempts to support the reform movement by enforcing the ban against clerical marriage. In these circumstances, Matilda could not mediate on their behalf at the same time that she was trying to convince the king to support the reform in other matters. This became the only recorded instance in which the queen simply

⁹³ Green, *Henry I*, 58; Anne Llewellyn Barstow, *Married Priests and the Reforming Papacy: The Eleventh-Century Debates*, Texts and Studies in Religion 12 (New York: The Edward Mellen Press, 1982), 90-4; Lois Huneycutt, "Intercession and the High-Medieval Queen: The Esther Topos," in *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women*, ed. Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 137-8.

⁹⁴ Eadmer, *Historia*, 173: "...At ille forte, ut fit, ad multa divisus nulla ad preces eorum miseratione permotus, vel saltem quavis eos sicut homines omnis religionis expertes responsi honestate dignatus, suis obtutibus abigi festine praecepit."

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*: "...sed timore constricta ab interventione arcetur."

refused to act as a mediator. Her fear and her tears serve to emphasize her public distress at her inability to help the priests. In fact, the queen's weeping echoes another instance of tearful regret in Eadmer's *Historia*. Earlier in the text, upon hearing of William Rufus' death, Anselm himself bursts into tears, grieving that he had failed to fulfill his duties of protecting William's soul.⁹⁶ Matilda's outburst seems to be rooted in the same awareness of a duty left unfulfilled. She had, like Anselm, set herself up as a protector and spiritual guide, but like Anselm found herself thwarted by the sins of the very people she was trying to protect.

Matilda also occasionally overstepped the boundaries of secular lordship as defined by the reform program. In 1104/5, Anselm sent Matilda a terse letter warning her away from acts of lay investiture. In it, he states:

After I left England I heard that you were dealing with the churches in your hands otherwise than is expedient for them or for your own soul. I do not wish to say here how you are acting—according to what I have been told—because no one knows it better than yourself. Therefore, I beg you as my lady, advise you as my queen and admonish you as my daughter...that the churches of God which are in your power should know you as mother, as nurse, as kind lady and queen. And I do not say this concerning those churches alone but about all the churches in England to which your help can be extended.⁹⁷

Anselm's implication is clear: Matilda had used the forbidden tool of lay investiture. Such action conflicted with Anselm's conception of her performance as a queen—as mother, nurse, and kind lady. It also conflicted with Matilda's own self-fashioning as a protector of clergy and monks. Matilda seems to have taken Anselm's warning seriously. In 1106, she appointed

⁹⁶ Eadmer, *Historia*, 159.

⁹⁷ Anselm, *Opera*, no. 346, v. 284-5: "Postquam exivi de Anglia, didici quia ecclesias, quae in manu vestra sunt, aliter tractatis quam illis expedit et animae vestrae. Quod dicere nunc nolo qualiter facitis—secundum quod mihi relatum est—quia nulli melius quam vobis notum est. Precor igitur ut dominam, consulo ut reginae, moneo ut filiam...ut ecclesiae dei, quae sunt in vestra potestate, vos cognoscant ut matrem, ut nutricem, ut benignam dominam et reginam. Et non solum de illis hoc dico, sed de omnibus ecclesiis Angliae, ad quas vestrum extendi potest auxilium." Eng. trans. Fröhlich, iii. 75; translation revised.

Aedulf, her former sacristan of Winchester, to the vacant abbacy of Malmesbury.⁹⁸ She was very careful in how she handled the appointment. She wrote to Anselm, saying, “Relying on the favor of Your Holiness, therefore, I have entrusted the abbey of Malmesbury to Aedulf, formerly a monk and sacristan of Winchester, who I think is known to you, in those respects that were in my jurisdiction. To you is reserved entirely whatever pertains to the gift and disposition, so that the bestowal of the staff and pastoral care is delivered wholly to the authority of your discretion.”⁹⁹ Matilda had already given Aedulf the temporalities of the office—the lands and revenues—but she had refrained from giving him the religious symbol of his office, the staff. That, along with instructions for the pastoral care of the abbey, she reserved for Anselm. The letter is thus a careful display of respect and lay obedience to ecclesiastical authority while still asserting the queen’s own influence in choosing the abbatial candidate.

The queen had an intriguing relationship with Malmesbury. Early in her reign, Matilda confirmed an existing fair held at the abbey, expanding its length from five days to eight days, and thus increasing the abbey’s potential revenue.¹⁰⁰ Some historians have postulated that Malmesbury was even part of the dower Henry I gave to his wife following their marriage,

⁹⁸ Aedulf was neither the first nor the last of the queen’s personal attendants to receive an important ecclesiastical appointment. According to the chronicler John of Worcester, in 1102 the queen’s chancellor, Reinhelm, became bishop of Hereford. In 1115, another of her chancellors, Bernard, was elected bishop of St. David’s in Wales. John mentions, too, that Matilda witnessed Bernard’s consecration at Westminster. John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester Volume III: The Annals from 1067 to 1140 with the Gloucester Interpolations and the Continuation to 1141*, ed. and trans. P. McGurk (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 102-3 and 136-139.

⁹⁹ Anselm, *Opera*, no. 384, v. 326-7: “Vestrae igitur sanctitatis favore freta domno Aedulfo, Wintoniensi monacho olimque sacristae, vobis credo noto, abbatiam Malmesberiae in iis quae mei iuris erant commisi, vestrae quidem donationi et dispositioni quaecumque illius sunt ex integro reservatis, ut scilicet tam virgae quam curae pastoralis commissio vestrae discretionis contradatur arbitrio.”

¹⁰⁰ *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066-1154 Volume II: Regesta Henrici Primi 1100-1135*, ed. Charles Johnson and H.A. Cronne (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), no. 971, 98; Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 62.

making her its secular lord.¹⁰¹ In addition, William of Malmesbury began his *Gesta Regum Anglorum* at Matilda's request, sometime near the end of her life in 1118.¹⁰² Matilda was clearly invested in the monastery, perhaps too much so. Shortly after he received the queen's letter about Aedulf's candidacy, Anselm wrote back with disappointing news. The archbishop approved of the queen's compromise, telling her, "you have acted well and according to the will of God, in what you did there." The candidate in question, however, "did something very foolish in this matter which he should not have done. For he sent me a goblet."¹⁰³ Anselm construed the gift of a goblet as an act of simony. In the letter, Anselm took care not to allow any mention of simony to touch his ally, the queen, directly; rather, the fault lay entirely with Aedulf. Anselm did not have the final say in the matter of Malmesbury Abbey, however. The question of the candidacy never comes up again in any of the extant letters, and the chroniclers, including William of Malmesbury who reportedly did not have a good relationship with Aedulf, recorded nothing more about Aedulf's appointment.¹⁰⁴ Despite the accusation of simony, however, Aedulf remained abbot until Matilda's death in 1118, when he was finally deposed.¹⁰⁵ Presumably her support was the only power that kept Aedulf in his office. Perhaps Anselm and the monks of Malmesbury realized that it would not be wise to offer offense to a queen who was otherwise their constant ally.

¹⁰¹ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 65.

¹⁰² Green, *Henry I*, 2; See also William's letter to David of Scotland, in which he refers to Matilda's encouragement. William, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, 2-4.

¹⁰³ Anselm, *Opera Omnia*, no. 385, v. 328: "Vos enim, quantum ad vos spectat, bene et secundum deum fecistis quod inde fecistis; sed ipse in hoc fecit quiddam valde insipienter, quod facere non debuit. Nam per eosdem legatos, qui mihi litteras vestras et aliorum de suo negotio attulerunt, misit mihi scifum unum."

¹⁰⁴ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 65-7.

¹⁰⁵ E.J Kealey, *Roger of Salisbury: Viceroy of England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), 112-14; Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 66.

While Anselm would have seen Aedulf's appointment as an example of unacceptable lay interference, Matilda herself, like her husband, clearly saw it as part of her royal prerogative. Indeed, what emerges from Matilda's letters is not a clerical reformer's dream of the temporal sword subordinate to its ecclesiastical counterpart. Instead, Matilda seems to have envisaged the two powers working in harmony, as equals, in matters pertaining to the real world. In 1104, Matilda wrote to Anselm with the following request: "Find a way by which neither you, the shepherd who leads the way, may give offence, nor the rights of royal majesty be diminished."¹⁰⁶ This was not merely a plea to end the hostilities between Henry and Anselm. It was a request to preserve royal authority. In the same letter, Matilda purposefully debases her own queenly authority, declaring that Anselm's "humble handmaiden throws herself on her knees" before his mercy, "stretching suppliant hands...If neither my weeping nor the wish of the people can move you, putting aside my royal dignity, giving up my insignia, letting fall my scepter, spurning my crown, I will trample the purple and the linen and will come to you, overcome with grief. I will embrace your knees and kiss your feet."¹⁰⁷ This is a performance on Matilda's part, albeit one in written form or delivered orally by a messenger on her behalf.¹⁰⁸ It is a performance of both humility and accusation. Matilda casts herself in the role of a supplicant, dependent upon ecclesiastical mercy, but to do so she must cast aside the physical

¹⁰⁶ Anselm, *Opera*, no. 317, v. 244: "Inveni viam qua nec tu, pastor, qui praecedis, offendas, nec regiae maiestatis iura solvantur."

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.: "humilis ancilla tua misericordiae tuae genibus devoluta, supplices ad te manus tendens...Si autem nec te fletus mei nec publica vota sollicitant: postposita regia dignitate, relictis insignibus, deponam fascies, diadema contemnam, purpuram byssumque calcabo et vadam ad te maerore confecta. Amplectar vestigia tua, pedes exosculabor." This vision of the queen casting herself at the feet of a clerical leader also occurs in Matilda's letter to Paschal II. See Anselm, *Opera*, no. 323, v. 253-4.

¹⁰⁸ Letters were usually read aloud or recited from memory to their recipients. As Martin Camargo points out, the delivery of a letter thus became a public performance in itself. See "Special Delivery: Were Medieval Letter Writers Trained in Performance?," in *Rhetoric Beyond Words: Delight and Persuasion in the Arts of the Middle Ages*, ed. Mary Carruthers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 173.

markers of her royal position. Anselm's stubbornness on the issue of investiture has forced her into a desperate position as a secular ruler. The casting aside of her insignia, crown, and other authoritative symbols is not done here in a show of penitence as in the case of Henry IV at Canossa in 1077. Matilda instead anticipates an elaborate display which implicitly confronts Anselm and Paschal II as nearly tyrannical in their stance on investiture. Moreover, to ignore or reject such an extreme display of humility and pious obedience on the part of a secular ruler of the highest rank could easily reflect badly on the archbishop and pope. She was their ally, but they had torn the purple from her.

Matilda's actions concerning Malmesbury Abbey reflect a turning point in the English Investiture Conflict, effectively delineating the boundaries between royal prerogative and ecclesiastical authority. Like most compromises, the agreement between Anselm and Matilda, and later between Anselm and Henry I, placated both parties and completely satisfied neither.¹⁰⁹ However, by reaching such a compromise over lay investiture with Anselm, the queen was able to find a way in which secular rulers like herself were able to interact with and influence the ecclesiastical world, while still allowing the reformers to limit secular power over ecclesiastical affairs to a certain extent.

Matilda provides a further example of the development of new performances of lay authority and piety. She is also a prime example of the new growth in lay devotion that resulted from the burgeoning interest in ecclesiastical reform. Her participation in new practices of religious devotion had an important impact on her own performance of queenship. The desire to live a religious life greatly influenced many of the lay noblewomen discussed in this study. Countess Matilda of Tuscany, for example, would have taken the veil if Pope Gregory VII had

¹⁰⁹ Brett, *English Church under Henry I*, 62; Green, *Henry I*, 108-10.

not told her that she could better serve the Church as a secular ruler. Adela of Blois and Ida of Boulogne became nuns following their husbands' deaths, just as Empress Agnes entered a convent once her son had ascended to the throne. Here, Matilda stands out as an exception, for she always preferred the secular life to a monastic one. In place of the veil, Matilda incorporated aspects of reform ideals into her practice of lay piety, which in turn became a defining facet of her reign. The queen went far beyond the traditional route of lay devotion described by William of Malmesbury of attending mass and donating to monasteries. When observers wrote of Matilda, they described her piety above all else. She was the daughter of St. Margaret of Scotland, "a rose from the root of a rose," according to Hildebert of Lavardin.¹¹⁰ Another claimed that her pious reputation had "inspired the minds of many religious and sweetened them with a certain delight of holy love."¹¹¹ During Lent the queen would walk to mass barefoot and wore a hair shirt beneath her rich garments.¹¹²

Following her initial involvement in the English Investiture Conflict, Matilda began to practice newer, more challenging forms of lay piety. Her younger brother David, serving in the English court during Easter 1105, could only stare in wonder as his sister cleaned a group of lepers in her own chambers:

The place was full of lepers, and there was the queen standing in the middle of them. And taking off a linen cloth she had wrapped around her waist, she put it into a water basin, and began to wash and dry their feet and to kiss them most devotedly while she was bathing and drying them with her hands. And I said to her, "My lady! What are you doing? Surely if the king knew about this he would never deign to kiss you with his lips after you had been polluted by the putrefied feet of the lepers!" Then she, under a smile, said, "Who does not know that the feet of the eternal king are to be preferred over the lips of a king who is going to die? Surely for that reason I called you, dearest

¹¹⁰ Hildebert of Lavardin, "De Mathilde proba regina Anglorum," *PL* 171, 1444-45: "Est rosa de radice rosae."

¹¹¹ Ivo of Chartres, "Epistolae," *PL* 162, 177: "Unde pro gratia nobis divinitus collata grates summo referimus bonorum omnium largitori."

¹¹² William, *Gesta Regum*, i. 757.

brother, so that you might learn such works from my example. Take some cloths and do in the same way what you see me doing.”¹¹³

This display of extreme piety reflected an important development in contemporary practices of lay religiosity. Leprosy had for centuries been considered a physical manifestation of sin.¹¹⁴ As a result, most societies shunned lepers, assuming that their affliction was a form of punishment. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, however, leprosy took on a new connotation. Christians began to focus more on Christ’s Passion, especially in terms of his suffering and humility. Many even began to venerate the *Christus quasi leprosus*, Christ in the aspect of a leper during the Passion. Lepers, victims of a “living death,” became the symbols of worldly grief and suffering.¹¹⁵ By caring for such afflicted individuals, Christians hoped to imitate Christ and his saints. At the same time, they practiced a deeply emotional form of penance by debasing themselves in order to act as servants and risking their own health to care for the lowest of the low. This can be seen in the way in which David looks back at his refusal to help his sister with the lepers: “I had not yet come to know the Lord....and I, to my shame, laughingly returned to my companions.”¹¹⁶ During Matilda’s lifetime, the veneration of the

¹¹³ Aelred of Rievaulx, “Genealogia regum Anglorum,” *PL* 195, 736: “Et ecce domus plena leprosis et regina in medio stans, depositoque pallio cum se linteo praecinxisset, posita in pelvi aqua coepit lavare pedes eorum et extergere, extersosque utrisque constringere manibus et devotissime osculari. Cui ego: Quid agis, inquam, o domina mea? Certe si rex sciret ista, nunquam is tuum leprosum pedum tabe pollutum suis dignaretur labiis osculari.» Tunc ipsa subridens: «Pedes, ait, Regis aeterni quis nesciat labiis regis morituri esse praeferendos? Ego certe idcirco vocavi te, frater charissime, ut meo exemplo talia discas operari.» Eng. trans. Jane Patricia Freeland, *The Historical Works* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 2005), 120; translation revised..

¹¹⁴ Carole Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 4. See also Caroline Walker Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991), 120-40; Susan R. Kramer, “Understanding Contagion: The Contaminating Effects of Another’s Sin,” *History in the Comic Mode: Medieval Communities and the Matter of Person*, ed. Rachel Fulton and Bruce W. Holsinger (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 145-57.

¹¹⁵ Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, 137.

¹¹⁶ Aelred of Rievaulx, “Genealogia regum anglorum,” 736: “Necdum enim sciebam Dominum, nec revelatus fuerat mihi spiritus ejus...ego mea culpa ridens ad socios remeavi.”

Christus quasi leprosus was so new to England that David could only react with a visceral sense of disgust and horror to his sister's form of lay devotion, rather than recognizing the penitential act for what it was.¹¹⁷ Yet Matilda had effectively put on a masterful show of cutting-edge pious expression, demonstrating not only the fervor of her religious devotion but also the attention she dedicated to protecting and caring for all members of Christian society.¹¹⁸

Matilda eagerly sought to be part of a larger religious network, far beyond the boundaries of her kingdom. Although the English Church was not the insular backwater sometimes portrayed in William of Malmesbury's chronicle, it had existed for several decades on the margins of Western Christendom's attention. The influx of Normans and reformist ideals in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries changed that, however. The English Church suddenly found itself dragged into continental affairs, and the English queen played an important role in helping the Church make as smooth a transition as possible.¹¹⁹ Matilda's participation in leprosarium and hospital foundations clearly shows her awareness of the newly popular continental trends of lay devotion; her example in England undoubtedly encouraged

¹¹⁷ Green suggests that Matilda's touch may have been thought to have curative powers, although the surviving sources produced during her lifetime or soon after her death do not seem to support this idea; *Henry I*, 259; and "The Piety and Patronage of Henry I," *Haskins Society Journal* 10 (2001), 13. C. Warren Hollister argued that Henry I was repulsed by Matilda's habit of kissing lepers; contemporary sources are silent on Henry's response, however; *Henry I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 130.

¹¹⁸ The twelfth century witnessed the most active phase of hospital foundations during the Middle Ages, and roughly one-fifth of these hospitals began as leprosariums. Henry I's reign saw a "rising tide" of new leper house and hospital foundations, mostly centered in major cities like London and York. What is interesting to note is that many of the Anglo-Norman aristocrats founded these hospitals with the expectation that their relationship with the foundations would continue. Matilda, for example, provided an annual income for her foundation, the Hospital of St. Giles in London. Like the new devotion to lepers, these hospital foundations went beyond the limits of the older forms of monastic donations in their founders' attempts to fulfill the ideals of *imitatio Christi*—caring for the sick and needy personally in imitation of Christ. See Rawcliffe, *Leprosy in Medieval England*, 106-7; Sheila Sweetinburgh, *The Role of the Hospital in Medieval England: Gift-giving and the Spiritual Economy* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 30-43.

¹¹⁹ Matilda's awareness of Continental practices is particularly interesting, considering that she herself was far more associated with England than with her husband's territory in Normandy.

other Anglo-Norman nobles to emulate her actions and facilitate the further spread of Continental religious ideals in England.

The queen also became part of an important network of communication among major European religious leaders. Much of this was due to her growing reputation as a religious figure. The bishop of Norwich, for example, alluded to this, saying, “The odor of your religion has penetrated to the ends of the world and the firmness of your integrity and chastity are known to the surrounding regions.”¹²⁰ Indeed, many influential clergymen wrote to Matilda from the Continent, praising her piety and asking for her advice or aid. Ivo of Chartres, Hildebert of Lavardin, and Marbod of Rennes clearly recognized her as a fellow supporter of reform and an influential lay figure. Bishop Ivo commended two of his canons to the queen, so that they might receive favor in the kindness of her heart, as well as requesting her patronage for his diocese.¹²¹ Hildebert of Lavardin, after hearing a report of the queen’s good health, connected her continued health with the health of the Church itself, writing, “For I am convicted of sin by law and the Church unless my spirit can rejoice and exult in the health of one whose health preserves reverence of laws and the status of the Church unimpaired.”¹²² Matilda’s piety allowed her to become a spiritual figurehead for England itself, drawing the attention of clerics across Europe like moths to a brightly burning flame. And, as Matilda became a part of a larger Western Church, so, too, did the English Church itself.

¹²⁰ Herbert of Losinga, *Epistolae*, ed. A. Robert Anstruther (New York: Burt Franklin, 1969), 48-50: “Penetravit fines mundi vestrae religionis odor et circumjacentibus regionibus vestrae integritatis et pudicitiae soliditas cognita est.”

¹²¹ Ivo of Chartres, “*Epistolae*,” *PL* 162, 125-6. See also cols. 148-9, 177.

¹²² Hildebert of Lavardin, “*Epistolae*,” *PL* 171, 289-90: “In leges enim et in Ecclesiam peccare convincor, nisi de salute laetetur et exsultet spiritus meus, cujus incolumitas et legum reverentiam, et Ecclesiae statum servat incolumen.”

To conclude, Matilda's experiences as queen well reflect the long reach of the reform program. The ban on lay investiture directly affected both the queen's and the king's relationship with the English Church. Her marriage became a matter for ecclesiastical debate. The mob of two hundred priests at the London procession speaks to the chaos and upheaval that the reform movement caused at a local level. In each of these issues, Matilda had to perform in a way that would maintain her status as a good and pious ruler. Moreover, she had to be *seen* performing in that way. This was one of the most critical services that an aristocratic laywoman could provide to the ecclesiastical reform movement: to express the ideals of that imaginary, more perfect Christian world through her own actions and words so that others might witness and be inspired to emulate her. Clerical authors therefore conceptualized "good" women who held positions of power, like Matilda, as living models of reformed morality and behavior. The women, in turn, profited from and encouraged the propagation of these images of themselves. Serving as exemplars gave lay noblewomen a larger audience who would watch them as they performed their duties as Christian lords. Of course, the caveat to this greater visibility was that more people would also be watching if they failed in carrying out their duties.

CHAPTER FOUR: DEFINING FEMALE LORDSHIP ON THE PERIPHERY OF A REFORMED LATIN CHRISTENDOM

The first three chapters have explored the ecclesiastical reform movement's discourses and constructions of female lordship within the "core" of Western Europe, those regions that have long dominated scholarly studies of the Gregorian Reform. This chapter examines a different zone of Christian culture and lordship targeted by religious reformers: the new or growing polities which emerged on the edges of Latin Christendom over the course of the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. As this chapter will demonstrate, these peripheral regions offer an important vantage point from which it is possible to reflect upon the patterns of female lordship and reform in the interior of Latin Christendom. What follows is not an exhaustive survey of the experiences of lay noblewomen living on the borders. Instead, it is a discussion of the major patterns of experience and ideas informing the intersection of religious reform, secular lordship, and femininity in regions which shared the common characteristic of increasing western and Latin Christian influences. Comparing the experiences of female lords on the edges of Latin Christendom to those living in its core can reveal both crucial commonalities and differences. This in turn can illuminate the processes by which ideologies of Christian female lordship developed.

It is not only possible but necessary to use the periphery as a vantage point in this manner because Latin Christendom was undergoing a remarkable geographical expansion in

the eleventh and twelfth centuries.¹ Although it is dangerous to speak of definite physical boundaries in the medieval period, there was a deep awareness of the limits of western European cultural and political influence and of encounters with the strange and foreign.² What solidified the concept of “Latin Christendom” as opposed to other parts of the known world was allegiance to the papacy as the overarching spiritual authority, an authority that transcended the political partitioning of territory amongst secular rulers.³ Religious reform naturally had a significant impact on the rapidity and success of any given region’s assimilation into the society of Latin Christendom.⁴ Moreover, Gregory VII and many other clergymen did

¹ According to Robert Bartlett, the High Middle Ages witnessed the growth of Latin Christendom, marked most clearly by the expansion of existing dioceses or the establishment of new ones. Bartlett suggests that peripheral areas played a key role in the development of a homogenous Latin European identity. He argues that the cultural identity of western Europeans was forged in part in the confrontations between diverse groups of people on the frontiers, when colonizers and explorers from the “core” kingdoms confronted strange and unusual practices and beliefs on the frontiers. Frontier societies therefore acted as an important catalyst in the process of European self-fashioning. See *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994 [originally published 1993]), 5, 313-14. George Beech has also emphasized the increased importance of foreign ventures in the lives of noble families living in the core of western Europe; “The Ventures of the Dukes of Aquitaine into Spain and the Crusader East in the Early Twelfth Century,” *Haskins Society Journal* 5 (1993), 61-76.

² The study of medieval European frontiers has a rich historiography. For an overview of theories and uses of frontier studies in the Middle Ages, see especially Bartlett’s *Making of Europe*. See also: Robert I. Burns, “The Significance of the Frontier in the Middle Ages,” in *Medieval Frontier Societies*, ed. Robert Bartlett and Angus MacKay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 307-330; Daniel Power, “Frontiers: Terms, Concepts, and the Historians of Medieval and Early Modern Europe,” in *Frontiers in Question: Eurasian Borderlands, 700-1700*, ed. Daniel Power and Naomi Standen (New York: St Martin’s Press, 1999), 1-12; David Abulafia, “Seven Types of Ambiguity, c. 1100-1500,” in *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices*, ed. David Abulafia and Nora Berend (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 1-34.

³ David Abulafia, “Seven Types of Ambiguity,” 12; Ronnie Ellenblum, “Were there Borders and Borderlines in the Middle Ages? The Example of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,” in *Medieval Frontiers*, 108.

⁴ Some scholars have argued that in several of these areas—most notably central Europe—religious reform did not gain a strong foothold until the later twelfth century, while the “Gregorian” reforms had no noticeable effect in the period 1070 to 1150; see especially James Westfall Thompson, “Medieval German Expansion in Bohemia and Poland (excerpts),” in *The Expansion of Central Europe in the Middle Ages*, ed. Nora Berend, *The Expansion of Latin Europe 1000-1500 Vol. 5* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Variorum 2012), 30; Louis Hamilton, “Desecration and Consecration in Norman Capua, 1062-1122: Contesting Sacred Space during the Gregorian Reforms,” *Haskins Society Journal* 14 (2005), 137-50. But this argument is based on the modern definition of the “Gregorian Reform,” which focuses on the issues of lay investiture, simony, and clerical marriage as distinguishing elements. It is true that these three points of concern seem to have been of lesser importance in the frontier areas of Iberia, Norman Italy, central Europe, and the Latin East. But this is too limited of an understanding to apply to the breadth of the reform efforts of this period. For example, Zygmunt Sulowski argues in favor of the powerful influence of

include the frontiers as part of their wider agenda to reform Christian society.⁵ Indeed, Gregory's register provides eloquent testimony to the papal court's growing geographical awareness. Gregory wrote to local rulers in areas as far flung as the Christian kingdoms of Spain, Ireland, Scandinavia, northern Africa, the Byzantine Empire, and Russia, encouraging them to recognize papal sovereignty and use the Roman liturgy.⁶ Other supporters of the papal reform movement also came to see the territorial expansion of Latin Christendom as a key part of the general effort to restore and strengthen the Church. For instance, Bonizo of Sutri, a member of Matilda of Tuscany's court at Canossa, displayed a keen interest in the far geographical reaches of papal authority. The arrival of the Hungarians and their eventual Christianization as well as the Norman seizure of Sicily, Calabria, Apulia, and Campania from Muslim and Byzantine control feature prominently in his history of the Church, as examples of instances in which war could be justified by religious means.⁷ More famously, Urban II turned the attention and efforts of western Christians to the Levant with his call for crusade at Clermont in 1095. Urban's motives have long been discussed by scholars, but most would agree that one goal of the First Crusade was to provide for the safety of Christians, whether

religion in unifying the population of Poland in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; see "L'Église Polonaise à ses origines," in *Histoire religieuse de la Pologne*, ed. Jerzy Kloczowski, trans. Karolina T. Michel (Paris: Le Centurion, 1987), 17-51.

⁵ Cowdrey provides the most detailed overview of the Gregorian papacy's interactions with the periphery of Latin Europe. Cowdrey argues that Gregory and his supporters had three main goals for outlying regions: to foster a balance of power, to establish the papacy as the ultimate source of justice and peace, and to promote the pastoral care of Christians far from Rome. See *Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 423-5.

⁶ For example, see Gregory VII, *Register*, nos. I.17-18, i. 27-30; I.22, i. 36-9; I.63-64, i. 91-4; II.13, i. 144-6; II.44, i. 180-2; II.51, i. 192-4; II.73-4, i. 233-7; III.11, i. 271-2; III.21, i. 287-8; V.10, ii. 361-3; V.12, ii. 365; VI.13, ii. 415-8; VI.37, ii. 453-4; VII.4, ii. 463-4; VIII.1, ii. 510-4; VIII.11, ii. 530. See also Bartlett's discussion of the "widening range of the papacy" under Gregory's pontificate, in *Making of Europe*, 244-50.

⁷ Bonizo of Sutri, "Liber ad Amicum," in *MGH Lib. de Lite*, i.568-620.

they be members of eastern churches or western pilgrims.⁸ One perhaps unintended result was the emergence of permanent Latin territories (permanent, that is, until the late thirteenth century), which ensured the west's continued attention to eastern affairs.

The eleventh and twelfth centuries saw the emergence of four frontiers of especial importance for the current inquiry: the Christian kingdoms of León-Castile and Aragon-Navarre in northern Iberia; Norman Italy and Sicily; the three central European powers of Poland, Hungary, and Bohemia; and the Latin East.⁹ While each of these areas brought its own unique benefits and challenges to Latin Christendom, they all share three common and crucial characteristics. The first was an increasing exchange of both lay and clerical personnel and cultural ideas and practices between the frontier region and the core kingdoms of Western Europe.¹⁰ Some of this exchange manifested itself through the creation or reestablishment of dioceses, which then served as loci of reform efforts. The reestablishment of the primacy of

⁸ Jonathan Riley-Smith suggested that "although the First Crusade began the process by which western Europeans conquered and settled many of the coastal territories of the eastern Mediterranean, it is very unlikely that this was planned from the start." See *The First Crusaders, 1095-1131* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 18. Rudolf Hiestand likewise states, "The crusader states were a historical accident, because nobody at Clermont had been planning anything with a view to new States or a Latin Church in the East"; in "Some Reflections on the Impact of the Papacy on the Crusader States and the Military Orders in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *The Crusades and the Military Orders: Expanding the Frontiers of Medieval Latin Christianity*, ed. Zolt Hunyadi and József Laszlovszky (Budapest: Central European University, 2001), 10. See also Riley-Smith, "Crusading as an Act of Love," in *Medieval Religion: New Approaches*, ed. Constance Hoffman Berman (New York: Routledge, 2005), 49-67.

⁹ Many scholars have identified the period 1000-1150 as a key turning point in the process of assimilation for these four areas. The historiography for each area is vast. Accessible starting points include Joseph O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975); Bernard F. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca, 1109-1126* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982); G.A. Loud, *The Latin Church in Norman Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) and *The Age of Robert Guiscard: Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest* (New York: Longman Publishing, 2000); László Makkai, "The Foundation of the Hungarian Christian State, 950-1196," in *A History of Hungary*, ed. Peter F. Sugar, Péter Hanák, and Tibor Trank (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990), 15-22; Nora Berend, Przemysław Urbańczyk, and Przemysław Wiszewski, *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages: Bohemia, Hungary and Poland c. 900- c. 1300* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Bernard Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States* (London: Variorum Publications, 1980).

¹⁰ See selected essays on colonization and settlement efforts by Paul Knoll, Manuel González Jiménez, Robert Bartlett, and Geoffrey Barrow in *Medieval Frontier Societies*, 3-21, 23-47, 49-74, 151-74.

Toledo, for example, represented a symbolic victory in Alfonso VI's "liberation" of the old Visigothic dioceses from the control of the *taifas*.¹¹ Ecclesiastical reformers were also determined to impose the Roman liturgy in place of regional practices, such as the Mozarabic rites in Christian Spain or the Slavic rites in central Europe. Many of Gregory VII's letters to border-rulers emphasized the importance of proper liturgical rites. For example, in 1076 Gregory wrote to the bishop of Oca-Burgos, arguing that universal religious practice was what the Church truly required.¹² To Sancho I of Aragon and Alfonso VI of León-Castile Gregory sent letters praising their efforts to enforce the Roman liturgy.¹³ In one such letter, Gregory used the liturgy as a way to associate the geographically isolated Spanish kings with the rest of Europe, for by enforcing the Roman liturgy the kings had connected themselves to the same network of basic religious practice.¹⁴ Cardinal Rainerius—the future Paschal II—oversaw the 1090 Council of León, the last of several ecclesiastical councils in Spain which abolished the local Mozarabic liturgy.¹⁵ Likewise, Geoffrey Malaterra praised Count Roger for bringing back to Sicily "the sacred law where it had been forsaken."¹⁶ Duke Wratislav of Bohemia, on the other hand, asked Gregory for permission to continue the use of the Slavic liturgy rather than converting to the Roman so that the common people could understand what was being

¹¹ Stephen Lay, *The Reconquest Kings of Portugal: Political and Cultural Reorientation on the Medieval Frontier* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 22-7.

¹² Gregory VII, *Register*, no. III.18, i. 284.

¹³ *Ibid.*, nos. I.64, IX.2, i. 92-4, ii. 569-72.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, no. I.64, i. 93.

¹⁵ Anselm Gordon Briggs, "Diego Gelmírez: First Archbishop of Compostela," *The Catholic University of America Studies in Medieval History New Series XII* (PhD Dissertation; Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 1949), 19. Diego Gelmírez of Santiago de Compostela, according to R.A. Fletcher, was also a strong proponent of ecclesiastical reform. See *Saint James' Catapult: The Life and Times of Diego Gelmírez of Santiago de Compostela* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 115-16.

¹⁶ GM, 69: "Qui reduxit sacram legem, unde prius corruit."

said. Gregory refused, calling the request “unwise,” and argued that obscuring the liturgy through the use of a foreign language would be beneficial to the Slavic Church, to prevent the Scripture from being misunderstood or corrupted.¹⁷ Other exchanges of ideas and practice focused on the *mores* of the laity in an effort to Christianize more fully these frontier societies. Marriage reform appears to have been as pressing an issue—if not more so—on the periphery as it was in the core of Latin Christendom, as will be discussed below. Deviation from approved forms of marriage among the laity—polygamy, for example, or marriages which fell within the forbidden degrees of consanguinity—were more than socially unacceptable. They became symbols of alterity, of lingering pagan roots or foreign, non-Christian influence.

This fear of alterity also shaped the second major characteristic of peripheral society: the presence of an external and threatening religious “Other” which better defined through contrast the region’s identity as Latin Christian. In Spain, for example, Muslim-Christian relations began to break down in the late eleventh century, as Spanish Christian rulers expanded their territories.¹⁸ In Norman Italy and the Latin East, western Europeans identified

¹⁷ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. VII.11, ii. 474.

¹⁸ In her recent study on the iconography of the Virgin Mary in Spain, Amy Remensnyder highlights how between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries, “Spanish Christian expansion had made conquest and conversion inescapable realities—even matters of life and death—for many women and men in the Iberian Peninsula and the Americas. Christians, Muslims, Jews, and the indigenous peoples of the Americas had to negotiate their ways through the complex cultural and religious situations...As individuals and as groups, and as colonizers and the colonized, they had to devise ways to forge their identities in situations of enormous diversity”; *La Conquistadora: The Virgin Mary at War and Peace in the Old and New Worlds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 7. R.A. Fletcher has suggested that incoming French laymen and clergy, agents of the reformed papacy, provided the first impetus towards the development of the idea of a *Reconquista* based on a sharp religious divide. See R.A. Fletcher, “Reconquest and Crusade in Spain c. 1050-1150,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* series 5, 37 (1987), 37-8. Pope Calixtus II later extended the crusading movement to include Iberian campaigns at the Lateran Council of 1123; William J. Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia, c. 1095-c. 1187* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2008), 129-36. See also Ann Christys, “Crossing the Frontier of Ninth-Century Hispania,” in *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices*, 35-53; Eduardo Manzano Moreno, “The Creation of a Medieval Frontier: Islam and Christianity in the Iberian Peninsula, Eighth to Eleventh Centuries,” in *Frontiers in Question*, 32-54.

themselves predominantly in contrast to their Muslim and Greek neighbors.¹⁹ And for the Christian kingdoms of central Europe, the “pagans” to the east and north offered both a clear threat and a clear cultural boundary.²⁰ It is no coincidence that this period witnessed both an expansion of geographical boundaries and new interpretations of holy war in conjunction with overall efforts towards religious reform. One major route of reform was the interpretation of the violence of Christian lords as being for the benefit of the entirety of Latin Christendom, both in terms of strengthening its physical borders and for spreading the true faith.²¹ This is, of course, a familiar and crucial theme of the First Crusade, but, as we shall see, it was not reserved only for that “Frankish” expedition.

Finally, each of these four areas has a surviving body of contemporary narrative sources that, while often patchy, is still extensive enough to grant us a clear view of the ideologies and processes which informed the assimilation of these frontiers into the wider polity of Latin

¹⁹ As Bartlett has pointed out, “The abstract ‘Christendom’ also summoned into being its mirror image: ‘heathendom’” (*Making of Europe*, 253). For discussions of the “Other” in the Latin East, see Bernard Hamilton, “Knowing the Enemy: Western Understanding of Islam at the Time of the Crusades,” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* series 3, 3 (1997), 373-87; Marcus Bull, “Views of Muslims and of Jerusalem in Miracle Stories, c. 1000-c. 1200,” in *The Experience of Crusading Volume One: Western Approaches*, ed. Marcus Bull and Norman Housley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 13-38; and Simon Yarrow, “Prince Bohemond, Princess Melaz, and the Gendering of Religious Difference in the Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis,” in *Intersections of Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Cordelia Beattie and Kirsten A. Fenton (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), 140-57; Philip K. Hitti, “The Impact of the Crusades on Eastern Christianity,” in *Medieval and Middle Eastern Studies in Honour of Aziz Suryal Atiya* (Leiden: Brill, 1972), 211-17; Hans Eberhard Mayer, “Latins, Muslims and Greeks in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,” *History* 63 (1978), 175-92. The diverse social and ethnic groups present in Norman Italy also presented problems for the Norman rulers. See, for example, T.S. Brown, “The Political Use of the Past in Norman Sicily,” in *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe*, ed. Paul Magdalino (London: The Hambledon Press, 1992), 191-210.

²⁰ Berend *et al.*, *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages*, 33-50.

²¹ Scholars have identified the last decades of the late eleventh century as a crucial period in the development of the medieval concept of holy war, leading up to the formation of the First Crusade. Moreover, several scholars have identified Matilda of Tuscany’s court as a crucial center of this developing intellectual thought. For example, see Jean Flori, “Ideology and Motivations in the First Crusade,” in *Palgrave Advances in the First Crusade*, ed. Helen J. Nicholson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 15-36; Riley-Smith, *First Crusaders*, 46-7; H.E.J. Cowdrey, “Christianity and the Morality of Warfare during the First Century of Crusading,” in *The Experience of Crusading Volume One: Western Approaches*, 75-192, and “Pope Gregory VII and the Bearing of Arms,” in *The Crusades and Latin Monasticism, 11th-12th Centuries* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 1999 [originally published 1997]), 21-35.

Christendom. For northern Iberia, these sources include the *Chronicon Regum Legionensium* (written c. 1121-1132) and the *Historia Compostellana*, a *gesta* of the career of Diego Gelmírez, first archbishop of Santiago, composed by multiple authors beginning in or shortly after 1107.²² The chronicles of Amatus of Montecassino (written soon after 1080), William of Apulia (composed most likely between 1097 and 1099), and Geoffrey Malaterra (finished before 1101) provide three diverse accounts of Norman Italy and Sicily.²³ For the Latin East, the histories of Fulcher of Chartres (composed between 1102 and 1128) and Albert of Aachen (begun in 1102 and most likely completed c. 1120) offer insight into the First Crusade and initial developments in Latin colonization.²⁴ The 1120s also saw the production of some of the earliest central European narrative histories, including Cosmas of Prague's *Chronica Boemorum* and the anonymous *Gesta principum Polonorum*.²⁵ The production and survival of these texts give us some access to the experiences and ideas developing c. 1050-1125 in the four regions discussed here. Efforts towards conversion and religious reform did take place in

²² Pelayo of Oviedo, *Cronica del Obispo Don Pelayo*, ed. B. Sánchez Alonso (Madrid: Imprenta de los Sucesores de Hernando, 1924). *Historia Compostellana*, ed. Emma Falque Rey, CCCM 70 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1988).

²³ Amatus of Montecassino's chronicle only survives in a fourteenth-century French translation. The most recent critical edition is the *Ystoire de li Normant*, ed. Michèle Guéret-Laferté, Les Classiques Français du Moyen Âge 166 (Paris: Honoré Champion Éditeur, 2011); Eng. trans. Prescott N. Dunbar and G.A. Loud, *The History of the Normans* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2004). William of Apulia, "Gesta Roberti Wiscardi," in *Le Geste de Robert Guiscard*, ed. Marguerite Mathieu, Testi e Monumenti 4 (Palermo: Istituto siciliano di studi bizantini e neoellenici, 1961). Geoffrey Malaterra, "De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae comitis et Roberti Guiscardis ducis fratris eius," ed. Ernesto Pontieri, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, vol. 5 pt. 1 (Bologna: Nicola Zanichelli, 1925-8); Eng. trans. Kenneth Baxter Wolf, *The Deeds of Count Roger of Calabria and Sicily and of his brother Duke Robert Guiscard* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2005).

²⁴ Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. Heinrich Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg: Carl Winters Universitätsbuchhandlung, 1913). Albert of Aachen, *Historia Ierosolimitana*, ed. and trans. Susan B. Edgington (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007).

²⁵ Cosmas of Prague, *Die Chronik der Böhmen des Cosmas von Prag*, ed. Bertold Bretholz, *MGH Scriptores rerum Germanicarum: Nova series* 2 (Berlin: Weidmann, 1923); Eng. trans. Lisa Wolverton, *The Chronicle of the Czechs* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2009). *Gesta principum Polonorum*, ed. and trans. Paul W. Knoll and Frank Schaer, Central European Medieval Texts 3 (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2003).

other areas of Europe during this period, most notably in the Celtic British Isles and Scandinavia. However, these regions do not offer the same quantity or quality of narrative source material reliably datable to the eleventh and early twelfth centuries. In addition, the process of cultural assimilation in Scandinavia and Ireland, especially, took much longer, extending well into the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries.²⁶

Each frontier presented religious reformers with its own unique challenges, making religious reform on the frontiers by necessity analogous rather than homologous to reform efforts in the interior; nor were reform efforts identical in each of the four geographical areas considered in this chapter. But these frontiers did share a number of commonalities that make them interesting testing grounds for an examination of female lordship within the context of religious reform. There were, for example, a number of shared reform goals along the frontiers. This chapter asks how the conditions of the periphery influenced the experiences and representations of lay noblewomen as potential agents of religious reform. To do so, the first section examines the models of gendered power and agency which were introduced into these increasingly Latinized areas. Next, the careers of specific noblewomen living on or interacting with the frontiers will be considered, including Urraca, queen regnant of León-Castile, the Lombard princess Sichelgaita, the second wife of Robert Guiscard, and Adelaide of Sicily, wife first of Roger I of Sicily and then Baldwin I of Jerusalem. When compared with the experiences of lay noblewomen in religious reform in the interior of Latin Christendom, the

²⁶ Ireland's cultural assimilation and colonization was most in evidence in the late twelfth and thirteenth centuries. See Bartlett, *Making of Europe*, 21. See also Brendan Smith, "The Frontiers of Church Reform in the British Isles, 1170-1230," in *Medieval Frontiers*, 239-53. See also F.J. Byrne, "Ireland and Her Neighbours, c. 1014-1072," in *A New History of Ireland I: Prehistoric and Early Ireland*, ed. Dáibhí Ó Cróinín (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), for an overview of Scandinavian and Irish religious developments in the eleventh through thirteenth centuries. See also Birgit Sawyer and P.H. Sawyer, *Medieval Scandinavia: From Conversion to Reformation, circa 800-1500* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).

experiences of their counterparts on the frontiers will reveal how remarkably adaptable medieval ideologies of female lordship could be.

Gendering the Nobility on the Periphery

Gender paradigms influenced conceptions of secular authority just as strongly on the periphery of Latin Christendom as they did in the core, and perhaps to an even greater extent. Consider, for example, how Cosmas of Prague tells the legendary story of the founding of the Bohemian Přemyslid dynasty in the ninth century. The legend opens the twelfth-century *Chronica Boemorum* and introduces the main motif of ducal leadership that permeates the rest of the text. According to Cosmas, a prophetess, Libuše, who “adorned and glorified the feminine sex while handling masculine affairs with foresight,” ruled the Czech people.²⁷ Despite her many good qualities, the Czechs found Libuše wanting as a ruler. In a carefully staged scene, Libuše, lounging on a coverlet “with the wanton softness of women when they do not have a man whom they fear,” rejects the case of a male supplicant, who salivates at the mouth with the force of his indignation.²⁸ The man challenges Libuše’s right to rule, citing her gender as the cause. As the scene unfolds, Libuše hides her rage and responds, “It is as you say: I am a woman, I live as a woman, and for that reason I seem to you to know too little, because I do not judge you with a rod of iron; and since you live without fear, you rightly look down on me. For where fear is, there is honor. Now, it is very necessary that you have a ruler fiercer than a woman.”²⁹ With her prophetic powers, Libuše names a farmer, Přemysl, as the

²⁷ Cosmas, *Chronik*, 11: “feminei sexus decus et gloria, dictans negocia providenter virilia.” Eng. trans. Woverton, 40; translation slightly revised.

²⁸ Ibid.: “...ut est lasciva mollicies mulierum, quando non habet quem timeat virum...” Eng. trans. Wolverton, 41; translation revised.

man worthy to be her husband and the first duke. As the narrative progresses, it is Přemysl who tames the “savage” people with new laws; it is his wife, Libuše, who sees in a vision the founding of Prague, later to be a beacon of holiness “throughout the whole world.”³⁰ This dichotomy of female softness and masculine ferocity is a prominent and familiar theme in medieval texts, but it is important to note that it is a dichotomy which Cosmas’ chronicle places at the very foundation of Czech rulership. Přemysl would not have become duke without Libuše; Libuše could not rule without Přemysl.³¹

Contemporary chronicles, chansons, and letters provide plenty of evidence of a general awareness that the frontier regions of Latin Christendom required a sharp separation of gender roles, similar to what occurs here in the Přemyslid legend. Indeed, it is impossible to understand models of femininity and female lordship that emerged in frontier areas without also considering the corresponding models of masculinity and male lordship. In general, representations of male Christian lordship on the edges of Latin Christendom resided in images of hyper-masculinity—of ferocity, violence, terror-inspiring strength. The questions we must now ask are what purpose this model of hyper-masculine lordship served and how it influenced simultaneous developments in ideas of female lordship.

One major outcome of ecclesiastical reformers’ attempts to improve the ethics of lay society was the recruitment of aristocratic masculine violence to the service of the Latin

²⁹ Cosmas, *Chronik*, 12: “Ita est...ut ais; femina sum, femina vivo, sed ideo parum vobis sapere videor, quia vos non in virga ferrea iudico, et quoniam sine timore vivitis, merito me despicitis. Nam ubi est timor, ibi honor. Nunc autem necesse est valde, ut habeatis rectorem femina ferociorem.” Eng. trans. Wolverton, 41; translation slightly revised.

³⁰ Cosmas, *Chronik*, 18-19.

³¹ Lisa Wolverton has interpreted this passage as Cosmas’ critique of Bohemian power structures; see *Cosmas of Prague: Narrative, Classicism, Politics* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2015), 92-8, 113-14.

Church.³² The most famous example of this is, of course, the First Crusade, which was itself the direct result of multiple currents of religious and cultural reform converging together.³³ Naturally enough, narratives of the crusade present the clearest and most frequent depictions of a hyper-masculinity controlled by religious fervor. Notably, the characteristics of pure physical strength and battle prowess became a hallmark of successful male crusading lordship in both the eye-witness accounts and in the narratives written after the crusade and the initial settlement of the Latin East. For example, Robert the Monk, the most popular of the First Crusade chroniclers, praises Godfrey of Bouillon's military exploits in delighted, gruesome detail. Robert describes one particularly eye-catching instance during the battle of Antioch in 1098, in which Godfrey reportedly cut a Muslim emir in half. His actions in battle distinguished him in the eyes of his enemies as "a shining light of Christendom."³⁴ Indeed, cutting an enemy in half became a common trope in both crusade chronicles and later *chansons*. Ralph of Caen offered a similar assessment of Godfrey's military prowess, declaring that "he knew how to wage war, to arrange a line of battle and to increase glory in arms."³⁵ For Raymond of Aguilers, physical strength became a symbol of divine purpose. About the siege of Jerusalem in 1099, Raymond writes, "Despite these casualties neither did the pagan attack diminish nor did the strength of our knights, truly *Christi militia*, weaken. Rather inspired by wounds and even

³² The convergence of aristocratic belligerence and piety was not unique to the frontiers, but it was accentuated. H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII and the Bearing of Arms," 21-35; and "Christianity and the Morality of Warfare during the First Century of Crusading," 175-80.

³³ See especially H.E.J. Cowdrey, "The Reform Papacy and the Origin of the Crusades," in *The Crusades and Latin Monasticism, 11th-12th Centuries*, 65-83; and Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The First Crusade and the Idea of Crusading* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1986).

³⁴ Robert the Monk, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, ed. D. Kempf and M.G. Bull (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 45

³⁵ Ralph of Caen, *Tancredus*, ed. Edoardo D'Angelo, CCCM 231, 18: "preliari, ordinare acies, armis gloriam propagare." Eng. trans. Bernard S. Bachrach and David S. Bachrach, *The Gesta Tancredi* (Burlington: VT: Ashgate, 2005), 37; translation slightly revised.

death, they carried the attack more energetically as they underwent greater pressure.”³⁶ Raymond’s words serve not only to praise the Christian forces for physical endurance, but also to gesture to the nascent idea that physical suffering could lead to spiritual gain. Likewise, Albert of Aachen made the connection between physical violence and spirituality explicit in the opening chapter of the *Historia Ierosolimitana* when he praised the crusaders for how they journeyed to Jerusalem and killed thousands of Muslims.³⁷

Gender also percolated into the language of disapproval. Those men who proved to be cowards in battle were condemned not just as failures as soldiers but as men. Ralph of Caen described how his patron Tancred “emasculated” his enemies (*effeminare*) at the siege of Nicaea.³⁸ Stephen of Blois became infamous for his desertion of the crusade during the siege of Antioch in 1098. The Anglo-Norman chronicler Henry of Huntingdon reflected on Stephen’s actions decades later and accused him of “fleeing like a woman.”³⁹ Robert the Monk likewise makes recourse to feminized language when describing the actions of a crusader called Rainald, about whom modern scholars know very little. Rainald’s brief role in the narrative is limited to that of an exemplar of the worst kind. He commits the ultimate betrayal by becoming an apostate and fleeing to the Turks: “Alas! Alas! Cowardly soldier that he was, from the North and not from the South, how lukewarm and effeminate was his fight for the

³⁶ Raymond of Aguilers, *Le “Liber”*, ed. John Hugh and Laura L. Hill (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1969), 141-2: “Neque tamen ob hoc imminetia hostium inminuebatur, neque fortitudo nostrorum militum immo Dei militum desperabat. Sed ex vulneribus et ab ipsa morte incalescentes, tanto aciores instabant hostibus quanto graviora se ab eis perpeccos senciebant.” Eng. trans. John Hugh Hill and Laurita L. Hill, *Historia Francorum Qui Ceperunt Iherusalem* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1968), 120.

³⁷ AA, 3.

³⁸ Ralph of Caen, *Tancredus*, 20.

³⁹ Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. Diana Greenway (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 436.

Heavenly King and Heavenly Kingdom when, not so much as touched by a light straw, he shrank from suffering martyrdom and renounced profession of the Christian faith despite being in good shape, on horseback and armed.”⁴⁰ Here, then, is a man in perfect physical condition acting “effeminate” by being a cowardly soldier and spiritually weak.

Several scholars have commented on how contemporary authors depicted the First Crusade and later expeditions as a purely masculine endeavor, despite the fact that the crusading movement inevitably affected the lives of women who remained in western Europe and who journeyed to the Latin East.⁴¹ Yet chroniclers of the First Crusade and the Latin East were not alone in their foregrounding of models of hyper-masculinity. Bishop Pelayo of Oviedo, for example, portrays Alfonso VI of León-Castile preeminently as a Christian warrior-king. In Pelayo’s *Chronicon Regum Legionensium*, Alfonso’s violent interactions with neighboring Muslim powers are framed in the narrative by clear statements of the king’s piety. First, Alfonso sends messengers to Gregory VII in Rome because he wants papal aid in establishing the Roman liturgy throughout his kingdom; this is, notably, also his first act as king in the *Chronicon* following his defeat of his brothers Sancho and García. Then comes a description of Alfonso’s military career, consisting of a long list of towns and castles he captured from the *taifas* and a statement that Alfonso reached a “pitch of elation” at the

⁴⁰ Robert the Monk, *Historia Iherosolomitana*, 20; Eng. trans. Carol Sweetenham, *History of the First Crusade* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 86.

⁴¹ Natasha R. Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 39. For the masculine nature of the First Crusade, see Matthew Bennett, “Virile Latins, Effeminate Greeks and Strong Women: Gender Definitions on Crusade?,” in *Gendering the Crusades*, ed. Susan B. Edgington and Sarah Lambert (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001), 16-30; Sarah Lambert, “Crusading or Spinning,” in *Gendering the Crusades*, 1-15; Constance M. Rousseau, “Home Front and Battlefield: The Gendering of Papal Crusading Policy (1095-1221),” in *Gendering the Crusades*, 31-44; Connor Kostick, “Women and the First Crusade: Prostitutes or Pilgrims?” in *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women 4: Victims or Viragos?*, ed. Christine Meek and Catherine Lawless (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), 57-68; and Kirsten A. Fenton, “Gendering the First Crusade in William of Malmesbury’s *Gesta Regum Anglorum*,” in *Intersections of Gender, Religion and Ethnicity in the Middle Ages*, 125-39.

prospect of fighting the Almoravids. His military triumphs are followed immediately by the statement, “This Alfonso was the father and defender of all the Spanish churches, and he did this because he was a Catholic in all respects. He was so terrifying to evil doers that they never dared to show themselves in his sight.”⁴² At his death in 1109, the people of León-Castile lamented that “Saracens and evil men” would fall upon the kingdom.⁴³ Scholars have debated whether or not Alfonso VI’s wars with the *taifas* and Almoravids were driven by the king’s religious feeling, but this was clearly the motivation which clerical authors wanted to place on his actions.⁴⁴ It also created a potential point of convergence for royal and papal discourses. Gregory VII himself, for example, used Alfonso’s and his Aragonese counterpart’s victories over “Saracens and pagans” as an excuse to remind the Christian kings of Spain of the papacy’s claims of sovereignty over “the kingdom of Spain” which could now be restored thanks to the expansion of Christian territory. Gregory’s emphasis on papal sovereignty indicates not only his own personal ambition as pope but also part of the wider agenda of reaffirming Holy Church’s place as the central authority for any Christian society.⁴⁵ Furthermore, in the same letter of 1077, Gregory told the kings and lay magnates of Christian Spain, “Direct your arms, resources, and power not merely to secular display but to the honor and service of the eternal

⁴² Pelayo of Oviedo, *Chronica*, 79-81.

⁴³ Ibid., 83: “Iste Adefonsus fuit pater et defensor omnium ecclesiarum hispaniensium, ideo hec fecit quia per omnia catholicus fuit. Tanto terribilis fuit ut omnibus maleagentibus que nunquam auderent parere in conspectus eius.”

⁴⁴ R.A. Fletcher, “Reconquest and Crusade in Spain,” 31-48; Felipe Fernández-Armesto, “The Survival of a Notion of Reconquista in Late Tenth- and Eleventh-Century León,” in *Warriors and Churchmen in the High Middle Ages: Essays presented to Karl Leyser* (London: Hambledon Press, 1992), 123-43.

⁴⁵ Cowdrey, *Pope Gregory VII*, 468-80.

King.”⁴⁶ Alfonso’s bellicosity thus offered a route through which concepts of Christianized rulership and papal reform could be promoted and put into action.

In Norman Italy, physical violence became not only a characteristic of male lordship but *the* defining characteristic of the Normans themselves.⁴⁷ William of Apulia’s *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi* claims that the Normans were both greedy and “distinguished by their ferocious knights.”⁴⁸ In the *De rebus gestis Rogerii Calabriae et Siciliae comitis*, Geoffrey Malaterra describes the Normans as a people “avid for profit and domination,” who increased their dominion “through the exercise of arms and subjecting the necks of many to their yoke.”⁴⁹ Their enemies—Greeks, Muslims, and Lombards—provided a sharp contrast. Rather than reveling in violence, they had “the hearts of women” and “neglected warlike matters.”⁵⁰ Although both chroniclers emphasize the cruelty and suffering caused by war, there is no doubt that the invading Normans are the heroes of their narratives. This can be seen especially in Robert Guiscard’s first appearance in William of Apulia’s text. The battle of Civitate in 1053 proved to be a Norman victory over an anti-Norman coalition led by Pope Leo IX.⁵¹ The pope, William suggests, was tricked into fighting the Normans by treacherous Germans and

⁴⁶ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. IV.28, i. 345: “Arma vestra opes potentia non ad secularem pompam tantum, sed ad honorem et servitium eterni regis vertite.”

⁴⁷ Kenneth Baxter Wolf’s *Making History: The Normans and their Historians in Eleventh-Century Italy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995) provides a good starting point for modern historiography on the formation of a Norman identity of conquest in southern Italy.

⁴⁸ William of Apulia, *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi*, 98: “...feritate insignis equestri.”

⁴⁹ GM, 8; see Loud’s comments on the *strenuitas* of the Normans, in *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 5.

⁵⁰ William of Apulia, *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi*, 118, 164.

⁵¹ The outcome of the battle, it is important to note, ended any attempts to expel the Normans from southern Italy. The battle itself marked one of the few failures of Leo IX’s pontificate; Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 119–20. William of Apulia seems to have been eager to find a way of excusing both the Normans and Pope Leo IX for their roles in provoking the battle in the first place.

Lombards; the Normans were, for once, unwilling combatants and tried but failed to make peace with the pope before battle broke out. The victory was “conferred by Heaven,” according to the *De rebus gestis Roberti Wiscardi*, and Robert Guiscard himself was a great hero of the battle.⁵² The narrative relates how Robert fought the Germans like a wild animal when it seemed the battle would be a loss for the Normans: “His fury merely increased, as does that of the lion who roars and furiously attacks those animals less strong than himself, and if he meets resistance becomes more ferocious and burns with greater anger. He gives no quarter, he drags off his prey and eats it, scatters what he cannot devour, bringing death to all. In such a way did Robert continue to bring death to the Swabians who opposed him. He cut off feet and hands, sliced heads from bodies, ripped into breasts and chests, and transfixed those whose heads he had cut off.”⁵³ There is no sense in the passage of something untoward in Robert’s leonine fury. Rather, it appears an act of righteous revenge against the Germans, who had impeded several attempts at peacemaking between the Normans and Leo IX. The Normans’ victory at Civitate not only cemented their hold on southern Italy but also earned them the pope’s blessing (though whether Leo had any real choice in the matter is another point entirely).⁵⁴ Following the battle, William of Apulia’s narrative always shows the Norman duke and the pope working in harmony, such as Pope Nicholas II’s granting of the title of duke in 1059 or Robert Guiscard’s rescue of Gregory VII from Rome in 1084.⁵⁵

⁵² For a detailed discussion of the epic nature of William’s account of Civitate, see Emily Albu, *The Normans in their Histories: Propaganda, Myth and Subversion* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001), 116-21.

⁵³ William of Apulia, *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi*, 144: “Ut leo, cum frendens animalia forte minora/ acriter invadit, si quid reperire quod obstet/ coeperit, insanit, magis et maioribus ira/ accensa stimulat; nil iam dimittit inultum;/ hoc trahit, hoc mandit, quod mandi posse negatur/ dissipat, affligens pecus exitialiter omne:/ taliter obstantes diversa caede Suevos/ caedere non cessat Robertus; et hos pede truncat,/ et manibus quosdam; caput huic cum corpore caedit;/ illius ventrem cum pectore dissecat, huius/ transadigit costas absciso vertice.”

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 146.

In central Europe, territorial squabbles and missionizing efforts shaped the interactions of masculine violence and religious fervor. The Hungarians, Poles, and Czechs were often at war with each other, with their “pagan” neighbors such as the Pomeranians, and with the German empire. Victory was seen as a sign of divine clemency, and the most lauded rulers were those who not only encouraged the faith and morals of Latin Christianity but who enforced it with threats of physical violence as well. For instance, St. Stephen, the first Christian king of Hungary (r. 1000/1-1038), provided an early model of a *miles Christi*, a king who won sanctity by forcibly converting his people and expanding his newly Christian territory.⁵⁶ Stephen’s violent efforts towards conversion laid the foundation for the Hungarian court’s later reputation as a seat of remarkable piety.⁵⁷ Indeed, by the thirteenth century Hungary had so firmly established its position as a bulwark of Christianity on the frontier that an anonymous cleric in King Béla IV’s court referred to it as the “gate of Christendom.”⁵⁸ The model of military belligerence and religious piety expressed through St. Stephen’s actions held true in neighboring Poland and Bohemia. The anonymous Latin chronicler of the Poles, perhaps influenced by Stephen’s example, emphasized the religious aspect of the Polish rulers’ use of violence by describing Poland’s constant strife with its neighbors in terms of a war of

⁵⁵ William of Apulia, *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi*, 152, 233-34.

⁵⁶ Glábor Klaniczay points out that Stephen was the first king to reach sanctity not through martyrdom, which had been the predominant model of saintly kings, but through converting his people. See *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses: Dynastic Cults in Medieval Central Europe*, trans. Éva Pálmai (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 134. For a discussion of Stephen’s importance to the fashioning of Hungarian political ideology, see Attila Bányai, “The Expansions of the Kingdom of Hungary in the Middle Ages (1000-1490),” in *The Expansion of Central Europe in the Middle Ages*, 333-80.

⁵⁷ Lois Huneycutt suggests that Margaret of Scotland, who was raised in the Hungarian court as an exile, was strongly influenced by the religious zeal of that court. See *Matilda of Scotland: A Study in Medieval Queenship* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), 16.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of the use of this frontier rhetoric by the Hungarian court in the thirteenth century, see Nora Berend, “Hungary, ‘The Gate of Christendom,’” in *Medieval Frontiers: Concepts and Practices*, 195-215.

conversion: “On the Northern Sea, or Sea of Amphytryon, [Poland] has as neighbors three most savage nations of pagan barbarians, Selencia, Pomerania, and Prussia, and the duke of the Poles is constantly at war with these countries, fighting to convert them to the faith.”⁵⁹ Moreover, warfare could serve as a religious expression beyond campaigns of conversion. Cosmas compared Duke Břetislav of Bohemia (r. 1035-1055), for example, to several Old Testament heroes: Břetislav “received such an accumulation of virtues that he surpassed Gideon in his vigor in warfare, exceeded Samson in bodily strength, and went before Solomon in the special privilege of wisdom. Whence it happened that he was a victor in all his battles, like Joshua, and richer in gold and silver than the kings of Arabia.”⁶⁰ Břetislav’s victories, which earned him such praise, were often religious in nature. Most importantly, for example, in 1039 Břetislav led a successful and brutal raid into Polish territory. From Gniezno, the duke brought back the relics of St. Adalbert and the Five Brothers to Prague, Cosmas’ own church. Cosmas relates how, influenced by standing in Adalbert’s saintly presence, Břetislav announced a series of decrees designed to Christianize the Czech people, who still practiced a number of pagan rites.⁶¹ Břetislav’s raid on Gniezno thus becomes, for Cosmas, a religious matter.

⁵⁹ *Gesta principum Polonorum*, 12: “Ad mare autem septemtrionale vel amphytrionale tres habet affines barbarorum gentilium ferocissimas naciones, Selenciam, Pomoraniem et Pruziam, contra quas regiones Polonorum dux assidue pugnat, ut eas ad fidem convertat.” For discussions of the conversion and conquest of Pomerania, see Stanisław Rosik, “Pomerania and Poland in the Tenth to Twelfth Centuries: The expansion of the Piasts and shaping political, social and state relations in the seaside Slav Communities,” in *The Expansion of Central Europe in the Middle Ages*, 450-89; Robert Bartlett, “The Conversion of a Pagan Society in the Middle Ages,” *History* 70 (1985), 185-201.

⁶⁰ Cosmas, *Chronik*, 82: “Quippe hanc virtutum obtinuit accumulationem, ut in rebus bellicis strennuitate precelleret Gedeonem, corporis viribus exsuperaret Samsonem, quadam speciali prerogative sapientie preiret Salomonem. Unde factum est, ut in omnibus preliis victor existeret ceu Iosue, auro et argento locupletior esset regibus Arabie.” Eng. trans. Wolverton, 110; translation slightly revised.

⁶¹ The retrieval of Adalbert’s relics was a great symbolic gain for Prague. Adalbert had been the bishop of Prague in the late tenth century. The bishop fled Bohemia after angering the Přemyslids and traveled for several years as a missionary. He later became bishop of Gniezno, where he died and was buried. Cosmas describes the seizure of his relics as Adalbert’s return to Prague. See Cosmas, *Chronik*, 85-91.

Overall, commentators on events taking place in the Latin East, Christian Spain, Norman Italy, and central Europe appear to have recognized an increased need for strong military leadership, a role that immediately threatened to exclude women participants. Although military prowess was a necessary skill for any male member of the lay aristocracy in western Europe, its importance was accentuated by the different pressures found in frontier societies. By the late eleventh century, the combination of western territorial expansion and religious reform had heightened tensions amongst the diverse groups living on the frontier to the point where physical conflict must have seemed inevitable. The western empire and the kingdoms of England and France also suffered from various political upheavals in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, but these conflicts were mainly internal in nature. More importantly, they did not have the same heightened level of religious significance attached to them as did those conflicts on the frontiers which featured external, non-Latin Christian enemies. The frontiers of Latin Christendom therefore needed a different model of male Christian rulership, one which depended upon images of hyper-masculinity to conquer, tame, and properly Christianize the rough and “barbaric” peoples living on the fringes of western society.

This highlighting of militant forms of masculinity was frequently accompanied and supported by a corresponding denigration of the feminine. The piety of the First Crusaders, for example, was signposted in many texts by male crusaders’ renunciation of women. Natasha Hodgson comments on how wives in historical narratives represented the worldly lives abandoned by men determined to go on crusade.⁶² In his description of the lay response to Urban’s sermon at Clermont, Orderic Vitalis writes of how “Husbands made arrangements to leave their beloved wives at home, while the wives, lamenting, longed passionately to leave

⁶² Natasha Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land*, 113.

their children and all their riches behind and follow their husbands on the pilgrimage.”⁶³ Fulcher of Chartres and Guibert of Nogent record similar descriptions of husbands regretfully abandoning their wives, driven to do so by a greater, divine love.⁶⁴ Inversely, those men who failed to renounce female companionship were accused of threatening the success of the campaign. In rationalizing the Hungarian defeat of the People’s Crusade in 1096, Albert of Aachen suggested that this first wave of crusaders had destroyed themselves through the warriors’ sin of fornication with female camp-followers.⁶⁵ Fulcher of Chartres made sexual sin a recurring theme in his chronicle, frequently blaming the Christian forces for defeat because they had succumbed to lust.⁶⁶

Women, unlike their male counterparts, had no guaranteed place on a battlefield.⁶⁷ For Cosmas of Prague, the mere idea of women taking part in military affairs was the stuff of legend and the hallmark of a pagan past. According to the *Chronica*, before the founding of

⁶³ Orderic relied heavily on Baudric of Bourgueil’s account for his own summary of the crusade (Marjorie Chibnall, “Introduction,” in OV, i. 47); OV, v.16: “Mariti dilectas coniuges domi relinquere disponebant, illae uero gementes relicta prole cum omnibus diuitiis suis in peregrinatione uiros suos sequi ualde cupiebant.”

⁶⁴ Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, 163. William of Tyre, writing much later, also described the departure of crusaders in terms of abandoning their weeping wives and children; *Chronicon*, 2 vols., ed. R.B.C. Huygens, CCCM 63 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986), i. 134. See also Purkis, *Crusading Spirituality in the Holy Land and Iberia*, 39-41.

⁶⁵ AA, 57; James A. Brundage, “Prostitution, Miscegenation and Sexual Purity in the First Crusade,” in *Crusade and Settlement*, ed. Peter W. Edbury (Cardiff: University College Cardiff Press, 1985), 57-65.

⁶⁶ For example, Fulcher blames the presence of women for the long duration of the crusaders’ siege of Antioch in 1098, and again when Turkish forces besieged the same city much later in 1119. See Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, 222, 243, 622-4.

⁶⁷ This held true in the core as well as on the frontiers of Latin Christendom. Orderic Vitalis, for example, tells us that William the Conqueror sent his wife, Matilda of Flanders, away from England in the late 1060s and early 1070s to get her away from the “English tumults”; OV, ii. 222-4. See also Megan McLaughlin, “The Woman Warrior: Gender, Warfare and Society in Medieval Europe,” *Women’s Studies* 17 (1990), 193-209; and Sabine Geldsetzer’s study on women crusaders, in which Geldsetzer discusses the roles of women as supporting the men who performed the actual fighting: *Frauen auf Kreuzzügen 1096-1291* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003), 122-51. Geldsetzer narrowly defines female participation in the crusading movement, focusing mainly on the crusades in the Latin East as military campaigns. She makes no mention, for example, of Adelaide, Baldwin I’s wife, who traveled to the Levant as a bride rather than as a crusader.

the Přemyslid dynasty Czech women pursued military arms like Amazons, fought like soldiers, hunted in the forests like men, and took men for themselves, rather than be taken by men. The young men of Bohemia had to trick these Amazonian women with food and wine into joining them, and it was not until the death of the princeps/prophetess Libuše that Czech women would fall under the power of men.⁶⁸ Cosmas does not speak of these man-like women in terms of endearment or nostalgia. Instead, they serve as a symbol of the wild, unstructured pagan past, much like the figure of Libuše herself and her forced marriage to Přemysl. The taming of these young women—their physical removal from arms training and other masculine activities—appears as a step in the process of modernizing Bohemia, for lack of a better word. Except for one notable exception (to be discussed below), women do not appear in the remainder of the *Chronica* as military leaders or bearers of arms.

Instead, women in the *Chronica* and other frontier narratives seem to have served the principal purpose of foils to their male counterparts. In fact, the preoccupation with warfare and violence on the periphery of Latin Christendom in contemporary texts had the parallel effect of accentuating women's vulnerability and fragility. In general, women actors appear most frequently as victims, booty to be carried off, or expressers of grief and suffering.⁶⁹ These roles are especially prominent in Albert of Aachen's *Historia*. The text first mentions female pilgrims at the Battle of Zemun in 1096. The women, traveling behind the army, were captured and sold into slavery in Bulgaria, where, Albert takes care to mention, they remain "right up to the present day."⁷⁰ Similar images of women slaughtered or enslaved appear throughout his

⁶⁸ Cosmas, *Chronik*, 19-22.

⁶⁹ See Hodgson's discussion of these tropes in *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land*, 42-50.

⁷⁰ AA, 20.

work. His most vivid description of female physical weakness focuses on the experiences of pregnant women on the march through Turkey in 1097: “For indeed, very many pregnant women, their throats dried up, their wombs withered, and all the veins of the body drained by the indescribable heat of the sun and that parched region, gave birth and abandoned their own young in the middle of the highway in the view of everyone...They were driven to give birth not by the due order of the months or because their time had come, but were forced by the raging of the sun, the fatigue of their travels, the swelling of their thirst, their long distance from water.”⁷¹ A description of men trying to catch mist in their mouths to alleviate their thirst accompanies Albert’s portrayal of pregnant pilgrim women and their unfortunate newborns, but it is the suffering of women which evokes true horror.⁷² The perils of the journey had forced women to give up a certain natural order, not only in provoking premature childbirth but in the very act of mothers abandoning their children. Interestingly, in the late twelfth century, William of Tyre summarized this portion of Albert’s *Historia* in his own chronicle, even though he provides the caveat that no other history recorded the experience of these pregnant women. It is possible that William, like Albert, saw the unusual and horrific suffering of these pregnant women as epitomizing the extraordinary hardships of the First Crusade.⁷³

⁷¹ AA, 138-40: “Quam plures namque fete mulieres, exsiccatis faucibus, arefactis uisceribus uenisque omnibus corporis solis et torride plage ardore inestimabili exhaustis, media platea in omnium aspectu fetus suos enixe relinquebant...Non ordine mensium aut hora instanti parere compellebantur, sed solis estuatione, uiarum lassitudine, sitis collectione, aquarum longa remotione ad partum cogebantur.”

⁷² Ibid., 140.

⁷³ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, i. 217-18. William relied greatly on Albert’s account for his own narration of the First Crusade and the earliest settlement efforts in the Latin East, but he was quite capable of critiquing and editing earlier sources to match his own view of what was credible. See Peter Edbury and John G. Row, “William of Tyre: Historian of the Latin East (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 45-50. Interestingly, Amatus of Montecassino also specifically mentioned the suffering of pregnant women during Robert Guiscard’s siege of Salerno in 1076, stating that women giving birth had to do so without help from midwives. See *Ystoire de li Normant*, 495.

Thus, in the eyes of commentators, frontier conditions tended to marginalize women by accentuating clichés of feminine vulnerability in the face of suffering.

This vulnerability applied not just to common women but also to noblewomen. For example, in a rare allusion to the aristocratic wives who did accompany their husbands on crusade, Robert the Monk describes the terrible grief of Humberge of Le Puiset, wife of Walo II of Chaumont-en-Vexin, a knight who was literally ripped apart outside of Antioch by “armed dogs” in 1098, despite a truce between the Christian forces and the Muslim-held city. According to the history, Humberge grows hysterical at the news, throwing herself on the ground and ripping her face and hair with her nails. Her lament is not just for Walo’s death but also for her own inability to care for his body after death.⁷⁴ This is her only appearance in Robert’s narrative. The inclusion of her character, in its expression of extreme and unseemly grief, serves to emphasize the horror and treachery of Walo’s murder and the monstrosity of the Muslims, who would break a truce, rip a man’s body apart, and deny his wife the closure offered by a burial ceremony. When considering the figure of Humberge, we see a woman denied a key part of her marital and feminine obligations; as a wife, she is useless in the context of the crusade.⁷⁵ In Norman Italy, Roger of Sicily’s wife served a similar narrative purpose. According to Geoffrey Malaterra, Count Roger insisted that his wife accompany him to Sicily, where he intended to continue his conquests. When he described the Greek siege of Norman-held Troina, Geoffrey emphasized how conspicuously out of place the countess was among her husband’s warriors. Despite dealing with the effects of starvation and exhaustion, each

⁷⁴ Care for the dead was seen as a peculiarly feminine prerogative among the medieval European aristocracy. See Matthew Innes, “Keeping it in the Family: Women and Aristocratic Memory, 700-1200,” in *Medieval Memories: Men, Women and the Past, 700-1300*, ed. Elisabeth van Houts (New York: Longman, 2001), 17-35.

⁷⁵ Robert the Monk, *Historia Iherosolimitana*, 139-41.

Norman man “hid his suffering so as not to discourage the other, even trying to stimulate a certain cheerfulness.”⁷⁶ The countess, on the other hand, openly weeps over her situation: “The young countess managed to quench her thirst with water, but she did not know how to check her hunger, except with tears and sleep, since she had nothing else at her disposal.”⁷⁷ Later in the narrative, following the successful breaking of the siege, Geoffrey praises the countess for her efforts towards overseeing the watch around Troina for signs of the Greeks, but he attributes her motives to fear of another siege and more suffering.⁷⁸ By drawing attention to her young age and to her emotions, particularly those emotions of fear and anxiety, Geoffrey depicts the countess as a young noblewoman out of her depth. Her weakness also acts as a counterpoint to the physical and emotional strength of Roger’s men, and of Roger himself. Hers is therefore a limited supporting role, one dependent on the men around her.

If women were made overly vulnerable—or, at least, imagined to be so—by the military conflict which so greatly shaped these frontier societies, where, then, did they belong? The answer, according to those ecclesiastical authors who spoke favorably of the greater Christianization and Latinization of the frontiers, lay in supporting their more heroic masculine counterparts, particularly within the nuclear family and the lord’s household. Reformers saw the institution of marriage as a crucial tool for “civilizing” societies that did not yet adhere to Latin Christian *mores*.⁷⁹ And it was marriage and the accompanying familial duties which

⁷⁶ GM, 40: “...viriles animo alter alteri flebilitatem suam, ne ad invicem dehortarentur, occultantes, quadam hilaritate vultu et verbis simulare tentabant.”

⁷⁷ Ibid.: “Sed juvencula comitissa sitim quidem aqua extinguebat; famem vero non nisi lacrimis et somno, aliquid unde non habens, refrenare sciebat.”

⁷⁸ Ibid., 41.

⁷⁹ The attention which Latin chroniclers of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries pay to reforming marital practices on the frontiers of Latin Christendom is remarkably similar to concerns over lawful marriage in, for

reformers duly made into the central aspect of female lordship on the frontier. Marriage encompassed a number of overlapping goals. It created political alliances by linking noble families, which in turn strengthened the connections between the new outlying polities and older, more prominent western European powers. For example, Urraca of León-Castile's first husband, chosen for her by her father, Alfonso VI, was Count Raymond of Burgundy; Alfonso also married his illegitimate daughter, Theresa, to Raymond's close relative, Henry of Burgundy, further cementing the ties between his court and the Burgundian nobility.⁸⁰ There were likewise frequent marriages between the German nobility and the new central European rulers.⁸¹ Intermarriage was crucial in the Latin East and Norman Italy, where the situation was one of western European ruling nobles imposing themselves upon a local populace.⁸² Following the success of the 1099 campaign, aristocratic women still tended to be relegated to supporting roles. For example, Albert of Aachen described the marriage of Baldwin I to Adelaide of Sicily in terms of the wealth and supplies she brought to the kingdom of Jerusalem: "She had two trireme dromonds, each with five hundred men very experienced in warfare, with seven ships laden with gold, silver, purple, and an abundance of jewels and precious garments, besides weapons, hauberks, helmets, shields resplendent with gold, and besides all the other

example, Anglo-Saxon England in the seventh and eighth centuries. See Stephanie Hollis, *Anglo-Saxon Women and the Church: Sharing a Common Fate* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 37-42.

⁸⁰ See Marcus Bull, *Knightly Piety and the Lay Response to the First Crusade: The Limousin and Gascony, c. 970-c. 1130* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 70-114; see also Joseph O'Callaghan, "The Many Roles of the Medieval Queen: Some Examples from Castile," in *Queenship and Political Power in Medieval and Early Modern Spain*, ed. Theresa Earenfight (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 21-32.

⁸¹ Jean W. Sedlar has referred to women in east central Europe as "pawns in dynastic marriage"; *East Central Europe in the Middle Ages, 1000-1500, A History of East Central Europe 3* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), 34.

⁸² Loud points out that marriage was a key factor in the survival of local families in the face of invading forces and in the takeover of property by new Norman or French rulers. See "Continuity and Change in Norman Italy: the Campania during the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries," *Journal of Medieval History* 22:4 (1996), 325-36; see also, Natasha Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land*, 112-13.

weaponry which powerful men are accustomed to carry for the defense of their ships.”⁸³ Baldwin and Adelaide’s marriage was annulled a few years later when Baldwin was accused of bigamy, but the impression of Adelaide in Albert’s account is that of a magnificent match on Baldwin’s part, particularly as he was ruler of a kingdom facing constant external threats. For the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, the manner in which Adelaide came to her marriage to Baldwin represented a stabilizing and supportive force.⁸⁴

Once married, foreign-born wives could act as transmitters of cultural trends, both through their influence on their husbands and in their positions as role models.⁸⁵ Frutolf of Michelsberg, looking back on the Christianization of the Hungarians at the turn of the eleventh century, emphasized the role of Gisela, St. Stephen’s wife, in his conversion, stating that Stephen was unworthy of marrying the Ottonian princess until he and his people had been baptized.⁸⁶ The Latin author of the *Gesta principum Polonorum* assigned a similar role to

⁸³ AA, 842: “Fuerunt ei duo dromones triremes, singuli cum quingentis uiris bello doctissimis, cum nauibus septem auro, argento, ostro, gemmarum uestiumque preciosarum multitudine onustis, preter arma, loricas, galeas, clipeos auro fulgidissimos, et preter omnem aliam armaturam quam ad defensionem nauium solent uiri potentissimi comportare.”

⁸⁴ Joshua Prawer has suggested that the continual state of war which Jerusalem found itself in resulted in “the most characteristic trait of the knightly class: the instability of its families and possessions.” This inherent instability would help to explain Albert of Aachen’s positive depiction of the marriage between Adelaide and Baldwin and the material benefits such a match brought to the kingdom of Jerusalem. See “The Nobility and the Feudal Regime in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem,” in *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe*, ed. Frederick L. Cheyette (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1968), 158; see also Bernard Hamilton, “Women in the Crusader States: The Queens of Jerusalem 1100-90,” in *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), 146, 174.

⁸⁵ G.A Loud emphasizes the importance of intermarriage in Norman Italy as a way of breaking down ethnic and cultural divisions between the invading Normans and the local population; see *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 286. Diana Webb suggests that marriage was the main reason for women of rank to travel, at which point they were serving the interests of the kin group to which they belonged. See “Freedom of Movement? Women Travellers in the Middle Ages,” in *Studies on Medieval and Early Modern Women: Pawns or Players?*, ed. Christine Meeks and Catherine Lawless (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2003), 75-89.

⁸⁶ Frutolf, *Chronik*, 50. Eleventh- and twelfth-century portrayals of Dobrava are remarkably similar to the early medieval narratives of saintly queens, including Saint Clothilda (d. 545), Clovis I’s wife. See Gábor Klaniczay, *Holy Rulers and Blessed Princesses*, 70-7.

Dobrava, wife of Mieszko I, the first Christian ruler of Poland (d. 992). According to the *Gesta*, Mieszko “was still so enmeshed in the error of paganism that following their custom he was wrongfully joined to seven wives...[Dobrava] refused to marry him unless he gave up this wicked custom and promised to become a Christian.”⁸⁷ Dobrava, we are told, brought with her a “great retinue” of Christian followers, both secular and ecclesiastical, in order to bring the true faith to Poland. Cosmas of Prague, too, dwells on the importance of marriage as a Christian and Christianizing institution. Polygamy appears throughout his chronicle as a telltale sign of the remarkable and dangerous staying-power of local pagan beliefs. It was also a main target for reform by Christian rulers, secular and ecclesiastical. According to the *Chronica*, Duke Břetislav I made marriage his first target for societal reform: “Let this therefore by my first and greatest decree: that your marriages, which until now you have treated as brothels and common to all, like brute animals, henceforth be legitimate, private, and insoluble, according to the canons.”⁸⁸ This first law continued with the threat of exile for women guilty of prostitution, adultery, and abortion, “the worst crime of crimes.” Moreover, most of Cosmas’ female actors are married women, with one notable exception: Mary, abbess of the monastery of St. George in Prague, the oldest monastic establishment in the Czech lands.⁸⁹

By portraying ninth- and tenth-century men and women as enactors of marital reform, eleventh- and twelfth-century chroniclers thus reflected the trend for foreign-born wives to become focal points of basic Christian practices and *mores*. This was also the role which

⁸⁷ *Gesta principum Polonorum*, 28-30: “Adhuc tamen in tanto gentilitatis errore involvebatur, quod sua consuetudine VII uxoribus abutebatur...At illa, ni pravam consuetudinem illam dimittat, seseque fieri christianum promittat, sibi nubere recusavit.”

⁸⁸ Cosmas, *Chronik*, 86: “Ergo hoc meum maximum et primum sit decretum, ut vestra conubia, que actenus habuistis ut lupanaria et ceu brutis animalibus communia, amodo iuxta canonum scita sint legitima, sint privata, sint insolubilis.” Eng. trans. Wolverton, 115.

⁸⁹ Cosmas, *Chronik*, 42-4.

Gregory VII emphasized in his letters to two Hungarian queens. To Judith, daughter of Emperor Henry III and Empress Agnes of Poitou and wife of King Solomon of Hungary, Gregory sent a letter of encouragement, apparently in response to hearing that Judith was unhappy at the Hungarian court. Gregory emphasized the queen's imperial parentage, and in particular the strength of her mother Agnes' piety. The pope encouraged her to follow this example of imperial female lordship, even if Judith herself was a mere queen rather than an empress. Moreover, Gregory highlighted Judith's role as a source of *gloria* in the "midst of a rough and unknown people."⁹⁰ Later, in 1081, Gregory sent a similar letter to Adelaide, the wife of the next Hungarian king, Ladislaus I (1077-1095). Gregory urged Adelaide to show particular reverence for Mary, Queen of Heaven, "For the woman is truly called a queen in the eyes of God who directs her way of life in the fear and the love of Christ...We therefore ask and charge you that you should always be at pains to attract the mind of your lord the king, our most dear son, to the fear and love of God, and to be of benefit to the holy church according to your power, to defend the poor, orphans, widows, and all who are unjustly oppressed."⁹¹ By instructing each woman to turn her attention to her "barbaric" husband and court, Gregory was employing traditional motifs of female participation in early conversion efforts.⁹²

Marriage among the nobility on the frontiers brought an additional form of stability to these budding polities, particularly in Norman Italy and central Europe. Converting or

⁹⁰ Gregory VII, *Register*, no. II.44, i. 181: "inter asperam et incognitam gentem."

⁹¹ Ibid., no. VIII.22, ii. 565: "Illa enim mulier vere apud Deum regina dicitur, que mores suos in timore et amore Christi moderatur...Rogamus ergo te atque precipimus, ut semper studeas animum domini tui regis, carissimi filii nostri, ad timorem et amorem Dei attrahere sancteque ecclesie pro tuo posse prodesse, pauperes orfanos viduas omnesque iniuste oppressos defendere." Eng. trans. H.E.J. Cowdrey, *The Register of Pope Gregory VII 1073-1085: An English Translation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 396; translation slightly revised.

⁹² Janet L. Nelson, "Gendering Courts in the Early Medieval West," in *Gender in the Early Medieval World: East and West, 300-900*, ed. Leslie Brubaker and Julia M.H. Smith (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 185-97.

installing the first Christian lords in any given frontier was only half the battle; that line of Christian lordship needed to continue through successive rulers to firmly establish the institutions and practices of Christian rulership. Moreover, dynastic continuity was often in flux in the newer polities of Latin Christendom, either through the introduction of new ruling families such as in Norman Italy and the Latin East, or through continuous internecine warfare, as in Spain and central Europe. Indeed, providing an heir who would meet the same expectations of the current Christian ruler seems to have dominated the duties of a secular noblewoman in a marriage in these regions of Christendom. For example, both Cosmas of Prague's *Chronica* and the *Gesta principum Polonorum* contain special (albeit brief) praise for Judith, the daughter of Duke Wratislav of Bohemia, the wife of Władysław Herman of Poland, and, most importantly, mother of Duke Boleslaw "the Great" of Poland.⁹³ Judith appears noteworthy for her piety and devotion to motherhood. Childless for years, Judith and her husband sent lavish gifts to the monastery of Saint-Gilles in Provence in exchange for the monks' intercession in the couple's efforts to produce a son. According to the *Gesta*, their efforts paid off: Judith conceived a son during the monks' three-day fast.⁹⁴ She died the same night her son was born, but both Cosmas and the Latin chronicler of the Poles memorialized her and the extraordinary lengths she went to conceive and bear a child. The chroniclers' fixation on Judith of Bohemia as an exemplar of female piety and lordship can be explained by the importance each placed upon dynastic continuity: her religious devotion helped her overcome her former barrenness, she gave her husband an heir who would prove to be a great ruler, and, her life's task complete, she died.

⁹³ Cosmas, *Chronik*, 133-4; *Gesta principum Polonorum*, 8, 116.

⁹⁴ *Gesta principum Polonorum*, 106-8.

The decision to frame frontier female lordship primarily within the context of marriage and childbearing makes sense when set alongside the corresponding models of hyper-masculinity which emerged in the same areas. The model of the devoted wife encouraging her husband to proper Christian feeling and dedicating herself to childbearing offered a complementary gender model to the violence and fury with which noblemen were tasked. The corollary of this equation was the idea that men embodied strength and were defenders and protectors while women were weak and had to be protected. The models of Christian lordship on the periphery, therefore, presented two distinctly gendered opposites which were meant to work in tandem. In war, men had to be brutal and brave; women could give voice to grief and fear. In terms of church reform, lay noblemen became the swords of the Church, while their wives encouraged and influenced them through prayer.

In many ways the discourse of female lordship which emerged on the periphery of Christendom aligns more closely with earlier Carolingian and Ottonian ideologies than does the corresponding discourse in Christendom's core.⁹⁵ This may have been because the experiences on Christendom's frontiers looked so familiar to contemporaneous imaginings of the Carolingian past.⁹⁶ The eleventh and twelfth centuries witnessed a great rise in popularity

⁹⁵ Eric J. Goldberg has discussed the circumscribed female gender roles available to royal Carolingian women, a description which seems apt for these later models of frontier female lordship. See Goldberg's article, "*Regina nitens sanctissima Hemme*: Queen Emma (827-876), Bishop Witgar of Augsburg, and the Witgar-Belt," in *Representations of Power in Medieval Germany 800-1500*, ed. Björn Weiler and Simon MacLean (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), 57-95. Jo Ann McNamara described early medieval female sanctity in terms of repeated scenes of intercession, almsgiving, and donations to the church, all of which expressed "the merciful side of power without softening the fierce warrior image of the king." McNamara goes on to claim that this early medieval trope of female compassion and intercession was abandoned between 1050 and 1150, as a direct result of the Gregorian reforms which threw women into general disrepute. However, this trope still appears to have been reintroduced to the frontier regions of Latin Christendom, perhaps because it had proved to be a successful model in the past. See McNamara, "The Need to Give: Suffering and Female Sanctity in the Middle Ages," in *Images of Sainthood in Medieval Europe*, ed. Renate Blumenfeld-Kosinski and Timea Szell (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 200-4.

⁹⁶ See Peter Brown's discussion of Carolingian frontiers as focusing on the issue of religion in *The Rise of Western Christendom: Triumph and Diversity, AD 200-1000*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 412-42.

of the Charlemagne myth, especially after the success of the First Crusade.⁹⁷ It was easy to compare struggles against pagan Slavs, Muslims, and Greek Christians to Charlemagne's Saxon and Spanish wars, a comparison which several chroniclers did in fact make.⁹⁸ Drawing upon images of the Carolingian Empire also made it easier to address the sudden expansion of Latin Christendom in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The incorporation of Norman Italy, Christian Spain, the Latin East, and central Europe was not a novel process. Rather, it was interpreted as a continuation of a long-standing tradition of often violent Christianization begun by the Carolingians and carried on by their successor kingdoms. If Charlemagne and his heirs provided a useful model for heroic male lordship, it is only natural that eleventh- and twelfth-century clergymen would also draw upon parallel models of early medieval female lordship as a Christianizing force within the immediate familial and household sphere. The dichotomy of male military endeavors and female vulnerability provided a useful framework for the "taming" of violent frontiers.

⁹⁷ For example, Godfrey of Bouillon deliberately styled himself as a descendant of Charlemagne, a fact which Albert of Aachen emphasizes. See Jay Rubenstein, "Godfrey of Bouillon versus Raymond of Saint-Gilles: How Carolingian Kingship trumped Millenarianism at the End of the First Crusade," in *The Legend of Charlemagne in the Middle Ages: Power, Faith, and Crusade*, ed. Matthew Gabriele and Jace Stuckey (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 59-75. There were also attempts in the early twelfth century to refashion Charlemagne as a crusade hero, particularly in conjunction with his Spanish campaign. See William J. Purkis, "Rewriting the History Books: The First Crusade and the Past," in *Writing the Early Crusades: Text, Transmission and Memory*, ed. Marcus Bull and Damien Kempf (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), 140-54. The Charlemagne legend continued to be influential well into the late Middle Ages, even as it was adapted to address the political and cultural issues of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; see, for example, Régine Lambrecht, "Charlemagne and His Influence on the Late Medieval French Kings," *Journal of Medieval History* 14:4 (1988), 283-91.

⁹⁸ Robert the Monk evoked Charlemagne's memory as a common Frankish ancestor and role model, for example (*Historia Iherosolimitana*, 80); the anonymous author of the *Gesta principum Polonorum* described the Polish duke as another Charlemagne: see Sulowski, "L'Église Polonaise a ses origins," 50.

The Problem of Female Lordship on the Frontiers: Four Case-Studies

How easily did this sharp rhetorical dichotomy of gendered roles fit the lived experiences of noblewomen on the frontier? The discussion will now turn to examine the careers of a handful of aristocratic women in order to address this question: Adelaide del Vasto, Sichelgaita of Salerno, Urraca of León-Castile, and Matilda of Tuscany. Each of these women has a prominent presence in contemporary sources, especially in light of the otherwise dominating focus on hyper-masculinity in these same texts. The attention which these individual women earned most likely rests upon the unusual nature of their experiences living in or, in Matilda's case, interacting with the edges of Latin Christendom. For example, Urraca, unlike any other woman discussed in this project, ruled as queen regnant, though her right to do so was frequently contested. Sichelgaita, the wife of Robert Guiscard, presents an example of a local princess marrying a member of the conquering aristocracy in Norman Italy. Adelaide del Vasto journeyed to Jerusalem to marry Baldwin I, and in the process created a crucial link between the Latin East and Italy. Finally, although she herself never traveled to the frontier regions of Latin Christendom, Matilda of Tuscany still managed to capture the attention of at least three chroniclers in Norman Italy, the Latin East, and central Europe, and Gregory VII identified her as a potential leader for a campaign to the east.⁹⁹ Although these four case-studies present very different experiences, each woman shared a key characteristic: her style of lordship and involvement in ecclesiastical and secular affairs on the frontiers presented a problem for contemporary witnesses. As will be seen, this problem rested on the issue of her

⁹⁹ For Gregory's "proto-crusade," see especially H.E.J. Cowdrey, "Pope Gregory VII's 'Crusading' Plans of 1074," in *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem Presented to Joshua Prawer* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1982), 27-40.

gender and where an active and powerful noblewoman might fit within the context of masculine violence.

The first case-study to be examined is Sichelgaita of Salerno, a Lombard princess and sister to Gisulf II, who married Robert Guiscard in December 1058. She and Robert had eight children, including Roger Borsa (d. 1111), Robert's heir to the duchy of Apulia and Calabria. Between the documentary and narrative evidence, though fragmentary, it is clear that Sichelgaita played an active role first in her husband's rule and later in her son's, until her death in 1090.¹⁰⁰ While Sichelgaita was presumably preoccupied with her many pregnancies in the early years of her marriage, by 1065 her name began to appear frequently beside Robert Guiscard's on charters. The three contemporary chroniclers of Norman Italy, too, emphasize Sichelgaita's presence at Robert's side. Amatus of Montecassino, who may have known Sichelgaita personally, recorded how she attended the restoration mass of the church of St Mary in Palermo in 1065.¹⁰¹ William of Apulia places Sichelgaita at the ceremony in which Roger Borsa was formally recognized as Robert Guiscard's heir, above his older half-brother Bohemond.¹⁰² And according to Geoffrey Malaterra's *De rebus gestis Rogerii*, Sichelgaita was present at the battle of Mileto between Robert and his brother, Roger, in 1058, shortly after

¹⁰⁰ Patricia Skinner has discussed the cartulary evidence for Sichelgaita in great detail, including the use of the term *dux* to describe her position. See "'Halt! Be Men!': Sichelgaita of Salerno, Gender and the Norman Conquest of Southern Italy," *Gender and History* 12.3 (2000), 630-2; see also Loud's discussion of the marriage, which he calls the "most important of all" of the marriages between Lombards and Normans: *The Latin Church in Norman Italy*, 94-6.

¹⁰¹ Skinner suggests that Sichelgaita, who had close ties with Montecassino and its abbot, Desiderius, may have also known Amatus. "'Halt! Be Men!'," 634-6. For Amatus' relation of the dedication of St Mary, see *History of the Normans*, 158.

¹⁰² William of Apulia, *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi*, 214.

Sichelgaita's marriage took place.¹⁰³ For these Norman-Italian chroniclers, what purpose did Sichelgaita serve, both in Robert Guiscard's rule and in the Norman conquest more generally?

Sichelgaita, as a princess of the prominent local dynasty of Salerno, acted, according to these three chronicles, as a main source of political and cultural support for Robert Guiscard. Their marriage represented a critical moment of assimilation between the Norman invaders and local Lombard communities. Each of the three chroniclers emphasizes how the marriage increased Robert's reputation. For example, Amatus records the marriage in terms of spiritual and material increase—for Robert, not for Sichelgaita. In *The History of the Normans*, Robert's marriage to Sichelgaita takes the form of a corrective to his previous marriage to Alberada, a Burgundian noblewoman whom Robert repudiated on the basis of consanguinity.¹⁰⁴ Amatus' chronicle couches this earlier repudiation in terms of Robert's concern for spiritual well-being: "For the good done when a man is in a state of mortal sin God gives grace so that the man may abandon that sin, as he did for Duke Robert Guiscard, or God helps him prosper in temporal matters, or He diminishes the pain of hell for him. Robert thought about these things when he found that Alberada, whom he had married, could no longer be his wife since they were related."¹⁰⁵ Sichelgaita immediately enters the narrative following this rather unsubtle rationalization of Alberada's dismissal, bringing to Robert's list of virtues (including wealth,

¹⁰³ GM, 39.

¹⁰⁴ Loud, for example, comments that Robert's repudiation of Alberada was "well timed," though he does not dismiss the idea that the annulment was truly motivated by concerns over consanguinity; *Age of Robert Guiscard*, 127-8. Kenneth Baxter Wolf suggests that Amatus used Robert's marriage to Sichelgaita to transform Robert into a paradigm of Christian lordship. His rejection of Alberada and subsequent union with Sichelgaita, in other words, served as the symbol of Robert's adoption of distinctly spiritual moral behavior. See *Making History*, 105-6.

¹⁰⁵ Amatus of Montecassino, *Ystoire de li Normant*, 362: "...car, pour cellui bien que l'omme fait quant il est en pechié mortel, Dieu donne grace qu'il isse de cellui pechié, comme fist a cestui duc Robert Viscart, ou Dieu lo prospera en les chozes temporeles, ou l'amenora de la pene d'Enfer. Et adont Robert, pensant a ceste chose, quar trova que Alverada, laquelle tenoit pour moillier, non lui pooit ester moillier pour ce que estoient parent." Eng. trans. Dunbar and Loud, 117.

humility, and physical strength) her own virtues of noble lineage, beauty, and wisdom.¹⁰⁶ William of Apulia, writing a few years later, states that the annulment of Robert's first marriage was a cause of concern for Gisulf, Sichelgaita's brother and lord. William does not offer a reason for Gisulf's eventual consent, but he does remark on how the marriage raised Robert's reputation: "A marriage of such greatness much augmented Robert's noble reputation, and the people who had previously had to be constrained to serve him now rendered to him the obedience due to his ancestors."¹⁰⁷ This obedience was due, William continues, to Sichelgaita's status as a member of Lombard nobility, and Robert's incorporation through her into that pre-existing nobility.¹⁰⁸ Over forty years after the date of the marriage, Geoffrey Malaterra described it very much in the terms of an exchange between Robert and Gisulf: Robert received Sichelgaita as his wife only after he had destroyed two fortresses "which his own brother William, count of the Principate, had established in Gisulf's territory, and from which Gisulf had been attacked many times."¹⁰⁹ The *De rebus gestis Rogerii* is also careful to note that while Robert's first marriage did violate canonical sanctions, Alberada still came from a distinguished line, a fact meant to improve readers' opinions of both Robert, her husband, and Bohemond, her son.¹¹⁰

Despite the emphasis placed on her marriage to Robert Guiscard, Sichelgaita's actions as a female lord in the contemporary narratives of Norman Italy are still quite limited. Indeed,

¹⁰⁶ Amatus of Montecassino, *Ystoire de li Normant*, 362.

¹⁰⁷ William of Apulia, *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi*, 156: "Coniugio ducto tam magnae nobilitatis, augeri coepit Roberti nobile nomen, et gens, quae quondam servire coacta solebat, Obsequio solvit iam debita iuris aviti."

¹⁰⁸ Wolf, *Making History*, 128.

¹⁰⁹ GM, 22: "...quae Guillelmus, frater suus, comes Principatus, in haereditate illius firmaverat, quibus ipse tamen plurimum infestus erat, dirutum vadit."

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

she appears neatly confined by the tropes of vulnerability and familial duties which dominate noblewomen's roles in these sources. She appears least frequently in Geoffrey Malaterra's chronicle, entering the narrative as an actor only twice after her marriage. In the first instance, she flees the battle at Mileto, fearing that she had become a widow. She does not appear again until Robert Guiscard's funeral in 1085, at which point the chronicle simply notes that she, her son, and the Norman magnates conducted Robert's funeral "with appropriate honor and justice."¹¹¹ Her relatively small role in the *De rebus gestis Rogerii* is not unexpected, as her husband was not its main subject. Nevertheless, these two brief mentions do manage to highlight her role purely as Robert's wife. The threat of Robert's death throws her own position into the uncertain realm of widowhood, a status even more fraught in her situation as a Lombard herself, as she would have had limited access to other Norman connections besides Robert. Indeed, with his death, she, too, disappears from the narrative. William of Apulia, on the other hand, places her in a slightly more prominent position by recording several instances when she acted—or at least traveled—in tandem with Robert. But despite her greater presence in the *Deeds*, Sichelgaita is very firmly defined in terms of female vulnerability. According to William's history, Sichelgaita happened to be at the Battle of Dyrrachium in 1081, when Robert's forces invaded Byzantine territory. We are told that Sichelgaita was wounded by an arrow, and, "terrified by her wound, and with no hope of assistance, she had very nearly fallen to the enemy."¹¹² We are not told why Sichelgaita was at Dyrrachium, but the narrative of her wounding and her resultant terror present the countess as being out of place on the field of battle, much like Roger of Sicily's wife at the siege of Troina in Geoffrey Malaterra's

¹¹¹ GM, 82.

¹¹² William of Apulia, *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi*, 226: "Quae vulnere territa, nullam dum sperabat opem, se pene subegerat hosti."

chronicle. Moreover, William's *Deeds* ends with Sichelgaita lamenting her suddenly weakened status upon Robert Guiscard's death in 1085. "Oh horror!" Sichelgaita cries at Robert's deathbed, "What have I done, unhappy woman, that I could be left so unfortunate. When the Greeks learn of your death, will they not attack me and your son, and the people for whom you were the sole glory, hope, and strength?...Now your wife and son are left the prey of wolves, and will never be safe without you."¹¹³ Sichelgaita's lengthy monologue in the *Deeds* serves as a commentary on the political instability which Robert Guiscard's death introduced to Norman Italy, as well as a eulogy for Robert's bellicose form of leadership.¹¹⁴ But the monologue also serves to emphasize Sichelgaita's vulnerability. Indeed, Sichelgaita's position is compounded by a number of factors, including her potential vulnerability as a widow, her physical dislocation at the moment of Robert's death from her husband's power base in Calabria, and, perhaps most importantly though not explicitly stated, her metaphorical dislocation from her family's circle of influence. She and her son, without Robert, are abandoned amongst a pack of wolves.

Even Amatus, the only chronicler to write about Sichelgaita during her lifetime, portrays the Calabrian duchess acting solely within the sphere of her immediate kin. Patricia Skinner has argued that the *History of the Normans* was meant to be a eulogy for both Robert Guiscard and his wife. Citing Sichelgaita's close ties to the monastery of Montecassino,

¹¹³ William of Apulia, *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi*, 252: "Proh dolor! exclamat, quid inibo miserrima, vel quo infelix potero discedere? Nonne Pelasgi audita me morte tui natumque tuumque invadent populum, quorum tu Gloria solus, spes et robur eras, tua quos praesentia fovit extremis positos?...Filius ecce lupis sinitur rapiendus et uxor et populus, nunquam sine te securus habendus."

¹¹⁴ Loud points out that "The Norman Conquest had not therefore brought peace to southern Italy. In addition to the disruption during the conquest itself, and that was a lengthy process, the generation after the death of Robert Guiscard saw a breakdown of authority, albeit partial and more in some regions than others, that also posed problems for churchmen." It is perhaps this instability which informed William of Apulia's portrait of despair at Robert Guiscard's death. See *Latin Church in Norman Italy*, 83.

Skinner suggests that she herself influenced the shaping of the text, the true purpose of which was to promote the claims of Sichelgaita and her son Roger Borsa to the duchy over the rights of Robert's oldest son Bohemond. Graham Loud, however, has rejected part of this claim, arguing that the *History* dwells too briefly on Sichelgaita to offer a true eulogy of her.¹¹⁵ It does seem clear, however, that Amatus did support Roger Borsa's claim as Robert's true heir, though how influential Sichelgaita was in the formation of that opinion is impossible to tell. But Amatus' bias is understandable considering his own Lombard background. Roger Borsa was, after all, the product of the unification of the invading Normans and the conquered local nobility. Moreover, it is as a bridge between Normans and Lombards that Sichelgaita appears most frequently throughout the text. More specifically, in the *History*, Sichelgaita acts as a fierce defender of her son Roger's rights to the duchy of Apulia and Calabria, and as a mediator between her husband Robert and her brother Gisulf. Consider, for example, Sichelgaita's main antagonist in the *History*: her husband's nephew, Abelard of Hauteville, whose father Humphrey had been count of Apulia until his death in 1057, at which point Robert succeeded to the then county. When Robert came close to dying from an illness in 1073, Sichelgaita had her son Roger formally recognized as heir by all of Robert's magnates, with the exception of Abelard, who argued he had the better claim. According to Amatus' chronicle, when Robert eventually began to lean towards making peace with his rebellious nephew, "the duchess, with this rancor in her heart like a knife, moved the heart of her husband against Abelard."¹¹⁶ Sichelgaita's continued ill will towards Abelard in this episode draws upon tropes of feminine

¹¹⁵ Loud, "Introduction," *The History of the Normans*, 35.

¹¹⁶ Amatus of Montecassino, *Ystoire de li Normant*, 458: "...cesse garda ceste dolor en son cuer ensi come un coultel. Ceste esmut lo cuer de lo marit a faire damage a Balalarde." Eng. trans. Dunbar and Loud, 175.

vindictiveness, but what is telling is her influence on Robert, framed within the language of her marital connection to him.

The ties of kinship are also key for her other major role as intercessor in the climatic conflict between Robert Guiscard and Gisulf II of Salerno in 1076/77. Amatus' chronicle places Sichelgaita firmly between the two men. She begins by urging Robert not to wage war against her brother, despite her brother's threats against both her and her husband. When her efforts fail to prevent conflict, Sichelgaita frequently travels back and forth between Robert Guiscard's camp outside of Salerno and the besieged city, acting, notably, on Robert's behalf rather than her brother's. She even sends provisions to the city to relieve the suffering of the people inside, many of whom are tortured and deliberately starved by their own prince, Gisulf, during the siege. Sichelgaita's success as an intercessor in this conflict is very limited in the end, but in the narrative she serves an additional purpose of symbolizing the failed potential of a marital alliance. In a fascinating exchange between Robert and Gisulf, Robert accuses his brother-in-law of abandoning their ties of kinship:

You might have enjoyed greater stature through your sister's marriage, as you said, if it had not been for your self-importance and arrogance, and if you had not scorned my help. You would have been exalted above all other princes, for from me alone could you have had ten thousand warriors and good men-at-arms. But you went to the Emperor of Constantinople and sought the aid of the pope in order to destroy me, and even sought the aid of women to ruin me completely.¹¹⁷

Later, following Gisulf's defeat and exile, only Sichelgaita and her sister weep over his fate.¹¹⁸

Sichelgaita's loyalty to Robert is never brought into question during this conflict; as Patricia

¹¹⁷ Amatus of Montecassino, *Ystoire de li Normant*, 504: "Tu pooiez ester surhaucié pour lo mariage de ta suer comment tu dis et estre enrichi, se la impatience toe et arrogance non fust et se non auïsses desaconcié mon service. Et sur touz les autres princes essuez esté surhaucié, quar [de] moi soul pooiez avoir X mille combateors et bon home d'armes. Et tu, pour moi destruire, alas a lo impereor de Constantinnoble et cerchas l'ajutoire de lo pape. Et pour moi destruire en tout, requeris l'ayde de li fame." Eng. trans. Dunbar and Loud, 201.

¹¹⁸ Amatus of Montecassino, *Ystoire de li Normant*, 506-7.

Skinner has pointed out, Amatus of Montecassino took great care to distance her from her villainous brother. Her efforts towards intercession focus on reforming Gisulf's habits, or alleviating the suffering he caused the people of Salerno, not on accepting Gisulf himself. But her presence in the narrative seems more to accentuate the failure of the alliance between Robert and Gisulf than to promote her own position as duchess of Apulia and Calabria. Through her, the two men ought to have been united. Her ineffective attempts to mediate only highlight the discord between brothers-in-law. In this instance, Sichelgaita's purpose as a bridge between Norman and Italian nobility had failed, though notably not because of any fault of hers.

For the Latin chroniclers of Norman Italy, Sichelgaita must have presented a cultural and political dilemma. On the one hand, her marriage to Robert Guiscard stabilized his hold on Apulia and Calabria. On the other hand, she was a Lombard, and Lombards were frequently condemned by these same authors as being treacherous, effeminate, weak, and barbaric. Emphasizing her status and role primarily as Robert's wife may have allowed Amatus, William, and Geoffrey to cope with the ambiguous reality of her position in Robert's Norman court. Indeed, their careful treatment of Sichelgaita becomes even more apparent when compared with a non-Latin source's representation of the same woman. The Byzantine princess Anna Comnena, writing in the mid twelfth century, described Sichelgaita as an Amazonian warrior. According to the *Alexiad*, Sichelgaita generally accompanied her husband on his campaigns and she herself wore armor and "was indeed a formidable sight."¹¹⁹ At the Battle of Dyrrachium, where William of Apulia described Sichelgaita's terror at being shot

¹¹⁹ Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*, trans. E.R.A. Sewter, ed. Peter Frankopan (New York: Penguin Books, 2009), 43.

with an arrow, Anna instead has Sichelgaita rousing her husband's cowardly soldiers back into action:

There is a story that Robert's wife Gaita, who used to accompany him on campaign, like another Pallas, if not a second Athene, seeing the runaways and glaring fiercely at them, shouted in a loud voice—words which were equivalent to those of Homer, but in her own language: 'How far will ye run? Halt! Be men!' As they continued to flee, she grasped a long spear and charged at full gallop against them. It brought them to their senses and they went back to fight.¹²⁰

Anna's portrait of this second Athena is all the more interesting when viewed in the context of recent research which suggests she had access to earlier southern Italian chronicles, including William of Apulia's *Deeds of the Normans*.¹²¹ As Valerie Eads has pointed out, this story of Sichelgaita too closely echoes Homeric epic to be a credible retelling of events.¹²² What Anna is doing with the figure of Sichelgaita is reversing normal gender roles as a critique of the Normans, and particularly of Robert Guiscard. Indeed, throughout the *Alexiad* Robert and his followers are described as barbaric, violent, and treacherous—and, at Dyrrachium, as effeminate. So effeminate, in fact, that it takes a woman acting like a man to bring them back to battle. Notably, these are the very same negative attributes with which Latin chroniclers were wont to label Greek Christians. If Anna was familiar with Norman-Italian texts, she may have been deliberately inverting the model of heroic masculinity and vulnerable femininity as a direct stab against Norman self-fashioning. In her narrative, it is Sichelgaita who holds the real power and ability to lead men, not Robert.¹²³ Additionally, even if there is a grain of truth

¹²⁰ Anna Komnene, *The Alexiad*, 121.

¹²¹ For example, see Peter Frankopan, "Turning Latin into Greek: Anna Komnene and the *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi*," *Journal of Medieval History* 39:1 (2013), 80-99.

¹²² See Valerie Eads, "Sichelgaita of Salerno: Amazon or Trophy Wife?," *The Journal of Medieval Military History* 3, ed. Kelly Devries and Clifford J. Rogers (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2005), 77-9.

¹²³ Eads, in fact, identifies Robert as a "power vacuum" which was filled only by Sichelgaita's presence. Eads, "Sichelgaita of Salerno," 87.

in Anna's portrait of Sichelgaita as a woman donning armor and riding on campaign with her husband, the fact that Latin chroniclers underplayed her participation in battle and emphasized her physical vulnerability is in itself a significant comment on their ideas of female lordship.

The second of our four case-studies, like Sichelgaita, also rose to narrative prominence through her marriage. Adelaide del Vasto (d. 1118) was the niece of Boniface del Vasto (d. 1130), the margrave of Savona and western Liguria, a man whom Geoffrey Malaterra described as "that most renowned marquis of Italy."¹²⁴ In 1089/90 Adelaide married Count Roger I, the Norman conqueror of Sicily. She was his third wife, and she bore him two sons, Simon (d. 1105) and the future Count Roger II. When her husband died in 1101, Adelaide ruled Sicily as regent until her son Roger came of age in late 1111. At that time, she and her son agreed to Baldwin I of Jerusalem's proposal for a marriage alliance, and shortly after she sailed to the Latin East. Once again Adelaide was the ruler's third wife, but she and Baldwin had no children together. Their marriage was annulled in 1117 on the basis of bigamy, as Baldwin's second wife, whom he had repudiated, was still living. Adelaide returned to Sicily and died shortly afterwards.¹²⁵

Adelaide's two marriages serve as prominent examples of the general importance placed on noblewomen as the routes through which familial alliances could be made. Marriage alliances were especially important in regions such as Norman Italy and the Latin East, where the traditional kinship structures of the conquerors and colonizers were geographically out of reach. According to Geoffrey Malaterra's *De rebus gestis Rogerii*, Roger's marriage to Adelaide marked a major shift, his first two wives having been of Norman descent. Roger was

¹²⁴ GM, 93: "famosissimi Italarum marchionis."

¹²⁵ Alan V. Murray, *The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Dynastic History 1099-1125* (Oxford: Prosopographica et Genealogica, 2000), 179.

apparently determined to cement his ties to Boniface del Vasto's family, for not only did he marry Adelaide but he also arranged betrothals between Adelaide's sisters and his two sons Geoffrey and Jordan (though Geoffrey, we are told, died before his marriage could be celebrated).¹²⁶ Geoffrey Malaterra does not tell us what motivated Roger's alliance with the del Vasto family; the promise of allies in northern Italy may have been motivation enough. Politics certainly did provide the motivation for Adelaide's marriage to Baldwin I in 1113. By that point, Adelaide's status through her son, Roger, weighed far more heavily than her original kinship ties to Boniface del Vasto. As mentioned briefly above, Adelaide brought with her much needed supplies and reinforcements to the Kingdom of Jerusalem, as well as an alliance with her son, Roger II of Sicily. The alliance could prove profitable to both Roger and Baldwin: according to William of Tyre, Adelaide's and Baldwin's marriage contract included naming Roger as Baldwin's heir, should he and Adelaide fail to have any children of their own. Neither Fulcher of Chartres nor Albert of Aachen record this part of the agreement, but as several scholars have suggested, the eventual annulment of the marriage was most likely due to the unwillingness of Baldwin's magnates to accept Roger as king. It is possible that William of Tyre, writing several decades after the fact, was addressing a genuine local concern about the Sicilian claim to the throne of Jerusalem.¹²⁷

Adelaide's place on two frontiers therefore depended on her role as a wife. Even more significantly, contemporary portraits of Adelaide and her marriages are remarkably contradictory: she appears in a generally good light as Roger's wife, but her marriage to Baldwin provoked less than friendly critiques from commentators. To begin with, Geoffrey

¹²⁶ GM, 94.

¹²⁷ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, i. 525-7, 541-3. See also Alan Murray, *Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, 115-17.

Malaterra had the most to say about her first marriage to Count Roger I. In the *De rebus gestis Rogerii*, Adelaide's most significant role is that of childbearer. Roger's oldest sons, Jordan and Geoffrey, both died before 1092, leaving Roger without a male heir. Luckily, immediately after Jordan's death in Geoffrey Malaterra's narrative, Adelaide realizes she is pregnant. In a long verse section, Geoffrey describes how both Roger and Adelaide prayed to God that the child would be a boy during the tense nine months of gestation. On the day of the child's birth, "the announcement is made: it is a boy! A new sense of joy prevails."¹²⁸ Adelaide promptly forgets her pain, while Roger rejoices and immediately designates the newborn, Simon, as his heir. Adelaide's next and last appearance in the text is also in conjunction with childbirth, this time in the form of a brief notice of the birth of the future Roger II.¹²⁹ Geoffrey Malaterra, writing before Simon's death in 1105, clearly saw his birth in c.1093 as both a triumph and a stabilizing effect for Roger I's rule over Sicily. Much like Judith of Bohemia's role in the *Gesta principum Polonorum* and the *Chronica Boemorum*, Adelaide's function in Roger's court was to pray and provide for dynastic continuity. Geoffrey Malaterra therefore has no criticism of her as Roger's wife—she had fulfilled her duty.

Adelaide's marriage to Baldwin was far more fraught. Albert of Aachen portrays Adelaide in a kind light, emphasizing her willingness to contribute to the Franks' fight against their enemies. As mentioned above, the *Historia Ierosolimitana* depicts Adelaide arriving at Ascalon in 1113 in an ostentatious display of wealth and manpower.¹³⁰ Baldwin greeted her in a similar manner, surrounded by his magnates and retainers, and with everything in sight

¹²⁸ GM, 98: "Nuntiatus puer natus nova praestat gaudia!"

¹²⁹ Ibid., 105.

¹³⁰ No other text describes the opulence of her arrival in the same way as Albert's narrative does.

bedecked in a royal style: "...with horses and mules resplendent in purple and gold, with trumpets and all sweetness of music. Even the streets were strewn with wonderful and different carpets, the rows of houses were adorned with purple cloths and they glowed warmly in honor of so noble a woman and one so renowned for her treasures, as is fitting for monarchs to be exalted in all glory and pomp."¹³¹ Adelaide's joyous arrival at Ascalon in 1113 provides a sharp contrast to her departure from Acre in 1117, where, "sad and grieving" she sailed back to Sicily.¹³²

Albert's treatment of Adelaide reflects in large part the importance of the potential alliance between Jerusalem and Sicily that might have been sealed by her marriage to Baldwin. Indeed, the marriage represents a turning point in Baldwin's reign in the narrative. She arrives at a moment of desperation and frustration in the king's struggles against the Turks, for Baldwin had just been defeated in battle on June 29, 1113, outside of Acre, in large part because the other Christian lords of the Latin East arrived late.¹³³ The "very great treasures" which Adelaide brought with her shortly afterwards provided the means by which "the king and all who had lost weapons in battles with the Turks were now inestimably relieved and enriched."¹³⁴ Adelaide thus appears in a supporting role to Baldwin's military leadership; she herself does not take part in battle, but she provides the tools that Baldwin and his men can then wield. Moreover, in the chapters falling between Adelaide's arrival and her departure, Albert used the moment of the wedding as a reference point for tracking the passage of time.

¹³¹ AA, 845: "...in equis et mulis ostro et auro fulgentibus, in tubis et omni dulcedine musicorum occurrit a nauigredienti. Sed et plateae mirificis et uariis tapetibus strate, uici purpureis uelis adornati in honore tam nobilissime et thesauris famosissime matrone rutilabant, sicut decet reges in omni gloria et pompa exaltari."

¹³² Ibid., 863.

¹³³ Ibid., 839-40.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 845.

For example, Albert begins one chapter with the statement “In the year following King Baldwin’s wedding,” and, in a later chapter, “In the third year after King Baldwin celebrated in regal style the wedding we have mentioned...”¹³⁵ This repeated allusion to the wedding reinforces it as a moment of particular significance in Baldwin’s reign.

Albert of Aachen’s treatment of the annulment is also noteworthy for its relatively noncommittal tone. The fault, according to the *Historia*, clearly lies with Baldwin for unlawfully repudiating his second wife, an Armenian, and then bigamously marrying Adelaide. But the accusations against Baldwin are not made by the direct narratorial voice; rather, the annulment—and the accusations—are carefully framed through a narrative of the council which oversaw the process. Direct commentary only returns with the end of the council, describing Adelaide’s sad departure and praising Baldwin for remaining chaste from then on.¹³⁶ Albert neither supports nor defends the ruling of the council; he simply praises Baldwin for observing the penance placed on him by both Paschal II and Patriarch Arnulf. This distancing from the council itself may have been the result of Albert’s otherwise apparently favorable view of Adelaide herself and the marriage in question.

Other chroniclers did not share Albert’s view of Adelaide, however. Fulcher of Chartres briefly discusses her arrival and departure. In describing her arrival, Fulcher’s *Historia* simply states that Baldwin found her waiting in Acre and that she was to be his new wife; there is no mention of who or what she brought with her to the marriage.¹³⁷ More significantly, in explaining the annulment of the marriage, Fulcher writes: “When the end of

¹³⁵ AA, 849, 857.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 861-3.

¹³⁷ Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, 575.

the year [1116] was approaching, the king was attacked by a growing bodily illness and feared death. For this reason he dismissed his wife Adelaide, the countess of Sicily mentioned above, whom he had unlawfully wed, since she whom he had lawfully married in the city of Edessa was still alive.”¹³⁸ This association of Baldwin’s fear of imminent death with the annulment—which here takes the form of a repudiation on Baldwin’s part, rather than a synodal ruling—follows a common thematic preoccupation in the text. As mentioned above, Fulcher frequently expressed concerns about the polluting effects of sexuality in a spiritual enterprise such as the First Crusade. Even beyond the military campaign of the crusade and settlement efforts, Fulcher still deploys Adelaide as a further example to emphasize his continuous condemnation of sexuality and women as threats to the Latin cause.

Adelaide’s harshest critic was found not in the Latin East but in Saint-Évroul. Orderic Vitalis, whose text betrays a clear bias against Roger II of Sicily, condemns and mocks his mother Adelaide. According to the *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Adelaide was guilty of poisoning her son-in-law, Robert of Burgundy, whom she saw as a political rival to her son in Sicily. After the murder, Adelaide craftily amassed a huge treasure, which drew Baldwin’s attention. “Being insatiably greedy for pomp and honor,” the *Historia* states, “[Adelaide] gave her consent to the noble suitors and hurried to Jerusalem, accompanied by numerous dependents and taking a huge treasure-store. King Baldwin accepted the rich treasure gladly...but he repudiated the woman who was wrinkled with age and notoriously stained with many crimes. So the old woman returned to the Sicilians with shame as her sins deserved and grew old among

¹³⁸ Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, 600-1: “exitu siquidem anni appropriquante, molestia corporis ingruente, quia rex mori tunc timuit, dimisit uxorem suam superius memoratam, Siculorum scilicet comitissam nomine Adelaidem, quia iniuste duxerat eam, eo quod adhuc viveret sua, quam apud urbem Edessam ante recte duxerat.” Albert of Aachen also discusses Baldwin’s illness but does not connect it to his bigamous marriage (AA, 858-60).

them, an object of general contempt.”¹³⁹ By emphasizing her age and making no mention of Baldwin’s previous marriage, Orderic portrays Adelaide as a greedy and foolish woman who should not have been involved in politics and who receives her due recompense for her sinful ways.

There is, therefore, no single clear vision of Adelaide as a female lord on the edges of Latin Christendom. Instead, for each clerical author she became a symbol of something larger. For Geoffrey Malaterra and Albert of Aachen, she represented those roles which each deemed appropriate for women in Norman Italy and the Latin East. For the former, she appears primarily in her role as the bearer of dynastic fruit. For the latter, she is a key supporter of the settlement of the Latin East, but she does not participate—nor even tries to participate—in the physical violence of the settlement process herself. But for Fulcher of Chartres and Orderic Vitalis, she very clearly did represent the problems of a woman straying into territory where she does not belong. Fulcher of Chartres saw the conquest and settlement of Jerusalem as a masculine endeavor, the motivations of which he understood and displayed entirely in terms of religious devotion. Baldwin, as Jerusalem’s king, should not have been distracted by a woman, and her presence endangered his physical and spiritual well-being. And Orderic’s Adelaide serves as a warning against the dangers of greed and political ambition, two vices accentuated by the femininity of the agent.

The image of vulnerability and feminine weakness was only strengthened in cases where a female lord appeared without an accompanying male authority. The most prominent example from the edges of Latin Christendom is our third case-study, Queen Urraca of León-

¹³⁹ OV, vi.432: “Illa uero faustus et honoris insatiabiliter auida nobilibus paranimphis adqueiuit, et multitudine stipata clientum cum ingenti aerario Ierusalem properauit. Rex autem Balduinus opimas quidem opes gratanter recepit...mulierem uero uetustate rugosam et pluribus criminum neuis infamem repudiauit. Anus itaque culpae promerentibus confuse Sicarios repetiit; et inter eos cunctis deinde contemptibilis consenuit.”

Castile. Urraca is an unusual case because she ruled as queen in her own right after her father, Alfonso VI, designated her as his heir, but despite her different situation she was still caught within the same expectations and patterns of female lordship. It would be impossible to provide here all of the details of her reign. What is important for the current study is that commentators identified Urraca as a weak ruler, a weakness they blamed on her womanhood. Contemporary sources tend to depict the period of Urraca's reign as a time of chaos which destroyed the peace her father established before her, and most authors blamed Urraca directly for the supposed failure of royal authority under her watch.¹⁴⁰ Bishop Pelayo of Oviedo, for example, responded to the transition of power following Alfonso's death in 1109 by relating a wonder of stones weeping at the news of the king's death. Pelayo interpreted this miraculous sign as a harbinger of Urraca's ruinous reign, which would offer contemporary witnesses such a sharp contrast to Alfonso's apparently successful rule as a powerful Christian king.¹⁴¹ Modern scholarship now tends to suggest that Urraca was not a particularly inept ruler, as her contemporaries believed, but that she was put in an extremely difficult situation.¹⁴² The unification of the kingdoms and counties of León, Castile, and Galicia was a fairly recent development, one which Alfonso VI

¹⁴⁰ For a useful overview of twelfth-century Iberian sources, see Raymond McCluskey, "Malleable Accounts: Views of the Past in Twelfth Century Iberia," in *The Perception of the Past in Twelfth-Century Europe*, 211-25.

¹⁴¹ Pelayo of Oviedo, *Chronica*, 85-6.

¹⁴² Reilly recognizes that Urraca's sex contributed a "special dimension" to the problems she faced, but claims that a male ruler in the same position would be faced with the same basic political problems, which originated in Alfonso VI's policies and actions. While this is most likely true, Reilly does not fully explore the complications which Urraca's sex introduced to her experience as queen. See *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, 3-12. Theresa Martin suggests Urraca was well aware of the uniqueness of her situation as a queen regnant and tried to fortify her situation through her patronage of the church of San Isidoro. Martin also points out Urraca's unusual situation, for "neither was Urraca a king, nor did she fit the image of the proper medieval queen, who acted as mediatrix between her lord and his people." See *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 4; and "The Art of a Reigning Queen as Dynastic Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain," *Speculum* 80 (2005), 1134-71. Maria Soifer Irish neither condemns nor defends Urraca, merely commenting on the general weakness of central authority in the kingdom of León-Castile during her reign: see "The Castilian Monarchy and the Jews (Eleventh to Thirteenth Centuries)," in *Center and Periphery: Studies on Power in the Medieval World in Honor of William Chester Jordan*, eds. Katherine L. Jansen, G. Geltner, and Anne E. Lester (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 39-49.

had achieved through civil war against his brothers. This unification proved to be easily splintered during Urraca's reign, particularly in the counties of Galicia and Portugal. Alfonso's conquests of Muslim territories, including the reconquest of Toledo, also provided the impetus for increasing Almoravid raids on the borders and shores of Christian Spain. Nor did Alfonso initially intend for Urraca to succeed him. His first designated heir was his illegitimate son, Sancho, who died early in battle. Urraca's ascension to the throne was thus somewhat unexpected.

Urraca's reputation as a queen has been strongly influenced—even marred—by the few surviving narrative sources that documented her reign. In some ways, she did follow the normative behavior expected of a noble or royal born woman. She was respectful and mindful of her father's legacy, she provided her (first) husband with a son and heir, and she proved to be a fairly consistent and effective supporter of religious reform. The early chapters of the *Historia Compostellana*, for example, emphasized her piety and the donations that she and her first husband, Raymond of Burgundy, made to various religious institutions.¹⁴³ Most notably, Urraca turned to the reestablished archbishopric of Toledo as her main source of ecclesiastical support and guidance. The reconquest of Toledo had been an important symbolic victory for Alfonso VI, and undoubtedly Urraca wanted to associate herself with her father's legacy. The archbishopric of Toledo also became an important center of reform influence, particularly from France. Alfonso VI had encouraged close links with a number of French influences, recruiting knights from across the Pyrenees and becoming a prominent donor of Cluny. In 1085, the former Cluniac monk Bernard of Sauvetot was elected as archbishop of Toledo; Urban II

¹⁴³ In particular, Urraca donated a great deal of land to the church at Santiago following Raymond's death. See *Historia Compostellana*, 55.

confirmed him as primate of Spain.¹⁴⁴ Bernard served as the main adviser for both Alfonso and his daughter. Later, when Diego Gelmírez of Santiago emerged as Bernard's rival for primatial authority in Spain, Urraca continued to support the traditional power of Toledo over Diego's ambitions to become an archbishop.¹⁴⁵ By aligning herself with Toledo, Urraca implicitly associated her reign with the currents of reform that were spreading into Christian Spain by way of France.

Urraca nevertheless received harsh treatment from her ecclesiastical contemporaries, particularly from the authors of the *Historia Compostellana*, the most detailed text focusing on the period of the late eleventh and first quarter of the twelfth centuries. The *Historia Compostellana*, while the most comprehensive narrative of her reign, is also the most problematic.¹⁴⁶ The work of multiple authors in the first quarter of the twelfth century, the *Historia* was initially commissioned by Diego Gelmírez so that "if anyone would wish to read it, he may read and become acquainted with how many honors and how many possessions and ornaments and dignities this same archbishop acquired for his church and how many persecutions and dangers he endured in defending his church from tyrannical powers."¹⁴⁷ The authors of the *Historia* thus deliberately portray Diego as a heroic figure; Urraca, in her continued defense of Diego's rival, Bernard of Toledo, appears as one of the "tyrannical

¹⁴⁴ Reilly, *Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, 12; Fletcher, *Saint James's Catapult*, 46.

¹⁴⁵ Reilly, *Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, 225-8.

¹⁴⁶ For more on the problems presented by the *Historia Compostellana* as a source of late eleventh- and early twelfth-century Spanish history, see Bernard F. Reilly, "The *Historia Compostellana*: The Genesis and Composition of a Twelfth-Century Spanish Gesta," *Speculum* 44.1 (1969), 78-85; Raymond McCluskey, "Malleable Accounts: Views of the Past in Twelfth-Century Iberia," 211-25; Fletcher, *Saint James' Catapult*, 127-30.

¹⁴⁷ *Historia Compostellana*, 3: "si aliquis per eum legere uoluerit, legat et cognoscat quantos honores et quantas hereditates et ornamenta et dignitates ipse archiepiscopus sue ecclesie adquisiuit et quantas persecutiones et pericula a tyrannicis potestatibus pro sue ecclesie defensione pertulerit."

powers” which Diego so determinedly fought on behalf of the church of Santiago. Although the *Historia* naturally presents many difficulties when trying to gain a clear picture of Urraca’s reign, what is important about the source is that its authors constantly emphasized Urraca’s sex as the basis for her failures as a ruler.

Urraca’s portrayal in the *Historia* rests on traditional images of female roles, both good and bad. She appears at her best, for example, as Raymond of Burgundy’s wife. In fact, it is during her marriage to Raymond that Urraca seems to have presented the safest image to the authors of the *Historia*. Alfonso VI gave Raymond control over Galicia in 1087, at roughly the same time that he arranged the marriage between Raymond and his daughter. We are told that before his death Alfonso ruled with Raymond at his side, his son-in-law and “pious count” (*piissimus comes*), along with Raymond’s wife, Urraca.¹⁴⁸ The implication seems clear: Urraca may have been Alfonso’s daughter, but it is Raymond who shares the king’s authority. Urraca is therefore present in the triangle of power that existed between the León-Castilian throne and Galicia, but hers is the smallest portion, bound between two men. Even after Raymond’s death in 1107, Urraca had a son who could one day assume his father’s place. Urraca’s second marriage, on the other hand, did not work as smoothly. According to the *Historia Compostellana*, the magnates of León-Castile insisted that Urraca marry Alfonso I of Aragon shortly after her coronation, and against her own desires.¹⁴⁹ The magnates undoubtedly saw Alfonso as a corrective force. He was a proven military commander and an alliance with Aragon must have seemed wise when facing the Almoravid threat.¹⁵⁰ Moreover, like Raymond

¹⁴⁸ *Historia Compostellana*, 20.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 85-7.

¹⁵⁰ By the time of their marriage, Alfonso I of Aragon had already earned the nickname *El Batallador*, and was well known for his military successes against Muslim forces. See Fletcher, *Saint James’s Catapult*, 127.

before him, Alfonso would have served as a buffer between Urraca and royal authority. Unfortunately, the marriage was a disaster. Fearing the threat of Aragonese dominance, Galicia rebelled and would remain a source of trouble for the rest of Urraca's reign. Additionally, Urraca and Alfonso proved incompatible, and Urraca separated from him in 1110. Alfonso, in return, invaded Castile, sparking a civil war that lasted for several years.¹⁵¹

Despite these threats, Urraca still managed to pass the throne of León-Castile on to her son, Alfonso Raimundez. However, the authors of the *Historia* portray her shrewd political maneuverings in her dealings with the rebellious Galicia and Portugal and her estranged husband Alfonso, and the growing conflict between the archbishop of Toledo and the bishop of Santiago as the result of a mercurial and emotional temperament. Like Count Roger's wife in Sicily, we are told that Urraca frequently resorted to tears when events did not develop according to her wishes. Within the narrative, Urraca's tears signify not only her weakness and emotional instability as a woman, but also her perfidy as a ruler. At one key point in the narrative, for example, Diego Gelmírez agrees to help Urraca fight her half-sister, Theresa of Portugal, who had seized the city of Túc; on the way back from the battle, Urraca betrays and arrests Diego, an action she had tried to accomplish several times before without success. Her son, the future Alfonso VII, and the leading magnate of Galicia, Pedro Froilaz, confront her over the arrest. Urraca bursts into tears and blames her advisers rather than admit that the plan was her own idea; her tears thus became a mask and a symbol for her weakness and cowardice.¹⁵² Notably, it is also at this point in the narrative that Urraca completes her

¹⁵¹ Reilly, *Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, 87-118.

¹⁵² *Historia Compostellana*, 292; notably, the text had earlier established Urraca's tendency to rely on unwise and greedy counselors, thanks to her "vacillating" nature as a woman; see *Historia Compostellana*, 112.

transformation from the “modest and prudent” wife of Raymond of Burgundy into a true “Jezebel.”

Two conflicting portraits of Urraca thus emerge from the *Historia Compostellana*. The first is of a pious and obedient wife who followed her husband Raymond’s efforts towards supporting religious reform, particularly through donations to the sees of Toledo and Santiago. The second portrait is of a capricious and treacherous woman threatening the rights of the church (of Santiago) and failing to provide order in her kingdom. By framing Urraca’s actions within a narrative of feminine temerity, the authors of the *Historia* were able to hold her up as an example of the pitfalls of Christian female lordship. There is one scene which more than any other in the *Historia* brings to centerstage this condemnation of Urraca’s gender. In 1116, the burghers of Compostela formed a commune with Urraca’s approval and assumed control of governing the city. One direct result of the institution of the commune was the removal of Diego Gelmírez as chief administrator of the city, a role granted to him by Alfonso VI in 1100. Diego went to Urraca and made peace with the queen, who received him favorably for once. Together they returned to Compostela in 1117, where the people revolted against Urraca’s attempt to reinstall Diego. She and Diego, the *Historia* tells us, end up barricaded in the bell tower of the half-built basilica of Santiago de Compostela, while a mob threatens them from the outside.¹⁵³ The leaders of the mob promise to let the queen leave safely, and Diego convinces her that they must be telling the truth. Urraca agrees and leaves the bell tower:

But when the rest of the mob saw her coming out, they made a rush upon her and seized her and knocked her to the ground in a muddy wallow; like wolves they attacked her and ripped off her clothes, leaving her body naked from her breasts on down; for a long time she lay shamefully in the presence of all. Many wanted to bury her under stones and one old lady of Compostela struck her harshly on the cheek with a stone.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ For more on the context of the revolt, see Christopher Forney, “Spaces of Exclusion in Twelfth-Century Santiago de Compostela,” *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 42 (2011), 55-88.

Diego, while Urraca is beaten by the mob, managed to escape the burning tower in the disguise of a monk.

The visual images conjured by this passage are remarkable in their intensity. The queen lies helpless, naked and muddy, surrounded by her furious subjects, while the archbishop, her male partner in this instance, sneaks away. This moment in the narrative represents a complete breakdown of power structures in Compostela. No one—not the leaders of the commune, not the archbishop, and not the queen herself—is able to control the furious people of the city. But most especially this revolt emphasizes Urraca’s lack of control and failure as an independent ruler. The stripping of her clothes and the physical violence done directly to her reveal her weakness. The author of this passage makes no mention of Urraca attempting to fight back. Rather, she is powerless and lies inert, waiting for the mob to decide her fate. Although Urraca does eventually escape the mob, this scene in particular symbolizes her fragility as a woman trying to bring order to a chaotic kingdom. A woman could not rule effectively on her own; she belonged at her husband’s side, guided by his strength of character and guiding him, in turn, through her personal feelings of piety.¹⁵⁵

The fourth and final case-study to be explored is Matilda of Tuscany, who offers a stark contrast to the three preceding women. Although she never traveled to the far reaches of Latin Christendom, Matilda nevertheless managed to capture the imagination of several Latin

¹⁵⁴ *Historia Compostellana*, 202-3: “Quam ut uidit cetera turba egredientem, concursum in eam faciunt, capiunt eam et prosternunt humi in uolutabrum, rapiunt eam more luporum et uestes eius dilaniant; a papillis siquidem deorsum nudato corpore et coram omnibus diu humi iacuit inhoneste. Multi quoque lapidibus eam uoluerunt obruere, inter quos anus quedam Conpostellana percussit eam grauius lapide in maxillam.”

¹⁵⁵ Fletcher points out that Urraca’s predicament as a queen regnant shared many similarities with the impediments which Queen Melisende of Jerusalem and Empress Matilda of England ran into in the mid-twelfth century. Fletcher, *Saint James’s Catapult*, 129.

chroniclers looking in towards the core of Christendom from their positions on the frontiers.¹⁵⁶ She therefore serves as an example of how the qualities of female frontier lordship could be transposed upon a woman who happened to interact with the periphery from the center. Matilda makes substantial appearances in two texts composed from the vantage point of the outside looking in: Amatus of Montecassino's *History* and Cosmas of Prague's *Chronica*. Fulcher of Chartres also mentions her, though his comment on the countess is too brief to be of significant help.¹⁵⁷ What is especially noteworthy is that in each of these texts Matilda appears in conjunction with the reform papacy.

Amatus of Montecassino, writing c. 1080 in Norman Italy, emphasized Matilda's involvement in papal affairs and wrestled directly with the problem of her gender. In Amatus' *History of the Normans*, Matilda appears on the "wrong" side of the narrative, as an antagonist to the text's protagonist, Robert Guiscard. But the figure of Matilda is not that of a villain. Rather, she is cast as a key supporter of the reform papacy. She appears as Gregory VII's ally, along with her mother Beatrice, during his political struggles against Robert Guiscard in the early 1070s. The Norman duke of Apulia laid claim to Benevento, which had been given over to the papacy in 1053.¹⁵⁸ The fight between Gregory and Robert culminated in Robert's excommunication at the Lenten synod of 1074. Amatus appears to have treated this episode of papal-Norman conflict with great care. Almost certainly a Lombard himself, Amatus gives

¹⁵⁶ Natasha Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land*, 205.

¹⁵⁷ Fulcher writes that Matilda aided Urban II by allying with the Frankish armies then passing through Rome on the way to the Latin East, in order to install Urban in Rome as pope. The chronicler describes her as "very powerful in her native land about Rome." She makes no other appearance in the *Historia*. See *Historia Hierosolymitana*, 148-9: "quae in Romana patria potestate multa."

¹⁵⁸ Robert Guiscard's son, Roger Borsa, would later help Pope Paschal II reintegrate the city into the papal states in December 1101. See Ute-Renate Blumenthal, *The Early Councils of Pope Paschal II, 1100-1110*, Studies and Texts 43 (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1978), 10-20, for more on Norman-papal interactions over Benevento.

every indication of being a proponent of the church reform movement. He has great praise, for example, for the first reformer pope, Leo IX, and his fight against simony and adulterous marriage, among other targets of reform.¹⁵⁹ So Gregory's reform policies were not at question in his fight against Robert Guiscard. Instead, Amatus frames the conflict in terms of pride—both Gregory's and Robert's—and Gregory's ill-advised fondness for Gisulf II of Salerno and Richard of Capua, Robert's political rivals. According to Amatus' history, Gregory, Richard, and Gisulf conspired together to remove Robert from his lands, but “no man would aid [Gregory].”¹⁶⁰ The pope turned instead “to the aid of women, sending messages to Beatrice and her daughter Matilda...Because of their perfect faith in St Peter and for the sake of the love which they bore God's Vicar, after having received the pope's message, they did not hesitate to come to him and prepared to do the pope's bidding.”¹⁶¹ Thus, Matilda appears not necessarily as a direct opponent to Robert Guiscard, but solely as a faithful friend to the pope. It is Gregory who is being insulted in this passage, particularly with the remark about men refusing to help him, forcing him to rely on women as a second-best alternative.¹⁶²

More significantly, the passage continues by accentuating the tenuous position Matilda and her mother held as women looking to go into battle. The chronicle records a conversation between the two countesses and Gregory. The women offer to bring 30,000 knights; Gregory

¹⁵⁹ Amatus of Montecassino, *Ystoire de li Normant*, 319.

¹⁶⁰ This may be a reference to Godfrey of Lotharingia's failure to come to Gregory's aid. Godfrey was Matilda's first husband.

¹⁶¹ Amatus of Montecassino, *Ystoire de li Normant*, 450-1: “Mes, que non trova home en son aide, cercha adjutoire de fame. Et manda adonc message a Beatrix et sa fille Mathilde...Et ceste[s], pour la foi parfait de saint Pierre et pour l'amour de carité qu'elle[s] avoi[en]t en lo vicaire de Dieu, puiz qu'elles orent oï cest mandement de lo pape, non targerent de venir a lui et s'appareillerent de faire la volenté de lo pape.” Eng. trans. Dunbar and Loud, 170-1.

¹⁶² Wolf, *Making History*, 110.

scoffs and assures them only a mere 20,000 would be necessary, for they would have “the aid of God and the Apostles.” The women answer him with a great awareness of their own vulnerability as female warlords: “If our soldiers, whom we have promised you, flee before the enemy, it will not be without great shame because the people will say ‘These women are attempting things that are not proper for them to do. It is right that they be berated for they wish to act as princes have acted throughout the world.’ Therefore, in order that we may be victorious like a man in confounding the Normans, Your Holiness must let us contribute enough men so that the honor of victory will be ours and we may be able to deliver from the enemy’s hands the possessions of the Prince of the Apostles.”¹⁶³ Gregory acquiesces, and Matilda and Beatrice march with him, only to have their expedition halted and disbanded by a riot outside of Pisa in 1074.¹⁶⁴ Despite the eventual failure of the expedition (for which Amatus blames Gisulf of Salerno), Matilda and her mother do not come off too badly in the text’s reckoning.¹⁶⁵ By having their characters give voice to the issue of women “acting like princes,” Amatus represents the countesses as having keen political acumen—more so than Gregory, in fact. Their dialogue also serves to highlight the potential damage Gregory was inviting by relying on female allies for military support, rather than male allies, for the countesses’ failure would also reflect upon him. The situation seems to have been clear to Amatus, at least: within

¹⁶³ Amatus of Montecassino, *Ystoire de li Normant*, 451: “Et se nostre gent que nouz vous avons promis foÿent devant li anemis, non seroit sans grant vergoigne, quar diroient la gent: ‘li fame cherchent les cosez qui non apartienent a ells. Digne chose est qu’elles aient vitupere, quar vouloient faire comment li principe faisoient par diverses pars de lo monde.’ Adont, a ce que aions victoire come home a confondre li Normant, la Vostre Santité laissera a nous mener tant homes que aions honor de victoire et que nouz puissions delivrer de la main de li anemis les coses de lo prince de li apostole.” Eng. trans. Dunbar and Loud, 171.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 452.

¹⁶⁵ For more on the expedition and the rift between Gregory VII and Robert Guiscard, see Loud, *The Age of Robert Guiscard*, 197-200.

the context of territorial conflicts which defined Norman Italy in the late eleventh century, women did not fit comfortably within the arena of battle and political rivalry.

The second chronicler to focus on Matilda of Tuscany with an eye to core-frontier interactions was Cosmas of Prague. In fact, Cosmas seems to have had a great admiration for Matilda, pausing his narrative of Czech events to dwell at some length on Matilda as a lord. Cosmas' fascination with Matilda is all the more interesting when one considers the very tenuous connection she had (according to the *Chronica*) to the Czechs. Once again, Matilda appears in close association with the papacy, this time, however, working on behalf of a Czech delegation. Cosmas introduces her as a fourth player in his narration of the conflict between Pope Gregory VII, Bishop Jaromír of Prague, and Bishop John of Moravia over the rights of the see of Prague.

A word should be said here about Jaromír's problematic career as bishop of Prague, in order to more fully understand Matilda's perceived intervention in his struggles against the pope and the bishop of Moravia. Jaromír's episcopate had been marred again and again by scandals since he was first forcibly raised to the see of Prague in 1067. The *Chronica* relates how the bishopric had been promised to Jaromír by his father and approved by a council of the Bohemian ruling elite. His brother and rival, Duke Wratislav II, however, preferred "a stranger and an alien" (Lanzo, a Saxon provost and favorite of the duke) over his brother and attempted to open the appointment to an elective assembly of clergy and secular elites. In the assembly, Wratislav tried to hand Lanzo the symbols of the bishopric himself. Cosmas has a member of Wratislav's court speak out in protest, saying, "The Roman Emperor Henry [IV] yet lives and long may he live; usurping his power, you act against yourself when you give the episcopal

ring and staff to a hungry dog.”¹⁶⁶ Eventually Jaromír succeeded in attaining the bishopric, receiving the staff and ring from Henry IV as was fully appropriate, according to Cosmas. Moreover, despite Jaromír’s many ill-advised actions as bishop—including physically assaulting John of Moravia over the issue of Prague’s rights—Cosmas continued to defend his right to wield episcopal authority based on his investiture at the hands of Henry IV.

Cosmas’ narration of Bishop Jaromír’s election reveals a number of crucial and intriguing tensions which secular and ecclesiastical leaders had to confront if they wanted to reform the more far-flung regions of Latin Christendom. The Bohemian Church was subordinate to the German Church, a political relationship which undoubtedly helped with the process of incorporating the Czech lands into the greater Latin Christendom sphere of influence.¹⁶⁷ At the same time, Cosmas, a Czech himself, clearly saw a threat in the close ties between Bohemia and Germany, in that German influence could fully overwhelm what remained of Bohemian independence. The main complaint against Lanzo, for example, was his status as an “alien” from Saxony, whereas Jaromír was not only Czech, but also a member of the local ruling dynasty. On the other hand, Cosmas frequently condemned his fellow Czechs with the complaint that most of the people of Bohemia were still “half-pagan,” offering sacrifices to the devil, practicing polygamy, and burying their dead outside of consecrated cemeteries.¹⁶⁸ Cosmas therefore presents a conflict of interests: his narrative praises actions which brought Bohemian cultural and religious practices more in line with the ideals of Latin Christendom while simultaneously suggesting a desire to preserve Bohemian identity and

¹⁶⁶ Cosmas, *Chronik*, 116: “Vivit adhuc Romanus imperator Heinricus et vivat; quem tu temetipsum facis, cum eius potestatem usurpans das baculum et anulum episcopalem famelico cani.” Eng. trans. Wolverton, 142-3.

¹⁶⁷ Bohemia would not gain its own archbishopric until 1344. Berend, *et al*, *Central Europe in the High Middle Ages*, 329, 377.

¹⁶⁸ Cosmas, *Chronik*, 90-1, 160-2.

sovereignty, particularly in contrast to their closest neighbors, the Germans, Poles, and Hungarians.¹⁶⁹ Moreover, Cosmas clearly did not have the same reform goals in mind as did the papal circle in Rome. As seen in the account of Jaromír's election, for instance, lay investiture was not to be shunned but was instead an important tool for maintaining a good relationship between Bohemia and its sovereign lord, the German king, since the bishopric of Prague had answered to the see of Mainz since its creation in 972.

Matilda makes her entrance in the *Chronica* amidst the tensions of Jaromír's troubled episcopate, fears of foreign influence, and the increasing need for stronger connections with the internal powers of Latin Christendom. Pope Gregory VII called for Jaromír's removal from the bishopric of Prague in 1074, citing his ill-treatment of John of Moravia and refusal to renounce Moravian territory as just cause. According to Cosmas, Matilda intervened on Jaromír's behalf with Pope Gregory, so that, "through Pope Gregory, by Matilda's doing, Bishop Gebhard [Jaromír] was restored to his original rank and honor in the year 1074."¹⁷⁰ In fact, Cosmas' treatment of Matilda reveals a great deal about his views of marriage reform, the papacy, investiture, and Bohemian-imperial relations. Cosmas goes on to state that Matilda's reason for supporting Jaromír rested on her belief that they were relatives, since Jaromír descended from her lineage "through his mother's blood," a connection which has not been confirmed by modern scholarship.¹⁷¹ Cosmas was clearly aware of Matilda's connection to the reform papacy, and quite possibly aware of the accusations against her as a member of Gregory

¹⁶⁹ Nor was this tension between local and external cultural and political forces unique to Bohemia-Moravia. For example, see Attila Bányai's discussion of Hungary's foreign policy in "The Expansions of the Kingdom of Hungary," 333-60.

¹⁷⁰ Cosmas, *Chronik*, 127: "Et ita per Gregorium papam agente Mahtilda restitutus est presul Gebhardus in pristinum gradum et honorem anno dominice incarnationis MLXXIII."

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 126-7.

VII's "new senate of women," controlling and polluting the Church with her feminine temerity. Indeed, Cosmas deliberately invokes this image of Matilda as the sovereign lord of the papacy when he first introduces her into the narrative, writing:

In those days the most powerful lord [*domna*] had come to Rome: Matilda, who after the death of her father, Boniface, governed all of Lombardy and Burgundy, and had the power to elect, enthrone, or remove over 120 bishops. The whole senatorial order was arranged according to her will, as if she were their own lord, and Pope Gregory himself handled both divine and human business through her, because she was a most wise counselor and the greatest supporter of the Roman church in all its troubles and needs.¹⁷²

Cosmas, unlike Henry IV's imperial bishops, does not therefore seem to take issue with Matilda's influence in Rome. Instead, he praises her with such phrases as "the most powerful lady" and "the greatest supporter of the Roman church." Moreover, he exalts her for her power over bishoprics (and the papacy itself). His remarks imply that Matilda had complete control over the bishoprics in her territory, presumably through lay investiture. His depiction of Matilda as a lord of the church and the controlling force in episcopal elections surely would have made the reforming circle in Rome cringe.

Cosmas clearly admired Matilda, enough to interrupt his history of the Czechs to say a little more about the Tuscan countess beyond her supposed involvement in Jaromír's case. The author relates how Matilda "manfully" sought out a husband at the urging of her magnates, not because they thought her incapable of ruling alone, but instead because they feared her dynasty would end after her death, since she still lacked an heir.¹⁷³ Matilda, in an interesting role

¹⁷² Cosmas, *Chronik*, 126: "Hisdem diebus venerat Romam Mahtildis potentissima domna, que post obitum patris sui Bonifacii totius Longobardie simul et Burgundie suscepit regni gubernacula, habens potestatem eligendi et introzandi sive eliminandi CXX super episcopos. Huius quasi proprie domne ad nutum omnis senatorius ordo parebat, et ipse Gregorius papa per eam divina et humana negocia disponebat, quia erat sapientissima consiliatrix et in omnibus adversitatibus sive necessitatibus Romane ecclesie maxima faulrix." Eng. trans. Wolverson, 152; translation revised.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 127.

reversal, is the one who first approaches her potential spouse, Welf V of Bavaria, promising him land, castles, palaces, and “unlimited gold and silver.” It is Matilda in her position as the dominant lord who greets and feasts Welf upon his arrival. On their wedding night and for three nights after Welf proves impotent and he accuses Matilda and her handmaids of hiding “something evil” in her clothes or sheets in order to make a fool of him. According to Cosmas, in an episode not repeated by any other author, Matilda led Welf

alone into the bedchamber, placed a three-legged stool in the middle and a dining table above, and showed herself naked as she had come from her mother’s womb, and said: “Whatever has been hidden I lay it all before you, nor is there any place where some evil might hide.”...Next, the woman sat a long time upon the table like a goose when it makes itself a nest, turning its tail here and there, but in vain. Finally the nude woman, indignant, arose and took the collar of the effeminate man in her left hand and, spitting in her right hand, gave him a great slap and threw him outside, saying, “Go far from here, monster, lest you pollute our kingdom.”¹⁷⁴

This story, and indeed the entire passage on Matilda, have the tone of both acclamation and defense. Lisa Wolverton argues that Cosmas’ depiction of Matilda was an implicit criticism of the Gregorian Reform and the resulting Investiture Conflict. According to Wolverton, Cosmas did not agree with many of the goals of the reform; he himself was married and as discussed above apparently saw nothing intrinsically corrupt about the act of lay investiture. Moreover, Wolverton suggests that Cosmas constructed a political arena in Bohemia that depended on the foundation of a strictly gendered binary of power, one established at the very beginning of the chronicle with Cosmas’ relation of the mythical origins of the Přemyslid dynasty.¹⁷⁵ On the basis of a line in the *Chronica*, which states that it was Premysl who “restrained this savage

¹⁷⁴ Cosmas, *Chronik*, 129: “...sola solum ducit in cubiculum, ponit in medio tripodas et desuper mensalem locat tabulam et exhibuit se sicut ab utero matris nudam et inquit: ‘En quecumque latent, tibi omnia patent, nec est, ubi aliquod maleficium lateat’...Postquam vero diu sedit mulier super tabulam et velut anser, cum facit sibi nidum huc et illuc vertens caudam frustra, tandem indignata surgit femina nuda et apprehendit manu sinistra anticiput semiviri atque expuens in dextram palmam dat sibi magnam alapam et extrusit eum foras dicens: ‘I procul hinc, monstrum, regnum ne pollue nostrum.’” Eng. trans. Wolverton, 155; translation revised.

¹⁷⁵ Lisa Wolverton, *Cosmas of Prague*, 92.

people with laws, tamed the untamed populace by his command, and subjected them to the servitude by which they are now oppressed,”¹⁷⁶ Wolverton has interpreted Cosmas’ text as a subtle censure of Bohemian power structures. On the one hand is the female side, a side marked by freedom and female compassion; Wolverton, citing Cosmas’ frequent use of Woman-Church imagery, suggests that Cosmas tried to portray the Roman Church as this “good” power.¹⁷⁷ On the other hand is the male side, marked by violence and oppression, the type of power embodied by the Premyslid dukes. For Wolverton, Cosmas’s Matilda fits squarely within this masculine arena of violence and sheer military force. As a woman, she could not otherwise wield power in the cruel “iron age” of men.¹⁷⁸

While Wolverton is correct to argue that Cosmas saw power in very gendered terms, the binary of opposing feminine and masculine forces she has suggested does not take into account the full complexity of Cosmas’ view of power and power relations, particularly between men and women, and the Church and secular rulers. Cosmas’ Matilda is the embodiment of some of his greatest concerns and goals as a Latin Christian cleric on the edge of Christendom. First, she is both foreign and native—foreign through her own parentage, but made native by her supposed connection to Jaromír, and thus to the Bohemian ruling dynasty. In this way, Cosmas’ Matilda becomes a powerful external protector and ally who can be trusted because of a supposed blood relationship. Second, other than the small detail of being

¹⁷⁶ Cosmas, *Chronik*, 18: “hanc efferam gentem legibus frenavit et indomitum populum imperio domuit et servituti, qua nunc premitur, subiugavit.”

¹⁷⁷ Wolverton does not make any connection between Cosmas’ use of the anthropomorphized Church and the more widespread use of such imagery in Western European texts of the same period. Cosmas was educated in Liège, most likely during the height of the Investiture Conflict (c. 1075-1083), so it is possible his use of the imagery was a reflection of his education. For Wolverton’s discussion of the Woman-Church in the *Chronica Boemorum*, see *Cosmas of Prague*, 121.

¹⁷⁸ Wolverton, *Cosmas of Prague*, 164-70.

female, Matilda represents the standard trappings of a strong Christian lord: she is wealthy and pious, she commands “thousands” of men, and she exerts direct oversight and control on her local bishoprics. And thirdly, she is a secular noblewoman trying to fulfill that most basic and important of duties: to marry and bear children in order to ensure dynastic continuity. While other friendly contemporary sources tend to describe Matilda’s two marriages as chaste in nature, emphasizing her piety, Cosmas instead portrays her moving naked in front of her unresponsive husband, doing everything in her power to fulfill her obligations. Her nudity is not a display of wanton lust, but a tool. In the end, it is clearly Welf who is somehow at fault, one whose weakness could “pollute” Matilda’s realm. In other words, Matilda represents all that Cosmas holds dear in his concepts of both male and female Christian lordship: military strength, unquestionable authority, and piety on the one hand, and a determined dedication to the needs of the ruling family on the other.

It is not surprising that Fulcher of Chartres, Amatus of Montecassino, and Cosmas of Prague were at least a little familiar with Matilda of Tuscany’s career and involvement in the pontificates of Gregory VII and Urban II. What is surprising and enlightening is each author’s decision to include the countess in his respective narrative. Each placed her firmly within the circle of the reform papacy, even Fulcher, whose account of Matilda’s actions is otherwise too brief to reveal more about his opinion of her. In contrast, the passages from Amatus’ *History* and Cosmas’ *Chronica* very clearly reveal a perceived tension between Matilda’s role as lord—and specifically as warlord—and her gender. This tension prompted Cosmas to present an elaborate defense of her position as both male and female lord, a defense which notably came at the cost of devaluing and denigrating the sexuality of Welf, her supposedly impotent husband, in order to buffer her own position as the dominant figure of their marriage. In

Amatus' case, Matilda's gender serves as a reprimand against Gregory VII, and especially against his policy towards the Normans in Italy, but not as a criticism of Matilda herself. Moreover, Amatus and Cosmas' chronicles both portray Matilda in the guise of a commander of armies, a role which chroniclers in the core areas affected by the Investiture Conflict tend not to do. Even pro-imperial chronicles, which do accuse Matilda of womanly guile or sexual indecency, do not directly address the question of her ability or authority to lead men into battle. But for Amatus and Cosmas, military leadership was one of two indispensable skills which secular lords needed, along with proper Christian devotion. Because of the disassociation of women from the waging of war, both authors apparently saw the need to offer an explanation for Matilda's actions. In Amatus' chronicle, Matilda's gender was an immediate drawback; in Cosmas' text, she appears as a heroic figure because she combined the two sides of his dichotomous vision of gendered lordship.

Conclusion

Latin chroniclers apparently saw the need to praise, defend, or condemn each of these four women in terms of a sharp dichotomy between male and female gender roles. The ideal woman was one who lived within the framework of her immediate family, encouraging Christian *mores* on a private basis. As an exemplar of private spirituality, a noblewoman could serve as a transmitter of a certain set of ideals to her male kin, who would then step forward to take public action, often by using political or military force. Sichelgaita, Adelaide, and Urraca thus appear in the most favorable light when acting as devoted wives or mothers. When they strayed into political or military affairs, however, they threatened the balanced dichotomy of male and female paradigms of behavior. Even Matilda of Tuscany found her actions closely

scrutinized through the frontier's lens of hyper-masculine lordship. Amatus highlighted the incongruity of Matilda's military campaign against Robert Guiscard, while Cosmas chose to depict her instead as both male and female lord. Yet the implication is clear in both of their texts: Matilda was an odd individual. Her actions did not easily fit into the patterns of female behavior which otherwise loom large in frontier narratives. In short, female secular lords on the borders of Latin Christendom do not appear to have taken upon themselves or been given the same kind of active, public roles as their counterparts in the core of Western Europe. There are no Deborahs, no requests for aristocratic women to boycott priests, to intercede on behalf of ecclesiastical reformers, or to rule their lands according to Christian standards if their husbands failed to do so. What emerges instead in these far-flung regions is a much closer adherence to traditional Carolingian models of Christian female lordship.

There are several possible reasons that could explain the difference in ideologies of female lordship. The most compelling is that the frontiers of Latin Christendom required a different kind of Christian rulership, one which emphasized the hyper-masculine in an effort to stabilize and strengthen new ruling institutions. In central Europe, the Latin East, Christian Spain, and Norman Italy, ecclesiastical reformers focused on external military threats as well as the need to correct internal morals and religious behaviors. They therefore needed accomplished Christian warriors to stamp out pagan beliefs, to convert troublesome neighbors by force, and to defend Latin Christendom from external threats. The focus of religious reform on the borders was thus much more about establishing appropriate institutions and modes of Christian rulership and culture rather than about reforming an existing model. Given this focus on powerful Christian warlords as the ideal picture of male lordship, Carolingian conceptions of female lordship, based as they were within the household, thus offered a convenient

preexisting model which could be used to encourage private obedience to Latin Christian practices.

What, then, does this closer adherence to Carolingian models of female lordship on the frontiers of Latin Christendom suggest about simultaneous developments in secular female authority in the core of Western Europe? In some ways, the different currents of cultural and religious reform which ran through the heart of Western Europe and along its periphery in the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries represent different phases in the process of Christianizing a society. Along the borders, it was a matter of establishing a strong Latin Christian culture and society; in the center, where Rome unquestionably held the supreme spiritual authority, it was a matter of purifying and refining what had already been established. The ideal Christian female lord at the beginning of the process of Christianizing a society, as seen in the border realms, was a woman most concerned with the wellbeing and success of her immediate family. But this role was not enough to accomplish the more progressive goals of the ecclesiastical reform movement. To impose fully the reforming *mores* upon a corrupt society required the nobility's greater attention to and action in the larger community. The conceptualization of Christian female lordship under the pressure of religious reform on the periphery of Latin Christendom reveals that, in contrast, ideas of secular female power and agency in the core kingdoms of Western Europe did undergo new and creative evolutions during the reform movement.

CONCLUSION: MARTHAS OF THE WORLD

In April 1633, Pope Urban VIII ordered the secret removal of Matilda of Tuscany's body from the countess's chosen resting place in the abbey of San Benedetto in Polirone. The monks of Polirone, who had long encouraged Matilda's local cult, fought Urban's decision. But the pope, who showed a certain determination to revitalize Matilda's legend, refused to return even a small portion of her remains to the monastery.¹ Instead, in the same year Urban commissioned a new sarcophagus and monument to honor Matilda, to be designed by the sculptor Gian Lorenzo Bernini. The resultant funerary monument still stands in St. Peter's Basilica, where it was placed in 1644 upon the completion of the commissioned work. Bernini's sculpture portrays Matilda as both a lord and a champion of the papacy. Matilda appears crowned, and in her right hand she holds a commander's baton; in her left, she cradles two symbols of the papacy, the keys and the papal tiara. Reliefs of military trophies are engraved on the arch which surrounds the sculpture, while the figure itself rests on a pedestal that displays, in bas-relief, the 1077 scene of reconciliation at Canossa. The inscription on the monument lists, among other virtues, Matilda's "manly soul" (*virilis anima*).² The emphasis on Matilda's role as a military leader is clear in this particular representation of the countess; just as clear is the leashing of that military role to the service and protection of the papacy.

¹ Beth L. Holman, "Exemplum and Imitatio: Countess Matilda and Lucrezia Pico della Mirandola at Polirone," *Art Bulletin* 81.4 (1999), 651-2.

² Silvia Tita, "Peace and Conflict in the Seventeenth-Century Funerary Monument of the Medieval Heroine Countess Matilda of Tuscany," *Journal of Research in Gender Studies* 4.2 (2014), 788-90.

Urban VIII's decision to transfer Matilda's remains to St. Peter's was not based on mere personal whim, but rather was part of a broader programmatic intended to stabilize and promote papal authority against the backdrop of another major movement of religious and cultural change: the Protestant and Catholic Reformations.³ Matilda's legend inspired multiple biographies and artwork in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Italy.⁴ Pope Urban showed a particularly keen interest in Matilda, however. As a cardinal, he composed a poem dedicated to the medieval countess, inspired in large part, according to Silvia Tita, by Matilda's supposed donation of the territory which would later become the core of the papal lands.⁵ In the memory of an eleventh-century countess who went to war for two popes, Urban found a model of secular Catholic lordship that he could use as an exemplum for seventeenth-century audiences.

The funerary monument is only one of many examples of the early modern fascination with the historical figure of Matilda of Tuscany. It is, however, one of the most visually striking and eloquent testimonies to her staying power in European—and especially Italian—historical memory. This dissertation began with Matilda of Tuscany and the opprobrium and praise she garnered from her contemporaries. It seems fitting, therefore, to end with this brief mention of Matilda's continued reputation as the papacy's military champion. Nor was Matilda the only female lord of the reform movement to enjoy such a long afterlife in historical memory and legend. Saint Margaret of Scotland, like Matilda of Tuscany, also became a symbol for the Reformation papacy, when Innocent XII moved her feast day from the day of her death (November 16) to June 10, in order to honor the birthdate of the son of the Catholic king of

³ Tita, "Peace and Conflict," 793.

⁴ For an overview of these biographies, see Holman, "Exemplum and Imitatio," 637-40.

⁵ Tita, "Peace and Conflict," 792-3.

England and Scotland, James II (her feast day was later moved back to November 16).⁶ Her daughter, the English queen Matilda II, was long remembered as “Good Queen Maude”; one scholar has recently suggested that she was the inspiration for the “fair lady” of the “London Bridge” nursery rhyme.⁷ And Ida of Boulogne entered the realm of literary legend when, in late medieval crusade cycles, she became a key character of the Swan Knight tale.⁸ Centuries later, Judy Chicago incorporated many of these female lords into her 1979 feminist art installation, *The Heritage Floor*, including Adelaide of Turin, Agnes of Poitou, the English queens Matilda I and II, and Matilda of Tuscany.⁹

The late-medieval, early-modern, and even modern representations and memories of these aristocratic and royal laywomen originate in the sources written by ecclesiastical contemporaries in the latter half of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth. It is no coincidence that the same period which saw the spread and impact of a major religious reform movement also witnessed the emergence of discourses featuring a remarkable cadre of powerful and influential secular noblewomen. Indeed, the prominent presence of female lords in sources focusing on or influenced by reformist affairs and beliefs cannot be explained away by simple political expediency or by the accident of birth or marriage. Matilda of Tuscany, arguably the most famous eleventh-century female lord in modern memory, did not earn her

⁶ Catherine Keene, *Saint Margaret, Queen of the Scots: A Life in Perspective* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 134.

⁷ John Clark, “London Bridge and the Archaeology of a Nursery Rhyme,” *London Archaeologist* 9 (2002), 338.

⁸ Particularly in the *Enfances Godefroi*. See Renee Nip, “Godelieve of Gistel and Ida of Boulogne,” in *Sanctity and Motherhood: Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages*, ed. Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker (New York: Garland Publishing, 1995), 219-20.

⁹ *The Heritage Floor* forms the base of the larger installation, Judy Chicago’s *The Dinner Party* (Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, NY, 1979, mixed media); an image is available online at https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/eascfa/dinner_party/resources#3, accessed February 5, 2017.

reputation simply through her role as the Tuscan heiress. Although that position did make her unusual to an extent in comparison to other medieval aristocratic women, the power and resources she inherited provided her with a base set of tools for political and cultural engagement. Her true fame, as Urban VIII recognized in 1633, rested on her actions in the affairs of the reform movement and the ways in which she combined her secular authority with religious fervor and obedience.

This study has addressed the paradox presented by the participation of women like Matilda of Tuscany in an ecclesiastical movement that often feared and questioned the very presence of women in religious affairs. It is impossible to capture in a single statement the complicated intersections between reformist beliefs, conceptions of gender, and the enactment and representation of female lordship. One final point may, however, serve to illuminate a fundamental connection between the reform movement and conceptions of female lordship. The church reform movement of the late eleventh and early twelfth century rested in large part upon the uncertain salience of abstract and contrasting ideas: right and wrong; purity and impurity; authority and obedience; sacred and secular; masculine and feminine. The task of ecclesiastical reformers was to translate these abstractions into lived experiences—to turn the imagined into reality. To accomplish their task, ecclesiastical reformers drew upon those tools which they had available to them most consistently: language and performance. Certain moments, actions, and situations became focal points for the abstract ideologies which formed the foundation of reformist thought. Consider, for example, the well-known targets of the reform movement—lay investiture, simony, and clerical marriage—which translated concerns over purity, authority, and the holy into tangible experiences: the exchange of ring or staff or

bribes; or the interaction between two human beings, whether that between a lord and a bishop or between a priest and his wife.

Female secular lordship presented a similar opportunity for the translation and enactment of the abstract ideals of religious reform. Secular noblewomen could all too easily be censured and limited by socio-religious expectations and codes of behavior. Clerics, as we have seen, were highly aware of the dangers inherent in women: the sexual allure of the female body and the vacillating nature of the female spirit. Indeed, misogynistic rhetoric is an undeniable dimension of much of the polemical literature which survives. Yet this rhetoric should not be seen as a constant or even a fundamental feature of the reform movement, the direction in which some scholarship has tended to lean. It was but one part of a larger reform programmatic which sought to make recognizable and achievable a novel vision of the ideal Christian society by employing familiar gender definitions and associations. The language of misogyny was used to denote impurity and deviancy, moments of “bad” womanhood. Equally prominent and just as—if not more—important were notions of “good” womanhood and, especially, of good lay aristocratic womanhood.

The reform movement acted as a catalyst for the ways in which medieval men and women conceived of female secular authority. Scholars have long commented on the ambiguous nature of female lordship, which was complicated by a woman’s need to rely on male kin as the ultimate source of her own authority, as well as by her general exclusion from the key masculine art of warfare. But, as was discovered during the reform movement, the blurred lines which characterized female secular lordship also lent a certain useful flexibility to it. This flexibility may have made female lords look particularly promising as potential agents of reform, as the reform itself had many and varied goals, each of which needed a

different form of authoritative action in order to be furthered. In the more distant regions of Christendom, female lordship was represented as highly domestic in nature, a model which supported the baseline goal of establishing appropriate marital and familial structures in place of “pagan” practices of polygamy. In the regions most directly affected by the fight over investiture, models of successful female lordship proliferated at an impressive rate. A female lord could act with the approval of the reformed clergy as an intercessor, as an enforcer of papal policy, as military champion, as a model of lay piety—or as all of these at once. Secular women were not swept cleanly aside by the reform movement, at least not during the period of 1050 to 1125. Several areas were closed off to them, with varying degrees of success, in the reform’s efforts to create a purer Church. But the reform, by bringing into question the very nature of secular power, provoked, perhaps unintentionally, a period of intellectual creativity regarding the nature of women and of female authority. The “good” woman was no longer defined solely or even primarily by the example of the cloistered virgin. Instead, the multifaceted currents of religious reform contributed to the emergence of clear patterns of strong female secular authority which combined personal feelings of piety with action in the world, not apart from it. The reformed Church needed Marthas, not just Marys, in order to obtain a more perfect Christendom.

This dissertation is a contribution to the study of the eleventh-century ecclesiastical reform movement’s impact on medieval female lordship. In the process of exploring that impact, the project has also opened up two additional questions that future research could profitably address. First, there is the methodological question of how medieval writers used the written word to engage with, come to terms with, and try to influence the real world around them. The polemical literature of the reform movement is a prime and rich example of the

power of language and idiom to create associations and definitions, and to influence cultural conventions of thought and behavior. The current project has discussed the use of language and narrative in relation to the relatively narrow topic of female lordship within the context of the Gregorian reform. Hopefully this discussion has demonstrated successfully that such a study of language can expand meaningfully our understanding of medieval worldviews on a variety of topics.

The second question is more specific in nature and one on which the current study frequently, if briefly, touches, but which merits greater study and consideration. The eleventh and twelfth centuries have long been identified as a transformative period for western European families and marital reform, culminating in the sacramentalization of marriage by the end of the twelfth century. Eleventh-century reformers' preoccupation with marriage (particularly marriage among high status individuals) has often featured as part of the scholarly narrative of the major events of the reform movement. Scholars of medieval marriage reform have, for the most part, focused on developments in canon law, conciliar decrees, and other writings of church policy.¹⁰ But several studies, including this dissertation, have also pointed out reformers' reliance upon the language of family and kinship to describe the expected roles of men and women in the secular and religious spheres.¹¹ Is it possible that this aspect of reform rhetoric represents a symptom of an overall shift in attitude towards conceptions of marriage

¹⁰ See: Christopher N.L. Brooke, *The Medieval Idea of Marriage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989); James A. Brundage, *Sex, Law, and Marriage in the Middle Ages* (Brookfield, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 1993); Charles J. Reid, Jr., *Power over the Body, Equality in the Family: Rights and Domestic Relations in Medieval Canon Law* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2004); David d'Avray, *Medieval Marriage: Symbolism and Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Ruth Mazo Karras, *Unmarriages: Women, Men, and Sexual Unions in the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

¹¹ See, for example, Megan McLaughlin, *Sex, Gender and Episcopal Authority in an Age of Reform, 1000-1122* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 6-20; Steven Biddlecombe, "Baldric of Bourgeuil and the *Familia Christi*," in *Writing the Early Crusades: Text, Transmission, and Memory*, ed. Marcus Bull and Damien Kempf (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), 9-23.

and family? Or did the reform rhetoric itself contribute to or even initiate such a shift? And what purpose did the changing theologies of marriage and family serve? The exact processes by which family structures and marital rites changed between 1000 and 1200 will most likely remain murky thanks to the uncertain survival rate of relevant sources. Perhaps more consideration should be given, however, to the connections between broader patterns of language and idiom in medieval narrative texts and those documentary sources—canon laws, charters, and genealogies—which have served as the base for most studies on marital and familial developments.

To conclude, the eleventh century and the early decades of the twelfth witnessed a pivotal period of cultural and religious change for western Europe. The ecclesiastical and monastic reform movements, shifting political ideologies, the advent of the crusades, and the expanding geographical awareness of western Europe were indelibly intertwined and interdependent developments which affected virtually every aspect of medieval life. Perhaps it was because of this backdrop of deep-rooted and oftentimes chaotic change that an extensive network of strong female lords was able to emerge, as traditional mechanisms of male authority were being challenged by new tasks or threats, both in the secular sphere and in the religious. The creative potential of female lordship presented an opportunity for men and women both to find and renew ways of connecting the religious and secular aspects of medieval rulership.

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