PARTNERS IN RULE: A STUDY OF TWELFTH-CENTURY QUEENS OF ENGLAND

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Introduction

By nature, because she was a woman, the woman could not exercise public power. She was incapable of exercising it.

– Georges Duby, “Women and Power”

With this statement, Georges Duby renders the medieval woman “powerless” to participate in any sort of governance in the Middle Ages. He and other scholars have perpetuated the idea that women who held landed titles in the Middle Ages relegated all power of that title to their husbands, including queens. Scholars have commonly assumed that the king, not the queen, was the only party able to wield significant authority in the governance of the country, and that men dominated the role of the queen in the political sphere. It is difficult to imagine how Duby and others reached his harsh conclusion about women and power in the Middle Ages once the ruling relationships between the kings and queens of twelfth-century England are examined. The queens of twelfth-century England provide a prime example of how the queen was not, in fact, powerless in the rule of her realm, but rather a significant governmental official who had the opportunity to take a complementary part in royal rule that suited her strengths. A study of the lives of queens Matilda II of Scotland (r.1100-1118), Matilda III of Boulogne (r.1135-1152), and Eleanor of Aquitaine (r.1154-1189) reveals much about what was expected from a queen in her relationship with the king in twelfth-century England, and demonstrates the changing nature of the queen’s partnership with the king in rule.

Let us begin by defining what exactly is meant by “rule” in twelfth-century England. Rule was the exercise of power in governance and regulation over a body of people, using various means to control and regulate the dominion. For a king and queen, both partners exercised these means, and each was expected to perform certain duties that suited their strengths the best. The king was expected to act as the head of governmental authority, as the legislator, as
the dispenser of justice at court, as the military leader, and as the mentor for his heir that would succeed him as king. As the king’s partner, the queen was expected to aid the king in certain aspects of rule, which included acting as the governmental head in the king’s place, issuing charters and legislation, dispensing justice at court in her own right or in conjunction with the king, educating their children, patronage, and tempering the king’s laws with mercy through intercession. Queens should be considered partners, not co-rulers, because a co-ruler would essentially have had the same duties of rule and the same routes to exercise power. While the duties of the king and queen were similar, each party had different ones ascribed to them. The king fought in battle where a queen could not, and a queen interceded to plead for mercy, where a king could not for fear of being perceived as weak. These duties of rule complemented each other, and allowed the twelfth-century royal couple to aspire to the goal of leading the government together as king and queen. Although the degree of partnership varied with each royal couple, writings of twelfth-century chroniclers show that partnership of rule was expected of the relationship between king and queen, with each acting to his or her strengths.

The lives of Matilda II, Matilda III, and Eleanor demonstrate how queens acted as partners with their husbands in rule, as well as the varying nature of each partnership (see fig.1 for genealogy). Matilda II of Scotland was the first wife of Henry I (r.1100-1135), and her time as queen is perhaps the best example of the three aforementioned queens of a partnership of the royal couple in rule. Charters and chronicles detail the extensiveness of Matilda's involvement in governmental affairs, as well as patronage and child-rearing, showing how Henry relied upon and trust Matilda as a partner to help him keep affairs of England and Normandy in order.

Because of the trans-channel nature of rule, Henry I and his successors needed a strong and reliable governing force in one area while they enforced their authority in other lands. The relationship between another royal pair, Matilda III of Boulogne and Stephen I (r.1135-1154), Henry I's successor, also demonstrates the partnership between king and queen; Matilda III recruited allies for her husband during the Anarchy, acted as regent, attempted to secure the throne for her son Eustace, and even deployed troops to support her husband in his rule as king. Stephen I’s successor, Henry II (r.1154-1189), had perhaps the most volatile relationship with his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine. For the first decade or so of Henry's reign, Eleanor issued charters for England and Aquitaine, acted as regent, sat in justice at court, and helped prepare her children to rule. However, their partnership became contentious when the couple disagreed over the governance of their lands in England and France. Also, Eleanor had less opportunity to wield influence in the political world because of the increasing bureaucratization of the Angevin Empire, which allowed the developing office of the chief justiciar to overshadow the role of the queen. Her partnership in rule with Henry ultimately ended with her imprisonment in 1173 after participating in a rebellion against him with her sons, and she would not have the opportunity again to participate wholly in the political sphere until Henry's death in 1189.

Thus, the lives of these twelfth-century queens are good case studies to demonstrate that queens acted as partners with kings in rule because her duties complemented his, and that the terms for this partnership were by no means set in stone. The examination of the reigns of Matilda II of Scotland, Matilda III of Boulogne, and Eleanor of Aquitaine will show how these queens acted as rulers in their realms, and what factors influenced their power and authority as

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6 Ibid., 78, 110.
queens of England.
Chapter 1

From the Insignificance of Women to Queenship as an Office: A Brief Historiography of Medieval Women and Queenship

The history of medieval women and medieval queens has come quite a long way from when women were first included in the history of the Middle Ages. Up until about the late nineteenth century, scholars generally did not consider women important in the “master historical narrative,” and relegated the role of queens to piety and patronage.\(^1\) The interest in women’s history did not even make a sliver of appearance until the nineteenth century, and Barbara Hanawalt writes that this was most likely because of an increased “political concern for women’s rights.”\(^2\) As the discipline progressed into the twentieth century and scholars looked more closely at the primary sources, they began to discover that queens, in fact, did have a part to play in the Middle Ages, although many of them wrote as though queens had to “overcome the system” of oppression and could only make legitimate influences on society through piety and patronage.\(^3\) It was not until the 1980s when historians began to examine the activities of medieval queens as rulers in their own right and look at queenship as an office as societal trends from two world wars pushed the interest of scholars towards the direction of analyzing constitutional and administrative changes in the Middle Ages.\(^4\) So, the history of queens in the Middle Ages has developed gradually from a discipline that first ignored queens, then focused on the subjection of queens under the authority of her husband, and then to a more sophisticated understanding of how queens were an integral part of rulership in the Middle Ages.

As previously state, this first stage of the appearance of women in scholarly historical writing began in the mid-nineteenth century, and scholars also began to examine the role of

\(^1\) Parsons, “Introduction: Family, Sex, and Power,” 2.
\(^3\) Parsons, “Introduction: Family, Sex, and Power,” 2.
queens. One of the first texts in which medieval queens featured prominently in scholarly writing was Agnes Strickland’s multi-volume work, *The Lives of the Queens of England from the Norman Conquest* in 1843. While this work was broad in scope, it only included small biographies of each queen and focused either on the pious influences of the queen on her husband like in the description of Matilda of Scotland, or on her immoral qualities that badly influenced his reign like in the description of Eleanor of Aquitaine. Strickland’s interest in English queens most likely came from Queen Victoria's reign during her time of writing, as well as from a society interest in women's rights. Strickland's motivations for lingering on the medieval queens' moral qualities are somewhat unclear, however; perhaps it is because Victorian women were meant to be the bastion of morality, so Strickland may have thought that morality was the only influence that a woman could have over a man.

Strickland’s work would be the most significant piece of work written on queens for quite some time. Hanawalt writes that after World War I, the romantic notion of the Middle Ages “died out” and historians became more interested in the developments of democracy in Western Europe. Women were most likely excluded from this study because scholars had not realized the significance of their part in medieval government as of yet. Also, Hanawalt suggests that the success of women’s suffrage in the 1920s probably led to a decreased interest in women’s history, and the topic was no longer vogue. It was not until the 1960s when the renewed interest in the political activism of women increased the interest of scholars in social history, and the role of women in society. Much interest lingered on the role of the “oppressed” sector of society,

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5 Ibid., 4-5.  
8 Ibid., 11.  
9 Ibid.  
10 Ibid., 12.
which included women, so much of the scholarship on women in the mid-twentieth century understandably focuses on women acting against the prescribed roles society had set up for them.\textsuperscript{11} For instance in Frances and Joseph Gies' 1978 book entitled \textit{Women in the Middle Ages}, they write of the patriarchal system of the feudal age and how women needed to work against this system in order to raise their status at the time. They say, “a woman under feudalism spent most of her life under the guardianship of a man,” showing how they believed that men dominated women in the patriarchal society of the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{12}

Even in the twentieth century with the increase of literature on medieval women, many scholars chose to focus on how women, and queens, had to overcome the oppression of men in order to increase their status in society. This is most likely the result of the increasingly popular discipline of gender history. Gender history focuses mainly on relations between males and females, and for the study of medieval queens, this approach tends to lead scholars to focus only on gender as a factor in determining how much influence a woman in power had. One such scholar is Louise Olga Fradenburg, who edited a collection of essays published in 1992 entitled \textit{Women and Sovereignty}. In the Introduction to the text, she writes that “Sovereignty, simply, does not exist apart from gender,” and that it defines and perpetuates cultural constructions of gender.\textsuperscript{13} The other essays in this volume also argue that sovereignty depends on the use of masculine and feminine ideas during the Middle Ages.\textsuperscript{14} So, Fradenburg essentially uses this volume to show how queens had to overcome social constructions of gender in order to take a part in the rule of their kingdoms. She seems to think that medieval women were defined primarily by gender, and that this stereotype had a large influence in the way that the medieval

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\textsuperscript{11} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{12} Frances Gies and Joseph Gies, \textit{Women in the Middle Ages} (New York: Crowell, 1978), 20.


\textsuperscript{14} Fradenburg, ed., introduction to \textit{Women and Sovereignty}, 1.
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woman practiced sovereignty. According to Fradenburg, women had a difficult time acting outside of social constructs that relegated their duties to certain functions of government, such as patronage, regency, and dynastic transitions. While Fradenburg believes women could be quite influential in these spheres, she seems to neglect the role that women could play in the political sphere through the virtue of their office.  

Two other scholars represent a similar viewpoint in their collection of essays. Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean edited the volume *The Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women*, published in 1995, and they also use gender analysis to frame their studies, even though the essays reach somewhat different conclusions. It is apparent even in the title of the book “The Power of the Weak,” that they assume from the start that women were considered the “weaker” sex and had to overcome gender constructions of society in order to make their voices heard. They do argue for the “empowerment of the weak,” indicating that women had access to power in the Middle Ages, but women could only act in limited roles such as piety and intercession because those were the defined limits of a woman's influence in society. They focus very much on how these gender constructions had an influence on how women accessed power as well. For instance, they write that certain struggles for women to gain power were “surely indicative of the very real fragility of the 'power of the weak,'” and that women reacted “against restrictive circumstances.” So, while they argue that women did have access to power in the Middle Ages, they still assume that gender constructions defined all of these routes to power.

Jennifer Ward, however, provides a more nuanced examination of gender constructions in medieval society. Ward, like previous scholarship, also views women in power and queenship

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15 Ibid., 7.
17 Ibid.
through the lens of gender studies in her 2006 monograph, *Women in England in the Middle Ages*. However, she analyzes her evidence differently than previous authors; while she does use gender to classify the means by which women came into power and had an influence in rule, she does not display women as the “weaker” sex, needing to overcome oppression in order to gain power. She paints a picture of women who did not “conform to the models laid down by the church or the crown,” showing how exceptional women in the Middle Ages, including queens, were not unusual.\(^{18}\) In her discussion of women’s authority, she also brings a fairly new perspective to the study of queenship: the idea of queenship as an office. She describes the position of the queen as one of duty, trust, and authority, in which the queen had sanctioned power and opportunity to actively participate in rule.\(^{19}\)

This “sanctioned” power, Ward argues, was actually given by the church, contrary to what other scholars have written about the church being one of the primary limiters of queens exercising power, like Georges Duby. In his 1995 essay entitled “Women and Power,” Duby argues that “the admonitions of men of the church to women” show that women had a limited means for access to power because churchmen did not approve of women acting outside pious roles.\(^{20}\) The fact that Ward completely reverses this argument demonstrates a significant change in the trend of writing about medieval women in power, a trend that examines sources more carefully to define what the actual limits of women in power were. This trend would even come to lead scholars down a path where they would examine queenship as an office because of the didactic nature in which medieval churchmen discussed the actions of queens. Previous scholarship had not necessarily addressed these concerns, and had focused more on how gender constructions played a role in the queen’s limitations of power. A group of scholarship takes a


similar approach to Ward in analyzing queenship as an office, such as works by Lois L. Huneycutt, John Carmi Parsons, and Lisa Hilton.

Huneycutt authored an article in 1989 entitled “Images of Queenship in the High Middle Ages,” in which she discusses that, until recently, “the medieval queen has been almost ignored both by traditional historians interested in the political, administrative, and institutional development of the kingdoms of Europe and by the new generation of women’s historians.” Instead of centering her argument around gendered power like Fradenburg, Carpenter, and MacLean, she focuses on the precise role that the queen had to play in the rule and government of her kingdom, or in other words, queenship as a governmental office. While she also does discuss gender constructions of society, she does not make this the main focus of her essay. She argues that the queen participated heavily in different roles within the government instead of arguing that the queen needed to fight against restrictive views of men that women were “weak.” Huneycutt's essay provides a deeper discussion of the measure of rule that the medieval queen had because she does not only define queens' power only by gender, but also by defining powers that were associated with the office of queenship in general.

John Carmi Parsons continues with this school of thought when he addresses medieval queenship as an office. In his Introduction to Medieval Queenship, a collection of essays published in 1993, he writes that previous works on medieval queens were “limited by the tendencies to depict queens as moral pendants to husbands or sons, and to dwell on their lives but not their offices,” and that this “current distaste” for administrative history has limited the investigation of resources and duties associated with the office of queenship. He more closely examines the role that the government played in the rule of medieval queens, such as how much

22 Ibid., 63.
the increasing bureaucratization of government really had on the office of queenship. His study shows that scholars were beginning to think of queenship as more than just a woman’s role “stuck” to duties of piety and moral persuasion; it was an actual office in which women could have great influence in the rule of her kingdom, not just derived from her position of providing an heir to the throne.

Finally, one of the most recent works on queenship by Lisa Hilton, *Queens Consort: England’s Medieval Queens*, published in 2010, addresses how queens could be influential as a ruler in their realm. Some of the ways that the queen had influence were through diplomacy, intercession, education of children, and patronage. She argues that it is possible to establish a picture of the development of queenship and that the duties and limitations of the office of queenship changed over time as one would expect a governmental position to develop along with a changing governmental structure in England. She also writes that it is impossible for queens to be reduced to mere corollaries of their husbands, instead taking on duties that greatly benefited the rule of the kingdom, like regency, intercession, and international diplomacy. Thus, these works also show how the study of queenship developed over time as a discipline that addressed only gendered power to one that examined the full extent of the powers of the queen in rule, with much less emphasis placed on gender.

It is queenship as an office that this study means to address in order to show that the twelfth-century queens of England were considered partners in rule with their husbands. In order to accomplish this, several secondary sources will be used to guide and inform the study; the works that address queenship as an office provide the most insightful guide to twelfth-century queenship in England. Huneycutt's writings about the positive views of medieval churchmen to

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24 Ibid., 2.
26 Ibid., 10.
women in power will be most useful in examining twelfth-century sources more closely to determine what actions queen took in rule (such as sitting as head of state, diplomacy, and intercession), and what the acceptable limitations were for a queen acting as the king's partner in rule. Ward's study on medieval women will also be useful because she also believes that writings of medieval churchmen can help to define the role that the queen played in the governance of her kingdom. And, of course, Parson's work on defining queenship as an office will further reveal how twelfth-century queens of England acted in the governance of their lands because he specifically addresses their political power. By using this scholarship to look at which actions earned the queen praise and which actions earned the queen scorn from twelfth-century writers, more light can be shed on the role that she played in twelfth-century England.
Chapter 2

Matilda II of Scotland: “Another Esther in Our Times,” r.1100-1118

Matilda, formerly Edith, of Scotland, has been considered by contemporaries and modern scholars to be the ideal model of a medieval queen; this ideal model involved her acting as Henry I's partner in the rule of England during her reign. Matilda embraced her role as the king's partner well, so much so that Huneycutt writes, “Almost from the first day of her marriage, Matilda began to play a part in the public life of her new realm.” Indeed, evidence from charters and contemporary chronicles shows that Queen Matilda displayed great acumen in navigating the waters of the political world of England during her reign, and made a great impact in the government of England with her rule. She was exercised her influence as the king's partner through such acts as legislation, holding court, patronage, diplomacy, preparing future rulers, acting in place of the king, and intercession. Also, her actions as queen demonstrate that her relationship with Henry I was most likely a mutually satisfactory one, in which the royal couple depended on each other for support in rule. Historical circumstances particular to her time as queen also affected her reign. The instability of government from the relatively recent event of the Norman Conquest in 1066 and the English Investiture Controversy in the first decade of the twelfth century made the king have a greater need for her particular strengths of holding court, diplomacy, and intercession with the church in their rule together. Also, because the system of bureaucracy in England was still in its experimental stages during Matilda's reign, Henry relied upon his queen and not other government officials for support in rule. Matilda can be considered, to a full extent, a partner in rule with the king during her reign as queen.

1 Lois L. Huneycutt, Matilda of Scotland: A Study in Medieval Queenship (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 73.
Duties of the Queen in Support of the King

Acting in Place of the King

Matilda acted in place of Henry I quite frequently because he often had to leave England to tend affairs in Normandy. After the Norman Conquest of England, the need for an individual to act as head of state in place of the king during his absences on the continent increased, which is shown by the way that Henry left Matilda to govern in his stead while he tended to affairs in Normandy. Charter evidence collected in the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* speaks strongly for the level of involvement of Matilda during her times as regent in England; she issued no less than thirty-three such documents during Henry’s absences, and is shown in them to be one of the primary witnesses to Henry's decrees. Also, Matilda's name appears on at least one hundred and forty extant charters, either as a witness, the principal issuer of the charter, or as approving the charter with her husband.

Matilda was also not confined to a particular type of case; the charters show her “dealing with a wide spectrum” of issues in these documents, such as granting land to barons or granting privileges to religious communities. For instance, Matilda settled disputes between manors over land, returned seized goods to the Abbot of St. Augustine Priory, and ordered the protection of monks. The settlement between manors over land is a particular display of Matilda's authority as the queen and as Henry's partner in rule. The charter states that at Winchester, in c.1111, Matilda ordered that a man named Roger de Albini would “do full right” to the Bishop of Durham for lands that had previously been seized by a man named Robert de Muschamp; thus, she gave

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4 Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 73.
6 Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 73.
rights of land from one party to another.\textsuperscript{8} Matilda displays her vice-regal authority in issuing justice and dispensing land just as we see the king doing in many of the other charters collected in the \textit{Regesta}.\textsuperscript{9} It can be safely assumed that Matilda acted with her own authority as the king's partner, resolving disputes and issuing lands in his stead.

The language used in the documents also displays Matilda's authority. In one charter that Matilda issued, it begins: “Notification by Queen Matilda…before her court and the court of her husband.”\textsuperscript{10} From this, we see that Matilda considered the court of England her court and considered herself equal with her husband in the rule of their kingdom, but that the author of the document thought so as well; such phrasing most likely would not have been used if the author did not agree with the statement. This is significant because scholars have argued in the past that medieval clerics did not portray women in roles that were not submissive to their husbands;\textsuperscript{11} this document shows just the opposite because the twelfth-century clerk who recorded it portrays Matilda with the authority of a queen, not at all submissive to her husband. The other charters issued by Matilda include a similar introduction, further emphasizing her role in creating legislation and policies for her realm.\textsuperscript{12} Also, when Matilda serves as a witness for these charters, her name almost always appears as the first name after Henry's, even before powerful men such as archbishops witnessing the charters.\textsuperscript{13} While it is possible that the editor of the documents may have altered the order of names, the fact that her name is consistently listed first among witnesses shows her high status as a governing officer in the court of Henry I and authority as his partner in rule in England.

In another charter, Henry grants “to the nuns of Malling a market in Malling,” which was

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid., 2:104.
\textsuperscript{9} Huneycutt, \textit{Matilda of Scotland}, 80.
\textsuperscript{12} Davis, ed., \textit{Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066-1154}, 2:104, 143, 145, 17, 9, 11, and many more.
\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 2:10, 11, 50, 56, and many more.
essentially a license for the religious community there to operate a market.\textsuperscript{14} This act in and of itself might seem like a routine granting of market rights, but it is significant because the author of the document added at the end, “This he [Henry I] granted at the prayer of Queen Matilda.”\textsuperscript{15} This is significant for several reasons; one is that this phrase shows that Henry discussed routine court affairs such as market licensing with Matilda (otherwise, how else would she have known to ask for a granting of the license?), showing that he respected her judgment in matters such as these. The second reason that this phrase is significant is because it shows that Matilda had sway over Henry and his routine court operations and could influence him in his policies made at court. Also, even if the author embellished the document and Matilda was really not involved in this decision, the fact that the author depicts her having influence over the king shows that he himself (and most likely other clerks) believed Matilda to have such sway over the king. Once again, Matilda’s influence at the court of Henry I is revealed because she influenced her husband in routine court affairs.

In addition to charters, the chronicle of Orderic Vitalis also provides a glimpse of what twelfth-century queens did during their reigns, as well as how twelfth-century churchmen felt about the role that the queens played. Orderic barely mentions Matilda of Scotland in his copious work, but the instances where he does are memorable ones. In one portion of his account, he writes of a prisoner, Bricstan of Chatteris, who had been unjustly accused and imprisoned by one of Henry I’s local justiciars, but the prisoner is miraculously freed when he appeals to Saints Benedict, Etheldreda, and Sexburga for help.\textsuperscript{16} Bricstan goes to the court of Queen Matilda, who sees that he has been wrongfully imprisoned, and then pardons the prisoner when he tells her of the saints’ intercession. Orderic writes, “The queen herself was filled with joy at the news with such

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\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 2:30.
\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{16} Huneycutt, \textit{Matilda of Scotland}, 91.
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a miracle” and orders that the church bells should be rung in praise of God’s glory. Even though these events most likely did not occur exactly the way that Orderic describes them, the fact that Matilda is seen as not only dispensing justice, but dispensing justice in accordance with three saints is significant because she is portrayed acting with royal authority in her deeds as queen, and performing these deeds on behalf of God. This quality of bringing justice and peace to the realm of England through a close relationship with God was one that twelfth-century chroniclers perceived in Matilda and other twelfth-century queens, and it was a quality highly praised by these chroniclers, as shown here. Although the king was also seen as God’s anointed on Earth, there is no record of Henry I acting with saints and/or God like the queen Matilda is shown here. So, the fact that Orderic depicts Matilda, not the king, for having the quality of dispensing justice on behalf of saints shows that Orderic saw this as a strength particular to the queen, and that this duty was meant to complement the king’s duties for the benefit of the reign of the king and queen’s subjects.

Matilda’s authority as the king’s vice-regal partner is also displayed in her seal that she used to legitimize royal writs and other documents that she issued. Seals were “visual representations of power, and they conveyed notions of authority and legitimacy” for the rulers who used them, and the fact that Matilda used a seal shows that she had authority as the Queen of England in issuing writs and charters. Seals could signify gender and status, and usually seals of kings and queens depict them holding symbols of rule and clemency. Furthermore, the

visual imagery on the seal represents the strengths of rule that Matilda was perceived to have, strengths that were meant to complement the king in his actions of rule. It is not certain when Matilda began sealing, but her seal is one of the earlies known seals of a European queen, as well as a rare use of the seal of a queen-consort to seal an official document.\textsuperscript{21} Her seal marks the beginning of an era of women sealing official documents, which we see with later queens Matilda III of Boulogne and Eleanor of Aquitaine, whose seals bear strong resemblance to Matilda II's (see figures 4 and 6). Matilda's extant seal is appended on a writ addressing Ranulf bishop of Durham and the sheriffs of Northumberland, which informs them that she gave a church to St. Cuthbert's at Durham; since this seal is attached to a typical grant of property and the diplomatic form of the document are entirely normal for the time, we can reasonably assume that Matilda's seal attached to writs was routine and that the seal received extensive usage.\textsuperscript{22}

This seal is of green wax and in a pointed oval shape, showing the queen standing crowned, wearing a long embroidered robe that extends past her feet, over which a seamless mantle is draped, including her head. The mantle is fastened by a brooch, and in her right hand she holds a scepter surmounted by a dove, while her left hand holds an orb surmounted by a cross.\textsuperscript{23} The standing female figure was a conventional iconography of seals for high-status women, showing Matilda's authority over the people she governed.\textsuperscript{24} The scepter and the orb are also symbols of royal power and Matilda most likely used them on her seal to further convey her authority as the queen of England.\textsuperscript{25} The dove, however, is particularly significant in its symbolism; the dove was used to represent "an impersonation of the spirit of God," and is

\textsuperscript{21} Huneycutt, \textit{Matilda of Scotland}, 89.
\textsuperscript{25} Ibid., 125.
essentially a symbol for the Holy Spirit, whose virtues include peace and justice. Matilda’s inclusion of the dove on her seal, then, meant that she wanted to portray herself as having royal authority, but that it was granted by God and she meant to use her authority for peace and justice on behalf of the Holy Spirit. This would have further emphasized her role as the king’s partner, because she brought her strengths of a special connection with God to her rule as queen in her legislation.

Many of these symbols are also symbols that kings used to emphasize their power. Henry I's seal depicts him seated on a throne, holding a sword in his right hand and an orb with a cross surmounted by an unknown type of bird in his left hand (see figure 3). Both Matilda and Henry's seals feature an orb with a cross surmounted by a bird, which symbolizes that both king and queen drew power and authority from God. The difference of the object in the right hand reflects their partnership as well, because it emphasizes the different qualities that each one brings to their rule; Matilda brings peace and justice, while Henry brings military might. Also, the two wordings around the edge of the seal are very similar. Henry's reads, “HENRICUS DEI GRATIA REX ANGLORUM,” and Matilda's reads, “SIGILLUM MATHILDIS SECUNDAE DEI GRATIA REGINAE ANGLIE.” Once again, the seals endow both parties with royal power by the grace of God, as indicated by the words written on the seals, also showing their partnership in rule.

Intercession and Diplomacy

Matilda's qualities of peace and justice presented themselves in her role as intercessor with the king. This quality was not necessarily unique to Matilda herself; her own mother, the sainted Queen Margaret of Scotland, had very similar qualities of tempering the king's harsh

28 Ibid., 302, 305.
laws with mercy, as shown in the *Life of St. Margaret of Scotland*.\textsuperscript{29} Huneycutt writes that the *Life* and similar twelfth-century texts written by churchmen show that the authors of these texts perceived women to have stronger qualities of peace and mercy, which they were meant to use to temper the king’s harsher tendencies of rule.\textsuperscript{30} She also writes that Matilda of Scotland wholly fulfilled these expectations of the authors with her actions as intercessor with Henry I, and set a precedent for intercession for future queens to follow.

Intercession was a large portion of Matilda’s activity as the king’s partner in rule, and several scholars bring this to the fore as her strongest ability as queen. This is not surprising, considering that Matilda’s intercessions are well-documented in her surviving correspondence with Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury and also by contemporary chroniclers. Huneycutt writes that the image of the queen as intercessor gained new importance in the twelfth century, and that Matilda was quite keen to take advantage of this means to rule.\textsuperscript{31} Sally Vaughn agrees with Huneycutt’s argument in her works describing the relationship between Archbishop Anselm of Canterbury and several prominent women of the twelfth century.\textsuperscript{32} Matilda of Scotland was one woman with whom Anselm shared a copious correspondence, and Vaughn uses their letters to show how Matilda was able to successfully negotiate disagreements between Henry and Anselm over the English Investiture controversy and intercede with the king on Anselm’s behalf.

The English Investiture Controversy began in the early twelfth century, and it essentially was a debate between the English monarchy and the church over who had the right to appoint

\begin{footnotes}
\item[31] Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 82.
\end{footnotes}
bishops to their ecclesiastical sees. The conflict escalated in 1103 when Pope Paschal II denied Henry’s rights to investiture, convinced in part by Anselm. Henry became angry with Anselm because he had sent Anselm to support his right to investiture, not defend the church in its belief in its sole rights to investiture. Consequently, Henry banished Anselm from his realm. Matilda attempted to reconcile the two men over their disagreement, and the letters she and Anselm wrote are quite revealing of the role she played as intercessor and the role Anselm expected her to play in her duties as queen. Vaughn writes that Matilda played a “critical role” in Anselm's years of political struggle with Henry I in the English Investiture Controversy, and that their letters “make clear that Queen Edith-Matilda played a prominent role in its progress and eventual resolution.”

For instance, in one of his letters to Queen Matilda, written in 1102 while the pope was still deciding what role Henry I would play in investiture, Anselm wrote, “I also pray that he [God] may cause your good intention to progress in such a way that through the heart of our lord the King may turn away from the counsel of princes which the Lord rejects and may be made to follow God's counsel which stands firm for ever [sic].” Anselm wanted Matilda to convince Henry to listen to him and other church fathers, not to the counsel of nobles at his behalf, who advised the king to push for his rights to appoint bishops in the realm of England as king. Later letters from Anselm show that Matilda did speak with Henry on Anselm’s behalf and attempted to mediate between the two men so that they could find a way to reconcile their differences. In one of these later letters, written after Matilda spoke with the king in order to allow Anselm to return to England, Anselm praises Matilda for doing so: “By trying to soften the heart of my lord the King towards me because of your desire for my return I perceive that you are doing what is

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33 Vaughn, St. Anselm and the Handmaidens of God, 226.
34 Ibid., 205, 221.
best for you and advantageous for him.”

In the same letter, Anselm also shows how Matilda’s actions have more kindly disposed him to reconciling with Henry: “Your [Matilda's] kindness prays me [Anselm] not to take my love away from my lord the King but to intercede for him, for yourself, for your offspring and for your realm.” Anselm's own words describe the role that Matilda played; her kindness in interceding with the king on Anselm's behalf succeeded in winning Anselm over and in making him receptive to reconciling with the king. Matilda's role of an intercessor turned the king towards good counsel for the benefit of their reign. What is truly significant from these letters, however, is the fact that Matilda was able to make an impact in her rule as queen to bring about a resolution to this dispute, as shown by the second letter here. These letters display how Matilda did take part in the rule of her kingdom as its queen by interceding with the king and bringing peace, and that these actions came to be embraced by a very powerful churchman.

Matilda's letters to Anselm and to other churchmen also show her comfort and success in playing her role as intercessor. She reveals her influence over the king and ability to influence his policies when she writes, “I find to be in the heart of my lord. His mind is better disposed towards you [Anselm] than many men think; and, I favoring it, and suggesting wherever I can, he will become more courteous and reconciled to you.” In addition, she had influence over the pope through her role as intercessor and could sway him to act more favorably towards her husband, which she shows in a letter to Pope Paschal II: “I cease not, nor will I cease, to entreat, till I know that my submissive humility, or rather the persevering importunity of my application, is heard by you.” This also displays her perseverance to fulfill her role as intercessor because she wanted Paschal to know that she would not stop pleading with him on behalf of her husband.

36 Ibid., 3:30.
37 Ibid., 3:31.
39 Ibid.
until he would be more kindly disposed towards reconciling with Henry.

Matilda's perseverance and willingness to influence her husband and leaders of the church was also detected by contemporary chroniclers and authors, who depict this part of her involvement in rule in a very positive light. The *Life of St. Margaret*, a text on the life of Queen Margaret of Scotland, Matilda’s mother, is one such text from which information can be gleaned about queenship in the twelfth century. Matilda commissioned this text herself in the first decade of her reign of queen, and the anonymous author states that Matilda asked for the text to be written because she wanted to learn of the life of her mother, “whose manner of living you have often heard lauded with the suitable praise of many people.” The text is also a didactic one, intended “for Matilda, to instill in her an ideal of queenly behaviour [sic], and to provide a pattern which she should follow in her daily activities,” according to Huneycutt. Matilda perhaps wanted to learn from her mother’s example of how to be a good queen praised by her people, which she had heard so much about. And, because many of Margaret and Matilda's actions as queen are very similar, one concludes that Margaret's life did indeed have a great impact upon her daughter as Queen of England.

One such similarity is through the queenly duty of intercession. In the second chapter, the author tells of Margaret’s influence over her husband the king: “…and above everyone else, she, with God helping her, made the king himself more obedient to justice, compassion, charity, and good works of merit.” This shows how the author expected the queen to act – that “through the affectionate bonds of marriage,” the queen was expected to intercede and to “temper the king's laws with mercy.” By including this reference to Margaret’s influence over the king, the author

40 Huneycutt, ed. and trans, “*A Translation of The Life St Margaret of Scotland,*” 162.
42 Huneycutt, ed. and trans, “*A Translation of The Life St Margaret of Scotland,*” 167.
43 Carpenter and MacLean, introduction to *Power of the Weak*, xvii.
shows that he also expected Matilda to act similarly, and that he wanted Matilda to learn from the example of her mother in interceding with the king as his partner in rule to benefit the reign of the kingdom. Matilda did follow the advice of the author and imitated her mother's acts of intercession, evidenced by her copious correspondence with Anselm of Canterbury to reconcile him and the king.

The *Life* is not the only work from the twelfth century depicting expectations for the queen involving intercession; an anonymous Latin poem about the reign of Henry I also portrays Matilda in a positive light it shows her interceding with Henry for justice. Even though the author is anonymous, Elizabeth vanHouts writes that it was most likely a monk who wanted to glorify the reign of Henry I in comparison with the harsher rule of his predecessor, William II Rufus. According to this author, Matilda was one of the factors that made Henry's reign such a great one, which shows that the author believed Matilda had large influence over Henry as his queen and partner in rule. In the poem, the anonymous author gives Matilda II a voice in influencing the policies of her husband's realm; Matilda says, “The law of injustice, good king, cease!” Henry obeys Matilda's command and corrects the unjust laws of which she did not approve. Even if this event did not occur exactly as the author described, it still shows how Matilda aided her husband in making his rule more fair and just, and that twelfth-century authors celebrated these kinds of actions by queens.

Matilda also made an impact as Queen of England through her involvement with diplomacy. This was a very important aspect of rule for twelfth-century monarchs in England because they, and many of their barons, held lands in both England and on the continent. Parsons writes that “Access to power was easier for queens who commanded strong cross-cultural

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perspectives” because “queens as daughters and wives had to negotiate divided loyalties.”

Queens with “strong cross-cultural perspectives” also had more familial and friendly ties that they could utilize in diplomacy. This keeps with the previous theme of queen as intercessor; since queens often married kings to make an alliance, twelfth-century authors celebrated when queens used their diplomatic networks to maintain this alliance between powerful families, utilizing their strengths of peace and mercy. Matilda successfully negotiated the divided loyalties of other powers of England and the continent, as already demonstrated by her correspondence with Anselm of Canterbury. Her preparation for this role most likely came from her education at Romsey abbey, where she may have learned of biblical rulers such as the queen Esther whom she could attempt to model her own role as a future ruler.

William of Malmesbury, a prominent twelfth-century chronicler and author of the *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, and Orderic Vitalis both comment on Matilda negotiating and reconciling with Henry I's rebellious brother, Robert Curthose. William writes that Robert had come to England to claim the land for his own, and Henry promised Robert three thousand marks in a negotiation for Robert to leave the country. However, Henry gained this money back because, “the following year at the queen's request [emphasis added] he [Robert] relinquished it of his own accord to give her [Matilda] pleasure.”

So, through Matilda's aid, Henry regained his lost money. The fact that Robert gave the money back because of Matilda and not Henry shows that Robert respected Matilda’s efforts to reconcile the two men, and saw that she was trying to bring peace to her and Henry’s rule. He celebrates Matilda's actions in diplomacy, showing how she brought peace to England through her intercession with Robert.

Orderic Vitalis tells the story similarly; again, Matilda appears as an intercessor to

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persuade Robert to renounce his pension to her husband to be reconciled with him. Orderic writes, “At length the duke [Robert Curthose]...renounced, on the queen’s deliberate intercession, the pension of three thousand pounds that had been settled on him [by Henry I].”

Orderic also gives Matilda all the credit for convincing Robert to give the money back to Henry, which shows that William was not the only twelfth-century chronicler who recognized and acknowledged the queen’s diplomatic role in bringing about conflict resolution. The continuity of both these major sources from the time strongly suggests that Matilda’s role as a diplomatic partner in rule with Henry was not an uncommon one, and that chroniclers from the time period even appreciated Matilda bringing peace to the realm of England with this role. Thus, Matilda of Scotland acted extensively as Henry I's partner in rule through her role of intercessor and diplomat, earning her praise from twelfth-century authors.

Matilda II's Patronage

Matilda also acted as Henry's partner in rule through patronage, which could include land grants to religious communities as well as literary patronage. Patronage was an important tool that a queen could use to gain favor from the church through grants, and even influence public opinion of her and the king’s rule through portrayals of royal couples in literature. Twelfth-century churchmen also saw this role as complementary to the king's because they perceived the queen to have a kinder and more pious disposition, making her more inclined to give grants to religious communities. Matilda was especially active in grants to religious communities, so much so that her ability to control her estate and grant lands as she saw fit “set a vital precedence for queenly power.”

The Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum provides many examples of Matilda's generous donations to various religious institutions, such as land grants to Westminster

\[49 \text{Orderic Vitalis, Historia Ecclesiastica, 6:15.} \]
\[50 \text{Ward, Jennifer. Women in England in the Middle Ages, 171.} \]
\[51 \text{Hilton, Queens Consort, 47.} \]
Abbey and grants to a leprosarium. Also, Matilda seemed to favor Augustinian canons, who were at the forefront of the English monastic revival in the twelfth century, and generally took care of the physical needs of the urban communities where they tended to live. Augustinian canons seemed to appeal to the practical nature of the queen, which is shown by Matilda’s “fervent” patronage of them. Matilda witnessed both charters founding the priory of St. Botolph’s at Colchester in 1100, and also founded the priory at Holy Trinity at Aldgate in London in 1108. Her apparent interest in this group provided a means for her to find favor with members of the church, such as Anselm of Canterbury, who in fact advised her to found the priory at Aldgate. Her religious patronage also set a precedent for future queens to follow, such as Matilda III of Boulogne, whose patronage of religious communities in the city of London arguably saved her and Stephen’s reign from destruction in 1141 (this will be further discussed in Chapter 3).

Considering Matilda's active patronage of religious communities, it is not surprising to discover that Queen Margaret of Scotland also generously patronized religious communities, according to the *Life of St. Margaret of Scotland*, suggesting that Matilda wanted to imitate her mother's good example. One instance of Margaret's piety that the author gives is of her grants to the church of St. Andrew in Scotland. The author writes that this church drew hundreds of religious people who came to worship there, so Margaret “constructed small dwelling places, so that after the labor of the journey, pilgrims and paupers could be directed here, and when they arrived they would find prepared for them all the necessary things which they might require in

52 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
order to refresh their bodies.”

The religious community at St. Andrew’s was probably struggling with the massive waves of pilgrims that came to visit their site, so Margaret's provisions for the pilgrims must have seemed like a great act of generosity indeed. It is quite reasonable to conclude that St. Andrew's was very grateful for her consideration. Thus, the author set up an example and a precedent for Matilda using her mother Margaret, which Matilda followed with her patronage of religious groups like Augustinian canons. Matilda's use of patronage complemented Henry I's rule of England by gaining favor of the church through these grants to religious communities.

**Preparing Children for Future Rule**

Matilda's influence can also be seen through the rearing of her children and preparing them for their futures as rulers themselves. As the mother of the king's children, the queen was expected to partake in the rearing and education of her children, helping to prepare them for their lives as future rulers, and helping to secure their inheritance.

Parsons writes that medieval authors greatly focused on the queen's ability to bear the king's children, and that authors showed that the queens' “maternal instinct to protect their children and their children's inheritance deserved sympathy and respect.” In addition, the queen was also expected to prepare her daughters for marriages to other royals or powerful members of the aristocracy so that important familial alliances could be made. The attitudes of twelfth-century authors, shown by their texts, reveal that these maternal qualities were one of the greatest duties expected of Matilda of Scotland.

The *Life of St. Margaret*, for instance, tells of St. Margaret's interactions with her children: “She [Margaret] poured out care to her children not less than to herself, seeing that they

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58 Huneycutt, ed. and trans, “*A Translation of The Life St Margaret of Scotland,*” 172-73.
60 Ibid., 6.
were nurtured with diligence and that they were introduced to honest matters as much as possible.” The author also writes that Margaret corrected the children when necessary, that their manners were exemplary, and that she taught them to fear the Lord as good Christians should.\(^{61}\) As a didactic text, one can clearly see that the author expected Matilda to act similarly with her children, educating them and taking part in their upbringing as future rulers.\(^{62}\) Matilda most likely did have a significant role in preparing her daughter, also named Matilda, for her marriage to Holy Roman Emperor Henry V by teaching her skills she would need to rule as empress. Marjorie Chibnall writes that, although no evidence exists to give details of the Empress' early life with her mother, girls were either usually sent to a nunnery to be educated or kept at their mother's court.\(^{63}\) Since Queen Matilda had an unfavorable experience at Wilton Abbey as a girl, she most likely kept her daughter at court for her time of education and preparation for “practical duties that lay ahead.”\(^{64}\) The Empress Matilda displayed her skills of rule by rallying forces to assert her claim to the English throne when Stephen usurped it from her in 1135.\(^{65}\) While the Empress Matilda proved unsuccessful in recapturing the crown from Stephen, her actions were most likely affected by the influence of her mother's education.

The author of the *Life* also emphasizes Margaret's role in teaching her children about God and Christ, which shows that he saw the queen as the primary individual who should take responsibility to educate the royal children about how to rule as good Christians, with mercy and peace. He writes, “Margaret had her children brought to her very often, and she taught them about Christ and faith in Christ, using words suitable to their age and understanding.”\(^{66}\) This

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\(^{61}\) Huneycutt, ed. and trans, “*A Translation of The Life St Margaret of Scotland,*” 166.
\(^{64}\) Ibid., 10, 9. Matilda of Scotland had been educated by her aunt at Wilton Abbey as a girl, where chroniclers say that her aunt treated her harshly.
\(^{65}\) Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 85,87
\(^{66}\) Huneycutt, ed. and trans, “*A Translation of The Life St Margaret of Scotland,*” 166.
emphasizes Margaret's role in her children's lives as their educator, especially as educator of Christian principals, and one can assume that the author meant for Matilda to do the same. Childhood is rarely described in the literature from the twelfth century, so the fact that one of the rare times childhood is mentioned, like in the Life, coincides with emphasizing the queen's motherly duties shows that the queen's role in her children's lives was considered quite important. Since the king is not shown teaching his children about Christian principles, one also reasonably conclude that the author of this text saw the education of the children as the queen's strength, and one in which she should become wholly involved. She is thus shown as the king's partner in rule by complementing his duties through education of her children as good and Christian rulers.

Matilda also provided another advantage for her children for their futures as rulers: her lineage. William of Malmesbury’s focus on Matilda’s lineage shows that her maternal genealogy was very important in establishing a legitimate rule for both her husband and her children, especially her son William as the future ruler of England (see figure 1). William writes, “The king's wife Matilda, a daughter of the king of the Scots...was descended from an ancient and illustrious line of kings.” He continues to write about her children: “The bearing of two children [by Matilda], one of either sex, left her content.” These passages show the importance of Matilda's lineage passed on to her children, as well as the importance of her role as the bearer of the king's children. It is interesting to note that William does not emphasize Henry's lineage like he does Matilda's, because Matilda was descended from kings. Making a royal marriage, such as Henry I’s marriage to the princess Edith of Scotland, was of utmost importance to the Anglo-Norman kings of England because it helped to establish their legitimacy as the rightful rulers of

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England after they had taken the right to rule by force in the Norman Conquest of 1066.69

William of Malmesbury makes no similar reference to Henry I’s lineage, only writing that he “was chosen king” after the death of William II, showing that Matilda’s lineage was the dominant one of the royal couple.70 It was Matilda’s lineage, not Henry’s, that legitimized their places as King and Queen of England. Her connection to an “illustrious line of kings” held her place as queen, her husband's place as king, and her children's places as the future rulers of their lands. Without Matilda, neither Henry nor his children would have as secure of a claim to the rule of England because she provided them with a connection to royalty, a crucial element for the legitimacy of their rule. Matilda's lineage, then, complemented Henry's rule as king by providing him with the legitimacy to the crown of England that he needed, and would then pass it on to their children. Thus, Matilda's role as the educator of her children and as passing on an “illustrious” lineage to her children are displayed as her strengths, and a duty that was seen to complement the king's duties of rule, showing how Matilda can be considered Henry's partner in rule as his queen.

A Harmonious Relationship with Henry I and Historical Circumstances

Matilda of Scotland's involvements as queen demonstrate that her marriage partnership with Henry I worked effectively as a harmonious unit, in which the royal couple depended upon each other for support in rule. Historical circumstances particular to Matilda's time as queen also affected the extent of her involvement, because the king needed an able partner that would hold court in his absence, negotiate with troublesome family and magnates, and intercede on his behalf to the church. After, all, since the king was the head of state and the “centre [sic] of

power,” he ultimately chose who would give him the best support in the rule of his realm; quite frequently, Henry I chose his wife and queen Matilda. Scholars tend to agree that the queen's relationship with the king and historical circumstances played a large part in how active she was in her realm. For instance, Jennifer Ward writes that “The degree of power exercised by queens fluctuated over the Middle Ages, depending on the circumstances and the political climate of the time, the attitude of her husband, and the queen’s own ambitions.” Huneycutt argues a similar position, applying the claim to Matilda of Scotland’s case: “In Matilda’s case, favorable historical circumstances such as…generally good relations with Henry…and the flexible, not-quite-institutionalized nature of the eleventh- and twelfth-century state, combined to allow her…to enjoy a privileged position.” Furthermore, in agreement with Huneycutt, Hilton writes that “Matilda of Scotland’s career represents a high point in the opportunities for medieval women to exercise public power” due to her relationship with her husband and historical circumstances that surrounded her reign. So, Henry and Matilda's working relationship, as well as historical circumstances of Matilda's reign like the English Investiture Controversy, were key factors in determining how far Matilda, and the queen in general, was able to act as her husband's partner in rule.

A Harmonious Relationship

While it is nearly impossible to decisively prove that Henry and Matilda had a harmonious personal relationship, especially given that Henry had over twenty known bastards, one can at least determine that twelfth-century authors expected a harmonious relationship from the royal couple, which most likely affected the actions of Matilda as queen. In the Life of St. Margaret of Scotland, there is a certain tender moment shown that clearly displays the agreeable

Ward, Women in England in the Middle Ages, 119.  
Huneycutt, Matilda of Scotland, 6.  
Hilton, Queens Consort, 51.
nature of Margaret's relationship with her husband Malcolm. When Margaret would run out of her own money to give to the poor, she would commit “pious thievery” from the king to obtain more alms. And, “even though the king knew full well that she did this, he would often pretend not to know. He greatly loved this sort of jest. Sometimes he would seize her hand full of coins and lead her to me [the author] for justice, joking that he wanted to accuse her in court.”

This interaction shows that the apparent harmony between the couple, and that medieval queens like Matilda reading this text would perceive this harmony and would want to also have a marriage that allowed trust between the couple.

The expectation of this author for the royal couple to have a harmonious relationship seems to have been followed through by Matilda and Henry because they made grants to religious communities on each other's behalf. A gift such of this was for the benefit and salvation of the person's soul for whom the grant was made, and the fact that Matilda and Henry did this for one another shows that they cared enough about each other to ensure the salvation of one another's souls. In one of Matilda's charters, for instance, she grants land to the church of Holy Cross, Waltham in London, and the clerk writes that she did this “for the welfare of the body and soul of her lord King Henry and for her children.” Matilda clearly cared enough about Henry's well-being and the salvation of his soul, making sure that she made the grant in his name. Henry makes a similar donation for the benefit of Matilda's soul after her death that also shows his care for his wife; the document says that he will pay the sacristan of St. Peter's at Westminster half a denarius a day “for a light to burn before the tomb of Queen Matilda from Michaelmas last past for ever [sic].” This clearly shows his devotion and care for his wife and his queen by the way that he attempts to ensure that prayers for her soul will never be forgotten. These donations show

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75 Huneycutt, ed. and trans, “A Translation of The Life St Margaret of Scotland,”172.
77 Ibid., 2:182.
the harmony between the royal couple in their marriage, and they perhaps even explain why Matilda and Henry acted so well as partners in rule during their reign together.

**Historical Circumstances of Matilda II's Reign**

In addition to a relationship of mutual trust between Matilda and Henry, historical circumstances also worked strongly in Matilda's favor that allowed her to act to such a full degree as Henry's partner in rule. One of these historical circumstances was the “dynastic uncertainty” that came from the Norman Conquest in 1066; Pauline Stafford writes that this situation “drew women into politics” because kings needed the aid of their wives in order to establish a secure rule. While Matilda of Scotland was not the only queen affected by the Norman Conquest, since William I’s wife Matilda I of Flanders was queen directly after the event, her situation still differed from the others. Matilda of Flanders asserted her influence as queen because William I needed her to secure his conquest of England, but Matilda II of Scotland asserted her influence because Henry I needed her lineage to secure the legitimacy of his claim to the throne, as well as her partnership in reestablishing secure governmental practices after the reign of his predecessor, William II Rufus.

This need for security of government can be seen in the texts of twelfth-century chroniclers, such as William of Malmesbury. He shows his appreciation for Matilda of Scotland utilizing her peace-bringing qualities when he writes, “She was a woman of exceptional holiness..., in piety her mother's rival, and in her own character exempt from all evil influence.” He praises and approves of Matilda’s contribution of peace and stability to uncertain political times that characterized her reign as queen. If the circumstances had perhaps been different, and Matilda were queen at a time when there was more stability, Henry I might not have needed

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Matilda quite as much, and William might not have so highly stressed these virtues that Matilda possessed. By writing of these qualities, William shows how Matilda contributed to the peace and increasing stability of England during the reign of Henry I.

The other historical circumstance that allowed Matilda to come to the fore as Henry's partner in rule was the English Investiture Controversy. There had been other conflicts between king and church before and there would be after the reign of Matilda, but this situation stood apart for several reasons. One: the issues of “episcopal fealty and lay investiture” had not arisen during the reigns of previous Norman kings; two: Henry I needed the support of Anselm in order to secure his claim to the throne; and three: Matilda happened to be close friends with the man of whom her husband needed support. Matilda and Anselm had developed a close friendship in 1100; Anselm did not support Henry and Matilda’s marriage plans because he believed that she fled Wilton Abbey and supposedly eschewed vows she had taken there, but Matilda went to Anselm directly and convinced him that she had not taken such vows and that she was free to marry. After this, Anselm supported her in an ecclesiastical council that ruled in Matilda’s favor, and Matilda and Anselm continued correspondence until her death in 1118. So, because Matilda knew Anselm as a close friend and had an intimate knowledge of the controversy, she acted as a mediator since both of the men needed her help in order to reconcile the situation. Huneycutt writes that “Matilda was careful not to alienate neither pope nor archbishop,” and played her part astutely in order to bring a resolution to the conflict. Anselm shows his gratitude for Matilda’s aid in resolving the conflict when he writes, “Therefore I give thanks to God who gives you the good will you indicated in your reply to me, and I give thanks to you that you maintain it with sweet affection.” His thanks, eloquently given here, demonstrates his close

81 Huneycutt, Matilda of Scotland, 75.
82 Ibid., 28.
83 Ibid., 29.
friendship with Matilda, as well as the support she gave Anselm in his struggle to repair his broken relationship with Henry I. This letter also demonstrates Anselm's reliance on Matilda to act as the intermediary with Henry, and how much of a part she actually played in this issue.

Also, epistolary interactions between Henry I and Anselm further reveal how they needed someone to negotiate the troubles they had been having; while the two men are not openly hostile towards each other, it is clear that tensions exist that would be difficult to resolve. For instance, in a letter Henry writes to Anselm in 1104, he writes that he “suffer[s] greatly” because Anselm had refused to live in agreement with him as the former archbishop of Canterbury had done with his father.\textsuperscript{85} He thus displays his unhappiness with the fact that Anselm would not easily cooperate with him on the matter of lay investiture. Anselm replies that he did not “promise to observe the law or custom of your [Henry's] father or of Archbishop Lanfranc but rather the law of God and of all the orders which I received.”\textsuperscript{86} These letters show that the two men were unwilling to compromise with the other; Henry wanted to hold with tradition of lay investiture, and Anselm wanted to follow the rules of the Church. This demonstrates the need for an individual to sort out the differences between them, and this need brought Matilda of Scotland to the fore in her role as intercessor. One can reasonably conclude, then, that without the English Investiture controversy, Matilda would not have played such a prominent role as Henry's partner in rule through her intercession.

\textit{The Development of Government under Henry I}

Matilda of Scotland exercised her influence in the office of queenship as Henry's partner because, simply, the governmental system at the time allowed her to do so. During the reign of

\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 3:25.
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 3:26.
Henry I, the government of England was only in the beginning stages of developing into a more bureaucratic system and of governmental reforms, which would eventually include a body of officials and administrators that aided the king in his rule. However, the government had not developed to that point quite yet, which allowed Matilda to take on duties that would later be regulated to the chief justiciar. Francis West writes that the chief justiciar was “the king’s alter ego whose office met the need for an extension of the king’s person and power,” and held vice-regal authority delegated by the king. However, the office of the chief justiciar was still in its experimental stages during the reign of Henry I, so Henry relied on kin groups to aid in administrative duties like many other members of the aristocracy at the time. Matilda of Scotland acted as part of this kin group, who we have already seen acting with vice-regal authority in duties such as regency, sitting in justice at court, and issuing charters. Jo Ann McNamara writes that the aristocracy of Western Europe relied heavily on these kin groups before the rise of administrative kingship, allowing women to play “vital roles in the ongoing history of dynasties,” such as Matilda of Scotland.

Chroniclers do not explicitly note that Henry I instituted governmental reforms, but some do note the importance of the role of Roger of Salisbury, the man closest to the definition of chief justiciar under Henry I. William of Newburgh, for instance, writes that Henry “entrusted to him [Roger] the management of state affairs, since he was well-tried, trustworthy, and industrious in many things.” This shows how Henry had begun to implement means for

88 Huneycutt, Matilda of Scotland, 78-79.
90 Ibid., 23; Huneycutt, Matilda of Scotland, 79.
bureaucratic officials, not kin, to aid in the administration of his reign. Roger's apparent
dedication and loyalty to Henry also shows the increasing respect of the emerging noble class for
the authority of the king, and the desire to serve him well. Also, William of Malmesbury makes
note of Henry reliance on Roger: “King Henry had in his inner counsels Roger bishop of
Salisbury, and leant heavily on his advice; for he had put him in charge of his household before
his accession, and as king, having had experience of his sound judgment, he had appointed him
first chancellor and then bishop,” and “the king entrusted to his judgment the administration of
justice throughout the realm, whether he were himself in England or detained in Normandy.”
This also displays how Henry used Roger's skills to aid him in ruling, and that Henry relied on
Roger's skill as opposed to a connection of kin that would have been more highly regarded
earlier in the Middle Ages.

However, West does note that when Henry appointed Roger to Bishop of Salisbury and
began to rely upon him with aid in rule, “there is no evidence that he held a formal office, and it
is obvious that his power and influence were of gradual growth.” Indeed, neither William of
Newburgh nor William of Malmesbury attribute a formal title to Roger at this time in his term of
“justiciarship,” and their descriptions do not seem to reference an actual office, but rather a
description of an individual who did justice in the king's realm. Thus, the office of the chief
justiciarship was still in its developmental stages during the reign of Henry I, which means that
Henry relied on a mixture of kin (like Matilda) and “offices” to administer his rule. Matilda,
then, had a greater opportunity to act as Henry's partner in rule, as opposed to another member of
his growing bureaucracy like the chief justiciar.

However, Huneycutt writes that “By the end of the first decade of Henry's and Matilda's
reign, it is clear that the administration was maturing to the extent that the personal authority of a member of the royal family was not necessary for day-to-day transactions.\textsuperscript{96} This did not negatively affect Matilda's reign, who still displayed a “confident control” at the head of Henry's curia.\textsuperscript{97} For instance, Huneycutt writes that in a charter appearing in the Worcester Cathedral Priory, Matilda announces to Prior Thomas that “‘his monks and all his men and lands are in the hands of the king and me, and they have the firm peace of the king and me [emphasis added].’”\textsuperscript{98} This charter shows that Matilda was still issued charters with her own authority even after these governmental reforms began to take hold, and that she was still considered the partner of the king in rule. The language in the charter clearly displays this; it uses the phrase “the king and me” not only once, but \textit{twice}, showing that the author and Matilda herself believed that Matilda acted as Henry's partner in rule, one might even suppose as equals, jointly making the decision to grant peace to the priory of Worcester.

Matilda's death in 1118, though, left a dearth of leadership in the government of Henry I, necessitating the heightened involvement of a chief justiciar-like position (since one did not “officially” exist as of yet). Judith A. Green writes that after Matilda died, “There is no doubt that Roger [of Salisbury] controlled royal administration” during the years in between Matilda's death and Henry's second marriage to Adeliza of Louvain in 1121.\textsuperscript{99} For instance, in a charter from September 1119 records a decision made by the \textit{curia regis}, or the king’s counsel, stating that the monks of Abingdon are exempt from a geld of one hundred and twenty hides.\textsuperscript{100} The clerk lists the members of the \textit{curia regis} at the beginning of the charter, and lists Roger first among the other members; while this does not necessarily mean that Roger was at the head of the

\textsuperscript{96} Huneycutt, \textit{Matilda of Scotland}, 88.
\textsuperscript{97} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{98} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{100} Davis, ed., \textit{Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066-1154}, 2:147.
curia regis, it is still significant that his name was listed first in the charter. His role was that of a chief administrator of the king who ruled with similar duties to Matilda when she had been alive. Roger’s control of Matilda’s old duties thus negated the role of the queen, since one no longer ruled for several years after Matilda’s death.

The implementation of Roger’s skills into a developing office of the chief justiciar perhaps explains nature of queenship in the early twelfth century the best. When Adeliza of Louvain became queen in 1121, she was nowhere near as active as Matilda of Scotland as Henry’s queen. Granted, her circumstances were a bit different than Matilda’s. Henry married Adeliza because his only legitimate son and heir had died in the sinking of the White Ship in 1121, so she needed to remain with Henry in order to produce another heir; this limited the time she could have spent as regent and issuing charters like Matilda.\(^{101}\) In addition, Adeliza was quite young when she married Henry, at least young enough to still be called a “young maiden” by chronicler Florence of Worcester, which could have further diminished her status at his court.\(^{102}\) This “young maiden” also does not seem to have had the same authoritative personality as her predecessor as queen, which probably also contributed to her lack of involvement.

Although these factors did play into the lack of Adeliza’s activeness, it is entirely possible that the main reason Adeliza was not able to act as Henry’s partner in marriage to the same extent as Matilda was because the governmental system did not allow her to do so. Her only significant involvement lay in literary patronage and patronage of religious houses; no record exists of her interceding with the king as Matilda did, and she only issued one writ and attested only thirteen surviving charters during her time as queen.\(^{103}\) Clearly, Adeliza's status as the king’s partner in

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rule in governmental functions had diminished. Laura Wertheimer writes, “It is hardly surprising that Adeliza, a young woman who entered a smoothly running administration, never regained powers held by Matilda II;” this is not to say that Adeliza never had the chance to act as Henry’s partner as his queen, but that the nature of queenship had changed to the point where Adeliza’s opportunities to participate in governmental affairs had become more limited because of the growing bureaucracy. The growth of power of the office of the chief justiciar and the lessening involvement of Adeliza of Louvain as Henry’s queen shows how the bureaucracy of England was developing to the point at which the queen’s status as the king’s partner in rule would become diminished from the reallocation of her duties to bureaucratic offices.

**Conclusion**

Before this point, though, Matilda of Scotland stands as a prime example of the height of queenly power in the twelfth century, before the reallocation of queenly duties. Her support of Henry as his queen and partner during her reign earned her an eloquent testimony from a chronicler at Hyde monastery; he writes “no woman in her time could withstand comparison to her,” and that “from the time England first became subject to kings, out of all the queens none was found to be comparable to her, and not will be found in the time to come, whose memory will be praised and whose name will be blessed through the ages.” This chronicler shows that the people of England remembered her in blessed memory, perhaps the greatest evidence that a queen’s support of her husband as his partner in rule was the ideal model of queenship in twelfth-century England. Lois Huneycutt concludes powerfully on her study of Matilda of Scotland: “If we are willing to listen to the voice of medieval commentators, modern thinkers have no choice

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104 Wertheimer, “Adeliza of Louvain and Anglo-Norman Queenship,” 104.
but to conclude with them that Matilda of Scotland was an unparalleled success in her role as England’s queen.”

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\[\text{106} \] Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 150.
Chapter 3

Matilda III of Boulogne: “A Woman of Subtlety and a Man’s Resolution,” r.1135-1152

Matilda III of Boulogne is another remarkable queen. She was “resolutely supportive” of her husband, King Stephen I (r.1135-1154) in his authority as king, and of assisting him with duties that were needed to hold England together during the civil war when the Empress Matilda, the daughter of Henry I and Matilda II, challenged his claim to the throne of England (see figure 1).\(^1\) It can be argued that, without Matilda III's assistance in suppressing rebellion and gaining allies for Stephen during the civil war, Stephen may have lost his hold on the crown of England altogether.\(^2\) Matilda also acted in Stephen's place as head of state while Stephen was imprisoned by the Empress, attempted to secure the throne for her son Eustace, and even deployed troops to support her husband in his rule as king.\(^3\) These actions as queen demonstrate that her relationship with Stephen was most likely a partnership and a harmonious, if not affectionate one, in which the royal couple depended on each other for support in rule. The historical circumstances of the civil war also gave Matilda the opportunity to utilize her skills of diplomacy and acting as head of state as Stephen's partner, especially since Stephen did not utilize the office of the chief justiciar that Henry I had developed during his reign, instead relying on his queen and not the justiciar for support in his rule. Thus, Matilda of Boulogne can be considered, to a full extent, a partner in rule with the king during her reign as queen.

Duties of the Queen in Support of the King

There were many aspects of rule in which Matilda was involved during her reign as queen that

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\(^1\) Patricia Dark, “‘A Woman of Subtlety and a Man's Resolution’: Matilda of Boulogne in the Power Struggles of the Anarchy” in *Aspects of Power and Authority in the Middle Ages*, ed. Brenda Bolton and Christine Meek (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2007), 164.

\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?,” 133-135.
demonstrate her partnership with Stephen, and complement his duties as king. Scholars writing on the life of Matilda III agree that because she acted in so many capacities as Stephen's helpmate, and because these actions gained a positive response from chroniclers, these duties were expected of the queen to support the king in his rule. For instance, Dark writes that “Medieval society had a strong expectation that women would act to further the agendas of their husbands by influencing them or acting as proxies for them,” and that Matilda was portrayed positively by contemporary chroniclers acting as a helpmate for her husband.⁴ Heather J. Tanner holds a similar point of view, saying that “An Anglo-Norman queen [of England] was...expected to share in governance by virtue of her office” and that Matilda III could call upon precedents set by previous queens like Matilda II for access to power and influence, and that Matilda III, like Matilda II, began to be involved in political affairs of England almost from the start of her husband's reign.⁵ As queen, Matilda III continued the work of Matilda II as queen in many of the same areas of involvement, adding the exceptional duty of commanding military forces to the list of acts done to support the king in his rule.

Acting in Place of the King

Matilda frequently acted as the head of state for Stephen in his absences from England and during his imprisonment.⁶ Tanner provides a list and number of charters that Matilda oversaw in her time as queen, writing that Matilda issued at least fifteen of her own charters during her time acting for Stephen; this is not necessarily a high number compared to Stephen issuing charters, but the fact that she did issue charters shows that she had the recognized authority to do so.⁷ In addition, Matilda's presence in areas where Stephen had reasonable control shows that she functioned in his stead or headed royal administration while he was occupied with

⁴ Dark, “A Woman of Subtlety and a Man's Resolution,” 150, 149.
⁵ Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?,” 138.
⁶ Ibid., 141.
⁷ Ibid., 139, 147.
other duties such as military affairs. A closer look at several of these charters in the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* confirms the conclusions made by Tanner. One such charter was issued in London only a week after Stephen's capture in February 1141, where Matilda makes a routine land grant herself from Eustace de Legrefth in St. Omer Capelle in the vicomté of Marck. The ordinary tone of the charter is key; its nondescript and unremarkable nature suggests that Matilda had stepped into such a role on many previous occasions, issuing similar acts during her husband's absence. Also, this suggests that such actions of assuming the position as head of state was non an unusual sight for other members of Stephen's court, given that there is nothing significant noted by the clerk who wrote the charter or about the witness list, which also seems quite routine in its inclusion of magnates who appear on other routing charters, like Ranulf the chancellor and Ranulf the marshal.

The language used in the charter also confirms that Matilda's position as head of state in Stephen's absence was a significant one, in which she held legitimate authority as the king's partner in rule. At the beginning of the document, the clerk places Matilda’s name first as the principle issuer of the charter, and he refers to her as “Mathildis dei gratia Anglorum regina et Boloniesium comtissa;” translated, this means, “Matilda, by the grace of God Queen of the English and Countess of Boulogne.” Thus, Matilda held her position and authority on behalf of God, just like the king, and orders that she gave should be respected as such. By choosing these precise words to be written on her charter, Matilda made a conscious decision to promote her authority as the head of state, sanctioned by the ultimate divine authority Himself. Other charters issued by Matilda use the same wording as the example given above, indicating that it was

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8 Ibid., 141.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
formulaic, showing that it was not an uncommon occurrence. This is significant because it shows that Matilda firmly grasped the concept of how to portray her royal authority and to gain legitimacy for herself from the barons by declaring herself to be acting upon the authority of God.

Matilda also acts jointly with Stephen as heads of state in these documents. Tanner writes that Matilda provided at least fifty-eight known attestations to Stephen's charters, and probably more, which is significant because this means that Stephen frequently used Matilda as a witness for his writs and records to give them legitimacy and authority. Furthermore, Johns writes that an individual's presence as a witness to a document indicates his or her status as a key political player at that time, and that queenly witnessing was an expression of power for the office of queenship. Like Matilda II, Matilda III’s name as a witness was listed before all others, indicating her important position as the partner of the king. One such instance in which Matilda is shown as a primary witness to Stephen's charters is in the resolution of a dispute, pled by the castellan of London and Holy Trinity Priory at the coram regis in 1137; this act was an exercise of justice and peace enforced by Stephen and Matilda together. The charter recording the event begins with a statement of the primary individual responsible for aiding the king: “In the second year of the reign of King Stephen, he first said, with the assent and help of Queen Matilda, wife of the king,” showing Matilda as the highest authority second only to the king. Other barons and bishops are also listed as part of the coram regis who assented to this act, but Matilda is listed first as the primary individual who helped Stephen resolve this issue. As such, Matilda was considered the most important out of these individuals and that her name confirming the king’s

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12 Ibid., 3:3, 9, 76, 191, 513, and more.
13 Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?,” 139.
15 Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?,” 141.
decree gave the document greater legitimacy and authority, and that she had a unique position and authority as the queen.

Matilda's status as the head of state in Stephen's absences is not only recorded by charters from her reign as queen, but by chroniclers as well. Orderic Vitalis attests to her authority when he tells of Matilda's ability to hold support for Stephen amongst his barons after his capture at the battle of Lincoln. He writes, “But...many others remained loyal to the queen [emphasis added], and vowed to fight manfully for the king and his heirs” after Stephen's capture and subsequent imprisonment. The fact that Orderic states that many barons remained loyal to the queen and not to another government official shows that, in Stephen's absence, his subjects considered Matilda as the next in command and looked to her for guidance in times when a strong head of state was needed, and even that being loyal to the queen was the same as being loyal to the king. It seems that because Matilda was such a strong presence, steadfast in support of her husband, many barons chose to follow her example and likewise remain supportive of the king and his claim to the throne of England, which made her a true partner of Stephen.

In addition to textual evidence that Matilda acted as the head of state and partner of Stephen in his rule, Matilda III's seal, like Matilda II's seal, also attests to her involvement in the affairs of England as its queen. Very few seals survive intact from this time period, but luckily Matilda of Boulogne's seal is extant to provide further evidence of her authority as the queen of England. Matilda's seal depicts her standing, crowned, wearing a mantle and gown, holding a fleur-de-lys in her right hand and holding a hunting bird in her left had (see figure 4). The writing around the seal, while fragmented, reads “MATILDIS DEI GRATIA...,” most likely finished with “REGINA ANGLORUM.” Like the wording on her charters, this means, “Matilda

by the Grace of God, [Queen of the English].” and it invokes the same sentiment as the title used for her official documents, further signifying that she draws her authority from God. This wording is very similar to that of Matilda II, who also invoked her authority by the grace of God; such continuity displays the standardized authority of a twelfth-century queen of England.

The symbols of Matilda's authority as a ruler also emphasize virtues that she brings to her queenship as well; these symbols are her crown, the fleur-de-lys, and the bird of prey. The crown clearly denotes Matilda's status as queen, but the fleur-de-lys and bird of prey hold more complex meanings. According to Johns, the fleur-de-lys was often used in women's seals “to represent female virtues and spirituality through association with the supreme Christian female icon, the Virgin Mary,” so it basically represented motherhood and fertility. The bird of prey has a slightly more ambiguous meaning, but it is generally agreed that the bird of prey represents high social status, aristocratic lifestyle, and exclusivity. So, the symbolism depicted on Matilda III’s seal confirms her authority as queen and emphasizes the virtues that she brought to the rule of her kingdom in her office of queenship. These elements are also a continuation of the representation of queenly power as seen on the seal of Matilda II, which shows that the queen’s expression of authority through her seal was a standard for twelfth-century queenship.

A comparison between Matilda's seal and Stephen's seal also reveals how her queenly duties were mean to complement Stephen's as king. Stephen's seal depicts him seated on a throne, holding a sword in his right and an orb surmounted by a bird of prey in his left hand (see figure 5). The similarity of the bird of prey is significant because it shows that both the king and queen had similar qualities of high social status and exclusivity, not just the king. Also, one can also reasonably conclude that each seal's emphasis on other different qualities for the king

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19 Ibid., 130.
20 Ibid.
and queen was meant to show that their qualities complemented each other in rule. For instance, on Stephen's seal, he holds a sword in his left hand and in Matilda's seal she holds a fleur-de-lys; thus, Stephen's seal emphasizes his military power, while Matilda's seal emphasizes her motherhood and fertility. In addition, the words on Stephen's seal read, “STEPHANI DEI GRATIA REX ANGLORUM,” which is the exact same wording that is used for Matilda's seal. This further shows that Matilda had the same high status and authority as the king, and acted as his partner in rule.

**Intercession and Diplomacy**

Matilda also asserted her influence through intercession and diplomacy. Tanner writes that queens in twelfth-century England “were expected to intercede” and to act as mediators in conflicts; intercession was perceived as a feminine act, and, as we will see, one of the queen’s greatest strengths. Indeed, Matilda III, like Matilda II, successfully negotiated conflicts and acted on Stephen’s behalf in her role as intercessor and diplomat. For instance, Tanner describes Matilda III’s role in interceding with Stephen on behalf of members of the church, which was prompted by “Custom[,] as well as a close working relationship between Matilda and Stephen.”

Also, like Matilda II, Matilda III seems to have made a special connection with a prominent churchman at the time of her queenship, Bernard of Clairvaux, who was a French abbot and leading figure of the newly emerging Cistercian order of monks. Matilda's apparent friendship with Bernard led him to appeal to Matilda to intercede with Stephen on many occasions.

For instance, Matilda became involved in a six-year dispute between Stephen and the church over the appointment of Henry Murdac to the archbishopric of York. Murdac had been appointed by the church in 1141, but Stephen refused to recognize him as the legitimate

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22 Ibid.
23 Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?,” 134-35.
24 Ibid., 142.
25 Ibid., 142-43.
archbishop of York; thus, Bernard, a supporter of Murdac, wrote to Matilda so that she would intercede on Henry’s behalf. In his letter, he writes that his petition “concern[s] your salvation and the glory of your kingdom [emphasis added].”

This letter demonstrates that Bernard believed that Matilda had enough influence with the king to sway his mind in favor of supporting Henry as the archbishop of York. It also demonstrates the shared rule that Stephen and Matilda held because of the way that Bernard references the kingdom as Matilda’s not just Stephen’s.

Although it took some time for Stephen to confirm Henry Murdac as the archbishop of York, Stephen eventually accepted the Murdac’s appointment in 1147 and Murdac was consecrated that same year. Even if Matilda was not directly responsible for persuading Stephen to support Murdac, Bernard still wrote to her with the expectation that she would be able to help his case. Clearly, he believed that Matilda had intercessory powers that she could use to influence the king to help smooth relations between the church and Stephen.

While Matilda of Boulogne did intercede with Stephen on behalf of the church, she also gained much praise from chroniclers when she intercedes with other magnates and the Empress (Stephen's rival for the throne) on Stephen's behalf. For instance, Matilda was one of the primary individuals that negotiated for Stephen’s release when he was imprisoned after the battle of Lincoln in February 1141. Several chroniclers from the time take note of her efforts to free Stephen from prison, such as the author of the Gesta Stephani and William of Malmesbury in his Historia Novella. When discussing the process by which Stephen was released from imprisonment, the author of the Gesta Stephani writes, “Just about this time too the queen, a woman of subtlety and a man’s resolution, sent envoys to the countess and made earnest entreaty

28 Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?,” 140.
for her husband’s release from his filthy dungeon.” He portrays her as the principle party taking charge of securing Stephen’s release, showing her “resolution” in support of her husband the king. This is significant because it was Matilda, not another baron or bishop, who took charge of attempting to free Stephen, which displays how important of a role that she played in this process of freeing Stephen.

Later, after Queen Matilda had succeeded in driving the Empress Matilda from London, the author describes how Queen Matilda further pled for the release of her husband: “…and now she humbly besought the Bishop of Winchester [Stephen’s brother], legate of all England, to take pity on his imprisoned brother and exert himself for his freedom…And the bishop, moved by both the woman’s tearful supplications, which she pressed on him with great earnestness,” pleaded with the Empress Matilda on Stephen’s behalf for the order of his release. This presents an interesting contrast with the previous description of her having “a man's resolution.” Here, Matilda uses the ultimate weapon: tears. Chroniclers gendered Matilda both male and female as a ruler, which probably meant that they saw her as having the authority and emotional strength of a man, as well as the mercy and softness of a woman; both were qualities that an ideal ruler should possess. Also, while the author’s relegation of Matilda’s actions to only “tearful supplications” here may seem slightly misogynistic, the tone of the writing in fact proves otherwise. The tone seems to imply that Matilda had a certain power in her pleasing and tears, and that this was a very positive and influential thing. It is shown as one of her strengths that allowed her to be a partner with Stephen and support him in his times of trouble with his rule.

However, one might suspect that the author of the *Gesta Stephani* only praised Matilda's actions because he favored Stephen's faction. The examination of William of Malmesbury's

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30 Ibid., 83-84.
Historia Novella easily contradicts this supposition; William was a known supporter of Robert of Gloucester and of the rightful claim that the Empress Matilda had to the throne of England. William also writes that Matilda of Boulogne went to Bishop Henry to plead for his help in the release of Stephen, and he says that Henry “had a family conference at Guildford with the queen [Matilda], his brother’s wife, and influenced by her tears and offers of amends he resolved to free his brother.” It is interesting to note that William of Malmesbury, who did not support Stephen's faction, would portray the wife of the “enemy” this way because he might have wanted to discredit Stephen and his supporters when the opportunity arose. The inclusion of Queen Matilda's intercession shows that even supporters of the Empress Matilda, like William, had respect for Matilda of Boulogne’s efforts to free her husband in support of him, and that he did not see such support as problematic or wrong. Queen Matilda, then, can truly be seen as Stephen’s partner in complementing his duties of rule through intercession on his behalf.

Matilda's diplomatic actions also display her power and authority as Stephen's partner in rule. Matilda was able to use her family's lands in Essex to aid Stephen in his struggle with the Empress Matilda by making gifts of some of this land so that magnates would fight for Stephen. The most prominent way that this is displayed is through her relations with the powerful and threatening de Mandeville family. Matilda used her family's lands in the county of Essex to essentially bribe Geoffrey II de Mandeville to support Stephen's side of the war. Matilda's actions show that she most likely knew that Geoffrey's support of Stephen was crucial for Stephen's success in the civil war, since Geoffrey also controlled much land in the south of England and Stephen needed the wealth of those lands to support his campaign. So, the fact that

33 Dark, “A Woman of Subtlety and a Man's Resolution,” 160.
34 Ibid., 163.
Matilda was able to help win Geoffrey over to Stephen's side shows her political astuteness in gaining good allies for her husband, and in determining the assets that they needed to win the war. Also, Matilda's family connections with the land of Boulogne aided her and Stephen when they needed extra assistance for their military campaigns. Tanner writes that the tenants in the honor and county of Boulogne provided “consistent support,” such as coming to Matilda's aid when she undertook the siege of Dover castle in 1138.\textsuperscript{35} Orderic Vitalis writes that Matilda called on “friends, kinsmen, and dependents of Boulogne to blockade the port,” and the siege ended up being successful.\textsuperscript{36} These two instance show how Matilda was able to utilize lands held by her family as well as her family's allies to support Stephen in his rule of England. It also shows that Matilda had her own power networks that she could draw upon for additional support. She did not need to rely on her husband for establishing these networks, but actively maintained them herself and could call upon them for aid when needed. Truly, Matilda brought a significant contribution to her role as queen in her diplomatic connections.

Chronicles from the time also stress Matilda’s international connections and that she was able to use these connections to secure aid and allies for Stephen. Both William of Malmesbury and Orderic Vitalis note that Matilda brought the county of Boulogne to her marriage with Stephen, which was a greatly to his advantage because of its wealth.\textsuperscript{37} Also, the author of the \textit{Gesta Stephani} praises Matilda’s ability to gain allies from these lands for Stephen’s faction in the civil war. He writes that “everywhere by prayer or price she [Matilda] won over invincible allies; the king’s lieges, wherever they were scattered throughout England she urged persistently to demand their lord back with her.”\textsuperscript{38} Clearly, Matilda took significant action and convinced a number of barons to remain loyal to Stephen, whether it be because she asked them to (“by

\textsuperscript{35} Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?,” 137.
\textsuperscript{36} Orderic Vitalis, \textit{Historia Ecclesiastica}, 6:521.
\textsuperscript{38} K.R. Potter, trans. and ed. \textit{Gesta Stephani}, 83.
prayer”) or because of bribes that she gave (“by price”). Either way, she was able to gain their fealty, and showed how she could act as a ruler in Stephen's stead and garner support for him during his imprisonment through her diplomacy.

**Preparation of Children as Future Rulers**

Matilda's support of Stephen in his reign as his partner continued in the preparation of their son Eustace to inherit the throne of England; one of Matilda's motivations for helping to secure Stephen's rule was most likely because she also wanted to secure the succession of Eustace after him. Tanner writes that Matilda's last public appearance, in 1152, was at a church council where she and Stephen attempted (unsuccessfully) to have the bishops of England crown Eustace as the next king. Matilda is also portrayed in these texts as acting on behalf of Eustace to secure his inheritance. For instance, in the *Gesta Stephani*, when Matilda sent envoys to the Empress to ask for Stephen’s release, the author writes that she “made earnest entreaty for her husband’s release from his filthy dungeon and the granting of his son’s inheritance.” Matilda's concern was not only for her husband, but also for her son, that he should rightfully succeed his father as heir to the throne. Also, in Orderic Vitalis’ *Ecclesiastical History*, he notes that when Matilda convinced some of Stephen’s barons to remain loyal to him after his capture, the barons “vowed to fight manfully for the king and his heirs [emphasis added].” This added stipulation shows that Matilda was not just trying to gain support for her husband, but to be a good mother to her son as well and fight to protect the inheritance that he was meant to have as the king’s heir. Matilda’s actions on behalf of Eustace show that it was part of her queenly duty to care for her children by protecting their inheritances and preparing them for rule, which allowed her to act as Stephen’s partner as his queen.

Dark, “‘A Woman of Subtlety and a Man's Resolution,’” 150.
Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?,” 146.
Patronage

Matilda did not only act to protect the inheritance of her children, but promote the status of her family as well, which she accomplished through patronage. Like Matilda II, Matilda III utilized patronage opportunities to gain the favor of the church, and even with the people who lived in the areas that she frequently patronized, like the religious houses of London. Tanner writes that “There can be no question…of her [Matilda's] support of the reforming monastic orders,” such as the Augustinians, Cistercians, and Cluniacs, and that these gifts reflect her “royal role of protector of the faith” like Matilda II.43 This role as protector of the faith was extended to the Cluniac priory of Faversham Abbey, which Matilda used to promote the status of her own family; the time devoted to the new house that was intended to be her family’s burial place shows a conscious promotion of their dynasty as well as Eustace’s succession.44 This is shown by the *Excavations of Faversham*, quoted by Tanner, which reads that Faversham had “an unusually long choir of considerable splendor and archaic design, with the tombs at its focal point,” showing that the tombs of Matilda's family were intentionally placed so that the they would be placed in a prime spot for remembrance.45

Also, Matilda's role in patronizing other churches around London most likely had a significant role in the steadfast loyalty of the Londoners during the time when the Empress Matilda occupied the city in 1141. Matilda was very active in her patronage around London,46 and Jean Truax writes that both Stephen and Matilda “were clearly aware of the importance” of London religious houses.47 Indeed, Stephen and Matilda’s acts of patronage show this awareness, as well as their partnership as king and queen. Two houses that they patronized in particular were

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43 Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?,” 143.
44 Ibid., 144.
45 Ibid.
47 Truax, “Winning Over the Londoners,” 54.
St. Martin-le-Grand and Holy Trinity, Aldgate, and charters collected in the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum* display Matilda and Stephen’s acts of patronage for these two churches. Matilda donated the church of Witham in Essex to be a tenth prebend for a canon of St. Martin’s, as well as another church at Chrishall in Essex, and Stephen made similar grants to this house. Matilda and Stephen also took great care to maintain good relations with Holy Trinity, Aldgate; for instance, Matilda decided to found the hospital of St. Katherine for the relief of London’s poor on land purchased from the priory of this house, which gave the house added financial support. These grants display how Stephen and Matilda were particularly invested in maintaining good relations with the Londoners through patronage, which proved to be an astute political move because of the way that the Londoners remained loyal to Stephen and Matilda when the Empress occupied the city in 1141.

The author of the *Gesta Stephani* describes the Londoners' laments from the oppression of the Empress Matilda, as well as their role in helping to expel her from the city when Matilda of Boulogne arrived with an army. He writes that “all who favored the king and were in deep depression from his capture joyously congratulated each other” when the army arrived, and they immediately admitted the queen. While the author of the *Gesta Stephani* might have exaggerated the people’s hatred of the Empress Matilda and their determination to make her leave the city, the fact that he portrays them favoring Queen Matilda and Stephen over the Empress shows how Stephen and Matilda had managed to foster their loyalty through the generous patronage they bestowed upon London’s religious houses. Thus, these joint acts of patronage show how Matilda and Stephen's partnership worked effectively to gain support from their people in their rule as king and queen and to solidify Stephen’s rightful place as the king of

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51 Ibid., 83.
England.

**Military Leadership**

Matilda acted in many ways to solidify Stephen's rightful place as the king of England, even acts unique to queenship in the twelfth century. Military leadership had no precedent with Matilda of Scotland, but nonetheless, Stephen’s reliance on Matilda of Boulogne for actions normally reserved for men shows how much he depended on her as his partner in rule. The first instance when Matilda commanded an army on Stephen’s behalf was at the siege of Dover in 1138. In response to stirrings of rebellion by Earl Robert of Gloucester in March, Stephen had to move into Herefordshire to meet this challenge, but this left containment of another group of rebels in Kent. Matilda herself took responsibility for controlling these rebels, making use with her connections with Flanders and Boulogne to accomplish this. Stephen had chosen her to help, and she would not disappoint him; Matilda successfully utilized her familial connections in Boulogne to blockade Dover Castle by sea, and she commanded the troops on land. Tanner notes that “the choice [of Matilda to lead the siege] was unusual as women rarely directed sieges, but it reflects [Matilda and Stephen’s] partnership.”

Orderic Vitalis' description of this event also shows the loyal support Matilda gave Stephen as his partner in rule, and writes that she even brought in members of her family and her friends in Boulogne to aid with the siege: “Secondly, the queen besieged Dover with a strong force on the land side, and sent work to her friends and kinsmen and dependents in Boulogne to blockade the foe by sea. The people of Boulogne proved obedient, gladly carried out their lady’s commands and, with a great fleet of ships, closed the narrow strait to prevent the garrison receiving any supplies.”

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53 Ibid.
54 Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?,” 140.
forces, a duty not usually undertaken by a woman. Orderic's comfort in portraying Matilda as a military leader also contradicts assumptions made by scholars that twelfth-century churchmen believed that women should only exercise influence through piety. The chronicler Henry of Huntingdon portrays Matilda's role similarly: “Walkelin, who was holding the castle at Dover, surrendered it to the queen [emphasis added] who was besieging it.” It was not to another male baron that this man surrendered, but to a woman, and his queen; Matilda was the primary force behind the siege, and had the authority to accept the surrender of the rebels in the castle. She worked as a strong and active woman, completely within her duties as the queen of England.

As previously mentioned, Matilda also took control of Stephen’s army after his capture at the battle of Lincoln and was able to drive the Empress Matilda from her occupation of London, as well as besiege the city of Winchester where the Empress fled afterwards. This event is described in detail by the author of the Gesta Stephani; he writes that Matilda “brought a magnificent body of troops across in front of London from the other side of the river and gave orders that they should rage most furiously around the city with plunder and arson, violence and the sword, in sight of the countess [the Empress] and her men.” Once the Londoners and the army drove the Empress away, “The queen was admitted into the city by the Londoners and forgetting the weakness of her sex and a woman's softness she bore herself with the valor of a man.” Although it seems that the author believes that women were the “weaker” sex, this does not stop him from praising the actions of Matilda and glorifying the way that she led troops to make her and Stephen's enemy flee from the city. Thus, because Matilda acted on behalf of Stephen, her husband, here actions were considered praiseworthy.

57 Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?,” 140.
59 Ibid., 83.
Shortly afterwards, Matilda played an important role at the siege of Winchester: “The queen..., with a splendid body of troops and an invincible band of Londoners, who had assembled to the number of almost a thousand, …besieged the inner ring of besiegers from outside with the greatest energy and spirit.” The author further glorifies Matilda's actions that she undertakes, also revealing how the Londoners supported their queen in her efforts to defeat the Empress. By showing that even the people of London fought for her against the Empress, the author reveals that the duties she was undertaking as queen as a military leader were approved by even the common people and not just barons who remained loyal to Stephen. Thus, Matilda undertaking duties normally reserved for men is praised and supported by the author of the Gesta Stephani, and most likely even by the people of London themselves, when she acts as his partner in rule.

Comparison with the Empress Matilda

It is interesting, though, to note that the Empress Matilda undertook many similar actions as Matilda of Boulogne, but was not glorified like the queen. One wonders why this might have been the case. A reason for this may have been because twelfth-century authors thought that the Empress sought to create more warfare and disruption than the Queen, whose actions they deemed more in favor of peace. From the descriptions of the battles of the two women, the churchmen clearly valued peace and justice over the havoc of war. For instance, the author of the Gesta Stephani is most unkind towards the Empress when she threatens the peace of England; when the Empress first lands at Arundel in 1139 with her brother and “a strong body of troops,… England at once was shaken and quivered with intense fear.”

However, although this author did not

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60 Ibid., 85.
61 Ibid., 58.
support her faction and would be expected to be harsh, this description of the fear that she struck 
into the hearts of the English people that he did not approve of her actions leading an army 
because it was not in the interest of peace. This sharply contrasts with the praise the author gives 
Queen Matilda when she brings “a magnificent body of troops” to London, which the author saw 
as something that would help to create peace in England.

The author also reveals that he expects a woman’s role to be that of peacemaker and not 
war-maker when he writes of the Empress’ refusal to grant a reprieve to the citizens of London 
for money that she asked of them; he says, “With a grim look, her forehead wrinkled into a 
frown, every trace of a woman’s gentleness removed from her face, blazed into unbearable 
fury.”62 Perhaps the Empress was too haughty and arrogant in her newfound authority as the 
author of this text describes, but the fact remains that the Empress does not seem to be interested 
in making peace with the people of England, but in making harsh demands that would cause 
more strife. So, it seems that the author of the Gesta Stephani disliked the Empress not only 
because he did not support her faction, but because she created too much turbulence for the 
people of England, unlike Queen Matilda.

Orderic Vitalis gives a similar impression of the Empress when he writes about her arrival 
in England. He criticizes Stephen for giving the Empress safe passage to the strongholds of her 
party, which led to “flames of terrible evil…being kindled” and allowed “the wolf…entrance…to 
the sheep-fold.”63 Orderic does not scorn the Empress in the other parts of his text as much as he 
does here, showing how he also had a strong dislike and even disapproval for the disruption of 
the peace that the Empress brought to England. So, it is reasonable to conclude that twelfth-
century chroniclers saw the strengths of women in power as ones that involved peace and justice,

62 Ibid., 81.
which is why Queen Matilda of Boulogne was more highly praised for her actions as head of state and a military leader than the Empress Matilda. By bringing qualities of peace and justice to her rule as queen, Matilda complemented Stephen’s duties as king and acted as his partner in rule.

A Harmonious Relationship with Stephen

Matilda of Boulogne’s deeds as queen also demonstrate that her relationship with Stephen was most likely a harmonious one, perhaps even affectionate, in which the royal couple depended upon each other for support in rule. Hilton writes that Stephen’s consistent reliance on Matilda’s advice and diplomacy indicates both trust and respect for her intelligence, and that the strength of Stephen’s marriage was one of his greatest assets as king.64 Their support of each other as partners in rule is clearly demonstrated by their joint gifts of patronage, reliance on each other in acting as head of state and military affairs, and attempting to secure the inheritance of their son Eustace. But, there is another element that shows the level of dedication that each had for the other. Like with Matilda of Scotland and Henry I, charter evidence shows that the couple had a harmonious relationship because of because they granted land and donations to religious communities on each other's behalf.

Matilda issued several such charters, and one of these was issued at Rochester for St. Augustine's Abbey at Canterbury in c.1151. The document states that the grant of one acre was made “pro salute domini mei regis Stephani et mea et filiorum nostrorum,” which means that the grant was made for the health of Stephen and their son, Eustace, as well as for herself.65 A grant of land such as this would have been made with the expectation that the monks at the abbey

64 Hilton, Queens Consort, 76.
would dedicate prayers to the people for whom the grant was made. Thus, Matilda's donation for the well-being of her husband and son shows that she cared for both of them because she granted property to secure the monks' prayers for their health. Stephen made similar donations for the well-being of Matilda; one of these is made at London, and it is a grant of forty acres for Westminster Abbey. The charter states that the donation is made “For the health of my soul and my wife Queen Matilda and my son Eustace.” Stephen similarly cared for his wife and wanted to ensure the well-being of her soul by donating land on her behalf to a religious institution. Land grants made from one spouse to the other reflects Stephen and Matilda's harmonious relationship and the care that they had for each other, as well as their mutual care for their son.

**Historical Circumstances of Matilda III's Reign**

Because of the Anarchy, Stephen needed Matilda of Boulogne's assistance more than he probably would have if peace dominated his reign. The governmental reforms that Henry I had initiated to develop more bureaucratic offices also remained stagnant during Stephen's reign, which allowed Stephen to rely on his queen and not the chief justiciar for support in his rule. Essentially, the Anarchy was just as it has been described: a series of civil wars in England over who had the rightful claim to the throne, fought between Stephen and the Empress Matilda, who was the only surviving legitimate child of Henry I and Matilda of Scotland. So, in addition to more customary queenly duties of intercession and patronage, “civil war during much of Stephen’s reign required Matilda to participate actively in diplomacy and to take an occasional stint as a military commander.” The level of disorder that necessitated Stephen involving Matilda to the extent that he did is recorded by several contemporary chroniclers. For instance,

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66 Ibid., 3:342. “...pro salute anime mee et Matild(is) regine uxor(is) mee et Eustac(hii) filii mei.”
William of Malmesbury writes that, “In the year of the Lord's Incarnation 1138, England was shaken by internal strife” when Stephen did not grant “reckless” men land and castles that they desired, so “they were at once moved to wrath, fortified castles against him, and carried off immense plunder of his lands.”\(^{69}\) He also recorded that in 1139, rumors that Earl Robert of Gloucester and the Empress Matilda would soon be landing in England to assert Matilda's claim to the throne. So, “in the expectation of this, many were deserting the king in deed as well as thought, he sought to assuage his own losses by afflicting wrongs on many.”\(^{70}\) Clearly, Stephen had a very difficult time controlling his barons, and needed someone else's help to bring them back under control. Orderic Vitalis writes of how Matilda brought in help from her family in Boulogne to aid in the siege of Dover castle.\(^{71}\) The fact that Orderic includes Matilda in the same section where Stephen is shown curbing major rebellions shows Matilda was an important individual that helped Stephen exercise his power as king and assert his right to rule; if Matilda were not important, she would not have been included as a major influence against the rebels.

In addition, Matilda was able to act as Stephen’s partner in rule because Stephen did not continue to develop a more bureaucratic government like Henry I had done, which had included the development of the office of the chief justiciar. Stephen's concerns remained with reigning in rebellious barons and fighting a civil war against the Empress Matilda, not developing the bureaucracy of England's government. This is evidenced by the fact that Stephen did not replace the man who was the closest definition of chief justiciar during his reign, Roger of Salisbury, after Roger's arrest in 1139. Roger of Salisbury had still been presiding as a high-status government official when Stephen claimed the crown, but Stephen had him imprisoned because of Roger's arrogance in issuing orders without the king's approval.\(^{72}\) Stephen left the office

\(^{70}\) Ibid., 45.
vacant, so the development of the official office of the chief justiciar remained relatively unchanged during his reign. As such, Stephen needed to rely upon another individual to perform some of the duties that Roger had been doing, an individual he could trust; naturally, he looked to his queen, like Henry I had done with Matilda of Scotland. While precedent may have determined Stephen's choice, he probably also did this because of Matilda's strengths as a ruler and because of their harmonious working relationship. So, instead of a man acting as the chief justiciar, Matilda of Boulogne performed duties as the head of state with vice-regal authority given to her by Stephen.

Conclusion

Matilda III of Boulogne participated in many ways as Stephen's partner in rule. She followed many of the precedents set by Matilda II of Scotland, which earned her praise from twelfth-century chroniclers, showing that churchmen of the Middle Ages had a deep and appreciative respect for women in power, especially when they were acting in support of their husbands in rule. Matilda's partnership in her relationship with Stephen is clearly apparent in her “steadfastness of purpose and her steady judgment” that she gave on his behalf, and it can be said with almost certainty that Stephen sorely missed her presence in his life when she died in 1152 because he not only lost his wife, he lost his partner, a woman who acted as his other half to make up the whole in their reign as king and queen. Matilda of Boulogne's actions in support of Stephen demonstrate her character as a remarkable woman in power, and as a queen who commanded the respect of her contemporaries, and who remained the dedicated partner of her husband the king.

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73 Ibid.
74 Ibid., 25.
75 Crouch, The Reign of King Stephen, 1135-1154, 261.
Chapter 4
Eleanor of Aquitaine: “An Incomparable Woman,” r.1154-1189

The queen of England after Matilda III of Boulogne is perhaps the most famous of medieval women. Eleanor of Aquitaine, queen of both France and England in her lifetime, has stimulated the imaginative minds of writers and scholars for centuries. Legend and truth mingle together in the stories of her life, making it quite difficult to determine what is fact and what is myth.¹ The accounts of her time as queen of England provide similar inhibitions of bias, but a closer examination of twelfth-century chronicles can tell us what they expected of Eleanor in her queenly duties, and how she may or may not have followed these expectations while married to Henry II of England (r.1154-1189). As demonstrated above, queens who came before Eleanor had set certain precedents and standards for queenly power in twelfth-century England, so it is quite reasonable to suppose that twelfth-century authors expected the same of Eleanor. Eleanor's actions, however, show that she did not act as her husband's helpmate in rule as these queens did. Although Eleanor followed precedents in acting as head of state, using patronage to promote the status of her family, and educating her children and securing their inheritances, her unsteady working and personal relationship with her husband and the increasing bureaucratization of the Angevin Empire's government caused the partnership to become progressively uneven, and then effectively cease to exist after her unforgivable deed of revolt against him in 1173, allowing Henry to grant duties previously undertaken by Eleanor to the chief justiciar.

Eleanor and Henry's Marriage: May 1152

Even though Henry and Eleanor’s marriage took place before they became king and queen, the way twelfth-century authors write of the marriage sets the tone for how they portray Eleanor for the rest of her time as queen of England. Eleanor divorced Louis VII of France in March 1152 and a short eight weeks later, she and Henry, Duke of Normandy and Count of Anjou, were married; this remarriage happened quickly enough to arouse suspicion from chroniclers about Eleanor's faithfulness to Louis.² For instance, William of Newburgh seems to imply that Eleanor and Henry had some sort of secret pre-arrangement to marry after she obtained a divorce from the French king. He writes, “It is also said that even during her [Eleanor's] marriage to the king of France she longed to be wed to the duke of Normandy as one more congenial to her character, and that therefore she desired and obtained a separation. Eleanor, we are told, was most insistent.”³ This excerpt implies that Eleanor's strong desire for a divorce might have been from a clandestine agreement with Henry that they made on a previous occasion. In fact, William goes on to say that when the couple did get married, Eleanor “and the duke of Normandy met at an agreed place and sealed the marriage-pact,” further implying that plans had been made in advance and that Eleanor had been unfaithful to Louis in their marriage.⁴

Matthew Paris also implies that Eleanor had suspicious motives for wanting to marry Henry, which he believed included revenge on Louis; he calls Eleanor “demonic” and “cunning” in her plans to marry Henry, Louis' known rival.⁵ He believed Eleanor did not possess honorable intentions in her marriage to Henry, and that the marriage was not one that would benefit either couple. Gerald of Wales also sees the marriage as a disgrace: “…King Henry, as common report

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² Hilton, Queens Consort: England’s Medieval Queens, 109. The fact that Eleanor was eleven years Henry's senior probably did not help her situation when chroniclers considered her second marriage.
⁴ Ibid., 1:129.
declared, dared by an adulterous intercourse to defile this so-called queen of France, and so took her away from her own husband [Louis VII], and actually married her himself. How then, I ask, from such a union could a fortunate race be born?" Both Henry and Eleanor are blamed for the disastrous result of their marriage, but the fact still remains that Gerald gives a scathing description of Eleanor, and shows how this opinion could have tainted later views of Eleanor. It is also interesting to note that chroniclers generally were not sympathetic to Eleanor when commenting on her second marriage, increasing the significance of their criticisms of this affair. Thus, Eleanor’s “surreptitious” plans to seek and obtain her second marriage were cause for suspicion from these twelfth-century authors, which also may have tainted their opinion of her later actions as queen of England.

*Following Precedents*

In contrast to Eleanor's marriage to Henry, chroniclers remain relatively silent in her first decade or so of queenship about her actions as Queen of England. Nonetheless, once Eleanor became queen, crowned at Westminster in December 1154, she had a certain number of duties that would have been expected of her. In order to effectively take part in the governance of her realm, she needed to maintain a good working relationship (and at least an amicable personal relationship) with the king. This was because, like during the reigns of Matilda II and Matilda III, the king ultimately dictated who shared power in his realm, so the queen generally relied upon her relationship with the king for the limits of her exercise of power. In the early years of their marriage, Eleanor and Henry seemed to possess a good working relationship such as this, as

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evidenced by her involvement acting in his stead, exercising public power, participating in
cultural life and patronage, and safeguarding the interests of their children.\textsuperscript{8} Evidence from
chroniclers and government documents show that Eleanor acted similarly to Matilda II of
Scotland and Matilda III of Boulogne with these duties.

**Acting in Place of the King as Head of State**

According to Turner, Eleanor most likely issued “dozens and dozens” of royal writs
during her time of regency in Henry's absences on the continent.\textsuperscript{9} Few of these writs were
preserved (only nine of Eleanor's actual writs are extant), but the ones that we have show that she
“had an indispensable part in the restoration of royal authority” because she and Henry are so
often seen acting together as king and queen to solidify Henry's place as the new king of England
after a tumultuous civil war.\textsuperscript{10} Eleanor's activity issuing charters and writs attest to her
significance in the governance of England in Henry's absence, and Henry's choice of leaving
Eleanor to function as head of state for him shows that he trusted her abilities to govern
effectively.\textsuperscript{11} The tone of several of these charters seems to adopt the same tone as that of Anglo-
Norman kings, which displays Eleanor's authority in acting as head of state. For instance, in a
charter addressed to the sheriff of Suffolk, the queen warns him that his failure to carry out an
earlier command “much displeased my lord king and me [emphasis added],” and that if he did
“not wish [to carry out the command], the king's justice will be made to be done.”\textsuperscript{12} The wording
of this charter reveals how Eleanor and Henry functioned as a cohesive unit, issuing justice on
behalf of the royal couple, not just on behalf of the king. In addition, many of Eleanor's writs

\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid.
dealt with routine matters, such as issuing royal permission for clerics like John of Salisbury to leave the kingdom. In a letter from John of Salisbury to Thomas Becket, he mentions in passing that he “gave the French king greetings from his daughter, whom [he] had seen lately at Salisbury when [he] went to the queen for licence [sic] to depart” for France. Even though this occurs during the conflict between Henry II and Becket, this act still seems routine for Eleanor because John mentions this instance without pomp or special circumstance; this was a routine act that occurred quite frequently for twelfth-century clerics. Thus, Eleanor acted with legitimate authority as the head of state when Henry was not present at court in England, fulfilling one of her duties as queen.

Eleanor's seal also shows that she acted with legitimate authority in issuing these charters (see figure 6). As one can see from the drawing, the seal is two-sided, which is in the style of kings' seals in England from the time of Edward the Confessor. The inscriptions on the front and back proclaim Eleanor by the grace of God Queen of England, Duchess of Normandy, Duchess of Aquitaine, and the Countess of Anjou: “ALIENOR DEI GRATIA REGINE ANGLORUM DUCISSE NORMAN,” and “ALIENOR DUCISSE AQUITANORUM ET COMITISSE ANDEGA VOR..” This is significant because it legitimizes her claim to all of these titles, as well as her authority in issuing the document to which it was attached. Also, because Eleanor is depicted in court dress typical of the mid-twelfth century (a bliaut gironé with a tightly fitted bodice and a finely pleated skirt), this seal was most likely engraved on the occasion of her coronation in 1154. An official seal, then, was something that a queen of England was expected to have to authorize the documents that she would issue, which means that Eleanor's legitimacy

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13 Turner, 154.
as Henry's partner in rule was signified by the seal.\textsuperscript{16} This expectation of a seal can also be seen when one compares Eleanor's seal with those of Matilda II and Matilda III (see figures 2 and 4). Upon examination, it clearly appears that Eleanor followed the examples of Matilda II and Matilda III in the design of her seal. Eleanor's seal follows the same basic pattern of the pointed oval shape and the standing figure with the crown, and Eleanor also appropriated the scepter-like object in her right hand and the bird. This shows how Eleanor followed the formulaic pattern of these seals and built upon precedent of expressing queenny power through them, which indicates that her authority drew upon an established power base that existed before she became queen.

Aside from this, the symbols on Eleanor's seal represent aspects of power and authority in their own right.

For instance, on her seal, Eleanor holds a piece of foliage in her right hand and an orb capped with a cross and bird in the left hand. All of these are relatively standard symbols used for royal imagery at this time period; the foliage generally relates to scepters, which were used by royals, and the orb with the bird refers to the regalia displayed by Henry I, Stephen, and Henry II, whose seals also display an orb surmounted by a bird (see figures 3, 5, and 7).\textsuperscript{17} Eleanor's seal does indeed bear several similarities to Henry II's seal (see figure 7), such as the orb surmounted by a bird, as well as the wording around the edges of the seal. The front of Henry's seal reads, “HENRICUS DEI GRATIA REX ANGLORUM,” and the back reads, “HENRICUS DEI GRATIA DUX NORMANNORUM ET COMES ANDEGAVORUM.”\textsuperscript{18} Like with Matilda II and Matilda III, the seals of the king and queen use the same formula to display the authority of each party, showing how Eleanor followed precedent in acting as the king's partner through her representation on her seal. Also, for Eleanor to exhibit “the full, highly

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{17} Ibid., 83-84.
charged formula” also on seals of male monarchs shows her status as the ruler of her inheritance of Aquitaine, as well as the lands of her husband that they share through marriage. Thus, Eleanor's seal was a means for her to display her authority while issuing her charters as the queen of England and as the numerous other titles she held as Henry's wife.

Also, many of Eleanor's charters are confirmations of Henry's, which further attests to her activity as queen. While she did not witness as often as Matilda II and Matilda III, evidence of their activity acting as the king's helpmate, Eleanor's frequent confirmations of Henry's charters should not be discounted. Eleanor may have confirmed more charters than witnessed them because of practical purposes; the Angevin Empire stretched over a vast amount of land, and Henry and Eleanor were not always holding court together. So, instead of witnessing charters, as Eleanor would have done if she and her husband held court together, Eleanor confirmed Henry's charters, acting with very similar authority as Matilda II and Matilda III had done in witnessing.

For instance, in one of Eleanor's confirmations made c.1155-1158 at London, the charter confirms a land grant given to a man named Simon Felstede on behalf of her husband; Henry and Eleanor act together through this confirmation, and Eleanor’s authority as queen clearly shows. Also, another charter Eleanor issues in 1156 confirms Henry’s orders of a resolution of a dispute between the treasurer of Saint-Hilaire de Poitiers and the chapter of Saint-Hilare. The charter begins, “Regina Anglie, et ducissa Aquitaine et comitissa Andegavie,” which denotes Eleanor's status as the Queen of England, Duchess of Aquitaine, and Countess of Anjou. The language indicates that Eleanor acted within her authority as Queen of England, and that her status was

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19 Ibid., 84.
22 Ibid., 1:117.
23 Ibid.
recognized by the cleric who wrote the charter. Also, this designation of Eleanor’s status in her charter follows the same basic formula of charters issued and witnessed by Matilda II and Matilda III. The formulaic designation of status further shows that the authority of the queen issuing and confirming charters was an established duty that Eleanor built off of to exercise power in her realm.

However, it cannot be discounted that, after 1163, the pipe rolls cease to record Eleanor’s writs as authorizations for payments; this coincides with Henry’s return from a four-year absence from England. Also, even less charters of Eleanor’s survive after 1163, showing that her activity issuing and confirming writs and charters most likely decreased.24 This most likely occurred because when Henry II returned to England, he built off the work that Henry I had started at the beginning of the century and expanded his government, shifting more political activity away from the royal household to the exchequer.25 This increasing bureaucratization of Henry’s government is a large factor that affected Eleanor's power as queen. Eleanor's absences in royal writs after 1163 speak just as strongly as the presence of Matilda II and Matilda III in royal government documents, which shows how the nature of queenship had changed significantly from the time of Matilda II at the beginning of the century. Thus, even though Eleanor acted as Henry's partner as the head of state in the earlier years of their marriage, the rise of administrative kingship limited her ability to fully act as his partner in this capacity.

**Preparing Her Children for Future Rule**

Even though Eleanor's role as the head of state may have become overshadowed by the increasing bureaucratization of the government, she did act as Henry's partner by preparing her children for future rule. While we know that Eleanor was pregnant and had eight of Henry's

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25 Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, 173. The exchequer was the central financial office of the English royal government.
children in the first fourteen years of their marriage (see figure 1), there is no evidence listed in contemporary sources about interactions of Eleanor with her children while they were young, much like the queens who came before her.\textsuperscript{26} However, this should not be taken as a sign of indifference to her children's education, well-being, and securing of their inheritances. Huneycutt writes that authors from this time period were not interested in events of a private nature, but a public one, so naturally any kind of close relations between mother and children would not have been of note in their records.\textsuperscript{27} Even Turner, who incorrectly believes that Eleanor embodied the standard aristocratic woman with her disinterest in her children, argues that both Eleanor and Henry would have ensured that “masters” were assigned to their children for their education in preparation for rule and marriage.\textsuperscript{28} Eleanor's actions later in her children's lives show that she was, in fact, quite invested in ensuring their proper inheritance; one such instance is her involvement in arranging the coronation of her son Henry in 1170. The author of the \textit{History of William the Marshal} writes that the young Henry’s coronation was made “by the counsel of the queen and all her entourage, for such was her duty,” which shows Eleanor as the principal initiator of Henry’s coronation as the next king of England, even though she was not actually present at the ceremony.\textsuperscript{29}

The correspondence of Thomas Becket also shows that Eleanor had a great role in ensuring that the young Henry became crowned. A letter from a well-informed supporter of Becket, most likely Master Arnulf, former keeper of Becket's seal, shows Eleanor’s role in preventing envoys from the pope crossing the Channel to excommunicate her husband, which

\textsuperscript{28} Turner, \textit{Eleanor of Aquitaine}, 147.
\textsuperscript{29} Ibid., 187; Flori, \textit{Eleanor of Aquitaine}, 90.
would have prevented the coronation of the young Henry. According to the letter, the pope’s envoys had been unable to cross the Channel because of Henry II’s orders implemented by Eleanor, and it states that Eleanor “will be staying at Caen until she receives certain word of this joy,” showing how Eleanor's support for her son's coronation. This displays Eleanor’s care for her son and her desire to see him secure in his succession as the next king of England, risking the anger of Becket and of the church. In addition, as will be discussed in detail later, Eleanor's participation with her sons in their rebellion against their father in 1173 shows how much she cared for them because committed treason to defend her sons' rightful inheritances.

Eleanor also receives her highest praise from a chronicler, Richard of Deviznes, when she acts on behalf of Richard and John to secure their inheritances as kings after Henry II's death. Richard writes, “Queen Eleanor, an incomparable woman, beautiful yet virtuous, powerful yet gentle, humble yet keen-witted, qualities which are most rarely found in a woman, ...still tireless in all labours [sic], at whose ability her age might marvel, brought with her [to Richard] the daughter of the king of Navarre, ...and followed the king, her son.” Even though this occurs in 1191, several years after Eleanor was no longer Henry's queen consort, the fact that she is most highly praised on these occasions shows that her actions on behalf of her children were the most respectable part of her duties as queen.

Eleanor's Patronage

As Eleanor most likely knew, patronage was an important tool for ruling women in the Middle Ages because it was a way for them to pursue their own strategies and relationships with churchmen and religious communities, and to build power and influence from these

30 Duggan, ed. and trans., The Correspondence of Thomas Becket, Correspondence of Thomas Becket, 2:1247.  
31 Ibid., 2:1247.  
32 Turner, Eleanor of Aquitaine, 145.  
relationships; patronage was not a passive act. It could be quite a useful tool to gain support from powerful members of the church in times of conflict with other rulers, such as during the reign of Matilda III. As previously noted, Matilda III’s and Stephen’s patronage of the religious communities in London earned the royal couple the Londoners’ loyalty, a loyalty that motivated the Londoners to drive the Empress Matilda from the city when she occupied it in 1141.

While Eleanor did not endure a civil war like Matilda III, she still used patronage to her advantage at Fontevrault Abbey to promote the status of England’s royal monarchy. She maintained good relations with the community there through generous donations, and in later years, she even had the tombs of Henry II, Richard I, and her own commissioned there. Correspondence with the abbey reveals her close relationship with the community there; for instance, in one of the letters written sometime between 1154 and 1182, Eleanor confirms a donation made to Fontevrault earlier that year of land that had been due to the institution for “a long time” from a man named Guillot Board. In the letter, she also writes that she gives the donation “for the salvation of my lord king and mine, and our sons' and my father and my ancestors, and for the redemption of our souls.” Eleanor’s gift would have secured prayers for her family from the community there, which promoted their status as royals because the prayers ensured that the royal family who gave them such generous grants would not be forgotten by the community. Another letter from c.1185 shows that Eleanor gave the abbey “the rent of one hundred pounds, in perpetual alms, from the provosture of Poitiers and the vineyard of Benon,” also “for the salvation of the soul of [her] lord king and the salvation of [her] soul and of [her] son Richard and [her] other sons and [her] daughters and [her] ancestors.” This further shows

36 Ibid.
37 Ibid.
Eleanor's desire to promote the memory and the status of England's royal family because she requests the donation be made in their name.

Eleanor also displays this desire in her patronage of the royal effigies of her family that reside in Fontevrault Abbey, which include the tombs of Henry II, Richard I, and herself.\(^{38}\) Even though these effigies on the tombs were made after Eleanor’s time as Henry's queen, their creation still suggests that she wanted to promote the status of the royal line of England, as Matilda III of Boulogne had also done with the tombs of her family at Faversham Abbey. According to Kathleen Nolan, one of the roles of medieval women was to be “keepers of family memory and providers of perpetual care for the soul,” and that Eleanor created these effigies in order to perpetuate the observance of those represented, thus promoting her family’s status as England’s royalty.\(^{39}\) The earlier effigies of Richard I and Henry II were most likely made in the year after Richard's death in 1199, judging from the similarities present in both tombs.\(^{40}\) They both show the kings in a lying-in-state and dressed in the royal regalia that their bodies would have also been dressed in during the funerary rites (see figures 8 and 9). These regalia included a crown, scepter, sword, spurs, and gloves, and the gloves would have borne gold medallions, which is evident in the stone recreations on the effigies.\(^{41}\) This strongly suggests that Eleanor’s purpose in ordering their monuments with this deliberate iconography was political, since it would have also affirmed the dynasty’s legitimacy and authority.\(^{42}\) The fact that Eleanor created these effigies years after her term as queen consort had ended shows that she still believed that her queenly duties included perpetuating the memory of the royal family of England and


\(^{39}\) Ibid., 391-92.

\(^{40}\) Ibid., 392.

\(^{41}\) Ibid., 393.

\(^{42}\) Ibid.
promoting its status.

Eleanor's effigy on her own tomb, however, seems to portray a slightly different message than those of her husband and son. Unlike the tombs of Henry II and Richard I, Eleanor's image is “manifestly alive, holding an open book and engaged in the act of reading,” and apart from the book, her only other attribute is a crown (see figures 9 and 10). This lack of royal regalia as compared to her husband and son has been interpreted in several different ways by scholars. On one hand, the lack of other royal regalia may have shown that she was less powerful than her male relatives, but more scholars tend to agree that Eleanor sought to represent a different kind of authority, since she could have requested a scepter or other royal regalia had she so wished. Eleanor's act of reading a book in her effigy shows her sense of autonomy and self-identification, and the act links her to a place of retreat or political retrenchment as well as the act of the perpetual study of a devotional book. Perhaps Eleanor requested this to draw attention away from her more adventurous acts in life, such as crusading, that had earned her so much criticism from her contemporaries. Instead, it seems that she chose to focus on qualities that she thought best suited her life, such as thoughtfulness in study and wisdom. Either way, Eleanor's effigy shows that she was able to use patronage of Fontevrault Abbey to portray her eternal image on her tomb, which she most likely used to gain respect as a woman in power in her time as queen of England.

Deviating from the Pattern of Accepted Rule

Even though Eleanor followed several precedents set by Matilda II and Matilda III, other aspects of her time as queen of England show how she was unable to build on all of the

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43 Ibid., 394.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.
precedents set by these queens. She did not act as an intercessor or diplomat as Matilda II and Matilda III had done, she held a larger inheritance of lands in France than her predecessors, her working relationship with Henry deteriorated over the years because of differing opinions of how to govern their lands, and, of course, Eleanor did not remain loyal to her husband but joined her sons in revolt against him in 1173. Huneycutt argues that these factors all play into the criticisms that contemporary chroniclers gave of Eleanor, and that these criticisms show that Eleanor did not act consistently with what they expected of a twelfth-century queen. Contrary to what Turner and Flori argue, chroniclers did not see her actions as “unwomanly” and her actions did not “depart from the accepted feminine pattern,” but rather departed from the accepted pattern of queenship in twelfth-century England.

**Intercession and Diplomacy**

Chroniclers saw Eleanor's actions in intercession and diplomacy as part of these deviations. Intercession and diplomacy of a twelfth-century queen could be a very influential way for her to exercise power and act as her husband's partner in rule, and this power usually stemmed from the queen's intimate relationship with her husband the king and her close relations with family in nearby regions. Matilda II and Matilda III both interceded with the king and on the king’s behalf during their reigns; as previously noted, Matilda II was very involved in resolving the dispute of investiture between Henry I and Anselm of Canterbury, and Matilda III interceded on behalf of Stephen to Bishop Theobald of Blois in order to secure Stephen’s release. Eleanor’s international and supposedly sexual relations with her uncle Raymond of Antioch, however, caused scandal that did not occur for Matilda II or Matilda III. So, unlike her predecessors, Eleanor was placed in the unique position among twelfth-century queens of having

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49 Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?,” 134.
too much intimate influence over her husband the king.\textsuperscript{50} We can see this mistrust when chroniclers like Matthew Paris accuse Eleanor of adultery when she and Louis VII were still married. He lists one of the reasons that Louis and Eleanor divorced, writing, “[Eleanor] was defamed by multiple adulteries, especially of a certain untrustworthy infidel prince in the East; while the king conceded negotiations of war, [Eleanor] perpetrated.”\textsuperscript{51} Matthew believed that one of the reasons that Louis divorced Eleanor was because of her adultery in the Holy Land, and he also displays his extreme distrust of a woman's sexual power and how it could negatively affect the rule of men like Louis VII.

John of Salisbury shows a similar mistrust of Eleanor's supposed sexual influence when he describes how Louis had a difficult time keeping Eleanor away from her uncle, Raymond of Antioch. He says, that while Louis and Eleanor remained at Antioch,

...the attentions paid by the prince [Raymond] to the queen [Eleanor], and his constant, indeed almost continuous, conversation with her, aroused the king's suspicions. These were greatly strengthened when the queen wished to remain behind, although the king was preparing to leave, and the prince made every effort to keep her, if the king would give his consent.\textsuperscript{52}

John of Salisbury clearly mistrusted Eleanor's secretive behavior with her uncle, and interpreted her sexual power as something that could negatively affect Louis' authority. The account from Gerald of Wales also suggests that this feeling of unease from Eleanor's “scandal” on the crusade carried over to her second marriage when he writes, “But it is a matter of sufficient notoriety how queen Eleanor had conducted herself at first in the parts of Palestine beyond the sea, and how when she returned she had behaved herself towards her first as well as her second husband.”\textsuperscript{53} According to Gerald, Eleanor's inappropriate behavior would not end with her first

\textsuperscript{50} Huneycutt, “Alianora Regina Anglorum,” 125.
\textsuperscript{51} Matthew Paris, \textit{Matthaei Parisiensis Historia Anglorum}, 1:288. “Diffamabatur de multiplici adulterio, praecipue de quodam infidelis infidelum principi in terra orientali; dum rex bellicis negotiis indulsit, perpetrato.”
\textsuperscript{53} Stevenson, ed. and trans., \textit{The Church Historians of England}, 225.
husband, but continue to negatively affect the reign of her second husband as well. Also, since Gerald writes that *everyone* knew about Eleanor's scandal, he indicates that other medieval churchmen of the time duplicated his feeling of unease; this would have made the churchmen suspicious of Eleanor's sexual power over any man with whom she frequently interacted, especially over her husband the king. They saw Eleanor as an emblem of the dangers of the queen's sexual intimacy with the king.\(^{54}\) Indeed, chroniclers take little to no note of Eleanor interceding as her predecessors did, and they rarely mention Eleanor's counsel with the king or her diplomatic counsel.\(^{55}\) This further suggests that chroniclers had a mistrust of Eleanor's influence in this sphere because of their reluctance to mention it.

However, primary evidence suggests that the chroniclers’ mistrust may not have been entirely misplaced. While it is unlikely that Eleanor was precisely the “sexual danger” that chroniclers made her out to be, an interesting issue of intercession comes to light when examining the events of the conflict between Henry II and the archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Becket. Henry II sought to restore royal control over the English Church as Henry I had once done; this set into motion a quarrel with Becket, whom Henry appointed the archbishop of Canterbury in 1161.\(^{56}\) Henry's issuance of the Constituents of Clarendon in 1164 led Becket to seek the protection of Louis VII by the autumn of 1165 because Henry attempted to assert his control over the church in England.\(^{57}\) Interestingly, this situation draws many similar parallels with the conflict that Henry I had with Anselm of Canterbury in the early twelfth century; however, evidence shows that Eleanor did not intercede as Matilda II of Scotland had done.

Letters of correspondence between several prominent churchmen at the time essentially provide the only clues for gaining more understanding about Eleanor's involvement in this

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54 McCracken, “Scandalizing Desire,” 258.
55 Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc?,” 146.
57 Ibid., 141.
conflict. In a letter from Bishop John of Poitiers to Becket in 1165, John makes it very clear to Becket that Eleanor will not intercede on his behalf, but will rather take her husband's side in the conflict. He writes, “But we wish you [Becket] to know that you can hope for no help or advice from the queen, especially since she relies entirely on Ralph de Faie, who is persecuting us [the church] no less than before.”⁵⁸ The Bishop of Poitiers believed that Eleanor had taken the counsel of her uncle, Ralph, a known antagonist to the church, and would not support the church in its struggle to maintain authority separate from the English monarchy. From this, one can deduce that churchmen like John did not have the same confidence in Eleanor as they did with Matilda II that Eleanor would support the church in conflicts between it and the English crown.

Even though the Bishop of Poitiers may have doubted Eleanor, she may in fact have had some inclinations to step in and bring about a resolution to the conflict (although it seems that whatever actions she took fell far short of Matilda II’s proliferous correspondence with Anselm). In another letter from 1165, John of Salisbury writes to Becket about aid Becket may be receiving from the count of Flanders: “Besides, it is said that the count of Flanders [Philip d'Alsace], working for your peace, at the request of the Empress [Matilda] and the queen [Eleanor], has sent a distinguished party of men to the king, and that they have returned.”⁵⁹ So, Eleanor did have some hand in supporting Becket like Matilda II had, but still no record exists of her going to Henry II himself and interceding with him on Becket's behalf. Perhaps this is because churchmen still did not trust her intimate connection with the king and chose not to portray her acting as an intercessor, but it is also possible that Eleanor actually did not have any hand in interceding with the king. In either case, chroniclers perceived Eleanor's queenly powers of intercession much differently than the intercessory powers of Matilda II and Matilda III.

⁵⁸ Duggan, ed. and trans., *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket, Correspondence of Thomas Becket*, 1:217.
⁵⁹ Ibid., 1:227.
Either Eleanor's perceived or Eleanor’s actual lack of intercession shows that she deviated from the accepted pattern of queenship, and that churchmen and chroniclers from this time mistrusted her because of it.

**Possession of Aquitaine and an Inharmonious Relationship**

Eleanor did not act consistently with her predecessors because of the larger inheritance of lands in France that she possessed; her desire to maintain control of the inheritance of Aquitaine prevented her from performing expected duties as the queen of England.\(^{60}\) Turner and Flori both argue that Henry and Eleanor's conflicts over how Aquitaine should be ruled was one of the main tensions that caused Eleanor's participation in the rebellion in 1173, which effectively ended Henry and Eleanor’s partnership.\(^{61}\) While Turner and Flori seem to exaggerate the tensions between Henry and Eleanor, arguing that the conflict led to dreadful resentment between the royal couple, the scholars seem to be accurate in identifying the tension that most likely existed between the couple over how to govern Aquitaine. One of the reasons such tensions existed was probably because of the unruly nature of Eleanor’s vassals, who frequently stirred up trouble by causing uprisings in her lands.

On several occasions, Henry fought for Eleanor to either contain treacherous vassals in Aquitaine or to defend her rights in parts of her land in France, such as the region of Toulouse. An instance of this in the earlier years of their marriage involves Henry showing interest in coming to Eleanor's aid in quelling a rebellious vassal in 1158.\(^{62}\) Richard le Poitevin, a chronicler who held a favorable view towards Eleanor, writes of an instance when Henry fought to put down the Viscount of Thouars at Nantes with his armies. He says that Henry, “perceiving that it would please the Queen, he had its [Nantes'] wall razed to the ground and sent Viscount Geoffrey

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\(^{60}\) Huneycutt, "Alianora Regina Anglorum ,” 121.
\(^{62}\) Flori, *Eleanor of Aquitaine*, 77.
of Thouars packing.”63 Even though, in this account, Henry seems quite willing to defend Eleanor's authority in her lands in France, the frequency of disloyalty from Eleanor’s vassals most likely took a toll on Henry’s patience with them, especially when Henry fought to defend Eleanor’s rights to Toulouse in 1159.

The incident in Toulouse most likely produced such tensions in Henry and Eleanor's marriage and working relationship as king and queen. While Henry's defense of Eleanor's lands may have started as the work of one spouse on behalf of another, it may have caused resentment between them because Henry was not successful in regaining Toulouse for Eleanor after he spent a vast amount of resources on the campaign.64 The chronicler Robert of Torigni writes how Henry took great pains to assemble an army in order to defend Eleanor's rights in Toulouse: “...the king caused to be summoned the army of the whole of Normandy, England, Aquitaine, and those other provinces which were subject to him because Raimund [sic] count of St. Giles, refused to surrender to him the city of Toulouse, which the king demanded of him as the inheritance of his wife, queen Alienor [sic],” and that “This enterprise continued for well nigh three months.”65 The campaign eventually did not succeed because, while Henry laid siege to the city of Toulouse, Louis VII had time to get into the city to support Raymond, his brother-in-law; Henry refused to push forward with the siege because Louis was his overlord and Henry owed Louis fealty as the Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine. Henry would have had to “break faith” of his fealty sworn to Louis in order to continue the siege, which would have irrevocably damaged Henry's diplomatic standing with the king of France.66

The chronicler Roger of Hoveden also makes note of Henry's failings in his text; he

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64 Flori, Eleanor of Aquitaine, 77-78.
66 Flori, Eleanor of Aquitaine, 78.
writes, “Henry, king of England, having levied a large army, laid siege to Toulouse, and although he sat before it for a long time, and wasted his treasure in various expenses, still he was able to effect nothing there, and, without gaining his object, took his departure.” Henry clearly felt disappointed from wasting his resources on the campaign, and it is possible that he may have felt some resentment towards Eleanor as well because he defended her claims. No record exists of Eleanor's reaction to the failure in Toulouse, but she most likely was not pleased the Henry had failed to regain the land. It is quite possible that the unsuccessful campaign caused a rift in the marriage between Henry and Eleanor, one that would become more apparent as the royal couple had more disagreements over the rule and inheritance of Eleanor's lands in France.

These disagreements seem to surface in the middle years of Henry and Eleanor’s marriage. In 1168, Eleanor assumed control of Aquitaine and based herself in Poitou for several years; this also happens to be the period when she enjoyed the most autonomy and produced the most charters and judicial decisions in her own right as the governor of Aquitaine. For instance, in 1168, Eleanor confirmed a settlement between Ralph de Faye and a citizen of La Rochelle, which not only displays Eleanor exercising her authority as their overlord, but also that these men recognized her as their overlord. In addition, Eleanor made generous grants to Fontevrault Abbey; in early 1173 at Chinon, she witnessed a charter by Henry II that confirmed the abbey's rights at Angers and Saumur, and she witnessed a gift by an individual called Ginosa. Given Eleanor's heightened activity, one can reasonably conclude that Eleanor may have grown accustomed to having control over her lands in Poitou after 1168, and may not have wanted to

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70 Ibid.
share as much power with Henry II, since she saw these lands as hers.

Eleanor's dedication to her lands further appears in her activity securing her son Richard as the heir to the duchy of Aquitaine; her role in securing Richard's inheritance indicates that she wished to see Richard safely installed as her successor in order to preserve her duchy “as a distinct political unit.”[71] The activities of mother and son from the mid-1160s to 1173 evidence Eleanor's copious involvement in ensuring Richard's inheritance. For instance, in the spring of 1170, Eleanor and Richard held court at Niort, where Richard received oaths of allegiance from the barons of Poitou, and then set out with him on a progress through Aquitaine.[72] In addition, in June 1172, Eleanor went through a “ceremonial investiture” in Aquitaine to confirm Richard's inheritance rights.[73] The chronicler Geoffrey de Vigeois notes Eleanor’s desire to see the inheritance of her duchy secured as well: “King Henry Senior transferred to Richard by the will of his mother Eleanor [emphasis added] the duchy of Aquitaine.”[74] Even though Geoffrey states that Henry transferred the power, he still adds that Eleanor was the driving force behind securing Richard’s inheritance, which shows the level of Eleanor’s investment in the preservation of her duchy of Aquitaine. A rift in the relationship between the royal couple may have occurred over the inheritance of Aquitaine as well because Eleanor may not have liked that Henry participated in the transfer of power for her duchy.

This rift becomes more apparent in the late 1160s onward when Eleanor and Henry separated from each other. While the couple had been previously been separated for long stretches of time (like during Henry's frequent visits to the continent), it is not unreasonable to conclude that the couple's separation in 1168 was due to a change in their personal relationship

within their marriage. As previously noted, Eleanor showed a renewed interest in ruling her duchy during this time, which probably also meant that she desired to see Henry less in the rule of her duchy of Aquitaine. A change in the wording of several of Eleanor’s charters from 1172 shows her desire to confirm herself as the head of the duchy, not Henry II. In three acts, Eleanor modifies the words from “to the king’s faithful followers and hers” to “her faithful followers.” While the signs are somewhat ambiguous, they still give reason to suppose that Eleanor was intentionally trying to exclude Henry from the rule of her duchy in order to “assert and free herself to act in her own name as the head of the duchy.” It is also possible that the royal couple decided to separate because of the age difference between them; by 1168, Eleanor had passed the prime of her child-bearing years while Henry II was only thirty-five, so their sexual interests probably did not coincide. Whether the motivation to separate was political, personal, or both, Eleanor and Henry seemed content with their decision to remain relatively separate in these last few years of Eleanor's freedom as England's queen. This was certainly a great deviation from Matilda II and Matilda III, whose relationships did not seem to endure the same tensions, and who acted by the king's side until their deaths. The largest issue to distinguish Eleanor from her predecessors, though, was still to come with her participation in a rebellion with her sons against Henry in 1173.

The Ultimate Deviation: Rebellion

Eleanor violated the primary queenly duty to be a loyal supporter of her husband the king when she joined her sons in their rebellion. This act of rebellion also drew her to the

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75 Ibid., 185.
78 Ibid.
Eleanor violated the primary queenly duty to be a loyal supporter of her husband the king when she joined her sons in their rebellion. This act of rebellion also drew her to the spotlight once again with twelfth- and thirteenth-century chroniclers and churchmen, who seemed to resent her for this act just as much as for her supposed infidelity to Louis VII on crusade. As previously mentioned, the young Henry was crowned as the next king of England in a ceremony at Westminster Abbey in June 1170, which signified a transfer of power from the old king to the young king. Naturally, once Henry II transferred titles to the young Henry and his other sons, they would expect to take a share in the power associated with them; for instance, Roger of Hoveden notes that at a council held at Limoges in February 1173, the young Henry “requested his father to give him either Normandy, or Anjou, or England,” noting how Henry wished to have a greater share in the rule that he had been designated by his coronation. Henry II did not concede to his son’s request, and so Roger of Hoveden also writes of the boy’s frustration resulting from not being allowed his fair share in rule: “...And [the young Henry] had now so entirely revolted in feeling from obeying his [father’s] wishes, that he could not even converse with him on any subject in a peaceable manner.”

Seemingly because of this frustration, the young king sought aid from Henry II’s rival and Eleanor's ex-husband, Louis VII of France. Shortly after, his younger brothers Richard and Geoffrey joined him in his revolt against Henry II, claiming that they also wanted a greater share in their inheritance rights from their father.

It is at this point that Eleanor makes a prominent appearance in chronicles once again. While some chroniclers note that Louis VII mainly encouraged the Angevin boys to fight against their father, several others accuse Eleanor of also taking part in this plot; whether Eleanor played

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as large a part as they say or not, the fact that the chroniclers criticize Eleanor so harshly for her role shows that she strongly broke with precedents set down by Matilda II and Matilda III. For instance, Matthew Paris gives a highly unfavorable account of Eleanor when he mentions the revolt. He writes,

At the same time, when the King of England delayed in Ireland, Hugh of Seinte-more and Ralph de Fesne, the uncle of Queen Eleanor, began, as is said, on behalf of the Queen, to turn away the heart of the Young King Henry from his father, telling him, it would be a great disgrace to a king to have his name covered and without power, and that he should be described as “standing in the shadow of a great name.”

He places Eleanor as the primary force driving the young Henry away from his father, and he also shows that he believes a queen should not be rebelling against her husband because of the negative tone of the text. Even though chroniclers usually condoned motherly support of their children's inheritances, it seems that Eleanor took this a step too far in order to defend her sons against their father.

More chroniclers, including Matthew Paris, William of Newburgh, and Robert of Torigni discuss Eleanor leading Richard and Geoffrey to also rebel against their father, further revealing the hostility of twelfth- and thirteenth-century churchmen for Eleanor's actions. Matthew Paris writes of these acts of rebellion in quite intensely: “Richard, Duke of Aquitaine, and Geoffrey, Duke of Brittany, by the advice of their mother Eleanor, chose to follow their brother rather than their father, so that all sides occurred dissensions, separations, conspiracy, hatred, robbery, and fire.” Matthew portrays Eleanor as the bringer of large amounts of destruction to the Angevin Empire, all because she gave advice to her sons to fight against their father. According to


Matthew, this is not something a queen should be doing.

Other chroniclers, like William of Newburgh and Robert de Torigni, do not use such biting language to describe Eleanor's crimes, but they still suggest that she had a large hand in inciting her sons to rebel. William writes, “[Henry's] two brothers, Richard and Geoffrey, who were still boys, were dwelling with their mother [in Aquitaine]. The story goes that with the tacit agreement of their mother he [Henry] sought their support and took them with him to France.”

Because William wrote that Richard and Geoffrey had been staying with their mother, he implies that she had great influence over them in their decision to fight against Henry II. Robert de Torigni also associates Eleanor with her sons' rebellion when he writes, “In like manner, the king was deserted by his queen Alienor [sic], and his sons Richard, count of Poitou, and Geoffrey, count of Brittany.”

In addition, because Robert uses such harsh language, saying that Eleanor “deserted” Henry, he implies that she committed a great sin against her husband. Eleanor had left Henry standing alone and without the support of his wife, an action that should never be done by a queen.

Another churchman, Peter of Blois, felt so strongly about Eleanor's unacceptable behavior that he wrote a letter to her in an attempt to end her act of disloyalty. In 1173, he wrote at the request of his patron, Rotrou the archbishop of Rouen, and explained the indissoluble nature of marriage that Eleanor needed to respect. He writes,

We deplore publicly and regretfully that, while you are a most prudent woman, you have left your husband...but what is worse, you have opened the way for the lord king's, and your own, children to rise up against the father...We know that unless you return to your husband, you will be the cause of widespread disaster. While you alone are now the delinquent one, your actions will result in ruin for everyone in the kingdom. Therefore, illustrious queen, return to your husband the king.

Peter's main concern with Eleanor's infidelity, then, is for the troubles that it will cause in Henry's realm; he anticipated, correctly, that this rebellion would lead to open warfare among Henry and his subjects. Like other churchmen, Peter believed that Eleanor's duty as Henry's queen was to help bring peace among his subjects, not create chaos. He further reveals these sentiments when he writes, “I beg you, advise your sons to be obedient and respectful to their father.”

From this, we can also see that Peter though that Eleanor could have brought her sons back to their father with her power as the queen mother, even if she has already strayed too far from the bonds of marriage in their rebellion. It is not known if Eleanor ever replied to Peter of Blois, but it is certain that Eleanor continued to give support to her three sons in their endeavors to obtain more power from Henry II.

Many scholars have commented on Eleanor's act of rebellion against her husband, but they do not all agree why medieval churchmen criticized Eleanor so heavily for her part in the rebellion. Ralph Turner and Jean Flori, for instance, argue that chroniclers criticized Eleanor because she deviated from the submissive role of a woman that she was supposed to play. Turner writes that “It appeared that...[Eleanor] was breaking one of the basic rules for a married woman, forgetting the submissiveness owed to her husband, just as she had at Antioch during her first marriage.”

He believes that medieval churchmen wanted women submissive to their husbands, which caused the chroniclers to berate Eleanor because she acted outside of this subordinate role. Flori also supports this assumption in his text, writing that Eleanor “departed from the accepted feminine pattern,” earning her harsh treatment from chroniclers. These scholars fail to place Eleanor's actions in the context of twelfth-century queenship in England and do not consider that

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88 Ibid.
chroniclers might have criticized Eleanor because she deviated from the patterns that had been set down by Matilda II and Matilda III.

Scholars like Huneycutt and Heather J. Tanner, however, do take the actions of previous queens under consideration. For instance, Huneycutt uses her 2003 essay “Alianora Regina Anglorum: Eleanor of Aquitaine and her Anglo-Norman Predecessors as Queens of England” to argue that Eleanor, as England's queen, did not build upon precedents set by England's previous queens because her actions were not consistent in the areas of intercession, diplomacy, and staying faithful to her spouse. This is what earned Eleanor the chroniclers' contempt.91 Tanner also places Eleanor in the context of queenly power of the twelfth-century by focusing on the life of Matilda III of Boulogne. She writes that “Matilda III's thorough integration into the governance of the realm was not repeated in Eleanor's years as queen of England” because of Eleanor's lack of lands in England and because the extension of royal bureaucracy circumscribed her power.92 Again, we see that placing Eleanor's actions in the context of queenly power in twelfth-century England provides a deeper understanding of why chroniclers praised some of her actions, such as supporting her sons Richard I and John I in their rule as kings, and criticized other actions, such as joining a rebellion against her husband. Therefore, we can conclude that churchmen and chroniclers did not criticize Eleanor because she acted outside the accepted role of a wife, but because she deviated from the accepted pattern of twelfth-century queenship.

Through her act of rebellion against her husband, Eleanor deviated in the most extreme way that she could from the queens who came before her, earning her the criticism of contemporary chroniclers and churchmen.

Replacing the Role of the Queen

Eleanor's part in the revolt ended soon after it began when Henry's forces captured her on her flight to the court of Louis VII at Chartres in late November 1173.\textsuperscript{93} Henry imprisoned her at Chinon castle while he dealt with the remaining rebels, and the two parties resolved their grievances with a treaty at Montlouis in October of 1174.\textsuperscript{94} Henry granted generous pardons to his sons for their actions against him, but he deemed Eleanor's actions unforgivable; it is not clear as to why Eleanor and her sons received such different treatment, but it is likely that Henry simply could not tolerate a disloyal wife who was supposed to remain loyal to him as his queen. And so, Eleanor would effectively remain the prisoner of her husband for the next fifteen years of her life until Henry II's death in 1189.\textsuperscript{95} Many scholars agree that 1173 marks a watershed for the loss of queenly power in the Middle Ages because the office of the chief justiciar replaced Eleanor's role as queen during her imprisonment; there seems to be a consensus among scholars that the rise of administrative kingship and monarchical power in England at this time severely undercut the role of women, including queens, in their roles of power. For instance, JoAnn McNamara writes that, before the eleventh century, “the sexes collaborated for good or evil more closely than they did in the millennium that followed,” and that “women were disadvantaged by the development of more centralized states.”\textsuperscript{96} Jennifer Ward and Huneycutt also agree with this assessment in the decrease of women's power, although they place the change about a century later than McNamara because they focus only on England in their discussions. For instance, Ward writes that after Eleanor's time as queen in the late twelfth century, queens-consort were rarely involved in politics.\textsuperscript{97} Similarly, Huneycutt writes that “Eleanor's personal difficulties with

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{93} Turner, \textit{Eleanor of Aquitaine}, 227.
\item \textsuperscript{94} Ibid., 228.
\item \textsuperscript{95} Ibid., 230.
\item \textsuperscript{96} McNamara, “Women and Power through the Family Revisited,” 30, 22.
\item \textsuperscript{97} Ward, \textit{Women in England in the Middle Ages}, 133.
\end{itemize}
Henry may have forced changes that would prove detrimental to the status of the queen far beyond her own reign” because of the combination of shifting relations with her husband and changes in the administrative structure of England's government.  

While Eleanor herself cannot be held solely responsible for diminishing the role of the queen in England, her imprisonment for fifteen years did allow Henry II the opportunity to replace duties that would have normally been relegated to the queen to the chief justiciar, allowing the queen's role to become highly overshadowed. We can see the change by comparing the duties of the queen before and during Eleanor's imprisonment. Before 1173, Eleanor had the power to overrule the justiciar in his decisions; we see this in a lawsuit from 1158-9, when Earl Robert of Leicester, one of two men serving as chief justiciar at the time, failed to issue a writ that would protect the property of the abbey of St. Albans from seizure. Eleanor issued her own writ in response to this that protected the abbey of St. Albans from further losses. However, during Eleanor's imprisonment, the office of the justiciar took its next step in developing into the office that would be considered “second to the king” by the end of the twelfth century.

Indeed, when discussing the governmental changes that occurred during Henry II's reign, Turner writes that the administrative changes that Henry II made “demanded a new kind of royal servant,” and he lists several qualities that Henry valued in these offices. Not surprisingly, loyalty was one of the top attributes desirable for a royal official, given Henry's trouble with the disloyalty of his sons and queen. It is also not surprising that Henry sought aid in rule elsewhere from the members of his family; the “special circumstances of the 1170s” most certainly had a

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98 Huneycutt, “Alianora Regina Anglorum,” 130.
99 Turner, Eleanor of Aquitaine, 155.
101 Turner, Eleanor of Aquitaine, 155.
hand in bringing the office of the chief justiciar into full existence, and this man for Henry II was Richard de Lucy.\(^{103}\) Richard's duties as the chief justiciar are described in the *Dialogus de Scaccario*, a guide written in the late 1170s as an instructional dialogue to the procedures of the twelfth-century exchequer.

The *Dialogus* essentially describes the justiciar's office as the king's *alter ego*.\(^{104}\) For instance, the text reads, “...the lord king's chief justiciar[s]...office makes him first in the realm after the king,” and that he “is the top man in the kingdom.”\(^{105}\) So, instead of the queen acting as the king's second in command, the chief justiciar did. In addition, the chief justiciar acted as the head of state while the king was gone, like the queen used to do: “But what I have said about the king's writs should be understood to be just the same for the writs of the presiding justiciar, though *only when the king is absent* [emphasis added].”\(^{106}\) The justiciar also dealt with disagreements among barons of the exchequer, dispensing justice and he represented the king in sittings of the *curia regis*.\(^{107}\) These duties of the justiciar coincide with the duties of the queen, and the fact that this office was much more defined after 1173 shows that the king reallocated the queen's duties of acting in his place to the chief justiciar. Thus, Eleanor's deviations from accepted patterns of queenship allowed Henry II to replace the queen's duties of acting in the king's stead, which limited the available means of power for queens for years to come.

**Conclusion**

While Eleanor is often remembered as the “rebel queen,” it is also important to consider her as the queen who took an active part in the role of the governance of her realm. Even though


\(^{104}\) Ibid., 45-46.


\(^{106}\) Ibid., 51.

of her actions deviated from precedents set down by Matilda II of Scotland and Matilda III of Boulogne, she still made an impact on the governance of England during her time as queen. Her captivity sadly cut her off from continuing to act as Henry's queen, and the French chronicler Richard le Poitevin eloquently mourns her imprisonment: “I beg you, two-crowned queen, leave your ceaseless grieving! Why wear yourself out with sorrow? Why afflict your heart with daily tears? Come back, O captive, come back to your estates, if you can.” Eleanor would come back, and bring with her a ruling force to both Aquitaine and England not easily forgotten, establishing herself as a good queen at long last in her actions to secure the authority of her sons Richard I and John as kings of England.

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Conclusion

The lives of Matilda II of Scotland, Matilda III of Boulogne, and Eleanor of Aquitaine demonstrate that the role of the queen in twelfth-century England was to act as the partner and helpmate of her husband in rule. They took part in many duties, such as acting as the governmental head in the king’s place, issuing charters and legislation, dispensing justice at court, educating their children, patronage, and tempering the king’s laws with mercy through intercession. These duties complemented the duties of the king, making them true partners in rule with their husbands. However, from the lives of these queens, we can also determine that her duties were not entirely secure. The queen’s role as the king’s partner depended on the relationship of the royal couple and on historical circumstances that necessitated either a greater or lesser need for the queen's support of the king.

These factors either greatly benefited the queen, like with Matilda II and Matilda III, or negatively affected the queen, like with Eleanor of Aquitaine. Matilda II can be considered an integral part of the institution of the monarchy in the early twelfth-century, shown by her partnership with Henry I in their marriage and by her active participation in diplomacy, intercession, and acting as the head of state, to name a few. Her actions drew the attention of twelfth-century chroniclers and set a precedent for future queens of England to follow. Matilda III followed these precedents and even exceeded them in some areas. Her harmonious working relationship with Stephen and the instability of rule created by the Anarchy allowed her to perform even duties of military leadership; this further demonstrates the flexible nature of queenship in twelfth-century England. Chroniclers also praised Matilda II and Matilda III for their actions done to support their husbands in their rule as kings. This flexible nature of queenship, though, came to work against the queen with the reign of Eleanor of Aquitaine, whose
queenly role became overshadowed by the increasing bureaucratization of the Angevin Empire’s
government and the office of the chief justiciar. That, plus her inharmonious working and
personal relationship with Henry II and inability to act in accordance with precedents set by
Matilda II and Matilda III, earned her criticism from chroniclers as well as a less active role as
queen. Because of Eleanor's imprisonment in 1173, the office of the chief justiciar overtook
many duties of the queen, and by the end of the twelfth century, it was the chief justiciar who
came to act as the king's second, not the queen as in previous years.

Even though the office of queenship in England came to be overshadowed by the office
of the chief justiciar, the contributions of Matilda II of Scotland, Matilda III of Boulogne, and
Eleanor of Aquitaine to the rule of England are not by any means insignificant. Their actions
show that queens in twelfth-century England were not just submissive wives to the kings, but
functioning rulers who greatly contributed their particular skills and capacities to the governance
of England in the twelfth-century.
Figure 1. Genealogy of twelfth-century queens of England. Source: Chart compiled by author.
Appendix II


Figure 6. Seal of Eleanor of Aquitaine as queen of England, drawing made for Gaignières, Paris. 

Appendix III


Bibliography

Primary Sources


**Secondary Sources**


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