

QUEEN-MAKING AND QUEENSHIP
IN EARLY MEDIEVAL ENGLAND AND FRANCIA

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For my Mother
in loving memory

ABSTRACT

This thesis compares the functions of queen-making and the concepts of queenship in Anglo-Saxon England and West Francia in the early medieval period. The urge to inaugurate the king's wife ritually to her position, in particular to anoint her as part of a rite of passage, seems to have arisen among the two peoples at more or less the same time. The present work assesses the significance of queen-making for both peoples, the possible exchange of coronation orders [*ordines*], and any cross-Channel influence which may have created conditions in which developments occurred. It addresses such questions as whether a concept of queenship existed, whether queenship was regarded as an office, and if there was any interdependence between queen-making rites and concepts of queenship. The work follows the chronological development of queen-making rites, surveying the entire early medieval period, from the conversions of both peoples to the late eleventh century. It takes as its starting point the period when a woman became a queen simply by virtue of the fact of her marriage with a king. We know of one queen's consecration in the mid-eighth century, that of Bertrada, though the more regular consecrations of queens, including an element of unction, began in the mid- to late ninth century. The earliest queen-making rites were developed in Francia and were quickly adopted by the Anglo-Saxons who continued to use and develop them until the Conquest. The West Franks were more conservative in developing their king- and queen-making rites and from the early tenth to the early twelfth centuries appear to have left their royal inauguration rites unchanged. The thesis analyses the *ordines* used in order to assess the purposes, and the political and religious significance, of queen-making. It surveys the surviving manuscripts containing the *ordines*, and the printed texts of those *ordines* for which no manuscripts survive. The texts of the *ordines* are provided in an Appendix.

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My father, whose love and generosity have helped me achieve my dream.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I certify that the substance of this thesis
has not already been submitted for any degree and
is not currently being submitted for any other degrees.

I certify that to the best of my knowledge
any help received in preparing this thesis, and
all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

Julie Ann Smith

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AB</i>	<i>Annales Bertiniani</i>
<i>AF</i>	<i>Annales Fuldenses</i>
<i>ASC</i>	<i>Anglo-Saxon Chronicle</i>
<i>ASE</i>	<i>Anglo-Saxon England</i>
Bede, <i>HE</i>	Bede, <i>Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum</i>
B.	<i>Cartularium Saxonicum</i> Ed. W.de G. Birch
BL	British Library
BN	Bibliothèque Nationale
EETS	Early English Text Society
<i>EHR</i>	<i>English Historical Review</i>
<i>FS</i>	<i>Frühmittelalterliche Studien</i>
Gregory of Tours, <i>LH</i>	Gregory of Tours, <i>Historiarum Libri Decem</i>
H.	<i>Anglo-Saxon Writs</i> Ed. FE. Harmer
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>JMH</i>	<i>Journal of Medieval History</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
K.	<i>Codex Diplomaticus Aevi Saxonici</i> Ed. J.M. Kemble
<i>MGH</i>	<i>Monumenta Germaniae Historica</i>
<i>Capit.</i>	<i>Capitularia Regum Francorum</i>
<i>Epp.</i>	<i>Epistolae</i>
<i>LM</i>	<i>Libri Memoriales et Necrologia</i> (New Series)
<i>SS</i>	<i>Scriptores</i>
<i>SSRM</i>	<i>Scriptores Rerum Merovingicarum</i>
<i>P&P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus, series latina</i> Ed. J.P. Migne
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Bénédictine</i>
R.	<i>Anglo-Saxon Charters</i> Ed. A.J. Robertson
RS	Rols Series
S.	P.H. Sawyer, <i>Anglo-Saxon Charters: an Annotated List and Bibliography</i>
<i>SMRH</i>	<i>Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History</i>
Tessier	<i>Recueils des Actes de Charles le Chauve</i> Ed. G. Tessier
<i>TRHS</i>	<i>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</i>
<i>VCH</i>	<i>Victoria County History</i>

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

From the late ninth and early tenth centuries it became customary in England and Francia for a queen to be ritually inaugurated to her position. The rite of passage of consecration endowed her with a new persona, and with the attributes and virtues of queenship. Of course, the sources reveal that kings' wives had been queens and significant members of the royal households from the sixth century at the latest. The nature of queenship changed gradually over the period: initially a queen was made by marriage with a king and her office carried strong religious significance, while, later, queenship came to require ritual inauguration. The present work is not simply a discussion of early medieval queen-making rites, for this would only have necessitated a study of the ninth to the eleventh centuries, but queen-making reciprocated with ideas of queenship just as king-making was inextricably bound up with ideas of kingship. During the early medieval period queen-making became a religious ritual, incorporating elements of anointing, imposition of insignia and, eventually, recognition. She was not a ruler and hence ruler theology and ideology could not be applied to her inauguration rites. Her installation had different purposes and ideology and different symbolism was required to underpin her new life and her new significance. The ritual actions of queen-making resembled some of those used in king-making, but they held different symbolism when applied to the king's wife. Janet Nelson has written that the anointing of the king mirrored 'not simply an actual situation but an ideal' and was a means of asserting a society's identity.¹ She goes on to comment that the anointing of a queen provided 'divinely blessed fertility which helped assure the continuance of society itself':² in this she is only allowing for a part of the 'situation' and does allow that it represented any 'ideal'. Thus far, any study of the early medieval queen-making rites has concentrated on the dynastic and political elements, and on these only superficially. This discussion explores not only these elements in greater depth but also the ideas which informed the development of the rites.

Before engaging in any discussion of the themes of this thesis I shall define some terms which are central to the argument, and also explain the chronological and geographical limits which have been set. For the purposes of the present work the term *queen-making* covers all possible means by which a woman might become queen, or warrant being called queen: (i) cohabiting with a king, (ii) marriage with a king, (iii) a

¹J.Nelson, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), p.304.

²*ibid.*

secular inauguration procedure such as coronation or enthroning,³ (iv) liturgical consecration, including unction. The ritual of queen-making was, according to J.C. Parsons,⁴ only one element of the ritualised features of the lives of queens. He sees any element of queenly behaviour which is repetitive and/or symbolic in nature as part of the ritual of queenship. However, for the present work, only the ritual of queen-making, and its reflection in, and significance for, the role of the king's wife, will be explored.

By *queenship* I do not mean sovereignty (as a sort of feminised kingship) rather the ideas which were accepted or endorsed within a given community concerning the person, duties, rights, and image of the king's wife. Just as kingship had different meanings, and the requirements placed upon kings and the roles they would be expected to fulfil varied over time and geographic distribution, so too would queenship vary according to the needs of time and place. The royal household was the centre of public power, and within this household, in the early medieval period, the private and the public merged. The queen's position within this public-domestic context was necessarily visible and at least some power and authority might devolve upon her. However, power and authority do not, strictly speaking, enter into the present discussion, as these were usually achieved by individual women (that is, the individual's personality was a significant factor in her success) or were conveyed by an individual (as in Charlemagne's *Capitulare de Villis*), but their bestowal was never incorporated into the queen-making rites. I shall be discussing attitudes towards, and ideas about, the king's wife which were specific to her as queen: (i) her status (that is, whether marriage or consecration were necessary), (ii) the virtues expected of a candidate as well as those which were intended to be conveyed by consecration, (iii) the significance of queenship for the throneworthiness of kings' sons, (iv) her religious roles, both in the *aula regis* and in the greater community, (v) the status which continued to inhere in the queen's person when she was no longer the consort of the reigning king, either through divorce or widowhood.

The discussion will cover the period from the times we have written records for both peoples, that is, from the sixth century, to the end of the Anglo-Saxon period in England, and to the late eleventh century in France. The latter years of this period constitute what might be called the zenith of medieval queenship. In England the eleventh century necessarily marks the end of the Anglo-Saxon queenship. In Francia,

³We have no written evidence for the existence of such inauguration procedures but they may as well be accepted as having taken place in the same way as secular king-makings have been accepted although we have no written evidence for them.

⁴J.C. Parsons, 'Ritual and Symbol in the English Medieval Queenship', in L.O.Fradenburg ed., *Women and Sovereignty* (Edinburgh, 1992), p.60.

in the years when the monarchy held small domain and limited powers, the queen's right to share these powers was not questioned.⁵ However, during the twelfth century as the power of the kings was consolidating in an expanding domain with increasingly complex organisation, there was less opportunity for queens to participate in royal government: they 'were losing the power they had derived from the private power of the family',⁶ that is, their position became centred only in the private, only in the family. As these changes mark changes in the essential nature of queenship, and in England a change not just in the monarchy but in the nation as well, it seems a natural point at which to end the current discussion. The royal inauguration rites also enter new phases in the late eleventh century and begin to absorb influences from outside the geographic sphere of the thesis.

The geographic limits have been chosen because during the early medieval period there was some limited cross-Channel exchange in royal inauguration *ordines*. The English consecration rites for king and queen to the present day are still based on those devised in West Francia in the ninth century, as were the rites used in France until the end of the monarchy. There seems to have been no influence in the rites of either the Anglo-Saxons or the West Franks from the liturgies of any of the other peoples with whom they had contact. The rites devised in the East Frankish realm, which were based on the Roman liturgy, made their earliest appearance in England only in the mid-eleventh century, and apparently had no influence at all on the West Frankish rites during the period.

THE LITERATURE

The history of queen-making and queenship in early medieval England and Francia has received limited and selective attention by historians either of the period in general, or of its women, or of the royal inauguration *ordines*. Works specifically dealing with early medieval royal consecration rites have concentrated almost exclusively on king-making. H.A. Wilson, in his article 'The English Coronation Orders',⁷ states his decision not to take the queen-making *ordines* into account. In the same year L.G.W.

⁵M. Facinger, 'A Study of Medieval Queenship: Capetian France, 987-1237', in W.M.Bowsky ed., *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1968), p.33.

⁶J. McNamara and S. Wemple, 'The Power of Women through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500-1100', in M. Erler and M. Kowalski eds., *Women and Power in the Early Middle Ages* (Athens, Georgia, 1988), p.9.

⁷*JTS* 2 (1901), 481-504.

Legg wrote his *English Coronation Records* (Westminster, 1901), which deals mostly with material from after the early medieval period. The book does contain exemplars of each of the four Recensions of the coronation *ordines*, the first three of which are from the early medieval period, and in each case gives the queen-making *ordo* as well as that for the king. However, the work is mainly a sourcebook, with little evaluation or exegesis. J.A. Robinson's article 'The Coronation Order in the Tenth Century'⁸ concentrates on dating, and identifying sources for, the 'Ratoldus' and 'Claudius II' *ordines*.⁹ He therefore addresses the *ordo* which was devised for the consecration of the Frankish princess Judith, as Queen of Æthelwulf of Wessex, in 856, but only insofar as it has such close relationship with the 'Leofric' king-making *ordo*. The queen-making *ordines* of the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts are not discussed at all.

In his *History of the English Coronation* (Oxford, 1937) P.E. Schramm wrote a very general history of the practice of king-making with no discussion of the development or significance of the *ordines*. Only the second chapter concerns early medieval king-makings. His references to queen-making are brief and reveal that he did not consider it significant. He comments that the Anglo-Saxons did not have queens before 856, though it was usual practice among the Carolingians.¹⁰ The consecration, in 856, of Judith, as Queen of the West Saxons was an attempt to raise the king's wife to the same status as that of the Frankish queens; however, it 'was a failure, and for some time to come both title and consecration were not repeated'.¹¹ In 973, a new *ordo* provided a section for the consecration of the Anglo-Saxon queen, but 'of course it was some time before the ideas underlying this ceremony were established among the Anglo-Saxons. Even Edgar's consort is not always styled *Regina*, and as late as the year 1000 it was not an understood thing that the Queen should receive a crown at all'.¹² P.L. Ward's article, 'The Coronation Ceremony in Medieval England'¹³ is simply a history of the English king-making rites up to the twelfth century which glances very briefly at the 'Judith' and 'Hermintrudis' *ordines*, but only in relation to their influence on the development of rites for kings.

In *Sacring and Crowning* (Groningen, 1957), C.A. Bouman traces the history of

⁸*JTS* 19 (1918), 56-72.

⁹The *ordines* and their representative manuscripts will be discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁰p.16.

¹¹p.17.

¹²p.22.

¹³*Speculum* 14 (1939), 160-78.

royal and imperial consecration rites, analysing the *ordines* and the formulas. Beginning with the earliest sacramentary material, he gives the background of the sources and the extant manuscripts, as well as any edited texts available. For any student of royal inauguration liturgy it is an excellent starting-point and companion reference-text. In Bouman's masterwork he, admittedly, only proposed to discuss the inauguration rites for kings and emperors; nevertheless it was disappointing to read in the brief half-page he devoted to the queen-making *ordines*, only that 'the tradition of a queen's blessing offers no special problems with regard to the development of the royal liturgy'.¹⁴ He mentions the queen-making *ordines* of Hincmar and those of the 'Erdmann' and 'Stavelot' traditions, and then dismisses the topic, 'for the present inquiry they are of no further interest'.¹⁵

J. Brückmann's article 'The *Ordines* of the Third Recension of the Medieval Coronation Order'¹⁶ deals with the series of manuscripts which contain versions of the royal consecration *ordines* of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. He shows that the Third Recension¹⁷ was first developed during the late eleventh century, introducing what Nelson would later call the 'Brückmann factor', that is, the use of the queen-making *ordines* to assist in dating pairs of royal *ordines*. However, he does not expand on the nature of the queen-making rites or on what they were designed to achieve. When M.J. Enright wrote *Iona, Tara and Soissons: the Origins of the Royal Anointing Ritual* (Berlin and New York, 1985) he was only concerned with the introduction of anointing to Frankish royal inauguration rites, and with the possibility of Irish or Visigothic influence on West Frankish liturgists.

Essential for students of early medieval Frankish and Anglo-Saxon royal inauguration liturgy are the works of Janet Nelson. Most of her writings on this topic have been published *en bloc* in *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1986), and there are also 'The Lord's Anointed and the People's Choice: Carolingian

¹⁴p.151.

¹⁵*ibid.*

¹⁶In T.A.Sandquist & M.R.Powicke Eds., *Essays in Medieval History presented to Bertie Wilkinson* (Toronto, 1969).

¹⁷There are four main categories, or Recensions, of early medieval and medieval king-making *ordines*. They are categorised according to their prayer formulas and do not usually take into account the presence, or formulas, of queen-making *ordines*. Indeed the queen-making *ordines* do not fit well into these categories as developments do not always parallel those of the king-making rites. Therefore the various Recensions are only mentioned here to assist in dating manuscripts and *ordines*.

Royal Ritual'¹⁸ and 'Hincmar of Reims on Kingmaking: the Evidence of the Annals of St-Bertin'.¹⁹ However, her work concentrates on king-making *ordines*: their sources; dating and order of production; provenance; and of course their political implications. Queen-making *ordines* are not included in her studies: in 'The Earliest Royal *Ordo*: Some Liturgical and Historical Aspects'²⁰ the *ordo* for Queen Judith is discussed only insofar as it is dependent upon the contemporary Anglo-Saxon king-making *ordo*, and in 'The Second English *Ordo*'²¹ the queen-making *ordines* of the Second Recension manuscripts, that is the 'Erdmann' descendents of the tenth century, the formulas for queen-makings are used to help date the texts. In no instance, in any work which discusses royal consecration *ordines* of the early medieval period, are the queen-making *ordines* explored or evaluated in their own right. It is one of the purposes of the present work to discern what were the value and significance of early medieval queen-making rites.

Queen-making and queenship are rarely topics to be found discussed in works on early medieval women. In texts such as S. Wemple's *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500-900* (Philadelphia, 1981), while she discusses the activities of the queens, she does not discuss queenship or queen-making as these are not part of her plan: she is looking not for queens but for the women of whom queens form a very small but accessible group. Likewise, J. Mc Namara and S. Wemple in their article, 'The Power of Women through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500-1100',²² only discuss queens as the most visible examples of the women they are seeking to discover in the history of the early medieval period. J. Nicholson's article, '*Feminae Gloriosae*: Women in the Age of Bede', is the only article on early medieval women to appear in *Medieval Women* edited by D. Baker, and is mainly concerned with royal abbesses and with the convent as the favoured occupation of well-born women.

In works where one might expect to find some aspects of queenship being discussed, such as in L.M. Larson's *The King's Household in England before the Norman Conquest* (New York, 1970), or A.W. Lewis' *Royal Succession in Capetian France: Studies on Familial Order and the State* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), the queen is all but ignored.

¹⁸In D. Cannadine and S. Price eds., *Rituals of Royalty: Power and Ceremonial in Traditional Societies* (Cambridge, 1987).

¹⁹In J.M. Bak ed., *Coronations: Medieval and Early Modern Monarchic Ritual* (Berkeley, 1990).

²⁰In *Politics and Ritual*.

²¹*ibid.*

²²*op.cit.*

Larson comments that at court, everything centred on the king, though he might share power with 'certain members of his immediate family. Of these we should first of all think of the queen. Her position, however, is not very clear' and after a couple of oblique references to *Beowulf* and Asser, he passes quickly on to 'clearer' things.²³ Lewis' work is, as the title explains, about royal succession and royal familial politics, but, although he does find that the marriages of kings and princes were made with political advantage in mind, he does not suggest that there might have been any exploitation of queenship or queen-making as an element of this Capetian programme.

There are a number of works on individual queens which concentrate on the personal careers of the women they discuss and their influence on contemporary politics.²⁴ But they do not fit them into any larger pattern of ideas on queenship (either contemporary or modern); neither do they explore the ramifications of the queen-makings of these women. The one exception in this case is M.J. Enright's 'Charles the Bald and Æthelwulf of Wessex: the Alliance of 856 and Strategies of Royal Succession'.²⁵ In this article Judith's queen-making is treated as a central feature of the alliance between the two kings; however, its ramifications for the study of queen-making are neither explored nor recognised.

Studies which do deal specifically with queenship concentrate upon its political significance, and where they do examine such religious and ritual aspects of queenship as coronation, Church patronage, monastic vocations, and sainthood, it is usually with the purpose of illuminating their political activities. J. Hyam, in her article 'Ermentrude and Richildis',²⁶ undertakes a study of the political advantages of Charles' two marriages, and of the spheres of influences and the bases of power of the two queens. However, she is mainly interested in how their careers contribute to our knowledge of

²³p.117.

²⁴A. Cabaniss, 'Judith Augusta and her Time', *Studies in English* 10 (1969) 67-109; M.W. Campbell, 'Queen Emma and Ælfgifu of Northampton: Cnut the Great's Women', *Medieval Scandinavia* 4 (1971) 66-79; K.E. Cutler, 'Edith, Queen of England, 1045-1066', *Medieval Studies* 35 (1973) 222-31; C.R. Hart, 'Two Queens of England', *Ampleforth Journal* 82 pt.2 (1977) 10-15; G. Kurth, *St Clotilda* (London, 1898); J. Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels: Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History' in *Politics and Ritual*; E.D. Sokol, 'Anna of Rus, Queen of France', *The New Review: a Journal of East European History* 13 (1973) 3-13; E. Ward, 'Caesar's Wife: the Career of the Empress Judith, 819-829' in P. Godman & R. Collins eds., *Charlemagne's Heir* (Oxford, 1990).

²⁵*JMH* 5 (1979) 291-302.

²⁶In J. Nelson & M. Gibson eds., *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom* 2nd Ed. (Aldershot, 1990), pp.154-68.

the reign of Charles the Bald. J. Dhondt, in 'Sept Femmes et un Trio de Rois',²⁷ discusses the marriages and careers of the wives of Robert II the Pious, Henry I, and Philip I. He does not discuss their queen-makings, nor any contemporary ideas pertaining to the queenship of these Capetian wives.

M. Facinger conducts a much broader study of Capetian queenship in 'A Study of Medieval Queenship: Capetian France, 987-1237'.²⁸ In this article, of which only the early part overlaps with the period covered by the present work, she assesses the individual careers of the queens to find if it is possible to formulate a definition of the office of queenship. She finds that the office may be evaluated only by observing the public actions of the queens and the changes which took place in the queen's potential to act. In the present study I shall not only extend the chronological and geographical bases of Facinger's work but also broaden the criteria by which the concept of queenship may be assessed.

With regard to the actual rites which were being used for the inaugurations of West Frankish and Anglo-Saxon queens, Facinger observes that the anointing of the queen did not start to take place in France until the twelfth century,²⁹ and that the existence of queen-making formulas in earlier Anglo-Saxon manuscripts does not indicate that the ritual anointing of the queen ever actually took place in that period.³⁰ In her view, marriage vows, coronation and special benediction were what made a queen until the middle of the twelfth century when a 'new' element, unction, was introduced to the queen-making rite.³¹ Abbot Suger's description of the marriage and consecration of Constance of Castille in 1154, in which the abbot specifically mentions the unction of the queen, constitutes what Facinger believes to be our first evidence for such an anointing.³² However, during the late ninth century an apparently unprecedented rite for the consecration of a queen which included the elements of anointing, coronation, and ring-giving was created somewhere in Francia alongside a new king-making *ordo*.³³ It seems unconvincing that this new protocol, which continued to be copied into bishops'

²⁷*Contributions à l'Histoire Economique et Sociale* 3 (1964-5) 35-70.

²⁸In M. Bowsky Ed., *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 1968), pp.3-47.

²⁹p.17.

³⁰p.17 note 32 & p.19 note 42.

³¹p.17.

³²*ibid.*

³³This *ordo*, now generally known as the 'Erdmann' *ordo*, will be discussed in Chapter 2.

books until the twelfth century, was compiled for a ceremony which had never been conducted, and was also never likely to take place. The existence of queen-making *ordines* in many West Frankish and Anglo-Saxon pontificals,³⁴ and the slight but significant changes which took place in the wording of the formulas during the ninth to the eleventh centuries, do not well support her claims.

The single most extensive corpus of writings on the early medieval queens by any one historian is that of Pauline Stafford. In works such as 'The King's Wife in Wessex',³⁵ and *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: the King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1983), she discusses such themes as dynastic politics and succession practices, royal marital politics, the potential for active political participation of kings' wives, and regencies. In 'Sons and Mothers: Family Politics in the Early Middle Ages'³⁶ she discusses the queen's role in succession politics but does not consider the importance of the consecration of the queen for the throneworthiness of her sons. In her article 'Charles the Bald, Judith and England'³⁷ she discusses Judith's consecration and its significance for Anglo-Saxon politics, but not the ritual's content or its status-changing qualities. None of her works undertakes a study of the nature of queen-making rites or an evaluation of the *ordines*, nor of the changes which took place in queen-making *ordines* during the early medieval period. While she accepts that the anointing of queens became standard practice in West Francia in the tenth century, she allows the Anglo-Saxons no anointed queen between Judith and Ælfthryth,³⁸ disregarding the evidence that the *ordines* continued to be copied and developed (and presumably used) during this period. And when the queen *was* consecrated the rite 'was designed more for the benefit of the dynasty than of herself'.³⁹

The accepted view among modern commentators concerning the anointing of queens seems to be that the magical-fertility aspects of the queen's consecration underlined her function as producer of royal heirs. Stafford writes, 'the origins of the practice lay in the requirements of fertility and succession',⁴⁰ and that Charles the Bald

³⁴A pontifical is a formulary containing directions and benedictions specific to the usage of a bishop.

³⁵*P&P* 91 (1981) 3-27.

³⁶In D. Baker Ed., *Medieval Women* (Oxford, 1978), pp.79-100.

³⁷In Nelson & Gibson, *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom*, pp.139-53.

³⁸*Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.7.

³⁹*ibid.*, p.134.

⁴⁰*ibid.*, p.134.

and his successors were strongly influenced by the 'fertility magic' of the ritual.⁴¹ She does not deal in detail with the nature of the rituals or the formulas of the *ordines* for queen-making. They are indeed more significant than has been suggested by commentators such as M.J. Enright and J.M. Wallace-Hadrill who regard the queen-makings of the reign of Charles the Bald as essentially fertility rites. Wallace-Hadrill comments that Richildis and Ermentrude were both crowned in the hope of better sons for Charles,⁴² while Enright argues that fertility was the 'magico-religious purpose' of queenly unction.⁴³ The use of anointing as a status-changing medium in sacramental rites does not indicate how this could have suggested to the creators of the inauguration rites for both kings and queens that its use might suddenly and incongruously be distorted to become a means of inducing or guaranteeing fertility. This is not a property which was expected of the holy oil in any other rite or context: it was meant to convey spiritual, not physical, attributes.

The *ordines* do reveal other ambitions and expectations, and do solicit other blessings, which cannot have been intended to disguise any fertility elements which may have been present in the rites. Enright goes on to state that unction and coronation of a queen 'endowed a king's wife with a new superiority and prestige and probably tended to make her, in some certain degree, charismatic',⁴⁴ as if these attributes were some accidental side-effect of the fertility magic. If the queen-making endowed the queen with these attributes, it was surely more than a fertility ritual. Enright's comment that the anointing of the queen was an 'extraordinary emergency device'⁴⁵ does not consider it in the light of other events in the reign of Charles the Bald, or of the liturgical and ritual advances that were made at that time, nor does he analyse the formulas of the rites to support his arguments. Nelson also writes that the queen's anointing was designed to assure the community's continuity through time, 'for it was through the provision of heirs to the royal house and the implied confining of those heirs to a single line, that the queen's divinely-blessed fertility helped assure the integrity and the continuance of society itself'.⁴⁶ There can be no doubt that the production of royal offspring, and the guaranteeing of the throneworthiness of those offspring, were elements of early medieval

⁴¹*ibid.*, p.87 and 'Charles the Bald, Judith and England', p.141.

⁴²*The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), p.248.

⁴³'Charles the Bald and Æthelwulf of Wessex', p.298.

⁴⁴*ibid.*, p.300.

⁴⁵*ibid.*

⁴⁶*Politics and Ritual*, p.304.

statecraft, but they were not significant elements of the *ordines* which were developed for the consecration of queens. Perhaps because commentators have seen queen-makings as essentially fertility enhancing rituals they have not recognised their true significance in the development of queenship.

Ideas regarding queen-making seem to have altered but little since R.M. Woolley wrote in 1915, 'the comparative unimportance of the coronation of the queen consort is shewn by the fact that many were not crowned at all'.⁴⁷ One cannot really argue from negative evidence that queens were not inaugurated simply because the sources do not mention them: there are few references to the ritual inauguration of kings, but there seems to be little doubt ever expressed that these took place. Perhaps not all queens were ritually inaugurated, but it is unlikely that the *ordines* were developed and then never used. Bouman has written that some of the variant formulas were not necessarily meant for use in actual accession rituals⁴⁸ (and certain redactions, such as the *Ratoldus Pontifical*, compiled for an Abbot of Corbie, probably *were* never meant for specific usage in royal inauguration rituals); but in claiming that the numbers of variants are far in excess of those required for historical usage he has assumed that there were no more inaugurations than may be found in the surviving sources, and that a new manuscript was compiled every time there was coronation. He does not allow for the probability that some manuscripts were re-used on more than one occasion.

Existing scholarship on early medieval queens has concentrated on themes of authority and power but has not considered the possibility of any ideas concerning queenship in the way that scholarly interest in kings has explored, in seemingly infinite permutations, the facets and intricacies of contemporary ideas of kingship. Stafford, Facinger, Nelson and others have made a valuable and long-overdue beginning to reinstall the royal ladies in their appropriate political, institutional and court environments, and revealed the potential for future studies of early medieval queens. The existing scholarship has, perhaps necessarily, focussed upon social, political and religious contexts (all of which will form parts of the arguments and discussion of the ensuing chapters), and, until such contexts had been established, a discussion of the nature of the present work could not have been possible.

It may have been difficult for those historians looking only at an individual queen's career, or discussing a shorter historical span, to see that a case can be made for developing ideas of queenship, and if no mention is to be found in the sources for the consecration of that particular queen it may have seemed unsuitable to discuss

⁴⁷*Coronation Rites* (Cambridge, 1915), p.199.

⁴⁸*Sacring and Crowning*, p.53.

queen-making. Facinger does glance at the possibility of a concept of queenship in France during the Capetian period but without the background of a cumulative view such as the present work provides she perhaps misses some of the finer nuances expressed in the writings, and the significance of events which took place in the tenth and eleventh centuries in West Francia. However, in the longer overview provided by the present work, these individual women can be seen as fitting into patterns established in earlier periods, and continuing, or perhaps expanding, traditions of queenship. It may also no longer be possible to think of a particular queen as necessarily unconsecrated in spite of the lack of such information in the sources.

THE SOURCES

The amount and range of source material available for the study of early medieval queenship varies throughout the period. Sources such as histories and chronicles, charters, letters, and saints' lives will be consulted where available for there are times when these sources speak directly about queens and queenship. There will also be a few sources which were written, if not solely then largely, about individual queens and the nature of their position. And in one or two cases we have access to the thoughts of individual queens concerning the nature of queenship and the rights and duties pertaining to their rank and dignity. Of course, the most extensively used single type of source will be the consecration liturgy. For this purpose I have consulted as many of the early medieval royal consecration *ordines* as I have been able to gain access to. Some are available in printed editions, and several manuscripts are in English collections. Many of the queen-making *ordines* have never been published, and there are a small number in continental collections which I have not been able to consult. I have, nevertheless, studied a good representative group of queen-making *ordines* consisting of all the major redactions which took place within the geographical and chronological limits of the thesis.⁴⁹

Regarding the use of liturgy as a source of contemporary political ideas, Morrison has written, 'the king held his power of God and could be deposed only by the judgement of God. In this, the coronation *ordines* represented accurately the tenor of ninth-century thought'.⁵⁰ However, Nelson believes the opposite to be the case:

⁴⁹These *ordines* may all be found in the Appendix.

⁵⁰K.F. Morrison, *The Two Kingdoms: Ecclesiology in Carolingian Political Thought* (Princeton, 1964), p.219.

... successive recensions of *ordines* ought not to be treated like set texts in a Political Ideas course. Liturgy is not the place to look for polemic, and though political ideas can be found in the *ordines*, they are of the most general, uncontentious and normative kind. To say that many of the prayer texts are catenae of clichés, scriptural or liturgical, is not perhaps a very helpful observation: nevertheless, the would-be seeker out of new claims or theories in these formulae will find it disappointingly often true.⁵¹

The archaic phrase concerning the Saxons, Mercians and Northumbrians found in Frankish king-making *ordines* has been presumed to have been taken from a now-lost Anglo-Saxon exemplar.⁵² The phrase remained a part of the French *ordines* for centuries, never being removed in spite of numerous revisions and copyings, and Nelson believes this exemplified the ‘profound respect of the later middle ages for ritual tradition precisely preserved. The medium itself had become the message.’⁵³ All of this raises questions as to how far liturgy can be studied to produce a reflection of contemporary values. Liturgy may not be a statement of contemporary political theory but it can surely be expected to reflect ideas, values and aspirations, particularly at times when it is being revised and expanded. It is true that the liturgy was not constantly changed or revised, but during those periods when no changes were made one should expect the *ordines*, if they continued to be used, to continue to reflect contemporary values. If they had come to contradict those values, one might expect them to have been changed. And not only liturgy but ritual as well: if ritual is necessary for the well-being of the community, can one ignore its language, the means of self-expression of the community, when seeking to understand its significance within that community?

There will be parts of the ensuing arguments which will be based upon the titles accorded by the sources to the kings’ wives. Throughout this work, the word ‘queen’ will be used to denote women who were either called queen (in any language) or who are known to have been full wives of kings, or to have been ritually inaugurated to their status. In Latin texts queens are variously entitled *regina*, *uxor*, *consors*, *conjunx*, while dowager queens are described or entitled *quondam regina*, *regis mater*, or simply called by their name with no title. In the Frankish sources (all Latin) the full wives of kings are almost invariably called *regina*. Gregory of Tours in his *Libri Historiarum* refers to any woman whom he regards as having formed a legal association with a king as *regina*. The *Reichenau Confraternity Book*, an early ninth-century manuscript, regularly includes the

⁵¹*Politics and Ritual*, p.383.

⁵²This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

⁵³*ibid.*, p.333.

names and titles of queens, even calling Swanhild, wife of Charles Martel, *regina*.⁵⁴ There can be little doubt when a source calls a woman *regina* of the meaning which is being conveyed. However, in the vernacular Anglo-Saxon sources the words used when discussing a king's wife (usually *hlaefdige* or *cwaen*) do not possess such restricted meanings. We need to feel assured therefore that when a source to be used in the present study used either of these words that they are meaning 'queen' and that they would have been translated or glossed in Latin as *regina*. Therefore we need to look briefly at the uses of *hlaefdige* and *cwaen* in the types of sources being used throughout the following chapters. Bosworth and Toller give the meaning of *hlaefdige* as 'lady', 'mistress of the house' or 'queen'. It may translate as *domina* as in the Old English Genesis, *ða dyde swa swa him dihte Sarai. ond Agar ða geeacnode ond eac forseah hyre hlaefdian*,⁵⁵ and Cynewulf, in his poem *Crist*, refers to the Blessed Virgin as *sie hlaefdige wuldorweorodes*. There are examples where *hlaefdige* undoubtedly refers to a queen, as in the will of Æthelgifu which makes bequests to *hire cynehlaford ond hire hlaefdian*.⁵⁶ Although this title was being given to kings' wives in charters from the eighth century, it only begins to appear regularly in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* during the eleventh century.⁵⁷ The chroniclers only used the title *hlaefdige* where the woman in question was undoubtedly a queen.

However, there are perhaps fewer difficulties with the title *cwaen*. It might, according to Bosworth and Toller, mean woman or wife, as in the Old English poem *Genesis, Abrahames cwen*,⁵⁸ but it more usually glosses or translates *regina*, and occasionally *imperatrix*. Ælfric glosses *cwaen* = *regina* and *ðaes caseres cwen* = *imperatrix/augusta* in his *Grammar*.⁵⁹ Asser calls Judith *regina*, which translates the *cwen* of the *Chronicle*,⁶⁰ and in *Beowulf*, Wealtheow is described as *cwen hroðgares* and

⁵⁴MGH LM I, pp.63, 98, 107, 114, 156, 158.

⁵⁵*The Old English Version of the Heptateuch, Ælfric's Treatise on the Old and New Testament and his Preface to Genesis* ed. S.J. Crawford (EETS 160, London, 1922). The Vulgate reading is, *Cumque ille acquiesceret deprecanti, At ille concepisse se uidens, despexit dominam suam.*

⁵⁶*Anglo-Saxon Wills* ed. & trans. D. Whitelock (Cambridge, 1930), p.23.

⁵⁷A few such entries: *ASC* sa 1002 'E', *com seo hlæfdige Ricardes dohtar hider to lande*; sa 1023 'D' *ða on þam bryddan dæge com Imma seo hlæfdige mid hire cynelican bearn Heardacnute*; sa 1075 'E', *ond Eadgyð seo hlæfdig forðferde on Winceastre.*

⁵⁸*The Junius Manuscript* ed. G.P. Krapp (New York, 1931), line 2261.

⁵⁹Ælfric, *Grammatik und Glossar* ed. J. Zupitza (Berlin, 1966), p.300.

⁶⁰Asser, *Life of King Alfred* ed. W.H. Stevenson (Oxford, 1904), cap.68.

freolicu folccwen.⁶¹ In a charter of 762, Dunwald *minister* granted land at Queengate in Canterbury, *ad Quenegatum urbis Dorovernensis*, to the church of Sts Peter and Paul.⁶² The title appears regularly in the *Chronicle* to denote the wives of kings.⁶³ The Mercian Register always calls Æthelflaed *hlaefdige* but never *cwaen*: it seems to have been the highest title she could receive without being called queen.

Most commentators have been in agreement that *hlaefdige* and *cwaen* were the titles of the wives of the Anglo-Saxon kings, but do not always accept that these are the equivalent of *regina*. D.M. Stenton places the use of *hlaefdige* to before the tenth century, claiming that it was only used at times when the king's wife was not recognised as queen,⁶⁴ while Stafford writes that the king's wife was called *regina*, *cwaen* and *hlaefdige* in the sources, and that in the tenth and eleventh centuries the latter title 'always translates as *regina*'.⁶⁵ According to Schramm, Anglo-Saxon royal consorts 'did not always have the title *regina*, but had to be content with the denomination *cwen* (wife) and *hlaefdige* (lady)',⁶⁶ in spite of the fact that *cwaen* usually translates as queen, and *hlaefdige*, as mentioned earlier, is often used for women who were undoubtedly queens. The queen was only given these titles in the vernacular sources: they seem to have been the closest the Anglo-Saxons had to a word for *regina*. For the purposes of the ensuing discussion, unless otherwise indicated, *cwaen* and *hlaefdige* will be taken to mean queen.

IDEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Throughout the work there will be some discussion of ideas or practices which were not directly related to West Frankish or Anglo-Saxon ideas or practices, or which might not be expected to have impinged upon them, but which may yet be discernible either in ideas concerning queenship or in the development of queenly ritual or regalia. It will be considered whether Byzantine liturgy, statecraft, or artistic traditions were

⁶¹*Beowulf* ed. & trans. M. Swanton (Manchester, 1978), lines 613, 641.

⁶²B.192/S.1182.

⁶³A few typical entries: *ASC* sa 672 'A', *Her forþferde Cenwath ond Seaxburg an gear ricsode his cwen aefter him*; sa 737 'A', *Her Forþhere bisc. ond Friþogip cuen ferdun to rome*; sa 1037 'C', *ond mon draf ða ut his modor, Ælfgyfe ða cwene*; sa 1048 'E', *þa forlet se cyng þa hlaefdian. seo waes gehalgod him to cwene*.

⁶⁴*The English Woman in History* (London, 1957), p.3.

⁶⁵'The King's Wife in Wessex', p.4 note 10.

⁶⁶*A History of the English Coronation*, p.16.

experimented with or exploited by Western rulers or churchmen. The visible and active role of Byzantine empresses may have suggested either modifications to concepts of queenship to Western political thinkers or ritual innovations to Western liturgists. Old Testament queens and heroines were portrayed helping their peoples, and David and Christ were exemplars and prototypes for Christian kings: Esther and Mary could have constituted ideals for Christian queens. Attention will also be paid to potential interdependence of earthly queenship and Marian cults. Late sixth-century Byzantine emperors developed the cult of the Blessed Virgin to provide a focus for urban and political identity,⁶⁷ while in West Francia, Maria Genetrix would be evoked as patroness of royal fertility in the reign of Charles the Bald, and in England, at the very end of the period, the cult of the Queen of Heaven was cultivated as part of a programme of support for earthly queenship. The queen cannot be lifted totally out of her political environment and the nature of kingship, and the history of the installation of the king, must needs be considered if we are to understand the impetus towards the consecration of the queen. The history of king-makings has generated an extensive literature but will only be discussed here when it may be seen to have modified or impinged upon contemporary queen-making.

PLAN OF THE PRESENT WORK

Before embarking upon a chronological discussion of how a woman came to be a queen in the early medieval period in England and Francia, a chapter will be devoted to tracing the history of the royal inauguration *ordines*, which will give some preview of the framework for the history of queen-makings. This discussion will encompass the structure of the rites, the prayer-forms and the visible elements, as well as the sources which may have been quarried by liturgists to provide some components of what would amount to largely composite rites. The history of queen-making *ordines* will be related to that for king-makings (for which an exhaustive secondary literature is available) and also the *ordines* used for consecrations of virgins, widows, and abbesses, and some blessing formulas for brides and barren women (for which the literature, like that for queen-making, is sparse and scattered). The history of the extant manuscripts containing queen-making *ordines* from the period will also be discussed and also placed in a context of existing scholarship concerning manuscripts containing king-making rites.

Chapter 3 will examine the qualities of queenship in the Anglo-Saxon and

⁶⁷A. Cameron, 'Images of Authority: Elites and Icons in Late Sixth-Century Byzantium', *P&P* 84 (1979), p.24.

Frankish kingdoms prior to the evolution of consecration rites for queens in the mid-to late ninth century. Initially, when a woman came to be acknowledged as queen, she was usually a full wife of the king. It is not always clear how a woman achieved the status of full wife, but the various elements of early medieval marriage practices will be considered. Changes in civil and canon laws regarding marriage and inheritance altered the role and significance of the queen. The chapter will examine those elements of the legal, political and religious roles of the king's wife which pertain to her royal position in order to elucidate contemporary concepts of the nature of queenship. Previously, historians have assumed these concepts either had not existed or had not been expressed in contemporary writings, as in Stafford's comment, 'writers of the sixth to ninth centuries knew a queen when they saw one, but they rarely clarified what they understood by the term, or how a woman rose to that dignity'.⁶⁸ However, it is possible to clarify some of the ideas and values of the age pertaining to the nature of queenship, and to see past the obstacles created by the warlike nature of the age which Nelson feels prohibited the development of an ideology of queenship.⁶⁹ Stafford has also written, 'the type of the active queen was relatively rare, eclipsed by holy rivals',⁷⁰ and this is perhaps true in the early post-conversion period of a kingdom such as Kent, but the four Merovingian queen-saints do not eclipse their more worldly sisters and in fact are also recognised for their worldly achievements, while Mercian queens were extraordinarily active when compared to other Anglo-Saxon royal wives, and in the later Anglo-Saxon period Eadgifu, Ælfthryth, and Emma were very active and far from holy.

Between the period represented in Chapter 3, in which there was apparently no formal recognition or ritualisation of queenship, and the historically documented queen-making rituals of the reign of Charles the Bald, which will be discussed in Chapter 5, there occurred some apparently unprecedented inaugurations of queens which highlight, and some notable individuals who represent, a progressive stage in the evolution of the idea of queenship and its expression or implementation through queen-making rites. King-making rituals are historically evident long before the earliest record for a queen-making, and blessing formulas for king-making survive from the sixth and seventh centuries, while the earliest queen-making *ordo* to survive dates from 856. We know that Bertrada, wife of King Pippin, was ritually inaugurated in 751 by some means or rite unknown to us, but there is no compelling reason for assuming that this was the first time a queen was consecrated, and Chapter 4 will show that a case can be made for the

⁶⁸*Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.127.

⁶⁹*Politics and Ritual*, p.22.

⁷⁰*Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.31.

possibility of rites for other queens taking place in the eighth and ninth centuries.

Bertrada's consecration in 751 was a rite of passage: she was being made into a new person and the rite was analogous to that of Pippin. The whole family was being set apart, being made into a new sacred nucleus from which would spring a new royal line. Even if no further consecrations of their descendants were to take place, they would still have been throneworthy by virtue of divine choice and blessing of both the paternal and maternal roots of the new royal tree. It was also a manifestation of progress in contemporary ideas about queens. The establishment of the need for legitimate wives to produce legitimate heirs to the throne became entrenched in the late eighth century in both Francia and England. Cynethryth may not have been anointed at the time that Offa was seeking to guarantee the continuance of his dynasty, but there can be no doubt that she was recognised extraordinarily as Offa's queen. In this chapter we will begin to see an enhancement of the idea of queenship among both peoples, a development of the potential role of the queen, and a stricter definition of royal dynastic rights and requirements. It represents a transitional stage in which the expectations and concepts hovering about the queen and her role begin to show that her role was being given some thought. As kingship and king-making were developing and being given ideological definition, it was, if not inevitable, at least natural that queenship and queen-making should also give cause for reflection and require ritual support.

Chapter 5 will concentrate on the reign of Charles the Bald, on the royal marriages and queen-makings which make of this reign a cross-roads in the evolution of the idea of queenship. The far-sighted partnership which developed between Charles the Bald and Hincmar of Reims was to provide a remarkable ideological impetus in the evolution and elaboration of queen-making rites. The sixth chapter will begin with the latter years of the ninth century when the regal consecration order known as the 'Erdmann' *ordo* was created, and this was to have a lasting influence upon the development of ruler inauguration rituals in both England and Francia. From the reign of Louis IV d'Outremer the *ordines* appear to have remained fairly stable among the West Franks, but in England dynastic and ecclesiastical politics continued to have considerable effect upon the rites of king- and queen-making. And dynastic and ecclesiastical politics were the two arenas where queens might be most influential. The religious reforms of the tenth century gave the queen and the churchmen the opportunity to enhance her role. Once the queen lost her essentially domestic image and developed a public role, the queenship must needs have been seen in an official capacity: Ælfthryth was officially responsible for the women's religious communities. After the issue of the nature of queenship and the effect this might have on the throneworthiness of her offspring had been raised upon Edgar's death, the debate must have had

considerable influence upon the position of subsequent Anglo-Saxon queens, and the necessity for elevating the status of the queen through ritual inauguration. During the eleventh century, the period covered by Chapter 7, there was continued interest in developing queen-making *ordines* in England, and the queens continued to exercise an increasingly secular form of queenship. In Francia, the *ordines* continued to be used in the forms developed a century before, while the queen's influence and activities seem to have been increasingly circumscribed.

Throughout the period, visual representations of queens were used as a means of enhancing the prestige of kings, religious houses, and, on occasions, the royal ladies themselves. The representation of a queen was expected to present to the viewer a prestigious image, and in my final chapter I shall discuss this aspect of early medieval queenship. At her inauguration, a queen was crowned and invested with a ring, and therefore this chapter will examine the symbolism and importance of these objects for queenship. Queens seldom appear crowned in the art of the period; more often ideas and virtues (such as *Prudentia*, *Virginitas*, or *Sapientia*), or nations (Francia or Gothia), or collectivities (the Church) are represented as a crowned woman, while the queen is more likely to be represented wearing a veil.

* * *

According to Bishop Asser, the people of Wessex had chosen not to have queens:⁷¹ this conscious choice not to recognise formally the king's wife may indicate that it was customary at the time, in other parts of England or in Francia, to do so. From this it would appear that a queen was not necessary. The king's wife was sufficient: she contributed to the *stirps regia*, and could function in the royal household without necessarily being called queen, as the West Saxons had shown. But it became increasingly common for rulers' wives, in the period and areas under consideration, not only to be recognised and exalted as queen, but also to take part in some sort of ritual inauguration. Changes in legal and religious attitudes towards succession, marriage, and inheritance were significant elements in this development but cannot alone explain the interest in, and desire for, ritual queen-making. Meyer Fortes explains that regal consecration rites reflect the self-image of the societies in which they are performed:

politics and law, rank and kinship, religious and philosophical concepts and values, the economics of display and hospitality, the aesthetics and symbolism of institutional representation, and last but not least the social psychology of

⁷¹Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, cap.13.

participation, are all concerned in them.⁷²

In other words, in societies where these concepts and values are important, the rites are necessary for the well-being of those societies. The queen-making rites of the early medieval period should not be dismissed as unimportant, or at best as fertility rites. Public ritual is performed for the well-being of the community, and if the ritual conveys office, no matter the power or authority it carries, it signifies an important element of communal life. Ritual creates the candidate over 'into the personality that is the proper, ritually pure vessel for the office, whose transcendence and perpetuity is pictured in dogmas about its sanctity and ideal inviolability'.⁷³ From the time of Hincmar of Reims 'dogmas' were being created concerning the 'inviolability' of queenship, not only as wife and mother of kings, but, towards the end of the period, as earthly counterpart of the Queen of Heaven.

There are, then, two themes being followed throughout this thesis: the first is the means by which a king's wife became a queen, and the second is the nature and image of queenship. The ideas which underpinned both these themes in their contemporary milieux will be discussed and compared to see if they were interdependent, both in national and cross-Channel contexts. Another purpose of the work is to attempt to dispel some of the misconceptions surrounding the purposes of queen-making, the nature of the rites, and even of the language and structure of the *ordines*. Such a long-term overview of the entire early medieval period appears necessary in order to establish developing trends in both the ideas and the rites. The few historians who have undertaken studies of early medieval queenship have lacked such a background upon which to build such ideas. This may explain some of the misconceptions which have arisen concerning the nature and importance of queenship, and the purpose and ideology of the queen-making rites.

⁷²'Ritual and Office in Tribal Society' in M. Gluckman ed., *Essays on the Ritual of Social Relations* (Manchester, 1962), p.6.

⁷³*ibid.*, p.19.

CHAPTER 2

THE *ORDINES*

This chapter discusses the development of consecration rites for queens, and traces the influences and sources for the benedictions, prayer forms and general outline of the ritual. This is not only to place the *ordines* in an historical context but also to reassess the relationship of the *ordines* and the manuscripts in the light of the development of queen-making rites, and also of other blessing formulas and rites for women. The historical evidence for the formal recognition of Anglo-Saxon and Frankish queens, for example Cynethryth and Bertrada, goes back much further than the evidence provided by the pontificals, and will be discussed in Chapter 4. Comparison will only be made between West Frankish and Anglo-Saxon rites. The East Frankish rites, although they had their basis in the earliest West Frankish formularies, developed distinctive features and prayer forms, and apparently had no influence upon the Anglo-Saxon or West Frankish traditions during the period under consideration. The Romano-Germanic type of royal inauguration *ordines* appeared in England only at the very end of the period, but their influence upon the English formularies was not substantial until after the Conquest. Contemporary writings are reticent on the matter of ritual king- and queen-makings, or indeed of any ritual occasions: the *ordines* provide evidence not simply for the procedure of the rituals, but often for the fact that such rituals ever took place.

The most conspicuous and formal means of making a queen, that is, more formally than by simply making her a full wife of a king, is to crown her publicly and anoint her with holy oil. The requirements for marriage, and the grades of marriage, in the early medieval period will be discussed in Chapter 3. The motives for, and circumstances of, historical queen-makings will be discussed in later chapters. For the present, attention will focus on the history, construction and content of the *ordines* which were developed with the express purpose of inaugurating a new queen. Individual kings in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries were obviously taken with the idea, or perceived the political and religious value, of formally recognising the person and office of the queen. The king could simply have crowned his consort himself (and possibly did before the development of fully ritualised and liturgified *ordines*), but the assumption of the duty of queen-making by churchmen indicates a conscious policy decision by the king and the clerical powers, and at least tacit assent by secular interests.

Nelson has commented concerning the production of liturgical rites that 'the

liturgist deals in communications, operating with faith through a symbolic code':¹ there can be little reason to assume that these parameters did not also influence the development of the queen-making *ordines*. What the queen's inauguration was communicating to all concerned, what aspects of faith it represented, and what it symbolised, are all facets of the queen-making ritual to be examined in the present work. Schramm has written concerning the royal inauguration rituals that 'only if the forms have been duly observed, and nothing has been omitted, does the coronation have its due effect'.² For the queen the effective forms were anointing, laying on of hands, and imposition of ring and crown. These were observed throughout the period represented by the *ordines* used in the present work, in both West Francia and Anglo-Saxon England. But the effects expected, the qualities thus bestowed and the functions imposed were not static, and not simply a matter of divinely disposed fertility. Marriage to the king made the king's wife a queen: public installation ceremonies made queenship a public concern.

All elements of early medieval queen-making rites are present in the earliest surviving *ordines*. Early formularies for the blessing and unction of kings (as found in the benedictionals) do not include elements such as coronation or enthronement: these were still elements of the secular part of king-making. This situation does not exist for the queen-making rites. Queen-making rituals in the earliest extant manuscripts are found in fully clericalised form. We have no evidence for secular coronations or installations of queens before the Hincmar protocols in the mid-ninth century. Although the historical evidence is strong that earlier queen-makings took place,³ we have no way of knowing the forms these took. The earliest liturgical evidence for the making of a queen, in either England or Francia, is found in the Hincmar protocol for the wedding and queen-making of Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald, when she married King Æthelwulf of Wessex at Verberie in 856. The West Frankish tradition would become the most influential in the development of royal formularies in the West,⁴ although the history of Frankish accession rituals is less thoroughly documented than the Anglo-Saxon.⁵ Liturgical evidence for these rituals is more generous than the historical records of actual consecrations. The early inauguration rituals for kings did not have

¹Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.339.

²Schramm, *A History of the English Coronation*, p.10.

³See below, Chapter 4.

⁴Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning*, p.52.

⁵Richardson, 'The Coronation in Medieval England', p.113.

fixed formulas or staging: they were apparently performed more or less according to the preference of the officiating clergy.⁶ The sacramentaries of the seventh and eighth centuries, which represent this stage in the development, contain prayers and blessings for the new king, the order of which was not prescriptive, and there are no rubrics to indicate procedure. It would appear that there were still elements of king-making which remained in secular hands.⁷ During the ninth century Western royal inaugurations were becoming increasingly religious in nature: secular elements, such as investiture with insignia, enthronement and the *promissio regis*, were being incorporated into the religious rite, and non-clerical participation was being minimised. Nelson comments that 'theology and practical need' dictated that the bishops needed a strong controlling part in government and hence in kingship, in its inauguration, practice and *raison d'être*.⁸ The order for the making of a king starts to appear in a more prescriptively liturgified form in the pontificals of the ninth century, and it is from this period and in these same pontifical manuscripts that we start to see orders for queen-making. By the end of the ninth century, in the interests of king, clergy and people, the overseeing of all elements of the regal consecration rituals had been given entirely into the liturgically and ritually specialised hands of the bishops,⁹ which not only gave kingship suitably exalted beginnings, but also provided it with sound theological foundations.¹⁰ At the time when the kingship was receiving the strongest liturgical and ideological support, when Crown and Church were working together to elevate the kingship above the merely secular, the queen also began to be recognised and elevated to a higher status by means of liturgical ritual.

THE MANUSCRIPTS

Before looking at an outline of the development of king- and queen-making rites in the ninth to eleventh centuries, I shall briefly describe the surviving manuscripts which will be used as the basis for the present study. The extant manuscripts of royal

⁶Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning*, p.71.

⁷*ibid.*, p.87.

⁸Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.255

⁹Nelson, 'The Lord's Anointed and the People's Choice', p.143.

¹⁰Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.255.

consecration *ordines* are not fully representative of the texts that once existed.¹¹ The pontificals listed here have been selected as representing developmental stages in the royal *ordines*, though it is not possible to ascertain which, if any, of the surviving manuscripts were ever used for an actual coronation service.¹²

Leofric Missal (Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 579) A continental copy, possibly from St Vaast in Flanders from c.900,¹³ of an Anglo-Saxon sacramentary or pontifical from, at the latest, the first half of the ninth century.¹⁴ The Missal is believed to have been brought into England in 1042 by Bishop Leofric of Exeter where additions were made to the manuscript in the tenth and eleventh centuries.¹⁵ The king's inauguration ritual, and the other *ordines* dealt with in this paper, are all found in the oldest part of the manuscript, that is, they were written on the Continent. However the exemplar for the Missal and, in particular, the king's consecration *ordo*, was Anglo-Saxon and may be taken as evidence for the early development of royal inauguration rituals in England.¹⁶ There are no formulas for a queen-making in the Missal, but the king-making *ordo* provided some material for the 'Judith' *ordo*.

The 'Judith' and 'Hermintrudis' protocols were created by Hincmar who had them copied into a single manuscript. Hincmar's manuscript was found at the monastery of St Laurence at Liège and copied by Sirmond, but is no longer extant.¹⁷ Sirmond's work provided the source for the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica* edition which was used for the present work. There are no rubrics to indicate the performance of the rites: the wording of the individual formulas is all the indication we have for the manner in which the rites were conducted.

¹¹Richardson, 'The Coronation in Medieval England', p.111.

¹²Some of the *ordines* represented by the various manuscripts have long ago acquired names by which they are readily recognised, such as 'Leofric' and 'Erdmann'. For those with no such familiar name I have supplied names for the purposes of the present, for example, 'Claudius II', 'Claudius III', and 'Canterbury'.

¹³Ward, 'The Coronation Ceremony in Medieval England', p.162.

¹⁴Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, pp.349ff.

¹⁵Ward, 'The Coronation Ceremony in Medieval England', p.163.

¹⁶C. Hohler, 'Some Service Books of the Later Saxon Church', in D. Parsons ed., *Tenth Century Studies* (London, 1975), p.80.

¹⁷Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning*, p.9.

Lanalet Pontifical (Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale A.27). An English manuscript from the monastery of St German's in Cornwall,¹⁸ *Lanalet* appears to be an eleventh-century copy of a formulary (no longer extant) which was derived from the *Leofric Missal*, but earlier than the late tenth-century *Ratoldus Pontifical*. Some of the benedictions are variants on those of the *Leofric Missal* but it also contains a displaced queen-making ceremony which is drawn from the *ordo* found in the late tenth-century *Benedictional of Archbishop Robert*, and the consecration of a virgin is the same as that of the late tenth-century 'Sherborne' group of *ordines*. The *ordo* for the consecration of the king includes a coronation formula which calls for him to be crowned with a helmet [*galea*]. There is no precedent for this in the king-making *ordo* of the *Leofric Missal* and all formularies which post-date that which 'Lanalet' represents call for the king to be invested with a crown [*corona*]. The *Egbert Pontifical* (Paris Bibliothèque Nationale lat. 10575), an English manuscript from the mid-tenth century, is usually associated with the *Lanalet Pontifical* as it also is largely derivative from the *Leofric Missal*, and in fact 'Lanalet' and 'Egbert' are the only English copies of the 'Leofric' formulary.¹⁹ However, like its paradigm, 'Egbert' contains no order for queen-making. It does contain a greater variety of formulas for benedictions of virgins, nuns and widows than found in 'Lanalet' or the 'Sherborne' group, though its rite for consecration of an abbess is much shorter.

Leningrad Pontifical (Leningrad, State Public Library, Qv.1 no.35). A tenth-century pontifical from Sens copied from an earlier 'Erdmann' formulary. It contains an otherwise unknown *ordo* for the consecration of a queen. The king's inauguration rite has many formulas in common with those of the Hincmarian *ordines* of 869 and 877. The marriage blessings contain only one prayer which is additional to the rite found in the *Leofric Missal*, and the *ordo* for the consecration of a virgin is also largely based on 'Leofric'. *Leningrad* found its way to St Petersburg during the French Revolution.²⁰

Leiden Pontifical (Leiden, Rijksuniversitat Voss. lat. Q.13). A fragment of a late tenth-century pontifical containing only a king-making *ordo*. It is a copy, made in a Sens

¹⁸G.H. Doble ed., *Pontificale Lanaletensis* (London, 1937), p.xii.

¹⁹Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning*, p.12.

²⁰*ibid.*, p.16. The *Nevers Pontifical* (Paris BN lat. 17333), a pontifical of Hugues le Grand, Bishop of Nevers (1013-66), was compiled in the early to mid-eleventh century and also represents the 'Erdmann' type of formulary, Crosnier, *Sacramentarium ad Usus Æcclesiae Nivernensis* (Farnborough, 1969), p.v. This formulary is also represented by a twelfth-century manuscript in the Walters Collection (Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning*), p.17, but neither of these were consulted for the present discussion.



scriptorium, of a ninth-century formulary which was probably compiled about the same time as 'Erdmann' and shares some formulas with it.²¹ 'Leiden' contains no queen-making *ordo* but quite idiosyncratically contains in the formulas *Omnipotens sempiterna Deus* and *Sta et retine* a few interlinear glosses with feminised endings for some words. These changes do not render the *ordo* suitable for a queen-making and are difficult to explain in a tenth-century context.

Pontifical of Trèves (Paris, BN 13313). An eleventh-century pontifical adapted to the usage of Cambrai.²² One of several surviving manuscripts containing West Frankish versions of the 'SMN' type of regal formulas. Other manuscripts representing this group are the *Pontifical of Sens* (Paris, BN lat.934)²³ and the *Pontifical of Chartres* (Paris, BN lat.945)²⁴ both from the end of the twelfth century.

Ratoldus Pontifical (Paris, BN 12052). A pontifical executed at St Vaast under Abbot Fulrad for Abbot Ratold of Corbie.²⁵ According to Leroquais the manuscript, which he describes as a sacramentary, was compiled in the second half of the tenth century,²⁶ but a *terminus ante quem* would be 986, the year of Ratold's death.²⁷ The 'Ratoldus' queen-making *ordo* has its source in the 'Erdmann' formulary, but the king-making *ordo*, while based upon 'Erdmann', also has extensive additions.²⁸

Benedictional of Archbishop Robert (Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale 369). A tenth-century manuscript executed at New Minster, Winchester, between 980 and 990, probably for Æthelgar who succeeded Dunstan to the archbishopric of Canterbury in

²¹Guy Lanoë, personal communication.

²²V. Leroquais, *Les Pontificaux Manuscrits des Bibliothèques Publiques de France* (Paris, 1937), Vol.2, p.175.

²³*ibid.*, pp.1ff.

²⁴*ibid.*, pp.15f.

²⁵Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning*, p.20. This manuscript is also sometimes named after Abbot Fulrad.

²⁶V. Leroquais, *Les Sacramentaires et les Missels Manuscrits des Bibliothèques Publiques de France* (Paris, 1924), Vol.1, p.79.

²⁷P.L. Ward, 'An Early Version of the Anglo-Saxon Coronation Ceremony', *EHR* 57 (1942), p.346.

²⁸I have been unable to examine the other relevant *ordines* of this formulary, and they do not appear to be in print.

988.²⁹ The Robert of the title may have been Robert of Jumièges, Archbishop of Canterbury (1051-52),³⁰ or Robert of Normandy, brother of Queen Emma and Archbishop of Rouen (990-1037).³¹ Either way, the manuscript was on the Continent by 1050 and has remained at Rouen ever since.³² The *ordo* for the consecration of the queen in this manuscript is but little changed from that of 'Ratoldus', and the king-making *ordo*, while retaining the 'Ratoldus' prayers and benedictions, also returns to the 'Leofric' formulary for the introductory and concluding prayers. The blessings for bride and groom are the same as those found in the 'Erdmann' formulas, but for the consecration of a virgin the redactor has returned to the *Liber Sacramentorum Gellonensis* and the *Leofric Missal*, as well as devising some apparently new material.

Sherborne Pontifical (Paris, BN lat.943). A late tenth-century pontifical and benedictional, probably from Christ Church, Canterbury.³³ It may have been produced for Archbishop Dunstan as ff.7-8v contain a copy of a letter from Pope John XII to Dunstan written at the time of the latter's accession to the See of Canterbury.³⁴ The royal consecration rites of this manuscript are the same as those in 'Robert', although the queen-making *ordo* contains a new introductory rubric. 'Sherborne' is the earliest extant complete Anglo-Saxon pontifical³⁵ and will be taken as the paradigm for the group of queen-making *ordines* comprising 'Sherborne', 'Sampson', 'Anderson', 'Claudius II', and 'Douai'.

Pontifical of Bishop Sampson (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 146). An eleventh-

²⁹H.A. Wilson ed., in *Benedictional of Archbishop Robert* (London, 1903), p.xii.

³⁰*ibid.*, p.xvi.

³¹Robinson, 'The Coronation Order in the Tenth Century', p.59.

³²Wilson, *Benedictional of Archbishop Robert*, p.xvi.

³³A. Prescott, 'The Structure of English Post-Conquest Benedictionals', *The British Library Journal* 13 (1987), p.126.

³⁴The folios containing the letter are in the same hand as the rest of the manuscript, Leroquais, *Pontifical Manuscripts*, Vol.2, p.6. Anne Dutton checked the queen-making *ordo* in the manuscript for me but I do not have copies of the benedictions for virgins (f.82v) or widows (ff.85v-86v). Leroquais mentions an abbot's consecration *ordo* (ff.80-80v) but does not mention if it has adaptations for an abbess. The benedictional contains blessings for *sponsi et sponse* (ff.144ff).

³⁵Prescott, 'Structure of English Post-Conquest Benedictionals', p.123.

century pontifical executed in two parts.³⁶ The older part, which contains the consecration *ordines* for king and queen, was compiled at Old Minster, Winchester, in the late tenth or early eleventh centuries.³⁷ The latter was written at Worcester probably under the auspices of Bishop Sampson (1096-1112).³⁸ This manuscript contains the same *ordo* as 'Lanalet' for the consecration of a virgin, while the formulas for the consecration of an abbess contain some material from the *ordines* of 'Leofric' and 'Egbert' as well as some new benedictions.

Anderson Pontifical (London, BL Addit.57337). A recently discovered manuscript of a pontifical and benedictional produced c.1023.³⁹ The benedictional elements of the manuscript seem to be closely related to those of the *Benedictional of St Æthelwold*, and therefore suggest a Winchester provenance.⁴⁰ No critical edition has yet been undertaken. The *ordo* for the consecration of a virgin are the same as those in the 'Sampson' manuscript, while the rite for an abbess contains only slight changes from that of 'Sampson'.

Claudius Pontifical II (London, BL Cotton Claudius A3). A composite manuscript from the eleventh and twelfth centuries consisting of fragments of three Canterbury pontificals.⁴¹ The second of these, 'Claudius II' (ff.9-18v, 87-105v), contains regal formulas which place it in the same group of manuscripts as 'Sherborne' even though it was probably compiled at Christ Church during the second quarter of the eleventh century.⁴² The royal *ordines* and the *ordo* for the consecration of a virgin in 'Claudius II' are the same as in the 'Sampson' manuscript. The *ordo* for the consecration of an abbess has some material in common with the 'Sampson' formulary, but also contains some benedictions which are otherwise unknown. Also from this group of manuscripts

³⁶J. Brückmann, 'Latin Manuscript Pontificals and Benedictionals in England and Wales', *Traditio* 29 (1973), p.405.

³⁷*ibid.*; M.R. James, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Library of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1912), p.332.

³⁸Brückmann, 'Latin Manuscript Pontificals and Benedictionals', p.406.

³⁹T.A. Heslop, 'The Production of Deluxe Manuscripts and the Patronage of King Cnut and Queen Emma', *ASE* 19 (1990), pp.169f.

⁴⁰Prescott, 'Structure of English Post-Conquest Benedictionals', p.123.

⁴¹*ibid.*, p.434.

⁴²D.H. Turner ed., in *The Claudius Pontificals* (London, 1971), p.xxix.

is the *Douai Pontifical* (Douai Public Library 67) which was copied in the first half of the twelfth century and according to tradition belonged to Thomas Becket.⁴³

Pontifical of Canterbury (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 44). A manuscript compiled either at St Augustine's or Christ Church, Canterbury in the second half of the eleventh century,⁴⁴ and representing a further developmental stage in the *ordines*. The formulas for queen, king, virgin and abbess are all based upon the 'Sherborne' group of manuscripts, however all contain material which seems to have been developed anew for this formulary. These enhanced formulas for king- and queen-making are only found in one other manuscript, the badly damaged *Ramsay Pontifical* (London, BL Cotton Vitellius A.7).⁴⁵

Romano-Germanic Pontifical (Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 163). A Winchester manuscript copied during the eleventh century from a continental manuscript which may have come from Cologne.⁴⁶ The earliest extant example of the Romano-Germanic type of formulary was compiled at Mainz c.961.⁴⁷ It found ready acceptance in Germany and Italy, but apparently did not reach England until the mid-eleventh century, and did not influence West Frankish *ordines* until the twelfth century. The regal *ordines* of CCC 163 are exactly those of the Romano-Germanic liturgy but it is unlikely that they were ever used in their undiluted form in English rites. The 'Romano-Germanic' *ordines* are only of interest here in that some elements of the royal *ordines* were variously incorporated at different times into English royal rites of the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

~~Winchester~~ *Pontifical* (Cambridge University Library Ee.2.3). An early twelfth-century pontifical and benedictional prepared in a scriptorium somewhere in the province of

⁴³Leroquais, *Pontifical Manuscripts*, Vol.1, pp.148ff. This manuscript was not consulted for the present work.

⁴⁴J. Brückmann, 'Latin Manuscript Pontificals and Benedictionals' in T.A. Sandquist and M.R. Powicke eds., *Essays in Medieval History Presented to Bertie Wilkinson* (Toronto, 1969), p.403. *Traditio* 29 (1973), p.403.

⁴⁵J.W. Legg ed., in *Three Coronation Orders* (London, 1900), pp.171f.

⁴⁶Brückmann, 'Latin Manuscript Pontificals and Benedictionals', p.406.

⁴⁷Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.382.

Canterbury.⁴⁸ The regal *ordines* combine elements from ‘Romano-Germanic’ and ‘Sherborne’-type formularies, forming the basis for the so-called Third Recension of the English coronation order.⁴⁹

Claudius Pontifical III (also from London, BL Cotton Claudius A.3, ff.19-29v). A fragment of a twelfth-century pontifical consisting only of *ordines* for king and queen. These *ordines* show slight developments from those of the ‘Winchester’ manuscript.⁵⁰

Magdalen Pontifical (Oxford, Magdalen College 226). A twelfth-century pontifical and benedictional possibly from Canterbury.⁵¹ The king- and queen-making *ordines* are slightly later developments of those in ‘Claudius III’.⁵²

Tiberius Pontifical (London, BL Cotton Tiberius B.8, ff.81-105v). A pontifical compiled during the twelfth century for a diocese in the province of Canterbury.⁵³ It is copied from an unknown exemplar,⁵⁴ and contains additional elements from the ‘Romano-Germanic’ formulas in its queen-making *ordo*.

BACKGROUND TO THE ORDINES

The prayers of the ritual *ordines* for king-making have their roots in the earlier benedictionals. These formularies provided the forms of the prayers and blessings without any elaborations concerning the enactment of the rites. There were two main types of Roman sacramentary, Gregorian and Gelasian, and the Gelasians fall into two further types, *Reginensis* and Eighth-Century.⁵⁵ During the sixth century Roman

⁴⁸Brückmann, ‘The *Ordines* of the Third Recension of the Medieval Coronation Order’, p.103.

⁴⁹*ibid.*, p.110.

⁵⁰*ibid.*, p.111.

⁵¹*Pontifical of Magdalen College* Ed. H.A. Wilson (London, 1910).

⁵²Brückmann, ‘The *Ordines* of the Third Recension of the Medieval Coronation Order’, p.111.

⁵³*ibid.*, p.106.

⁵⁴*ibid.*

⁵⁵*Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, Vol.10, p.605.

influences had been gradually infiltrating the Gallican rite and by 700 the Frankish liturgy was largely Gelasian, showing but few remnants of the traditional liturgy.⁵⁶ The earliest regal blessings are in the Frankish sources, the *Benedictionals of Frëising, Gellone, Angoulême, and St Emmeram*,⁵⁷ though the earliest extant example of these, the *Benedictional of Frëising*, is from the eighth century. The sacramentaries continued to be copied until the twelfth century even though the royal blessing formulas (and indeed many of the prayers and blessings) had been superseded by those of the pontificals. These Eighth-Century Gelasian type of sacramentaries were in use in the Frankish Church until the reformation of the liturgy by Charlemagne.

In the very latest years of the eighth century, Charlemagne decreed that the Roman Gregorian missal would be substituted for the currently used, and popular, Frankish Eighth-Century Gelasian sacramentary. The Roman usage was much simpler and had none of the accretions which had endeared themselves to Frankish clerics.⁵⁸ Among the practices thus suppressed were the anointing elements of ordination rites.⁵⁹ The *Hadrianum* (of which the purest extant manuscript is Cambrai 164) was a revised Gregorian sacramentary sent by Pope Hadrian to Charlemagne around the year 785.⁶⁰ It was a purely papal stationary sacramentary which did not include all the other Sundays and feast days needed for cathedrals and churches throughout the year. Alcuin supplemented the extra days needed, drawing them from the Eighth-Century Gelasian of Pippin, to fill the whole liturgical year, but kept his Supplement separate from the papal material. Whilst Charlemagne was endeavouring to simplify the Frankish liturgy in this way there could have been no development in accession rituals. His sons were instituted as co-rulers, but there do not appear to have been any novelties such as special blessings, let alone anointings, for the royal wives. The years after the accession of Louis the Pious witnessed the return to the style of ceremonial preferred by the Franks and exemplified by the Eighth-Century Gelasian,⁶¹ and opened the way to the ritual innovations of the reign of Charles the Bald.

In England the early history of liturgical elaboration is all but indiscernible.

⁵⁶A.A. King, *Liturgies of the Past* (London, 1959), p.121.

⁵⁷Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning*, p.2.

⁵⁸G. Ellard, *Ordination Anointings in the Western Church before 1000 AD* (Cambridge, Mass., 1933; Kraus Repr. 1970), pp.34ff.

⁵⁹*ibid.*

⁶⁰King, *Liturgies of the Past*, p.104.

⁶¹Ellard, *Ordination Anointings*, pp.39f.

During the eighth century, the Eighth-Century Gelasian was the type of sacramentary in current use, certainly in the north, for there are the remnants of a manuscript of Northumbrian provenance of this type still extant in the Cologne City Archives.⁶² Its influence on the Anglo-Saxon king-making rites of the ninth century is evident in the earliest elements of the *Leofric Missal*, which was in use in England before the experimentation in royal *ordines* of the ninth century began to take place in West Francia.⁶³ But these new *ordines* were not composed of entirely new material: the combining of material from various sacramentaries and sacramentary groups (such as the Gregorian, Gelasian, or Leonine types) at the discretion of the compilers of liturgical manuscripts had been taking place before the ninth century, and these blended formularies were the basis for the earliest pontificals.⁶⁴ It is not clear for any specific pontifical if it were compiled for use on a particular occasion, or even if any specific formula were simply being included when a new manuscript was being made.

The Old Testament provided not only exemplars but some of the ideology for elements of the early regal *ordines*. The creators of the West Frankish king-making rites had not only the biblical example of the anointing of two peoples as being chosen races.⁶⁵ The ordination anointings of priests had already taken place in the Paris-Corbie-Soissons area, according to *ordines* extant in the *Missale Francorum*, and there were anointing elements present in the blessing formulas for kings in the seventh and eighth centuries. Nelson suggests that the biblical parallel here no doubt further suggested the introduction of anointing of kings as well.⁶⁶ Hincmar's protocol for the consecration of Charles the Bald in 869 draws a parallel between the unction of the king and that of priests, kings, prophets and martyrs.⁶⁷ The bishops were undertaking the responsibility for protecting the rights of the Frankish people when they assumed the role of consecrating the king to his office.⁶⁸

⁶²H.M. Bannister, 'Fragments of an Anglo-Saxon Sacramentary', *JTS* 12 (1910-11), pp.451f, and 'Liturgical Fragments', *JTS* 9 (1908), p.400.

⁶³Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, pp.344f.

⁶⁴E. Bishop, 'The Liturgical Reforms of Charlemagne: their Meaning and Value', *Downside Review* 38 (1919), p.16.

⁶⁵Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.291.

⁶⁶*ibid.*

⁶⁷*Ordo Coronationis Karoli II*, *MGH: Capit.* II pars 2, p.457, *et ungat te in regni regimine oleo gratiae Spiritus sancti sui, unde unxit sacerdotes, reges, prophetas et martyres.*

⁶⁸Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.295.

THE QUEEN-MAKING *ORDINES* OF ARCHBISHOP HINCMAR

The reign of Charles the Bald was a key period in the development of royal inauguration liturgy. The paucity of evidence for liturgical activity in the evolution of West Frankish royal inaugurations between Pippin and the reign of Charles may be explained by the facts that between the ritual inaugurations of Pippin and Lothar II Frankish kings were associated on the throne with their predecessors,⁶⁹ and that Charlemagne strove to eliminate liturgical novelties by securing uniformity of Frankish ecclesiastical usage with that of Rome.⁷⁰ The reign of Charles the Bald is remarkable for its liturgical proliferation, largely through the assiduous creativity of Hincmar, archbishop of Reims and liturgist *par excellence*. It was also a critical period in the development of inauguration rituals for royal wives. The four royal *ordines* which survive from this period are the only ones which can confidently be ascribed to particular performances of accession rituals down to the early Capetian period.⁷¹ Two of these *ordines* were created for royal women: Judith in 856, and Charles' own wife, Ermentrude, in 866. It would seem likely for Richildis, Charles' second wife, to have been consecrated, but no *ordo* survives, and no reference to such an event is to be found in the sources.

Hincmar's protocols contain numerous biblical references from both the Old and New Testaments. Blessings for both Judith and Ermentrude resemble the 'dew of heaven and abundance of earth' blessing given to Jacob by Isaac.⁷² This invocation had earlier formed part of the blessing for the king, *Prospice omnipotens Deus*, which occurs in the *Benedictional of Freising*,⁷³ and in the prayer *Omnipotens Deus* of the 'Leofric' king's *ordo*.⁷⁴ 'Judith' is partly quarried from 'Leofric': it has elements of a king-making *ordo* adapted to the circumstances of 856.⁷⁵ The 'Judith' *ordo* also invokes Old Testament exemplars for the anointing of queens Judith and Esther,⁷⁶ thus stressing the

⁶⁹Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.255.

⁷⁰Ellard, *Ordination Anointings*, p.38.

⁷¹Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning*, pp.152f.

⁷²Genesis 27, 28-9, *de rore caeli et de pinguedine terrae*. See Appendix, pp.242 and 244.

⁷³Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning*, pp.91 & 107.

⁷⁴*Leofric Missal*, p.231.

⁷⁵Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, pp.343ff.

⁷⁶See Appendix, pp.241f.

new Judith's membership of the new chosen people. The introductory prayer of 'Hermintrudis' recalls God's directive to Abraham to listen to what Sarah said.⁷⁷ Hincmar was conscious of the permanence of the queen's position by virtue of her marriage to the king, ('what God has joined together let no man put asunder' applied equally to the king as to any man in Hincmar's view), and the archbishop underscored this in the *ordines* he devised. He was also conscious of the significance of the office of the queen in the *curia regis*. Her responsibilities, as outlined by Hincmar in the later *De ordine palatii*,⁷⁸ taken together with the support given to her in her consecration ritual, indicate that Hincmar had at least perceived an image, and perhaps came as close as anyone was ever likely to formulating an idea, of queenship.

The blessing formulas for women which occur in the pontificals and the earlier sacramentaries also provided some material for the creators of regal *ordines*. It was considered appropriate to thus borrow and refashion material from other formularies as status-changing rituals were all believed to hold in common the capacity to regenerate the candidate.⁷⁹ In the sacramentaries, blessings and consecrations for virgins, nuns, widows, deaconesses, abbesses, barren women, and bridal couples are variously represented. The presence of these is reduced in the pontificals to the consecration of virgins and abbesses, and the blessings for bride and groom. Nuns and widows are but rarely represented, and it had apparently ceased to be the function of a bishop to invoke blessings upon a barren woman. The borrowings from these blessing formulas which were made by Hincmar and his liturgical successors can perhaps provide some insight into the ideas behind the development of the queen-making rituals, and the qualities with which the royal consort was meant to be invested.

In the nuptial blessings the emphasis is upon the bride, her virtue and her ability to produce offspring. The exemplars appealed to are women from the Old Testament who best encompassed the virtues and gifts requested for the bride, *sit amabilis ut Rachel uiro suo, sapiens ut Rebecca, longiua et fidelis ut Sarra*.⁸⁰ The formulas created by Hincmar for the queen-making rituals of Judith and Ermentrude adopt a nuptial tone. In the 'Judith' *ordo* this is not out of place as the marriage and queen-making rituals for Judith were combined into one ceremony. The biblical role-models invoked, Judith and Esther, were women who appear not to have produced offspring in spite of the fact that

⁷⁷See Appendix, p.243.

⁷⁸These will be discussed in Chapter 5, p.122.

⁷⁹Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.348.

⁸⁰*Liber Sacramentorum Gellonensis*, Vol.2, p.413.

women in the Bible were largely seen as wives and mothers. The protocol for Ermentrude bears little resemblance to that of 856, ten years before. Once again, Hincmar has tailored the *ordo* to the circumstances. It has marital overtones which perhaps reflect the fact that prior to the development of queen-making *ordines* it was marriage with a king which made a woman a queen.⁸¹ The allusions to her nuptials and bridal veil would otherwise seem inappropriate when Ermentrude had long been married to, and had already produced offspring for the king. The ‘let no man put asunder’ injunction which Hincmar included in the rite⁸² was perhaps a warning against taking steps towards divorce in order to gain the new sons Charles was desiring. As well as the references to her fertility and offspring, the *ordo* also dwells upon her chastity, and her good works and royal authority. This bridal element does not persist in the later queen-making *ordines*: with the development of the queen-making rite which first appears in the ‘Erdmann’ formulary,⁸³ the *ordo* does not request that God make the queen fruitful, and no longer resembles marriage blessings. These matters had, perhaps, already been dealt with in the queen’s marriage ceremony, and it would appear that these elements of queen-making were no longer considered necessary or even appropriate.

It has been suggested that the queen’s inauguration rite was developed as a type of fertility ritual.⁸⁴ While this is perhaps an element of the Hincmar protocols, there is more of the ‘Leofric’ king-making *ordo* to be found in ‘Judith’ than of any reference to exceptional fertility, and ‘Hermintrudis’ can really only be seen as a fertility rite insofar as a marriage rite was related to the bride’s fertility. There is nothing in ‘Hermintrudis’ of the anxiety or hopes, or the maternal love, of, for example, the prayers for barren women in the *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae*.⁸⁵ Prayers for barren women do not appear in pontificals after ‘Leofric’. In these same pontificals the prayer forms of the queen-making *ordines* no longer contain prayers pertaining to the queen’s fecundity. The marriage formulas of the ‘Erdmann’ type of manuscripts contain specific references to the bride’s ability to produce offspring. Presumably the queen as king’s wife had already obtained these blessings. The queen’s fertility did not form an element in the *ordines* of the tenth-and eleventh-century pontificals.

In the king-making *ordo* of the *Leofric Missal*, and also of the derivative

⁸¹This will be discussed in Chapter 4.

⁸²See Appendix, p.244.

⁸³See Appendix, p.245.

⁸⁴Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.131; Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.304.

⁸⁵*Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Ecclesiae*, pp.220f.

formularies ‘Lanalet’ and ‘Egbert’, the *Benedic Domine hunc presulem principem*⁸⁶ contains borrowings from the formula for the consecration of a virgin. This is the only regal formula which draws on a blessing formula for a virgin, and it makes no particular reference to chastity. The compilers of the post-Hincmarian queen-making *ordines* were as little interested in the queen’s chastity as in her fertility. The consecrated virgin was a bride of Christ,⁸⁷ while Ermentrude and Judith were the brides of kings (even though Ermentrude had been married to Charles for years). The virgins of the *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae* prepare themselves for the heavenly bridegroom in garments of salvation and delight; their mortal clothing of chastity will be exchanged for immortal garments.⁸⁸ Ermentrude is to be clad in the raiment of good works and the armour of faith. The blessings for virgins request that they might retain their chastity, and brides that they might produce offspring. But with regard to the queen, despite the ideological contribution these other estates may have made to the development of the queen-making *ordo*, I have been unable to detect any reference to either the chastity or the fecundity of the king’s wife in ‘Erdmann’ or any of its derivative *ordines*. Only in the litanies of the *Laudes Regiae* would the queen be linked to the choirs of virgins.⁸⁹ The fruits of the lives of consecrated virgins, abbesses and nuns are only to be had in the next life, but are eternal. In the *ordines* which would be developed in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the queen would have her liturgical feet planted firmly in this world: she would be chosen by God to the performance of good works alongside the king, and to uphold the faith.

THE ‘ERDMANN’ *ORDO* AND ITS DERIVATIVES

The next *ordo* for the consecration of a queen to survive, the so-called ‘Erdmann’ *ordo*, is also of West Frankish provenance. The ‘Erdmann’ royal *ordines* were compiled before 900, by which time they would appear to have been known in England, and were presumably prepared for an actual royal inauguration, as the compilation of an apparently new queen-making *ordo* would seem to indicate its preparation for immediate use. Prior to the advent of this *ordo* we have only the two Hincmar protocols for

⁸⁶Leofric Missal, p.231.

⁸⁷J. Bugge, *Virginitas: an Essay in the History of a Medieval Ideal* (The Hague,1975), pp.59f.

⁸⁸*Liber Sacramentorum Romanae*, p.126.

⁸⁹Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, p.62.

inauguration rites for queens, so it would appear to have developed independently from the Hincmarian tradition for it bears but little resemblance to ‘Judith’ or ‘Hermintrudis’. The ‘Erdmann’ redactor, when compiling his new rite for the consecration of a king, used some formulas also to be found in the Hincmarian *ordines* but may not necessarily have been dependent upon them. The group of *ordines* comprising ‘Leiden’, ‘Stavelot’ and ‘Erdmann’ may have had independent beginnings, and may have been used for non-Reims king-makings earlier than previously thought.⁹⁰ However, it is unlikely that ‘Erdmann’ was seen in England before the late ninth century: the ‘Leofric’ *ordo* was in use for Æthelwulf and possibly also for his sons. On the other hand, the ‘Judith’ and ‘Hermintrudis’ types of protocol were perhaps altogether too personalised to be included in the ‘Erdmann’ formulary, for the queen-making *ordo* bears no resemblance to them. The older benedictionals contain no blessings for a queen so the redactor seems to have been confronted with the need for a new *ordo* for the consecration of queens. This new rite must have been composed for a particular queen-making otherwise the formulary could have been compiled without any queen-making formulas. The final prayer of this *ordo*⁹¹ is drawn from a similar prayer in the ‘Erdmann’ king-making rite.⁹² It originally occurred in the Prayers for the Blessing of the King used by Pope John VIII for Louis the Stammerer at Troyes in 878, the year after he was made king of the West Franks by Hincmar at Compiègne.⁹³ Through sharing this prayer with the king the queen is seen to share his honour, perhaps even his rank [*dignitas*], and in the same way as her royal husband she is expected to strengthen, through good works, the glory given to her by God, *bonis operibus corrobora gloriam*.

As the ‘Erdmann’ queen-making *ordo* formed the basis for all subsequent *ordines* of the early medieval period, it seems relevant at this point to provide a translation and evaluation of the formulas of the rite.⁹⁴ This will afford a basis for ensuing discussion, and also a clearer understanding of the nature and purpose of the rite. Additions or changes made to this basic rite in subsequent recensions of the tenth and eleventh centuries will be discussed within their context in later chapters. According to the ‘Erdmann’ *ordo*, the queen enters the church and prostrates herself before the altar. She

⁹⁰Guy Lanoë, personal communication.

⁹¹See Appendix, p.245, formula 7a.

⁹²Schramm, *Kaiser, König und Papst*, Vol.2, p.219.

⁹³*ibid.*, p.209; Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning*, p.25. The formulary, in common with other of Hincmar’s liturgical creations, was probably composed for this specific ceremony and never used again.

⁹⁴See Appendix, p.245, for the Latin text of the *ordo*.

is then led by the bishops to the altar where she bows her head for the archbishop to commence the first prayer which requests for the officiating clergy the fitness to perform the rite. This prayer appears again at the beginning of the 'Ratoldus' queen-making *ordo* but has not been retained in any of the subsequent extant manuscripts.

The first formula of the queen-making proper is the actual anointing prayer, and this became the initial prayer in queen-makings of the tenth century until the absorption of the formulas from the 'Romano-Germanic' *ordo* during the second half of the eleventh century. The anointing formula is in the form of a simple blessing during which the holy oil is applied to the head of the queen in a sign of the Cross, the archbishop saying,

2a)⁹⁵ In the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit may the anointing of this oil increase you in your office and strengthen you for ever.

It is the unction of the queen which institutes her new rank.

The third prayer accompanies an imposition of hands which signifies God's blessing of the new queen and His gift of strength that she might remain worthy of her honour,

3a) Almighty and eternal God, through our prayer and of your blessing pour out your divine spirit over this your handmaid that through the imposition of our hands today she may be instituted queen, by your consecration may she remain worthy and chosen, and with your ineffable guidance may she remain strong and steadfast.

This formula is largely taken from a benediction found in the formula for the ordination of an abbess in the *Liber Sacramentorum Gellonensis*.⁹⁶ In it the bishop prays that the queen may remain worthy of having been chosen [*electa*] by God. In the original prayer the abbess has been elected to office with all the duties and trials that it brings. She is compared to Miriam who was one of the leaders, alongside Moses and Aaron, when the Israelites came out of Egypt.⁹⁷ The more practical functions of the office of queen are

⁹⁵In the Appendix, each basic prayer form has been numbered and lettered. Subsequent changes and additions to any prayer form are then indicated by changing the letters. The changing configuration of the formulas between 'Erdmann' and 'Magdalen' underlines the changes in the queen-making rite between the late ninth and eleventh centuries.

⁹⁶p.400.

⁹⁷Micah 6, 4.

underlined in 'Erdmann' by the use of material from the *ordo* for an abbess. The consecration of an abbess in the *Liber Sacramentorum Gellonensis*⁹⁸ does not strengthen the candidate with holy oil as does the 'Erdmann' queen's *ordo*, in which she is to be ordained through unction and the imposition of the bishop's hands. The queenship was not hereditary: she was chosen by the king as wife, but the office came to be elective in that she was blessed as such by God. The office for which the queen has been chosen by God is not explained until she is presented with the Ring of Faith.

The giving of the ring, a symbol of Faith (until the queen-making *ordines* of the eleventh century in which it would become a sign of purity and innocence), is the intention of the fourth formula,

4a) Receive the ring of Faith, sign of the Holy Trinity, with which may you have the power to avoid all heretical perversenesses, also, distinguished by your virtue, to summon barbarous peoples to acknowledgement of the truth.

The 'Erdmann' royal *ordines* are the earliest with prayers for the imposition of the ring, that is, as part of the royal consecration: the ring-giving of the 'Judith' *ordo* was part of the marriage ceremony. The queen's ring-giving formula resembles that for the king in that the ring is the symbol of the faith which the ruler and his consort are bound to preserve. By sharing this office, the partnership between the royal couple is emphasised, though it is not specifically mentioned. This is followed by another prayer which requests that God should endow her with the integrity to fulfil her duty as paragon of the Faith,

5a) O God to whom is all power and all honour, give your handmaid, by this sign of faith, prosperous accomplishment of her office, and by which may she remain always steadfast and strive to be perpetually pleasing to You.

The duty placed upon the queen in this part of the *ordo* is towards the preservation of the Catholic faith. The queen is to avoid heretical perversities, and to summon barbarous peoples to acknowledge the truth through her distinguished virtue. The king is required to banish heresies, and to ensure the perseverance of the faith,⁹⁹ but while the king may use force the queen can only fulfil her function through good example. The queen customarily fulfilled a distinct religious role as patroness, and as guardian of royal cults. In the years since royal saints had replaced the tribal gods as dynastic

⁹⁸pp. 399ff.

⁹⁹P.E. Schramm, *Kaiser, König und Papst*, Band 2 (Stuttgart, 1968), p.218.

forebears and legitimisers, her prayers, and the benefits accruing from religious patronage, contributed to the well-being, the dynastic security, and the prestige of the royal house. Stafford has commented that one role of the queen was to help guarantee harmonious relations with the divine.¹⁰⁰ Such an influential position between the divine and her husband and people contributed to her importance, and power. An inauguration which stressed this position, an anointing which underwrote her place in relation to God, was to the advantage of king and Church, and provided her with the sacrality necessary for one who is thus placed between man and the divine. It was, therefore, not unsuitable to install a queen as guardian of the faith, and the existence of an office would make it more suitable to hold an official inauguration. By this means sanctity became an instrument of authority,¹⁰¹ and provided a queen with the functional equivalent of political power.

The coronation, which follows next, is a simple prayer requesting glory and joy for the new queen,

6a) Receive the crown of glory and the office of joy, that you may be illustrious and magnificent, and may you be crowned in eternal rejoicing.

The final formula of this *ordo* is drawn from a similar prayer in the 'Erdmann' king-making rite.¹⁰² It originally occurred in the Prayers for the Blessing of the King used by Pope John VIII for Louis the Stammerer at Troyes in 878, the year after he was made king of the West Franks by Hincmar at Compiègne.¹⁰³ Through sharing this prayer with the king, the queen is seen to share his honour, perhaps even his rank [*dignitas*], and in the same way as her royal husband she is expected to strengthen, through good works, the glory given to her by God,

7a) Almighty and everlasting God, fount and origin of all good things, and giver of all preferments, bestow we pray on this Thy handmaid, the ability to bear her office and glory well, with which she has been distinguished by You, and strengthen her in good works.

¹⁰⁰Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.122.

¹⁰¹R.A. Rappaport, 'The Sacred in Human Evolution', *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics* 2 (1971), p.37.

¹⁰²Schramm, *Kaiser, König und Papste*, Band 2, p.219.

¹⁰³*ibid.*, p.209.

In this final prayer, the queen, like the king, is said to sustain the charge of, or to bear, her office: the word used, *gerere*, carries a sense of an entrusted rule. In the *ordines* of the tenth century, starting with ‘Robert’, and in all subsequent *ordines*, the verb *regere* replaces *gerere* in both the king- and queen-makings: *regere*, to rule or govern, carries an enhanced sense of an intrinsic right to rule.

The earliest Anglo-Saxon accession ritual for a queen appears to have come into England with an ‘Erdmann’ type of *ordo*.¹⁰⁴ We have no evidence for this *ordo* type ever having been used for an actual Anglo-Saxon royal inauguration, but the ‘Saxons, Mercians and Northumbrians’ *ordo*,¹⁰⁵ which is believed to have been developed in England at this time, is largely based on ‘Erdmann’. The ‘SMN’ *ordo* is so named because the consecratory prayer for the king, *Omnipotens sempiterna deus creator*, contains a reference to a single throne of these three peoples, *regale solium videlicet saxonum merciorum nordhanhimbrorum*.¹⁰⁶ There is no longer any Anglo-Saxon manuscript of this *ordo* in existence: it is only surmised as having existed from the presence of ‘SMN’ prayer forms in extant continental manuscripts.¹⁰⁷ If, as has been suggested by Nelson,¹⁰⁸ the ‘Erdmann’ *ordo* was adapted to form an Anglo-Saxon ‘SMN’ *ordo* for the king-making of Edward the Elder in 900, a time when it would have been politic to emphasise the union of the three peoples under a single king,¹⁰⁹ the ‘Erdmann’ queen-making *ordo* could also have been used for the first time for Edward’s queen, Ælfflaed,¹¹⁰ although without adaptation for it appears in the later ‘Ratoldus’ manuscript in almost exactly the same form as in the West Frankish *ordo*. Ælfflaed may then have been the first West Saxon queen to be ritually consecrated in her own country and recognised by king and churchmen as queen.

The next development again occurred on the Continent, when the Anglo-Saxon ‘SMN’ formulas were adapted for the West Frankish kings and queens,¹¹¹ mysteriously leaving *in situ* the phrase which made the West Frankish king ruler of the Anglo-Saxon

¹⁰⁴Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.367.

¹⁰⁵Hereinafter called the ‘SMN’ *ordo* in accordance with accepted usage.

¹⁰⁶Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.364, Table 2.

¹⁰⁷Ward, ‘The Coronation Ceremony in Medieval England’, p.168.

¹⁰⁸*Politics and Ritual*, p.367.

¹⁰⁹Hohler, ‘Some Service Books of the Later Saxon Church’, p.68.

¹¹⁰Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.367.

¹¹¹*ibid.*, p.365.

peoples as well. Louis IV d'Outremer was raised at the court of his maternal uncle Æthelstan. His consecration at Lyon by the Archbishop of Reims on 19 June, 936, was a very likely time for an Anglo-Saxon rite to be imported into West Francia.¹¹² Turner concludes from this that an 'SMN' formulary must have been in use in England by at least 4 September 925, the date of Æthelstan's own consecration.¹¹³ With the exception of the 'Ratoldus' manuscript, there are seventeen extant pontificals of continental origin dating from the eleventh and twelfth centuries which bear witness to the continuous use in West Frankish royal inaugurations of 'SMN'-type formulas, largely unchanged, during the tenth and eleventh centuries,¹¹⁴ when the Anglo-Saxon manuscripts continue to show uneven though significant developments throughout the period.

The *ordo* for the consecration of the king underwent distinctive revision between the 'Erdmann' formulary and the protocols which are preserved in the *Ratoldus Pontifical*. (The latter, having been compiled for monastic use, is unlikely ever to have been used at a regal inauguration ritual, but the *Benedictional of Archbishop Robert*, which follows the 'Ratoldus' protocols closely, provides evidence for their suitability if not for their actual use). However, the queen-making *ordo* found in the 'Ratoldus' manuscripts is still largely based on the 'Erdmann' formula, showing only two slight modifications. The redactor has returned to the original source (that is, his source's source) for the benediction after the queen's anointing,¹¹⁵ which was the benediction for an abbess found in the *Liber Sacramentorum Gellonensis*.¹¹⁶ The word *affluentem* has been restored to the beginning of the queen's blessing, and the original *ut numquam postmodum de tua gratia separetur indigna* has been reinserted in place of *et ineffabilis gratiae tuae praesidio hic et in aeternum munita consistat* as found in the 'Erdmann' *ordo*.¹¹⁷ The 'Robert' queen-making protocol follows that of 'Ratoldus' except that it does not retain the introductory prayer, *Adesto Domine*. It was the 'Ratoldus' regal *ordines* which came to be adopted as the standard West Frankish rite, and remained so until the twelfth century.

The formulation of the royal *ordines* stabilised during the tenth century. The

¹¹²Hohler, 'Some Service Books of the Later Saxon Church', p.68; Turner, *The Claudius Pontificals*, p.xxxiii.

¹¹³*ibid.*

¹¹⁴Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.363.

¹¹⁵See Appendix, p.246, formula 3b.

¹¹⁶p.400.

¹¹⁷Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.367, note 22.

rituals became more formalised, and although there was some enrichment during this period, the main structures remained unchanged. A number of Anglo-Saxon pontificals survive from the late tenth and early eleventh centuries which bear witness to this situation. The *Pontifical of Archbishop Robert* contains a protocol for a queen-making which is the same as that of 'Ratoldus', while the protocol for the consecration of a king adds some prayers from the 'Leofric' *ordo* to the 'Ratoldus' format. The queen-making *ordines* which appeared in the Anglo-Saxon pontificals from the time of the 'Robert' manuscript were never extensively renewed or refurbished until the expansion of the royal consecration *ordines* for the inaugurations of 1066.¹¹⁸ The 'Sherborne' group of *ordines* contain a new preliminary rubric in the *ordo* for the queen stating that she is to be consecrated in the presence of the *optimates*, which suggests that a formal ceremony of recognition of her altered status was required, and implies an expansion of ideas concerning the enhanced status of the queen and the significance of her accession ritual.

In the early eleventh century two manuscripts were produced in which the formulas of the queen-making *ordo* followed those of the late tenth-century 'Sherborne' group, but also took the unusual step of including the anthems to be sung between the various elements of the rite.¹¹⁹ The royal *ordines* of the *Pontifical of Canterbury* and the *Ramsay Pontifical* bear witness to the developments which took place in both king- and queen-making rituals in England in the early eleventh century. As this type of *ordo* was not used for the inauguration rites of William I,¹²⁰ it may be taken as evidence for expanded views on the nature of queenship which were taking place during the late Anglo-Saxon period. In West Francia in the late tenth and eleventh centuries, the Capetian kings were reduced to the level of 'not very powerful territorial princes', although the king's sacral and judicial functions, while severely delimited, were still recognised.¹²¹ Perhaps this position is reflected in the fact that the West Frankish king- and queen-making rituals do not show the ideological development which appears to have been taking place across the Channel.

In the mid-eleventh century the Romano-Germanic royal consecration orders were brought to England and began slowly to be incorporated into the Anglo-Saxon rites. The earliest extant example of an English manuscript containing such an integrated royal consecration order is found in the Winchester Pontifical produced in

¹¹⁸*ibid.*, pp.389ff.

¹¹⁹Brückmann, 'The *Ordines* of the Third Recension of the Medieval Coronation Order', *passim* and especially pp.109-15.

¹²⁰Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, pp.382ff.

¹²¹E. Hallam, *Capetian France, 987-1328* (London, 1980), p.1.

the early twelfth century. Brückmann postulates that this is not the earliest copy of what has come to be known as the Third Recension of the English coronation order which was no doubt first developed in the eleventh century.¹²² Nelson has shown that the first probable use for the Third Recension was for the consecration of Harold (and perhaps Ealdgyth) in January, 1066.¹²³ The 'Winchester' *ordo* adopts the second formula of the Romano-Germanic formularies as its initial prayer, and has the earliest example of a formula for the blessing of the queen's crown. This benediction is exactly the same as that used for the blessing of the king's crown in the king-making order of the same manuscript.

The copying of *ordines* for the consecration of queens into the pontificals cannot simply be explained away as liturgical antiquarianism, or as the scribes' desire for completeness. Not all the manuscripts contain blessings for abbesses, and blessings for barren women occur only in the earliest of the pontifical manuscripts used for this paper, and only one, 'Egbert', includes separate blessing formulas for nuns. The omission of these formulas may suggest that it was not essential that they be included in a bishop's book, but the fact that queen-making *ordines* were included must indicate intention of use. The consecration of a queen was as significant, liturgically, as that of the king. Churchmen had sought to encompass royal power and authority within the moral realm of the Church: one means was by assuming the right to confer that authority in the first place. By assuming the right to confer queenly status the Church extended its realm over yet another facet of royal power. The queen-making ritual became simplified after the initial experiments of Hincmar: the simple ritual format of the 'Erdmann' *ordo* was more suggestive and effective than the verbose blessing formulas of the Hincmar *ordines*. During the two centuries following the introduction of the 'Erdmann' rite, the queen-making *ordines* gradually expanded again and came to encompass more complex ideas and expectations.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ANOINTING.

The most significant element in ruler inauguration rituals in the early medieval West was the anointing.¹²⁴ According to the *ordines* themselves, and to commentators like Hincmar, unction was the constitutive element, the channel for the divine grace

¹²²Brückmann, 'The *Ordines* of the Third Recension of the Medieval Coronation Order', *passim*, esp. pp.109-15.

¹²³Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.395.

¹²⁴Richardson, 'The Coronation in Medieval England', p.116.

which enabled the candidate to function as king.¹²⁵ Once anointing had been introduced into the royal rites it quickly came to be considered an indispensable facet of king-making.¹²⁶ The participation of the clergy thus became necessary to king-making, and they also acquired the capacity, if not to control, at least to bring pressure to bear upon the ruler's activities.¹²⁷ It did not become essential for the queen to be ritually inaugurated, but when she *was* consecrated the clergy were equally indispensable to the performance of the rite. She had been able to assume her title, and to wear the crown, before her queen-making, but the anointing would alter her symbolic status, and place her apart from other Christians in the same way as baptism separated Christians from pagans.

Anointing can only be taken as evidence of the significance of the ritual in which it is employed. A special blessing is required from God upon the candidate: He is invoked to carry the candidate across the threshold to his or her new condition. The power ritual possesses to convey status to the recipient requires that it should not be performed lightly: the meaning for the group, the significance of each ritual, should not be lost on observers or participants, otherwise there is no point in conducting it. Ritual conveys certain attributes to the recipient, but at least as importantly it contributes to the life, thought, and *raison d'être* of the group. It requires their approbation, and draws on their ideology. By sanctifying royalty through ritual, the bishops made king- and queen-making part of the combined religious experience of Church and people.

In the formative years of the royal inauguration rituals, the anointing of kings was considered to be a sacrament¹²⁸ and remained so until the time of the Investiture Contest of the twelfth century when the Hildebrandine reforms were made to limit the power of kings. The kingship was a spiritual office conferred by God through His clerical representatives, and to stress the significance of the new role of the king he became a *Christus Domini*, his new personality created by the rite of unction, a rite of passage.¹²⁹ The advent of royal anointing brought a new dimension to the person of the king which carried with it the idea of 'touch not the Lord's anointed', *noli tangere christum Domini*. The words *Rex et Sacerdos* were used to justify the monarchico-theocratic principle: the unction separated the king from the laity in the way the

¹²⁵Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.270; *Vita Remigii*, cap.15, pp.296-300.

¹²⁶Nelson, *ibid.*, p.288.

¹²⁷*ibid.*, p.251.

¹²⁸Schramm, *History of the English Coronation*, p.119.

¹²⁹*ibid.*, p.7.

priesthood was, and made him like Christ Himself.¹³⁰ The queen was married to this *Christus* figure and it became appropriate for her as consort of the 'Lord's anointed' to be ritually inaugurated also through application of the holy oil.

A ritual is performed to impress observers as well as to change participants, to reaffirm the values of the group, whether it be a private ritual such as baptism or a public ritual such as a royal consecration. The adoption of anointing as part of the queen-making ritual marks a conscious decision to give religious significance to the inauguration of the king's wife, and presumably greater political, social and legal significance to her personal and official position. That queen-making was given into the hands of the clergy, and allowed to be ritually and symbolically dignified, indicates that the king, and perhaps the nobility, wished to enhance her status above that of king's wife. She was chosen by the king, but marriage, or simple coronation or enthronement could have given her all the prestige she needed to take her place beside the king, to be his marriage partner and give birth to his legitimate heirs. But anointing at the hands of the bishop elevated her election, and gave her divine sanction. She also became twice-anointed which marked her as a member of a very small elite (priests, kings, abbots and abbesses) who have been granted access to special grace, and have joined an elect stratum of the Christian hierarchy. However, anointing would not become a part of queen-making until the ninth century, at least not according to existing records (although a case will be made in Chapter 4 for some eighth-century queenly consecrations). So we need first to look at the status of the king's wife and the nature of her queenship in the centuries prior to this innovation, in order to establish the context from which grew the ideas and the rites of the late ninth century.

¹³⁰*ibid.*, p.118.

CHAPTER 3

THE KING'S WIFE

This chapter is intended as a survey of the period when a woman became queen by virtue of being a king's wife, that is, the time before ritual inauguration of queens began to take place. It will begin in the sixth century and continue through to the early ninth century in Francia, and slightly later in England. The Franks began regularly to inaugurate their queens ritually in the mid-ninth century and there had been crowned empresses at least from the reign of Louis the Pious. The evidence for the Anglo-Saxons is rather more sparse but there were probably no regularly consecrated queens in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms until the early tenth century. The ideas which would inspire such recognition and elevation of the king's wife were still far from the minds of sixth- and seventh-century kings and churchmen, but this does not mean that they had no expectations or perceptions concerning the nature of queenship, or the qualities required of the king's wife or with which she was imbued by virtue of her association with the king. These perceptions may be gleaned from assessments of the legal position of the king's wife; her position as creator and sustainer of domestic harmony; the increasing importance of the king's wife for the maintenance of dynastic purity, and hence the significance of her own pedigree; the status of, and respect for, the dowager queen; the place of the queen in the religious life of the community, and her responsibility for the spiritual prestige of the dynasty. The development of the functions of the king's wife was accompanied by changing ideas concerning her status and the reasons for her existence. These changes were distinctly in the interests of kings and churchmen, moralists and the exploiters of royal cults and patronage, not to mention of the royal ladies themselves. However, the developments were seldom directly paralleled between the two nations.

MARITAL LAW AND ROYAL MARRIAGES

The laws of the Frankish and Anglo-Saxon peoples applied to royalty as to any man or woman. That is not to say that kings necessarily abided by the law (it is difficult to be sure how far social customs and legal principles modified or controlled their behaviour), but they could be expected to fall back on the law when it suited them. With regard to their treatment of wives, concubines, queens and widows, they can be seen to base their relationships upon custom and the law. In the late antique and early medieval periods the Church and the state perceived marriage from two entirely

disparate points of view. The Church created moral sanctions regarding suitability of marriage partners and, increasingly, the indissolubility of the marriage bond, while the state was concerned with the contractual nature of the union, and with the development of the idea of mutual consent, and both of these points of view would variously influence the nature of the relationships of the kings with their wives.

Among the Franks there were three interdependent stages in undergoing legal or full marriage: the suit [*petitio*]; the betrothal [*desponsatio*] accompanied by a troth; and the wedding [*matrimonio, conjugia, nuptiae*] which was accompanied by payments of the pledged *dotalicium*, morning gift, and sometimes *faderfio*, and the bride was formally given into the *mundium* of the husband. This became a public affair that there might be witnesses to the event. Betrothal and the wedding were legally binding, although betrothal alone could not constitute marriage.¹ Likewise, there were three elements of marriage in Anglo-Saxon custom: the betrothal [*beweddunge*]; the delivery of the bride [*gyfta*], also accompanied by the pledged payments; and consummation. Pollock and Maitland are uncertain if betrothal was essential for a valid marriage.² There are no records of how a wedding was conducted. The transfer of the woman to the household of the husband could be performed publicly to ensure recognition of the union, but there were no special ritual or liturgical requirements. The sacrament of Matrimony was not constituted until the twelfth century: there are special benedictions for *sponsi* in the early sacramentaries, but performance of these seems to have been a matter of personal choice.

The most significant marital assigns (for the present work) are the *dotalicium*, also known as brideprice, which was the payment made by the groom to the bride's family, and the morning-gift, or bridegift, which was made to the bride herself. These transactions will be significant for assessing the intentions of the kings when taking royal wives. Germanic brideprice had been a compensation for the *mundium* of the woman, when the latter was transferred from her father or guardian to her new husband. The decline of brideprice and the concomitant increase in the significance of the morning-gift indicates a change in the basic concept of marriage.³ It no longer consisted of a transfer of the control of the woman, but became a transaction between the man and

¹E.L. Hallgren, *The Legal Status of Women in the Leges Barbarorum* (PhD Thesis, University of Colorado, 1977), pp.62f.

²F. Pollock and F.W. Maitland, *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I* (Cambridge, 1911), pp.365f.

³D.O. Hughes, 'From Brideprice to Dowry in Mediterranean Europe', in M.A. Kaplan ed., *The Marriage Bargain: Women and Dowries in European History* (New York, 1985), pp.19f.

the woman, with consummation the mark of a legal marriage.⁴ This and the morning-gift received increasing attention in the law codes, charters and literature of the Germanic peoples. Under Salic and Anglo-Saxon law the husband had control of his wife's dotal lands during his lifetime. However, the *dotalicium* and the morning-gift gave a woman economic independence after her husband's death, although she was not free to alienate her lands if she had children of the marriage.

However, in continental practice, if all or any of the legal requirements were not met, it was still possible for a man and a woman to be legally married. There appear to have been different levels of marriage: there was the full, legally contracted and financially validated union, and there was *quasi coniugium*. Any free woman who consented to cohabit with a free partner without undergoing any contractual or legal elements of marriage was still a type of wife. Provided there were no legal bars, such as a pre-existing contract or marriage, and subject to the agreement of the kin, cohabiting was sufficient basis for marriage.⁵ In this type of union, which has been given the name of *Friedelehe* by modern scholars, there was no betrothal or transfer of the woman's *mundium*: she did not have the legal protection, and did not have the security of the financial arrangements, which went with full marriage. With the exception of the *Lex Romana Burgundionum*, the barbarian codes did not distinguish between the children of full marriage and those of *Friedelehe*.⁶ The only women who were considered concubines were slaves who were legally incapable of marrying a free person. These gradations of marriage do not appear to have been present in the Anglo-Saxon social order.

Because the Anglo-Saxons appear only to have recognised one grade of marriage, that legalised by appropriate contract (although this impression could be the result of the clerical influence on the Anglo-Saxon law codes), any woman who lived with a man without observing the legal requirements would have been regarded as a concubine. 'Concubine' is usually taken to mean a woman who participates in a sexual union with a man without the benefits, or restrictions, of the legal components of marriage, and this appears to have been the case among the Anglo-Saxons. Anglo-Saxon churchmen, like their Frankish counterparts, made few requirements for the establishment of true marriage beyond those promulgated by secular authorities. Archbishop Theodore

⁴*ibid.*

⁵S.F. Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society: Marriage and the Cloister, 500-900* (Philadelphia, 1981), p.35.

⁶*ibid.*, p.36.

thought that for a first marriage a priest should say Mass and bless the couple⁷ but this was not regarded as constitutive. So, in England, concubinage came to mean a union either between free and unfree, or in which the legal observances had not been fulfilled: without the transfer of the woman's *mund*, or payment of *dotalicium*, the union was concubinage.⁸ The Church regarded concubinage as immoral, though nowhere do we find a churchman making clear what his definition of a concubine may have been.

As the Franks regarded cohabitation (implying mutual consent) as sufficient for marriage, only those who were legally incapable of marrying (that is, slaves, in the continental codes) could strictly have been termed concubines. If a free Frankish woman was not a full wife, then she was a *Friedelfrau*, not a concubine.⁹ Continental law codes forbade marriage between free and unfree.¹⁰ Men who married, or had sexual relations with, slaves who did not belong to them were punished; and even harsher punishments were meted out to women who formed relationships with slaves, either their own or other peoples'.¹¹ A man was at liberty to have sexual relations with his own slave, and he could recognise the children of such a union, but he had to free the woman if he wished to marry her.¹²

Some Frankish kings were quite plainly aware of the expedience and advantages of legal forms of marriage, although this is not to say that they limited themselves to a single wife. After his defeat of the Thuringians, Chlothar brought Radegund back with him and married her.¹³ The fact that she had ~~estates~~ when she left Chlothar suggests that she had been given a marriage portion by her husband, and she was therefore his wife (although some of her property may have been gifts from courtiers: when Queen Fredegund's extraordinary wealth was questioned, she explained that not only the king but also members of the court themselves had made her many generous gifts).¹⁴ As a war captive, Radegund had no power or family support to insist upon a valid marriage,

⁷*Penitential of Theodore*, Book I, cap. XIV, 1, *In primo conjugio presbyter debet missam agere et benedicere ambos.*

⁸G.H. Joyce, *Christian Marriage: an Historical and Doctrinal Study* (London, 1948), p.605.

⁹Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, p.34.

¹⁰*Laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks* ed. & trans. T.J. Rivers (New York, 1986), p.67.

¹¹Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, p.36.

¹²*ibid.*

¹³Gregory of Tours, *LH*, III, 7, *eam in matrimonio sociavit.*

¹⁴*ibid.*, VI, 45.

but Chlothar did not simply take her to his bed: he nurtured and educated her, and later married her. She was a free woman, nobly born, and therefore not to be treated as a concubine: the legal forms were observed and she became both wife and queen. When Dagobert repudiated his queen [*reginam*], Gomatrudis, because the marriage had proved infertile, he took Nanthechild in full marriage thus making her his queen.¹⁵ He stressed the unquestionable nature of Nanthechild's queenship in a joint charter issued in 633 in which he called her legitimate queen of the Franks.¹⁶ King Sigibert saw that his brothers were taking unworthy wives for themselves when they married their slaves, so he sent a request to Athanagild, the King of Spain, for the princess Brunhild as his wife, and married her before his assembled court.¹⁷ Prior to his marriage to Deuteria, Theudebert had been betrothed to the Longobard princess, Wisigard, but after seven years the Franks were shocked [*scandalizabantur*]¹⁸ by his failure to complete the marriage agreement. So Theudebert, not being one to wish to scandalise his people, made Wisigard his wife [*duxit uxorem*].¹⁹ There were obviously those among the king's followers who were able to convince him of the necessity of completing the contractual agreement which had been undertaken, and to observe, at least publicly, the legal forms.

Not all Merovingian kings were entirely convinced of the necessity for a sole, legally wedded queen. Some preferred informal marriages for ease of repudiation.²⁰ A fully legal union was also a risk if the wife died childless, for her entitlements reverted to her kin. A king with plenty of property with which to maintain wives, ex-wives or widows would be better off living in *quasi coniugio* with his wives. By this means he could ensure none of his lands went to her kin if she died, but could also ensure that she would have the use of estates for her maintenance if he died. Noble Frankish families would have been content for their daughters or sisters to live in *Friedelehe* with a king, provided that the women were maintained appropriately, for they were accustomed to such relationships and aware of the potential benefits for the woman's family of such an intimate association with the king's household. It is perhaps in this light that we should

¹⁵*Gesta Dagoberti*, p.408, in *matrimonium accipiens, reginam sublimauit*.

¹⁶From J.M. Pardessus & L.G.O. de Brequigny, *Diplomata, Chartae, Epistolae, Leges, aliaque Instrumenta ad Res Gallo-Francicas Spectantia* (Paris, 1843-9), Vol.2, p.24, in Wemple, *op.cit.*, p.235, note 87, *Nanthechildis, regina Francorum, nostra legitima*.

¹⁷Gregory of Tours, *LH*, IV, 27.

¹⁸*ibid.*, III, 27.

¹⁹*ibid.*

²⁰Stafford, 'Charles the Bald, Judith and England', p.141.

view the story of Childeric's sexual escapades: Gregory of Tours writes that the magnates were angry when the king ravished and defiled their daughters.²¹ We need, of course, to recognise Gregory's antipathy for Childeric and his ability to exaggerate the king's misdeeds. However, the point of the tale for the present interests is that the families would have expected Childeric at least to take their daughters as *Friedelfrauen* and to treat them with the respect to which their free birth entitled them, which he apparently failed to do. King Chilperic followed his brother Sigibert's example in arranging a formal marriage with the foreign princess, Galswinth, even though he already had many wives.²² He promised to send the others away,²³ and he received her honourably in marriage.²⁴ But it seems he could not relinquish his previous concubine, Fredegund²⁵ who had not been married to Chilperic prior to his union with Galswinth: according to the *Liber Historiae Francorum* she had been a member of Audovera's household,²⁶ and it was not until after the death of Galswinth that the king actually married Fredegund.²⁷

Frankish kings' marriages seem to have been a selection of the various levels of marriage available in their society, and it would appear that any free woman who cohabited with a king could be called a queen. Only the foreign princesses are mentioned as having full marriage settlements arranged in advance for them, and Gregory mentions their marriage portions. There can only have been one active queen in the royal household, managing it and the treasury, even if she was not the only person to share the king's affections. The Merovingian kings with multiple wives or queens could have had them as mistresses of different households and administrators of royal *civitates*. When a repudiated wife was no longer required by a king and replaced by a new queen, she appears to have been left in control of her dotal lands. Queen Ingoberg, who had been dismissed by her husband Charibert for trying to prevent him from marrying, or otherwise associating with, two women from her household,²⁸ is found at

²¹Gregory of Tours, *LH*, II, 12, *coepit filias eorum stuprose detrahere*.

²²*ibid.*, IV, 28, *iam plures haberet uxores*.

²³*ibid.*, *promittens se alias relicturum*.

²⁴*ibid.*, *est sociata coniugio*.

²⁵*ibid.*, *quam prius habuerat*.

²⁶Ch.31.

²⁷Gregory of Tours, *LH*, IV, 28, *post paucos dies Fredegundem recepit in matrimonio*.

²⁸*ibid.*, IV, 26.

the end of her life a widow and yet still called queen and in a position to bequeath estates to the cathedrals of Tours and Le Mans.²⁹ The kings do not appear to have divorced these former queens, but simply to have left them with their entitlements as full wives. These queens-in-retirement may even have still been left in control of some kind of treasury for Theudechild offered herself and her treasure to Gunthram upon Charibert's death.³⁰ It would appear to Gregory's mind there could be more than one queen at a time for he calls Theudechild one of Charibert's queens³¹ and the only one of Charibert's wives whom we know he had relinquished was Ingund.

Given the opposition to marriage between free and unfree in late antiquity and in the barbarian law codes, it is unlikely that the Merovingian kings, for all their predilections for retaining varying numbers of wives and female companions, would have contravened such strongly ingrained customs, or so far scandalised their society, as to marry their own slaves without having formally freed them first. The laws regarding marriages or liaisons with slaves would have been held to be the same for royalty as for their peoples. When Amalasantha, daughter of King Theodoric of Italy, eloped with her slave on her father's death, her mother had her beaten and the slave killed.³² For Theudebert to marry Bilichild, his mother's slave,³³ or Chilperic to marry Fredegund, it was required by law for the ladies to be manumitted first, no difficult procedure for a king but necessary before the women could become full wives. However, whether he married a woman or not, the children of any king's union were capable of being recognised as his heirs. When Dagobert formed a liaison with the slave [*puellam*] Ragnetruide, he took her to his bed:³⁴ she is not called wife or queen but she bore him his first son and heir, Sigibert. And when Sagittarius began spreading rumours that Gunthram's sons would not be able to inherit his kingdom because their mother had been Magnachar's slave, Gregory is anxious to convey the idea that all children born to

²⁹*ibid.*, IX, 26, *Anno quoque quarto decimo Childeberthi regis Ingoberga regina, Chariberthi quondam relicta, migravit a saeculo.*

³⁰*ibid.*, VII, 26.

³¹*ibid.*, IV, 26, *una reginarum eius.*

³²*ibid.*, III, 31.

³³Fredegar, *Chronicle*, p.22, *Theudebertus Bilichildem habebat uxorem, quam Brunechildis a neguciatoribus mercauerat.*

³⁴*Gesta Dagoberti*, p.409, *stratu suo adsciuit.*

a king, in spite of the mother's status, are called king's sons.³⁵ A Frankish woman did not need to be a queen to see her son become a king.

The apparently monogamous marriages of the Anglo-Saxon kings contrast sharply with the numbers of royal wives and the variety of statuses attached to them in the Merovingian royal courts.³⁶ Anglo-Saxon royal wives appear to have had a fairly uniform marital status. Where we know anything of a royal courtship it is usually in conjunction with a political alliance. Bede tells us that Eadwin was united with the kings of the Kentish folk through having married the princess Æthelburh.³⁷ Most queens were procured from other ruling families, and were not to be affronted by anything less than full marriage. The concubine of youth was often taken by an Anglo-Saxon king's son when he had no kingdom or perhaps even household of his own. Upon achieving a kingdom, or reaching his majority, he was able to take a full wife, who was often not the companion of his youth. When Eadwin finally accepted baptism he was followed by his sons Osfrid and Eadfrid, who had been born to him by Cwenburh, daughter of Cearl King of the Mercians, during his exile.³⁸ Despite Mercian support during his enforced stay and despite his liaison with the princess, upon achieving his kingdom a Kentish alliance and marriage proved more attractive. Queens could, of course, be repudiated: Eadbald of Kent renounced his first wife, and Eadwin of Northumbria divorced Æthelburh when she bore him no sons. Kings kept concubines, and sought bedfellows in convents, all of which was a source of rancour to churchmen whose letters tell of the carnal transgressions of kings. Archbishop Boniface's correspondence contains several letters complaining of King Æthelbald's continuing licentiousness and of the contempt with which he looks upon legitimate marriage.³⁹ Anglo-Saxon kings' sons, whether born of a queen or a concubine, were not essential to the well-being of the nation: throneworthiness inhered in a candidate for the kingship simply by virtue of his

³⁵Gregory of Tours, *LH*, V, 20, *praetermissis nunc generibus feminarum, regis uocitantur liberi, qui de regibus fuerant procreati.*

³⁶Perhaps we simply have no information concerning their possible concubines or extra-marital relationships, and this may reflect the willingness of contemporary historians to deal with the sexual relationships of their kings. Gregory of Tours could contentedly speak of Charibert's 'queens', while in Bede's view if one must marry (and he was aware that kings did need to marry) then let it be but once. He may not have been capable of reporting the sexual activities of kings, but these were certainly not central to his theme.

³⁷Bede, *HE*, II, 9, *iunctus est regibus Cantuariorum, accepta in coniugem Ædilberga filia Ædilbercti regis.*

³⁸*ibid.*, II, 14.

³⁹*Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents Relating to Great Britain and Ireland* Eds. A.W. Haddan and W. Stubbs (Oxford, 1964), p.359, *despiciat legitima matrimonia.*

membership of the royal kin. Mature succession was favoured by the Anglo-Saxons, who rarely contemplated the option of minority rule or a regency.

Anglo-Saxon and Frankish churchmen were more concerned with the observance of the civil requirements for marriage than with nuptial blessings. Church legislators were concerned with the observance of the canonical degrees, while moralists fretted over chastity within marriage. In judicial matters relating to marriage churchmen usually deferred to the authority of the state.⁴⁰ The Church frowned upon multiple marriages, even if serially contracted, and reserved nuptial blessings to first marriages between chaste couples. This condition can have applied to few Merovingian kings: but then it no doubt took a brave cleric to inform a king that he was unsuitable for marital blessings. Penitentials provided substantial penances for those who made more than one marriage.⁴¹ Pope Boniface's letter to Æthelburh reminded the queen that marriage to a pagan did not constitute a full Christian marriage: only if the king received baptism would they be fully recognised before God.⁴² In 755, the Council of Verneuil declared that all marriages were to be made in public,⁴³ and this was also supported by secular legislation during the reign of Charlemagne.⁴⁴

Nuptial blessings appeared in the liturgy from the fourth century, and nuptial masses in the first half of the fifth century, however they were not regarded as constitutive.⁴⁵ Pseudo-Isidore (c.850) claimed that a union entered into without benefit of sacerdotal blessing was not marriage but cohabitation. However, this ignored the intention of the parties: if the couple could prove that they intended to contract a true marriage then it was valid before the secular law.⁴⁶ In 866, Pope Nicholas I refuted the misconception that marriage was invalid if it had not received priestly blessing.⁴⁷ It was not until the twelfth-century Hildebrandine reforms that marriage became a sacrament, and marriage before a priest in the porch of the church was not required until the

⁴⁰E. Schillebeekx, *Marriage: Human Reality and Saving Mystery* (London, 1965), pp.272f.

⁴¹*Penitential of Theodore*, Book I, cap.XIV, 2 & 3.

⁴²Bede, *HE*, II, 11.

⁴³Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, p.240, note 8.

⁴⁴*ibid.*

⁴⁵Schillebeekx, *Marriage*, p.261.

⁴⁶Joyce, *Christian Marriage*, p.105.

⁴⁷*ibid.*, pp.44f.

Council of Trent.⁴⁸ In Francia in the mid-ninth century, churchmen started to assume a more dominant role in the making and breaking of royal marriages, at the same time that they began to introduce queen-making rituals. The queen had long been the king's lawful wife; churchmen desired her to be his only wife.

Under both Salic and Anglo-Saxon laws the marriage settlement was the property of the bride, pledged to her by her prospective husband at the time of betrothal as security for her widowhood, or against repudiation. The morning gift did not necessarily consist of real property but may have been, and probably often was, movables. However, while he lived, her husband usually had control or usufruct rights over all her property, both inherited and communal. The wife was unable to alienate land, either communal or familial, without the consent of her husband. A widow had full rights of disposal of her morning gift unless her husband had limited her control to her lifetime, or there were children of the marriage.⁴⁹ The position of the queen, both Anglo-Saxon and Frankish, in relation to her control of her marriage portion, does not differ essentially from this outline. They received a property settlement at marriage which was often the basis for the maintenance of herself and her household (although this may not normally have been the case in non-royal households), but her ability to alienate her dotal property was hemmed about by legal principles. There are a number of surviving charters in which queens act as co-donor⁵⁰ and a very few charters and other sources in which it is indicated that the queen is the principal donor, although it is usually stated that she is acting with the consent of the king. In a charter of Queen Æthelswith to the thegn Cuthwulf, in 868, she states that she is effecting the transaction with the consent of her elders:⁵¹ presumably her elders are King Æthelred of the West Saxons, King Burgred of the Mercians, and all the other bishops, dukes, brothers and sons of kings who witness the document. In the *Gesta Dagoberti* the author recounts a donation of land made by Queen Nanthechild to St Denis with the king's approval.⁵² The queen's position in the law was also to be respected. Radegund's letter to the bishops, as recorded by Gregory of Tours, tells that she endowed her foundation at Poitiers with lands provided by Chlothar, and that she and the other nuns had all given their property

⁴⁸C.N.L. Brooke, 'Marriage and Society in the Central Middle Ages', in R.B. Outhwaite Ed., *Marriage and Society: Studies in the Social History of Marriage* (London, 1981), p.29.

⁴⁹E. Young, 'The Anglo-Saxon Family Law', in E. Young *et al.*, *Essays in Anglo-Saxon Law* (Boston, 1876), p.178.

⁵⁰B.86/S.15, B.96/S.18, B.143/S.251, B.147/S.253, B.524/S.214; *Dip.Kar.*, pp.23 & 116.

⁵¹B.522/S.1201, *cum consensu meorum seniorum*.

⁵²*Gesta Dagoberti*, p.410, *rex libentissime concedens*.

to the convent by charter.⁵³ In the case of Queen Osthryth's property at Fladbury, the king was unable to resume control of the land at the queen's death, or at least he tried to do so but was successfully challenged by Æthilheard of the Hwicce who claimed kinship rights with the late queen,⁵⁴ and that the king could not legally inherit his wife's estate.⁵⁵

Perhaps the most interesting case of a queen insisting on her landed rights occurred in 722. The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* for that year makes the somewhat inscrutable comment that Queen Æthelburh had destroyed Taunton which Ine had built.⁵⁶ Three years later Ine and Æthelburh made a joint donation to Glastonbury Abbey,⁵⁷ so the difference of opinion of 722 must have been reconciled. In the next year Ine abdicated and Æthilheard, Queen Æthelburh's brother, took the throne. In 737 Æthilheard's queen Frithugyth left for Rome, and in that year she gave lands at Taunton to Winchester, confirmed of course by the king.⁵⁸ It would appear that the royal landholdings at Taunton were among those that were normally assigned to the queen, and that Ine, in 722, had presumed to build a fortress on the queen's land. Æthelburh apparently made short work of Ine's presumptive resumption of her lands, in which case the West Saxon queen must have been a lady to be reckoned with along the lines of some of her Merovingian sisters.

Ecgferth's hostility towards Wilfrid in 678 may have been at least partly the result of Wilfrid's acquisition of Æthelthryth's dotal lands at Hexham.⁵⁹ When Ecgferth and Æthelthryth separated it was after twelve years of marriage during which it was later claimed by Eddius and Bede that the queen had steadfastly remained a virgin. Æthelthryth's rights to alienate the property depend upon the grounds for the divorce. Early divorce laws permitted the wife to retain her morning gift if she were blameless, but non-consummation would have required the return of the morning gift, which was essentially a reward to the bride for her virginity. It is possible that Ecgferth would have expected the return of the Hexham lands that they might in turn be granted to his

⁵³Gregory of Tours, *LH*, IX, 42.

⁵⁴H.P.R. Finberg, *The Early Charters of the West Midlands* (Leicester, 1961), p.177.

⁵⁵*Chronicon Abbatiae de Evesham*, p.73, *dicens regem non posse haereditatem uxoris suae*.

⁵⁶ASC, 'A' & 'E'.

⁵⁷B.143/S.251.

⁵⁸B.158/S.254.

⁵⁹M. Roper, 'Wilfrid's Landholdings in Northumbria', in D.P. Kirby ed., *Saint Wilfrid at Hexham* (Newcastle, 1974), p.73.

subsequent queen Iurminburh whose antipathy towards the tactless prelate may have had its foundation in his refusal to restore the estates to her control. Whatever the grounds for the divorce, and whatever Æthelthryth's entitlements to her morning gift lands, once she had alienated them to Wilfrid, the king was unable to resume them. This certainly speaks for the strength of Wilfrid's resolve, but also indicates the legal force of the queen's power of gift. When Æthelthryth finally returned to East Anglia it was to endow a new convent with the lands she had also retained from her first marriage with Tonberht of the South Gyrwe.⁶⁰

The Merovingian queens may also be seen insisting on and persisting in their legal rights. Brunichild had to wait several years, until the signing of the Treaty of Andelot, before finally gaining her inheritance rights in her sister Galswinth's Frankish estates. Galswinth's morning gift [*matutinale donum*] consisting of the cities of Cahors, Bordeaux, Limoges, Lescar and Cieutat, were recognised as belonging to the queen's heir, Brunichild, although Gunthram only allowed her immediate control of Cahors with the others to revert to her on his death.⁶¹ Fredegund found it necessary to reassure the disconcerted witnesses to her contribution to Rigunth's nuptial treasure that it all came from her own honest earnings, the queenly revenue from her estates and taxes, and from gifts made to her by the king and themselves.⁶² No one argued with this explanation of her personal wealth and one must assume that it was reasonable to expect a queen to be able to administer her affairs so efficiently and remuneratively.

The language of the sources can be helpful in estimating the status of a king's wife. When Gregory of Tours or Fredegar are telling us about a full marriage they use terms such as *matrimonium accipiens*,⁶³ *accepit uxorem*,⁶⁴ or *matrimonio sociavit*,⁶⁵ *acceperere* being the verb most often used to describe the act of taking a full wife. So when Chlothar took over Theudebert's kingdom and took the latter's wife to his bed [*copulans ... stratui suo*],⁶⁶ or when Dagobert admitted the slave Ragnetruide to his bed

⁶⁰The author of the *Liber Eliensis* claims to have found this information in a source no longer extant: *et sicut scriptum repperitur, insulam Elge ab eodem sponso eius accepit in dotem*, I, 4.

⁶¹Gregory of Tours, *LH*, IX, 20.

⁶²*ibid.*, VI, 45.

⁶³Fredegar, *Chronicle*, p.49.

⁶⁴*Gesta Dagoberti*, p.402.

⁶⁵Gregory of Tours, *LH*, III, 23.

⁶⁶*ibid.*, IV, 9.

[*aestrati suae adsciuit*],⁶⁷ we can be fairly certain they did not intend these liaisons to be regarded as any form of marriage. Bede preferred the verb *habere*: Eorconbeorht of Kent had been married to Seaxburh [*habuerat in coniugem*],⁶⁸ and Æthelred of Mercia to Osthryth [*habebat uxorem*].⁶⁹ So when Eadbald of Kent married his father's widow [*uxorem patris haberet*]⁷⁰ Bede was taking the liaison to be a marriage, even if he would later describe it as *conubio non legitimo*, that is contrary to Christian law.⁷¹ The phlegmatic contributors to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* rarely mention royal liaisons unless they are full marriages: *feng to niwan wife* (sa 792), *nam to wiue* (sa 787, 'F' only), and occasionally *haefde to cwene* (sa 885). An Anglo-Saxon king might not always feel the necessity, for the benefit of kingdom or dynasty, of taking a wife, but when he took a woman as full wife she became his queen, and conversely if he wanted a queen he necessarily made her a full wife.

ROYAL DIVORCE

Royal divorce does not always appear to have been confined by the trammels of secular or Church law, which were more ample on the subject of divorce than marriage. A marriage which did not satisfy canon or civil law did not require a divorce to end it: the couple were simply required to separate.⁷² Under the continental codes a man could divorce his wife if she had failed to bear children or committed any serious crime, but if he wished to relinquish a blameless wife she retained her morning gift and inheritance, and was entitled to a compensation.⁷³ The Frankish law codes were generally unfavourable on the subject of divorce being initiated by a woman, and she could not cite adultery as grounds for divorce.⁷⁴ Æthelberht's code suggests that it was

⁶⁷*Gesta Dagoberti*, p.409.

⁶⁸Bede, *HE*, IV, 17.

⁶⁹*ibid.*, IV, 19.

⁷⁰*ibid.*, II, 5.

⁷¹*ibid.*, II, 6.

⁷²J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church* (Oxford, 1983), p.407.

⁷³Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, p.42.

⁷⁴*ibid.*

relatively easy for an Anglo-Saxon woman to divorce her husband.⁷⁵ And in the case of dissolution of a childless marriage, unless the wife was guilty of adultery or desertion, she retained her morning gift and inheritance.⁷⁶ Restrictions on divorce, particularly with regard to the wife against the husband, may have fostered the multiple marriages of the Frankish kings: the kings may have simply relinquished their wives without benefit of legal process, continuing to maintain them on royal estates, perhaps even continuing to make use of them as local administrators of *civitates* and estates, which may have been part of their official functions as queens. The difficulties of divorce for women, or even loss of status, may have discouraged the supernumerary queens from seeking to end their marriages: unable to remarry, perhaps these queens were content to step aside for a new queen. In the Church canons, mutual desire to adopt the religious life provided acceptable grounds for divorce, but usually they did not allow for either partner to remarry. This did not trouble Chilperic when he generously endowed a convent for Audovera and their daughter, and then made Fredegund his queen.⁷⁷ The Anglo-Saxons were somewhat more lenient in this regard: Theodore declared in his Penitential that either party might enter the religious life with the consent of the partner who was then free to remarry (provided it had been a first marriage).⁷⁸

In the later part of the eighth century, Carolingian secular and ecclesiastical law began to consider marriage as indissoluble.⁷⁹ In the *Capitulare Ecclesiasticum* compiled by Charlemagne in 789 under the influence of the *Collectio Dionysion Hadrianum*, and in his later *Capitulare Missorum* of 802, the indissolubility of marriage was reinforced, and remarriage was not permitted while the partner was still alive.⁸⁰ Charles repudiated Himiltrude for the Longobard princess, and the latter for Hildegard, but these events predated his legislation concerning the indissolubility of marriage. After this he practised serial monogamy until the death of Liutgard, after which he took only concubines.⁸¹ The attempts of churchmen and magnates to force the dissolution of Louis the Pious' marriage to Judith indicate the problems which still resided in attitudes

⁷⁵*The Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, Ed. & Trans. F.L. Attenborough (Cambridge, 1922), p.14.

⁷⁶*ibid.*

⁷⁷*Liber Historiae Francorum*, p.79.

⁷⁸*Penitential of Theodore*, Book II, cap.XII, 8.

⁷⁹Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, p.43.

⁸⁰Joyce, *Christian Marriage*, pp.347f.

⁸¹Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, pp.78f.

towards marriage and indissolubility. There appears to have been no suggestion that the emperor simply repudiate his wife according to secular law: it was necessary to find grounds such as adultery or witchcraft which would satisfy the Church. That churchmen were involved in trying to force the king to divorce his wife indicates that the Church's anti-divorce stand was still not strong.⁸² The next generation of churchmen gave much thought to, and there was much heated controversy over, the question of indissolubility. It was also in this next generation that queens began to be crowned, perhaps as part of a Hincmarian programme to foil the attempts of kings to dispense with unwanted wives.

WIDOWHOOD AND ROYAL DOWAGERS

The strongest personal position for a woman under Germanic law was that of widow. She was entitled to possession of all her own property acquired by inheritance, gift or morning gift, had control of minors and their inheritance, and had usufruct of a percentage of her husband's property unless she remarried. After Dagobert's death in 639, Queen Nanthechild was able to claim one-third of all that the king had acquired during their marriage.⁸³ This was actually the amount specified as the widow's share of her husband's estate in the Ripuarian code.⁸⁴ In this the Dowager Nanthechild was more fortunate than Sidonia, the widow of Duke Mummolus: when Gunthram confiscated Mummolus' lands the king left Sidonia with only her inherited property.⁸⁵

A Frankish widow could not alienate her morning-gift lands if she had children. If she wished to endow a monastery she would need the consent of those who had an interest in the land. Only if she were childless could she theoretically do as she pleased with her property. If a childless woman predeceased her husband, the widower was unable to alienate her morning gift as her kin were entitled to two-thirds.⁸⁶ The Anglo-Saxon widow retained her morning gift, but as it was most likely to have consisted of movable property, especially in the early period (*Æthelberht #78* specifies *scaet*), she would have been able to take it with her if she chose to return to her family. In Anglo-

⁸²J.A. McNamara and S.F. Wemple, 'Marriage and Divorce in the Frankish Kingdom', in S.M. Stuard ed., *Women in Medieval Society* (Pennsylvania, 1976), p.107.

⁸³Fredegar, *Chronicle*, p.72.

⁸⁴*Laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks*, p.186.

⁸⁵Gregory of Tours, *LH*, VII, 40, *quae de parentibus habuerat*; Fredegar, *Chronicle*, p.5.

⁸⁶*Laws of the Salian and Ripuarian Franks*, p.131.

Saxon law, if a wife predeceased her husband and had borne no children, her paternal kin inherited her property including her morning gift.⁸⁷ It is seldom clear from the Anglo-Saxon sources what form the marriage portions of the early queens took. Many of them returned to their paternal, or fraternal, kingdoms upon the demise of their consorts, which would suggest that at least part of their dotal entitlements had been movables as specified in the early codes, or that they had been able to sell their lands as Judith did before leaving England. Under early Anglo-Saxon law codes a woman remained a member of her paternal and maternal kin-groups: her husband was simply her guardian. The *mundium* of a widow rested with her own kin,⁸⁸ but the later codes would place her in the *mundium* of the Church and state, and leave her free to conduct her own life on the completion of a compulsory year of widowhood.⁸⁹ If the dowager queen's *mundium* rested with her kin in another kingdom it was no doubt preferable for her to return there. Frankish dowagers appear to have had lands provided for them, and not many would have been enticed to return to their familial homes.

The position and status of the dowager queen can tell us much concerning the nature of queenship in this early period. If she was accorded respect or special treatment it was because she had been elevated to the higher status of queen with all its concomitant rights, duties and qualities, she had usually borne a king's offspring, and her prior association with a king had bestowed on her a quality which could not be dismissed once the association had been brought to an end by the king's death. Queen-regents ruled more often and more effectively in the late sixth and seventh centuries in the Frankish kingdoms than in any other early medieval kingdom.⁹⁰ Dowager queens who remained politically active usually did so by force of personality. Brunhild's power in her son's and grandsons' reigns demonstrates the potential of queenship given the royal resources. She certainly had strong views on queenship, and was determined to keep Childebert and his sons from taking legal wives. Concubines could provide heirs: the kings did not need legal wives to fulfil this role, but a full or quasi-legal wife would have the opportunity to exercise her rights and powers as the queen she would inevitably become. It was of course the functions and potential power of queenship which interested Brunhild, but she was aware of the qualities which allowed for the possession

⁸⁷*Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, p.14, *Gif heo bearn ne gebyrth, faederingmagas fioh agan ond morgengyfe*.

⁸⁸T.J. Rivers, 'Widows' Rights in Anglo-Saxon Law', *American Journal of Legal History*, 19 (1975), p.210.

⁸⁹Young, 'Anglo-Saxon Family Law', p.181; Rivers, 'Widows' Rights', p.211.

⁹⁰J. Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.46.

of that power.

However, the non-institutionalised nature of queenship and queenly power could work against the dowager queen. Her personal influence needed to be greater than that of the magnates. She existed in a milieu where personal power might over-ride all but the highest of institutionalised offices, that is, kingship and, to a lesser extent, episcopal office. Fredegund offered Chilperic's realm to Gunthram and he behaved very honourably towards her. He would not give her to Childebert, who sought revenge for all her misdemeanours, because, he said, she had a king for a son.⁹¹ Theudechild's similar gamble of offering herself to Gunthram did not achieve the desired effect. To Gunthram, Fredegund was the mother of a king, while Theudechild was a woman who was unworthy of his brother's bed.⁹² Fredegund, for all the devotion of her followers, needed Gunthram to put her infant son on his father's throne. She needed strong political support in order to become regent and hold both her own and her son's positions. Bishop Praetextatus reminded Fredegund that in or out of office he would always be a bishop, but she would not always enjoy royal power.⁹³ The doomed prelate believed that a dowager-queen's prestige did not emanate from any basic concept of queenship, but from her personal ability to manipulate events from the position in which her queenship placed her.

The condition of the dowager queen in early Anglo-Saxon England seems less secure than among the Franks, but this appears to result from political implications rather than loss of the dignity of queenship. There were few active queen-regents, but the mature succession and semi-elective nature of Anglo-Saxon monarchy virtually eliminated this avenue of occupation for a king's widow. The most notable exception to this was Queen Seaxburh who, after the death of her husband, Coenwealh, 'held his kingdom for a year'.⁹⁴ Seaxburh's regency was one of the few recorded for the Anglo-Saxon period and does not appear to have been on behalf of a minor son: she was succeeded by Coenwealh's distant cousin, Æscwine.⁹⁵ Bede does not mention Seaxburh but tells us that Coenwealh was succeeded by under-kings.⁹⁶ Searle suggests that these

⁹¹Gregory of Tours, *LH*, VII, 14.

⁹²*ibid.*, IV, 26.

⁹³Gregory of Tours, *LH*, VIII, 31.

⁹⁴*ASC* sa 'A', *tha heald Seaxburgh his cuen an gear thaet rice aefter him.*

⁹⁵*ibid.*, *Tha feng Æscwine to rice, thaes cyn gaeth to Cerdice.*

⁹⁶Bede, *HE*, IV, 12, *cumque mortuus esset Coenualch ... acceperunt subreguli regnum gentis, et diuisum inter se tenuerunt annis circiter X.*

subreguli were Æscwine (647-6) and Centwine (676-85) who were sub-kings to Penda's sons Wulfhere (659-75) and Æthelred (675-704).⁹⁷ Perhaps Seaxburh was also a sub-ruler under Wulfhere: the Mercians were always respectful of queenship and a woman's potential as queen. However, it seems to have been more usual for the early dowager-queens to return to their native kingdoms. Æthelburh left when Eadwin died and his nephew Oswald took the throne. The reasons for her flight were political rather than loss of status, but as her kin-group remained her legal protectors she was safer, or at least more comfortable, in her native Kent.

The influence of a queen-regent was ephemeral: it was not institutionalised and had no foundation in custom or law, and was not apparently conferred or in any way formalised. The queen held the position by dint of her own personality, or by force of the circumstances in which she found herself and the personalities which surrounded her. Frankish dowager-queens were usually left with control of dotal properties and, sometimes, royal cities as when Clotild was given Tours, or Fredegund, Rouen, which was expected to keep them occupied and out of the mainstream of political affairs. This suggests that they had become persons of importance and were entitled to be maintained in a suitable fashion, with a dignified retirement plan. This was no doubt more acceptable to such active women as Fredegund and Brunhild than enforced claustration. Merovingian kings' widows and repudiated wives seem always to have been provided with estates for their maintenance; even Ingoberga, who had angered Charibert, was provided for. And the provisions were not necessarily made by the respective husbands: Chilperic sent Brunhild to Rouen, and Gunthram did likewise for Fredegund. They may have been enforced stays, but at least they were suitable to the queens' position. The scrupulous attention to the maintenance of dowagers and ex-queens bespeaks a high regard for the position of queen, in spite of the fact that the individual may have deserved far different treatment.

The continued secular power, or potential for it, of the widowed Merovingian queens is a good indication of the attitude towards, and concept of, the qualities of queenship.⁹⁸ The individual woman might be loved or hated, a Jezebel or a saint, but she was entitled to acknowledgement by virtue of the fact that she had been queen. The power of a queen-regent had its obvious weak points in that she could be so readily removed without creating instability such as would be created by the removal of a king.

⁹⁷W.G. Searle, *Anglo-Saxon Bishops, Kings and Nobles* (Cambridge, 1899), p.335.

⁹⁸It is interesting that at the Third Synod of Saragossa (691) 'Visigothic bishops decreed that a royal widow must always enter a convent', M.J. Enright, 'Lady with a Mead-Cup: Ritual Group Cohesion and Hierarchy in the Germanic Warband', *FS* 22 (1988), p.195. This was presumably to prevent her exploiting her potential power or her inherent status.

But the qualities of kingship did not forestall elimination if the magnates considered this necessary, any more than did the qualities of a queen. In the Merovingian period the nature of kingship had not developed the untouchability it would acquire after the rise of the Carolingians. Kingship was still assumed to emanate from the will of the people: a sort of elective position. The essential right of the king's wife to be called queen, to assume a regency if she had the support, to have her own followers whom she might send into battle, was not questioned. As with the king, she was only judged harshly for an abuse of power.

PEACEWEAVERS

The idea of the queen as a peaceweaver was more significant and more often exploited among the Anglo-Saxons than among the Franks.⁹⁹ Anglo-Saxon queens were often peaceweavers, or at least partners in politically significant alliances. Merovingian kings seem largely to have wed whomever they pleased. Daughters of dependent Anglo-Saxon kings could expect to be exploited by overlords for political marriages. Eabe, daughter of Eanfryth sub-king of the Hwicce, married Æthelwealh, king of the South Saxons, under the mandate of Wulfhere, king of the Mercians in the mid-670s as part of the growth of Mercian predominance south of the Thames.¹⁰⁰ Princesses were given to be queens in political marriages: their high birth was a significant asset to the parties involved. The only foreign princesses sought by Merovingian kings were the occasional Visigothic ones who came from the only royal houses of sufficiently high status to constitute a royal match, while some of the kings' strategic marriages were made with their own comital families. The practice of marrying low-born women meant that no kin-group gained advantageous entrée into the royal family.

Anglo-Saxon kings tended to marry kings' daughters, particularly in the early period when there were a number of kingdoms, and shifting loyalties and dependencies made political marriages a significant element of royal diplomacy. In these early alliances the father, or guardian, of the bride often held some kind of political superiority over the king who was accepting her as wife. St Æthelthryth was twice

⁹⁹Peaceweaver [*freoðuwebbe*] is a term, essentially poetic, which reflects the role of a woman who has been married to the king of a people not her own to seal a peace between their two peoples. Enright suggests all queens and ladies of the mead-hall were peaceweavers in that they 'weave' goodwill between their husbands and their followers, 'Lady with a Mead-Cup', pp.189f. However, in the present context only the narrower sense of a princess given in marriage as an earnest of peace is meant.

¹⁰⁰D.P. Kirby, *The Earliest English Kings*, (London, 1991), p.116.

coerced into strategic royal marriages before being suffered to retire to a life suited to her own inclinations. In 853, King Burgred of Mercia was forced to come to terms with Æthelwulf king of the West Saxons when the Mercians needed assistance to defend their territories from the Danes and Welsh. Under this agreement, King Æthelwulf provided not only the assistance required but also a queen for Burgred in the person of his own daughter.¹⁰¹ Not all mixed marriages resulted in anything like peaceful relations: the marriage of Æthelred of Mercia with the Northumbrian princess Osthryth recurrently witnessed rivalry, contention and murders in the two families. Royal marriages were a feature of Anglo-Saxon statesmanship: we know of no love-matches such as those indulged in by the Merovingian kings.

The Bernician dynasty's absorption of the Deiran kingdom was partly assisted by marriages to Deiran princesses. Whether Æthelfrith married Acha, sister of Eadwin, before or after achieving the combined kingship, it would have consolidated his hold over the Deiran kingdom while Eadwin, son of the previous king of the Deirans, was still living in exile, though Bede tells us that it was not until Oswald, the son of Acha and Æthelfrith, became king of the combined kingdoms was there a peaceful union between the two peoples.¹⁰² On the death of Oswald, the kingdom was again divided with Oswiu initially only being king of the Bernicians and Eadwin's second cousin, Oswine, assuming the kingship of Deira.¹⁰³ Oswiu's marriage with Eanflaed, daughter of Eadwin and Æthelburh,¹⁰⁴ would have been made to ensure dynastic security against Oswine. Eanflaed was exceptionally worthwhile as a Northumbrian queen: she came of Deiran and Kentish royal stock, and was part of a marriage alliance between Northumbria and Kent. When Ealhred, king of Northumbria married Osgifu, daughter of Oswulf, a prior king of Northumbria, he united two separate lines of the dynasty of Ida.¹⁰⁵ It was not wise for a dependent king to repudiate his queen if she were related to his overlord. Coenwealh king of Wessex put aside his wife, sister of his overlord Penda, and the Mercian king then drove him from his kingdom.¹⁰⁶ For reasons of state, the Anglo-Saxons deemed that princesses made the best queens. Peaceweaver

¹⁰¹S. Keynes & M. Lapidge, *Alfred the Great*, p.12.

¹⁰²Bede, *HE* III, 6.

¹⁰³Bede, *HE* III, 14.

¹⁰⁴Bede, *HE* III, 15.

¹⁰⁵Symeon of Durham, *A History of the Kings of England*, sa 768; Searle, *Anglo-Saxon Bishops, Kings and Nobles*, p.307.

¹⁰⁶Bede *HE* III, 7.

marriages exploited the idea of queenship in that an overlord demonstrated his superiority by placing a member of his own family in a significant position in the court of a dependent or politically inferior king. Anglo-Saxon kings also wed women for their bloodright: princesses of kingdoms which were being annexed, by becoming queens of the new royal dynasty provided a sense of continuity between the new and the old royal lines. The blood-royal flowed in her veins and this helped to reconcile her people to the consolidation of their kingdom with that of the new king or ruling dynasty.

When Frankish kings sent to foreign courts to propose marriage to their princesses, the political and dynastic implications of the suitability of kings' daughters as queens, as in the case of Sigibert's union with Brunhild, are never made clear. And the sources never explain why a Spanish king requested for the daughter of a Frankish king as his wife. It is difficult to fathom the political value of a marriage when the queen might be mistreated, as in the case of Clovis' daughter Clotild,¹⁰⁷ or even murdered in her new home, as happened to Galswinth,¹⁰⁸ or when her failure to arrive elicited no apparent enquiries of concern for her welfare, as with Rigunth.¹⁰⁹ However, even if well-born, marriage with a king usually improved any woman's status. A foreign princess like Brunhild enjoyed the power she acquired as queen, and the prospects of royal orphans such as Radegund or Clotild must have been precarious before they won the hearts of their royal consorts.

The potential public power of queens in the early medieval period resulted from the intersection of the public and private spheres within the *aula regis* and if harmony could not be maintained at court it boded ill for harmony in the kingdom. In the *Liber de Rectoribus Christianis* of Sedulius Scottus, a treatise on the nature and obligations of kingship, the emphasis is 'on conjugal harmony and union'.¹¹⁰ The maintenance of stability in the kingdom was the reason behind Eanflaed's demand [*postulauit*] that Oswiu provide land at Gilling for the establishment of a monastery in expiation for his part in the murder of her Deiran kinsman Oswine.¹¹¹ As a member of a separate *maegth* from that of her husband she could be expected to bear a feud against her

¹⁰⁷Gregory of Tours, *LH*, III, 10.

¹⁰⁸*ibid.*, IV, 28.

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*, VII, 9.

¹¹⁰p. Godman, *Poets and Emperors: Frankish Politics and Carolingian Poetry* (Oxford, 1987), p.160.

¹¹¹Bede, *HE*, III, 24.

husband.¹¹² The Deiran kin had been placated by Oswiu's compliance with her demand for compensation, and she was a significant party in the peacemaking process. King Alfred's story of the exclusion of the West Saxon king's wife from what Asser clearly saw as her rightful place beside the king and with her rightful title of queen, stemmed from a failure of domestic harmony. A previous queen had failed to fulfil what Alfred and perhaps his predecessors had seen as an essential function of the lady of any household. If the king's wife failed in this function, could not be trusted to contribute to public harmony, she did not deserve to be called queen.

THRONEWORTHINESS AND SUCCESSION PRACTICES

Dynastic purity by virtue of the legitimacy of the union between the king and his wife or wives was not a significant element of early Frankish or Anglo-Saxon throneworthiness. Kingship in early Wessex was a personal rather than hereditary position, only descent from Cerdic was necessary. Therefore the significance of the king's wife as producer of legitimate heirs was not fundamental. Merovingian kings' sons were all throneworthy: Dagobert I had two heirs according to the *Gesta Dagoberti*,¹¹³ the elder, Sigibert, by his concubine Ragnetrud, the other, Clovis, by his queen Nanthild. Theuderic, in accordance with his grandmother's wishes, did not have legitimate wives who could take their place as queens in the royal household. Columbanus reproached the king for cohabiting with what he called prostitutes [*lupinaribus*]. The saint held that the royal offspring [*regales prolexs*] should come from a respectable queen [*honorabilem reginam*].¹¹⁴ Theudebert was obviously not troubled by the maternal lineage of his sons who were first and foremost sons of the king.

In the eighth and ninth centuries the question of legitimacy of the royal heirs became increasingly significant, more so in the north and east of England and in Francia than in Wessex where fraternal succession was still favoured over minority rule into the early tenth century. Anglo-Saxon queen-regents are not unheard of, but female regents such as Seaxburh and Æthelflaed were not regents for minors but held power in their own right. A legatine council held in Northumbria in 786 and presided over by King Ælfwald of Northumbria and George, bishop of Ostia, decreed against succession to the throne of illegitimate sons, and against murder of the king because he was *Christus*

¹¹²Young, 'Anglo-Saxon Family Law', p.123.

¹¹³*Gesta Dagoberti*, p.412.

¹¹⁴Fredegar, *Chronicle*, p.23.

Domini.¹¹⁵ In 787, a similar synod was held at Celcyth under the auspices of Offa of Mercia, whose son Ecgferth was consecrated king at that time.¹¹⁶ The legates reported to Pope Hadrian that they had decreed that heirs to the throne should be legitimate sons of duly elected kings and not the offspring of adulterous unions.¹¹⁷ This proclamation was not only meant to ensure dynastic succession but it also elevated the position of the queen as mother of the heir to the throne. It is not clear if the proclamation was known in Wessex but from the reign of Ecgbeorht his dynasty held the throne until the time of the Danish kings in the eleventh century, and there was only one presumed illegitimate king, Æthelstan who succeeded Edward the Elder. His brothers resumed the legitimate line on his death.

In his *Ordinatio Imperii* of 817, Louis the Pious excluded sons not born of the king's legitimate wife from succession to the throne. When the idea of legitimate heirs to the throne became fundamental, the king began to have to clarify his marital position, and to ensure the legitimacy of his unions in order to guarantee the succession of his own line. It became increasingly difficult for illegitimate sons to wear the crown. Lothar II's desperate but futile attempts to divorce his sterile queen Theutberga and marry his concubine Waldrada,¹¹⁸ who had borne him a son, were undertaken to guarantee the continuation of his line on the throne of Lotharingia. If Hugh could not be legitimised he would be incapable of inheriting his father's crown; and indeed Lothar's death brought the sceptre of Lotharingia into the hands of his uncle, Charles the Bald.

RELIGIOUS ROLES

The religious nature of queenship in this early period was tied up with the spiritual role the queen fulfilled in the community. The religious role is manifested in a number of capacities: as patroness or foundress of religious houses; guardian of the royal mausoleum, relics and cults; keeper of the spiritual well-being of the *aula regis* and

¹¹⁵Kirby, *Earliest English Kings*, pp.152f.

¹¹⁶*Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, p.444.

¹¹⁷*ibid.*, p.453

¹¹⁸By this time there was a much broader use for the term *concupina*, as Lothar's concubine was free-born and he was unable to marry her because the Church would not recognise his repudiation of his wife. The implications of this divorce case for Frankish queenship will be discussed in Chapter 6.

the nation; and, finally, saint and intercessor before the Heavenly Patron.

In the first decades following the Conversion, in both Anglo-Saxon England and Francia, female monasticism was useful for establishing the new religion in the Christian frontier areas. Women were notably receptive to the new faith, and royal and noble women, along with their lands, wealth and influence, were encouraged to join or at least patronise the monasteries which were the bastions of the new faith.¹¹⁹ Prior to the introduction and diffusion of the civilised, coenobitic Columbanian Rule, monastic life could have exercised little appeal upon the aristocratic families of Gaul.¹²⁰ Aristocratic women's religious houses needed to provide a lifestyle in keeping with that which prospective members were accustomed to in the secular world. Columbanian-style monasticism, which was not controlled by the bishops, was readily adapted for inclusion in the land-based familial structures of Frankish society. The independence of such *Eigenklöster* appealed to the women of the propertied classes.¹²¹ The pattern of royal foundations began in the early seventh century in Kent, and in Mercia the royal foundations were most numerous in the early eighth century, that is, in the early years subsequent to the conversion of the royal households. Rigold argues that the ideas of double minsters in England first began in Kent, and that these institutions and their founders and foundresses were influenced by the example of Merovingian counterparts. From there the rest of the English royal families followed the Kentish lead.¹²² Double minsters were a sensible arrangement when the houses were usually situated away from the main royal centres. Sited on sometimes quite isolated royal estates, and providing local administration centres, they needed the protection and support of an associated male community. The royal monasteries of Kent were probably also the basis for ecclesiastical and pastoral organisation of the kingdom and the clerics could have undertaken the pastoral care of the local secular community before the development of the parish church system.¹²³

The role of abbess provided a different power base and prestige for a retired

¹¹⁹J.T. Schulenburg, 'Women's Monastic Communities, 500-1100: Patterns of Expansion and Decline', in *Signs*, 14, No.2 (1989), p.270.

¹²⁰S.G. Luff, 'A Survey of Primitive Monasticism in Central Gaul', in *Downside Review*, 70 (1952), p.190.

¹²¹Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.2.

¹²²S.E. Rigold, 'The "Double Minsters" of Kent and their Analogies', in *Journal of the British Archaeological Association*, 3rd Series, 31 (1968), 27-37.

¹²³D.W. Rollason, *The Mildrith Legend: A Study in Early Medieval Hagiography in England* (Leicester, 1982), pp.47f.

queen. Anglo-Saxon princesses and royal widows had been going to Francia to enter monastic institutions (Faremoutiers, Chelles, Les Andelys) prior to the founding of houses for women in England. Saethryth and Æthelburh, sisters of Seaxburh and Æthelthryth, and Eorcongota, Seaxburh's daughter, were abbesses at Faremoutiers. Æthelthryth's convent, founded in 673, was one of the earliest foundations for women in eastern England.¹²⁴ Seaxburh founded Sheppey and gave the abbacy to her daughter, Eormenhild, who had been Wulfhere's queen in Mercia. Seaxburh retired to the abbacy of her sister's convent at Ely. Eormenbeorh-Domneva founded a house on Thanet with lands given her by King Ecgbeorht of Kent as blood fine for the death of her brothers.

Kentish and East Anglian queens chose to return to their homelands to set up their monasteries. These two royal houses provided a remarkable number of royal saints either directly or through marriage with other royal houses during the seventh century. This is not to say that other royal houses did not have their saintly members, but they never produced the startling numbers we see in the Kentish genealogies, which suggests a programme of attaching dynastic saints to dynastic houses. There are nineteen royal saints named in the Kentish Royal Legend, which Rollason has described as 'a spectacular celebration of the saintly virtue associated with the Kentish royal house'.¹²⁵ The Kentish dynastic religious communities built up a legend concerning the spiritual and political greatness of the royal house, and the Legend concentrates on abbeys founded by royalty and royal saints.¹²⁶ Perhaps this was part of the propaganda of the royal family itself inspired by their self-image as the introducers of Christianity to the Anglo-Saxon peoples. They had supplied many Christian princesses to non-Christian courts: even Æthelburh's betrothal included the conversion of Eadwin as one of its terms, and Eadbald, the king of Kent, was not a Christian himself at that time. Perhaps the churchmen were keen to keep the Kentish kingdom as the religious centre of the land, encouraging sanctity among the royal family and ensuring the retention of cults and holy women within the kingdom. The two generations of the Mercian royal family which produced the greatest concentration of royal saints had strong Kentish connections: Queen Eormenhild and Queen Eormenbeorh-Domneva were both Kentish princesses who bore saintly royal offspring to their Mercian husbands before returning to abbeys in Kent.

Anglo-Saxon queen-abbesses were placed in the role of caretakers of royal

¹²⁴S. Ridyard, *Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England* (Cambridge, 1988), p.178.

¹²⁵Rollason, *Mildrith Legend*, p.41.

¹²⁶Ridyard, *Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.242.

mausolea and dynastic cults. These cults were propagated to create or enhance dynastic prestige,¹²⁷ to provide a moral basis for royal behaviour and ideals,¹²⁸ or to encourage acceptance of a parvenu royal house. King Eadwin was initially buried in his church of St Peter at York. His translation to Whitby was effected by Eanflaed, his daughter and later queen of King Oswiu, and Ælfflaed, their daughter, as the basis of a dynastic cult centre. Oswiu, Eanflaed and Ælfflaed were also buried there and Whitby became a 'monument to the new unity of Bernicia and Deira'.¹²⁹ The possession of royal relics and remains enhanced the prestige of a monastic house and contributed to the power base of the royal family. Saints' resting-place lists were a 'celebration of the saintly wealth of the Anglo-Saxons'.¹³⁰ It also became the practice for royal land-books to be deposited alongside the royal relic collection 'conferring upon them a kind of *ex post facto* authenticity'.¹³¹

Unlike their Anglo-Saxon counterparts, Merovingian queens who founded and entered religious houses chose not to assume the abbacies. The only Merovingian queen who entered the convent of her own volition, Radegund, did not become abbess, but retained her secular contacts and interests. Balthild was forcibly 'permitted to retire' to Chelles where she apparently participated wholeheartedly in convent life and neither desired nor was offered the position of abbess. No doubt, as with her belated vocation, there is much we are not being told. Clotild lived in semi-retirement at Tours and never took the veil: her interests remained essentially secular and her clerical concerns were mainly with the city and bishopric of Tours. The role of patroness-foundress seems to have appealed more to Merovingian queens. Brunhild founded three monasteries in Autun, 'her favourite city',¹³³ and she supported the royal dynastic cult of St Martin.¹³⁴ Balthild founded Corbie, and refounded Chelles with royal lands, and there

¹²⁷*ibid.*, p.5.

¹²⁸A. Thacker, 'Kings, Saints and Monasteries in Pre-Viking Mercia', in *Midland History*, 10 (1985), p.20.

¹²⁹B. Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England* (London, 1990), p.80.

¹³⁰D.W. Rollason, 'Lists of Saints Resting-places in Anglo-Saxon England', *ASE*, 7 (1978), p.82.

¹³¹P. Chaplais, 'The Origin and Authenticity of the Royal Anglo-Saxon Diploma', in *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 3 (1965), p.54.

¹³³Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p.58.

¹³⁴Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.10.

are possibly twelve more major cult centres which she endowed.¹³⁵ Monasteries in the north of Francia in the seventh century were part of a political programme expanding Merovingian influence through the spread of royally-founded double monasteries.¹³⁶

In the sixth and seventh centuries the increase in female monasticism was paralleled by the increase in the numbers of female saints,¹³⁷ and abbesses were always prominent in the numbers of women elevated to sainthood. Saint-kings, and there were few of these, owed their cults to high politics, while the cults of saint-queens were developed in the monastic world.¹³⁸ Schulenberg comments that sainthood is only of value for, and expressed by, the community. For a candidate to achieve recognition as a saint they need visibility or stature, to be significant within the community.¹³⁹ In the feminine hierarchy the most significant or visible person is the queen: to the community she can be of even greater significance than the virgin saint. Queens destined for sainthood might lead exemplary lives at court and produce worthy and even saintly heirs, but in order to achieve sanctity it was necessary for them to enter the convent; no matter how exemplary the secular life of an individual there was nothing like monastic vows for producing sanctity. The connections of a queen-abbess provided security, both economic as well as social, for her religious community during her lifetime, and her sanctification helped to continue the protection which her physical absence had removed.

The sanctity of royal women was founded upon their chastity, or upon their renunciation of royal status and way of life. However, no-one, least of all the hagiographers or purveyors of the royal cults, ever forgot the royal status of these ladies. It was greatly beneficial to the prestige of royal religious houses that the political and familial influence of royal saints be kept in mind by future patrons, and by those who might think to encroach upon the abbey's rights or property. Baudonivia's Radegund was still interested in events in the *regnum Francorum*, and in defending the privileges of her monastery. Baudonivia continues to call the saint *regina* and *domina*,¹⁴⁰ and

¹³⁵*ibid.*, p.40.

¹³⁶Wallace-Hadrill, *Frankish Church*, p.72.

¹³⁷Schulenburg, 'Women's Monastic Communities', p.266 Tables 1 & 2, and 'Sexism and the Celestial Gynæceum, from 500 to 1200', *JMH* 4 (1978), p.122, Table 1.

¹³⁸Ridyard, *Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.236.

¹³⁹T. Schulenburg, 'Sexism and the Celestial Gynæceum from 500 to 1200', p.119.

¹⁴⁰*De Vita Sanctae Radegundis*, *MGH SSRM* II, caps. 2 and 5, *sancta regina*; caps. 14, 16, 25, 26, 27, *domina Radegundis*; and she is usually addressed in direct speech as *Domina Radegundis*, caps. 11, 12, 17, 19.

never loses sight of her secular importance. Like Venantius, Baudonivia reassures us that Radegund was unhappy in royal life, or at least secular royal life: though she was not troubled to live on royal estates donated by her husband (whom she had abandoned contrary to canon law). However, the worldly welfare of her monastery was not forgotten, an element of her life dismissed by Venantius. Baudonivia was writing a practical *Vita*, demonstrating the very worthy worldly connections of the community's particular saint.

The inclusion in a saint's *Vita* of the story of the acquisition of the monastery's lands leant 'solemnity and perpetuity' to the monastery's rights and served as a warning against usurpation.¹⁴¹ The relics of the patron saint were physical proof of her spiritual patronage, particularly if her mortal remains were incorrupt, or proved to have miraculous properties. 'Possession of the church and lands of Ely was vested in St Æthelthryth: guardianship of her relics conferred guardianship of the same church and lands',¹⁴² and the proprietary nature of Ely convent created a hereditary abbacy: Æthelthryth bequeathed the abbey to Seaxburh, Seaxburh to Eormenhild, and Eormenhild to Waerburh. Each of these women acquired a cult at the instigation of her successor: she became part of 'a dynasty of patron saints'.¹⁴³ The first rush of royal saints was usually in the first two generations after the conversion of the royal household. By the late seventh and early eighth centuries there were far fewer Anglo-Saxon queens taking early retirement to enter the monastery. The convent was usually only an option if and when widowhood had removed worldly influence. As Anglo-Saxon laws increasingly left widows independent of familial control, and as the queen's functions and significance developed, the cloister exercised less appeal.

Sanctity was usually associated with rank and wealth: the royal ladies took vows of poverty and ostensibly renounced earthly titles, but the mechanisms of sanctification recognised the exceptional virtue only of the well-born. However, the purposes for the development of a cult were not totally political or worldly. In recognising the saintly attributes of a dead member of the community who had been a patroness and protectress during her lifetime, the community was distinguishing the potential, and in some ways greater protection she might provide through her proximity to God and the Communion of Saints. As in her lifetime she had been *mediatrix ad regem* so in her after-life she could assume the same role between the community and God.

The king's wife in her several roles as queen, patroness, abbess, saint, was

¹⁴¹Rollason, *Mildrith Legend*, p.7.

¹⁴²Ridyard, *Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, p.191.

¹⁴³*ibid.*, p.180.

continually fulfilling functions as protectress of the royal image and of dynastic welfare. Whatever was to the benefit of the royal house was simultaneously advantageous to the welfare of the nation. If a ruler needed to work hard, much harder than lesser beings, to achieve sanctity, the queen who was his other self, was perhaps needed to make up for his deficiencies and vulnerabilities by her piety, philanthropy and potential sanctity. What was detrimental in his character in terms of the spiritual prestige of the royal family, could be compensated for by the goodness of the queen. The queen's chastity and sanctity was an earnest for the well-being of dynasty and kingdom.

* * *

During the sixth to ninth centuries, the Franks and Anglo-Saxons were disposed to accord their queens special treatment, a sympathetic response to the kings' wives as queens. They believed there was behaviour which was suitable towards queens although their respective concepts of a queen's potentiality were often different. A full wife of a Frankish king was provided with dotal lands, was administrator of a treasury, manager of the royal household: she was queen in both name and nature. Dowager queens in the Frankish kingdoms continued to live on their dotal estates, if not to exercise political power. They were usually treated by succeeding kings in a manner becoming to their status as wives and mothers of kings. The Anglo-Saxon dowager queens held their greatest sway in, and were most appreciated for their attributes as ex-queens by, the monastic establishment. Merovingian queens, whether nobly born or ex-slave girls, still had the same privileges and potential power and were no more nor less royal. But Anglo-Saxon queens seem always to have sprung from royal or at least noble stock. Sometimes it was politics, and sometimes bloodlines, which dictated this element of Anglo-Saxon royal marriages, but it meant that Anglo-Saxon queenship in the early period differed fundamentally from that of the Merovingians. Anglo-Saxon kings married for policy and married princesses while Frankish kings married whomever, and as often as, they pleased. Sigibert's marriage to Brunhild was for prestige, and Charlemagne's to the Lombard princess was a rare example of a politically significant Frankish king's marriage. As monogamy and legitimate marriage became more dynastically important so did the position of the king's wife.

There are occasional references in the sources where one may note a sense of the exceptional nature of queenship, where the writer is suggesting that the queen has been accorded recognition of her position. When Dagobert married Nanthechild she

was elevated to the queenship [*reginam sublimavit*]¹⁴⁴ and in Thegan's description of both the unions entered into by Louis the Pious he writes *reginam constituit*¹⁴⁵ with the sense of an elevation to office. In the *Liber Vitae Dunelmensis* the queens and the abbesses are listed together with no differentiation by title of the two groups, although there were no doubt some women who filled both offices. This stresses the relationship between the two offices which would later, in the ninth and tenth centuries, also be underlined in the relationship between the rites of consecration for the two offices. These early affirmations of the nature of queenship would lead to a ritualisation of her induction into such an important role. If an abbess required consecration into her role as caretaker of a religious community, how much more necessary would be the consecration of the queen. From this milieu emerged some notable women, some of whom were called queen by their contemporaries, and some performed the functions and demonstrated the qualities of queenship. And there were some who saw in themselves or their position the potential for self-advancement, or in whom this potential was recognised by others.

¹⁴⁴*Gesta Dagoberti*, p.408.

¹⁴⁵Thegan, *Vita Hludowici Imperatoris*, *MGH SS II*, pp.591 & 596.

CHAPTER 4 ON THE THRESHOLD OF QUEEN-MAKING

In the previous chapter we have seen that the king's wife in Anglo-Saxon England and Francia in the sixth to eighth centuries was capable of fulfilling the practical roles of a queen without benefit of official or ritual inauguration. If queens began to receive special blessings, or to be ritually inaugurated, this must have received at least some of its impetus from non-practical, that is ideological, requirements. These ideas would appear to have received only intermittent attention during the second half of the eighth century and the first half of the ninth, and the material nature of this attention is not entirely clear in the sources. No *ordines* or blessing formulas for queens survive from this period, but perhaps there were *ad hoc* rites or prayers as has been assumed to have been the case for king-making rites from the same period. There was no standard or ritually prescribed behaviour for king-makings and each of these events was conceived or stage-managed according to the interests of the participants and the exigencies of the time.¹ We can start to assemble some rudimentary ideas about queenship, and the desirability of giving this newly perceived office ritual support and validity, from some intermittent instances during the eighth and ninth centuries. This chapter will look at the nature of the queenship enjoyed by women such as Bertrada, Cynethryth, Æthelwith and Æthelflaed of the Mercians. Three of the four were kings' wives and were called queen in the sources. At least one, Bertrada, was consecrated. Æthelflaed was not a queen, but her behaviour entitles her to inclusion in the present discussion.² Æthelwith and Æthelflaed were partners in royal unions which appear also to have had exceptional aspects. Æthelflaed undertook duties and fulfilled ideals which were above and beyond those undertaken by contemporary royal or noble wives. The careers of each of these women were atypical: either by virtue of their personalities or through expedience created by contemporary events they were elevated beyond the simple status of king's wife. It is the purpose of this chapter to discuss how these developments contributed to, or were inspired by, expanded ideas about queenship.

¹A. Jones, 'The Significance of the Regal Consecration of Edgar in 973', *JEH*, 18 (1970) Supplement pp.377f; Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning*, pp.71f.

²Æthelflaed overlaps into the period covered by the next chapter but as she was not a consecrated queen and occurred at a time when it is uncertain if Anglo-Saxon kings' wives received any form of inauguration, it seems most appropriate to include her in the present discussion.

QUEEN BERTRADA

Pippin was first consecrated at Soissons in the Church of St Medardus, and he was anointed a second time when his sons were anointed by the pope at St Denis. The unction of Pippin and his sons was to transfer the rights of succession from the Merovingian line to that of the new ruling family, to make them a throneworthy dynasty. Pippin's consecration was believed to have accorded with Frankish tradition in that he was elected by the people and consecrated by the bishops according to ancient tradition.³ His inauguration may have included liturgical enthronement, although at this stage enthronement may still have been a secular element of royal consecration.⁴ Nelson suggests that this secular element took place prior to the liturgical components of the inauguration,⁵ no doubt as part of the so-called elective element of Pippin's accession. The rite used for the consecration of Pippin in 751, if, as Fredegar claimed, it was in keeping with accepted practice,⁶ could well have been based upon a formulary like the Benedictional of Freising. Bertrada may also have been anointed in 751 thus confirming the transfer of royal authority and status to the Carolingians. There can be no doubt that Bertrada was consecrated in 751 or 754; what is unclear is the form that consecration took. The sources are not specific as to the nature of Bertrada's inauguration, but even if she was not anointed alongside her husband and sons, the sources do state that she was ritually inaugurated to her new position. However, there were enough exceptional circumstances surrounding the inaugurations of Pippin and his family that it would not be impossible that the new queen was indeed anointed with the holy oil.

Most of the contemporary sources are in agreement that Pippin was consecrated king by Boniface and the Frankish bishops at Soissons in 751, with the concurrence of the pope and of the Frankish people, in a rite which included anointing.⁷ In 754, at the royal *Eigenkloster* of St Denis, Pope Stephen II himself anointed the princes Charles and

³Fredegar, *Chronicle*, p.102.

⁴Nelson, 'The Lord's Anointed', p.144.

⁵*ibid.*

⁶Fredegar, *Chronicle*, cap. 33, *Pippinus ... in sedem regni cum consecratione ... una cum regina Bertradane, ut antiquitus ordo deposcit, sublimatur in regno.*

⁷Einhard, *Annales, 741-829 MGH SS II*, sa 750, *Romani pontificis sanctionem Pippinus rex Francorum appellatus est, et ad huius dignitatem honoris unctus sacra unctione manu sanctae memoriae Bonifati ... et more Francorum elevatus in solium regni; Annales Laurissenses, MGH SS II*, sa 750, *Pippinus ... unctus per manum sanctae memoriae Bonifacii; Annales Xantenses, MGH SS II*, sa 750, *Pippinus secundum morem Francorum electus in regem, ungitur a sancto Bonifacio.*

Carloman as joint kings with their father, and at this time the pontiff also re-anointed King Pippin.⁸ There seems to have been an abundance of anointings, which suggests that Pippin and the churchmen and the pope were not totally secure in their achievement: a special anointing of the queen would not have been unlikely in this atmosphere of insecurity.

Only two sources make any statement regarding Bertrada's part in the inaugurations of the new royal dynasty. The *Clausula* text⁹ recounts the anointing of Pippin by the Frankish bishops in 751, and then the anointing of Pippin and his sons by Pope Stephen. In the same church on the same day, the king's wife Bertrada was blessed by the pope and clothed in the female robes of state [*cicladibus*].¹⁰ It is not clear what this state dress may have been, but what is suggested in this text is that queens were customarily robed according to their status.¹¹ According to the Continuator of the *Chronicle of Fredegar*, which only records the original inauguration rites of 751, Pippin, along with his queen Bertrada, was consecrated according to ancient custom and elevated to the throne.¹² Although neither of these sources can be said to claim that the queen received unction at the hands of either the bishops or the pope, there can be little doubt that she was consecrated queen as part of the rites surrounding the accession of her family to the Frankish throne. However, as has been noted, the Continuator of the *Chronicle of Fredegar* states that the consecrations took place in the traditional manner, and those sources which mention unction also report that the rites were observant of tradition. Unless blessings, no longer extant, existed for queens, there was nothing apparently traditional in an inauguration for a queen, and if Bertrada was

⁸Einhard, *Annales*, sa 754, *Stephanus ... ipsum sacra unctione ad regiae dignitatis honorem consecravit, et cum eo duos filios eius, Karlum et Karlomannum; Annales Laurissenses*, sa 754, *Stephanus confirmavit Pippinum unctione sancta in regem, et cum eo inunxit duos filios eius, domnum Carolum, et Carolomannum in regibus; Annales Xantenses*, sa 754, *Unguntur in reges Francorum Pippinus et duo filii eius Karolus et Karlomannus*.

⁹A tenth-century manuscript, Codex Bruxellensis 7666-71, ff.99v-100r; printed in A.J. Stoclet, 'La Clausula de Unctione Pippini Regis' *Francia* 8 (1980), pp.2f.

¹⁰*ibid.*, *In ipsa namque beatorum martyrum æcclesia uno eodemque die nobilissimam atque devotissimam et sanctis martiribus devotissime praedictus venerabilis pontifex regalibus indutam cicladibus gratia septiformis spiritus benedixit*. Niermeyer gives this meaning for *cicladibus*; the author of the *Clausula* probably meant 'royal robes' but seems to have been seeking a word which specifically implied feminine garments and only found *cicladibus* though this word is not specifically royal. *Cyclade* occurs, though very much later, in antiphon during the veiling of a virgin in an *ordo* in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 163, p.262. Here the word has obviously lost its political overtones.

¹¹This element of queenship will be discussed in Chapter 8.

¹²See note 6.

non-traditionally inaugurated, why not with an equally non-traditional anointing?

Enright has suggested that the marriage of Bertrada and Pippin may have been within the canonical degrees which could have caused Pippin, whilst he was still *maior domus*, some concern.¹³ His questions to the papacy, in 746, concerning illicit marriages may have been the result of this concern,¹⁴ particularly if he was contemplating starting his own royal dynasty: it was important to lay solid, legitimate foundations. Enright also points out that Bertrada's marriage had taken place in 744 and Charles was not born until 747. This time lapse was not excessive, but Pippin was undergoing political pressures which were exacerbated by his dynastic insecurity.¹⁵ If Pippin was troubled by the legitimacy of his marriage, and hence of his sons, the potentiality for his dynasty as rulers could well have been brought into doubt. The applying of holy oil to both parents and offspring could have gone far towards creating an aura of legitimacy.

Subsequent references to Bertrada's status in letters and charters during her lifetime are of some assistance to us in assessing the nature of her position. In a diploma of 762 Pippin describes himself as anointed to the throne¹⁶ while his two references to Bertrada in the same document are simply as wife [*coniux, uxor*],¹⁷ but then neither does he make reference to the anointed or even royal status of his son Charles. However, the popes who wrote to Pippin, Charles, Carloman and to Bertrada herself did not manifest any doubt as to her royal status. Pope Paul I, in a letter of 761 to Charles and Carloman, described their mother as *a Deo conservandae reginae*,¹⁸ while in 767 she was called selected queen, *eximia reginae*.¹⁹ In 769, Pope Stephen III addressed her as *Domnae religiosae filiae Bertradae, Deo consecratae*,²⁰ and in another letter of the same year as *Deo sacratae*.²¹ However we still find no suggestion that she had been anointed.

¹³Enright, *Iona, Tara and Soissons*, p.93.

¹⁴*ibid.*

¹⁵*ibid.*

¹⁶*Diploma Pippini* #16, *MGH Dip.Kar.*, p.22.

¹⁷*ibid.*, p.23.

¹⁸*Epistolae, PL*, 98, cols.185-6.

¹⁹*ibid.*, col.225.

²⁰*ibid.*, col.245.

²¹*ibid.*, col.248.

There can be no doubt that Bertrada received some sort of consecration, that she participated in the inauguration rites of the Carolingian dynasty, either in 751 or 754, or perhaps like her husband, in both years. The reasons for Pippin's second anointing have never been made clear. In 754 the pope declared the hereditary right to the monarchy to be the sole entitlement of Pippin's descendants, and pronounced an anathema upon anyone who tried to choose a future king from any other family: perhaps this had not been made clear in the first ritual at Soissons. Bertrada's consecration cannot have been expected to have the efficacy of a fertility rite as her two sons were also anointed as part of the inauguration of the dynasty. The accession of the Pippinids required both innovative and traditional elements and the innovations were the anointing of the kings and the consecration of the queen. The accession of the Carolingians coincided with a revival of religious fervour, which made it seem natural to give the new monarchy a religious character. Coulanges has commented with regard to the accession of the Carolingians, that 'toute institution porte la marque d'esprit du temps où elle naît':²² when an institution persists through successive ages, it bears the marks of all those ages, and the new monarchy was simply adding the 'marque d'esprit' of their own time to the accumulated character of Merovingian kingship.

Eric Shils has written in relation to belief in ritual as a means of averting crisis that 'every collectivity is in danger not only from changes outside itself but from changes within as well':²³ if changes are given sacred affirmation through benediction, as was the case in the inauguration of Pippin's dynasty, the threat of such danger can be minimalised. He continues, 'in addition external dangers generate internal dangers. Leaders who are effective at one stage in dealing with the external environment lose their legitimacy when the environment becomes unencompassable and their followers, subordinates, or dependents cease to be willing to accept them.'²⁴ These conditions were indeed in existence in Francia during the period in which the Merovingian kingship was in decline. 'Those events which are closest to the generation, reproduction, and cessation of the vitality of individuals and collectivities are among the most likely to arouse the need for connection with sacred things. Empirically observable events which contradict or infringe on those rules of life which designate the right relationship with sacred things also call forth the need to reaffirm (and reinterpret) that relationship':²⁵

²²F. de Coulanges, *Histoire des Institutions Politiques de l'Ancienne France* (Paris, 1892), p.228.

²³E. Shils, 'Ritual and Crisis', in D.R. Cutler ed., *The Religious Situation: 1968* (Boston, 1968), p.734.

²⁴*ibid.*

²⁵*ibid.*, p.735.

Pippin's usurpation of the throne was an infringement on Frankish 'rules of life', and the inauguration of his dynasty reaffirmed, through the traditional accession rites, and reinterpreted, through his anointing and the consecration of his queen, his people's relationship with 'sacred things'. The innovative aspects of Pippin's consecration were rarely mentioned specifically by contemporary commentators, so it seems unlikely that the innovation of ritually recognising the new queen would have been worthy of comment. Charlemagne's ascetic attitude towards ritual and liturgy would have reduced the likelihood of any repetition of queen-making rituals during his own reign and the time in which his sons were his co-rulers. Louis the Pious and Ermentrude were king and queen during Charlemagne's lifetime, but we do not know how the queen achieved her status, and Louis' second wife, Judith, may only have been crowned empress. It is not clear if the ritual inauguration of a West Frankish queen was employed again until the reign of Charles the Bald, a period when critical impetus would be given to ritual elaboration of both king- and queen-making rites.

We have no evidence for blessing formulas and know little of the procedures of royal inauguration rituals between the reigns of Pippin and Charles the Bald. The anointings of 754 were performed by, and appear also to have been instigated by, Pope Stephen II, and Charles' sons Pippin and Louis were likewise consecrated by Pope Hadrian I in Rome in 781. This was the first recorded occasion for a coronation to be performed at a consecration ritual, and the inspiration for this innovation may have been drawn from the Byzantine imperial inauguration ceremony.²⁶ Indeed the accessions of the early Carolingian kings are of a distinctly experimental nature. Pippin was anointed twice. Charlemagne and Carloman were anointed as kings at the same time as their confirmation, when they were both still very young. Charlemagne was crowned emperor by the pope in Rome, but he had Louis crown himself as emperor in 813. Louis was ritually re-crowned by the bishops upon his restoration to the throne in 834, while he personally crowned and invested Charles the Bald in 838. Charles was anointed in 848, even though he had been crowned during his father's lifetime, and he was again crowned and anointed upon assuming the kingship in Lotharingia in 869. The pre-mortem succession practices of the early Carolingian kings meant that sons were already kings at the demise of their fathers. Thus clerical elaboration of ritual king-makings was restricted. This would certainly mean that queen-making procedures were unlikely to have been developed in the same period, particularly given Charlemagne's aversion to liturgical elaboration of any nature. Charlemagne was intent upon securing uniformity of Frankish ecclesiastical usage with the Romans, and as there would have been no royal

²⁶Nelson, 'The Lord's Anointed', p.142.

accession rites in the Roman liturgy there could have been no novelties in the Frankish liturgy such as special blessings or anointings for queens. The years after the accession of Louis the Pious witnessed a return to the more elaborate ceremonial preferred by the Franks, as exemplified by the Eighth-Century Gelasian type of sacramentary.²⁷ Ermoldus Nigellus tells us that Louis the Pious was crowned and anointed emperor in 816 and that Ermengard was crowned and blessed, though not anointed, as empress.²⁸ No blessing formulas for queens exist from before 856.

Despite his apparent lack of interest in queen-making rites, the idea of queenship and the role of the king's wife in the early Carolingian period is perhaps best illustrated by Charlemagne himself in his *Capitulare de villis*.²⁹ he declared that anything which was ordained by himself or his queen must be carried out.³⁰ This was enacted during his last marriage, to Liutgard, and he either considered that she held these powers without benefit of ecclesiastical or secular inauguration, or we are simply uninformed of the occurrence or nature of such practices during Charles' reign. The ^{lack of} interest apparently displayed by kings and churchmen in royal unction in the years after Pippin's inauguration could indicate a belief that the unction of the new dynasty was considered to have been constitutive, and that repetition was unnecessary for individual successors. When Charles the Bald and Hincmar turned their attention towards developing prayer formulas and ritual acts for royal inaugurations, they also began to formulate queen-making rites, and seriously and conspicuously to contemplate the nature of queenship.

QUEEN CYNETHRYTH

Of Offa's queen, Cynethryth, the contemporary sources provide us with precious little information. But it is still possible to gain some insights into her reign, and some impressions of contemporary Mercian attitudes towards queenship. She was designated Queen of the Mercians by 770 when she began to witness Offa's charters as *Cyneðryð regina Merciorum*.³¹ From 774 Offa often styled himself as *rex Anglorum*, or even *rex*

²⁷Ellard, *Ordination Anointings*, pp.34f.

²⁸Ermoldus Nigellus, *In Honorem Hludowici*, p.86.

²⁹*Capit. de villis*, cap.16.

³⁰*Volumus ut quicquid nos aut regina unicuique iudici ordinaverimus aut ministeriales nostri, sinescalci et butticularii, de verbo nostro aut reginae ipsis iudicibus ordinaverint, ad eundem placitum sicut eis institutum fuerit impletum habeant.*

³¹B.201/S.106.

totius Anglorum patriae,³² and was the first Anglo-Saxon king to claim this title,³³ although Cynethryth continued to subscribe as *regina Merciorum*. In a charter of 764, Offa claimed that not only had he sprung from the royal stock of Mercia, but also had been duly inaugurated king by divine precept.³⁴ So presumably there had been some form of clerical blessing administered to Offa at his accession in 757. Apart from the blessings which existed, and presumably were in use, before the accessions of Pippin and Offa, the consecrations and anointings which took place at Soissons and Paris in 751 and 754 could well have provided exemplars, may even have been the motivation, for Offa's own inauguration. If Offa was influenced by the Frankish inauguration rituals it is quite possible that Cynethryth underwent a consecration similar to that of Bertrada. Since Bertrada had been ritually recognised as genetrix of Pippin's newly founded dynasty, it may have been deemed equally appropriate for Cynethryth to be formally recognised as queen and mother of the sons of the royal line of Offa.

According to Haddan and Stubbs, a charter of 774 which Cynethryth subscribed³⁵ 'represents very fairly a complete Witenagemot of Mercia',³⁶ which suggests that as Cynethryth was witnessing the final record of the outcome of the *witenagemot* she was presumably present at the proceedings. Alcuin requested in two of his letters for his greetings to be extended to the queen; in his letter to Offa he described her as *dominam et dispensatricem domus regiae*.³⁷ In Alcuin's view, she fulfilled the usual roles of a queen as lady and keeper of the royal household. The papal privilege granted to Offa by Hadrian I (722-95) decreed that all royal monasteries dedicated to St Peter should remain perpetually in the control of the king, Queen Cynethryth and their descendants.³⁸ As Offa's widow, Cynethryth appeared as abbess of Cookham in 798 when she subscribed a charter of King Cenwulf,³⁹ thus fulfilling an accepted role of a dowager-queen. Sisam has commented of Offa that he had 'all the

³²B.214/S.111.

³³F.M. Stenton, 'The Supremacy of the Mercian Kings', in D.M. Stenton Ed., *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England: Being the Collected Papers of Frank Merry Stenton* (Oxford, 1970), p.63.

³⁴B.195/S.105.

³⁵B.213/S.110.

³⁶*Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, Vol.3, p.435.

³⁷*MGH Epp.* 4, p.148.

³⁸P. Sims-Williams, *Religion and Literature in Western England, 600-800* (Cambridge, 1990), p.161.

³⁹B.285/S.152.

attributes of a great ruler except a contemporary historian'⁴⁰ and these attributes clearly included an active and politically competent queen.

At this time the Mercian queen was also significant in the redefining of dynastic requirements for kingship. The findings of the Synod of Celcyth in 785, and of the northern synod in the previous year, demanded that only the son of the legitimate wife of the king might be heir to the throne. Offa was not only influenced by developments in kingship in the Frankish kingdom, but was 'deliberately emphasising' the superiority and longevity of his dynasty in comparison to that of the newly inaugurated Carolingians.⁴¹ The Synod at Celcyth and the definitions and reforms pronounced by the papal legates were no doubt all related to his desire to have Mercia retain its prestige among the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, and for his own dynasty to retain the throne. The dynastic instability of the Mercian kingdom, ranged beside the recent change of dynasty in Francia, must have made Offa sensitive to the problems of ensuring the continuance of his own royal house. His desire to have Ecgferth consecrated in 787 would have been influenced by the recent inaugurations of Pippin's heirs. It had been necessary for Pippin to recognise the pope's supreme spiritual authority when he sought papal blessing upon the foundation of a new royal house, but the papal decrees at Offa's instigation were far less radical. The legates were bolstering an existing dynasty by supporting direct legitimate succession, not artificially creating a new royal dynasty by apparently unprecedented means.

The legatine report included the discussions and findings concerning the nature of kingship. In their first pronouncement concerning kingship the legates reinforced the scriptural admonition, 'Touch not my anointed ones'.⁴² The second statement declared that the heir to the throne was not merely to be the son of a legitimate king, nor only to be duly elected by the bishops and nobles of the realm, but also to be born of a legally wedded union, to be the son of a queen.⁴³ In a letter to Ecgferth written sometime after 787, Alcuin described the young king as born on the throne.⁴⁴ Only the

⁴⁰K. Sisam quoted in F.M. Stenton, 'The Anglo-Saxon Coinage and the Historian', in D.M. Stenson, *Preparatory to Anglo-Saxon England*, p.278.

⁴¹F.M. Stenton, *ibid.*, p.381.

⁴²*Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, Vol.3, p.452; see also 1 Par. 16,22, *Nolite tangere christos meos*, and Ps.105,15.

⁴³*Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, Vol.3, p.453, *legitime reges a sacerdotibus et senioribus populi eligantur ... nec christus Domini esse valet, et rex totius regni, et haeres patriae, qui ex legitimo non fuerit connubio generatus.*

⁴⁴*MGH Epp.* 4, p.105, letter #61, *qui natus es in solio regni.*

queen was capable of producing an heir to the throne, and as mother of the king's son she guaranteed the continuance of the dynasty on the throne.

Prior to Ecgferth's consecration, Cynethryth attested a number of royal charters in the 780s, subscribing them as *Dei gratia regina Merciorum* or *Deo donante regina Merciorum*.⁴⁵ Offa was clearly experimenting with regnal titles throughout his reign signing variously as *Dei praedestinatione rex Anglorum, divina gubernante gratia rex Merciorum*, or *dei dono rex Merciorum*.⁴⁶ Stenton believed that the regnal styles used in royal diplomas up to the reign of Æthelstan were an accurate reflection of contemporary usage,⁴⁷ so it seems we may accept that both Cynethryth and Offa were accustomed to ascribing their positions to God's will. Byzantine rulers had used the *Dei gratia* qualification from the fifth century.⁴⁸ Although the formula was not used by Merovingian kings, they had used analogous expressions as when Chlothar II signed a diploma *Chlotacharius in Christi nomine rex*.⁴⁹ It was used by churchmen in Merovingian and Carolingian periods as a simple expression of piety and humility 'par laquelle on reporte à la faveur ou à la clémence de Dieu des biens que l'on n'eût pas mérités par soi-même'.⁵⁰ The formula was not used by Pippin (except in a few late and not well authenticated documents), but came into use in the reign of Charles and Carloman.⁵¹ The Lombard King Agilulf used it in the eighth century, and the Anglo-Saxon kings were familiar with the formula from the late seventh century.⁵² It is not certain if Charlemagne took the example from the Lombards or the Anglo-Saxons but from the second half of the eighth century the use of the term *Dei gratia* became a common feature in Western kingdoms.⁵³

The impetus for the use of the formula may well have come from the clerical

⁴⁵B.234/S.117, B.236/S.116, B.239/S.120, B.251/S.127.

⁴⁶B.201/S.106, B.203/S.59, B.209/S.109, B.210/S.109.

⁴⁷F.M. Stenton, 'The Supremacy of the Mercian Kings', p.433.

⁴⁸W. Ullmann, *Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages* (London, 1961), p.117.

⁴⁹F. de Coulanges, *Histoire des Institutions Politiques de l'Ancienne France* (Paris, 1892), p.225.

⁵⁰*ibid.*, p.223.

⁵¹W. Levison, *England and the Continent in the Eighth Century* (Oxford, 1946), p.120.

⁵²Ullmann, *Principles of Government and Politics*, p.118.

⁵³*ibid.*

scholars working in ecclesiastical and royal chanceries.⁵⁴ The idea stemmed from Pauline doctrine that everyone owes what they have and are to the grace of God, and office holders have the privilege conferred on them through God's grace.⁵⁵ The spread of this idea led to the royal office being viewed as having emanated from God rather than from the people: the king acquired divine sanction and the kingship became theocratic.⁵⁶ Cynethryth's use of the *Dei gratia* title before the events of 787 suggests that her status had been imbued with increased significance much earlier in Offa's reign. Offa used expanded titles, and claimed enlarged sphere of influence, from 774, and the queen was attributed with God-given status from at least 780, the date of the earliest surviving manuscript using this style. What must remain unanswerable is, could God-given status be claimed, even on her behalf by clerics, without at least symbolically indicating such a divine gift?

Cynethryth's reign was exceptional in that she had coins issued in her name.⁵⁷ This is the only known example of a queen-consort issuing coinage in the Anglo-Saxon period,⁵⁸ and it is not until the reign of Lothar (954-86) that what is possibly the name of a continental queen (ENMA PEIONA for Emma Regina) appears on the reverse of a few possibly Burgundian coins.⁵⁹ Offa's portrait coinage was developed before that of Charlemagne. The portraits were designed by Anglo-Saxon artists and are of 'high quality'.⁶⁰ There are no Merovingian or Carolingian precedents for such coinage, and it forms part of what Wallace-Hadrill sees as 'a kind of dawning professionalism among Western kings'.⁶¹ This flourishing of Mercian coinage during Offa's reign reflects his desire to enhance the image of Mercian kingship, and the coinage in his queen's name was expected to reinforce this embellishment of his international prestige.

Offa aspired throughout his reign to create a regal image, to reinforce the power and ensure the dynastic strength of his own royal house. In all these objectives he

⁵⁴Levison, *England and the Continent*, p.120.

⁵⁵Ullman, *Principles of Government and Politics*, p.119.

⁵⁶*ibid.*

⁵⁷See further on this in Chapter 8, pp.217-18.

⁵⁸C.E. Blunt, 'The Coinage of Offa', in R.H.M. Dolley ed., *Anglo-Saxon Coins: Studies Presented to F.M. Stenton* (London, 1961), p.46.

⁵⁹P. Grierson and M. Blackburn, *Medieval European Coinage Vol. 1: the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1986), p.248.

⁶⁰J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Medieval History* (Oxford, 1975), p.159.

⁶¹*ibid.*, p.160.

exploited queenship to augment his ideas. Offa made Cynethryth his queen and endorsed ecclesiastical legislation which sought to confine royal succession to the offspring of a legitimate queen. If Cynethryth received royal blessing or inauguration, we have no way of knowing, but it would be surprising if Offa had neglected an opportunity of such political, dynastic and cultural significance.

QUEEN ÆTHELSWITH

Æthelswith was Queen of the Mercians from her marriage to King Burgred in 855 until his expulsion by the Danes in 874. She witnessed charters during her reign, signing as *Æthelswið regina*,⁶² and in her death notice which appears in several of the manuscripts of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle sa 888, the annalists call her *cwaen*. As a Mercian queen it is not surprising that she should have held queenly office and exercised considerable authority. However, for the present work, what is of greatest interest in her career is her queen-making.

Asser tells us that Æthelswith was given as queen in marriage to Burgred, King of the Mercians by her father King Athelwulf of Wessex: the marriage was celebrated in a regal manner at the royal villa of Cippenham.⁶³ In spite of the reputed West Saxon aversion to queenship the West Saxon king made his daughter queen of the Mercians. In a charter of 869 Æthelswith is described as *pari coronata stemma regali*.⁶⁴ It would appear that Æthelswith was at least crowned as queen and that Æthelwulf ensured a public celebration and recognition of his daughter's new status, performed under the watchful eyes of her own people in much the same way as Æthelwulf's own marriage to Judith would be celebrated the following year in her father's kingdom.

There is no evidence to indicate the order of Æthelswith's inauguration; however, it does seem that Hincmar based his 'Judith' *ordo* upon an Anglo-Saxon exemplar of the 'Leofric' type. Could not this 'Leofric'-type manuscript have included an earlier queen-making formula? The 'Leofric' *ordo* was in existence in England prior to 856 and may therefore have been used for Æthelwulf's own inauguration in 839. The 'Leofric' king-making *ordo* contains the anointing formula *Deus electorum ... per hanc olei*

⁶²B.487/S.206, B.524.S.214, B.535/S.209, B.607/S.361.

⁶³Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, cap.9, *Necnon et eodem anno Æthelwulfus, Occidentalium Saxonum rex, post Pascha filiam suam Burgredo Merciorum regi in villa regia, quae dicitur Cippanhamme, nuptiis regaliter factis, ad reginam dedit.*

⁶⁴B.524/S.214.

*unctionem tuamque benedictionem.*⁶⁵ It is, therefore, not unlikely that Æthelwulf had been anointed, otherwise he could not have been content to accept the anointing element of his young queen's consecration rite, and it is not impossible that the experiment in queenly unction had already been conducted at his own daughter's wedding the previous year, if not even earlier.

ÆTHELFLÆD, LADY OF THE MERCIANS

Æthelflaed was not a queen: she was not the wife of a king, which was the primary condition for queenship in the early medieval period. In the early years of her marriage, whilst her husband Ealdorman Æthelred was effectively regent of Mercia for King Alfred, she assumed the role of a queen, and in the last eight years or more of her reign she wielded the authority that had been vested in her husband before his illness and death. The Mercians were in favour of her authority and recognised it by according her the title of *hlaefdige* which was also the title given to West Saxon queens. Her reign shows that queen-making, by marriage with a king or by inauguration, was not yet essential to assuming the office of queenship.

Asser relates that two of Alfred's children, Eadweard and Ælfthryth, were always brought up in the royal household,⁶⁶ which implies that Æthelflaed, the eldest child was not raised in the West Saxon court. Given her close relations in the Mercian royal household, and the later respect and authority that were accorded to her by the Mercians, it does not seem unreasonable to conclude that Æthelflaed was *nutritus* among the Mercians. If she indeed grew up in the Mercian court, she would have had many years in which to build up her strong position as niece to the previous rulers, daughter of their West Saxon overlord, and wife of the Ealdorman of the Mercians, as well as building upon her own political reputation, and attracting the customary Mercian regard for their queens. Perhaps the choosing of Æthelflaed as their leader by the Mercians was to act as a buffer against West Saxon interference. If she had lived in Mercia since her childhood she would have represented a compromise between West Saxon overlordship and Mercian nationalism.

Æthelred's title, and the nature of his governance, are the only real impediments to classifying Æthelflaed as queen. Æthelred of Mercia's origins are unknown: the failure of the sources to comment on Æthelred's ancestry may indicate that, as Yorke

⁶⁵*Leofric Missal*, pp.230f.

⁶⁶Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, cap.75, *Eadwerd et Ælfthryth semper in curto regio nutriti*.

has suggested,⁶⁷ he was not of royal birth. His is the last name to appear in the Worcester regnal list, *De regibus merciorum*,⁶⁸ although no duration for his reign is recorded as it has been for the preceding names on the list. In the same manuscript is a list of kings of the Mercians who have donated lands to Worcester.⁶⁹ Neither the name of Æthelred nor Æthelflaed appears on this list in spite of the fact that charters still remain, and some indeed are copied into the Worcester cartulary itself, which record such donations.⁷⁰ Æthelred appears in charters from the period variously styled as *ealdorman*,⁷¹ *dux et patricius gentis merciorum*,⁷² *dux et dominator Merciorum*,⁷³ and jointly with Æthelflaed *Dei Gratia monarchiam Merceorum*.⁷⁴ In the *Chronicle of Æthelweard* he is described in his death notice as *Myrciorum superstes*.⁷⁵ Campbell translates *superstes* as 'lord' in the text but as 'chief' in his Introduction, commenting that this usage is not to be found in any other insular manuscript.⁷⁶ The Mercian Register sa 911 records the death of Æthelred *Myrcna hlaford*.

After Æthelred became leader of a reduced Mercia, possibly in 879,⁷⁷ he allied himself with King Alfred of Wessex, although the Mercian Register and Mercian charters imply that Æthelred had rather more independence from Wessex than the West Saxon sources allow.⁷⁸ Wainwright has described Mercian fortunes as having been 'revived and rejuvenated' under Æthelred's administration, after the failures of the

⁶⁷*Kings and Kingdoms of Early Anglo-Saxon England*, p.123.

⁶⁸Cotton Tiberius A.13, f.114v.

⁶⁹*ibid.*, f.167r, *De regibus merciorum quanto tempore regnauerunt et de terris quas huic monasterio dederunt*.

⁷⁰*Hemingi Cartularium Ecclesiae Wigornensis* Ed. T. Hearne (Oxford, 1723), pp.60ff, pp.93ff; and B.579/S.223.

⁷¹B.551/S.218.

⁷²B.547/S.217.

⁷³B.607/S.361.

⁷⁴B.578/S.221.

⁷⁵*Chronicle of Æthelweard*, Ed. A. Campbell (London, 1962), p.53.

⁷⁶*ibid.*, p.xlviii.

⁷⁷Ceolwulf II acceded to the Mercian throne in 874 and the Worcester Regnal List gives him a reign of five years.

⁷⁸Yorke, *Kings and Kingdoms*, p.123.

reigns of Burgred and Ceolwulf II.⁷⁹ In 886, Alfred returned control of the newly recovered Mercian city of London to Æthelred,⁸⁰ and before 890 he had committed to Æthelred the former Mercian territories recovered from the Danes in the treaty with Guthrum.⁸¹ Ælfred thus retained overlordship of the Mercian territories but left administration and military organisation in the hands of a sub-ruler. It would appear that the marriage between Æthelred and Æthelflaed took place at about the time of the transfer of London to Mercian control, as an earnest of the Mercian-West Saxon political alliance.⁸²

Æthelflaed witnessed charters in the early years of her marriage⁸³ but it was not until her father's death that she started to assume increasing responsibility in the leadership of Mercia. Edward was more content to recognise her ability and the part she played: in a charter of 904 he describes Æthelflaed and Æthelred as holding joint leadership and power over the Mercians under his own overlordship.⁸⁴ However her status appears seldom to have been recognised in West Saxon circles: only once does the West Saxon chronicler refer to Æthelflaed's authority in Mercia.⁸⁵ In Æthelflaed's own charter of 900, granting land at Stanton to Alchelm, she styles herself as *domina Merciorum* and omits any reference to the three common dues,⁸⁶ an indication of the extent of her authority at even this early date.⁸⁷ It is believed that Æthelred was ill for the last years of his life: Æthelflaed and Edward are recorded as commanding the Mercian fyrd in 909-11, while a fragmentary Irish annal mentions that Æthelred was incapable of leading the Mercians from as early as 902 and that Æthelflaed was

⁷⁹F.T. Wainwright, 'Æthelflaed, Lady of the Mercians', in H.P.R. Finberg Ed., *Scandinavian England* (Chichester, 1975), p.307.

⁸⁰Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, cap.83, *Ætheredo, Merciorum comiti, commendavit servandam*.

⁸¹T. Dyson, 'King Alfred and the Restoration of London', in *The London Journal*, 15 (1990), p.102.

⁸²P. Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: a Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London, 1989), pp.25f.

⁸³B.547/S.217, B.577.S.1628, B.579/S.223.

⁸⁴B.606/S.371, *qui tunc principatum et potestatem gentis Merciorum sub praedicto rege tenuerunt*.

⁸⁵ASC sa 922 'A', *ond him [Edward] cierde to eall se beodscype on Myrcnalande þe Æþelflaede aer underþeoded waes*.

⁸⁶B.583/S.224.

⁸⁷C. Hart, *Early Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands* (Leicester, 1975), pp.102f.

effectively commanding the Mercian fyrd from this time.⁸⁸ Although this Irish annal is not altogether trustworthy, Wainwright considers that it supports the belief that Æthelflaed was a notable leader of the Mercians during her husband's lifetime.⁸⁹ She easily, perhaps automatically, assumed full leadership upon Æthelred's death in 911, and this was assisted, may even have been determined, by the years she had been in control before 911.

The fortress-building campaigns of Æthelflaed and Edward were closely coordinated and complementary. Her cooperation with Edward served the Mercians well: his programme of containing the Danish threat north of the Humber not only fitted in with Mercian needs but also provided the armed support of the West Saxon fyrd, and allowed Æthelflaed to concentrate on problems in the north-west. Æthelflaed's northern campaigns, which formed part of her 'Anglo-Celtic coalition',⁹⁰ perhaps reflect a recognition that the potential for future Mercian hegemony lay in the north. Alfred had purposely left London under Mercian control, but Edward reversed these decisions on his father's death. By ceding London and Oxford to Edward and concentrating her efforts in the north, Æthelflaed may have been pursuing a conscious plan of leaving the south and east to West Saxon interests and carving out a new Mercian hegemony in the north, thereby demonstrating the expansionist attitudes of a competent and ambitious ruler. She was deeply concerned with the Irish-Norwegian encroachment upon Mercian territory: her fortress-building campaign in the north was to counteract this threat, and her Mercians joined the forces which defeated Ragnald in 918.⁹¹ The *Irish Three Fragments* recognise Æthelflaed as 'the leader of an anti-Norse coalition in the north'.⁹² The *Annals of Ulster*, *Annales Cambriae* and the *Brut y Tywysogyon* record her death but neither that of Alfred or Edward, and the *Annals of Ulster* describe her as *famosissima regina Saxonum*,⁹³ showing that she was recognised as 'holding a position of power and dignity'.⁹⁴ Edward's actions subsequent to her death were a continuation of her policies: he led the anti-Norse coalition and secured

⁸⁸Wainwright, 'Æthelflaed', p.309.

⁸⁹*ibid.*

⁹⁰*ibid.*, p.320.

⁹¹*ibid.*, p.317.

⁹²*ibid.*, p.319.

⁹³*The Annals of Ulster* eds. S. MacAirt and G. MacNiocaill (Dublin, 1983), p.368.

⁹⁴Wainwright, 'Æthelflaed', p.321.

the submission of Ragnald in 920.⁹⁵ She had been the policy maker of the northern campaigns and the Irish annals recognised her achievements, but ‘West Saxon policy could not countenance the development of an Æthelflaed legend in Mercia’.⁹⁶

Æthelflaed, in concert with Æthelred during his lifetime and in her own right after his death, refurbished some of the early Mercian cults as in their joint donation to Much Wenlock abbey in 901.⁹⁷ She fulfilled the queenly role of guardian of national relics and nurturer of royal cults. She supervised the translation of Mercian cults and relics to her new burhs,⁹⁸ exploiting the devotion to such cults. She used them as political symbols to encourage loyalty to the new towns: the success of the programme of fortified town building depended upon practical use and habitation. The presence of saints’ relics and cults lent religious support to her political cause, and strengthened Mercian solidarity. Her nationally conscious programme gave a promise of the return of Mercian ascendancy with a new northern outlook.

The anomalous nature of Æthelflaed’s position is reflected in the treatment of her career and policies in contemporary annals. The West Saxon version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (MS ‘A’) does not recognise Æthelflaed’s actions either before or after Æthelred’s death, but then neither does the Mercian Register comment upon Edward’s campaigns north of the Thames during Æthelflaed’s reign. On Æthelred’s death, according to the West Saxon chronicles (MSS ‘A’, ‘D’) Edward took control of London and Oxford, but the Mercian Register does not record any interference from Wessex. The Mercian Register shows ‘Mercian pride focused on the court of Æthelflaed’.⁹⁹ The keeping of a chronicle may have been a family interest, and Æthelflaed no doubt encouraged the keeping of the Mercian Register, reflecting her awareness of the political value of national annals, a fact exploited by her father and brother in Wessex. The Mercian Register begins with Ealhswith’s death, and ends with Edward’s death and Æthelstan’s accession, which marked the end of Mercian autonomy. It more or less follows the career of Æthelflaed. Her death notice in the Mercian Register sa 918 makes a clear statement of the position and power she was perceived to have held in Mercia during her reign: she died in the eighth year that she held the rulership of

⁹⁵*ibid.*

⁹⁶*ibid.*

⁹⁷B.587/S.221.

⁹⁸D.W. Rollason, ‘Relics as an Instrument of Royal Policy’ *ASE* 15 (1986), p.95: she moved St Oswald from Bardney to Gloucester, St Werburg from Hanbury to Chester, St Eahmund from Derby to Shrewsbury.

⁹⁹Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p.8.

Mercia with lawful authority, *ðy eahtophan geara þaes ðe heo Myrcna anweald mid riht hlaford dome healdende waes*. Edward's continuance of her programme of northern expansion shows a recognition of the power she had built up. The suppression of her story in the southern chronicles indicates a concern that her reputation might inspire a reaction against West Saxon domination. Perhaps her 'loyal and successful cooperation with Eadweard'¹⁰⁰ in the campaigns against the Danes was seen by the West Saxon chroniclers for what it truly was: a conscious political programme to re-establish the political ascendancy of the Mercian people.

Æthelflaed's own title of *Myrcena Hlaefdige*¹⁰¹ has been cause for discussion among modern commentators. Wainwright describes it as the 'exact equivalent' of Æthelred's title,¹⁰² while Stafford notes that *hlaefdige* is 'a title which later always translates *regina*',¹⁰³ and both of these may be seen to be applicable. Æthelflaed's royal birth aside, Alfred could not have brought himself to give her, or to assist her to gain, queenly status. Her title of *hlaefdige* is in evidence only after she started to assume exceptional power, that is, after the death of her father. *Hlaefdige* translates as 'lady', but according to Bosworth and Toller, after Beorhtric's reign (786-802) it was the title of the wife of the West Saxon king. Æthelflaed, being of West Saxon royal birth, would have been plainly aware of the deeper significance of the title. Her Latin title in later charters is *domina*¹⁰⁴ which may simply have been a direct translation of *hlaefdige*. Bishop Werferth's charter of 904 records a lease of lands made to *Æpelrede y Æpelflaede heora hlafordum* and they witness the document as *Myrcna hlafordas*.¹⁰⁵ In a charter of 901, Æthelred and Æthelflaed describe themselves *dei gratia monarchiam merceorum*:¹⁰⁶ monarchy can only have meant to them what it means to us today. As her titles in the sources acknowledge, and as her extremely active political and military career suggests, Æthelflaed had more than usual powers, and queen-like status.

Æthelflaed had ruled Mercia in her own right and may have felt it was acceptable for Ælfwynn to succeed her. But once she was dead the attempts to pass her

¹⁰⁰Wainwright, 'Æthelflaed', p. 306.

¹⁰¹Mercian Register sa 912, 913, 917.

¹⁰²Wainwright, 'Æthelflaed', p.309.

¹⁰³p. Stafford, 'The King's Wife in Wessex', *P&P*, 91 (1981), p.4, note 10.

¹⁰⁴B.583/S.224.

¹⁰⁵B.608/S.1280.

¹⁰⁶B.587/S.221.

position and her power to her daughter was high-handedly suppressed by Edward: such dynastic and separatist pretensions could not be ignored by the expansionist West Saxon ruler. The Mercian annalist seems disgruntled by the West Saxon seizure of the potential heir to the Mercian leadership. Ælfwynn's removal by Edward implies that the Mercians were planning to set her up as an independent leader, perhaps she had even claimed her right to the position. However, Edward's son, Æthelstan, had been raised in the Mercian court and may have been Edward's choice for the subordinate leader of Mercia. Stafford has suggested that he may have ruled Mercia between 918 and 924,¹⁰⁷ in which case his early career would appear to mirror that of his aunt: a member of the West Saxon royal house raised in the Mercian court, and attracting in time his own group of Mercian followers. Ælfwynn's removal by her uncle left the way clear for Æthelstan to acquire effective leadership of the Mercians. The Mercian Register records in its last entry that the Mercians chose Æthelstan as king after the deaths of Edward and Ælfweard in 924.¹⁰⁸ As the only mature, surviving son of Edward, and having received support for his claim to the throne by the Mercians, his accession was apparently accepted by the West Saxons without any problems. The fact that his reign was not troubled by Mercian separatist stirrings indicates that he had established good relationships with the Mercians by the time of his accession. Æthelflaed was succeeded by a king: her power and position were too significant to be allowed to continue in opposition to growing West Saxon dominion. Her authority had been individual, and a queen as monarch would not reign again in England for over six hundred years.

The Mercians have been noted for their exceptional recognition of the position of the queen. In the career of Æthelflaed we have evidence of the willingness of the Mercians to accept queenship as the equivalent of kingship. Æthelflaed was probably not installed as queen. However, her upbringing in Mercia, her relatively independent actions against the Danes, her building up of the prestige of the Mercian ruling house and of the new burhs, her title of *hlaefdige* in Mercian sources, suggest that in Mercia her position was much higher and more significant than the West Saxon sources recognise, or than the leaders of Wessex had intended. The Mercians were no doubt keen to have their own regent and hence were content to be ruled by Æthelflaed, and perhaps her daughter, after the death of Æthelred. They could have found another of their own ealdormen to fulfil the role of *dux* but chose instead to continue under the leadership of their dowager-*hlaefdige*. Her personality was very strong, and she must have had an excellent supporting group among the Mercians. She had the support of

¹⁰⁷ Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p.41.

¹⁰⁸ *Æpelstan waes of Myrcum gecoren to cinge.*

her brother, and certainly she had the ability to lead her people successfully against the Danes. Her policies and strategies were more than those of a queen: she understood the politics of rulership. Æthelflaed was queen in all but name by contemporary standards, in fact by those very standards, as close as any Anglo-Saxon woman came to assuming the role of a king.

* * *

Queenship is a gender-specific political role. It involves the nurturing of the *familia regis*, management of the treasury, distributing largesse and royal patronage, overseeing of royal cults, relics and religious welfare, and assisting in shaping royal policies: all these roles of a queen demonstrated in the previous chapter continue in essence to be the functions of queens throughout the early medieval period. Mercians of the eighth and ninth centuries emphasised the position and dignity of their queens, but Æthelflaed stepped outside these gender specific activities and took on the role of a king, leading armies, deciding royal policies, building fortresses, receiving submission from subject peoples. Queenship obviously possessed inherent significance, for the Mercians honoured their queens and the West Saxons may have had a policy of doing without them, in the ninth century at least. In order to rehabilitate the office of queen among the West Saxons it would have been necessary to elevate the nature of queenship. Religious and liturgical enhancement of the queenly image would make her more acceptable through divine sanction: the earliest Anglo-Saxon sources for queen-making make their appearance after the death of King Alfred. When a kingship or a dynasty was not secure royal ritual could be used to enhance their prestige or power. The Carolingian dynasty, upon its accession to the Frankish throne, depended upon the power of ritual and upon its potential 'to convey a range of meanings',¹⁰⁹ when not only the new king, the founder of the nascent royal house, but his sons and his wife were consecrated to their new roles. Queenship was seen as a contributory element to the validity and fitness of the rising dynasty. In both Francia and England ideas on queenship were beginning to focus, albeit not very sharply yet, upon queen-making as an expression, or reinforcement of those ideas. It would not be until the reign of Charles the Bald, and the period of influence of Hincmar of Reims, that the ideas would start to clarify and the rites to take a more substantial form.

¹⁰⁹J. LaFontaine, *Initiation* (Harmondsworth, 1985), pp.32f.

CHAPTER 5

CHARLES THE BALD, HINCMAR AND QUEEN-MAKING

In October, 856, Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald and Queen Ermentrude, became the wife of Æthelwulf, King of the West Saxons, and was consecrated his queen. It was certainly not the first Frankish, nor perhaps the first Anglo-Saxon, queen-making, but it is the earliest documented queen-making for which the protocol has been preserved.¹ Interestingly, the next documented West Frankish queen-making, that for Charles' own wife, Ermentrude, has also left its particular order for the performance of the rite.² Even accepting that there had been earlier queen-makings, these two *ordines* and the events which surrounded their creation and performance are a fundamental link between the ideas surrounding queenship in the centuries prior to 856, and the development of queen-makings and the idea of queenship in the following two centuries. The Carolingian and Anglo-Saxon queens before Judith were possibly not anointed, but probably were enthroned or crowned. Asser comments that West Saxon kings did not permit their wives to sit *in regali solio*,³ as if the bishop believed they would, and should, normally occupy this position. Kings were born kingworthy but were coming to need consecration to transform them into kings. Queens had simply become so through marriage, which was still a secular contract not requiring religious support (although sacerdotal blessing was always recommended, and later came to be regarded by some churchmen as essential). At a time when political and religious thought in West Francia was seeking to enhance royal authority as a divinely sanctioned office, the queenship was also being enhanced by divinely endorsed anointings.

Charles the Bald cooperated with his churchmen: he had been educated by them and would have been very sensitive to ecclesiastical suggestions which would support or improve his power.⁴ That Charles and Hincmar were born in the same age meant that their mutual interests received mutual support: no churchman could have expanded the intellectual and ritual interests of the king as richly as Hincmar, and no king would have given the archbishop the licence to do so as confidently as Charles. To assess the developments in queen-making during Charles' reign we need to look not only at the *ordines*, or even the queens to whom they pertain, but also at the status and careers of

¹See above, Chapter 2, pp.33-36, for history of the *ordo*.

²See also *ibid*.

³Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, cap.13.

⁴Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p.66.

other queens in the Frankish kingdoms during the period, women who may well have undergone queen-making rites (although of unknown format), and whose careers elicited formal thought and comment upon the role of a queen and upon the nature of queenship.

QUEEN JUDITH

The consecration of Princess Judith is the first known queen-making of Charles' reign. Æthelwulf's reasons for marrying Judith, and Charles' reasons for promoting the match and for so distinctively underscoring his daughter's new position, have been variously discussed, and attributed to a variety of causes and reasons: Charles needed Æthelwulf's support against the Vikings,⁵ Æthelwulf needed Charles' support against his sons⁶ or the prestige of an association with the Frankish court,⁷ and even Æthelwulf needed Judith to give him more sons.⁸ On the other hand, all discussion surrounding the queen-making *ordo* for Judith has narrowly confined its function to that of a fertility rite.. However, the events leading up to, and those succeeding, the consecration of Judith have not yet been evaluated in the light of the *ordo* which was specifically created for the event.

The prologue to Judith's consecration in 856 probably started in 851: in that year Æthelwulf won a major victory against the Danes at Aclea.⁹ In 853 the West Saxon princess Æthelswith became Queen of the Mercians through a marriage arranged between her father, Æthelwulf, and Burgred of Mercia as part of an anti-Welsh alliance.¹⁰ The alliance had been formed, according to Asser, at the instigation of the Mercian king. In 855, Æthelwulf left his realm under the control of his sons, Æthelbald and Æthelberht, and travelled on a pilgrimage to Rome.¹¹ Along his journey he visited the West Frankish court where he was honourably received in the manner befitting a

⁵Stafford, 'Charles the Bald, Judith and England', p.143.

⁶Enright, 'Charles the Bald and Aethelwulf of Wessex', pp.292ff.

⁷Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p.182.

⁸Enright, 'Charles the Bald and Aethelwulf of Wessex', p.293.

⁹ASC: 851.

¹⁰ASC: 853; Asser, cap.7; see also above Chapter 5.

¹¹AB: 855; ASC: 855.

king, and at the end of his visit was escorted by Charles to the borders of his realm.¹² His return journey took Æthelwulf back to Charles' court where he was betrothed and married to the Frankish king's daughter, and during the marriage ceremony she was ritually consecrated his queen by Archbishop Hincmar.¹³ The reasons behind the West Frankish and West Saxon alliance, for which the marriage appears to have been an earnest, were quite different for the two kings involved. Æthelwulf has been described as 'a religious and unambitious man'.¹⁴ After a reign of sixteen years he undertook a pilgrimage to Rome, which it has been assumed was simply for religious reasons. However, he returned the following year ready to take up control of his realm again, having stayed twice in the Frankish court and made a Frankish princess his queen. He seems to have developed a fairly strong political sense whilst he was away, or else he undertook the journey fully aware of its implications and value. Æthelwulf must have believed it was an appropriate time for him to make his journey, even if Æthelbald and his associates were less convinced. He seems to have become aware, during one of his visits to the Frankish court, that Æthelbald was planning his rebellion, and he may have married Judith in order to confront his son and his supporters with an earnest of the strength of his alliance with the West Frankish king. However, there can have been little chance that Æthelwulf planned to supplant his sons with any possible offspring of his marriage to Judith. Enright's suggestion that Charles would have envisaged his grandson as a future king of the West Saxons,¹⁵ does not seem to take into account the fact that Æthelwulf still had another three throneworthy sons should Æthelbald require deposition.

Charles, on the other hand, was no doubt impressed by Æthelwulf's success in dealing with the Danes in 851. The entry in the *Annales Bertiniani* for 855 reports that the Northmen attacked Bordeaux and roved about the countryside at will.¹⁶ The annalist follows this with the account of the impressive state reception for Æthelwulf,

¹²AB: 855, *Karlus etiam Edilwulfum, regem Anglorum-Saxonum, Romam properantem honorifice suscipit, omni regio habitu donat, et usque ad regni sue terminos cum obsequiis rege dignis deduci facit.*

¹³AB: 856, *Edilwulf, rex occidentalium Anglorum, Roma rediens, Iudith, filiam Karli regis, mense Iulio desponsatam Calendis Octobribus in Vermeria palatio in matrimonium accipit, et eam, Ingmaro Durocortori Remorum episcopo benedicente imposito capiti eius diademate reginae nomine insignit, quod sibi suaeeque genti eatenus fuerat insuetum.*

¹⁴F.M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1971), p.245.

¹⁵Enright, 'Charles the Bald and Aethelwulf of Wessex', p.293.

¹⁶AB: 855, *Nortmanni Burdegala, Aquitaniae civitatem, invadunt et hac illacque pro libitu pervagantur.*

which suggests that the latter was seen as a king who had successfully handled the Danish problem. This, coupled with the fact of Æthelwulf's departure from England, may have suggested to the beleaguered Franks that the West Saxon king was in control of the situation at home. Charles, on the other hand, had been having to buy the support of his magnates with lands he could ill-afford to alienate,¹⁷ and may have sought a marital alliance with Æthelwulf, as Burgred of Mercia had done two years earlier. Æthelwulf's first visit could have informed both kings of the potential value of an alliance, and his time in Rome would have given both time to cogitate upon these values. A year later, on his return journey, Charles provided him with a state wedding and a queen,¹⁸ which suggests that it was Charles who was courting Æthelwulf. The alliance with the West Saxons may not have been particularly practicable in military terms: Enright has argued against such a theory on the grounds of the poor mobility of both the West Saxon and West Frankish war machines, the essentially defensive nature of both armies, and the unlikelihood of either agreeing to travel across the Channel to fight on behalf of foreign territory.¹⁹ However, so desperate was Charles at the time, perhaps every potential for support was to be seized, and this particular deal had the additional benefit of not requiring the alienation of lands. Carolingian kings had been slow to give their daughters in marriage,²⁰ presumably because of the indirect access this might give the husbands, or their offspring, to the Frankish throne. Perhaps Æthelwulf was a safer husband for a Frankish princess, as the capacity for a West Saxon prince or king to try to claim any access to the Frankish throne would have been limited. By giving Judith in marriage to Æthelwulf, Charles demonstrated the significance of the alliance for himself. It was a rare step and cannot have been taken lightly, and certainly not solely for the benefit of the West Saxon king: the primary beneficiary of the transaction must have been Charles.

There was no pre-existing *ordo* for queen-making when Charles and Hincmar were devising the consecration formulas for 'Judith'. There is little doubt that pre-existing regal blessing formulas of a non-Frankish provenance were consulted by Hincmar.²¹ Nelson has shown that some of the 'Judith' formulas are adaptations of the

¹⁷Wallace-Hadrill, *Early Medieval History*, p.207.

¹⁸*AB*: 856, *patratoque regis apparatibus utrimque atque muneribus matrimonio*.

¹⁹Enright, 'Charles the Bald and Aethelwulf of Wessex', p.292.

²⁰Stafford, 'Charles the Bald, Judith and England', p.143.

²¹Bouman, *Sacring and Crowning*, p.96; Ward, 'The Coronation Ceremony in Medieval England', p.166.

Anglo-Saxon 'Leofric' king-making rite,²² and indeed that the order of the borrowed formulas in the queen-making *ordo* are the same as in 'Leofric'.²³ There had been consecration and blessing formulas for kings in sacramentaries and pontificals from at least the seventh century, but none of these contained formulas for the consecration, or even the blessing, of a queen. The 'Leofric'-type exemplar they consulted appears to have contained no queen-making rite. This exemplar was probably West Saxon,²⁴ and it seems that Æthelwulf, or more likely a clerical member of his entourage, may have provided it for the West Frankish liturgist. Indeed it is not impossible that 'Leofric' had been used at Æthelwulf's own king-making: it is unlikely that he would have agreed to Judith's being anointed if he had not been consecrated himself. 'Judith' is the only consecration *ordo* for a queen which has so much in common with an *ordo* for king-making. There is no coronation element in 'Leofric', but this had become part of the West Frankish rite during the ninth century and was written into 'Judith'. We know of no Anglo-Saxon exemplars for this, however Æthelwulf is described as *coronata* in a charter of 869.²⁵ There may even have been queen-making formulas in the 'Leofric' exemplar available to Hincmar: the surviving 'Leofric' manuscript is a later compilation, and does not give many clues as to the composition of the manuscript which contained the 'Leofric' type of *ordo* in Æthelwulf's day. Hincmar took what he needed from the existing formulas and created an eminently suitable adaptation. He could have delved into any of the West Frankish formularies to produce his new *ordo*; instead he consulted an Anglo-Saxon formulary to form the basis for Judith's consecration, no doubt in order to underscore her new position as Queen of the West Saxons.

'Judith' is divided into two main parts:²⁶ the nuptial blessings, and the royal consecration. The first nuptial prayer is for the chastity of the bride, and the second requests that she be worthy of her dowry and of eventually entering the fellowship of the Fathers. The third provides for the giving of the ring of faith and love, which is the sign of her marital union, while the fourth prayer recalls for the bride Old Testament exemplars of good wives, Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Esther, Judith, Anna, and Naomi. The final prayer is a fertility blessing and is an element which is present in all bridal blessing formulas to be found in the sacramentaries. The marriage element of 'Judith'

²²Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.344.

²³*ibid.*, pp.348f.

²⁴*ibid.*, p.350.

²⁵B.524/S.214.

²⁶See Appendix, pp.241-42.

is considerably foreshortened in comparison to the nuptial blessings of the *Liber Sacramentorum Gellonensis* and the *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae* with which it has one short blessing prayer in common. This is the *Deus qui in mundi crescentis* which requests the blessing of fertility upon the bride. Apart from this prayer the nuptial element of 'Judith' does not appear to depend upon any pre-existing blessing formula, and thus seems to have originated with Hincmar for this occasion. There are no apparent borrowings from the nuptial blessing formulas of the 'Leofric' manuscript.

The consecration of the queen immediately follows the marriage blessings. There are no rubrics indicating the performance of the rite: in 'Leofric' the only rubrics are the instructions for the triple shout of the *Vivat rex* acclamation, and the enthronement of the king.²⁷ The *Te invocamus* prayer of 'Judith' requests divine guidance and grace to accomplish her duties, and protection from adversity. This formula has only slight adaptations, and is the introductory benediction in both 'Leofric' and 'Judith'. Hincmar uses the same word to describe the queen, *famula*, in his new *ordo* as had been used for the king, *famulus*, in 'Leofric': she is a handmaid of the Lord just as the king is His servant.

The following formula, *Sursum corda*, constitutes the anointing element of the rite. Hincmar invokes Aaron as the archetypal anointer of kings, priests and prophets. He also invokes Judith (not a queen but a powerful exemplar) and Esther (the only queen in the Old Testament to be crowned), both of whom were 'anointed' for the salvation of their people. The prayer also suggests that Judith be blessed with abundance [*pinguedine*],²⁸ peace and chastity. Esther was perhaps considered a suitable exemplar for her as both were queens of foreign kings. Perhaps the biblical queen's reserved and placatory behaviour was being commended to the young princess. This is the only queen-making *ordo* known to us which makes reference to this Old Testament queen. Neither is the biblical Judith ever invoked again as a model for queenly behaviour. The next formula is a coronation prayer and requests that her actions may shine as the gold and gems of her crown. These two prayers are more concerned with her actions as queen, and with the benefits she may bring to her people, than with any implications of fertility. There is no enthronement formula in 'Judith', even though

²⁷The anointing, handing over of the sceptre, and coronation of 'Leofric' are not rubricated. However, the 'Egbert' manuscript, which shares most of its formulas with 'Leofric', has fuller rubrical instructions for the pouring of the chrism, the delivery of the sceptre and baculum, and the imposition of the helmet-crown [*galea*] inserted in the appropriate places.

²⁸The abundance implied by *pinguedine* could not easily be construed as essentially female fertility when it is also used in a male context in king-makings and in the Old Testament.

there was an enthronement element, the *Deus perpetuitatis auctor* prayer, in 'Leofric'.²⁹ This was probably not considered necessary as Æthelwulf would enthrone Judith when they returned to Wessex.³⁰

Of the final six benedictions of 'Judith' only the first has been taken from the 'Leofric' series. The *Benedic Domini* (which is associated in 'Egbert' with the giving of the sceptre), is reworked for 'Judith' but is no longer part of the investment elements of the rite; instead it has become part of the final blessings upon the newly crowned queen, and it requests that she receive blessing and guidance for her royal authority. The adaptation of this formula from a king-making *ordo* underscores Hincmar's belief in the authority of queenship. The remaining benedictions consist largely of scriptural quotations and allusions which also stress Hincmar's belief in the significance of queenship. The scriptural allusions emphasise the promise of success to the Chosen People. The clause *Da ei de rore caeli et de pinguedine terrae abundantiam frumenti et vini*, also found in 'Leofric', is taken from Isaac's blessing upon Jacob (who was the eponymous father of his people³¹), 'God give you dew from heaven and the richness of the earth, corn and new wine in plenty. May peoples serve you and nations bow down to you'.³² The phrase *benedictionibus uberum et vulvae*, also borrowed from the West Saxon *ordo*, recalls Jacob's blessing upon Joseph, '... may He bless you with the blessings of heaven above, and the blessings of the deep that lies below, the blessings of breast and womb ...'³³ The blessings of abundance and richness which are called down upon the new queen are no different from those requested for kings or for their Old Testament exemplars. The fertility requested for her is more than simple female fertility, rather it is the capacity to participate in the building of a great nation.

It is the marriage element of 'Judith' which requests fertility for the royal bride: fecundity was not the primary physical characteristic requested for the new queen.³⁴ Certainly Judith's consecration rite was designed to provide her with security, and to render her fertile, that her offspring might protect her and be made particularly throneworthy by her status.³⁵ But there were other important characteristics which a

²⁹Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.348.

³⁰Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, cap.13.

³¹Gen. 35, 10: So Jacob was called Israel.

³²Gen. 27, 28.

³³Gen. 49, 25.

³⁴cf. Enright, 'Charles the Bald and Aethelwulf of Wessex', p.298.

³⁵Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.131.

queen equally needed, and these also were requested for Judith. She needed, as much as anything, to survive in her prospective home; she needed to acquire the social and political gifts of a good queen, to contribute to the welfare and prestige of her husband's people, and these are indeed stressed more in 'Judith' than her fertility.

The entry in the *Annales Bertiniani* which describes Judith's queen-making comments that it was Æthelwulf who distinguished her with the title of queen³⁶ after Hincmar had blessed her and placed the diadem on her head. Up until this *ordo* had been created, and until Judith was consecrated queen at the time of her marriage, it had been the prevailing view that the king's wife became queen by virtue of her royal marriage. She required neither secular nor ecclesiastical sanction for her queenship. Æthelwulf's personal conferring of Judith's title indicated that the authority to create a queen was vested in the king. It took the place of the election required for the king, and is seen again in Ermentrude's consecration when Charles requested that the queen-making take place, and then joined the bishops in placing the crown upon her head.³⁷

When Æthelwulf returned to Wessex with his child-queen, it was to a kingdom troubled not only by Danish harassment but also divided into two factions, one of which adhered to the king and one to his son and sub-king, Æthelbald. The cause of the latter's rebellion is not clearly understood. It appears to have arisen during Æthelwulf's absence and may have had its foundations in Æthelbald's disinclination to receive his father back as overlord, or in his antipathy to his new stepmother, who had been crowned in contravention of recent West Saxon practice. Bishop Asser tells us that through Æthelwulf's mercy [*clementia*] the kingdom was divided between himself and his son, Æthelbald,³⁸ with the young king taking the western districts and Æthelwulf the eastern ones.³⁹ In his following chapter, Asser reports that Æthelwulf placed Judith beside him on the West Saxon throne,⁴⁰ which confounds the idea that Æthelwulf was relegated to the lesser kingdom of Kent, and which was, in any case, under the sub-rule of Æthelberht. We know that it was the West Saxon throne and not that of Kent because this is where Asser makes his comment about the West Saxon kings not permitting queens to be enthroned beside their husbands and that Æthelwulf had acted

³⁶AB: 856, *Edilwulf ... eam ... reginae nomine insignit.*

³⁷AB: 866.

³⁸Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, cap.12; no mention is made of Aethelberht who had been under-king in Kent, Surrey, Sussex, and Essex during his father's absence.

³⁹*ibid.*, cap.12, *orientales plagae patri, occidentales filio.*

⁴⁰*ibid.*, cap.13, *Iuthitham ... iuxta se in regali solio ... sedere imperavit.*

contrary to the custom of his people.⁴¹ Æthelwulf retained his over-kingship of the West Saxon kingdoms, and was not in the political decline which has been mooted by Enright and Stenton.

It is generally held that Æthelbald rebelled because of his father's remarriage, and because Judith received the title and position of queen.⁴² The reasoning for this is that Æthelbald feared displacement of himself or of his sons by potential offspring of the union between his father and Judith. However, a number of factors argue against this opinion, and hence against the possibility that Æthelwulf sought Judith's hand and made her queen in order to produce yet more throneworthy sons. The first is Æthelwulf's will. This document no longer exists but it is recalled for posterity by his youngest son, Alfred. It seems likely that the will had been made before Æthelwulf left for Rome. It was common practice among pilgrims to leave their affairs in good order, and Æthelwulf was a dutiful king. The terms of the will required that all the royal estates and the kingship should pass to the eldest surviving son, thus preventing the dissipation of royal lands by partible inheritance and creating the concept of a royal demesne.⁴³ On this son's death the next brother in line should succeed to the undivided inheritance, and so on through each surviving brother, and passing over any sons any of the brothers might produce. As the terms of the will were observed it would seem that the brothers had been in accord with their father. If the will was made after his return it indicates that he still did not intend to disinherit his existing sons. After specifically ensuring each son's place in the line of inheritance, it is inconceivable that Æthelwulf should then marry Judith in order to disinherit all of them. Æthelbald may have resented Judith, but her offspring, according to the terms of Æthelwulf's will, could only have joined on at the end of the line of Æthelwulf's sons. He specifically did not want a partition of his realm. The second argument is that Æthelbald was not married and did not have a line of his own to whom he might pass the kingdom. If Æthelbald's descendants or heirs were such an important aspect of his policy he did precious little to acquire such descendants. He did not marry until his father's death, and his marriage to Judith was presumably to protect his claim to the throne of Wessex. He had agreed, at least tacitly, to Æthelwulf's requirement of collateral succession and would no doubt recognise the mistake of producing heirs under those circumstances. Neither he nor

⁴¹*ibid.*, *gens namque Occidentalium Saxonum reginam iuxta regem sedere non patituri, and contra perversam illius gentis consuetudinem.*

⁴²S. Keynes and M. Lapidge eds., *Alfred the Great* (Harmondsworth, 1983), p.234, note 26; Stafford, 'Charles the Bald, Judith and England', p.150; Enright, 'Charles the Bald Aethelwulf of Wessex', p.296.

⁴³E. John, *Orbis Britanniae* (Leicester, 1966), p.42.

Æthelberht produced heirs to disinherit their younger brothers. It was the return of Æthelwulf which was troubling Æthelbald and his followers: they had managed well without the old king and had possibly hoped that he would remain in Rome. All of which reinforces the argument that Æthelwulf did not need to marry Judith, or to make her his queen, and that the arrangement must have been made at the invitation, and out of the need, of her father. The *ordo* which was devised for her queen-making by Hincmar was no doubt stipulated by her father to provide her with all possible protection and status enhancement. The unprecedented step of giving a daughter as queen to a potential royal ally is reflected in the rite which was created to bring about her royal dignity.

Upon Æthelwulf's death in 858, the same son, Æthelbald, contravened current ecclesiastical and secular usage, and married his stepmother.⁴⁴ As he was already king he should not have needed Judith to ensure his hold on the throne. However, he only held the western districts of Wessex and if his brother and co-ruler, Æthelberht, had married her he could have united his father's eastern Wessex with his existing sub-kingdom of Kent. A third party may even have sought to gain control of the middle kingdom through marriage with the dowager-queen. As a consecrated queen she was too significant to be left in a position to marry the wrong person. Æthelbald recognised that she possessed all the qualities of queenship including the potential for throneworthiness by association.

In 860 Judith was a widow again. Her fate is no longer followed by the West Saxon annalist, but the *Annales Bertiniani* and Flodoard both relate her subsequent activities. Both are conscious of her royal status, and of behaviour which was suitable for both the young dowager queen and for those into whose care she was placed. Upon the death of her second royal husband Judith sold all the property she had held in the English kingdom⁴⁵ and returned to her father's kingdom. The young queen had held at least part of her dower lands by book-right and was at liberty to sell these when she left the kingdom. However her return to Francia did not bring her the liberty which possession of her own estates would have done. Her father and Hincmar kept her under close supervision at Senlis, in a manner becoming a consecrated queen.⁴⁶ After two years she was still confined at Senlis while Charles and Hincmar contemplated a suitable match for her. It may have been more difficult for Charles to agree to a marriage with

⁴⁴Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, cap.17.

⁴⁵AB: 862, *possessionibus venditis quas in Anglorum regno obtinuerat*.

⁴⁶Flodoard, *Annales* ed. P. Lauer (Paris, 1905), III, 12, *reginae decore ac benedictione insignita*.

his daughter now that she was a consecrated queen. If Judith had not taken matters into her own hands she would probably have lived out the rest of her days in the manner befitting a queen at Senlis. Hincmar comments that Judith was *mutato habitu* when she ran away with Baldwin.⁴⁷ Nelson calls this dress ‘widow’s clothing’,⁴⁸ but it is perhaps unlikely that she would still be wearing widow’s dress after two years. It could be that, as she was living in a manner becoming a queen, she had dressed in a manner becoming a queen, and it was these robes that she dispensed with when she left her father’s care. Hincmar appears unable to understand how she could give up her queenly life.

QUEEN ERMENSTRUDE

Judith’s mother was consecrated queen some ten years after her daughter’s queen-making. Charles’ marriage to Ermentrude in 842 had been a matter of policy,⁴⁹ but it had not been deemed necessary for her to be anointed. Her status was defined by her marriage to the king. Prudentius comments that Charles took Ermentrude as wife and empress.⁵⁰ This untimely use of the title empress is not easily explained, as no imperial features were yet present in Charles’ regime. To Prudentius, marriage to a king simply elevated a woman to the highest status, and he appears as yet to have been unclear on the appropriate terminology.

Ermentrude led an active queen’s life. Her political influence was acknowledged by the king, the pope, Hincmar, and a number of monasteries and churches. She had been influential in arranging the meetings and negotiations between Lothar I and Charles at Péronne in 849, and in organising the reconciliation between Lothar II and her husband at Attigny and Vignoble in 865-6.⁵¹ Monasteries were wont to make use of her influence with the king: many charters exist in which Charles makes gifts and decisions at the request of the queen.⁵² In 864 Ermentrude and Bishop Erchenraus made a joint request for a mint to be set up at Chalons-sur-Marne, for which Charles

⁴⁷AB: 862.

⁴⁸Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p.97.

⁴⁹*ibid.*, p.131.

⁵⁰AB: 842, *uxorem ducit atque Augustam*.

⁵¹AB: 865, *Interea Lotharius missos suos ad Carolum dirigit volens et petens, ut mutua firmitate inter eos amicitia foederarentur. Quod et Ermentrude regina interveniente obtinuit*.

⁵²Tessier, #278 & #248; also #12, #182, #212, #269.

signed a charter on 22 November.⁵³ It was still necessary for her to have her transactions ratified by her husband's royal charter. In a charter of 854 Charles confirmed an exchange of lands between *dulcissima nobis conjunx nostra Hirmintrudis regina et sui monasterii Cale*.⁵⁴

As well as escorting her husband about his realm and supporting him politically, she also gave birth to eleven children of whom six were sons. Those sons who did not die very young were to prove less than satisfactory if not downright rebellious, and it is this state of affairs which is generally believed to have precipitated her consecration in 866: Charles had Ermentrude ritually consecrated because he wanted more sons who might furnish a more felicitous succession in West Francia.⁵⁵ This is a somewhat superficial estimation of the intentions of Charles, Hincmar and perhaps even Ermentrude herself,⁵⁶ especially given the complex inter-pretation which may be placed upon Charles' purposes in having his daughter consecrated ten years earlier.

There are some anomalous points in the *ordo* which was specifically composed for Ermentrude's consecration.⁵⁷ The rite contains strong nuptial overtones, which do not resemble those contained in 'Judith', where the marriage elements are distinctly separate from the queen-making and are seemingly superfluous when Ermentrude and Charles had been married for twenty-four years. There is also a long preliminary address (some fifty-three lines in the *MGH* edition) which does not pertain to the actual consecration but constitutes a discourse on the role of the bishops. The final formula in this opening sequence, *His ergo fulti auctoritatibus*, makes no real reference to the events of the day, or the significance of queen-making. Perhaps Hincmar was stressing the significance of the synod of which the queen-making was the final event.

The initial formula of 'Ermentrude', *Volumus vos scire fratres*, is addressed to the churchmen present, relating that just as Charles has been anointed and consecrated according to Old Testament precepts, he has asked that his wife [*uxorem*] be likewise made queen. Hincmar suggests in his opening formula of 'Ermentrude' that it had been

⁵³Tessier, #277.

⁵⁴Tessier, #169.

⁵⁵J.M. Wallace-Hadrill, 'A Carolingian Renaissance Prince: the Emperor Charles the Bald', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 64 (1978), p.170; Enright, 'Charles the Bald and Aethelwulf of Wessex', p.299; Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.131; E.H. Kantorowicz, *Selected Studies* (New York, 1965), p.87.

⁵⁶Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p.210, "Perhaps it was the impressive ceremonial of Theutberga's reinstatement which suggested to Ermentrude herself the idea of ritual consecration ... and a promise of divinely blessed fecundity".

⁵⁷See Appendix, pp.243-44.

accepted practice at least to bless queens: just as a king was anointed and consecrated by episcopal authority, likewise his wife might be blessed as queen as had been performed for others by their predecessors.⁵⁸ Charles has asked episcopal blessing for his wife that her issue might bring solace to the Church, defence to the realm, peace, law and justice to their faithful followers, just as God promised to Abraham's descendants, 'All nations on earth will wish to be blessed because you have been obedient to me'.⁵⁹ Sarah and Rebecca were both able to conceive in spite of their sterile state, and their descendants were blessed, 'Isaac appealed to the Lord on behalf of his wife because she was childless; the Lord gave heed to his entreaty, and Rebecca conceived'.⁶⁰ It appears from the preliminary address that Charles was hoping for more offspring, while Hincmar is consecrating Ermentrude for the solace of holy Church and the defence of the realm, *unde sancta ecclesia solatium et regnum necessarium defensionem ... possit habere*,⁶¹ two issues dear to the heart of any churchman.

After this long preliminary address comes the first of the formulas which constitute the actual consecration of the queen. The first prayer, *Domine sancte, pater omnipotens* up to *sit probata et innocens*, is taken almost exactly from the *Oratio ad sponsas benedicendas* of the Gregorian *Hadrianum*. One or two small passages commencing *Fidelis et casta nubat* and *Sit verecunda gravis* are also to be found in the *Accio nuptialis* of the *Liber Sacramentorum Gellonensis* and the *Liber Sacramentorum Romanae*. The references to biblical queens in 'Judith' are not found in 'Ermentrude': her exemplars are good wives, Rachel, Rebecca and Sarah, even though Ermentrude had already proved herself a good wife. This first prayer has strong nuptial overtones, but her anointing and coronation are expected to give her the abundance of virtues and gifts she needs as queen. By anointing her with holy oil it is hoped she will have good health in mind and body and an abundance of faith, hope and charity. It is requested that she be crowned with the crown of justice, and with holy fruits and blessed works. She is to sit crowned with honour and glory at the right hand of the king, clothed in the raiment of good works and surrounded with a diversity of virtues. She is to produce such offspring as may be worthy to inherit paradise. God is asked to support her faith, to protect her with the armour of faith and the shield of salvation, to shape her character

⁵⁸*sicut ipse in regem est unctus et consecratus episcopali auctoritate, unctione sacra et benedictione, veluti in scripturis legimus Dominum praecepisse, ut reges ungerentur et sacrentur in regiam potestatem, ita uxorem suam dominam nostram in nomine reginae benedicamus, sicut et a sede apostolica et a nostris decessoribus antea de aliis factum comperimus, see Appendix, p.243.*

⁵⁹Gen. 22, 18.

⁶⁰Gen. 25, 21.

⁶¹See Appendix, p.243.

so that in her old age she may be worthy of being led to the heavenly realm. The single line of the *Coronat* prayer requests that she be crowned with glory, honour, and eternal protection. The final benediction recalls two divine precepts: 'increase and multiply'⁶² and 'what God has joined together'.⁶³ It asks that the queen be blessed with the dew of heaven and the abundance of earth, as 'Judith' had also requested, and is the only element 'Ermentrude' and 'Judith' both have in common with 'Leofric'. It requests God to send good angels to protect the queen from all evil, and that she may live in peace, harmony and conjugal love, to see the sons of her sons flourishing in the good will of the Lord and in belief in the Trinity and the universal Church. In these prayers and benedictions, the honour, glory and duties of the queen are at least as significant as her fertility.

Ermentrude did not need her consecration to supply her with *queenly power*: she had been a successful and functional queen since her marriage. Hyam has suggested that her queen-making may have been a 'recognition of her services' as she 'had long been an influential figure in the kingdom',⁶⁴ though she qualifies this by adding that it 'should probably be considered more as a sort of fertility rite'. Nelson's suggestion⁶⁵ that Ermentrude herself had recommended the idea may be borne out by the scriptural quotation *Omnia quae dixerit tibi Sarra, audi vocem eius* in the first prayer formula of the rite. The scriptural passage alluded to goes on to say 'because it is through Isaac's line that your name will be perpetuated',⁶⁶ a reference, not to Sarah's infertility, but to her role as maternal forbear of Israel. Hence at Louis the Stammerer's consecration eleven years after his mother's queen-making, the bishops each made a profession to the new king as son of Charles *and* Ermentrude, *Caroli et Hermintrudis filio*.⁶⁷

Ermentrude's consecration rite has more in common with marriage blessings than it does with a fertility rite; indeed the nuptial blessings of the sacramentaries stress far more the fertility of the bride than does the 'Ermentrude' queen-making rite. The so-called sterile biblical women, Sarah and Rebecca, were also the maternal forbears of Israel, while the prayers for barren women in the sacramentaries invoke Rachel, Anna and Elizabeth. The *ordo* draws attention to the marital relationship of the king and

⁶²Gen. 1, 28.

⁶³Mark, 10, 9.

⁶⁴Hyam, 'Ermentrude and Richildis', p.160.

⁶⁵Above, note 51.

⁶⁶Gen. 21, 12.

⁶⁷AB: 877.

queen: perhaps Hincmar is stressing the indissolubility of the marital bond even for a king, with an implicit warning to Charles not to seek a new wife in order to gain new offspring. But most significantly, Hincmar is using a type of marriage ceremony to consecrate the queen. It is a witness to the belief that marriage was the basis of queenship. Hincmar was unable to separate entirely the idea of queen-making from nuptial blessings.

THEUTBERGA AND WALDRADA

Lothar II had two queens, which would not have troubled his Merovingian forebears, or even apparently his forebears' churchmen. However, by the 850s, times and marital legislation had changed, even for kings. According to Regino of Prüm, Lothar, as a youth in his father's house, formed a relationship with the noblewoman, Waldrada.⁶⁸ This union may have been of the *Friedelehe*-type, and it is not clear if it had attracted any disapprobation at the time, but it was not until Lothar I's death in 855 left his son feeling vulnerable against his brother, the Emperor Louis II of Italy, that Lothar II felt a politically astute match was needed and a marriage 'with unequivocal church approval'.⁶⁹ Theutberga's political appeal was short-lived,⁷⁰ and in 857 Prudentius reported that Lothar made use of concubines and put aside his wife the queen.⁷¹ Waldrada was not his wife and therefore could not be his queen. Lothar then wished to annul his marriage with Theutberga and to legalise his union with Waldrada. He convinced the Frankish bishops at the Council of Aachen in 862 to convict Theutberga of incest and various other abominations and the bishops sinfully [*quod nefas est dictu*] assented.⁷² Lothar then crowned Waldrada and coupled with her as if she were his wife and queen.⁷³ In this case Lothar did not apparently marry Waldrada (although he did claim that his first union with her had been legal⁷⁴) in order to make

⁶⁸*Chronicon, MGH SS I, sa 864, quam exosam habebat propter Waldradam, quae eius fuerat concubina, cum adhuc adolescens esset in domo paterna.*

⁶⁹Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p.198.

⁷⁰*ibid.*

⁷¹*AB: 857, Lotharius concubinis abutens, uxorem suam reginam abicit.*

⁷²*AB sa 862.*

⁷³*AB: 862, coronat, et quasi in coniugem et reginam sibi ... copulat.*

⁷⁴Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, p.86.

her his queen. She had, it was argued, been his wife all along; it was her coronation that made her his queen. Hincmar was obviously convinced that Waldrada's coronation was intended to make her Lothar's queen. It would have been necessary to underline her superiority as queen over the repudiated Theutberga. This is the first instance in which some form of ritual installation became the foundation for queenship.

When papal and diplomatic relations were threatened by Lothar's refusal to accept Theutberga as his wife and queen, he relented and in 865 agreed to her reinstatement. Twelve of his magnates were required to take an oath that they would ensure that the king would treat his wife in the manner befitting a queen.⁷⁵ According to the *Annales Bertiniani*, Arsenius restored Theutberga to Lothar in matrimony⁷⁶ and they both attended mass on the Feast of the Assumption royally attired and crowned.⁷⁷ This recognition of Theutberga's reinstatement as queen has more of the sound of a festival crown-wearing rather than a coronation: both king and queen appeared already wearing their crowns. Theutberga would need to have held status at least as high as Waldrada's had been, and if she was not ritually crowned on her reinstatement then it seems that she must have been before her repudiation.

The reconciliation was short-lived, and in 866 Theutberga was on her way to Rome again. Hincmar describes her as 'Lothar's queen in name only'.⁷⁸ she had been denied the treatment appropriate to a queen. Adventius of Metz, in a letter to Pope Nicholas, describes the treatment that a king owes to his wife the queen: they should attend the divine office together, eat together at the royal table, and the king should discharge his conjugal duties cheerfully.⁷⁹ The divorce case dragged on until Lothar's death in 869, but Waldrada was never reinstated as queen, although it would appear from the *Annales Xantenses* that she continued to cohabit with him.⁸⁰ Hincmar also seems uncertain of her status, when he mentions a letter from Pope Nicholas to Lothar

⁷⁵*AF*: 865; *AB*: 865, *et ut Hlotharius Theotpergam quemadmodum rex legitime sibi coniunctam deinceps tractaret reginam, duodecim ex optimatibus eiusdem regis iuramento firmare coegit.*

⁷⁶*AB*: sa 865, *illi in matrimonium reddidit.*

⁷⁷*ibid.*, *Lothario et Theotberga regio cultu paratis et coronatis, in die assumptionis sanctae Mariae missas celebrat.*

⁷⁸*AB*: 866.

⁷⁹*MGH Epp.* IV, p.235, letter #16, *Igitur Theotpergam reginam noster senior ad praesens ita tractare cernitur, sicut rex coniunctam sibi debet tractare reginam, videlicet ad divinum officium pariter honorifice comitantem et in mensa regia simul convivantem atque ut relatio innuit coniugalis habitus debitum solvere hilariter praetendit.*

⁸⁰*Annales Xantenses*: 869, *Lotharius ... relicta legitima coniuge contra sanctorum canones et Nicolai papae iussum, inlicito concubina usus est.*

'concerning his wives'.⁸¹

The legality of the queen's marriage to the king was the element of her position which secured her future in this period when churchmen were intent upon rehabilitating the bases for ecclesiastically and civilly acceptable marriage. Lothar and Theutberga were unfortunate in that they became a test-case in the hands of the churchmen. Since the Merovingian period views on marriage and the legality of the different types of unions had come under the closer scrutiny of the churchmen, and a single legally recognised union became the norm, certainly among the aristocracy.⁸² A wife was no longer simply a free woman who cohabited with a free man, but a woman whose union with her husband had been recognised with the appropriate *dotalicium* or bridegift, and had parental consent.⁸³ The *formulae* texts indicate that men were retrospectively legitimising their unions by providing their wives with bridegifts.⁸⁴ The Council of Mainz in 852 defined a concubine as a woman with no appropriate marital contract, and declared that she might be abandoned for an honourable marriage.⁸⁵

In the second half of the ninth century, bishops called for priestly blessings on marriages. Jonas of Orléans in his *De institutione laicali* had urged couples to ensure the validity of their marriages, and hence the legitimacy of their children, by obtaining sacerdotal benediction upon their unions.⁸⁶ However, the bishops still accepted that the secular requirements of parental consent and appropriate property settlements were the elements which created the permanent status and legitimacy of a marriage.⁸⁷ Hincmar included consummation in his requirements for a legally binding union.⁸⁸ In 846, Hincmar excommunicated Fulrich for refusing to reinstate his repudiated wife. The latter then made a successful appeal to Pope Leo IV based upon the findings of the council of Mainz: Fulrich claimed that there had been no formal betrothal and

⁸¹AB: 867, *de causa uxorum illius*.

⁸²Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, pp.95f.

⁸³*ibid.*, p.96.

⁸⁴*ibid.*, p.80.

⁸⁵*ibid.*, p.82.

⁸⁶*ibid.*, p.80.

⁸⁷*ibid.*, p.83.

⁸⁸*ibid.*

therefore his wife was really only a concubine.⁸⁹ However, by the time Lothar II was endeavouring to divorce Theutberga, the ecclesiastical expectations for marriage were coming to over-rule secular requirements. Marriage was indissoluble, except in the case of incest; and separation was only permissible if either or both partners wished to take up a monastic vocation, or one party was found guilty of adultery. Neither party was permitted to remarry.⁹⁰ Lothar was required to retain Queen Theutberga just as the laws required a legitimate wife to be retained.⁹¹ The queen was such by virtue of her position as legitimate wife. Every marriage was to persevere 'even at the cost, in the Lotharingian divorce case, of ruining three lives and the independence of a kingdom'.⁹²

QUEEN RICHILDIS

On 5 September, 869, Charles the Bald was crowned king of Lotharingia at Metz by Archbishop Hincmar. On 9 September, he received news of the death of Ermentrude at St-Denis three days earlier. She had not accompanied Charles to Metz and perhaps was already ill when her husband was being installed in his third kingship. Three days later Charles received Richildis from the hands of her brother Boso, one of his new Lotharingian magnates. She was also niece to the previous queen of Lotharingia, the ill-used Theutberga.⁹³ Charles did not marry Richildis until 22 January, 870.⁹⁴ Hincmar appears somewhat disgruntled by Charles' flaunting of both ecclesiastical and secular marital standards, by cohabiting with his betrothed before the nuptials were complete, about which the archbishop held such strong views. In the three references which he makes to Richildis in the *Annales Bertiniani* for 869 and 870 he calls her the

⁸⁹J.A. McNamara & S. Wemple, 'Marriage and Divorce in the Frankish Kingdom', in S.M. Stuard Ed., *Women in Medieval Society* (Pennsylvania, 1976), p.108.

⁹⁰Wemple, *Women in Frankish Society*, p.85.

⁹¹AB: 866, *Hac necessitate constrictus, vellet nollet, Thietburgam reginam in matrimonium recepit, interposito iurisiurandi sacramento, se illam ita in reliquum habere, sicut aequitatis iura dictant legitimam uxorem esse tenendam, nec eam a se separaret, nec ipsa vivente aliam super eam induceret.*

⁹²J. Bishop, 'Bishops as Marital Advisers in the Ninth Century', in J. Kirshner and S. Wemple eds., *Women of the Medieval World* (Oxford, 1985), p.83.

⁹³AB: 869, *exequente Bosone, filio Buvini quondam comitis, hoc missaticum apud matrem et materteram suam Theutbergam, Lotharii regis relictam, sororem ipsius Bosonis nomine Richildem mox sibi adduci fecit et in concubinam accepit.*

⁹⁴AB: 870, *Et in die festivitatis septuagesimae praedictam concubinam suam Richildem desponsatam atque dotatam in coniugem sumpsit.*

king's concubine. Charles had been quick to seize the opportunity presented by Ermentrude's death to consolidate his shaky position in his new kingdom by a politically strategic marriage. He was careful to observe all the formalities of marriage, and perhaps only waited the three months to complete them, as Nelson has suggested,⁹⁵ in observance of a mourning period for Ermentrude. He did not, however, wait to cohabit with her, maybe in hopes of starting a new family: this hasty, illicit union with Richildis does seem to support the view that Charles was desirous of more sons. It would appear from a charter of 871,⁹⁶ that Charles considered the day of his joining with Richildis, *conjunctionis nostrae*, rather than their wedding day as the more significant date, for he asks the clergy of Lyons to commemorate that day in their prayers.⁹⁷

There is no record of any inaugural coronation or consecration of Richildis as queen. If Hincmar had presided at a queen-making for Richildis, as he had for the two previous consecrations, we would no doubt have some indication, either an *ordo* or a reference in the *Annales Bertiniani*. Perhaps if Charles had Richildis consecrated in Lotharingia Hincmar would not have taken such an interest in the rite. Given Charles' interest in establishing himself firmly in his new kingdom, it would seem appropriate for him to have had Richildis crowned and anointed, but this would have been difficult for him to effect after their wedding at Nijmegen in January, 870. When Charles appropriated Lotharingia in 869 the metropolitan sees of Cologne and Trier were vacant,⁹⁸ which was why Hincmar had been able to preside at Charles' king-making at Metz. Charles had tried to have Hilduin installed at Cologne, but Willebert, Louis the German's candidate, was installed in January, 870,⁹⁹ and there may have been small chance of this new archbishop of Cologne consecrating the queen of the usurper-king. Charles may have had to wait until appropriate conditions arose: with marriage still the main constitutive factor of queenship, there would have been no pressing need for a consecration. The situation concerning Charles' heirs was still pressing a need for more royal offspring,¹⁰⁰ and it would seem inevitable that Charles would have insisted upon a queen-making for his new bride, if the essential purpose of queen-making had been

⁹⁵Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p.222.

⁹⁶Tessier, #355.

⁹⁷Hyam, 'Ermentrude and Richildis', p.154.

⁹⁸Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p.168, note 13.

⁹⁹*ibid.*

¹⁰⁰In Tessier, #364, Charles importunes the Mother of God, *Maria Genetrix*, to grant him and Richildis offspring.

for the queen's fertility. However, all we know from the sources is that Charles waited until after his imperial inauguration in 876 to have Richildis anointed as empress.¹⁰¹

It is from the reign of Charles the Bald that we have the first western ruler portrait which contains a representation of the queen. It is in the full-page illustration of f.1r of the *Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura* in Rome.¹⁰² Charles, the main subject of the illustration, appears crowned and centrally throned. The queen, probably Richildis, stands to his left with a female attendant.¹⁰³ Both women are veiled, and Richildis perhaps wears a gold circlet underneath her veil.¹⁰⁴ This representation of a royal consort, particularly such a ceremonious one, was 'unique in the period'.¹⁰⁵ The extraordinary event of the portrayal of a queen does not allow us to judge if it were unusual for a queen to appear crowned.¹⁰⁶ Richildis is first described as wearing a crown in 876, when she appeared beside Charles wearing imperial regalia at the end of

¹⁰¹AB: sa 877; in Tessier #364 Charles twice refers to Richildis as *conjugis nostrae Richildis reginae*, although there is no mention that the title was ritually conferred.

¹⁰²Kantorowicz, *Selected Studies*, pp.88ff; see also Chapter 8, pp.220-22.

¹⁰³There is some debate over the identity of the queen in the San Paolo ruler-portrait but the evidence is more in favour of Richildis than Ermentrude. Gaehde's suggestion ('The Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura in Rome: its date and its relationship to Charles the Bald' *Gesta* 5 (1966), pp.9f) that the queen in the San Paolo Bible portrait is Ermentrude is based on his belief that the Bible was available to the illuminators of the Codex Aureus (The Codex Aureus of St-Emmeram was completed by Christmas, 870, and was covered and in use by Easter, 871), and that the San Paolo Bible must therefore have been completed before Easter, 871, at the latest. He concludes that if the queen were Richildis the whole manuscript must have been completed after January, 870, and as such a huge task is not feasible, the queen must be Ermentrude. Gaehde does not consider that the Bible may have been started before that date as is suggested by Kantorowicz (*Selected Studies*, p.91), who believes that the manuscript was finished in haste. He comments that the text had probably already been written at some time before the marriage of Charles and Richildis, and that 'all the full-page miniatures as well as a great number of pages containing large initials or incipits have been subsequently pasted into the Bible; that the images betray hands of several artists; and that the illustrations were executed hastily (some of the ornamental borders remain unfinished, and the purple panels inserted for inscription in gold lettering remained sometimes vacant)'. He deciphers the monogram as naming either Richardis or Richildis, and as the ruler has been settled on as Charles the Bald, then the monogram must name Richildis. It is not possible to find Ermentrude's name among the letters. (p.91) Kessler (*The Illustrated Bibles from Tours*, p.137) believes neither Gaehde nor Kantorowicz have proven their cases and leaves the identification of the queen open. He is inclined, however, to date the manuscript later than 870 on the basis of the design of Charles' throne (p.138).

¹⁰⁴J.E. Gaehde, 'The Bible of San Paolo fuori le mura in Rome', p.13, note 5, mentions a gold circlet, however I cannot discern it in any reproductions yet seen.

¹⁰⁵Kantorowicz, *Selected Studies*, p.90.

¹⁰⁶This iconographical aspect of the representation of a queen will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8. In other Carolingian ruler-portraits which contain images of crowned women, these women are shown to represent nations subject to the king, and this iconography would have been unsuitable for the representation of a queen.

the Synod at Ponthion,¹⁰⁷ even though she was not crowned as empress until the following year. It seems likely that the Bible was executed for a special occasion, particularly as the queen is specifically mentioned in the dedicatory inscription which appears beneath the illustration.¹⁰⁸ Kantorowicz proposes that the occasion was the marriage of Richildis and Charles, which he feels explains 'the fact that the queen makes her appearance, veiled and not crowned',¹⁰⁹ although, as already pointed out, Gaehde claims that the queen is wearing a golden diadem discernible underneath her veil. The San Paolo portrait reveals yet another aspect of the changing attitudes towards queenship in the reign of Charles the Bald.

Richildis' career was more as queen than empress: even though crowned as empress she functioned only within the Frankish realm, only as queen of the West Franks. Charles usually left her in Francia to hold the fort whilst he endeavoured to consolidate his interests elsewhere. When the Emperor Louis II died in August, 875, Charles left Richildis in Francia where she attempted to organise the defence of the kingdom.¹¹⁰ She more often appeared as *regina* than as *imperatrix* or *augusta* in her husband's charters.¹¹¹ She was not crowned empress at the same time as Charles but waited until the following year to travel to Tortona in Italy to be consecrated by Pope John VIII after which she 'fled back to Maurienne, taking the treasure with her'.¹¹² When Charles lay dying he sent for Richildis and commissioned her to invest his son, Louis the Stammerer, with his realm. According to Hincmar she and her magnates first ravaged the countryside before coming to Louis at Compiègne.¹¹³ There she handed over the rule of the kingdom: she brought the sword of St Peter, with which she invested him with his kingdom, the royal robes, and the crown and baculum of gold and

¹⁰⁷AB: sa 876.

¹⁰⁸Kantorowicz, *Selected Studies*, p.83,
Nobilis ad laevam coniunx de more venustat,
Qua insignis proles in regnum rite paretur.
"Beautifying according to custom is the noble consort on the left,
Through whom distinguished offspring may rightly be given to the realm".

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*, p.91.

¹¹⁰AB: sa 875.

¹¹¹Tessier #379, #364.

¹¹²AB: sa 877.

¹¹³AB: sa 877.

gems.¹¹⁴ Charles had put into the hands of his queen the duty of investing [*revestiret*] the next king of West Francia. This may have been a reflection of the Byzantine custom wherein the dowager empress was instrumental in the selection and investiture of the new emperor.

However, Richildis, having fulfilled her role as bearer of the insignia to the new king, fades from the annals. It is likely that she returned to Lotharingia with her daughter Rothild.¹¹⁵ But her status as queen was not forgotten by her contemporaries. Flodoard relates a letter from Fulk, archbishop of Reims, to Richildis *reginam vel imperatricem*¹¹⁶ written some time between 883 and 900 and suggesting that her actions were unsuitable for one who had attained the queenship,¹¹⁷ and that she should strive to keep untainted the veil she had taken in her widowhood.¹¹⁸ It was perhaps in accordance with Fulk's admonition that she made two donations to Gorze Abbey in 910.¹¹⁹ In both charters she makes the donations as a former queen, *in Dei nomine Richildis quondam regina*, and signs *domne Richildis regine*,¹²⁰ and neither charter has been confirmed by king or overlord. To the end of her life Richildis retained the style and prestige of a queen.

ANSGARD AND ADELHEID

Ansgard was Louis the Stammerer's first wife, whom he married in 862 without his father's permission or knowledge. He remained with her until about 870 when Charles forced him to repudiate Ansgard and to marry Adelheid. Hincmar does not mention this in the *Annales Bertiniani*: it is not clear if he approved of Charles' rearrangements, but it is unlikely given his strict views on marriage. After the death of

¹¹⁴AB: sa 877, *Richildis Compendium ad Ludovicum veniens, in missa sancti andreae attulit ei praeceptum, per quod pater suus illi regnum ante mortem suam tradiderat, et spatem quae vocatur sancti Petri, per quam eum de regno revestiret, sed et regium vestimentum et coronam ac fustem ex auro et gemmis ... consecratus et coronatus est in regem Ludovicus ab Hincmaro, Remorum episcopo.*

¹¹⁵Hyam, 'Ermentrude and Richildis', p.165.

¹¹⁶Flodoard, *Annales* IV, 5.

¹¹⁷*ibid.*, *pro fama non bona quae ad ipsum de vita vel actibus ejusdem reginae pervenerat.*

¹¹⁸*ibid.*, *velamen quoque Christi, quod assumpserat viduitatis, incorruptum servare studeret.*

¹¹⁹Hyam, 'Ermentrude and Richildis', p.165.

¹²⁰*Cartulaire de l'Abbaye de Gorze* Ed. A. d'Herbomez (Paris, 1898), #87, #88.

Charles in 877, Louis was consecrated king by Hincmar at Compiègne.¹²¹ The following year a *Festkrönung* for Louis was presided over by Pope John VIII. During this papal visit Louis petitioned John to crown his wife as queen, but the pope refused.¹²² It would appear that the Frankish bishops also would not, or could not, consecrate Louis' second wife. Hincmar was by now quite accustomed to queen-makings, and yet Adelheid remained unconsecrated, and this no doubt was the result of the dubious nature of her marital union with Louis: the essential nature of queenship was subject to the legality of her marriage with the king. When Louis was dying, he sent the royal regalia to his son, Louis, not with his wife, as Charles had done, but with Counts Odo and Albuin.¹²³ It was Ansgard's sons who were chosen by the *nobiles* to succeed to their father's realm: Adelheid's son, the future Charles the Simple, was passed over until 893 when the magnates had no legitimate royal offspring left to choose from.¹²⁴ Legitimate marriage was still a primary constitutive factor of queenship, and the queen was the producer of the royal heirs.

HINCMAR ON KING-MAKING, MARRIAGE, AND QUEENSHIP

Hincmar was devoted to Charles the Bald, and supportive of the king's plans and needs; he was an erudite and prolific writer who was also deeply interested in liturgical ritual and its elaboration. Hincmar's first appearance in Charles' reign is in a royal charter issued in May or June, 844.¹²⁵ Prior to his entry into the royal circle he had been a monk of St-Denis, and he became archbishop of Reims in 845. He 'was to prove a permanent mainstay of Charles' regime. Genuinely committed to Charles as his king and lord, Hincmar put his enormous practical talents and energy at Charles' disposal'.¹²⁶ His interest in regal inauguration *ordines* does not indicate that his attitude towards king-making was hierocratic: the role of the bishops was not his first concern.¹²⁷ But the well-being of Church and nation did depend upon a strong king

¹²¹AB: sa 877; the *ordo* for Louis' consecration still exists.

¹²²AB: sa 878, *ut uxorem illius in reginam coronaret sed obtinere non potuit.*

¹²³AB: sa 879.

¹²⁴Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p.257.

¹²⁵*ibid.*, p.140.

¹²⁶*ibid.*, p.145.

¹²⁷Nelson, 'Hincmar of Reims on Kingmaking', p.120.

and a well-ordered kingdom: it was in their interests to give ample and definitive support. Between 751 and 848 Frankish royal anointings had been performed by the popes. The appropriation of the rite into the sphere of the Frankish bishops was 'probably at the instance of Hincmar himself'¹²⁸ when Charles was consecrated as king of Aquitaine¹²⁹ at Orléans in 848. Hincmar did not devise the rite of 848, or that of 855, when Charles' son, Charles the Child, was made king of Aquitaine at Limoges, because it was Wenilo of Sens not Hincmar who conducted the rites. The events are recorded in the *Annales Bertiniani*, but Hincmar did not become the author of the annals until 861 and so the entries contain no detailed descriptions.¹³⁰ To our knowledge the first royal *ordo* created by the archbishop was for the consecration of Judith in 856.

His first king-making *ordo* was for Charles the Bald at Metz in 869, and his only other king-making *ordo* was for Louis the Stammerer in 877. According to Hincmar the bishops were simply the mediators between God, king and people in the performance of the king-making rites. In the anointing formula of the *ordo* of 869, *Coronet te Dominus corona gloriae ... et ungat te in regni*,¹³¹ it is the Lord who crowns and anoints the new king, but in cooperation with the secular electorate.¹³² While election and inheritance were still the primary grounds for accession, the bishops could not yet be indispensable to king-making.

Hincmar has been described as the 'champion of the Christian view of marriage and monogamy'.¹³³ He endeavoured to reconcile secular and ecclesiastical traditions and legislation with regard to the requirements for marriage and the restriction of its dissolution. In his *Epistula de nuptiis Stephani* he developed a quasi-sacramental view: 'We learn from the fathers and find it handed down to us by holy apostles and their successors that a marriage is lawful only when the wife's hand was requested from those who appear to have power over her and who are acting as her guardians, and when she had been betrothed by her parents or relatives and when she was given a sacerdotal benediction with prayers and oblations from a priest and, at the appropriate time

¹²⁸Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.137.

¹²⁹Possibly even of his whole realm.

¹³⁰Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.149, note 2.

¹³¹*Ordo Coronationis Karoli II*, *MGH Capit.* II, pt.2, p.457.

¹³²Morrison, *The Two Kingdoms: Ecclesiology in Carolingian Political Thought*, pp.181-89; Nelson, 'A Tale of Two Princes: Politics, Text and Ideology in a Carolingian Annal', *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History*, 10 (1988), p.127; Nelson, 'Hincmar of Reims on Kingmaking', p.18.

¹³³Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.2.

established by custom, was solemnly received by her husband, guarded and attended by bridal attendants requested from her nearest kin and provided with a dowry. For two or three days, they should then take time out for prayers, guarding their chastity, so that they may beget good offspring and please the Lord. Then their children will not be spurious but legitimate and eligible to be their heirs'.¹³⁴ Hence his dissatisfaction with the initial union of Charles and Richildis: after the furore that had escalated over Lothar II's marital irregularities, in which Charles himself had also raised his voice, his failure to observe marriage laws by taking Richildis as his concubine, and doing so quite openly, was not only unconscionable but also might be seen to undermine Hincmar's own work.

Hincmar and Charles had both promoted adherence to Church principles regarding the permanence of marriage during the divorce case of Lothar and Theutberga. In the *De Divortio Lotharii regis et Tetbergae reginae*¹³⁵ Hincmar is not concerned with the royal status of the subjects of his dissertation: as churchmen were seeking to regularise and to eliminate, or at least control, divorce, he may not have wished to emphasise the special nature of the case. The issues raised are not those of a king repudiating his queen but of a man wishing to put aside his wife. Hincmar wrote in his work, *una est lex viri et feminae*,¹³⁶ and, whether this was indeed the case in the canonical courts, Hincmar was underlining the fact that the king and queen were a man and a woman who were both expected to live under that one law. It was marriage to the king which in Hincmar's view had elevated the queen, but royal marriage was as binding as any other: the status of the married couple was no longer an issue. His opposition to royal divorce is indicated not only by the *De Divortio* but may also be found in elements of the 'Hermintrudis' *ordo*.

Hincmar's queen-making *ordines* were, in part, elaborations of a marriage ceremony, and through these elaborations he expressed his ideals for queenship. The ideals emphasised in 'Judith' were for the queen to remain chaste, to take Judith and Esther as her role models, and to remain lovable, wise and faithful. In 'Hermintrudis' Hincmar had more material to work with as Ermentrude had already proved herself as a queen. The *ordo* stresses that the queen should be learned in heavenly teachings, should practise good works, and sit at the right hand of the king. She should be chaste

¹³⁴Translated in McNamara and Wemple, 'Marriage and Divorce in the Frankish Kingdom', p.108.

¹³⁵*PL* 125, cols. 620-772.

¹³⁶*PL* 125, col.732.

and modest, and well endowed with virtues of faith, hope and charity.¹³⁷ The ideals for Ermentrude were eminently more practical but perhaps this is because she had already proved herself. Hincmar could not have been certain as to how active or practical a role Judith would be allowed to undertake in her husband's kingdom.

Hincmar's ideas concerning queenship and the image of the queen may also be found in a variety of other sources. According to his *De Ordine Palatii*¹³⁸ the queen fulfilled a very practical *ministerium*. The work was compiled for Carloman, son of Louis III, in 882.¹³⁹ Hincmar was recalling for the young king the management of the court and kingdom in the Golden Age of Carolingian administration. The work is written in the past tense to emphasise this fact: it is a goal for the inexperienced [*novitate*] young king to work towards, not a condition to be maintained.¹⁴⁰ It is the queen's duty to run the palace (together with the chamberlain) in order to free the king to fulfil his role, which is to be always ready for the governing and preservation of the realm.¹⁴¹ The duties for which a king should be left free by the ministrations of his queen included those outlined in the first part of the treatise, namely the preservation of the Christian religion and the protection and maintenance of the Church and her bishops and priests.¹⁴² The *De Ordine Palatii* may be derivative, but this chapter was included because Hincmar saw the necessity for including the queen among the essential officers. His own experience of the appropriate and successful running of the royal household not only established the necessity for a queen but also provided exemplars for the role. In the *Annales Bertiniani* we receive many glimpses of well-directed queenly behaviour both within and outside the palace. Hincmar also believed that a queen was entitled to be

¹³⁷The ideals expressed, and the blessings requested in the king-making rites, are equally nebulous.

¹³⁸*MGH Capit.*, II, pt.2, pp.517-30.

¹³⁹D. Herlihy, *The History of Feudalism* (London, 1971), pp.208f. The first eleven chapters of the *De Ordine Palatii* are compiled from pronouncements concerning the duties of kings made at the Council of Fismes in April, 881, and according to Hincmar, the remaining chapters, 12-37, are based upon a similar work written by Adalhard of Corbie, c.814. A. Cabaniss, *Charlemagne's Cousins: Contemporary Lives of Adelard and Wala* (Syracuse, 1967), p.207, note 81, Hincmar wrote 'in my youth I saw the wise old man, Adalard ... his booklet, *De Ordine Palatii*, I read and copied'. Wallace-Hadrill, *The Long-Haired Kings* (London, 1962), pp.119f, believes that as Adalhard's work was already missing when Hincmar came to write this, there is more of Hincmar in his *De Ordine Palatii* than he implies.

¹⁴⁰Hincmar, *De Ordine Palatii*, cap.37.

¹⁴¹*ibid.*, cap.22, *ad totius regni statum ordinandum vel conservandum animum semper suum promptum*.

¹⁴²*ibid.*, cap.9.

treated with the honour due to her status both by her husband,¹⁴³ and by others, including neighbouring kings.¹⁴⁴ It has also been suggested that the San Paolo Bible was a gift from Hincmar to Charles the Bald.¹⁴⁵ If Hincmar commissioned this special dedication portrait with such an exceptional portrayal of a queen, his ideas of queenship and of the position and role of Richildis must have been at least commensurate with the image.

Hincmar was essentially interested in kingship and in the effective exercise of government. The *soliditas* of the realm, which Hincmar viewed as essential and worked so hard to maintain, was enhanced by queenship and by queen-making. Queenship was free of constitutive fetters such as those surrounding kingship and which he described in the *De Divortio*.¹⁴⁶ The constitutive element of queenship was still essentially marriage to the king and both of his queen-making *ordines* contained nuptial elements. Queen-making, like king-making, was not yet dependent upon episcopal sanction or intervention, which is, no doubt, the reason why episcopal queen-makings still remained relatively infrequent.

CHARLES' IDEAS ON KINGSHIP AND QUEENSHIP

Charles the Bald and his churchmen, particularly Hincmar, worked together to serve the king's interests. In 848 Charles was anointed King of Aquitaine at Orléans by Wenilo of Sens. He had previously been invested as under-king by his father at Quierzy in 838, but this investiture had been a purely secular installation.¹⁴⁷ The Orléans rite is believed to have consecrated Charles as king of his entire realm.¹⁴⁸ Charles for the first time was using episcopal benediction and unction to reinforce his political power. By virtue of this consecration Charles was later to claim that he could not be supplanted or cast out of his realm without the hearing and judgement of the bishops through

¹⁴³AB: 865, *amodo et deinceps accipiet Theotbergam uxorem suam pro legitima matrona, et eam sit habebit in omnibus, sicut decet regem habere reginam uxorem.*

¹⁴⁴AB: 865, *Theotbergam quae aliquamdiu honorabiliter in regno Karoli deguit.*

¹⁴⁵Gaehde, 'The Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura', p.12.

¹⁴⁶Nelson, 'A Tale of Two Princes', p.127.

¹⁴⁷AB: sa 838, *praefato Karolo arma et coronam necnon et quandam portionem regni inter Sequanam et Ligerem dedit.*

¹⁴⁸F. Lot, 'Une Année du Règne de Charles le Chauve, année 866', in *Recueils des Travaux Historiques de Ferdinand Lot*, Vol.2 (Paris, 1970), p.33; Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p.155.

whose ministry he had been consecrated.¹⁴⁹ He acknowledged his secular election but claimed to be above secular control and judgement: only the bishops who consecrated him were in a position to cast him out. In 851 Charles installed Erospoë as king of Brittany:¹⁵⁰ by thus receiving homage of the Breton count and handing over the royal vestments, Charles expressed his superiority as overlord.¹⁵¹ He believed that it was for him as king to order the inauguration of under-kings.¹⁵² In 872, by which time Charles had been consecrated king a second time, he wrote in a letter to Pope Hadrian that Christ had said ‘Through me kings reign’.¹⁵³ His kingship was now beyond the control of bishops and popes: the king had become answerable only to Christ.

Charles had a deep belief in the efficacy of liturgical ritual and was also attracted to Byzantine and later Roman liturgy and to elements of Byzantine court ritual. His close association with his churchmen gave him both the interest and the opportunity to utilize liturgy for the benefit of his family and the enhancement of his own prestige. His letter to the clergy of Ravenna tells of a mass being celebrated for him according to the liturgy of St Basil, ‘the chief eucharistic formulary of the Byzantine rite’,¹⁵⁴ and he possibly also had become acquainted with the liturgy of St James of Jerusalem.¹⁵⁵ He asked John Eriugena, who was part of a court circle of Greek scholars which also included Sedulius Scottus, to translate a number of Greek works for him,¹⁵⁶ especially the works of Dionysius the Areopagite which had been sent to the king by the Byzantine Emperor Michael.¹⁵⁷ Charles revived the practice of the *Natales Caesarum*, that is, the

¹⁴⁹*MGH Capit. II, Libellus Proclamationis adversus Wenilonem, cap.e, A qua consecratione vel regni sublimitate subplantari vel proici a nullo debueram, saltem sine audientia et iudicio episcoporum, quorum ministerio in regem sum consecratus.*

¹⁵⁰*AB*: 851.

¹⁵¹Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p.166.

¹⁵²A Roman emperor could make his sons (natural or adopted) his colleagues.

¹⁵³Charles the Bald, *Epistolae*, PL 124, col.890, letter #8, *scientes dixisse Christum, Dei virtutem et Dei sapientiam, per me reges regnant, et conditores legum justa decernunt*. The quotation actually comes from the Old Testament, Proverbs 8,15, but the point was that Charles (or Hincmar) was claiming that the giving or depriving of a king’s authority was beyond the power of churchmen.

¹⁵⁴Wallace-Hadrill, ‘A Carolingian Renaissance Prince’, p.165.

¹⁵⁵*ibid.*

¹⁵⁶*ibid.*, p.164.

¹⁵⁷Wallace-Hadrill, *The Frankish Church*, p.246.

ecclesiastical celebration of royal anniversaries.¹⁵⁸ The anniversaries which Charles usually requested to be commemorated were those for the deaths of his parents, his birthday and consecration day, the birthday and, later, the death of Ermentrude, their wedding anniversary, Richildis' birthday, and the day of their *conjunctio*.¹⁵⁹ His is the only consecration anniversary which he requested to be commemorated. The *Theotokos* was an important Byzantine state cult, and it was Maria Genetrix whom Charles entreated in a charter of 872¹⁶⁰ to assume a role in the granting of royal offspring for Charles and Richildis. The Virgin Mary was first invoked in a royal *ordo* in 869. It was in this same period of Byzantine borrowing and liturgical elaboration that West Frankish queenship was being developed and elaborated: the queen appeared in association with the virgin saints¹⁶¹ or with the Virgin Mary¹⁶² in the litanies, was included in the anniversary liturgy and in the acclamations,¹⁶³ and, most notably, was being ritually inaugurated to sit beside the king.

After Charles' imperial coronation in Rome on Christmas Day, 875, he returned to Francia garbed in Byzantine imperial dress. The Fulda annalist describes for us this new and unaccustomed form of dress: a dalmatic which reached to his ankles, and over this a girdle that hung to his feet, and also a silk veil for his head over which was placed a diadem.¹⁶⁴ The imperial dress consisted of a white tunic with gold *clavi*, a belt of gold and jewels, and the *paludamentum*, a long purple cloak edged with gold and fastened at the right shoulder with a large jewelled fibula with pendants. The diadem by now had developed from a ribbon to a large jewelled circlet with pendants over the ears.¹⁶⁵ The Byzantine empress also wore the *paludamentum*, though without the fibula, and an elaborate jewelled circlet with pendants. Later, the *lorum*, an intricate garment worn by both the emperor and empress, replaced the *paludamentum*, and this

¹⁵⁸E.H. Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae: A Study in Liturgical Acclamations and Medieval Ruler Worship* (Berkeley, 1946, Repr. 1974), p.67.

¹⁵⁹Tessier, #153, #162, #216, #236, #246.

¹⁶⁰Tessier # 364.

¹⁶¹Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, p.62.

¹⁶²*ibid.*, p.44, note 112.

¹⁶³*ibid.*, p.68.

¹⁶⁴AF: 876, *Karolus rex de Italia in Galliam rediens, novos et insolitos habitus assumpsisse perhibetur; nam talari dalmatica indutus, et baltheo desuper accinctus pendente usque ad pedes, necnon capite involuto serico velamine, ac diademate desuper imposito, dominicis fetisque diebus ad aecclesiam procedere solebat.*

¹⁶⁵F.E. Brightman, 'Byzantine Imperial Coronations', *JTS* 2 (1901), p.376.

would also be adopted by the Ottonian emperors and empresses. The Fulda annalist was resentful of Charles' adoption of 'Greek glories' which he saw as a rejection of Frankish customs.¹⁶⁶ At the conclusion of the Synod of Ponthion in 876, Charles and Richildis appeared as emperor and empress, crowned and attired in the Greek manner, and accompanied by papal legates dressed in the Roman manner.¹⁶⁷ Charles had ordered the council in order to promote acceptance of his imperial title among the clergy and magnates of his kingdom.¹⁶⁸ At the end of this final session liturgical acclamations were sung, 'an ecclesiastico-legal act which implied the recognition of the emperor on the part of the Frankish Church'.¹⁶⁹ The imperial dress and imperial style of acclamation were meant to represent a *fait accompli*.

It is not surprising, in the light of this liturgical and imperial experimentation, that the ritual anointings for queens were exploited during Charles' reign. The initiative for the coronation of a Byzantine empress came from the emperor,¹⁷⁰ and the impetus for the queen-makings of Charles' reign came likewise from Charles. The purposes behind Judith's queen-making were not the same as those for Ermentrude. The latter was a proven queen who was being distinguished by the added prestige of anointing, while Judith was being blessed with the attributes of queenship. This multi-purpose aspect of the rite shows that Charles and Hincmar had not yet formulated a consistent theory on queen-making or queenship, and were using ritual consecration of the queen to support a variety of needs and values. Charles initiated a concerted campaign to enhance the image of kingship through ecclesiastical performance of the inauguration rite including the sacerdotal element of anointing. In this same programme the image, the very nature of queenship, was being enhanced and exploited. At the time of Charles' imperial consecration, the new emperor made a gift to the pope of, among other things, the San Paolo Bible, with its ruler portrait which included a representation of his queen. This representation of the queen was expected to contribute to the prestige of the West Frankish kingship.

* * *

¹⁶⁶AF: 876, *omnem enim consuetudinem regum Francorum contempnens, Graecas glorias optimas arbitrabatur.*

¹⁶⁷AB: 876, *ut 17. Kalendas Augusti convenirent episcopi, mane circa horam nonam venit imperator Graecisco more paratus et coronatus, deducentibus eum apostolici legatis more Romano vestitis ... Richildem imperatricem coronatam in synodum; et stante illa iuxta imperatorem.*

¹⁶⁸Wallace-Hadrill, 'A Carolingian Renaissance Prince', p.180.

¹⁶⁹Kantorowicz, *Laudes Regiae*, p.70.

¹⁷⁰Brightman, 'Byzantine Imperial Coronations', p.364.

Charles the Bald and Hincmar had different ideas and aspirations concerning queenship, but both felt strongly enough concerning the value of queen-making to support each other in the development of this aspect of royal governance. Anointing of the queen required the same 'restricted group of clerical consecrators'¹⁷¹ as king-making: the ritual of queen-making was becoming concentrated within the same ritual and ideological realm as king-making. Churchmen had to legitimise worldly power in their own eyes, and did so by providing ecclesiastical warrant: 'The order of the pure, the priesthood, required the exercise of impure power as a condition of its existence in the saeculum. The dilemma could not be evaded'.¹⁷² By ritually under-writing the authority and prestige of royal power they were able to justify their dependence upon it. If the queen as an element of worldly power is consecrated in such a way that her chastity and her virtue are stressed, are made significant elements of her ritually endowed persona, she can bring an element of purity to the "impure power" upon which the Church and her hierarchy are dependent. If the ensuring, or bestowing, of fertility were the primary objective of queen-making, it would be difficult to understand why there were so few ritual anointings of queens in a period when royal heirs became increasingly scarce. Regino attributed the failure of the Carolingian line in the generation after Charles the Bald partly to the number of early deaths of the royal princes, and 'partly through the increasing sterility of their wives'.¹⁷³

By the end of Charles' reign, ideas concerning queenship and the process by which a woman became a queen were becoming more clearly defined. The essential element of queen-making still remained her marriage to the king, but ideas about the nature of queenship were evolving. While 'the king held his power of God and could be deposed only by the judgment of God',¹⁷⁴ the queen held her position at the choice of the king and by virtue of her marriage, but could not be deposed by him by virtue of that same marital bond. The bishops were not yet in the way of being indispensable to queen-making, but they were able to insist on the permanence of queenship by virtue of the marriage which had created it. Marriage to a king was the source of a queen's power: enthronisation and coronation were symbols of that power. The kingship was

¹⁷¹Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.274.

¹⁷²Nelson, 'A Tale of Two Princes', p.132.

¹⁷³Nelson, *Charles the Bald*, p.257.

¹⁷⁴Morrison, *The Two Kingdoms*, p.219.

based upon heredity, and on election which was manifested in formal acclamation. The queen did not yet require this formal acceptance by her husband's people: her consecration was still unnecessary to her position and to the throneworthiness of her offspring. Not until the late tenth century and on the other side of the Channel would the consecrating clergy require lay assent to the elevation of the queen.

CHAPTER 6

FROM 'ERDMANN' TO 'SHERBORNE'

This chapter covers the evolution of queen-making *ordines* from the appearance of 'Erdmann' in Francia and its adaptation in England, to the reign of Edgar with its so-called imperial ceremony in 973 and the demise of the Carolingian dynasty with the death of Louis V. In England this represents the ritual developments from the surmised 'SMN' *ordines* to the 'Sherborne' group of king- and queen-making rites with their special preface for the queen-making, while in Francia the developments in queen-making rites during the period were more conservative. It is not clear when, or even if, any of the redactions or manuscripts we have access to were used for specific ceremonies; however it may be a little easier to speculate upon such usage for Anglo-Saxon king- and queen-makings than for those among the Franks. Some queens are more accessible than others for this type of investigation: we do not know if all the tenth-century queens were consecrated, and of some we know little other than the children they bore. The political success of a queen was not dependent upon whether or not she was consecrated: although it would seem unlikely that any of the West Frankish or Anglo-Saxon queens of this period were not given the benefit of consecration, such ritual as they may have participated in did not guarantee a high profile at court, or even permanence of tenure. During Edgar's reign succession politics would come to take account of the nature of queenship, and the means by which queenship was created, as important elements of the throneworthiness of princes. Religious life and patronage, significant elements of the office of queens since the conversions of both peoples, continued their importance though the focus had shifted away from retirement into nunneries and sainthood to a more worldly influence and patronage. Initially, this chapter will briefly highlight such biographical details of the queens as pertain to the nature of their official status, or which provide insights into contemporary perceptions of their status. These biographical sketches will form the basis for ensuing discussion.

WEST FRANKISH QUEENS OF THE TENTH CENTURY

Queen Frederun

Frederun was the first wife of Charles III the Simple (893/8-922/9). She married the king in 907 and a copy of her dower charter is still extant. In it Charles comments that his advisers have reminded him of the benefits of taking a worthy wife from whom

he may receive sons who will benefit and preserve the kingdom.¹ Hence according to the laws and statutes of his forefathers he has associated Frederun with him in marriage and made her partner in his realm.² This does not altogether make it clear if her constitution as partner in the realm is part of the requirements of the statutes, but Charles is recognising the significance of his actions. During their ten-year marriage she gave birth to six daughters but no sons.³ She occasionally appears in royal charters as being entitled to the prayers of the monks who were the beneficiaries, and after her death (15 February, 917) Charles made a series of donations for the benefit of her soul.⁴ The king mentions in the first of these that the queen, his beloved wife, had been consecrated at Reims.⁵

Queen Eadgifu

Eadgifu was the second wife of Charles III. She was the daughter of King Edward I (901-24) and Queen Ælflæd, and married the West Frankish king in 919. There is no evidence to indicate if she was consecrated. Their son Louis was born c.921, and when Charles was incarcerated in 922 she fled with her infant son to her father's court where they were protected until Louis' call to duty in 936. She returned to Francia with her son, no doubt because his accession would mean the restoration of her dotal lands, or their equivalent. Louis was consecrated at Laon, and Eadgifu retired to her nunnery there.⁶ In 951, without the knowledge of her son, she left the convent to marry Count Herbert of Vermandois, her son's implacable enemy. The angry Louis confiscated her Laon estates and gave them to his wife, Gerberga.⁷ The reason for the dowager-queen's defection is not clear; however it would seem that Louis' anger was based in the fact of his mother's defection and not in any idea of unqueenly conduct.

¹*Recueils des Actes de Charles III le Simple*, M.P. Lauer ed. (Paris, 1940), #56, *consiliariis, de nostro nos commonuere conjugio, salubre dicentes fore et oportunum, si conjunx condigna lateri adhaereret regio ex qua filiorum, Deo largiente, totius regni profutura procederet propago.*

²*ibid.*, *secundum leges atque statuta priorum nobis nuptiali conubio sociavimus regnique consortem statuimus.*

³A. Eckel, *Charles le Simple*, (Paris, 1899), p.58.

⁴*Recueils des Actes de Charles III*, #87, #88, #89.

⁵*ibid.*, #87, *Frederuna, quondam regina, conjunx mea karissima, pro Dei omnipotentis amore sanctique Remigii Francorum apostoli veneratione, ante cujus sacratissimum pignus benedictione olei et consecratione in reginam fuit delibuta.*

⁶Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.110.

⁷Richer, *Histoire de France*, ed. & trans. R. Latouche (Paris, 1930), II, 101.

Beatrix

Beatrix was married to Robert I some thirty years before his accession. They had three children, Hugh the Great, Emma, who would marry the future King Raoul, and a second, unnamed daughter.⁸ In his description of Robert's consecration at Reims in 922, Richer does not mention Beatrix. We do not know if she was present, or even if she was still alive, and cannot know if she was consecrated queen.

Queen Emma

The daughter of King Robert, Emma married Raoul while he was still Duke of Burgundy.⁹ Radulphus Glaber relates that Hugh the Great, Emma's brother, felt himself to be in the position of king-maker, if not himself the most suitable candidate. He conferred with his astute sister who advised the election of her husband rather than her brother.¹⁰ This preference to be queen rather than sister to the king is hardly surprising, but the most interesting points in Glaber's story are that Hugh acted on his sister's advice (although he no doubt had other advisers), and that the reason she gave for the choice was that she would prefer to kiss the knee of her husband than of her brother.¹¹ She as queen would be expected to pay the homage due from a feudatory lord to his king, which seems to suggest that the Frankish queen had a status resembling that of a secular magnate. Raoul was duly elected and consecrated at Soissons, while Emma was consecrated shortly after at Reims.¹² She was a very active partner in her husband's reign and died a year before him in 935, apparently without children.¹³

Queen Gerberga

For the career of Queen Gerberga we are rather better served. Born c.914, she was first married to Gilbert, count of Nogent in 928.¹⁴ When Louis IV heard of the death of the count, he was suitably moved, but lost no time in sending for the widowed

⁸Eckel, *Charles le Simple*, p.35.

⁹Radulphus Glaber, *Historiarum Libri Quinque*, ed. N. Bulst, trans. J. France and P. Reynolds (Oxford, 1989), I, 2.

¹⁰*ibid.*

¹¹*ibid.*, *respondit magis se uelle regis mariti genu osculari quam fratris.*

¹²J. Verdon, 'Les Femmes et la Politique en France au Xe siècle', *Economies et Sociétés au Moyen Age: Mélanges offerts à Edouard Perroy* (Paris, 1973), p.17.

¹³P. Lauer, *Robert I et Raoul de Bourgogne* (Paris, 1910), p.28.

¹⁴Richer, *Histoire*, I, 35.

countess, who was also the sister of Otto I, and marrying her and making her his queen,¹⁵ possibly at Reims.¹⁶ She was an active participant in her husband's reign, undertaking diplomatic missions,¹⁷ and conducting the defence of towns,¹⁸ as well as providing her husband with suitable heirs. Lauer has suggested that without Gerberga Louis would not have been able to retain his kingdom after his imprisonment¹⁹ and would perhaps have lost it even earlier. Upon Louis' death in 954, Gerberga set about ensuring the succession of their eldest son, Lothar. Flodoard tells us that she sent to Hugh the Great seeking his help for the promotion of her son to the kingship, which the duke duly promised to give,²⁰ and Lothar was consecrated at Reims on 12 November.²¹ Richer was in no doubt of the significance of the dowager-queen for the effecting of Lothar's accession: *creatusque rex a matre Gerberga simulque et principibus.*²² Whether one takes *creatus* in its meaning as 'created' or as 'elected', it is still an outstanding claim to make for the capacities of an ex-queen. She immediately accompanied Lothar on his tour of Neustria with Hugh²³ and continued by his side until his marriage to Emma in 966.²⁴ Richer, who obviously admired Gerberga, commented upon her good reputation²⁵ although he does not explain if the virtues she displayed were those suitable to, or which might be expected of, a queen.

Queen Emma

Emma, daughter of Empress Adelheid and her first husband, King Lothar of

¹⁵Richer, *Histoire*, II, 19, *Ludovicus rex Gislebertum extinctum comperiens, multam in ejus uxorem Gerbergam Ottonis sororem conjugie duxit, eamque secum reginam in regnum coronavit.*

¹⁶Verdon, 'Les Femmes et la Politique', p.118.

¹⁷Richer, *Histoire*, II, 49 & 86; Flodoard, *Annales*, sa 946, 949, 953.

¹⁸Flodoard, *Annales*, sa 946.

¹⁹P. Lauer, *Le Règne de Louis IV d'Outremer* (Paris, 1900), pp.238f.

²⁰Flodoard, *Annales*, sa 954, *Gerberga regina mittit ad Hugonem, ejus consilium et auxilium petens ... et de provectione filii ejus in regnum pollicetur.*

²¹*ibid.*

²²Richer, *Histoire*, III, 2.

²³*ibid.*, III, 2-3.

²⁴Flodoard, *Annales*, sa 955, 960, 961.

²⁵Richer, *Histoire*, III, 53, *Gerberga regina multa virtute memorabilis.*

Italy, married Lothar in 966.²⁶ It is not clear if she was consecrated, but it would be unlikely for Lothar or his advisers to make such an oversight, and it is clear from Emma's letters that she believed she held royal name [*regium nomen*].²⁷ It was Emma whom Hugh Capet approached with his suggestion for the marriage of the young King Louis, who had been crowned at Compiègne in 979, with Adelheid, the recently bereaved widow of Stephen, Count of Gévaudan.²⁸ It was a match which was believed would help bring strategic control over Aquitaine for Lothar and his son. Emma was persecuted by Lothar's brother, Charles of Lorraine, both before and after her husband's death. She was accused of adultery with Bishop Adalbero of Laon,²⁹ and the matter was brought before the Synod of Macre.³⁰ Charles was intriguing to succeed his brother on the throne by bringing the queen into disrepute, and impugning the birth of her son by Lothar. Few people appear to have subscribed to Charles' opinions of his sister-in-law, and during Lothar's lifetime Emma was not lacking in supporters. Bishop Dietrich of Metz wrote to Charles berating him for, among other sins, bringing shame upon the imperial sister and partner in Lothar's realm.³¹ In spite of Charles's intrigues, on Lothar's death in 986, the duke and the other magnates chose Louis to fill his father's place.³² Louis, by now divested of his Aquitanian queen, was not considered capable of governing his realm, and his mother had ambitions of assuming the role of queen-regent as her mother-in-law had done in the previous reign. Emma and her son received the oaths of fealty of the Frankish nobles, including Duke Charles,³³ after Louis' inauguration.³⁴ However, Charles, having been unable to achieve the throne,

²⁶Flodoard, *Annales*, sa 966.

²⁷Gerbert of Aurillac, *Epistolae*, PL 139, col. 230, letter #119, in the name of Queen Emma to the Empress Theophano, *regium nomen*.

²⁸Richer, *Histoire*, III, 92.

²⁹*ibid.*, III, 66.

³⁰Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.94.

³¹Gerbert of Aurillac, *Epistolae*, PL 139, col.208, Letter #31, *imperatoriam sororem, regnique sui consortem infamares*.

³²Richer, *Histoire*, IV, 1.

³³Adalbero, *Epistolae*, PL 137, cols. 516f, letter #39 to Charles, *Quamvis enim sanctuarium Domini pervaseritis, reginam, cui quae novimus jurastis, comprehenderitis, episcopum Laudunensem caeceri mancipaveritis*.

³⁴Gerbert of Aurillac, *Epistolae*, PL, Vol.139, col.221, letter written in the name of Queen Emma to the Empress Adelheid, *Francorum principes mihi ac filio simul fidem sacramento firmasse*.

was able to thwart her plans, and those of Hugh Capet, by gaining control over the young king. His influence was short-lived, ending with Louis' untimely death on 2 May, 987, and the debut of the Capetian dynasty. Charles responded by seizing Laon together with the hapless Queen Emma and Bishop Adalbero. He did not release her until December, 988, whereupon she fled to King Hugh, and died in November, 989. Emma's career after her husband's death tells us much about the status of a dowager queen: she certainly retained the rank and condition of a queen, but she might only retain authority provided she had the good will of the magnates.

Queen Adelheid

Adelheid-Blanche married Louis V, perhaps in 982,³⁵ after Louis' consecration as under-king to his father. The two kings had travelled to Brioude for the nuptials and the consecration of the young king and his wife to the throne of Aquitaine.³⁶ It appears that Louis remained in the Aquitaine where his immaturity and lack of administrative skills, as well as his failure to develop a rapport with his wife, led to the failure of the entire diplomatic exercise.³⁷ The fact of consecration could not imbue the young king with the qualities of a ruler, nor could it guarantee the success of an ill-starred diplomatic marriage. Shortly after her divorce from Louis, Adelheid married again, to William, Count of Arles,³⁸ and their daughter Constance would later marry Robert II.³⁹ The fact of Adelheid's consecration did not inhibit her ability to remarry.

ANGLO-SAXON QUEENS OF THE TENTH CENTURY

Ecgvynna

It is not clear if Ecgvynna was a full wife of Edward I. She was associated with him from at least c.894, when she gave birth to Æthelstan,⁴⁰ and had either died or parted company with him by the time of his accession to the throne of Wessex c.901. William of Malmesbury, writing in the twelfth century, described her as *illustri [sic]*

³⁵Richer, *Histoire*, p.118, note 1.

³⁶*ibid.*, III, 92-3.

³⁷*ibid.*, III, 94-5.

³⁸*ibid.*, III, 95.

³⁹Radulphus Glaber, *Historiarum*, p.107, note 5.

⁴⁰Hart, *Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands*, p.300.

foemina,⁴¹ while the *Liber Monasterii de Hyda* described her as Edward's *concupina*.⁴² She may have been a concubine put aside at Edward's accession, if not earlier. Her son Æthelstan, although Edward's oldest son, appears to have taken an inferior place at court⁴³ and in the succession, to the sons of Ælfflaed. The most likely reason for this inferiority of Ecgwynna's son would have been her lower marital status.

Queen Ælfflaed

Ælfflaed was married to Edward by the time of his accession in 901. According to the *Liber Monasterii de Hyda* her father was Æthelm⁴⁴ ealdorman of Wiltshire, who may have been a son of Æthelred I and brother of Æthelwold. It was the latter who had challenged Edward's right to the throne, and the marriage may have been made to unite the two branches of the family and thereby strengthen Edward's hold on the kingship.⁴⁵ However, if the charters cited above⁴⁶ may be accepted and are accurately dated to 901, Æthelweard was already born at the time of issuing of both charters, and so his parents must have been married at least a year before Edward's inauguration. We have no evidence for a consecration for Ælfflaed, or indeed for any Anglo-Saxon queen until Ælfthryth. We have only one extant charter from Edward's reign, a gift to Malmesbury Abbey in 901, which was attested by *Eahlswið mater regis* and *Elffled conjux regis*,⁴⁷ but this tells us nothing of the status of either the queen or the dowager. It would appear that Ælfflaed survived her husband until well into Edmund's reign (940-46), and as Edward married Eadgifu in 919 it would seem that he had put aside his first queen. This second marriage may have been one of policy as Ælfflaed had provided two sons who were still living at that time. William of Malmesbury relates that she was buried at Winchester alongside her two daughters Eadflaed and Æthelhild, both of

⁴¹William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, Ed. W. Stubbs (London, 1887; Kraus Repr. 1964), II, 126.

⁴²*Liber Monasterii de Hyda*, Ed. E. Edwards (London, 1866; Kraus Repr. 1964), p.112.

⁴³In B.598/S.366 Æthelstan attests after Æthelweard, and the latter attests but Æthelstan does not in B.594/S.359. Æthelstan only attests occasionally while Æthelweard appears regularly.

⁴⁴*Liber Monasterii de Hyda*, p.112.

⁴⁵B. Yorke, 'Æthelwold and the Politics of the Tenth Century', in B. Yorke ed., *Bishop Æthelwold: His Career and Influence* (Woodbridge, 1988), p.70.

⁴⁶See Note 43.

⁴⁷B.589/S.363.

whom had entered the nunnery.⁴⁸ From this Meyer has suggested that they had all three entered the Nunnaminster⁴⁹ but this is the only suggestion that she had retired from secular life. She was certainly comfortably, if not prosperously, provided for: Æthelstan granted her an estate at Winterborne in 928,⁵⁰ and there are two extant charters of King Edmund granting estates to her at Buckland, Plush, and Okeford Fitzpaine, all in Dorset.⁵¹ Her royal status is not mentioned in any of these sources, nevertheless it is clear that later kings felt it necessary to support her in an appropriate style. There is evidence for two donations made by Ælfflaed to Glastonbury Abbey: in Adam of Damerham's *Historia de Rebus Glastoniensibus* there is record of a now lost charter for a donation by Ælfflaed, with King Edmund's permission, of land at *Hamedune*,⁵² and the Winterborne charter mentioned above is bound into the Glastonbury cartulary which it is presumed indicates that she in turn granted the estate to the abbey possibly at her death.⁵³

Queen Eadgifu

Eadgifu, the second queen of Edward I, was born c.900 and married the king perhaps in 919. She bore Edward two sons, Edmund and Eadred, both of whom became kings. She is not visible in the sources for the remainder of Edward's reign, nor for that of Æthelstan. She was influential in the reign of King Edmund I, and in spite of his having two wives, Ælfgifu and Æthelflaed, she seems to have been more visible than either of them: she attests many of Edmund's charters as *regis mater* while there are no extant charters attested by either of his wives. Eadgifu seems to have assumed an even more authoritative position in the reign of her second son. She was instrumental in forwarding the careers of Æthelwold and Dunstan, the two foremost monastic reformers, and was active in the refoundation and support of the monasteries. She attested a great many of Eadred's charters, her *signum* often appearing immediately after the king's, a

⁴⁸William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Regum*, II, 5.

⁴⁹M.A. Meyer, 'Women and the Tenth Century English Monastic Reform', in *Revue Bénédictine*, 87 (1977), p.47.

⁵⁰B.664/S.399.

⁵¹B.768/S.474.

⁵²H.P.R. Finberg, *Early Charters of Wessex* (Leicester, 1964), p.87.

⁵³M.A. Meyer, 'Women and the Tenth Century English Monastic Reform', p.46. These donations to Glastonbury argue against the ex-queen's being a member of the Winchester community, and suggest that her separation from the king was not the result of a late vocation.

position usually reserved for that of the archbishop.⁵⁴ Meyer comments that "no other queen, before or after, attests so consistently".⁵⁵ The dowager queen was a wealthy woman, 'perhaps the richest woman in England',⁵⁶ when her grandson, King Eadwig, deprived her of her landed estates. Most of these were restored to her after Edgar's accession, but she appears not to have returned to court, or at least not to have resumed her dominant position there. Her last appearance was in the Newminster refoundation charter⁵⁷ of 966, although a series of manumissions dated 970 in the *Leofric Missal* could possibly have been hers.⁵⁸ She was the only wife [*coniux*] of King Edward to be entered in the *Liber Vitae* of the New Minster.⁵⁹

Queen Ælfgifu

Ælfgifu was married to Edward by 940, the year in which Eadwig, their elder son, was born. Their second son, Edgar, was born c.943, and both her sons would sit on the throne. Once again, there is no clear indication of her royal status. In the one extant charter in which she appears,⁶⁰ a grant of King Edmund to Bishop Burhric of Rochester, Eadgifu *mater regis* attests immediately after the king, while Ælfgifu *concupina regis* attests after the bishops. Plummer has suggested that the *concupina* may have been simply a translation of the Anglo-Saxon *gebedda* 'which is a perfectly honourable word'.⁶¹ It is certainly the only suggestion, in a fairly limited range of sources, where she is not considered to have been at least the wife of the king. In her death notice in the Chronicle of Æthelweard she is described as Queen Ælfgifu, wife of King Edmund, at whose grave in Shaftesbury Abbey many miracles had occurred.⁶² Presumably she was a patroness of Shaftesbury: William of Malmesbury records in the *Gesta Pontificum* that she founded the community, possibly a confusion with the

⁵⁴Hart, 'Two Queens of England', p.11.

⁵⁵M.A. Meyer, 'Women and the Tenth-Century English Monastic Reform', p.39.

⁵⁶*ibid.*, p.43.

⁵⁷B.1190/S.745.

⁵⁸B.1248, 1249, 1251, 1252, 1253.

⁵⁹*Liber Vitae: Register and Martyrology of New Minster and Hyde Abbey* ed. W. de G. Birch (London, 1892), p.57.

⁶⁰B.779/S.514.

⁶¹C. Plummer, *Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel* (Oxford, 1892), II, p.147.

⁶²*Chronicle of Æthelweard*, Ed. A. Campbell (London, 1962), sa 948 (=944).

foundation abbess, Ælfgifu, daughter of King Alfred.⁶³ The 'D' version of the Chronicle sa 955 calls her *Scē Ælfgyfe*: she is the only tenth-century queen to achieve the status of saint although her cult is obscure.

Queen Æthelflaed

Æthelflaed of Damerham became the second wife of King Edmund somewhere between the death of St Ælfgifu and the death of the king in 946. She was daughter of Ælfgar, ealdorman of the East Saxons and retained landed interests mainly in East Anglia both during and after her brief royal marriage. There is no record of any queen-making rite for her, although the will of Æthelgifu, drawn up between 944 and 946, makes bequests to *domino meo regi* and *domine mee regine*.⁶⁴ Edmund describes her, in a charter granting her the lands at Damerham as well as others in Hampshire and Dorset, as *mee dilecte conjugi vocitami Ethelfled*.⁶⁵ The unusual *signum*, *Ædelflaed consiliarius*, of a charter of King Edmund for Burton Abbey,⁶⁶ suggests that she had assumed some part at least of a queenly role in spite of the predominance of her mother-in-law. Some time during Eadwig's reign she remarried, to Æthelstan 'Rota', a new man in Eadwig's court. The king seems to have been grooming Æthelstan to help undermine the hold on the northern counties by the family of Æthelstan 'Half-King', by appointing him ealdorman of south-east Mercia, and allowing a presumably prestigious marriage with the young dowager queen, who was also a wealthy land-holder in East Anglia.⁶⁷ She also survived her second husband who is last seen in 970.⁶⁸ Her will,⁶⁹ one of only two queens' wills surviving from the Anglo-Saxon period, was drawn up at Bury St Edmunds between 975 and 991, and grants lands to Christ Church, Canterbury, Barking, St Paul's, London, Ely, Bury St Edmunds, and Glastonbury. It shows that her

⁶³William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Pontificum Anglorum* (RS 52, London, 1870; Kraus Repr.1964), p.186: Alfred founded the city in 880, but Ælfgifu, wife of Edmund, founded the nunnery, *Ibi Elgiva uxor Edmundi qui fuit pronepos hujus Elfredi monasterium sanctimonialium fecit, ibidemque carnis exuvias post fatum deposuit.*

⁶⁴B.812/S.1497.

⁶⁵B.817/S.513.

⁶⁶B.876/S.549.

⁶⁷She had inherited considerable estates from her father, Ealdorman Ælfgar, *Anglo-Saxon Wills*, ed. D. Whitelock (Cambridge, 1930), Will #2, dated between 946 and 951, as well as those she held as dowager queen.

⁶⁸B.1268/S.780.

⁶⁹*Anglo-Saxon Wills*, #14.

landed interests were still in her native East Anglia: the lands to Glastonbury had been given to her by King Edmund with reversion to the Glastonbury community.

Queen Ælfgifu

Ælfgifu probably married Eadwig shortly after his consecration in 955: he had been smitten by her charms at his coronation feast, much to the dissatisfaction of Dunstan and Archbishop Oda.⁷⁰ There can be little doubt that she and the king were married: she attests as *paes cininges wif* in an Abingdon charter,⁷¹ and she is entered in the New Minster *Liber Vitae* as *Ælfgifu coniunx Eadwigi regis*.⁷² Among Eadwig's many unpopular policies was the promotion of Ælfgifu's family,⁷³ and the pressure created by the partition of the Mercians and Northumbrians under the leadership of Edgar in 957 culminated in Eadwig's enforced separation from his wife. The reason for the divorce given in the 'D' version of the *Chronicle* sa 958 was that they were too closely related.⁷⁴ If, as has been suggested, Ealdorman Æthelweard was her brother, then Ælfgifu and Eadwig were third cousins once removed.⁷⁵ This was, strictly speaking, uncanonical,⁷⁶ but closer relationships had not forced the annulment of other royal marriages. Indeed, Eadwig had not been made to separate from his wife until his political position had become very weak. In 966 Edgar issued two charters in her favour⁷⁷ granting her lands in Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. From one of these charters, copied into the *Chronicle of Abingdon*, it would appear that Edgar felt it incumbent upon himself to support, in a suitable manner, his royal kinswoman by

⁷⁰Author 'B', *Sancti Dunstani Vita*, cap.21, in *Memorials of St Dunstan* Ed. W. Stubbs (RS, London, 1874; Kraus Repr. 1965).

⁷¹B.972/S.1292.

⁷²*Liber Vitae ... Hyde Abbey*, p.57.

⁷³B. Yorke, *Bishop Æthelwold*, p.78.

⁷⁴*Her on þissum geare Oda arcebiscop to twaemde Eadwi cyning ond Ælfgyfe forþaem þe hi waeron to gesybbe.*

⁷⁵In the will of Ælfgifu (*Anglo-Saxon Wills*, #8), which is believed to have been this queen's, she mentions a person named Æthelweard, who it is suggested may have been her brother, and may also have been ealdorman of the Western Shires, and author of a Latin version of the *Chronicle*. Yorke, *Bishop Æthelwold*, pp.76f, points out that if his claims to have been great-great-grandson of Æthelred II are also acceptable, then he and Ælfgifu were indeed closely related to the king.

⁷⁶*ibid.* p.77.

⁷⁷B.1189/S.737, B.1176/S.738.

marriage.⁷⁸ Ælfgifu was buried at Winchester in the Old Minster among the royal dead,⁷⁹ which suggests that she was still regarded as bearing some elements of her queenly nature, as Ælfflaed had been after her displacement by Eadgifu.

Queen Æthelflaed

Æthelflaed the Fair, the first wife of King Edgar, is perhaps the least visible of the tenth-century Anglo-Saxon queens. She was married to the king by 961 or 962 as she gave birth to Edward (the Martyr) in c.962. She was dead or repudiated by 964 when Edgar married Ælfthryth. It seems more likely that she had died, as ex-queens who survive a number of years seem to manage to reappear somewhere in the sources.

Wulfthryth

Wulfthryth's association with Edgar is difficult to assess. The story is obscure despite the fact that her relationship with Edgar attracted a good deal of contemporary attention. The sources generally agree that she was of noble birth,⁸⁰ and was living in Wilton Abbey, although they differ on her status there. Whether a nun or a lay girl placed in the nunnery for her education,⁸¹ she was seduced, or perhaps married, by the king and their union produced a daughter, the future St Edith of Wilton. Wulfthryth retired to Wilton with her infant daughter where they both took the veil. The abbacy, left vacant by Wulfhilde's departure for Barking, devolved upon Wulfthryth, in whose capable hands the expansion of this important royal nunnery was achieved, with some help from her saintly daughter, and from the king.⁸² Edgar may have married Wulfthryth: Goscelin tells of their great love and of their indissoluble vows which were broken only by her decision to enter the convent.⁸³ Wilton may have been part of her

⁷⁸*Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, Ed. J. Stevenson (RS 2, London, 1858; Kraus Repr.), p.294 (S.737), *land aet Lhincgelade, cuidam matronae ingenuae, quae mihi afinitate mundialis cruoris conjuncta est, quae ab istius patriae gnosticis eleganti Ælfgifu appellatur vocamine, pro obsequio ejus devotissimo perpetua largitus sum hereditate.*

⁷⁹Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.189.

⁸⁰'La Légende de Ste Edith en Prose et Vers par le Moine Goscelin', Ed. A. Wilmart, *Analecta Bollandiana*, 56 (1938), 40, *Mater sancte uirginis Edith Uulfrudis noscitur beata, stemma principum et regii ducis proles generosa.*

⁸¹*Liber Monasterii de Hyda*, p.184, *Hanc autem Wilfritham non vere sanctimoniam fore, sicut opinio vulgariter delirat, sed timore regis Edgari eam illicite concupiscentis se velantem constat.*

⁸²Ridyard, *The Royal Saints of Anglo-Saxon England*, pp.143f.

⁸³Goscelin in 'La Légende de Ste Edith', ed. A. Wilmart, *Analecta Bollandiana*, 56 (1938), p.41, *Hanc rex, ut Iacob Rachel dilexerat; hanc, splendidius nobilium puellarum sidus, de ipsis scolis diuina dispensatione assumserat, et insolubilibus uotis regno sociauerat; sed sola Christi caritas hos*

morning gift and she may have wished for the abbacy of it for herself, necessitating the transfer of Wulfhilde to Barking at that time. On the other hand, she may indeed have been a nun whom Edgar violated and her placement in the abbacy of Wilton might have been in recompense for his crime.⁸⁴ Either way, Wulfthryth appears never to have taken up any of the roles of a queen. No source ever claims this rank for her and it is not even certain that Edgar was not married to Æthelflaed at the time of his liaison with Wulfthryth.⁸⁵

Queen Ælfthryth

Ælfthryth, the third lady in Edgar's life, is much more generously documented. She was first married to Æthelwold, eldest son of Æthelstan 'Half-King'. Hart suggests this took place in 956, and that they had a son, Leofric, before Æthelwold died in 962.⁸⁶ According to a charter of 964 she was married to the king in that year,⁸⁷ although the 'D' and 'F' versions of the *Chronicle* place the marriage in 965.⁸⁸ That she was a consecrated queen can be beyond any doubt, although the date and the place are the subject of much conjecture and debate.⁸⁹ She was an active and visible queen, witnessing charters, attending witenagemots,⁹⁰ supervising nunneries, which were placed specifically under the queen's care by the *Regularis Concordia*. She was an active contributor to the monastic reform, working diligently in conjunction with Bishop

nexus dissoluere poterat.

⁸⁴*Laws of the Earliest English Kings*, p.68, Alfred VIII forbids the removal of a nun from a nunnery without the permission of the king or the bishop. If a man abducted a nun he was required to pay a fine to the king, the bishop, and to the lord of the church [*þære cirican hlaforde*]. Wilton was a royal foundation, so the nun and the nunnery were both under Edgar's lordship, and he had abused his power both as king and as lord of the monastery. In recompense he may have returned Wulfthryth to the nunnery, made her abbess, and generously endowed both her and her house. By law, neither Wulfthryth nor Edith were entitled to any part of Edgar's property [*ierfe*], but as members of his own nunnery they could be very well looked after.

⁸⁵Edith died 16 September, 984, and, according to William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, II, 13, she was aged twenty-three years, which would place Edgar's association with her mother to around 960-61, at which time he may have been married to Æthelflaed.

⁸⁶C. Hart, 'Æthelstan "Half-King" and his Family', in *ASE*, 2 (1973), p.130.

⁸⁷B.1143/S.725.

⁸⁸'D': *Her on issum geare Eadgar cyning genam Ælfðryðe him to cwene, heo waes Ordgares dohtor ealdormannes*
'F': ... *Ælfðryðe him to gebeodan*

⁸⁹The subject of her consecration will be dealt with below.

⁹⁰She attests a charter, B.1220/S.806 issued at the witenagemot at Cheddar, Somerset, in 968, and another B.1266/S.779 at Walmer, Kent, in 970.

Æthelwold. She founded, refounded and supported monasteries and nunneries, both in her own right and in association with the king. Her landed wealth was extensive,⁹¹ although most of her business activities seem to have been related to religious houses. This could be the result of the nature of the extant sources, but may also reflect the traditional view of the appropriate concerns for a queen. The opportunity to expand the sphere of her queenly concerns came with the accession of her twelve-year-old son, Æthelred, in 978. She seems to have assumed at least some of the roles of a regent: Meyer points out that she continued Edgar's policy of monastic benefactions as a means of controlling the kingdom.⁹² She founded nunneries at Ramsbury, Winchester, and Amesbury.⁹³ She overshadowed Ælfgifu, Æthelred's first wife, perhaps even raising her children.⁹⁴ In charters of Edgar's reign Ælfthryth's *signum* usually appears between the bishops and the *duces*, while in the years from 978 to 984 she attests either after the king or the archbishop. From 984, the time of Bishop Æthelwold's death, to 993, Ælfthryth virtually disappears from the sources. Keynes explores the reasons for her eclipse,⁹⁵ and it is interesting to note that without the support of the bishop and the acquiescence of her son, her position among the king's councillors was no longer realisable. She reappeared at court around 993, and witnessed her last document in 997.⁹⁶ She died 17 November, 1002,⁹⁷ and in the same year, Æthelred donated land to her foundation at Wherwell for the benefit of her soul.⁹⁸

DOWAGERS AND OTHER EX-QUEENS

Of the sixteen women discussed in this chapter, only four died whilst married to their royal husbands. Of the rest six were widowed, and three were divorced, while

⁹¹See Hart, *Early Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands*, p.273, for the transactions involving this queen.

⁹²Meyer, 'Women and the Tenth Century English Monastic Reform'.

⁹³*ibid.*, p.55.

⁹⁴Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.112.

⁹⁵S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'the Unready' 978-1016* (Cambridge, 1980), especially pp.177, 181, 187.

⁹⁶K.698/S.891; C. Hart, *Early Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands*, p.205.

⁹⁷Wherwell Cartulary, London BL Egerton MS.2104, f.43.

⁹⁸K.707/S.904.

Beatrice's career is unknown to us and two were probably not full wives. The careers of these widows and ex-queens show that they were usually well provided for (that is, in the manner to which they had become accustomed) by their husbands' successors. Anointing was not a guarantee of inviolability, just as unction did not protect Charles III from imprisonment and usurpation of his throne.⁹⁹ A dowager might maintain her royal state and hold the position and some of the powers of a regent if she possessed the stamina and assertiveness, and if she met no destructive opposition from her son, the king, or the magnates, or even the young queen. But then this had been the case long before the benefits of royal unction were conferred upon the king's wife. Nevertheless, the roles and lifestyles of dowagers and ex-queens can tell us something of the ideas concerning the nature of queenship during the tenth century.

Dowager-regents of the tenth century did not arrogate to themselves the powers of a king. Their role remained very much that of councillor. Adelheid (mother of Charles III), Gerberga, Eadgifu (mother of Edmund I and Eadred), and Ælfthryth, are all prominent in the charters of their sons' reigns: Gerberga and Adelheid were influential only until the young kings married, while Eadgifu and Ælfthryth continued their influence over their sons even after the latter had taken wives. Queen Emma, mother of Louis V, anticipated that this role would automatically devolve upon her after her husband's death,¹⁰⁰ and perhaps if her brother-in-law Charles of Lorraine had not proved an implacable enemy, she may have held some sway in the court of her inept son. She acknowledged that without the support of brother, relative or friend she was helpless.¹⁰¹ Ælfthryth disappeared from court in 984, the year of Bishop Æthelwold's death, and reappeared in 993 attesting a charter in which Æthelred rued his policy changes after the bishop's death and the ensuing problems these created.¹⁰² Whether the dowager's absence during the years of disorder came as a result of her dependence upon Æthelwold for support, or a fall from favour, is not clear.¹⁰³ A dowager might be influential, even powerful, but she could not function alone.

⁹⁹After Charles III's removal and imprisonment there appears to have been little concern expressed for the affront to his royal dignity. Indeed the magnates elected and witnessed the ritual consecration of two non-dynastic kings before Charles' death in 929.

¹⁰⁰Gerbert of Aurillac, *Epistolae, PL*, Vol.139, col.226, Letter #97 in the name of Queen Emma to the Empress Adelheid, *dum conjugem perdidit, spes in filio fuit, is hostis factus est.*

¹⁰¹*ibid.*, *Gloriantur hostes mei nonsuperesse mihi fratrem, propinquum amicum qui auxilium ferre possit.*

¹⁰²Keynes, *Diplomas of King Æthelred*, p.177.

¹⁰³*ibid.*, p.181.

Consecration did not guarantee immunity from interference for a dowager or an ex-queen. When Eadgifu left Laon to marry Herbert of Vermandois, her son Louis IV confiscated her royal lands. The enmity which existed between her son and her new husband no doubt went a long way to explaining the king's reaction, nevertheless her status could not protect her from Louis' vengeance. The extensive landed wealth of the Anglo-Saxon queen Eadgifu, which had been granted to her by at least three kings, were not immune to confiscation by her grandson Eadwig. His need for lands to offset his weak political position, and perhaps a need for estates with which to dower his own wife, were no doubt exacerbated by a falling-out between the king's party and that with which Eadgifu had aligned herself. Generally, however, the wives of previous kings were well treated by their successors. Upon reuniting the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms under a single rule, Edgar restored several [*nonnullos*] of his grandmother's estates. Eadred had been exceedingly generous in his gifts to his mother and Edgar could not have returned all of them to her. He also may have needed some of them for his own queen, and he possibly left some of them in the possession of Eadwig's ex-queen, Ælfgifu, to whom he also made further gifts of land.¹⁰⁴ Likewise, Edmund made gifts of land to his father's repudiated queen, Ælfflaed.¹⁰⁵ A repudiated queen could not gain access to the power available to a dowager, but she retained some of the appurtenances of her status as did a royal widow, and was entitled to be treated with consonant respect, provided she conducted herself appropriately.

Dowager and ex-queens seldom remarried in the tenth century: Æthelflaed of Damerham and Adelheid both did but both their royal marriages were only brief and had produced no children. Eadgifu remarried in 951, twenty-two years after Charles' death, and her son stripped her of her queenly lands. Gerberga, Emma, Eadgifu, and Ælfthryth would not have remarried because their powers of regency would have been lost, and the ones who did remarry may have done so because they felt they had little to lose. Of the other ex-queens who did not remarry, only Ælfflaed may have entered the nunnery, while Ælfgifu was well cared for by Edgar. Taking the veil was not a popular second career choice among tenth-century queens and ex-queens. As so few queens did remarry there may have been an understanding, although never expressed in the sources, that it was inappropriate for a consecrated queen to remarry. She certainly could not have retained any royal lands, and even booklands or morning gift lands may have been difficult to retain.

¹⁰⁴B.1176/S.738; and in a charter recorded in *Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, p.294 (S.737), *cuidam matronae ingenuae, quae mihi afinitate mundialis cruoris conjuncta est, quae ab istius patriae gnosticis eleganti Ælfgifu appellatur vocamine.*

¹⁰⁵S.1719, B.768/S.474.

A QUEEN'S VIEWS ON QUEENSHIP

We have few contemporary writings on the nature of, and qualities required for, kingship or queenship in the tenth century. However, preserved among the correspondence of Gerbert of Aurillac¹⁰⁶ are letters written on behalf of Emma, widow of King Lothar, and through these letters we can begin to know something of a West Frankish queen's attitudes towards her own role and status. In April, 986, upon the death of her husband, Emma wrote to her mother Empress Adelheid that

The time of my charms, the time of my comeliness has disappeared, oh my lady, and oh sweet mother; while he, in whose flourishing I flourished, in whose ruling I ruled, made me a wife and perpetually a widow ...¹⁰⁷

To the former queen her queenship depended upon her association with the king: her ability to rule, or to flourish, was removed with the removal of her husband. However, in the same letter, and in a slightly less emotional vein, she does find satisfaction in the fact that she and her son had received oaths of fealty from the magnates, and that they would rule together, with the advice of the empress. Adelheid's image would be enhanced by being known not only as the mother of Queen Emma but of all realms.¹⁰⁸

Her letter written in January, 987, once again to her mother, concerns her estrangement from her son, and was written at a time when she was still at liberty but no longer had any influence in the conduct of her son's kingdom:

having lost my husband my hope was in my son. He has become my enemy ...¹⁰⁹

The treatment she underwent at the hands of Charles of Lorraine was personal, but it was also part of a larger scheme to deprive Hugh Capet of his developing power. Emma does not seem to have been aware of this element of her difficulties; she is concerned rather for the affront to her royal dignity. In the same year she complained of the

¹⁰⁶Gerbert of Aurillac spent several years making himself useful to kings, queens, churchmen, and magnates in Francia before finally becoming pope, as Sylvester II, in 999. Among the many people for whom he acted as messenger or secretary was Queen Emma, after the death of King Lothar.

¹⁰⁷Gerbert of Aurillac, *Epistolae*, PL 139, col.221, Letter #75 in the name of Queen Emma to her mother, Empress Adelheid, *Elapsa sunt tempora mearum deliciarum, tempore decoris mei, O mi domina et O dulcis mater, dum is quo florente florebam quo regnante regnabam, conjugem in perpetuum viduam fecit.*

¹⁰⁸*ibid.*, *In hoc, et in reliquis, quae sequenda, quae vitanda sint, vestro iudicio utemur. Ut non solum H. reginae, sed omnium dicamini mater regnorum.*

¹⁰⁹quoted above, note 100.

campaign to discredit both herself and Bishop Adalbero of Laon, who was accused of committing adultery with the queen both before and after Lothar's death:

they persecute him and try to despoil him of his own office in order to brand me with eternal dishonour, with what may be a most just reason for the loss of my office.¹¹⁰

Emma used the same word, *honor* (high office; rank; unassailable right) to describe what she believed both she and the bishop were being deprived of. She considered that her position was an office and did carry rights and dignity to which she was entitled. She also believed that adultery would be a most just reason for depriving her of that office.

TENTH-CENTURY KINGSHIP AND SUCCESSION PRACTICES

The bases of royal authority and power changed quite markedly in Francia between the reigns of Charles the Bald and Hugh Capet. In England there were also changes, between the reigns of Æthelwulf of Wessex and Æthelred II, but these were quite different from those experienced by the West Frankish kings and were perhaps not as striking in their effects. The ascendancy of the great noble families of Francia in the late ninth and tenth centuries contributed to the erosion of the powers of the West Frankish monarchy, and the West Frankish kings were still endeavouring to function in a system of personal monarchy. In the ninth to the eleventh centuries, women in Francia increasingly exercised control of their own inherited and dower estates, and they also appear as military leaders, arbitrators, and castellans.¹¹¹ The personal nature of the monarchy, and the heightened power of women in general may be seen reflected in the position and influence of individual West Frankish queens. While the position of West Frankish kings was insecure, women such as Emma, wife of Raoul, Gerberga, wife of Louis IV, and Emma, wife of Lothar, who were well connected and politically active, could prove to be the mainstays of their husbands', and their sons', reigns. There was every reason for kings, queens, and churchmen to wish to support shrinking royal authority and prestige, and consecration of both the king and queen became indispensable.

In England, the position of the kings was very different: Edward I had consolidated the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms under his own rule, and only in Eadwig's brief

¹¹⁰*ibid.*, Letter #97, col. 226, *Persequuntur eum proprioque spoliare contendunt honore, ut inuratur mihi ignominia sempiterna, quae sit quasi justissima causa amittendi honoris mei.*

¹¹¹McNamara and Wemple, 'The Power of Women through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500-1100', p.94.

reign were the ealdormanries north of the Thames disinclined to submit to rule from Wessex. Only four of the six kings in the period seem to have married, and they drew their wives from the families of their ealdormen. There may not have been the pressing need felt by the Frankish kings to underscore the status of the monarchy by consecration of their consorts. The Anglo-Saxon queens do not appear to have taken part in the defence of cities, or in travelling to foreign courts on diplomatic missions as did their West Frankish counterparts. Their province tended to remain in the *aula regis* and in their religious functions, and may not have required the warrant for authority which unction could give.

West Frankish kings in this period seldom dealt with potential succession problems either by installing their preferred successor as under-king during their reigns, or even by designating their chosen candidate. The nature of the marriages of these kings does not seem to have been questioned: they were monogamous, and only Louis V repudiated his wife. There is no evidence for any of these kings keeping concubines. In the 880s, Charles the Fat, after unsuccessfully trying to repudiate his barren wife Richildis, had equally unsuccessfully tried to legitimise Bernard, his son by a concubine.¹¹² His failure brought about the election of Odo, Count of Paris, to the throne in 888, the first non-Carolingian king since Pippin. Charles III produced to our knowledge only one son, Louis, who fled with his mother to sanctuary in the Anglo-Saxon court where he resided until the failure of Robert I or Raoul to establish their own dynasty necessitated his recall to the throne by Hugh the Great in 936.¹¹³ Louis IV died 10 September, 954, but he had not taken the precaution of designating his son Lothar as his successor. Gerberga enlisted the assistance of her brothers, Otto I and Bruno, Archbishop of Cologne, and of Hugh the Great, to ensure the accession of her son. Richer relates that the magnates of the kingdom convened in Reims together with the queen to elect Lothar king.¹¹⁴ As Lot pointed out, Gerberga recognised that the 'real arbiter' of the situation was Hugh,¹¹⁵ and she was aware that her son's royal birth would not guarantee his election to the kingship. The queen's contribution to the *stirps regia* was first brought under scrutiny in the tenth century in the succession of Louis V. Charles of Lorraine persistently accused Emma of adultery both during and after Lothar's lifetime. This could have raised questions of Louis' right to the throne. In

¹¹²Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.66.

¹¹³F. Lot, *Les Derniers Carolingiens* (Paris, 1891), p.9. Hugh was responsible for the election of three successive kings: Raoul, Louis IV, and Lothar.

¹¹⁴Flodoard, *Annales*, sa 954, *in urbem apud Gerbergam reginam*.

¹¹⁵Lot, *Les Derniers Carolingiens*, p.115.

spite of these accusations, and indeed perhaps because of them, Lothar had Louis consecrated at Compiègne in 979, and associated the young king with him on the throne. This was the only occasion in the tenth century when the reigning king took steps to guarantee his son's succession. At their marriage, Louis and Adelheid were consecrated king and queen of the Aquitanians, though she does not seem to have been consecrated to the greater realm. The marriage and consecration of Louis and Adelheid had been part of a political plan to bring Aquitaine under Lothar's control. The consecrated status of the queens in the tenth century never appears to have been an issue in the election of a successor to the West Frankish throne.

In the late ninth and early tenth centuries, Anglo-Saxon succession policies preferred fraternal succession or an illegitimate adult king, and gave precedence to the elective principle rather than hazard a minor, though legitimately born, kingship. Fraternal succession guaranteed mature succession. Throneworthiness within a dynasty meant any son or grandson of a king was capable of assuming the kingship: a mature brother or nephew of a king was preferable to an immature son. The infrequency of designation or crowning of a son as under-king in Anglo-Saxon England, from the reign of Æthelbald to the end of the Anglo-Saxon period, indicates that kings were unwilling to impose an under-age king on the throne in the event of an early death: the welfare of the kingdom apparently took precedence over dynastic concerns. During the tenth century, legitimate birth would become an important factor in designating suitable candidates. Æthelstan was the last illegitimate Anglo-Saxon to accede to the throne. By the time of the succession to Edgar's throne it would appear that legitimacy of birth was becoming an issue as was the status of the mother of the successor.

Edward I sought to strengthen support for his kingship by marriage into the family of his chief rivals, the descendants of Æthelred I. Ælfflaed was probably married to Edward at the time of his accession, and was quite likely also consecrated. Hrotsvitha believed that Ælfflaed's relationship with the king was of higher status than that enjoyed by Ecgwynna.¹¹⁶ On Edward's death, at least two of his sons were of mature age: the eldest, Æthelstan, son of Ecgwynna, and Æthelweard, the elder son of Ælfflaed. It would appear that Æthelweard was meant to succeed his father, an obvious reference to the marital, and perhaps royal, status of his mother.¹¹⁷ In Edward's charters, Æthelweard regularly attests, while Æthelstan appears less regularly and attests after his

¹¹⁶Yorke, *Bishop Æthelwold*, p.70.

¹¹⁷*Liber Vitae ... Hyde Abbey*, p.6, describes Ælfweard *verus regalibus infulis redimitus, immatura ... preuenti sunt*.

half-brother.¹¹⁸ In the event, Æthelweard survived his father only sixteen days, and so Æthelstan was chosen by both the Mercians and the West Saxons as Edward's successor.¹¹⁹ Eadgifu's sons were the next two Anglo-Saxon kings. Her elder son, Edmund, had two sons by his first wife, but these were still under-age at their father's death, and Eadred, Edmund's brother, succeeded him. This seems to have taken place without any political or dynastic contention. Likewise the succession to Eadred's throne by Edmund's elder son, Eadwig, and after that of Edgar, were uncontroversial.

The first really contentious succession to the throne in the tenth century occurred on Edgar's death. His eldest son by Æthelflaed was Edward, whose appropriateness as successor was criticised even during Edgar's lifetime. The other candidate was Æthelred, Edgar's second surviving son by Ælfthryth. Strictly speaking there should have been no contest: Edward, at thirteen years or perhaps a little older, was barely acceptable according to Anglo-Saxon preference for mature succession, while Æthelred, at barely nine years, was unacceptable even if his birth had been superior to his half brother's. The greater throneworthiness of Ælfthryth's sons over Edward was based on one of two premises: either that Edward's mother was not a full wife to Edgar, and there is no evidence for this, or that Ælfthryth had been a consecrated queen at the time of the birth of her first son, in 965 or early 966.¹²⁰ Edgar's refoundation charter for the New Minster¹²¹ dated 966, is attested by the queen as *legitima prefati regis conjunx* and her son, Edmund, born sometime in the year before the document was laid on the altar of the New Minster, attests as *clito legitimus prefati regis filius*. Edgar's older son, Edward, attests below Edmund simply as *eodem rege clito procreatus* with the outstanding omission of Edmund's *legitimus*. Given the protocol of royal charters this is a rather official declaration of the belief that Ælfthryth's son was more throneworthy on the part of Bishop Æthelwold, who is believed to have been the hand, or at least the voice, behind the drawing up of the document,¹²² which had also perhaps been made with the knowledge of the king. In the will of royal kinsman, Ealdorman Ælfheah, dated between 968 and 971, he leaves lands to *Ælfriðae þaes cyninges wifae*, and to *þm ylðran aepaelingae þaes cyngaes suna and hira* (which can only mean Edmund), and to *þam gincgran*

¹¹⁸See note 43: Æthelstan's irregular appearances were no doubt due to his residence in Æthelflaed's court in Mercia, but his lower position in the witness lists suggests his lower status.

¹¹⁹William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, II, 131.

¹²⁰If Ælfthryth was consecrated in 965/6, it argues against the view that Edgar's coronation of 973 was an inaugural rite.

¹²¹B.1190/S.745.

¹²²E. John, *Orbis Britanniae and Other Studies* (Leicester, 1966), p.275.

(Æthelred).¹²³ Ælfheah does not mention Edward and apparently considers that only Ælfthryth's sons were aethelings. If these questions of legitimacy were being raised during Edgar's lifetime, the great wonder is that he appears to have done nothing to try to settle the succession. Perhaps as this was not normal Anglo-Saxon practice, the king did not believe that it could truly eliminate succession problems. Nevertheless, despite Ælfthryth's endeavours to the contrary, Edward did succeed his father. The fact that Edward's succession was supported by Dunstan and the family of Æthelstan 'Half-King' suggests that his throneworthiness was not really questionable and that Ælfthryth and Æthelwold and others of their party were endeavouring to build a case that was not entirely justifiable. The fact still remains that her status, her queenship, were factors which could legitimately be raised in an attempt to establish the throneworthiness of her son. In the early 990s, Ælfric would write that the *aeðeling*, the son of the *cwen*, was entitled through his birth to accede to the throne.¹²⁴

THE MONASTIC REFORMS OF THE TENTH CENTURY

Religious concerns had been part of the queens' job since their peoples had been converted. In the monastic reforms of the tenth century, the roles of the Anglo-Saxon and West Frankish queens appear to have differed from one another, but then so did the roles of the kings. The monastic reforms on the Continent were instigated and supported by the aristocracy, while in England the monarchy kept a firm controlling hand on monastic developments. The Cluniac reform had two major objectives: the enforcement of strict Benedictine monasticism, and the protection of the monastic houses (initially Cluny and later her daughter houses) from interference from secular magnates. The territorial fragmentation of the Frankish realm in the late ninth and early tenth centuries led to the monastic hierarchy seeking support other than that of the king. The monasteries were either under the auspices of local reformers, such as Gerard of Brogne, William of Volpiano, or John of Gorze,¹²⁵ or, like Cluny, placed themselves under the direct protection of Rome.¹²⁶ The objectives of the reform in

¹²³*Anglo-Saxon Wills*, #9.

¹²⁴*Homilies of Ælfric*, ed. B. Thorpe (London, 1843), Vol.1, p.110.

¹²⁵J.-F. Lemarignier, 'Political and Monastic Structures in France at the end of the Tenth and the Beginning of the Eleventh Centuries', in F.L. Cheyette ed., *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe* (New York, 1968), p.101.

¹²⁶*ibid.*, p.113.

England were much the same: the enforcement of the Benedictine Rule upon monastic communities which had become secularised, in particular the cathedral communities. The development of the religious order which had its first days on the Continent was not part of what took place in England. The Anglo-Saxon reformers were also keen to minimise the interference of magnates in monastic affairs, but chose to place their trust in the king as protector rather than the pope, although Edgar's reforms were not of course undertaken without papal approval.¹²⁷ In this may be seen the contrast between the decline of the West Frankish monarchy and the ascendancy of the Anglo-Saxon kings.

The reformation of the Anglo-Saxon monasteries drew the houses away from local family control. Bishop Æthelwold and King Edgar were both devoted to the new monasticism, but Edgar also stood to make considerable political gains in the control it would allow him to have in the areas where the abbeys held lands. Much of royal justice and authority in the localities was vested in the ealdormen and king's thegns, and in the new order local power came often to be vested in abbots or bishops who were dependent upon the king for their position.¹²⁸ Edgar's reforms were organisational before they were doctrinal.¹²⁹

The roles of the queens in this period are a reflection of the power of the respective kings. West Frankish queens are not particularly visible in the story of continental monastic reform. The power of the kings had become circumscribed by the aggrandisement of comital power, and the queens could only fare as well as their husbands. They are present as wives and mothers in some royal charters of the period, usually having requested the king for the gifts being granted, or as beneficiaries of the prayers owed by the monks in return for the gifts. West Frankish kings were struggling to retain their position in the tenth century and could not give substantial support to monasteries. The queen's power with regard to the monasteries was also necessarily limited, and she was also kept busy helping to sustain her husband's authority.

Anglo-Saxon queens were active and munificent reformers and patronesses of monasteries and nunneries: they appear as co-donors with their husbands and sons, as well as making endowments in their own right. Befriended by the leading reformers and other churchmen, they were extremely influential in building up the prestige and landed

¹²⁷N. Brooks, *The Early History of the Church of Canterbury* (Leicester, 1984), p.247.

¹²⁸John, *Orbis Britanniae*, pp.174f.

¹²⁹D.H. Farmer, 'The Progress of the Monastic Revival', in D. Parsons ed., *Tenth Century Studies* (London, 1975), pp.13f, and 'Regularis Concordia', *Ampleforth Journal* 76 (1971), p.49; John, *Orbis Britanniae*, p.178.

wealth of the monasteries. The queen's official role in the monastic reform in England was specifically directed at the nunneries and was part of Edgar's policy regarding royal influence over the monastic communities of his kingdom. Aristocratic patronage of Anglo-Saxon nunneries was not as important as that of the king and queen. The major royally-supported nunneries of the West Saxon kingdom, Shaftesbury, Wilton, Amesbury, Nunnaminster, Romsey, Wherwell, and Barking, were still the wealthiest nunneries in Domesday,¹³⁰ and indeed few other nunneries survived the eleventh-century Danish invasions.¹³¹

The Council of Winchester, held sometime between 964 and 975, was attended by the king and queen, bishops, abbots and abbesses.¹³² It was at this council that the *Regularis Concordia* was drawn up. It stressed, apart from the enforcement of the Benedictine Rule, the restriction of secular interference in monasteries to the king and queen,¹³³ and the queen was made special patroness and guardian of the nunneries.¹³⁴ Abbots and abbesses were prohibited from treating monastic lands as private estates. However all of these new rules disregarded the potential for royal abuse of office. Perhaps the most outstanding example of such abuse is Ælfthryth's treatment of St Wulfhilde. The latter had been given the abbacy of Barking and extensive estates for her community by King Edgar, apparently in atonement for his attempts to seduce her while she was a nun at Wilton. The Barking estates in eastern England were extensive and wealthy, and shortly after Edgar's death Ælfthryth removed Wulfhilde and sent her to the abbey's estates at Horton, in Dorset, placing her own candidate in the abbacy and taking personal control of the abbey's affairs.¹³⁵ Likewise when Ælfthryth founded Wherwell Abbey she retained ownership of the Wherwell estates, which were only granted in perpetuity to the abbey by King Æthelred after Ælfthryth's death.¹³⁶ Ælfthryth was an astute woman, quick to seize the opportunities which the newly-defined boundaries of the office of queenship offered her. During her career as regent, in the early years of Æthelred's reign, she continued Edgar's policy of monastic

¹³⁰M.A. Meyer, 'Patronage of the West Saxon Royal Nunneries', *Revue Bénédictine*, 91 (1981), p.334.

¹³¹*ibid.*, pp.336f.

¹³²*Regularis Concordia* Ed. T. Symons (London, 1953), p.xxiv.

¹³³*ibid.*, Rule 10.

¹³⁴*ibid.*, Rule 3.

¹³⁵Meyer, 'Women and the Tenth Century English Monastic Reform', pp.54f.

¹³⁶K.707/S.904.

benefactions as a means of controlling the kingdom.

TENTH-CENTURY CHURCHMEN AND QUEENSHIP

The nature of queenship and the religious role of the queen began to shift in the tenth century. It was no longer the place, or the preference, of ex-queens to enter the nunnery or to assume a caretaking role for royal mausolea and cults. Only Ælfflaed, of the Anglo-Saxon and West Frankish queens of the tenth century, possibly became a nun; Eadgifu, widow of Charles III, retired to her nunnery at Laon, and Ælfthryth may have retired to Wherwell, but neither appear to have taken the veil. And only Ælfgyfu, wife of Edmund I, and Wulfthryth entered the ranks of the saints. It is unlikely that less queens received vocations to the nunnery, rather that more queens were in a position to remain at least independent, if not powerful, in the secular world. The sphere of influence of the queen had shifted, and new values and ideas were needed to underpin her more worldly position and occupations.

Unfortunately, contemporary writings concerning queens and queenship are meagre: no writer of the stature of Archbishop Hincmar thought to record his views on the subject. However, we are not without any clues as to the effort made by a few churchmen to foster an expanding notion of queenship and its practice. In this respect we are again largely reliant upon the Anglo-Saxon evidence: the few comments we find among the West Frankish evidence tend to be in response to Charles of Lorraine's vilification and mistreatment of Queen Emma. Bishop Dietrich's letter to Charles,¹³⁷ in which he describes her as the imperial sister and partner in Lothar's realm, makes it clear that the queen not only held rank, but also fulfilled significant office, or functions, in her husband's realm.

On the other hand, the Anglo-Saxon reformers were working in close alliance with the queens and it was in their mutual interests to enhance the image and broaden the functions of queenship. As we have seen, queens and ex-queens were generous in their endowments of cathedral and monastic communities. In the tenth century, Æthelflaed, the second wife of Edgar, is the only queen for whom we do not have evidence, either direct or indirect, of such endowments. The most outstanding of the royal patronesses were Eadgifu and Ælfthryth, and both of these queens were extremely influential in the career of Bishop Æthelwold, the most active of the reformers. It was Eadgifu who inspired her son Eadred to refound Abingdon and to offer the abbacy to

¹³⁷Quoted above, note 31.

Æthelwold,¹³⁸ and then convinced the young monk to stay in England and take up the king's offer. Her own financial support of the monastery was also generous.¹³⁹ Her assiduous efforts on behalf of Dunstan and Æthelwold provided a firm foundation for the success of the reformation.¹⁴⁰ Ælfgifu left land at *Taeafersceat* in her will to Bishop Æthelwold that he might frequently intercede [*symlie þingiae*] for her mother and herself,¹⁴¹ which suggests that Æthelwold had stood by the queen during her brief marriage to Eadwig, and probably also in the ensuing years as Edgar had done. Ælfthryth was no doubt active in monastic patronage before her marriage with Edgar. Her first marriage was into the family of Æthelstan 'Half-King', a family noted for the support given by both the men and women to religious houses.¹⁴² Her brother, Ordulf, would found Tavistock Abbey around 981.¹⁴³ She also seems to have been associated with Æthelwold prior to her marriage with the king. The *Liber Eliensis* mentions an Ælfthryth *matrona* who induced Edgar to sell an estate at Stoke to the bishop in order that the latter might present it to Ely.¹⁴⁴ After her marriage with Edgar she continued to support Æthelwold's monastic interests, as intercessor and co-donor with the king,¹⁴⁵ as well as giving her own lands to his favoured foundations.¹⁴⁶

Æthelwold was very supportive of royal prestige, and was particularly interested in the enhancement of the queen's royal image.. It is generally accepted that Æthelwold was the author both of the *Regularis Concordia* and the vernacular account of the introduction of the reforms into the monasteries.¹⁴⁷ Both of these texts stress the important role of the queen, not only as guardian-patroness, but also in ensuring the

¹³⁸*Chronicon de Monasterii Abingdon*, pp.123f.

¹³⁹Ælfric, *Vita Dunstani*, in *Three Lives of English Saints*, Ed. M. Winterbottom (Toronto, 1972), cap.8.

¹⁴⁰Meyer, 'Women in the Tenth Century English Monastic Reform', pp.38f.

¹⁴¹*Anglo-Saxon Wills*, #8.

¹⁴²See B.1059/S.1810, B.1060/S.1809, B.1061/S.1808 for bequests made by the women of this family to Ramsey Abbey.

¹⁴³Hart, *Early Charters of Northern England and the North Midlands*, p.352.

¹⁴⁴*Liber Eliensis*, Ed. E.O. Blake (London, 1962), II, 39.

¹⁴⁵R.49/S.1449; K.598/S/806; B.1269/S.781.

¹⁴⁶*Liber Eliensis*, II, 31.

¹⁴⁷'Edgar's Establishment of the Monasteries', in *Leechdoms, Wortcunning and Starcraft of Early England*, Ed. Cockayne (London, 1866; Repr. Kraus, 1965), p.440.

proper observance of the Rule through visitation and personal examination of the nuns, just as the king would do for the monks. The *Regularis Concordia* required the recitation of certain psalms *pro rege et regina* at every liturgical hour,¹⁴⁸ and a special collect just for the queen at Nocturns.¹⁴⁹ It is possible that the foundation of Wherwell Abbey was a joint venture by Ælfhryth and Æthelwold: most of Wherwell's estates were either contiguous with lands belonging to New Minster, or had originally been given to the cathedral community.¹⁵⁰ Æthelwold seems to have been among the party which advocated the superior throneworthiness of Ælfhryth's sons over Edward: he is believed to have been the author of the New Minster charter, which seems to consider Edmund superior in birth to his older half brother.¹⁵¹ The redaction of the 'Sherborne' type of consecration *ordo* is generally placed during Edgar's reign, and it is not unlikely, given the attention that it pays to the queen, that this particular rite was the work of Æthelwold.¹⁵² The most splendid example of Æthelwold's celebration of royal prestige, and most notably that of the queen, may be found in the Benedictional of St Æthelwold. Several of the full-page miniatures portray regal images of the Blessed Virgin Mary, an unusual iconographical treatment of her cult for a Western manuscript of the period. There are also portrayals of the choir of virgins, complete with their heavenly crowns, and an Anglo-Saxon queen-saint, Æthelthryth. This royal programme of the Benedictional will be discussed in detail in Chapter 8, but it serves here to show the commitment of Æthelwold to underscore the nature and prestige of queenship. Ælfhryth and Æthelwold mutually promoted each other's interests, and the bishop was the most outstanding churchman of the period for his ideological championing of the queen.

TENTH-CENTURY QUEEN-MAKING *ORDINES*

As we have seen from this and the preceding chapter, queens were usually consecrated in West Francia from the time of Charles the Bald. The situation in England for the same period is less clear: queen-making *ordines* existed in England

¹⁴⁸*Regularis Concordia*, Rules 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, 25, 27.

¹⁴⁹*ibid.*, Rule 18.

¹⁵⁰B. Yorke, *Bishop Æthelwold*, p.82.

¹⁵¹B.1190/S.745.

¹⁵²To be discussed below, p.161.

during the period, but no contemporary source mentions a ritual inauguration of an Anglo-Saxon queen. However, the evidence for the consecration of tenth-century Anglo-Saxon kings is not always direct or contemporary. The Anglo-Saxon chroniclers usually confine themselves to the formula *feng to rice* when describing the accession of a king, although 'C' and 'D' versions of the *Chronicle* sa 924 relate that *Æthelstan aet Cingestun gehalgod*. The apparent lack of interest of contemporary writers cannot be taken as evidence that consecration did not happen, for other contemporary sources show that some at least of the tenth-century kings were consecrated. Therefore silence of the sources cannot be taken to mean that queens were not also consecrated.

In order to study the consecrations and the *ordines* of the tenth century it is necessary first to return to the ninth century and the development of the 'Erdmann' *ordo* which formed the basis for the West Frankish and Anglo-Saxon king- and queen-making rites for the remainder of the early medieval period. The liturgical sources have been indifferently preserved and we do not know how many other pontificals or *ordines* may have existed. The presence of king- and queen-making *ordines* in a pontifical does not necessarily represent historical or anticipated use, and the actual use of an *ordo* does not necessarily mean it was changed for that particular inauguration. No one particular selection of rites or prayers recurs in any of the extant manuscripts as there was no established canon of approved prayer-forms suitable for a bishop's book. Therefore the possibility of establishing where, when, or for whom a particular *ordo* or pontifical was compiled is limited. However, the attempt is not without its merits: we can establish when some of the *ordines* were available in either England or West Francia, and although this does not prove their use, it is also unacceptable to assume they were not used on the basis of the silence of sources which are far from complete or satisfactory in other respects.

The 'Erdmann', 'Leiden', 'Burgundy', and 'Stavelot' king-making *ordines* were developed during the second half of the ninth century. They were not part of the Reims tradition being fostered by Hincmar, although there were occasional elements in common. These appear to have risen in different centres in Francia, and once again it is not clear whether they were all used, or if they were compiled with specific occasions in mind. West Frankish kings in the tenth century were consecrated in different centres from one another, and the queens appear to have been consecrated at different times and places to their husbands.¹⁵³ However, as 'Burgundy' and 'Stavelot' do not appear to have influenced the West Frankish tradition at this stage, and 'Leiden' had no queen-

¹⁵³Charles III, Robert I, Lothar, Frederun and Emma, wife of Raoul, were consecrated at Reims, Raoul at Soissons, Louis IV at Laon, Louis V at Compiègne, while it is not clear where Eadgifu, Gerberga or Emma, wife of Lothar, were consecrated.

making *ordo*, only the ‘Erdmann’ rite need take our attention for the present.

The ‘Erdmann’ queen-making¹⁵⁴ was preceded by prostration of the candidate, a ritual position which emphasised the fundamental change in the nature of the new office-holder: the rite of passage would elevate her. After a short supplicatory prayer, the bishop anoints the queen, and this unction institutes her new rank.¹⁵⁵ The prayer following the anointing¹⁵⁶ is largely borrowed from the consecration of an abbess in the *Liber Sacramentorum Gellonensis*. It requests that the new queen, having been ordained [*instituitur*] by the bishop’s hand, might remain worthy through God’s grace. Her ring is given as a sign of faith:¹⁵⁷ it is no longer a ring of love as was Judith’s ring, although the latter’s was also a marriage ring. Tenth-century queens do not appear to have been consecrated on the day of their nuptials; perhaps this was to separate the queenship from the marriage. The prayer after the ring-giving¹⁵⁸ suggests that through the giving of the ring her rank has been effected, *signo prosperum suae dignitatis effectum*. The coronation formula¹⁵⁹ almost leaps from the page in its joyful splendour. It is short, but to the point: her crown is a crown of glory and her office is one of pleasure, *accipe coronam gloriae, honorem iocunditatis*. Only the final prayer¹⁶⁰ requests that the new queen be strengthened to bear her office, her royal prerogative, well, *bene gerere dignitatem*. The ‘Erdmann’ queen-making *ordo* does not make mention of the king or any aspect of their relationship. Her office, that is her *dignitas* and her *honor*, are never defined, and she is girded with no virtuous symbols, and appears to be spared any onerous duties. It does not mention her royal fecundity, or any expectations which king, Church or people might place upon her in this or in any other respect. Undoubtedly these expectations were understood in the comprehensive and versatile term *dignitas*, perhaps implying duty as well as prerogative, or in her good works referred to in the final prayer. Nevertheless, this queen-making *ordo* appears as an intensely personal rite. Her faith and her virtue are matters between herself and God; they are not public assets, although they should be exemplary even among foreign peoples.

¹⁵⁴See Appendix, p.245, and above Chapter 2, pp.36-40.

¹⁵⁵Prayer 2a.

¹⁵⁶Prayer 3a.

¹⁵⁷Prayer 4a.

¹⁵⁸Prayer 5a.

¹⁵⁹Prayer 6a.

¹⁶⁰Prayer 7a.

The 'Erdmann' *ordo* appears to have placed no expectations upon the new queen, and of the queens who may have been consecrated according to this rite prior to the return of Louis d'Outremer, only Emma appears to have lived beyond these expectations. Charles the Fat is the only king whom we know to have been married, to have been inaugurated during the late ninth century when this *ordo* was created, and not to have had a special ceremony created for him by Hincmar, and so it is possible that Richardis was consecrated according to the 'Erdmann' rite. Frederun was consecrated in Reims sometime after her marriage to Charles III in 907. She only bore daughters, and conveniently died ten years later, whereupon Charles remarried, to Eadgifu daughter of the Anglo-Saxon king Edward I, in 919 and produced a son, Louis. There is no evidence for Eadgifu's consecration but it would seem safe to assume that one took place, given that Charles had already had one consecrated queen, and West Frankish kings were taking care to have their wives consecrated from at least the reign of Charles the Bald. It would certainly appear that Emma considered consecration an important element of her authority. She had been married to Raoul before the time of his election, and yet was not consecrated at the same time as the king at Soissons in 923.¹⁶¹ Her queen-making took place in Reims later that same year during Raoul's absence in Lotharingia.¹⁶² Lauer believed that this consecration had been performed under Emma's own order, that she believed her husband was in danger and she needed to be in an advantageous position if something should go wrong.¹⁶³ This would also mean that Emma considered her ability to seize authority in the event of her husband's capture would be generated by her consecration. She was never able to test her belief that queen-making would give her the power to stand in for her husband. The queen-making rite reinforced an authority which was available to a king's wife, but it is unlikely that it could ever have enabled a queen to reign should her husband be permanently removed.

By 900, 'Erdmann' and perhaps a 'Leiden'-type of king-making *ordo* were used in England to create an 'SMN'-type *ordo*, but we have no surviving examples of this hybrid rite.¹⁶⁴ This 'Erdmann'-related Anglo-Saxon *ordo* was most likely used for Edward I's consecration, and as the queen-making was slightly changed at this time, this

¹⁶¹Flodoard, *Annales*, sa 923, p.14.

¹⁶²*ibid.*, p.17.

¹⁶³Lauer, *Robert I et Raoul de Bourgogne*, p.26.

¹⁶⁴See Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, pp.365f, for arguments in favour of the introduction of the 'Erdmann' *ordo* to England at this time.

may have been done with the intention of using it.¹⁶⁵ The changes in the rite occur only in the prayer following the anointing,¹⁶⁶ ‘and by someone capable of identifying, and returning to, his source’s model: the rite for consecrating an abbess’ in the *Liber Sacramentorum Gellonensis*.¹⁶⁷ At the opening of the prayer, the redactor has restored the descriptive *affluentem* from the rite for an abbess to the *spiritum* requested to be imparted to the newly-anointed queen, and at the closing of the prayer, has restored the original words, *ut numquam postmodum de tua gratia separetur indigna*. This is no great change and certainly does not alter the tone of the ‘Erdmann’ queen-making *ordo*, but does suggest an intention of use for the inauguration of Anglo-Saxon queens, and that Ælfflaed may have been the first to receive its benefits in 900.¹⁶⁸ Eadgifu’s lifelong high status, and the influence she exerted during the reigns of both her sons, suggests that her position may have been underlined by a queen-making. The availability of an *ordo*, and the need to assert her replacement of Ælfflaed would make her consecration most likely.¹⁶⁹ The *ordines* used for St Ælfgifu, Æthelflaed of Damerham, and Ælfgifu, may have been ‘SMN’ types. No pontificals from this period survive: perhaps as the ‘SMN’ rite was superseded in England the manuscripts were no longer retained. As well, different formularies were no doubt favoured by successive bishops, as was the case in West Francia, which could mean variations upon ‘SMN’, ‘Ratoldus’, or even earlier versions of ‘Robert’.

The ‘SMN’ *ordo* was taken back to the Continent, and the most likely time for this would have been the return of Louis IV d’Outremer in 936.¹⁷⁰ Once again this makes the assumption that the transmitting of an *ordo* and the simultaneous changes made to it, indicate intention of usage. It has been suggested that ‘Erdmann’ and West Frankish variants on the ‘SMN’ *ordo*¹⁷¹ were in use in West Francia until the twelfth

¹⁶⁵*ibid.*, p.367.

¹⁶⁶Prayer 3b.

¹⁶⁷Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.367 and note 22.

¹⁶⁸Ælfflaed was perhaps put aside by Edward I in order to marry Eadgifu. This would show that consecration did not guarantee a queen’s position at court. However, she did retain some part of her royal status in much the same way that a dowager queen would retain hers.

¹⁶⁹In the *Vita Dunstani* attributed to Osbern, the author has King Eadred address Eadgifu as *carissima mater, ac totius imperii Anglorum regina*, cap. 23, but the monk may have been imposing eleventh-century views of queenship upon a tenth-century queen.

¹⁷⁰Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.368.

¹⁷¹Ward, ‘An Early Version of the Anglo-Saxon Coronation Ceremony’, pp.347-50, lists eighteen extant manuscripts.

century and later into the medieval period.¹⁷² The continued development of these parent *ordines* in England and Germany appears not to have been noticed in West Francia. There were a number of ecclesiastical centres where kings are known to have been consecrated in the ninth and tenth centuries: Orleans, Reims, Sens, Laon, and Compiègne. Each of these could have had its own individual king- and queen-making rites which would account for the variants present in extant manuscripts. No doubt many intermediate exemplars have been lost to us, particularly when pontificals survive from places where no king- or queen-making is ever known to have taken place: the possible number of pontificals and variants is considerably larger than those which survive. A revision could have been made at any time when a codex was being compiled on behalf of a particular bishop, not necessarily in preparation for a specific royal inauguration: many non-royal benedictions and consecrations show evidence of rewriting. Once manuscripts started to proliferate, there may have been no one set *ordo* required for the making of a West Frankish queen or king. Each bishop had his own pontifical containing perhaps his personal selection of preferred rites and benedictions. So it would not be impossible for the 'Erdmann' and 'SMN' rites to be used interchangeably for royal inaugurations until the twelfth century. From the twelfth century changes began to be made to the West Frankish *ordines* and manuscripts began to proliferate remarkably.

The 'SMN'-'Ratoldus' queen-making rite can tell us little about developments in ideas concerning queen-making in West Francia, where it was first developed, as no further changes were made to its formulas. It could easily have been used interchangeably with the 'Erdmann' queen-making rite. Of the remaining tenth-century West Frankish queens, we know that Gerberga was consecrated in 939, probably at Reims,¹⁷³ and Adelheid at Brioude in 982.¹⁷⁴ Adelheid's consecration, unusually, took place at the same time as that of Louis: Richer comments that *secum coronatam per episcopos in regnum promovit*.¹⁷⁵ However, there seems to have been little authority conveyed to either participant by this rite as they were soon separated, and Louis had to be rescued from the embarrassing predicament he had created in his new kingdom.¹⁷⁶ Consecration could not convey the ability to rule to king or queen if they

¹⁷²*ibid.*, p.368 note 33, citing P.E. Schramm.

¹⁷³Flodoard, *Historiae Remensis Ecclesiae*, PL 135, IV, 135.

¹⁷⁴Richer, *Histoire*, II, 93.

¹⁷⁵*ibid.*, III, 94.

¹⁷⁶*ibid.*

were not of the right mettle.

The next development in Anglo-Saxon king- and queen-making rites is represented by the *ordines* of the Pontifical of Archbishop Robert. As this manuscript also contains a modified *ordo* for the consecration of an abbot, including a prayer adapted from the king-making rite, and given the historical context in which it was compiled, it seems likely, as Nelson has suggested,¹⁷⁷ that Bishop Æthelwold was responsible for the innovations in this king-making *ordo*. There is no record of a consecration for Edgar in 957 when the Mercians elected him to displace Eadwig. Oda, the archbishop of Canterbury, had remained faithful to Eadwig, but Dunstan had been recalled to the bishopric of Worcester and could well have consecrated Edgar as king of the northern English. In a charter dated 958, Edgar appears as *totius regni Merciorum monarchiam*, and attests as *rex Merciorum et Norðanhymbrorum atque Brettonum*.¹⁷⁸ Likewise, there is no record for Edgar's inauguration to his whole realm in 959. However, as Nelson points out,¹⁷⁹ there was no archbishop of Canterbury at the time of Edgar's accession. Brihtelm had been appointed just before Eadwig's death but had not received his pallium, and Edgar replaced him with Dunstan who travelled to Rome and received his pallium on 21 September, 960.¹⁸⁰ He would have been available to consecrate Edgar by early 961, but all recensions of the *Chronicle* are silent for 960 and 961, and no other source mentions a consecration. However, in a charter for Wilton nunnery dated 974,¹⁸¹ Edgar further dates his document as *imperii nobis a deo collati anno. XV*, which suggests that he considered he had been consecrated in the early part of his reign. Æthelwold's 'Robert' *ordo* could well have been prepared for this occasion. Edgar may have been married to Æthelflaed at this time, but as there were no changes made to the queen-making of 'Robert', and as her status seems to have been inferior to that of Ælfthryth, it could be that she was not consecrated (perhaps only living long enough to produce her son).

In 964, or perhaps 965, Edgar married Ælfthryth, widow of Ealdorman Æthelwold, and between that time and the birth of their first son, Edmund (who was present at the signing of the New Minster charter in 966), Ælfthryth was consecrated queen. The 'D' version of the *Chronicle* has sa 965 *Her on þysum gear Eadgar cyning*

¹⁷⁷*Politics and Ritual*, pp.370f.

¹⁷⁸B.1040/S.677.

¹⁷⁹*Politics and Ritual*, p.299.

¹⁸⁰Searle, *Anglo-Saxon Bishops, Kings and Nobles*, p.8.

¹⁸¹B.1304/S.799.

genam Ælfrōðe him to cwene, but no contemporary source specifically states that she was consecrated. However, several factors point to this being the case (in addition to those discussed earlier in relation to the New Minster charter). During Edgar's reign the queen-making rite was altered from that in the 'Robert' *ordo* to that found in the 'Sherborne' group of pontificals. This version leaves the rite unchanged but inserts a prefatory rubric which expresses several significant ideas concerning queenship.¹⁸² Firstly, it requires that the queen be consecrated by anointing with holy oil in the presence of the nobles of the kingdom, *in ecclesia coram optimatibus*. The presence of the nobles at the consecration signified their agreement and participation in the rite, and this certainly is a development in the nature and purpose of queen-making. It also suggests that Edgar required his queen's inauguration to be witnessed: he expected recognition of the legitimacy of her position. Given the official role she would assume in the monastic reformation, it would be a part of a programme to enhance the power of the queen. The next innovation emphasises that she was blessed and consecrated for her partnership in the royal marriage bed, *in regalis thori consortium*. This is the first direct reference in a queen-making *ordo* to the connubial duties of the queen. There is, however, still no reference to her fertility. Her consecration to the partnership in the royal marriage bed can only be a reference to the throneworthiness of her sons, and suggests that Edgar was no longer prepared to leave the succession to chance. He was proclaiming that only his sons by the queen were to succeed him. It is little wonder that Ælfthryth felt she could claim precedence for her sons over the son of Edgar's previous marriage. The third innovation of the rubric is that it is put forward as a decree [*decernimus*]. A decree by whom is not made clear: the witan perhaps, or Edgar (the royal 'we'), or Edgar and Æthelwold, who seems to have been interested in the expansion of the role of the queen through liturgical and ideological support for her office. The importance of Ælfthryth's consecration was for the enhancement of her power and the prestige of the dynasty, and, by mutual agreement, for the benefit of the churchmen.

The royal ceremony which took place at Bath on Whitsunday, 973, has generated a great deal of discussion and confusion, both contemporary and modern.¹⁸³ The ongoing debate concerning the nature of the ceremony and its implications for Edgar's kingship cannot be entered into in detail in the present work. The confusion in the

¹⁸²See Appendix, p.248.

¹⁸³Robinson, 'The Coronation Order in the Tenth Century', pp.60ff; Richardson and Sayles, 'Coronations and Crown-wearings Before the Conquest' in *Governance of Medieval England*, pp.397-412; John, *Orbis Britanniae*, pp.276-89; Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, pp.296-303; to mention but a few.

contemporary sources over the date and number of consecrations undergone by Edgar suggests that there was indeed more than one ceremony which our informants had trouble differentiating. The confusion of the anonymous author of the *Vita Oswaldi*, as discussed by Richardson and Sayles,¹⁸⁴ that is, the description of several separate events as if part of the proceedings at Bath, has been compounded by the reliance of historians upon this account to understand both the development of king-making rituals, and the events of Edgar's reign. There can be no doubt that there was a rite conducted at Bath in 973: all the contemporary sources mention it including Edgar himself.¹⁸⁵ Even this suggests that Bath was not Edgar's inauguration to his West Saxon kingdom, for the chronicles do not normally take note of king-makings, and for them all to pay such notable attention to the event suggests its extraordinary nature. The fact that the author of the *Vita Oswaldi* does not describe a queen's consecration when there was an *ordo* for it in his pontifical source, suggests that he knew that the queen was not consecrated on that day. The king and queen had been consecrated much earlier in the reign, and the Bath ceremony was a special, festal recrowning of the king to recognise his exceptional, perhaps imperial status. And if it was a ceremony to mark, or inaugurate, his imperial position, then re-anointing would not have been out of the question. The presence of the two archbishops at the ceremony supports the imperial theory: only the archbishop of Canterbury was necessary for royal consecration, and the presence of the archbishop of York could signify the northern element of Edgar's hegemony. The exceptional attention paid to the abbots and abbesses in the *Vita Oswaldi* account of the festivities could mean that the event was also a celebration of the success of the monastic reform.

* * *

Tenth-century West Frankish and Anglo-Saxon queens are not particularly well documented and their personalities and styles of queenship are not always evident. West Frankish kings were largely monogamous, and their wives were supportive, even necessary for the maintenance of their positions. Those Anglo-Saxon kings who married continued the earlier policy of repudiating wives when new alliances proved attractive. Their succession practices did not demand marriage, or offspring, of a king if he had suitable brothers. Queens continued their interests in religious patronage, and seldom presented their husbands or their peoples with any problems. Those who were put aside

¹⁸⁴Richardson & Sayles, 'Coronations and Crown-wearings', *passim*.

¹⁸⁵B.1304/S.799.

were well maintained, as they had always been, and were free to choose an independent life or the nunnery. No writings emerge from the period criticising queens, or defining the elements of queenship in which they may have failed. No tenth-century queen attracted critical comment as had Empress Judith or Queen Brunhild. The attacks on Emma drew support, but provoked no works exploring the elements of queenship which were being denigrated. It was treated as a personal vendetta (which it was) and never placed in a wider context of the offence against queenship, or the possible betrayal of her office by the queen. The bad press which Ælfthryth attracted tended to be late, and is not substantiated in contemporary evidence. These women fulfilled what was expected of them as queens by their respective consorts and peoples. They did not intrigue against the kings, and do not appear to have placed personal advantage ahead of royal interests. The strong women used their strengths constructively: they were good queens.

During the tenth century, anointing became the constitutive act of king- and queen-making rites. The development of the political influence of kings' wives led to the increasing use of queenly consecration, although they were not always styled 'queen'. There is still much that is speculative in this chapter despite the apparent proliferation in primary source material. The queens remain shadowy figures, at times proving less accessible than those who have appeared in previous chapters. It covers a complex period with a large number of queens and a proliferation of *ordines*. The simplicity of the queen-making *ordo* misrepresents its significance: it does not define her office, though it manifestly conveys *dignitatem* and *honorem*. Emma had been perfectly justified to claim her *honor* as queen, as the 'Erdmann' and 'Ratoldus' *ordines* show that she had been anointed to this very status. It is evident from the exploitation made of queen-making, in particular by West Frankish kings and queens, and by King Edgar, that the rite did not convey mere title or prestige; it made the queenship into an important element of royal government.

CHAPTER 7

THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

During the eleventh century the concept of queenship made but few advances. Frankish queens, with one or two exceptions, are not particularly accessible: they continued to live much as their predecessors had done in the tenth-century. Only those queens who troubled the court, such as Constance of Aquitaine, attracted more detailed comment. As in the previous chapter, this will begin with a series of biographical sketches of the queens of the eleventh century. This will provide details of their reigns which will assist in understanding the ensuing discussion. The lives of eleventh-century queens and dowagers reveal queenship to have been as mutable as it had ever been: a queen's position was only as strong as her political utility, the party to which she was attached, or her ability to bear sons. The loss of power of the late Carolingian kings, and the narrow sphere of influence inherited by the Capetians in the late tenth and eleventh centuries, necessarily limited the potential significance and effective powers of their queens. The expansion of the West-Saxon kingdom in the tenth century had meant the rise of the local comital families as local suzerains: they became a structural element of Anglo-Saxon government. Usually queens came from these families and could participate in the familial and royal intrigues. This strategic placing of the royal wives meant that a king who was politically or dynastically insecure, as Edward the Confessor would be, could use his wife's family connections and expertise as a means of securing his own position. The activities of the Anglo-Saxon queens were no longer exclusively religious: their horizons were expanding into more secular areas. Queens still depended upon their husbands, families, and friends for political strength. Their ambitions were vicarious, necessarily centred upon their husbands, sons, and, occasionally, their families. Their ideas on the nature of queenship needed to be practical and practicable. A queen's hold on her lands could also be tenuous: if she held lands or wealth which the king needed she might easily be deprived of them. If her political utility changed, she might easily be displaced. She depended upon her family, or her party, or upon her good relationship with the king. However, neither could any king or magnate ever wield effective power if he stood alone.

As in the tenth century, the king- and queen-making *ordines* continued to develop in England, for the first time importing formulas from elsewhere than West Francia. These 'Romano-Germanic' formulas exerted no influence upon West Frankish liturgists who continued apparently to use 'Erdmann' or 'SMN' variants. It would have been negligent and incompetent for an eleventh-century king to compromise his political status and dynastic stability by disregarding or underestimating the value of ritual

inauguration for either himself or his consort, and yet not all such occasions have been recorded by contemporary sources. There can surely be little doubt that Æthelred ensured that both his wives were consecrated: the anxieties which witnessed the period after the death of his father, the brief reign of his brother and the beginning of his own reign, must have demonstrated the expedience of ensuring the consecration of the queen, but no source mentions either event. The failure of the sources to mention all but a few of the king- and queen-makings of the eleventh century can be only that, a failure to mention, not the lack of the event.

WEST FRANKISH QUEENS OF THE ELEVENTH CENTURY

Queen Adelheid

Adelheid married Hugh Capet c.970, and their first son, Robert (the future Robert II), was born in 972.¹ The sources mention Hugh's consecration, upon his accession, at Reims in 987, and that of his son, Robert,² shortly after at Orleans, while no source mentions Adelheid's consecration. However, in a letter to the Empress Theophanu written in 988 Hugh describes his wife as *sociam ac participem nostri regni A.*³ Adelheid founded the nunnery of St-Frambourg at Senlis, where there was a royal residence,⁴ and at Argenteuil in the Parisis.⁵ She witnesses Hugh's charters before his accession,⁶ and appears in one of her son's charters as mother of the king.⁷ Hugh, like Pippin two hundred and fifty years before him, inaugurated a new dynasty on the Frankish throne. Like Pippin, he was already married with a son and heir. He was anointed at his accession and Robert was anointed shortly after. We have no evidence that Adelheid was, like Pippin's Bertrada, consecrated at the inception of the dynasty, but Hugh's claim that she shared his realm suggests that he had secured his position,

¹F. Lot, *Les Derniers Carolingiens* (Paris, 1891), p.74.

²*Annals of St-Denis, MGH SS 9*, p.403, *Eodem vero anno ipse Hugo dux cognomento Capez unctus est in regem civitate Remis, Robertumque filium eius dulcissimum in ipso anno, regio diademate sublimari fecit.*

³Gerbert of Aurillac, *Epistolae, PL 139*, col.231, letter #120.

⁴Lattin, *Letters of Gerbert*, p.209, note 3.

⁵Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p.178.

⁶Lot, *Les Derniers Carolingiens*, p.403.

⁷C. Pfister, *Etudes sur la Règne de Robert le Pieux* (Paris, 1885), p.lxivf.

and anchored his dynasty's claim to the throne through what was becoming a customary ritual.

Queen Susanna

Of Susanna-Rosala we know very little. Hugh, who seems to have contemplated a Byzantine match for Robert after his coronation,⁸ settled for a politically astute union with Susanna, widow of the Count of Flanders and daughter of the King of Italy.⁹ The marriage appears not to have been to Robert's taste and he shortly after repudiated her: Richer explains that it was because she was too old [*eo quod anus esset*].¹⁰ Robert refused to allow her to keep her dower estate, the castle of Montreuil. Susanna countered by building another nearby from whence she planned to interfere with local shipping, although Richer does not tell us if she was successful.¹¹ We do not know if she was consecrated after her marriage, but as Hugh was concentrating on securely establishing dynastic claim to the throne, it seems likely he would have made use of queenly consecration for his new daughter-in-law, even though the young king was dragging his feet throughout the affair. Susanna's brief queenship shows that the security of the queen's position was no stronger than it had been in the past if the king chose to displace her.

Queen Bertha

After separating from Susanna, Robert formed a liaison with Bertha of Chartres, widow of Count Stephen of Blois, and mother of the Counts of Blois, Chartres and Tours.¹² She was older than he and they were related within the canonical degrees.¹³ They wanted to marry but were opposed by churchmen and by Hugh,¹⁴ and so it was not until after Hugh's death, and Robert's full accession in 996, that they were able to do so. There is no information concerning her consecration. The marriage was

⁸Gerbert of Aurillac, *Epistolae*, PL 139, col.229-30, letter #111.

⁹A.W. Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981), p.21.

¹⁰Richer, *Histoire*, IV, 87.

¹¹*ibid.*

¹²*ibid.*, IV, 108.

¹³Dhondt, 'Sept Femmes et un Trio de Rois', p.44.

¹⁴*ibid.*, p.42.

childless, and after six years, Robert, needing a son, divorced her.¹⁵ Her family were angered by her repudiation, and Robert was forced to seek the support of their opponents, the House of Anjou, which entailed marriage to Constance. However, Bertha does not seem to have withdrawn from court, despite her husband's conjugal and diplomatic volte-face. Her status and title at court are not made clear, but when Constance and Robert were becoming estranged and the king was hoping to divorce his unpleasant third wife, Bertha seems to have hoped for her restoration to the queenship.¹⁶ However, the king still needed an heir and was reconciled with Constance. Once again the mutable nature of queenship was underlined: the queen's position in the *aula regis* and the *thalamo regis* was in the hands of the king who might act without concern for her change of status. Bertha's remaining at court no doubt reflects the strength of her personal relationship with the king, but also demonstrates the continued high status of an ex-queen.

Queen Constance

In 1005, Robert married for the third time, to Constance of Arles, who outraged the court with her southern manners and strange companions, and her jealous and violent nature. Bertha's continued presence at court can only have aggravated Constance's behaviour, for the latter was responsible for the factions which formed around herself and the ex-queen.¹⁷ After Constance's intrigues and the murder of Hugh of Beauvais, Robert tried to convince Pope Sergius IV to dissolve their marriage,¹⁸ but the pontiff dissuaded him and the royal couple were reconciled. Raoul Glaber obviously believed this to be a fitting end to the estrangement between the king and queen: *ut decebat, concors reginae fuit*.¹⁹ Constance, like Bertha, witnessed a few charters, but none survives in her own name.²⁰ During the early Capetian period the *curia regis* came to be more narrowly defined as a court of justice, and there is evidence

¹⁵Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France*, p.22

¹⁶Odoranus of Sens, *Opera Omnia*, Ed. & Trans. R.-H. Bautier & M. Gilles (Paris, 1972), p.100, *sperans se ... jussu apostolico restitutam toro regio*.

¹⁷Hallam, *Capetian France, 987-1328*, p.71.

¹⁸Dhondt, 'Sept Femmes', pp.49f.

¹⁹Radulphus Glaber, *Historiarum*, III, ii, 7.

²⁰*Catalogue des Actes de Robert II*, Ed. W.M. Newman (Paris, 1937) #9, #13, #119, witnessed by Bertha; #14, #66, #78, #81, #91 witnessed by Constance.

for Constance participating in this court,²¹ and she was also present at the Council of Orleans.²² Constance bore Robert four sons and two daughters. The eldest, Hugh, was crowned, at age ten, as Robert's associate. Upon the early death of the young king in 1025, Robert decided to have their second son, Henry, crowned, but Constance favoured their third son, Robert, for the throne. Factions developed behind each candidate and his favouring royal parent, and Constance took fierce umbrage against all who supported the king in this contest. Henry was finally crowned in May, 1027, and many of the nobles and churchmen who had agreed with the king's choice of candidate decided not to attend the inauguration ceremony so as not to have openly to declare their support for the king, and further risk the fury of the queen.²³ Having lost the battle against Robert, she turned to stirring Henry and young Robert to rebel against their father in 1030. After Robert's death in 1031, she turned against both her sons; however, she only survived her husband by one year, and so was able to harass Henry only for a short while after his full accession. Constance's behaviour was founded mainly upon her nature rather than upon her queenship; however, her reign serves to demonstrate the potential extent of a queen's power if she met inadequate opposition.

Mathilda

Of Henry I's first wife, Mathilda, we know very little. They were married c.1043 and she died the following year having given birth to a daughter.²⁴ We do not know if she was consecrated, and she neither witnessed nor intervened in any surviving charters.²⁵

Queen Anna

Henry married Anna of Russia, daughter of Jaroslav I, Grand Duke of Kiev, in 1051. According to the *Vita Lietberti*, Henry requested consecration for his new wife,²⁶ and this was duly performed at Reims in May, 1051. Lewis has commented upon the

²¹Facinger, 'A Study of Capetian Queenship', p.33, note 103.

²²*ibid.*

²³Fulbert of Chartres, *Letters and Poems*, Ed. & Trans. F. Behrends (Oxford, 1976), Letter #116.

²⁴Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France*, p.45.

²⁵Dhondt, 'Sept Femmes', p.55.

²⁶Radulphus Coevus, *Ex Vita Lietberti: Epistola Cameracensis, Recueils des Historiens Gaules et de la France*, Vol.2 (Paris, 1876; Repr. Farnborough, 1968), p.481, *ut sponsa ... benediceretur, regaliq[ue] consecratione pariter insigniretur.*

eccentricity of Henry's dynastic confidence which could induce him to wait till his forty-first year before marrying Anna. However, she provided him with three sons, the eldest of whom, Philip, was crowned in 1059, a year before his father's death. Philip was seven when he came to the throne and the regency had been vested in Baldwin IV of Flanders by Henry before his death.²⁷ However, despite having no official role in the regency, Anna took a more active role in her son's reign than she had in Henry's.²⁸ Her husband may have repressed her as a reaction to the destructive influence of his mother during his father's reign. In 1062 she remarried, to Raoul III, Count of Crépy and Valois. He was still married to his previous wife and had abducted the dowager-queen prior to their nuptials. Pope Alexander II excommunicated the count, though not, it would seem, Anna, who nevertheless remained with Raoul until his death in 1074 (perhaps her status had protected her).²⁹ The reaction to this marriage was based only upon the bigamy of the count: the remarriage of the dowager-queen was not frowned upon and she continued to frequent her son's court, witnessing his charters until 1067 as *regina*, even though remarried, and after that, until 1075, as *mater regis*.³⁰ Her signature, 'Anna Queen', appears in a charter of 1063 in cyrillic:³¹

А НА РЪДНА

Sometime in or after 1075 she returned to Russia, and the date of her death is unknown.³²

Queen Bertha

Philip made a politically astute marriage with Bertha of Holland, daughter of the Count of Holland, in 1072. Once again, the sources are silent concerning her consecration, but we can hardly doubt that by this time it had become as accepted to consecrate the queen as it was the king. Bertha bore Philip two children, a son, the future Louis VI, and a daughter. She attests a few charters, usually signing as *regina*,

²⁷Dhondt, 'Sept Femmes', p.58; E.D. Sokol, 'Anna of Rus, Queen of France', *The New Review: A Journal of East European History*, 13 (1973), pp.8f.

²⁸Sokol, 'Anna of Rus', p.9.

²⁹*ibid.*

³⁰*Recueils des Actes de Philippe Ier*, M. Prou ed. (Paris, 1908), #32 & #75.

³¹Sokol, 'Anna of Rus', p.7; *Recueils des Actes de Philippe Ier*, p.cxxxiv & #16.

³² Dhondt, 'Sept Femmes', p.60.

and once as *Francorum regina*.³³ After twenty years of marriage, Philip repudiated Bertha to marry Bertrada of Montfort,³⁴ for reasons possibly of personal preference though the sources do not make this clear. It is also not clear if the queen retired quietly, or remained at court as her earlier namesake had done, to become a thorn in the side of her supplanter. If she chose the latter course it was not for long, for she died two years later, in 1094.

Queen Bertrada

Philip's marriage with Bertrada of Montfort was completely unlawful: neither party was divorced, and they were related within the canonical degrees.³⁵ They spent the remainder of their lives alternately being excommunicated and reprieved.³⁶ Bertrada bore Philip three children, the eldest of whom, also named Philip, she endeavoured to have recognised as heir to the throne.³⁷ However, Philip foiled her plans, though only so far as to designate Louis as his successor: he never had the prince crowned as his associate.³⁸ Bertrada witnessed or intervened in only a few of Philip's charters.³⁹ She was never recognised by Rome as Philip's wife, but seems to have been accepted as queen in Francia,⁴⁰ even though the bishops were forbidden by the pope to consecrate her.⁴¹ As Philip already had a designated heir born of a duly consecrated queen, it appears to have been possible for Bertrada to live as queen without benefit of royal unction. Upon Philip's death in 1108, she retired to Fontevrault Abbey in her son's county of Anjou, where she died in 1119.⁴²

³³*Recueils des Actes de Philippe Ier*, #78, #86, #130.

³⁴*Annals of St-Denis*, MGH SS IX, p.405.

³⁵Dhondt, 'Sept Femmes', p.61.

³⁶*ibid.*, pp.67f.

³⁷Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France*, p.50.

³⁸*ibid.*, p.51.

³⁹*Recueils des Actes de Philippe Ier*, #141, #157, #158, #168.

⁴⁰Facinger, 'Study of Medieval Queenship', p.6, note 5.

⁴¹Ivo of Chartres, *Correspondence*, J. Leclercq ed. & trans. (Paris, 1949), Letter #28, dated 1094.

⁴²Lewis, *Royal Succession in Capetian France*, p.51.

Queen Ælfgifu-Emma

There is much that could be written on Queen Emma: married to two kings, and mother of two more, she had a long and active career. Her date of birth is unknown, and we first encounter her at the time of her arrival in England in 1002,⁴³ her marriage with the Anglo-Saxon king, Æthelred, sealing an alliance between her new husband and her brother, Richard II, Duke of Normandy.⁴⁴ It is not known how, when, or why she assumed the Anglo-Saxon name Ælfgifu. It had been the name of several Anglo-Saxon queens, including, rather interestingly, that of her husband's first wife. She is only called Ælfgifu in contemporary Anglo-Saxon sources: continental and later sources revert to her real name.⁴⁵ No source mentions her consecration but she witnessed a charter of Æthelred in 1004 as *thoro consecrata regio*.⁴⁶ After her arrival in England, we first hear of her in relation to the Danish attack on Exeter in 1003 which happened, according to the *Chronicle*, through the failure of Emma's reeve, the Frank, Hugh.⁴⁷ Exeter had possibly been part of Emma's morning gift, and it seems she also had charge of delegating its management and defences. The chronicler is critical of the mismanagement of the city and of the unsuitability of Hugh's appointment. Emma's foreignness is not mentioned -she is simply the Lady - but Hugh's race and social class are denigrated. She regularly participated in documents in the reigns of Æthelred, Cnut, and Edward, and at least twice in Harthecnut's reign,⁴⁸ as well as issuing documents of her own.⁴⁹ She usually attested as *regina* or *seo hlaefdige*, even till as late as 1044.⁵⁰ During the tribulations of 1013 Emma and her boys returned to her brother's court in Normandy. She appears to have remained there when Æthelred returned to England in 1014, and Barlow suggests that after Edmund's division from his father, Emma seems to have supported her stepson: she was already attempting to dissociate herself from

⁴³ASC-'F', *And on ðysan ilcan gear on lencten, com ricardes dohter Ymma hider to lande.*

⁴⁴*Encomium Emmae Reginae*, E. Campbell ed. & trans. (London, 1949), p.xlii.

⁴⁵*ibid.*, pp.55ff.

⁴⁶K.709/S.909.

⁴⁷ASC, 'E', 'F' & 'C', *Her waes Exacester tobrocen þuruh þone Frenciscan ceorl Hugan. ðe seo hlaefdige hire haefde geset to gerefan.*

⁴⁸K.763/S.994; S.997.

⁴⁹K.965/S.1229; K.697/S.1638.

⁵⁰R.98/S.1391.

the unfortunate events of her husband's reign.⁵¹ In the *Encomium Emmae* Æthelred would not be mentioned as Emma's husband, and indeed was never named, while even Edmund became simply a hero of the siege of London.⁵²

She was in Normandy at the time of Edmund's death and Cnut's seizure of the southern hegemony. After Cnut had ensured that no aethelings remained in England, he sent to Normandy to arrange for his marriage with the dowager-queen.⁵³ Cnut's reasons for arranging this marriage are quite complex. It would not have been simply that Emma brought continuity with the previous regime: she was a foreign princess who by now knew well the vagaries of the Anglo-Saxon court, and although the throneworthiness-by-association she brought to the foreign usurper-king must necessarily have been limited, it would not have been without its value. Her compliance and, more importantly, that of her powerful brother, would have limited the possibility of any attempt to restore Æthelred's sons to the Anglo-Saxon crown. Emma would certainly not have been averse to a restoration to her accustomed life and power. Once again, no consecration is recorded; indeed we have no record for the consecration of her second husband either, but Emma attests a charter of Cnut in 1019 as *thoro consecrata regio*.⁵⁴

William of Malmesbury's account of Emma's preference for her second husband over Æthelred is probably based on her failure to ensure any mention of Æthelred in the *Encomium Emmae*, and upon her demand that her son by Cnut should succeed him on the Anglo-Saxon throne.⁵⁵ The *Vita Edwardi* claims that she had made this same demand of Æthelred upon her first marriage.⁵⁶ However, there was nothing she could have done to ensure that Edward would succeed his step-father. She was a woman of shrewd political perception and would not have allowed sentiment to cloud political reality, and she recognised that she was in no position to assert the undeniable blood-right of her two elder sons. After Cnut's death, Harald Harefoot, his son by Ælfgifu of Northampton, was chosen by the northern magnates to succeed his father, while those

⁵¹F. Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (London, 1970), p.35.

⁵²*Encomium Emmae*, p.15.

⁵³ASC sa 1017, 'C' ... *Cnut cyning aflymde ut Eadwig aepeling. ond eft hine het ofslean. ond þa toforan KĪ Agusti het se cynig fetian him þaes cyniges lafe Æþelraedes. him to wife. Ricardes dohtor.*

⁵⁴K.730/S.995.

⁵⁵William of Malmesbury, *De Gestis Regum Anglorum*, II, p.237.

⁵⁶*The Life of King Edward who lies at Westminster* (2nd Ed.), F. Barlow (ed. & trans.) (Oxford, 1992), i, 1, p.12.

who followed Godwin's party in preferring to wait for Harthecnut's return, chose to place the regency of Wessex in Emma's hands and to centre her regime in Winchester. Harthecnut's failure to return to England and take up his kingship drove Godwin into Harald's camp, and in 1035 the latter became king. He sent to Emma in Winchester demanding the royal treasure, and then in 1037 expelled her from England. By the time of Harald's death in 1040, Harthecnut was ready to claim his birthright, and the magnates invited him and his mother to return. She appears to have been very influential during her son's reign, but her fortunes were to undergo another, though minor, setback after the accession of Edward, her eldest son by Æthelred, whom she had effectively disinherited on her marriage to Cnut. After Edward's consecration in 1043, he, and Godwin, confiscated his mother's estates and accumulated wealth, although he allowed her to continue to live in Winchester and provided her with suitable maintenance.⁵⁷ She continued to witness documents, and her presence at court belies the suggestion that Edward had placed her in disgrace.⁵⁸ It seems more likely that her wealth was needed to supplement the royal fisc (as seems to have been the case when Eadwig confiscated Eadgyfu's lands in 955) at the outset of the new king's reign. If she had been disgraced it would be far more likely that she would have been sent to one of the royal nunneries. She died in 1052 and was buried with Cnut in Old Minster, Winchester.⁵⁹

Emma's ambition and political acuteness persuaded her to accept the various sources of power as they came into being. She appears to have supported her stepson, Edmund, in his bid for power during Æthelred's exile. She accepted the fact of Cnut's rule, and tailored her ambitions to ensure the succession, not of her older sons by her first king-husband, but of her son by Cnut. Even her determination to force the earls to accept Harthecnut as Cnut's successor was viable until she lost the support of the Godwins and their party. However, she did not fade into obscurity during her second exile and was rewarded for her tenacity by being restored to her office as queen on Harthecnut's accession. Even her temporary eclipse after Edward's accession did not last long, although her place was finally lost to her when Edward married Edith. She accepted the fact that she needed the support of friends and successfully functioned and manipulated events within her limitations: she exploited fully the inherent potentialities of queenship.

⁵⁷Campbell, in Introduction to *Encomium Emmae*, p.xlix.

⁵⁸*ibid.*

⁵⁹ASC sa 1015, 'C', *ond on þys ylcan geare forðferde seo ealde hlaefdige. Eadwerdes singes moder. Harðacnutes. Imme hatte. II Id Mart. ond hyre lic lið on ealdan mynstre wið Cnut cing.*

Ealdgyth

From the periods when Emma was in exile two other royal consorts may take our attention. The first of these, Ealdgyth, was the widow of Sigeferth, one of the northern thegns executed by Æthelred on his return to power in 1015. Edmund rescued her from her incarceration at Malmesbury Abbey and married her against his father's will.⁶⁰ Edmund's marriage with Ealdgyth sealed an alignment with the northern magnates (as would Cnut's association with Ælfgifu of Northampton, and Harold's marriage with Ealdgyth of Mercia). Ealdgyth, Edmund's wife, bore him two sons, Edward and Edmund.⁶¹ There is no information concerning Ealdgyth after the birth of her sons, and, as usual, only Edmund's consecration is noted.⁶² Cnut feared her sons' throneworthiness, and Edward the Confessor regarded one of her grandsons as capable of being his successor, but her royal status is never made clear.

Ælfgifu of Northampton

Cnut's first wife, also named Ælfgifu, was daughter of one of the northern magnates, possibly Ælfhelm, Earl of Northumbria. It is not clear if the association was a full marriage: we know of no contemporary comment concerning the nature of Cnut's union with Emma. The 'C' and 'E' chroniclers claim that Harald was not the son of Cnut and the 'other' Ælfgifu, but they make no statement concerning the nature of their union.⁶³ She accompanied her son Svein to Norway c.1030 to act as regent, although her rule was to prove unpopular. After Svein's deposition in 1033 and his death in 1036, she returned to England.⁶⁴ According to a letter sent to Azeko, Bishop of Worms, in 1036, she was scheming in England to have her second son, Harald Harefoot, made king.⁶⁵ The will of Bishop Ælfric, whose death notice appears in the *Chronicle* sa 1038, makes bequests to King Harald and to the *hlefdigen*.⁶⁶ Harald is not known to have

⁶⁰ASC sa 1015 'F', *ferde Eadmund æðeling to. ond genam þæt wif ðas cinges unþances. ond hæfde him to wife.*

⁶¹ *Liber Monasterii de Hyda*, p.264, *Habuit rex quoque Edmundus ex uxore Aldgiva, foemina genere praeclara, duos filios, Edwardum et Edmundum.*

⁶²*ibid.*, p.260.

⁶³ASC sa 1036 'E' & 1035 'C', *þære oðre Ælfgyfe.*

⁶⁴Stevenson, W.H., 'An Alleged Son of Harold Harefoot', *EHR* 28 (1913), p.115.

⁶⁵*ibid.*, pp.115f.

⁶⁶*Anglo-Saxon Wills*, #26/S.1489.

married and Stevenson suggests that the Lady is the king's mother.⁶⁷ Given her period of authority in Norway it would not be unlikely for her to have assumed the title of *hlaefdige*. It was certainly customary for the king's mother by this time to retain the title of *hlaefdige* if there was no young queen: if a young queen was present at court, usually the dowager was called the King's Mother [*regis mater*] or the Old Lady [*by ealde hlaefdige*] in the sources. But then, by this time the king's mother had usually been the queen of the king's father.

Queen Edith

Edith was the daughter of Earl Godwin and Countess Gytha, and was born between 1020 and 1025. She was educated at Wilton, and married Edward the Confessor in 1045, two years after his accession.⁶⁸ No consecration is recorded for Edith; however, the 'E' *Chronicle* sa 1048 mentions at the time of her banishment from court that *seo waes gehalgod him to cwene*. Cutler comments of this marriage that it associated Edward with one of the great landed Anglo-Saxon families, and strengthened his position which was weakened by his Norman upbringing. Alternatively, Barlow suggests that the king was expected to choose a wife from among the high Anglo-Saxon nobility, as "an insular check on Edward was required".⁶⁹ These are two sides of the one coin, but no doubt all parties saw the marriage in the light which suited. The sources make clear that she was part of the Godwinist party at court and that she was one of the foremost of the king's counsellors. She was kept busy attesting charters and writs, and issuing some in her own name,⁷⁰ usually signing as *regina*, *seo hlaefdige* or *regis conlaterana*. There were no children of the marriage which may have caused some friction,⁷¹ and would later contribute to the king's saintly reputation. In 1050, the power of the Godwins failed and the earl and his sons were forced to flee England. The queen was deprived of goods and lands and sent to the nunnery at Wilton;⁷² she no doubt too strongly represented family power and ambitions. By 1052 the Norman element at court had lost its control over the king allowing the return of the Godwins.⁷³

⁶⁷Stevenson, 'An Alleged Son of Harold Harefoot', p.114.

⁶⁸ASC sa 1044 'E' and 'F', *Her nam Ædward cyng Godwines dohtor eorles him to cwene*.

⁶⁹Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, p.80.

⁷⁰H.70/S.1240; H.72/S.1241.

⁷¹Barlow, *Edward the Confessor*, p.93.

⁷²*Life of King Edward*, p.36. See also below, note 112.

⁷³Cutler, 'Edith, Queen of England, 1045-1066', p.230.

The queen was restored to court, lands and possessions,⁷⁴ and the subsequent careers of her brothers bespeak the influence she was able to regain on her return.⁷⁵ Her contribution to court and national politics was not always to her credit, as in the murder of Gospatric at court⁷⁶ which caused problems with Northumbria in 1064-5, and ultimately contributed to the debacle of 1066.⁷⁷ As Edward was too ill to attend the dedication of his newly-rebuilt Westminster Abbey, he ordered Edith to attend as his representative.⁷⁸ On his deathbed, Edward commended queen and kingdom to Harold's care, despite the fact that he had made at least one prior arrangement for the succession. Edith retired to Winchester, as Emma had done before her. Indeed Winchester may have been in her care from the time of Emma's death, for the burgesses of Winchester appear to have been content with her management by the time of the Conquest, when William was seeking assurances for the submission of the city. She lived at Winchester until her death in 1075, and William had her buried beside Edward in Westminster Abbey.⁷⁹

Queen Ealdgyth

Ealdgyth, daughter of Ælfgar of Mercia, and widow of Gryffydd ap Llywelyn, married Harold Godwinson between 1063 and 1066. One source, Florence of Worcester, calls her *regina*,⁸⁰ but we know nothing of her brief reign.

Queen Mathilda

Mathilda, daughter of Baldwin V and Adela, daughter of Robert II,⁸¹ married William, Duke of Normandy, between 1050 and 1059. The marriage had been

⁷⁴ASC sa 1052 'C', 'D', 'E'.

⁷⁵Cutler, 'Edith, Queen of England', p.230.

⁷⁶Florence of Worcester, *Chronicon ex Chronicis* (Frankfurt, 1601), sa 1065.

⁷⁷Cutler, 'Edith, Queen of England', pp.230f.

⁷⁸*The Life of King Edward*, ii, 9, p.112.

⁷⁹ASC sa 1075 'E', *ond Eadgið seo hlaefdig forðferde in Winceastre. VII nihton aer Xpes maessan. ond se cyng hi let bryngan to Westmynstre. mid mycclan wurðscipe. ond laede hi wið Eadward kyng. hire hlaforde.*

⁸⁰*Chronicon ex Chronicis* sa 1066, on hearing of Harold's death, Edwin and Morcar went to London and *sororem suam Algūham reginam sumptam ad civitatem Legionum misere.*

⁸¹S. Körner, *The Battle of Hastings, England and Europe, 1035-1066* (London, 1964), p.165.

prohibited by Pope Leo IX in 1049 on the grounds of consanguinity,⁸² but nevertheless took place sometime during the ensuing decade. In 1059, Pope Nicholas II recognised the marriage.⁸³ When William set out on his English campaign he left Mathilda and their fourteen-year-old son, Robert, responsible for the duchy.⁸⁴ William of Poitiers reports that during William's absence the government of the duchy was well discharged by the Lady Mathilda who was called queen even though she was not yet crowned.⁸⁵ William was consecrated at Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day, 1066, and it was not until Whitsuntide, 1068, when William was holding court at Westminster that Mathilda was consecrated.⁸⁶ Mathilda, as king's wife, was assigned English lands,⁸⁷ but William did not intend that she should live in England. She gave birth to Henry, their third son, the year following her consecration, but was soon back in Normandy acting as regent for the duke-king's continental patrimony.⁸⁸ William continued to move between England and Normandy but we only hear of Mathilda residing in the duchy for the remainder of her life. Mathilda died in Normandy in 1083,⁸⁹ and was buried at her own nunnery, Holy Trinity at Caen.⁹⁰

DOWAGERS AND EX-QUEENS

Adelheid, Anna, and Bertrada were the only Frankish queens to survive their husbands for more than a few months, and only Anna remained actively at court. Of

⁸²*ibid.*, p.163.

⁸³*ibid.*, p.211.

⁸⁴D.C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: the Norman Impact Upon England* (London, 1964), p.185.

⁸⁵*Gesta Guillelmi ducis Normannorum*, II, 43, p.260, *Optime quidem egerat in quibermaculo domina nostra Matildis, jam nomine divulgato regina etsi nondum coronata.*

⁸⁶ASC sa 1067 'D', *com Mathild seo hlaefdie hider to lande. ond Ealdred arceb. hig gehalgode to cwene on Westmynstre. on Hwitan Sunnan daeg.*

⁸⁷Robertson, *Charters*, App.I, #3, Northamptonshire Geld Roll, (c. 1075) mentions an estate at *Nauereslund* of which 8 hides belong to *si laefdi þes kynges wif.*

⁸⁸Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, M. Chibnall ed. & trans. (Oxford, 1969), IV, pp.209, 211, 281.

⁸⁹ASC sa 1083 'E', *ond þæs ilcan geares forþferde Mahtild Willelmes cynges cwen. on þone daeg aefter eabra halgena maesse daeg.*

⁹⁰Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, pp.243f.

the repudiated queens, only Bertha of Chartres remained at court, but this was exceptional: it was not really to be expected that supplanted queens should remain not only politically active but ^{also} achieve it at court. Emma had the singular fortune of being twice a dowager-queen, and only spent as much time away from court as was forced upon her. Edith's widowhood was swiftly followed by a change in dynasty, but her sensible dealing with William, and with the burgesses of Winchester, secured her a respectable position in a major, if no longer the major, city of the kingdom.

Anna was the only former queen of Francia whom we know to have remarried: this apparently was paid scant attention by contemporaries, and in no way affected her attendance at court or her access to her son. Emma's remarriage was likewise regarded with equanimity. The apparent expectation that the dowager-queen would quietly retire as seems to have been the case in the tenth century, appears to have given way to a quite ready communal acceptance of her remarriage. There are two possible explanations for this: either the nature of queenship was no longer as exclusive as it had been, or eleventh-century queens became so accustomed to taking the initiative and, to a certain extent ordering their own lives, that they were not intimidated by customary expectations. It also should be remembered that Anna and Emma were both foreign and perhaps less concerned for local respectability or popularity, and their families were not in a position to impinge upon their post-nuptial activities.

Dowager-queens were, however, still vulnerable to shifts of fortune in the political machinations which were constantly a part of court life. At Æthelred's death, Edward can have been at most thirteen-years-old. The only way the dowager could expect to return to England and recover something of her lands and position was to come to terms with Edmund. This she attempted to do by sending her elder son to join his step-brother's court. However, Edmund's reign lasted only seven months and Emma was still in Normandy when Cnut established his rule over all of England. Had Cnut not decided to marry her himself she could not have recovered any of her Anglo-Saxon lands and wealth. During the fluctuations in her fortune, there does not appear to have been any attempt on the part of the magnates to protect her. She resided at Winchester from the time of Cnut's death, with the exception of the time spent in Bruges. The *Chronicle* relates that Edward removed all her lands and possessions because she had not supported him. She is generally seen by modern commentators as undergoing a period of disgrace following this confiscation.⁹¹ However, Emma was permitted to continue living in Winchester after her so-called disgrace. If she were truly being relieved of all lands and wealth a more likely place for her to live would have been Wilton or

⁹¹F. Barlow, 'Cnut's Second Pilgrimage and Queen Emma's Disgrace', *EHR* 73 (1958), pp.651ff.

Wherwell. The fact that she remained in Winchester and was soon seen to have been restored to some of her property suggests that she was not truly disgraced in the sense of Edith's removal to Wilton. It seems a more likely explanation that royal resources were being rationalised for the benefit of the new king. The *Annals of Winchester* record that Emma had been a very wealthy woman at the time of Harthecnut's death⁹² and no doubt she was required to accept a more modest portion. She was certainly not prevented from participating in court life, and continued to attest Edward's charters.

Edith produced no sons to support or hinder her in her dowagerhood. Her fortunes were linked far more closely with those of her family and she shared in their vicissitudes. When Edward died she seems to have moved to Winchester as Emma had done before her. She was certainly living there at the time of the Norman invasion. When William demanded the submission of the city, the magnates and the queen conferred: the city lords seem to have been accustomed to the queen's influence at such conferences. She could not have hoped for any influence in William's new régime and yet the city placed their dependence upon her, and no doubt on her status, to ensure their continued well-being. Guy of Amiens believed it was her rank which influenced William to protect the city,⁹³ and he refers to her several times as *regina* or *domina*. The changing fortunes of a dowager-queen were probably no worse than those faced by a reigning queen, who might be put aside without any provision for her support (as in the case of Susanna) or locked up in a nunnery (as with Edith). The dowager was dependent upon the goodwill of the existing régime for her livelihood, and seems to have been guaranteed nothing by her status.

TWO QUEENS' VIEWS OF QUEENSHIP

For the eleventh century we have two works which were written at least under the patronage, if not under the editorial eye, of the queens to whom they pertain. It is not clear how much of the *Encomium Emmae* and the *Vita Edwardi* are dependent upon material supplied by the two queens. The author of the *Vita Edwardi* received his

⁹²*Annales de Wintonia* in *Annales Monastici* Vol.2 ed. H.R. Luard (RS, London, 1865), *Habebat enim regina illa multa maneria quae Ethelredus rex illi in dotem dederat, et Cnutus et Hardecnutus reges in ius haereditarium confirmaverant.*

⁹³Guy, Bishop of Amiens, *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*, eds. C. Morton and H. Muntz (Oxford, 1972), p.40, *Hanc regina tenet regis de dote prioris, Hetguardi, qua re dedecus esse putat, Sic sibi concessam si uadit tollere sedem.*

instructions from his Muse who speaks of Edith in the third person.⁹⁴ Both works were written by monks of St-Bertin, the *Encomium Emmae* while Emma was living in exile in Bruges, and presumably had time to oversee, or edit the work of her selected author. The anonymous author of the *Vita Ædwardi* wrote his work in England,⁹⁵ and if Edith did not have time to guide her author as vigilantly as Emma during the first part of the work, in which she is portrayed as one of the leading protagonists, she may have been sufficiently lacking in employment after Edward's death to take an active interest. It seems likely that both works reflect quite accurately the views held by their royal patronesses. Both works give us many insights into a queen's beliefs of the attributes suitable to, and required of, a queen; of the treatment appropriate to her status; and of the active place of the queen beside the king, in secular as well as religious affairs.

Some element of the peaceweaver role may still be detected in the Encomiast's preliminary discussion of the significance of Emma's place in the history of the English people [*Anglis*].⁹⁶ After Cnut had won his wars against the English, the end of the fighting was brought about by his marriage with Emma.⁹⁷ Cnut has sought a woman suitable to be the partner of his realm [*imperii sui consortem*] and a royal bride [*regalia sponsa*].⁹⁸ Emma was found to be the most worthy: in her breeding, beauty, wealth and wisdom she exceeded all other women of her time.⁹⁹ These are, of course, commonplaces in the attributes of royal brides, but here the queen herself is subscribing to them as elements of queenship.

The *Encomium Emmae* claims that Emma had insisted, prior to her marriage to Cnut, that only her son by Cnut, and not any pre-existing offspring, was to succeed to his kingdom. She was aware of Cnut's association with Ælfgifu and required assurances that only the queen's sons should be the king's heirs. When, after Cnut's death, the nobles decided to elect Ælfgifu's son, the Encomiast comments that some of the English

⁹⁴*The Life of King Edward, I* (prologue), pp.2-8.

⁹⁵Barlow, Introduction to *Life of King Edward*, pp.xliv-lix, makes a case for the author being either Goscelin or Folcard, both of whom were living in England at the time the work was written.

⁹⁶*Encomium Emmae*, p.6.

⁹⁷*ibid.*, et fortasse uix aut numquam bellandi adesset finis, nisi tandem huius nobilissime reginae iugali copula potiretur.

⁹⁸*ibid.*, p.32.

⁹⁹*ibid.*, stirpe et opibus ditissima sed tamen pulcritudinis et prudentiae delectamine omnium eius temporum mulierum praestantissima.

preferred to dishonour the kingdom than to honour it,¹⁰⁰ and deserted the noble sons of the distinguished Queen Emma.¹⁰¹ Harold was Cnut's son but was unsuitable for rule because he was not the son of the queen.¹⁰²

Emma's first royal marriage, and the fact that two of her sons were from that marriage, are suppressed in the *Encomium Emmae*. Æthelred's death in London during Cnut's siege is simply mentioned as part of the campaign: the *Encomiast* does not name Æthelred, only calling him the prince who guarded the city,¹⁰³ nor does he point out that he had been king and husband of the heroine of his work. In the passage recounting the wooing of Emma by Cnut's messengers [*proci*], she is twice called a virgin despite the fact that only a few lines earlier she was deemed suitable for the marriage because she was a renowned queen [*regina famosa*].¹⁰⁴ The contradictions are insignificant in the face of Emma's purpose, which was to stress her suitability to be Cnut's queen, the legitimate role she could play as wife, and mother, of kings, as well as the indisputable right of her son by Cnut to succeed to the throne. Only through Harthecnut's accession could she hope to reacquire and then maintain the position to which she had long become accustomed. And indeed the *Encomiast* has already told us in his Introduction that Harthecnut's reign was only a success because of his mother's influence.¹⁰⁵

Edith was also chosen because she was worthy of her royal husband: she was *sponsa tanto digna sponso*¹⁰⁶ and *regi condigno marito*.¹⁰⁷ The anonymous author of the *Vita Edwardi* describes the virtues which had recommended her selection as queen: her beauty and chastity, her skills as painter and needlewoman, her learning acquired at Wilton, her readiness and ability to act as counsellor, her quietness and modesty, her helpfulness and generosity to vassals and foreign visitors, her nurturing of the boys of

¹⁰⁰*ibid.*, p.38, *quidam Anglorum ... mallent regnum suum dedecorare quam ornare.*

¹⁰¹*ibid.*, *reliquentes nobiles filios insignis reginae Emmae.*

¹⁰²*ibid.*, pp.38-40.

¹⁰³*ibid.*, p.22, *eum principem, qui interius ciuitati presidebat.*

¹⁰⁴*ibid.*, p.32.

¹⁰⁵*ibid.*, p.6f, *Hardecnut itaque recepto regno, maternis per omnia parens consiliis, diuitiis ampliando regnum imperialiter optinuit.*

¹⁰⁶*Life of King Edward*, p.22.

¹⁰⁷*ibid.*, p.26.

royal stock who lived at court.¹⁰⁸ These are all queenly skills we have heard of before, although not all at once like this: Edith was indeed fit to be queen. She personally ensured that Edward was attired in kingly splendour [*regis cultibus parandum prebuerit*], although her own dress is not mentioned.¹⁰⁹ The Anonymous also records that Edward had agreed to the union because Godwin had assured him it would assist him to possess his hereditary rights more securely.¹¹⁰ Edith saw her family connections as Edward's guarantee to his hold on the throne. While this would prove not to be entirely the case, it would prove true for Edith's hold on her queenship. Once all parties were agreed upon the efficacy of the match, we learn that the bishops fulfilled the rite, blessing the girl as wife and crowning her as queen.¹¹¹ We are left in no doubt by this source that an inauguration rite took place but we are still denied any of the details we would so love to have.

The episodes surrounding Edith's banishment from court are modified in the *Vita Ædwardi* so as to leave untarnished the reputations of the king, the queen, and her family. The Norman Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert of Jumièges, is blamed for the queen's incarceration in Wilton during her father's exile.¹¹² The bishop was ensuring that no member of the Godwin family should be empowered by the king to provide for the well-being of the fatherland,¹¹³ not even the queen herself.¹¹⁴ She was separated from the king against the law of Christian religion,¹¹⁵ and the king restrained the divorce by sending her to Wilton where she had been brought up.¹¹⁶ Edith was taken to Wilton with appropriate royal dignity and imperial retinue.¹¹⁷ Her departure from

¹⁰⁸*ibid.*, pp.22 and 24.

¹⁰⁹*ibid.*, p.24.

¹¹⁰*ibid.*, *quo se sciebat ipsius Godwini consilio et auxilio ius suum hereditarium in Anglia securius possidere.*

¹¹¹*ibid.*, *complant pontifices sacramentum; benedicatur puella in uxorem et in reginam coronatur.*

¹¹²*ibid.*, p.36; the *Vita Ædwardi* places Edith's banishment at Wilton, while according to the *ASC* sa 1052 'D', sa 1048 'E', sa 1050 'F', she was sent to Wherwell. The Chroniclers' account is usually accepted as correct (*ibid.*, p.1) but I see no reason for doubting the account of the *Vita*, especially as Edith was involved in its production.

¹¹³*ibid.*, *ad parandam salutem rerum patriae.*

¹¹⁴*ibid.*, *etiam ipsa regina.*

¹¹⁵*ibid.*, *contra ius religionis Christianae.*

¹¹⁶*ibid.*, *moderatus est tamen causam diuortii, hanc pretendens honestatem ut Wiltunensi monasterio, quo educata erat.* This is the only indication that divorce was considered.

¹¹⁷*ibid.*, *cum regio honore et imperiali comitatu.*

court caused greater *dolor* than that of the duke himself, for she was in all counsels *moderatrix*, and she always placed in higher esteem, even above office and riches, what was proper to the king.¹¹⁸ When the queen's family were restored to royal favour, a thegn was sent with royal splendour, as was appropriate, to Wilton,¹¹⁹ and the queen was brought back to the marriage bed of the king.¹²⁰ To return the queen to the royal marriage bed of a chaste saint-king seems a little inappropriate but does stress that this is the proper place for the queen. However, having been restored to her husband and court, she preferred to sit at the king's feet rather than on the royal seat at the king's side which was provided according to custom and law.¹²¹

She supported the king in his charitable and religious works, not only exhorting him to such works but excelling him in her own bounty though ensuring that all the honour went to him.¹²² When it came time for the consecration of Westminster, the king was on his deathbed and the queen went in his place *ut sacre consecrationis impleatur sacramentum*.¹²³ It seems the king's presence was essential for the rite which would consummate his royal building programme, but failing his presence the queen might attend as his compeer.

The honour due to, or treatment suitable for, a queen are not themes which eleventh-century writers dwelt upon. Emma's *Encomiast* remarks concerning the queen's flight to Bruges that she was received by the Count and his wife *honorifice, uti se dignum erat*, and she was given a costly royal residence appropriate for a queen.¹²⁴ Emma and Edith both believed that a queen was entitled to retain her *honor*, and to be treated in a becoming manner, but neither makes reference to her consecrated status. Perhaps it was not enough to support them through their troubles: political discretion and family connections were of more value for preserving queenly status. The anonymous biographer of Edward the Confessor relates that the dying king commended

¹¹⁸*ibid.*, p.38, *et quod regem deceret potissimum preferens [*]tibus et omnibus diuitiis*. Barlow notes that the corner of the manuscript is torn here [*] and suggests *dignitatibus*.

¹¹⁹*ibid.*, p.44, *mittitur eques regio, ut par erat, apparatu ad monasterium Wiltunense*.

¹²⁰*ibid.*, *reducitur regina ... ad thalamum regis*.

¹²¹*ibid.*, p.64, *ex more et iure regia sedes*.

¹²²*ibid.*, p.64, *in quibuscumque bonis ipse preire parabat, regis coniunx eum non retrahebat, sed potius ad prouectum anteriorem hortabatur, plerumque etiam ipsa preire uidebatur. Nam cum ipse interdum daret, illa largiebatur, et honestate hanc intendebat largitionem, ut ad regis quoque plurimum spectaret honorem*.

¹²³*ibid.*, p.112.

¹²⁴*Encomium Emmae*, p.48, *domus regali sumptui apta eidem reginae*.

the kingdom to Harold's care, admonishing him to maintain Edith in a manner befitting a queen.¹²⁵ However, Edith's book does not emphasise the elements and rights of queenship in the same way, or for the same purpose, as does Emma's. Emma had sons and could hope to retain her position and influence through them, and so emphasised her status as wife and mother of kings. Edith could only hope that whoever succeeded her husband would make suitable provision for her maintenance. In writing, or supervising the writing of, this work in the period just prior to, and shortly after, the Conquest, she was emphasising her political significance with a work which emphasised the achievements and prestige of her husband, her family and herself.

KINGSHIP AND THRONEWORTHINESS

By the eleventh century it was becoming increasingly important for a king to marry the right sort of woman: queenship was becoming complementary to kingship. Hugh Capet was determined to give his dynasty the strongest possible hold on the throne. He had his son, Robert, crowned and associated with him on the throne. He contemplated a Byzantine princess for a queen for his son: this was the highest status bride he could seek and would have elevated the prestige of the new royal house.¹²⁶ Eventually, the impressive, though ill-starred, match was arranged with Susanna, an Italian princess and Flemish dowager-countess. Henry I seems to have been careful to marry only well-born women. His first betrothed was Mathilda, young daughter of Conrad II of Germany, but she died before the nuptials could take place.¹²⁷ Henry next espoused Mathilda, niece of Emperor Henry III. Henry then waited several childless years before seeking a suitable bride among the Russian aristocracy: he seems to have been more concerned with finding the right bride than with acquiring an heir.

Eadmer provides us with an account of the exchange between Harold and William after the former's accession to the Anglo-Saxon throne in defiance of the oath he was believed to have taken to support William's claim. Eadmer believed that part of William's dissatisfaction concerned Harold's failure to marry the duke's daughter (also

¹²⁵*Life of King Edward*, p.122, *Hanc, inquit, cum omni regno tutandam tibi commendo, ut pro domina et sorore ut est fidei serues et honores obsequio, ut, quoad uixerit, a me adepto non priuatur honore debito.*

¹²⁶Gerbert of Aurillac, *Epistolae*, PL 139, cols. 229-30, letter #111, *Ergo ut haec bona fiant perpetua, quoniam est nobis unicus filius et ipse rex nec et parem in matrimonio aptare possumus, propter affinitatem vicinorum regum, filiam sancti imperii praecipuo affectu quaerimus.*

¹²⁷Dhondt, 'Sept Femmes', p.53.

supposed to have been part of the agreement). The monk quotes Harold as saying that he did not have the right to place a foreign woman over the kingdom of the English.¹²⁸ Eadmer's story that Harold refused to make a foreign woman his queen seems a strange claim to make, given his historical context: Emma, a Norman princess, had twice been queen of the Anglo-Saxons, and Mathilda, the queen of the English at the time of Eadmer's writing, was also a Norman. Eadmer's nascent nationalism would seem to be out of place in his historical context, but may reflect a vestigial antipathy among the Anglo-Saxons to foreign queens. There had been very few foreign princesses come to Anglo-Saxon shores as brides for kings prior to Emma's arrival. The embarrassments created in Robert's court by Constance's foreign habits and courtiers may have been an example of the reason why some writers spoke against the idea of foreign queens. A woman born and bred to local customs and raised among the people over whom she would reign had less potential for causing tensions within the kingdom and the *aula regis*.

In a more practical vein, Cnut's marriage with Emma not only secured diplomatic relations with her brother, Richard II of Normandy, but he also recognised the expedience of marrying the queen of the previous Anglo-Saxon king who, despite her foreignness, loaned him a certain throneworthiness. He no doubt also recognised her own political acumen and valued her experience in dealing with the Anglo-Saxon court and institutions. Perhaps her foreignness to him was an advantage, giving the experience of an outsider having learnt the ropes of the local customs and administration. Also in practical terms, the marriage of candidates for the Anglo-Saxon throne with women from the northern counties seems to have been a means of assuring access to the throne. Edmund's marriage with Ealdgyth, widow of Sigferth, against his father's wishes, brought the prince her husband's lands, and the allegiance of the Five Boroughs.¹²⁹ Cnut had formed an association with Ælfgifu of Northampton, a daughter of the same northern family from which Ealdgyth had come, and Harold married another Ealdgyth, daughter of Ælfgar of Mercia. Edgar had aligned himself with the northern magnates against Eadwig, and numerous kings' sisters and daughters had been wedded to northern lords to consolidate an existing king's hold on his title.

There appears to have been a greater emphasis in the eleventh century upon the king and queen functioning jointly. The diplomatic meetings held in the early years of

¹²⁸Eadmer, *Historia Novorum in Anglia*, ed. M. Rule (London, 1884), p.8, *Si de filia sua quam debui in uxorem, ut asserit ducere agit, super regnum Angliae mulierem extraneam inconsultis principibus me nec debere nec sine grandi injuria posse adducere noverit.*

¹²⁹A. Williams, 'Some Notes and Considerations on problems Connected with the English Royal Succession, 860-1066', *Proceedings of the Battle Conference on Anglo-Norman Studies*, 1 (1978), p.159.

the reign of Hugh Capet and described in the letters of Gerbert¹³⁰ indicate the important role of the queens either as peacemakers or as representatives, with powers to negotiate equal to those of their husbands. These letters also indicate Hugh's confidence in Adelheid and the other queens to achieve a diplomatic compromise. Lemarignier comments that with the 'demise of Frankish institutions' in the late tenth and eleventh centuries, the queen, and her sons, became more effective members of 'a kind of familial government'.¹³¹ Queens made relatively safe co-rulers and regents: incapable of taking the throne themselves, they could be depended upon to function effectively on behalf of husbands and sons. An exception to this was Constance who did not like the son whom Robert had nominated as his successor, so it was fortunate for Henry that he was old enough to manage without his mother's assistance after his accession.

In his *Ecclesiastical History*, Orderic Vitalis recounts a conversation between William and Mathilda concerning the misdemeanours of their eldest son, Robert. Mathilda had provided him with funds against William's specific command.¹³² The recounting of this incident probably represents Orderic's view of the functions and duties of queenship. Mathilda's role as regent in the duchy is seen by Orderic as continuous with her role as queen. She is appointed to authority in the kingdom and over the royal treasure. She has the potential to supply money and arms to the king's enemies; not that Orderic is suggesting that she has done this, but that she has access to the means and the contacts. The queen is the king's wife who has been assigned these offices.

The reign of Cnut and Emma is noteworthy for their 'extravagant' joint religious patronage.¹³³ Gerchow points out that Cnut's patronage of religious houses was part of his programme for legitimising his rule,¹³⁴ and suggests that Emma was the inspiration for his religious policies.¹³⁵ He points out the unusual depiction of a queen-donor in the frontispiece of the New Minster *Liber Vitae*, which certainly

¹³⁰PL, 139, col. 231, #120; also, PL 137, col.510, #15.

¹³¹J.-F. Lemarignier, 'Political and Monastic Structures in France at the End of the Tenth and the Beginning of the Eleventh Centuries', in F.L. Cheyette ed. *Lordship and Community in Medieval Europe* (New York, 1968), p.105.

¹³²Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, Bk V, p.102.

¹³³J. Gerchow, 'Prayers for King Cnut: the Liturgical Commemoration of a Conqueror', in C. Hicks ed., *England in the Eleventh Century* (Stamford, 1992), p.236.

¹³⁴*ibid.*

¹³⁵*ibid.*, p.224.

emphasises the joint nature of the donation.¹³⁶ In his *Vita Wulfstani*, William of Malmesbury recounts that Wulfstan's teacher Earwin gave two deluxe manuscripts to Cnut and Emma with worldly advantage in mind.¹³⁷ Earwin was aware of the reputation of the king and queen for acquiring luxury manuscripts and disposing of them as largesse. These two particular manuscripts were in turn given by Cnut, though Emma's name is not mentioned, to the imperial court in Cologne, and would eventually find their way back to England with Bishop Ealdred, after his trip to Cologne in 1055.¹³⁸ Emma and Cnut jointly gave a reliquary of St Vincent of Spain to Abingdon Abbey.¹³⁹ Although not described as joint religious patrons, Edith and Edward are portrayed in the *Vita Ædwardi* as a constant inspiration to one another to further their endeavours as benefactors. When Edward chose to build the new church for Westminster, the queen was also induced to undertake a church-building programme at Wilton, *ut uero solus rex non operaretur*.¹⁴⁰

Kings of the eleventh century are unlikely to have neglected to have their queens consecrated, although we know of few examples. When Henry married Anna, he ensured that she was distinguished with consecration. The biographer of St Lietbert tells us that this was requested at the time of Lietbert's own consecration as Bishop of Cambrai, and the saint performed the queen-making rite while everyone was gathered at Reims.¹⁴¹ We have no evidence for Cnut's consecration. However, he was an astute king in his respect for, and understanding of the value of, outward forms,¹⁴² and is unlikely to have neglected the outward form of consecration as means of consolidating his hold on the Anglo-Saxon throne. We also do not know if Emma was consecrated

¹³⁶*ibid.* Also see Chapter 8, pp.222-25.

¹³⁷William of Malmesbury, *Vita Wulfstani* I, 1, *uerum doctor ad seculi spectans comodum; spe maioris premii sacramentarium regi tunc temporis Cnutoni, psalterium Emme regine contribuit.*

¹³⁸Heslop, 'The Production of Deluxe Manuscripts and the Patronage of King Cnut and Queen Emma', p.160.

¹³⁹*Chronicon Monasterii de Abingdon*, ed. J. Stevenson (London, 1858), p.433, engraved on the reliquary were the words:

Rex Cnut hanc thecam, necnon Ælfgiva regina
Cudere iusserunt; bis centum necne decemque
Coctos igne chrison mancosos atque viginti,
Necne duas libras argenti pondere magno.

¹⁴⁰*Life of King Edward*, p.70.

¹⁴¹Radulphus Coeuvus, *Ex Vita Sancti Lietberti*, p.481, *Henry petiit ut sponsa, quae sibi parabatur, in eodem conventu benediceretur, regalique consecratione pariter insigniretur. Huic regiae consecrationi Dominus noster Lietbertus Cameracensis Episcopus interfuit et praefuit.*

¹⁴²See for example Heslop, 'Production of Deluxe Manuscripts', *passim*.

to her second term as queen. This encourages some interesting speculations. Cnut, as we have observed, would not have neglected his own consecration, especially so if Emma had been previously consecrated. Also, Emma, if she had been previously anointed, could not, strictly speaking, have been anointed again to the same status. However, if her queenship emanated from her marriage to the present king then she may have been seen to accede to her queenship *de nouveau*. It would be most interesting to know if such musings engaged the churchmen of Emma's day.

William of Poitiers tells us that Duke William was reluctant to accept the English crown, and offers a couple of explanations for this. William was troubled by the disorder and rebellion in the kingdom, and he would prefer peace in the realm to his own coronation. And if it was God's will that he be crowned, he wanted his wife to be crowned with him.¹⁴³ Queens were not usually crowned alongside their husbands, so this was a stipulation which would not have enhanced William's right to, or hold on, the English throne. William would not have hazarded his position by waiting for Mathilda's arrival to receive royal unction. He had not battled his way into the kingdom to risk his hold on it by not observing the king-making rites at his earliest possible convenience. However, it pleased William of Poitiers to emphasise the place of the queen beside the king, and also the importance of the consecration of the queen. Indeed, William did not neglect to have Mathilda consecrated as queen even though he did not intend for her to function as queen in England.

The ideas of contemporary churchmen concerning the contribution of queenship to the prestige and validity of the kingship may be reflected in the correspondence of Bishop Ivo of Chartres to Philip I. In a letter written in 1092 to the king concerning his planned marriage with Bertrada, the bishop refused to attend the nuptials as the king wished unless a church council were to decree a legitimate divorce between the king and his present wife, Bertha.¹⁴⁴ Admittedly the bishop was mainly concerned for his religious principles rather than with the nature of Bertha's queenship; however, he does remind the king that the proposed marriage would endanger not only his soul but his crown as well.¹⁴⁵ Two years later the bishop was again writing a letter of refusal to the king. Philip had called for a military escort for a meeting with the English king, but the bishops were refusing to attend him because the pope had placed Philip under interdict,

¹⁴³William of Poitiers, *Histoire de Guillaume le Conquérant*, ed. and trans. R. Foreville (Paris, 1952), p.216, *Praeterae, si Deus ipsi hunc concedit honorem, secum velle conjugem suam coronari.*

¹⁴⁴Ivo of Chartres, *Correspondence*, ed. and trans. J. Leclercq (Paris, 1949), Letter 15, dated 1092.

¹⁴⁵*ibid.*

because he was treating the woman in his bed as his wife.¹⁴⁶ The Frankish bishops had also been forbidden to crown this woman.¹⁴⁷ Once again, Ivo was not concerned for the queenship of the repudiated Bertha, but was certain that Bertrada was incapable of being queen whilst her marriage to Philip was not legitimate. Marriage, in the eyes of the churchmen, was still necessary for queenship, but consecration had become an integral element of what made a woman a queen.

Theories about throneworthiness in the eleventh century are difficult to formulate. There were, of course, succession problems in both countries, and when these occurred usually the queens were among the chief players. However, succession disputes were seldom centred upon the status of the royal mothers, or the nature of their union with the previous king. Frankish kings took care in each case to either designate or associate their chosen sons as their successors. The intricacies of the marital relationships of the West Frankish kings (which contrast with those of their tenth-century counterparts), and the unfortunate reputations of queens such as Constance and Bertrada of Montfort, were never compounded by accusations of adultery on the part of the queens. Bertrada was never legally married to Philip and yet was popularly regarded as his queen. She produced three sons for Philip, one of whom she hoped to convince Philip to recognise as his heir. However, Philip designated his eldest son by Bertha as his successor, perhaps not unmindful of Bertrada's dubious status.

The succession in England in almost every case was contentious and fraught with the difficulties caused either by the failure of the previous king to produce an heir, by conquest, or by the absence of the selected candidate. Edmund's right to be his father's heir was not questioned,¹⁴⁸ but his accession was hampered by the presence of Svein and Cnut. The latter's accession was by conquest, and introduced a new dynasty to dispossess the line of Cerdic. On the death of Cnut, the northern earls wanted Harald, and the southerners, Harthecnut, as his successor. This seems to have been based upon political preferences and not to have taken into consideration the status of the princes' births. Harald's presence gave him an edge over the absent Harthecnut at the critical time. The Anglo-Saxons still preferred the son of a king: it had not yet occurred to them that one of their number might prove more suitable than the unpopular, and possibly illegitimate, Harald.¹⁴⁹ And even on Harald's death they sent emissaries to

¹⁴⁶*ibid.*, Letter 28, dated 1094, *thorum mulieris quam pro uxore habetis*.

¹⁴⁷*ibid.*, *interdicūt etiam omnibus episcopis ne capiti illius mulieris coronam imponant*.

¹⁴⁸ASC sa 1016, 'F', *ealle Angelcynnes witan gecuron Eadmund to cinge*.

¹⁴⁹*Life of King Edward*, p.32, Harald was Cnut's son *obliquo ut aiunt sanguine ei natus*.

Harthecnut and Emma requesting their return. Only Edward followed his half-brother peacefully and by designation. The strife surrounding the succession to Edward's throne emanated not simply from his failure to produce an heir but also from his disposal of the kingdom as private property by designating at least two successors, neither of whom were throneworthy by traditional standards.¹⁵⁰

In the instances of accession by conquest, that is by Cnut and William, the kings made distinct policies of utilising queenship to bolster their positions and improve their dynastic hold on their thrones. However, both these were cases of special pleading, attempts to justify or reinforce the rights of both men to thrones they had already usurped. Emma's queenship was believed by some contemporaries to convey some element of throneworthiness-by-association. The marriage of Cnut with the dowager-queen of his predecessor supposedly assisted his acquisition of power on the English throne. William's entitlement to claim the English crown was based, at least partly, by William of Poitiers on the duke's consanguinity with Emma and therefore with Edward.¹⁵¹ He was not himself descended from royalty, and neither was Emma: his throneworthiness-by-association was simply not adequate. It was not impossible for cadet lines through princesses to possess adequate throneworthiness, but William's relationship with the Anglo-Saxon royal house did not endow him with the right to take the English throne: only conquest could do that.

It would appear that Emma had endeavoured to narrow the field of possible successors in both her royal marriages. In both cases she had required that the sons of the marriage would take precedence over existing sons of either partner. She had replied to Cnut's wooers [*proci*] that only if the king swore that his successor would not be a son of any other wife but herself would she agree to the king's proposal.¹⁵² The *Vita Edwardi* claims that Emma's son by Æthelred was designated his successor before his birth. In this case it was all the people who swore to recognise her son as king

¹⁵⁰ Edward had made both William of Normandy and Harold Godwinson his heirs at different times. ASC sa 1051, 'D', whilst the Godwins were in eclipse, *ða sone com Willelm eorl fram geondam sae. mid mycclum werode Frenciscra manna. ond se cyning hine underfeng. ond swa feola his geferan swa him to onhagode.* According to the *Vita Edwardi*, William commended the kingdom to Harold's care on his deathbed, see Note 124. According to J.S. Beckerman, 'Succession in Normandy, 1087, and in England, 1066: the Role of Testamentary Custom', *Speculum*, 47 (1972), pp.258ff, under Norman testamentary custom *inter vivos* bequests, that is, those made formally before witnesses, were irrevocable, whilst among the Anglo-Saxons, a death-bed bequest, *verbum novissima*, superseded any previous commitment. Therefore, by their own national customs, William and Harold both felt justified in claiming to be Edward's heir.

¹⁵¹ *Histoire de Guillaume le Conquérant*, p.220, *Et si ratio sanguinis poscitur, pernotum est quam proxima consanguinitate regem Edwardum ... Emma, genetrix fuit Edwardi.*

¹⁵² *Encomium Emmae*, p.32, *sed abnegat illa, se unquam Cnutonis sponsam fieri, nisi illi iusiurando affirmaret, quod numquam alterius coniugis filium post se regnare faceret nisi eius.*

[*omnis coniurat patria*].¹⁵³ This seems to be special pleading after the accessions of the sons she had in mind. In neither case were the sons she wished to succeed able immediately to take the throne.

RELIGIOUS ROLES

The religious roles of the eleventh-century queens were less well defined than in earlier periods. They continued as patronesses of monastic houses, and took an increasing interest in the acquisition and endowment of relics. The customary function of the Anglo-Saxon queen, which had been specifically outlined in Edgar's reign, of guardianship of nunneries does not appear to have been pursued as singularly by succeeding queens. They continued an active interest in some, at least, of the nunneries which were significant in the tenth century, but it does not appear to have been considered an intrinsic or separately defined element of their office. According to the *Vita Ædwardi* Edith funded and oversaw the building of a new stone church for the Wilton nunnery, not because it was her place as queen to do so, but because she wished to emulate the labour of her spouse, who was building Westminster Abbey.¹⁵⁴ This account may of course mask a rivalry between the royal patrons, but it does not suggest that the queen was helping the nunnery because it was her job.

The situation of the Frankish kings in the eleventh century had changed little from that of tenth-century kings: their influence was limited to the royal demesne, and even within the demesne the king's influence was perhaps more limited than that of some of the greater duchies such as Normandy.¹⁵⁵ And a queen could be no more influential than the king. Helgaud of Fleury does admire Philip's mother for her gifts to churchmen and her monastic patronage. However, she did these things in order that she might partake of God's promised reward¹⁵⁶ not because she considered it her queenly duty.

Sainthood was no longer the province of queens, and only Edith, of the eleventh-century queens, was associated in the saintly reputation of her husband. However, the

¹⁵³*Life of King Edward*, p.12.

¹⁵⁴*ibid.*, p.10.

¹⁵⁵Lemarignier, 'Political and Monastic Structures in France', p.120.

¹⁵⁶Helgaud of Fleury, *Vie de Robert le Pieux*, eds. and trans. R.-H. Bautier & G. Labory (Paris, 1965), p.82, *sperabat enim se Deo fidelis regina partem habituram cum eo cui promiserat Deus*.

reputation for chastity of Edith's marriage interestingly only served as a means of establishing the king's sanctity. The *Vita Ædwardi* functioned as the basis for Edward's sanctification. It could have served as well for Edith: she was as chaste as her husband, and her charitable works exceeded his. Her virtues were exemplary, and yet no efforts appear to have been made to secure a saintly reputation for Edward's queen. It suited the new Norman dynasty for Edward, from whom the right to rule had been transmitted, to be cast as a saint, and it would have been of no benefit to this programme to disparage Edward's wife. Edith was allowed to retain her character of devoted daughter-wife to her saint-king husband.¹⁵⁷ This represents a significant reversal of the roles of earlier Anglo-Saxon queens and kings, where it was usually the royal wives whose saintly reputations served as symbols of the fitness to rule of the royal kin.

THE *ORDINES*

The eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon queen-making *ordines* retained all the prayer forms of the later 'Erdmann'-based *ordines* of the tenth century. The introductory rubric of the 'Anderson' group was retained only in the Canterbury Pontifical, a later eleventh-century copy of an *ordo* from the earlier part of the century.¹⁵⁸ The elements of the eleventh-century *ordines* which were retained from the tenth-century rites indicate that these elements of queen-making still suited contemporary ideals and requirements, and will not be further discussed or elaborated upon in the present chapter. Only the additions and changes introduced during the eleventh century, including those of 1066, will be examined. As in the tenth century, there appear to have been no developments in West Frankish queen-making *ordines* in this final century of the period under study in the present work. The West Frankish churchmen who conducted the rites apparently saw no need for elaboration and do not appear to have been beguiled by the 'Romano-Germanic' type of royal *ordo* as were the Anglo-Saxon bishops. It is clear that West Frankish queens were being consecrated during the period, for a letter, dated 1089, of Pope Urban II to Rainald Archbishop of Reims, confirms the authority of the archbishops of Reims to consecrate both the king and the queen, so the lack of

¹⁵⁷Cutler, 'Edith Queen of England', p.226.

¹⁵⁸Cambridge, Corpus Christ College MS 44 is the only complete extant example of this *ordo*. London, BL Cotton Vitellius A7 is from the early eleventh century but is too fragmentary to form the basis of the present discussion. See above, Chapter 2, pp. 29 and 43.

development does not indicate lack of use.¹⁵⁹

The early eleventh century saw the final development of the Second Recension of the Anglo-Saxon coronation order. In the Canterbury Pontifical, the king-making rite introduces several new formulas which appear only in this and the 'Ramsey' manuscript. The Third Recension, developed later in the century, would return to the corresponding formulas of the 'Sherborne' group. The 'Canterbury' ring-giving formula adds virtue and purity, *uidelicet sanctae integritatis et innocentiae*, to the properties endowed by the queen's ring. The 'Canterbury' and 'Ramsey' queen-making *ordines* also contain elements not found in any other extant manuscripts. The *ordo* specifies the antiphons to be sung during the rite: no other earlier or later queen-making *ordo* does this. The three antiphons which were included in the 'Canterbury' queen-making *ordo*, and a fourth found in 'Ramsey', inform the rite with what Richardson has called a spirit of basileiolatry.¹⁶⁰ In the anthem, *Tota pulchra es amica mea*, which the compiler of the 'Ramsey' manuscript has inserted after the prayer *Deus cuius est* and before the coronation prayer, he substitutes the words *regina nostra* for the usual phrase *amica mea*.¹⁶¹ In another contemporary manuscript, this antiphon is sung at Vespers on the feast of the Assumption (drawing a subtle parallel between the queenship of Mary and that of the new Anglo-Saxon queen), and also during the ceremony for the reception of the pall by an archbishop.¹⁶²

The 'Canterbury' queen-making concludes with three short benedictions¹⁶³ which make this single appearance in the history of royal *ordines*, and contribute little to our understanding of early medieval queenship. They were perhaps meant to complement three similarly placed short benedictions of the king-making *ordo* in the same manuscript. The first formula begins by addressing God, requesting *largitas* for the new queen, but somewhat confusingly, appears to address the queen herself in the second part of the sentence, praying that she might remain constant in desiring to share the kingly power as was 'his' will. The sense may be that it is God's will that the candidate become queen, as it follows immediately upon the address directly to *dominus*

¹⁵⁹*Epistolae Urbani II Papae*, in *Recueils des Historiens des Gaules et de la France*, Vol. 14 (Paris, 1877; Repr. Farnborough, 1968), p.695. According to a letter dated 25 December, 1089, the bishops of Reims had possessed the right to consecrate the kings of the Franks since Remigius converted Clovis and instituted him as most Christian king in the church at Reims, *Domino disponente, fungimini ungenti Regis et ordinandi, sive Reginae, prima potestate fungimini*.

¹⁶⁰Richardson, 'Coronation in Medieval England', p.122.

¹⁶¹J.W. Legg, *Three Coronation Orders*, p.172.

¹⁶²*ibid.*

¹⁶³See Appendix, p.252, Prayer 8.

omnipotens. The second formula prays that having constituted her queen among her people, God might grant her serenity, peace and an abundance of all good things. The third blessing desires that having passed over earthly things she might be judged worthy to join the saints and enjoy everlasting joys with the Lord. There are no new ideas, apart from the possibility that it was God's will she should be queen, which these blessings added to the existing formulas of the 'Sherborne'-type *ordines*.

The only Anglo-Saxon queen-makings in the first half of the eleventh century, that is, prior to the introduction of 'Romano-Germanic' forms to Anglo-Saxon pontificals, were those of Emma, as Cnut's queen in c.1017, and of Edith c.1045. Either one of these could have been the occasion for the additions of the 'Canterbury' rite. It may have seemed appropriate to alter, even if only slightly, the *ordo* which had been used for Emma at her first consecration. The king- and queen-making rites may also have been enhanced at the time of the inaugurations of Edward and Edith in order to underwrite the return of an Anglo-Saxon king and queen to the throne.

The Third Recension was developed in England sometime after 1054. It had as its exemplars the Second Recension, as it contains all the formulas present in the 'Sherborne'-type of queen-making with the exception of the introductory rubric, and the 'Romano-Germanic' *ordo*. Anglo-Saxon access to this latter *ordo* appears to have been through Ealdred, Bishop of Worcester and later Archbishop of York. Ealdred was in Cologne in 1054 on a diplomatic mission for King Edward.¹⁶⁴ He visited Emperor Henry III and with Hermann II, Archbishop of Cologne.¹⁶⁵ According to an anonymous chronicler, whilst Ealdred was in Cologne he followed the local liturgical observances, and brought some of these back to England.¹⁶⁶ Nelson points out that Hermann presided over the royal consecration of Henry IV at Aachen in 1054, and that Ealdred may have been present at, or at least would have heard about, this rite.¹⁶⁷ This was an opportune time for the bishop to bring back to England a copy of the 'Romano-Germanic' consecration order. He is known to have brought other manuscripts with him on his return.¹⁶⁸ The Winchester manuscript, Cambridge CCC 163, contains an eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon copy of the 'Romano-Germanic' royal *ordines* which has a close affinity with the pontifical copied, probably at Cologne, for

¹⁶⁴William of Malmesbury, *Vita Wulfstani*, I, 9.

¹⁶⁵Florence of Worcester, *Chronicon ex Chronicis*, sa 1054.

¹⁶⁶J.M. Cooper, *The Last Four Anglo-Saxon Archbishops of York* (York, 1970), p.28.

¹⁶⁷Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.392.

¹⁶⁸William of Malmesbury, *Vita Wulfstani*, pp.15-16.

Archbishop Hermann II.¹⁶⁹ Hence, the 'Romano-Germanic' *ordo* was available in England at the time when Brückmann postulates that the Third Recension was being developed.¹⁷⁰ His analysis of the early versions of this *ordo* reveals that the oldest extant copy, Cambridge UL Ee.2.3, of c.1220 if not earlier, is not the original redaction, which would mean that the Third Recension had to have been compiled during the eleventh century.¹⁷¹ Nelson points out that Ealdred's interest in liturgy, his contacts with Cologne, and the fact that he presided over the consecrations of 1066 and 1068 suggests that he was responsible for the development of the original redaction of the Third Recension, and that it was this *ordo* he used for the king- and queen-makings.¹⁷²

It is not certain, from the sources, who presided over the consecration of Harold Godwinson in January, 1066. Some Norman sources claim that it was Stigand, Archbishop of Canterbury, whom Florence tells us had been denounced by Pope Alexander II,¹⁷³ while the Bayeux Tapestry depicts Harold placing the crown on his own head. However, these interpretations may simply be to underline the Norman belief of the illegitimacy of Harold's rule. Florence of Worcester reports that the presiding prelate was Ealdred of York.¹⁷⁴ The archbishop's relations with Harold appear to have been good, while there was growing discomfiture in the Anglo-Saxon court over Stigand's position,¹⁷⁵ and so it seems more likely that Harold had asked Ealdred to perform his consecration. If, as Nelson suggests, most of the Anglo-Saxon magnates, when they gathered for the Christmas court of 1065, were anticipating that Edward was dying, Ealdred may have been ready with his new *ordo* to consecrate

¹⁶⁹M. Lapidge, 'Origin of CCCC 163', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society* 8 (1981-85), p.19.

¹⁷⁰Brückmann, 'The *Ordines* of the Third Recension of the Medieval Coronation Order', *passim*.

¹⁷¹Turner dates 'Claudius III' to c.1200 and Brückmann places it at a later date to 'Winchester' which makes an eleventh century date for the earliest redaction of the Third Recension very feasible.

¹⁷²Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, pp.389ff.

¹⁷³Stigand had taken over the archbishopric after the expulsion of Robert of Jumièges in 1058. He had also received his pallium from the anti-pope Benedict X, *Oxford Dictionary of Popes*, p.151.

¹⁷⁴*Chronicon ex Chronicis*, sa 1066, after Edward's death, *quo tumultato, subregulus Haraldus, Godwini ducis filius, quem rex ante suam decessionem regni successorem elegerat ... ab Aldredo Eboracensi Archiepiscopo in regem est honorifice consecratus*.

¹⁷⁵Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.393; Cooper, *Last Four Anglo-Saxon Archbishops of York*, p.26.

Edward's successor.¹⁷⁶ This would suggest that they were anticipating a hasty king-making, that they were expecting Harold to succeed, and that they concurred with its hasty completion, and wished for the accession to be a *fait accompli* before William could make good his claim to the throne.

All sources agree that it was Ealdred who consecrated William.¹⁷⁷ And as it was believed that William should be crowned according to English custom [*sicut mos Anglici*]¹⁷⁸ to help secure his title to and hold on to the English throne, it would seem likely that he would prefer not only a form but also a rite, which had already been used. The 'Winchester' king-making *ordo* includes an *acclamatio*, and William of Poitiers relates the acclamation, and its aftermath, of William's consecration.¹⁷⁹ All of which suggests that the parent version of the Third Recension may have been the formulary used for the consecrations of Harold, William, Mathilda, and Ealdgyth (if she was consecrated).

The earliest existing example of the Third Recension, the 'Winchester' *ordo*, will form the basis for the ensuing discussion as it represents most closely the formularies most likely used by Ealdred in 1066 and 1068. It borrows only one formula from the 'Romano-Germanic' *ordo* to augment the English queen-making rite, and this the second prayer of the parent *ordo*, appearing in 'Winchester', 'Magdalen' and 'Claudius III'. The remaining prayer formulas of the 'Romano-Germanic' rite were completely absorbed into the English queen-making *ordo* in the twelfth century, first appearing in 'Tiberius'. The new prayer in 'Winchester'¹⁸⁰ requests God's blessing on the queen, who is about to be crowned, for the well-being of his grateful Christian people [*christiane plebis gratia salutis*]. It requests that she be permitted to 'cross over' and join with the king in his lofty honour [*ad dignam sullimemque regis nostri copulam misericorditer transire concedas*]. It is clear that her marriage with the king has not yet elevated her to the lofty honour which her husband occupies: the rite of consecration is required before she is able to 'cross over', to undertake the rite of passage, to the queenship. Queenly chastity is compared for the first time with the *palma*, that is the palm of honour or glory, of virginity. It is significant that it is the palm and not the crown of the virgin which is to

¹⁷⁶Nelson, *ibid.*, p.395.

¹⁷⁷ASC sa 1066, 'E', and *Willelm þis land geeode. ond com to Westmynstre. ond Ealdred arceb. hine to cyngge gehalgode*; Florence of Worcester, *Chronicon*, sa 1066, *William ab Aldredo Eboracensium archiepiscopo in Westmonasterio consecratus est honorifice*.

¹⁷⁸Orderic Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 3, p.183.

¹⁷⁹Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.385.

¹⁸⁰Prayer 10.

be conveyed to the virtuous queen, perhaps because the queen will have her own crown, that of glory and joy.

The formula which was present as the initial prayer of the 'Romano-Germanic' *ordo* and was not incorporated into the English rite until the twelfth century, is of interest to the present discussion.¹⁸¹ The redactor of the last Anglo-Saxon queen-making *ordo* chose *not* to incorporate this prayer which makes much of the queen's fecundity. It was quite obviously available for Ealdred to include in his up-dated *ordo*, but to the very end of the Anglo-Saxon period the fertility of the royal marriage bed was not considered an appropriate or necessary element of the royal inauguration rites. And this, at the time of Ealdred's redaction, was in the face of the infertile union of Edith and Edward and the emerging problems deriving from the lack of a successor. The omission of this prayer from the Ealdred *ordines* is a telling one for what the archbishop has chosen to leave out.

The 'Winchester' queen-making includes for the first time a blessing formula for the queen's crown.¹⁸² This blessing is not written in full, only having the first four words *Deus tuorum corona fidelium* followed by *ut supra*. The formula appears in full, and also for the first time, in the 'Winchester' king-making *ordo*, although without the inclusion of feminine endings for *famula tua* as have been included in an interlinear gloss in 'Claudius III'.¹⁸³ The 'Magdalen' king-making does not include this prayer form; however, it is found in full at the end of the queen-making *ordo* with masculine endings and feminine glosses. No indication is given of its needing to be inserted in the texts of both *ordines*. The later 'Tiberius' manuscript does include the *Deus tuorum corona fidelium* in both the king- and queen-making rites, written in full and appropriately placed.

The *Laudes Regiae* which had been part of Norman and Frankish ritual and festal observances, were probably not used in England prior to William's reign.¹⁸⁴ In the Litany, which it has been suggested was sung at the consecration of Queen Mathilda in 1068, she appears third, after the pope, Alexander II, and her husband, the king.¹⁸⁵ There is no apparent relationship suggested between the queen, or the king, and the saints with whom they are associated in the litany, William with the Virgin, St Michael,

¹⁸¹Prayer 9.

¹⁸²Prayer 13.

¹⁸³Prayer 13.

¹⁸⁴D.C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror: the Norman Impact upon England* (London, 1964), p.249.

¹⁸⁵*Liber Pontificalis Ch. Bainbridge, Henderson* (ed.) (Durham, 1875), p.279.

and St Raphael, and Mathilda with Sts John, Peter, Paul, and Andrew.¹⁸⁶ William is described as *serenissimo a Deo coronato magno et pacifico regi* for whom is invoked *vita et victoria*, while the queen is described as *serenissima a Deo coronatae reginae* and for her the archbishop has invoked *salus et vita*. Whether the *salus* requested for the queen is health of body or soul, it is her personal well-being which is still a focal point of the rite. Nelson suggests that it was also Ealdred who composed the *laudes* of Mathilda's consecration.¹⁸⁷

* * *

In the eleventh century, West Frankish queens, with the exception of Constance, were not as politically active as in the tenth century. There were no real changes in ideas concerning queenship and its contribution to the nature of royal rule, and no developments in the queen-making rites. In England, the century saw the expansion of the secular roles of the queen, and there was a continued development of queen-making *ordines*, although as in Francia the ideas concerning queenship as an adjunct to kingship do not appear to have been explored or expanded. The political upheavals of the eleventh century in England, and the fact that there were effectively only two Anglo-Saxon queens, one of whom did not bear any children, meant that dynastic strength and throneworthiness were not able to develop as significant elements of queenship. In Francia, all successors to the throne were legitimate eldest sons of consecrated queens. Most heirs-apparent were associated on the throne during their fathers' reigns, and one second queen, Bertrada of Montfort, tried unsuccessfully to have one of her sons made heir in preference to Philip's son by his first queen.

The political utility and secular activities of Anglo-Saxon queens expanded, accompanied by a blurring of distinctions between secular and religious roles, during the reigns of Emma and Edith. We start to get a clearer view of the extent of the queen's control of her cities (Emma at Winchester and Exeter, and Edith at Winchester). Whether this represents an expansion, or simply a more detailed accounting, of queenly office is not very clear, but I think that it is more likely to have been the former option: up until this time queens were more usually associated in the sources with the management of their manorial estates or religious houses. It was no longer necessary for a queen to confine her activities to religious matters. As her interests diversified and secularised, less emphasis was laid upon the specifically religious nature of the queen's

¹⁸⁶*ibid.*, p.280.

¹⁸⁷Nelson, *Politics and Ritual*, p.398.

activities. There were no queen-saints for the eleventh century, and no evidence for queens entering the nunnery: Bertrada of Montfort seems to have retired to Fontevrault but there is no evidence for her taking the veil.

It was accepted, at times perhaps expected, that the queen would contribute to all levels of court life and be an active member of her husband's councils. And as active political participants they were to be expected to take the bad with the good, as were their male counterparts. Women like Emma and Edith were ambitious, but were aware of the limitations of the power available to queens. Their ambitions and their careers were tailored to their potential as women of the eleventh century. They did not seek to shock, or to step outside accepted contemporary female roles, as did Constance. To overstep the bounds brought about curtailment of powers and rights; within the bounds no-one apparently questioned their rights or abilities. Facinger has suggested, 'perhaps because it was never questioned, the need did not arise for developing a formal elaboration of the queen's regal rights; therefore the shape of the office always remained ambiguous'.¹⁸⁸ Because the office of queenship was poorly defined, or not defined at all, in periods of change or in periods of decline of the monarchy, the office of the king's wife could vary quite markedly. The queen's position was vulnerable during periods of fluctuation of the power and authority of the king or of changing structures of the court. When a king was ineffectual or his influence was reduced, a queen was only as strong as her husband or, perhaps, as her family connections. And developments in the queen-making *ordines* of the period did nothing to strengthen her position, or to clarify the nature of her office.

¹⁸⁸Facinger, 'Study of Medieval Queenship', p.32.

CHAPTER 8

IMAGO REGINÆ

The purpose of this chapter is to fit contemporary representations of early medieval queens into the image of queenship that has been reconstructed so far. Earlier chapters have established attitudes towards queenship, and its purpose and value for kings, churchmen, and religious houses. The representations of queens, though apparently of infrequent and erratic production, may be seen to fit in with these contemporary views of queenship. Art as a general means of enhancing royal prestige seems only to have been employed sporadically in the early medieval West. In the East, imperial images were sent around to the cities and provinces of the empire at the accession of each new emperor: an *adventus* ceremony was held for the arrival of the images which were treated with the same reverence as the emperor's own person.¹ However, there appears to have been no comparable political programme exploiting ruler representations in the early medieval West.² The culture of the Early Middle and the Middle Ages was strongly visual. The visual 'texts' of wall-paintings, sculpture, and coins which reached beyond palace and cloister were major means of enlightening the non-literate, and of promoting ideas, both secular and theological. But very few of the surviving representations of Anglo-Saxon or Frankish queens were of such a public nature: they were usually private images with the limited audiences of court or religious house. Medieval art was symbolic, allegorical, and had a teaching function, and it also contributed to the prestige of the owner of the work, and of the person represented (whether that person was represented realistically or symbolically).

For the present work I use the word 'representation' for the form which each visual text takes; 'image', as here used, has a broader sense, including the associated prestige of the person represented. Portraiture from life was not a part of the artistic tradition of the early medieval period. A representation of a ruler presented an image of rulership: it was not meant as a physiological or psychological representation of the

¹S. McCormack, 'Change and Continuity in Late Antiquity: the Ceremonial of Adventus', *Historia*, 21 (1972), p.747.

²The ruler representations in the bibles of Charles the Bald were not of the same public nature as those of the Byzantine emperors. Ermoldus Nigellus, in his *In Honorem Hludowici*, lines 2148-63, describes the royal-imperial theme of the sculpture which adorned the palace of Ingelheim (of which nothing remains), and which ranked the exploits of the Carolingians with the Roman emperors. There is also a ninth century statue of Charlemagne in the church of St-Jean at Müstair, which portrays him with crown, chlamys and fibula (J. Boussard, *The Civilisation of Charlemagne* (London, 1968), p.104), much in the style favoured by his grandson, Charles the Bald. These remnants must alert us to the possibility of what may be lost to us of Western public ruler representations. We have no evidence for any rituals equivalent to the *adventus* ceremony for Western ruler-representations.

individual. We cannot securely depend upon any extant representations to reveal the actual appearance of any queen. There are contemporary representations of Cynethryth of Mercia, Empress Judith, Richildis, Emma of Francia, Anna of Russia, and Emma of England, and with one or two exceptions these will be discussed in detail during the course of the chapter.³ Contemporary writers have described some queens but these descriptions tend to be literary topoi: we are never given a disinterested insight into the appearance of the royal wives. In the course of this chapter I shall be discussing a number of artefacts and pictorial representations which have survived from the period and which demonstrate the inherent properties of the queenly image. All but one of these examples are visual representations of queens, and the exception is the Chemise of St Balthild which, like the other representations, exploits the prestige of queenship, and in this case the dress and appearance of a queen, to the advantage of the patron or owner of the artefact.

THE QUEEN'S APPAREL

We do not know whether a queen would have worn any characteristic form of dress, but it seems unlikely that she dressed very differently from her noble, wealthy sisters, and no surviving representations of queens give any suggestion of distinctively queenly array. For festive or ceremonial occasions she no doubt dressed quite sumptuously: the writer of the *Clausula de unctioe Pippini* comments that Bertrada, at her consecration, was clothed by the bishop in female robes of state [*indutibus cicladibus*]⁴ but does not give any hints as to what these may have been, and they are never mentioned again by later writers. Hincmar, in the *Annales Bertiniani*,⁵ relates that Judith changed her clothes [*mutato habitu*] to run away with Baldwin of Flanders. As suggested in Chapter 5, this clothing was no doubt fit for a queen but there is no suggestion of distinctively queenly apparel. Indeed, we do not see in any Anglo-Saxon or West Frankish ruler representations any indication of formal court, or royal, dress,

³Of these representations, two will not be considered in the ensuing discussions. The portrait of Anna of Russia is part of a fresco cycle in the north, west, and south arcades of the church of Santa Sophia in Kiev. They are of Prince Jaroslav, Princess Irina, and their sons and daughters, and are the only known monumental portraits of the eleventh century in Russia. The frescoes are in bad repair, but that of the young princesses is the clearest. The second princess is believed to have been Anna: K. Kornilovich, *Arts of Russia* (Geneva, 1967), pp.18 and 23. There was also a portrait of Emma, Lothar, and Louis in her Book of Hours. The manuscript has been lost but a drawing of it exists in Mabillon, *Annales Bénédictines*, Vol.4, pp.32-3.

⁴*Clausula de Unctioe Pippini*, p.3. See Chapter 4, p.79 for a discussion of this passage.

⁵AB sa 862.

such as the Byzantine *lorum*. In the few extant Anglo-Saxon ruler portraits the king usually wears a crown, and of the Anglo-Saxon queens only Emma, in the eleventh century, is depicted wearing a crown. The reign, and the ruler representations, of Charles the Bald are notable for his experiments in Byzantine-style royal dress, but this did not catch on among his successors. We read of an occasion when he and Richildis appeared wearing Byzantine regalia,⁶ but there is no representation of Richildis so attired. The *Vita Ædwardi* relates that Queen Edith personally embroidered the king's clothes and accoutrements, and saw to it that he was adorned with gold and precious gems. Prior to this English kings had dressed according to the way of their people [*secundum morem gentis*],⁷ but nowhere does this work describe the queen's own attire.

The gold-brocaded fillets found in well-furnished female graves of the sixth century in England, France and Germany can only indicate wealthy, and therefore high-status, burials, as none of these graves can specifically be linked with a queen. The best surviving example is that of the so-called Cologne Princess. These gold-brocaded fillets

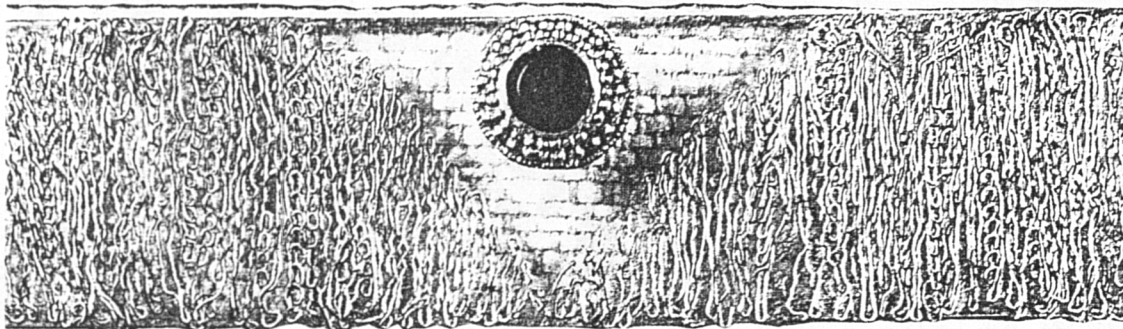


Fig. 1: Gold *vitta* found in female grave in Cologne Cathedral

are probably the *vittae* mentioned by Gregory of Tours in his *Historiarum*⁸ and were a costly gift from a bridegroom for his bride to wear at their nuptials. The cost (20 solidi) ensured possession only by the wealthiest women,⁹ but in no way restricted ownership

⁶*AB* sa 876.

⁷*Life of King Edward*, p.24.

⁸Gregory of Tours, *LH*, X, 16.

⁹E. Crowfoot and S.C. Hawkes, 'Early Anglo-Saxon Gold Braids', *Medieval Archaeology*, 11 (1967), p.65.

to royalty. No fillets have been found from later than the sixth century¹⁰ but they continued to be worn at least until the early eighth century. St Aldhelm describes, in disgruntled tones, the luxurious court dress of Anglo-Saxon women at the end of the seventh century, which included long veils to the feet and *vittae*,¹¹ and Angilbert describes the *vittae* and the gem-encrusted coronets of the royal ladies of Charlemagne's court.¹² In the only burial which has possibly been associated with a queen, the so-called Arnegunde grave in St-Denis, the woman was richly apparelled but did not wear a *vitta*, and indeed wore nothing that might distinguish her as a queen.

Three rings have been found which have been associated with queens from the early medieval period: a seal-ring belonging to Berthild, queen of Dagobert I, and two dress rings, one inscribed with the name of Arnegunde, queen of Clothar I, and the other with that of Æthelswith, queen of Burgred of Mercia.¹³ The ring inscribed with Arnegund's name was found in the St-Denis grave and has been used to identify her as Queen Arnegunde. Wilson believes that as the ring is not a seal-ring it is unlikely to have been worn by the queen herself, but rather was a gift from her to a friend or retainer in keeping with the royal image of ring-giver.¹⁴ However, he does not make clear why he believes it is unlikely that the queen would herself wear a ring inscribed with her own name.¹⁵ He applies the same rationale to the ring inscribed with the name of Æthelswith, an isolated find and not associated with any burial. He suggests that as the queen's name has been scratched on the bezel of the ring it may have been added later.¹⁶ However, as the queen's name is secondary and is not part of the design of the ring, as is the case with the Arnegunde ring or with that of Æthelswith's father, Æthelwulf, it does not totally rule out the possibility that the ring belonged to her.

Very few Anglo-Saxon women's rings have been found, and those found in graves

¹⁰*ibid.*, p.51.

¹¹Quoted in *ibid.*, pp.63f and note 66.

¹²Angilbert, *Carmina, MGH Poetae Latini Aevi I, #6*,
Candida purpureis cinguntur tempora vittis;
Aurea fila ligant clamidem, capitique byrillus
Inseritur, radians claro diadema metallo
Enitet, ...

¹³D.M. Wilson, 'A Ring of Queen Arnegunde', *Germania*, 42 (1964).

¹⁴*ibid.*, p.267; D.M. Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork 700-1100 in the British Museum* (London, 1964), p.56.

¹⁵Wilson, 'Ring of Queen Arnegunde', p.267.

¹⁶Wilson, *Anglo-Saxon Ornamental Metalwork*, pp.23 and 118.

have come from very richly furnished burials.¹⁷ Owen-Crocker concludes that the simplicity of these rings in comparison to other types of jewellery suggests that they were not a generally popular form of adornment and were only used to denote high status.¹⁸ Prior to the advent of Christianity Anglo-Saxon interest in finger-rings appears, from the archaeological evidence, to have been minor.¹⁹ Finger-rings were a luxury item which acquired social status during the seventh century, but few seem to have been made and few of high artistic merit have been found.²⁰ We do know that queens, from at least the time of Judith, were presented with a ring at the time of their consecration.²¹ We cannot know what took place at queen-makings prior to this but the fact that it was included in the earliest surviving *ordo* could suggest that it had occurred earlier. The *ordo* for Judith's consecration included the blessings for her marriage, and called for her to be presented with a ring of faith and love, but the queen-making *ordines* which were created after this time all call for the queen to be invested with the ring of faith, which suggests that a ring-giving had been an accepted part of queen-making. It does not seem impossible that a queen wore, and may have been invested with, a ring bearing her own name.

THE CHEMISE OF ST BALTHILD

The only garment we have which has been associated with an early medieval queen is the Chemise of St Balthild which was embroidered in the mid- to late seventh century, probably at Chelles. It is not a garment which would have been worn by her in life but seems to have been a pall created for her funeral and which relied for its significance upon the queenship and worldly image of the saint. It was found at Chelles where the dowager-queen had spent the last fifteen years of her life in enforced retirement. Balthild had refounded the royal nunnery at Chelles during her years of active queenship, including it in her programme of endowing religious and cult centres as part of her political power base. Chelles was close to a royal palace, and Balthild as

¹⁷G.R. Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England* (Manchester, 1986), pp.56f and 96f.

¹⁸*ibid.*, p.57.

¹⁹C.C. Oman, 'Anglo-Saxon Finger-rings', *Apollo*, 14 (1931), p.104.

²⁰Oman, *ibid.*, p.105, suggests it might be expected that poor quality, base-metal rings might be found in greater numbers if this were a popular form of personal adornment. However, most of those found seem to have been high-status artefacts.

²¹See the 'Judith' *ordo*, Appendix, p.241, and above, Chapter 5, p.101.

royal patroness would have been a familiar sight there in her worldly finery. According to the *Vita Eligii* she eschewed her worldly goods on entering the convent and gave away her jewellery in accordance with the asceticism of Columbanian and Benedictine monasticism.²² She may have affected or genuinely undertaken the ascetic life: convents were known to continue the comfortable lifestyle of their residents and members.²³ However, when she died she was buried simply shrouded, and covered with this garment. The lack of grave goods may have been because she did not have any finery left with which to be buried, or it may have been because the practice was no longer observed. Either way, her worldly status was still being brought to the eyes and minds of the mourners at her funeral.

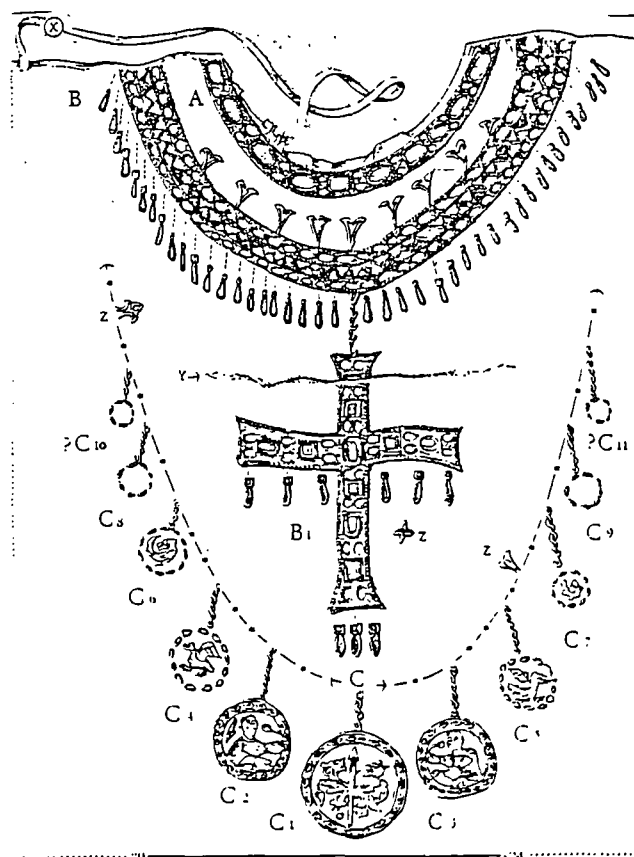


Fig. 2: Detail of the Chemise showing the embroidered 'jewellery' of the deceased queen

²²H. Vierck, 'Tunique de la reine Bathilde (d.680-681)', in P. Périn and L.-C. Feffer eds., *La Neustrie: les Pays au Nord de la Loire de Dagobert à Charles le Chauve, VIIe-IXe siècles* (Paris, 1985), p.138.

²³Gregory of Tours, *LH*, X, 16.

The garment is a piece of linen, shaped and finished at the neck and shoulders only. It had ribbons sewn on at the shoulders of which only one remains. It is embroidered in gem-like colours, in red, yellow, blue and green silks, and is about a metre long. The embroidered pattern resembles jewellery of the type worn by the Empress Theodora in the nave mosaics of San Vitale in Ravenna. There are also a



Fig. 3: Empress Theodora. Detail of mosaic in choir of S Vitale, Ravenna

number of representations of Western queens of Balthild's era wearing this type of jewellery. None of the surviving representations of women wearing such necklace combinations show a cross or enamelled discs as does the Chemise. There is a small cross attached to the seventh-century Anglo-Saxon necklace found at Desborough (Fig.4), and other jeweled collars of the sixth and seventh centuries, also bearing crosses, have been found in Bulgaria and Hungary, though none were as elaborate as the



Fig. 4: The Desborough Necklace

imitated cross of the Chemise.²⁴ The fine decoration of the Balthild cross resembles that of a cross now in the Treasury at Monza and said to have been attached to a votive crown of Agilulf, King of the Lombards (591-616).²⁵ The work which the embroidery is meant to imitate resembles that being produced in the atelier of St Eligius, goldsmith to kings until his death in 660.²⁶ The cross and the enamelled discs of the Chemise may have been Germanic additions to the Byzantine-style double necklace, and had no liturgical function. Balthild was never abbess, and perhaps simply added a cross to her finery thus continuing to display her status whilst living in the convent. The story of her giving away all her jewels may have been a hagiographical *topos*, or she may have acquired more finery after her initial exhibition of asceticism. The necklace may have been a combination of worldly and religious finery worn in the convent to remind herself, her companions, and visitors of her worldly status, but with which, at the time of her burial, it was no longer appropriate for her to be buried.

The Chemise is a funeral pall of a type which was placed over the shrouded

²⁴Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, p.95.

²⁵H. Vierck, 'La "Chemise de Ste-Balthilde" à Chelles et l'Influence Byzantine sur l'Art de Cour Mérovingien au VIIe siècle', *Actes du Colloque International d'Archéologie* (Rouen, 1978), p.525.

²⁶*ibid.*, p.533.

body, and designed to represent the worldly estate of the wearer.²⁷ One of the purposes of such funereal garments, or indeed of any luxury items buried with the dead, had been to remind mourners of the status of the deceased. The pall may have been prepared during her lifetime; however, it is more likely that the nuns prepared the Chemise wishing to remind mourners of the status of the deceased queen, thereby enhancing the prestige of Chelles, and keeping alive the flow of patronage and membership to the convent. The embroidery is fine but would not have taken long to complete and the garment is not well finished: figure 5 shows that the unfinished edges

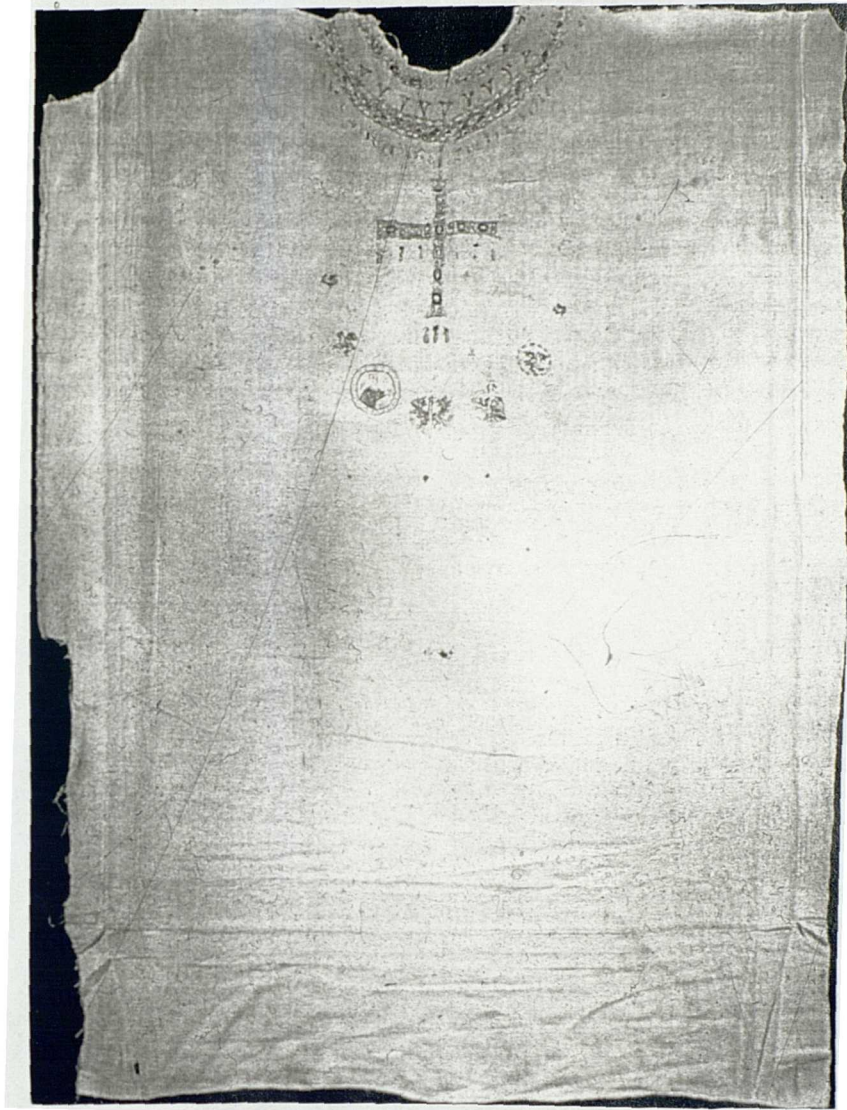


Fig. 5: Chemise of St Balthild

were simply folded under and that the important element of the pall was the embroidery and suggests that it was completed in haste, perhaps during a final illness, and that it was worked by the nuns.

²⁷*ibid.*, p.545. Vierck compares the Chemise to those funereal palls which were decorated with pectoral crosses of gold leaf. This Byzantine custom was adopted by the Lombards and Alamans, but a few examples survive from Bavarian and Frankish burials.

The royal theme of the Chemise relies on the royal prestige of St Balthild : to give it significance. We do not know how the bodies of other queen-nuns, or indeed queens of Balthild's era, were displayed during funerals and obsequies, and cannot know how unusual was Balthild's funeral pall. However, even if it were quite the thing to lay out a queen's body in royal state, the point of Balthild's pall was that the nuns were displaying her body resembling her secular glory. Part of the basis for the elevation of a queen-nun to sainthood was her withdrawal from worldly affairs and her renunciation of secular status, but in effect, that status was never completely relinquished by her cult-makers. The Chemise emulates jewellery which the queen may have worn during her lifetime, not only to remind mourners of her worldly status, but also that it was she who was responsible for the current success of the nunnery. Balthild had refounded the abbey and restored its lands and possessions, and the nuns may have been troubled that once her protection was removed there may have been inroads made into the community's property. The loss or misappropriation of conventual or monastic lands was a real problem for any community once the influence of the original patron was removed. With her death there was a risk of failure of ongoing support, of decline in membership and funds, perhaps even a withdrawal of existing possessions and lands. A reminder to mourners (presumably royal and noble mourners were in the chapel at Chelles that day) may have seemed timely and politic, that it would be expedient and salutary for them to maintain the community which had been protected by their saintly royal relative. The Chemise and the later *Vita Balthildae* were part of a programme to maintain the prestige of the abbey through the promotion of the cult of its royal saint. The status of the royal members of a religious house, both living and dead, was a very strategic appurtenance of the community. A dead royal member might quickly become a patron saint, and the members of the community would lose no opportunity to ensure the recognition of a saintly sister or brother. It served the interests of the nuns of Chelles for the body of Balthild to be displayed in all its worldly glory, or as closely as they might imitate it.

CROWNS AND CROWN ICONOGRAPHY

The symbol of royalty and the element of the royal regalia we have come to expect to find in a representation of a queen or a king is the crown. But images of crowned queens are quite rare in the early medieval period. Indeed, few representations of any description of early medieval queens survive. The crown was a symbol of immortality and divine glory for Jews and early Christians. The Bible provides a variety

of symbolic meanings for the crown. In the Old Testament it is a symbol of glory²⁸ and divine blessings,²⁹ or it is a badge of office for queen or king.³⁰ In the New Testament the writers took up the imperial imagery of the crown as a reward for victory; that is, the victory of the martyr,³¹ or the Christian who had put aside worldly interests.³² In the East, the newly baptised catechumens were crowned as they emerged from the font. This practice seems not to have been adopted in the West although the imagery was sometimes applied: Alcuin describes the newly baptised as being anointed and their heads covered as if with a royal crown.³³ Virgins, as brides of Christ, wore bridal crowns at the times of their dedication. After they might continue to wear them, but it would seem that they did so over the veil. Tertullian in his *De virginibus velandis* declared that virgins should always and everywhere be veiled.³⁴ In the *Benedictional of St Æthelwold*, the virgin-saints wear crowns over their veils.

Early Christian art, no doubt inspired by the Epistolary writings, borrowed crown iconography from the official iconography of the imperial court where crowns were symbols of, or rewards for, triumph, which were presented to victors: one of the symbols of martyrdom in representations of the early saints was the victor's crown.³⁵ Crowns could symbolise both reward received and gift offered. The Byzantine ceremony of *aurum coronarium* consisted of the offering of gifts of golden crowns to the emperor by the provinces of the empire on festal occasions, although this no longer featured in

²⁸Isaias 28:5, In that day the Lord of hosts shall be a crown of glory, and a garland of joy to the residue of his people.

²⁹Psalms 20:4, For thou hast prevented him with blessings of sweetness: thou has set on his head a crown of precious stones.

³⁰Esther 2:17, And the king loved her more than all the women, and she had favour and kindness before him above all the women, and he set the royal crown on her head, and made her queen instead of Vashti.

4 Kings 1:10, And he brought forth the king's son, put the diadem upon him, and the testimony: and they made him king, and anointed him; and clapping their hands, they said, God save the king.

³¹Revelations 2:10, Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer ... Be thou faithful until death: and I will give thee the crown of life.

³²1 Corinthians 9:25, And everyone that striveth for the mastery, refraineth himself from all things: and they indeed that they may receive a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible one.

³³R. Desman, 'The Iconography of the Full-page Miniatures of the Benedictional of St Æthelwold' (unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton, 1970), p.41.

³⁴O. Bardenhauer, *Patrology: the Lives and Works of the Fathers of the Early Church*, 2nd Ed., Trans. T.J. Shahan (St Louis, 1908), p.187.

³⁵A. Grabar, *Christian Iconography: A Study of its Origins* (London, 1969), p.45.

imperial ceremonial after the beginning of the seventh century.³⁶ However, the idea of the crown as a gift was not wholly forgotten. The *Liber Pontificalis* lists among the gifts brought to Pope Benedict III by King Æthelwulf in 855 a crown of purest gold.³⁷ Shortly after this Charles the Bald sent emissaries to Rome bearing gifts for the altar of St Peter among which were two gold crown adorned with precious stones.³⁸ In representations of this ceremony, the crown was usually held for the purpose of presentation.³⁹ In the nave mosaics of S Apollinare Nuovo in Ravenna the *aurum coronarium* ceremony has been translated into a Christian context. Crown iconography is prevalent in the mosaics of both this church and of S Apollinare in Classe, also in



Fig. 6: Procession of virgin saints.
Nave mosaic from S Apollinare Nuovo, Ravenna

³⁶O. von Simson, *Sacred Fortress: Byzantine Art and Statecraft in Ravenna* (Princeton, 1987), p.104.

³⁷*Liber Pontificalis*, PL 128, cols.1355-6, *Saxonum nomine causa orationis veniens, relictis omnibus suis rebus, regnum proprium suum dimisit, Romam properans ad limina apostolorum Petri et Pauli cum multitudine populi, et obtulit dona beato Petro apostolo, coronam ex auro purissimo, pensan. libras quatuor.*

³⁸AB sa 870, *sed et pannum ad altare sancti Petri de vestimentis suis aureis compositum cum duabus coronis aureis et gemmis ornatus misit.*

³⁹R. Deshman, 'The Iconography of the Full-page Miniatures of the Benedictional of St Æthelwold', p.237.

of Ravenna, underscoring the imperial theme of the decoration of both churches. The male crown continued to symbolise victory or overlordship throughout the early medieval period: the martyr's crown was a crown of victory.⁴⁰ The only crowned male figures represented were secular rulers and saints: there were no crowned male allegorical figures to compare with the female *nationes* of the *Gospel Book of Otto III*. This iconography of dependent *nationes*, which appeared in West and East Francia (fig.7), symbolised the overt imperialism of the emperor-kings which was given artistic expression in the representations of crowned female figures personifying subject states. There are no extant Anglo-Saxon ruler portraits showing any form of *aurum coronarium* ceremony.

The iconographical significance of crowned female figures in early medieval art seems to have been reserved for representations of virgins (fig.8), and for personification of virtues, ideas (fig.9), or peoples. Occasionally *Ecclesia* is represented in the personification of a crowned and enthroned female figure. On f.62 of the *Bury Bible* there is an enthroned woman, crowned and bearing a sceptre and palm, within the initial Q of the beginning of Psalm 51, *Quid gloriaris*.⁴¹ The manuscript dates from the second quarter of the eleventh century,⁴² and it was about this time that the *palma* was introduced to the Anglo-Saxon queen-making *ordo*. The crown of the virgin-martyr was the symbol of her brideship of Christ,⁴³ as was the case with *Ecclesia*.⁴⁴ The queen was none of these things. The female crown was usually a symbol of virginity, not of authority. The queen stood for other things than those ideas embodied in crown images, and it may have been inappropriate for her to be depicted wearing a crown which symbolised attributes she did not possess, or elements of rule in which she did not take part.

⁴⁰Von Simson, *Sacred Fortress*, p.99.

⁴¹Vatican MS reg. lat. 12, f.62; Christ Church, Canterbury, second quarter eleventh century. See E. Temple, *Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts, 900-1066* (London, 1976), pl.262.

⁴²*ibid.*, p.100.

⁴³Von Simson, *Sacred Fortress*, p.83.

⁴⁴*ibid.*, p.103.



Fig. 7: Emperor Otto II and crowned female figures representing dependent *nationes* of his empire (detached leaf, Chantilly Musée Condé)

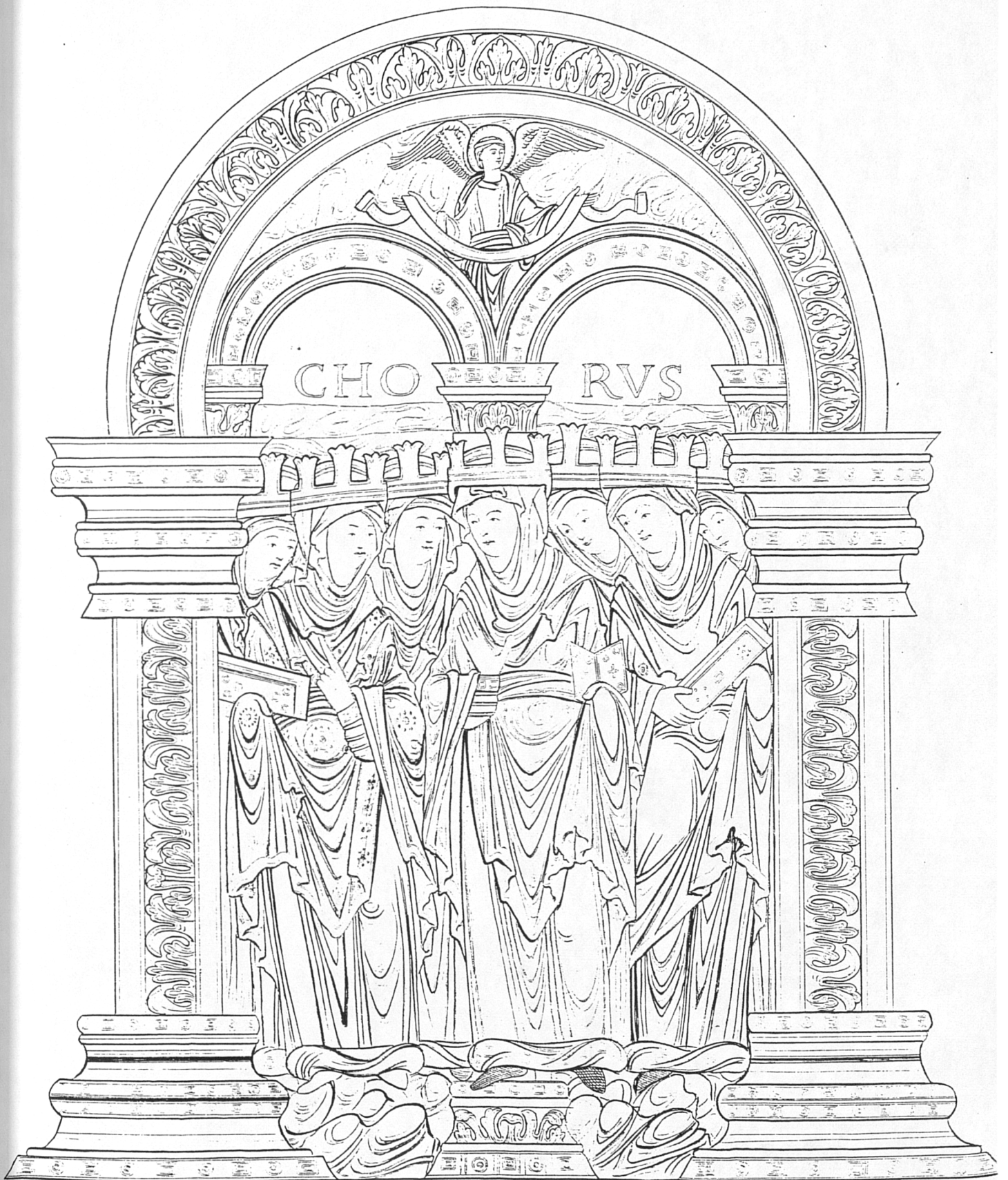


Fig.8: One of a pair of miniatures depicting the choir of virgins
in the *Benedictional of St Æthelwold*
(London, BL Addit. 49598)

QUEEN CYNETHRYTH

Cynethryth was the queen of Offa of Mercia, who was the first of the early medieval rulers to issue portrait coinage, and she was the only early medieval queen to have portrait coins issued in her name.⁴⁵ The Cynethryth pennies were issued between 787 and 792, and were all minted by the moneyer Eoba. On all her portrait coins she



Fig. 10: Two pennies bearing representations of Queen Cynethryth on obverse, and her name and title *Cyneðryð Regina* on reverse

appears wearing a diadem, and all have her name on the reverse, with Eoba's name on the obverse. There are some non-portrait coins and these all have her name on the obverse, with the moneyer's on the reverse. All her coins have the monogram M with an abbreviation sign for Mercia, and none bear her husband's name. Seventeen

⁴⁵See also Chapter 4, pp.87f.

specimens of the Cynethryth pennies survive, and almost all are different from one another, the multiple strikes indicating that the pennies do not come from a 'one-off' minting but are part of a programme of exploiting the image of the queen. Offa had expanded the prestige of the Mercian kingship during his reign, seeking to establish his supremacy over the other Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and to guarantee his own dynasty's hold on the Mercian throne. He exploited the queenship in his objectives, and encouraged the legatine council of 785, which pronounced that only the son of the legitimate wife of the king was throneworthy. This was a new departure from the practice of allowing illegitimate sons or pretenders from cadet lines to succeed to the throne. After establishing himself as overlord of Kent he took control of the Canterbury mints and began to issue portrait coinage. The visual texts of portrait coinage are the ruler representations which are the most accessible to the largest part of the community. Offa exploited not only his own image to disseminate the news of his overlordship, but that of his queen as well.

EMPRESS JUDITH

There is a small, unprepossessing representation of the Empress Judith in a manuscript written by Hrabanus Maurus. It is a Commentary on the Book of Judith and is dedicated to the Empress. In the miniature she appears crowned in a medallion (fig.11), beneath a *manus Dei* in a gesture of blessing or protection. Hrabanus also wrote a Commentary on the Book of Esther, in which he equates Esther with the Church.⁴⁶ The Judith portrait in the first Hrabanus manuscript parallels one of her husband in a third manuscript by the same author, the *De laudibus sanctae crucis*, in which the king is depicted as a *militem Christi*.⁴⁷ The strong visual and verbal imagery of the Louis manuscript (fig.12) reflects the nice strong sort of kingship which church-men considered necessary for the protection of the Church. Hrabanus' portrait of Judith draws some of its significance from the fact that it complements his portrait of Louis, but is separate enough to show that it was mainly created for the honour and prestige of Judith herself. It is the earliest extant representation of a crowned queen of West Frankish provenance and is unlikely to have had a very wide circulation. This precocious representation of Judith reflects the personal opinion of the author concerning the individual queen rather than a policy of enhancing ruler, or even queenly, prestige.

⁴⁶PL 109, col.635, *quia ipsa Esther in Ecclesiae typo.*

⁴⁷*Opera Omnia*, PL 107, cols. 141-2.

Fig. 11: Empress Judith from
 a manuscript of Hrabanus Maurus
Expositione in Librum Iudith
 (Cod. Genf. Bibl. 22, f.3v)

ORRERUQUI UERBO CUNO
 OMNETUAMDEXTRATVRI
 SCXELUMETRAMISFLORE
 CQUETUAEDEITATISUI
 DEPZTREASUMQUOTESCI
 EMPETIBICRISTUMERE
 MPESACERISTETIBINUO
 AEQUALISTOCUGINSAEQ
 HOMINUMRECTOR SALUAT
 IUSTISPOENAMQMEREM
 SONASAEETATESPERSPIC
 TPROPRIAMDOMASIUSTR
 EPOSCEMELINQASLEDEI
 AUDEPOUEASQUEBENIC
 ASFORTISLUDEXRECN
 QPOLOIUDITHIPSAPARO
 TQACATAASITMANE
 EMOROSLAETUSPLACAT
 LEATCANEBODIASDICE
 TUOTOREUSALTRAOCULC
 MENTECAAMORDINISAT
 TRIBUITILLESYPERAET
 DNI POTENS QUI SOL REC



Fig. 12: Louis the Pious depicted as *militem Christi* in Hrabanus Maurus *De laudibus sanctae crucis* (Cod. Wien Nat. Bibl. 652, f.3v)

QUEEN RICHILDIS

In the ruler representation of Charles the Bald in the frontispiece of his Bible, now in San Paolo fuori le mura in Rome, the queen standing on his left is probably his

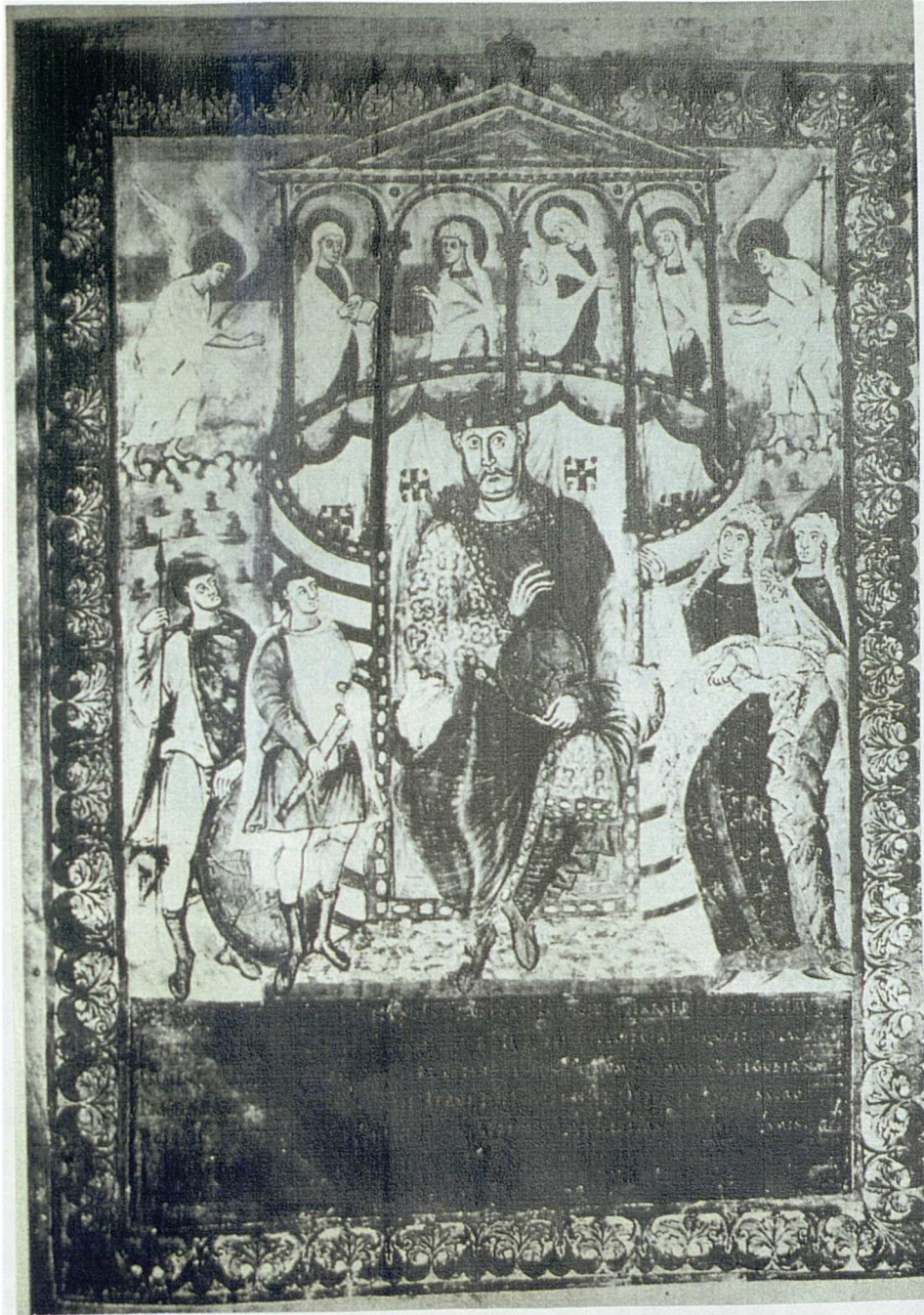


Fig.13: Ruler portrait from the Bible of S Paolo fuori le Mura in Rome showing both the king, Charles the Bald, and his queen, Richildis

second consort, Richildis, whom he married in 870.⁴⁸ The Bible was produced c.870 and may have been a wedding gift from Archbishop Hincmar⁴⁹ whose contribution to the image of kingship, and to queenship as a complement to kingship, has already been discussed.⁵⁰ The queen in the miniature may be depicted wearing a crown: as mentioned in Chapter 5, Gaehde has described her as wearing a crown, but this is not clear in any reproductions I have yet seen.⁵¹ Her veil does sit higher on her head than that of her attendant, and may conceal a small crown. However, to have portrayed her wearing a crown may have been deemed unsuitable as it may have identified her with other images of crowned women who were not queens, as, for example, in the ruler representations of Charles in the *Vivian Bible* and the *Codex Aureus of St-Emmeram*, in which the crowned women are *aurum coronarium* types.⁵² However, whether Richildis wears a crown or not, a representation of the queen is being used to enhance the kingship of her husband.

Ruler portraits of the early medieval period were stereotypes: artists were conveying stock attributes of the type of subject represented. Kings were meant to be handsome, just, generous, and wise, and his own appearance and the context in which he appears convey many of his attributes and virtues. In the San Paolo miniature, Charles is larger than the other figures. He is watched over by the kingly virtues, and by angels signifying divine recognition. He is flanked on his right by soldiers to symbolise his military strength, and is garbed in Byzantine fashion, that is, in paludamentum with fibula, but not with a Byzantine crown, to display his imperial ambitions and achievements. On his left is his queen, Richildis, and her attendant: this is the first time that a West Frankish queen was represented in a ruler portrait. She is pointing towards Charles, stressing his central significance to the representation. The queen is part of the representation of Charles and is an attribute of the ruler image: the king has royal virtues, the king has military strength, the king has a suitable queen. The final two lines of the inscription below the portrait read:

Beautifying according to custom is the noble consort on the left,
Through whom distinguished offspring may rightly be given to the realm

⁴⁸See also Chapter 5, pp.114-18.

⁴⁹E. Kantorowicz, 'The Carolingian King in the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura', in *Selected Studies* (New York, 1965), p.91.

⁵⁰Hincmar's contribution to the image of kingship, and to queenship as a complement to kingship, was discussed in Chapter 5.

⁵¹See p.116 and note 104.

⁵²*Vivian Bible*, Paris BN lat. 1; *Codex Aureus*, Munich BS. clm 14000, f.5v.

though as shown in Chapter 5 this was not the sole significance of queenship for Charles or for Hincmar. The idea of the visual enhancement of prestige was not new, but in the reign of Charles the Bald the extent to which it was exploited, including the representation of the queen, was unprecedented in Western political thought.

QUEEN EMMA

Emma was in many ways an exceptional queen, not the least of these is the fact that we have two extant contemporary representations of her. The first is the miniature of the queen and her second husband, Cnut, from the *Liber Vitae* of New Minster, Winchester, while the second, the frontispiece of what is believed to have been the presentation copy of the *Encomium Emmae*,⁵³ is one of the few secular ruler representations from the Anglo-Saxon period. The New Minster miniature (fig.14) shows the royal couple dedicating a great cross to the abbey and placing it upon the altar of the abbey church. It is a simple line drawing with no decoration, or suggestion of jewels, on the cross or on the garments of the royal donors. Cnut is being crowned by an angel who acts on behalf of Christ, who sits in a mandorla surveying the whole scene. Emma is already crowned, and wears her veil over this. She also wears a stole-like ornament which resembles that worn by Cnut as an attachment for his cloak. Owen-Crocker suggests that Emma's crown is a *vitta* and that the two 'streamers' are the tie ends for this.⁵⁴ Emma is not pointing towards her husband, as Richildis was doing in the San Paolo portrait, but is pointing towards the cross, indicating her participation in the gift. She was an active partner in the programme of religious patronage her Danish husband undertook as a means of gaining the support of the Anglo-Saxon churchmen for his régime.⁵⁵ Her position at the right hand of Christ is unusual for a woman and it has been suggested that this honour was a recognition of her important role in this programme.⁵⁶

The angel hovering above Emma in the *Liber Vitae* miniature holds a cloth or veil over her head, while pointing at the figure of Christ, making a pair with the

⁵³J. Backhouse *et al.*, *The Golden Age of Anglo-Saxon Art, 966-1066* (London, 1984), p.145.

⁵⁴*Dress in Anglo-Saxon England*, p.143.

⁵⁵J. Gerchow, 'Prayers for King Cnut: the Liturgical Commemoration of a Conqueror' in C. Hicks ed., *England in the Eleventh Century* (Stamford, 1992), *passim*.

⁵⁶Heslop, 'Production of Deluxe Manuscripts and the Patronage of King Cnut and Queen Emma', p.157, note 16.



Fig. 14: Frontispiece of *Liber Vitae* of New Minster, Winchester. Queen Emma and King Cnut present the Great Cross to the Cathedral and community
(London, BL Stowe, 944, f.6)

coronation of the king and suggesting that this action is in some way equivalent to it. In the Dormition of the *Benedictional of St Æthelwold*, three angels bear similar veils, and in the Baptism of Christ from the same manuscript (fig. 15), four angels hover over the scene, two also bearing cloths and two bearing sceptres and crowns. The veil of a

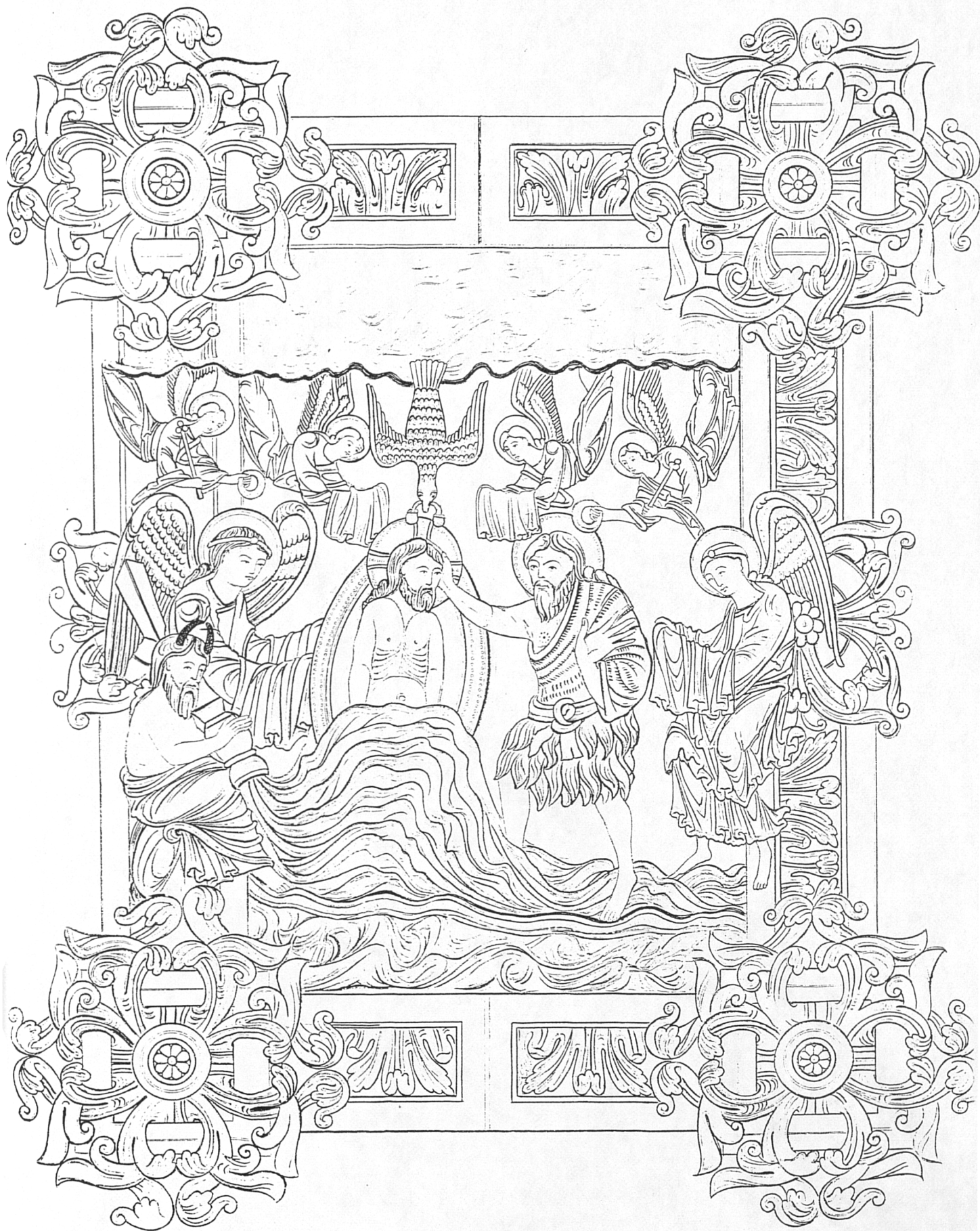


Fig. 15: Baptism of Christ from *Benedictional of St Æthelwold*

consecrated virgin or widow is called a *pallium* in the consecration *ordines* of the pontificals of the tenth and eleventh centuries.⁵⁷ A *pallium* is a liturgical symbol of religious profession or office presented to the new incumbent during the rite of passage of their consecration. In the Dormition and Baptism miniatures, the Virgin and Christ are being presented with *pallia* during what are essentially rites of passage. In the *Liber Vitae* miniature, the king is being crowned and the queen presented with a *pallium*. The symbol of the office of queenship is portrayed as having religious connotations; her office is seen as religious by the monk-illustrator of the manuscript. In the *Encomium Emmae*, a secular work, she would be represented in secular guise: the monks of New Minster were still stressing the queen's religious roles, while the queen saw herself in a more secular mould. The office, and the insignia, of the queen, like that of the king, and of Mary and Christ, are divinely ordained gifts. The iconography of the *Liber Vitae* miniature is being borrowed from coronation scenes of the Virgin and of Christ in support of Emma's queenship.

The second miniature comes from a manuscript written during the queen's lifetime (fig.16). Once again it is a simple line drawing, in which Emma is represented enthroned and wearing an elaborate, and unusual, crown. There are two secular male figures, possibly her sons, Edward and Harthecnut, both of whom wear their crowns, and a cleric who presents the book to the queen. She wears a gown with borders on the sleeves and a central panel which are ornamented to imitate gem-encrustation. The miniature is very much in keeping with the ideas expressed in the book concerning queenship and most especially Emma's fitness for the office. Emma most definitely saw herself in this light. These two Emma portraits are unusual not only for the fact that there are two representations for the same queen, and in both of them she appears crowned, but also because they seem to have had some inspiration from the queen herself. Her interests in manuscripts as propaganda and largesse, and her concern for the royal, and especially the queenly image would suggest that she at least approved, if not took part in designing, her two portraits. It was noted earlier⁵⁸ that the female crown had not been a symbol of authority, but with Emma's appearing crowned in settings which reflect authority, the female crown has lost its symbolism of virginity and subjection, and finally transmits to the wearer an image of authority.

⁵⁷The *ordo* for the consecration of a virgin in the *Leofric Missal* is in the tenth-century part of the manuscript and is largely taken from the *Liber Sacramentarium Romanum* with the addition of two formulas. The first of these, *Quando sacrum uelamen accipit dicendum est*, reads *Accipe, puella, sanctum pallium, quod perferas sine macula ante tribunal domini nostri ihesu christi*. This formula, with additions, appears in other such tenth-century *ordines* for virgins and widows as 'Lanalet', 'Robert', 'Sampson' & 'Claudius II'.

⁵⁸p.213.



Fig. 16: Presentation miniature from *Encomium Emmae*
(London, BL Addit. 33241, f.1v)

THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN

The Dormition of the Virgin miniature from the *Benedictional of St Æthelwold* (fig.17) is the earliest extant representation of the coronation of the Virgin.⁵⁹ The cult of Mary as Queen of Heaven had been a development of belief in her role as Mother of God (the Theotokos had been officially recognised at the Council of Ephesus in 431)

⁵⁹R. Deshman, 'Christus Rex et Magi Reges: Kingship and Christology in Ottonian and Anglo-Saxon Art', *FMS*, 10 (1976), p.397.



Fig. 17: Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary from the *Benedictional of St Æthelwold*

and in her assumption body and soul into Heaven at the time of, or shortly after, her death. The cult of the Queen of Heaven in Byzantium did not encourage representation of her as a crowned queen or empress: the mosaic of the Virgin on a jewelled throne in S Apollinare Nuovo is her first Byzantine appearance in regal splendour.⁶⁰ The image of Mary as crowned queen was of Roman origin, as, for example, in the mosaics of Maria Regina in Santa Maria in Trastevere in Rome, and the crowned Virgin, originally in Old St Peter's and now in San Marco in Florence. In each of these



Fig. 18: Queen of Heaven. Mosaic in nave of S Marco, Florence

⁶⁰M. Lawrence, 'Maria Regina', *Art Bulletin*, 7 (1925), p.151.

representations, both of which date from the pontificate of John VII (705-7),⁶¹ she appears already crowned. The cult of *Maria Regina* was recognised in Francia during the Carolingian period; however, representations of the Queen of Heaven were much later in finding their way over the Alps. The elaborate garments and regalia of Roman representations would not be matched by Frankish, Ottonian or Anglo-Saxon artists, who chose to portray her in simple garments with a simple circlet, or triangular or fleur-de-lys crown.⁶² The *Æthelwold Dormition* is the earliest surviving representation of the actual coronation of the Virgin as well as the earliest extant visual acknowledgement of the cult of the Queen of Heaven in the Germanic countries, and from England it expanded quickly to France and Germany.⁶³ It is rare to see her being crowned by God the Father; sometimes she is crowned by her Son, but in most cases she is crowned by ministering angels.

The *Benedictional* has a distinctly royal theme: the Christ in Majesty (f.70) is the earliest Anglo-Saxon representation in which He wears a royal crown,⁶⁴ the Epiphany (f.24v) is one of the earliest in which the Magi appear crowned,⁶⁵ and the first Magus presents the infant Christ with three gold crowns in a type of *aurum coronarium* which underlines Christ's title of King of Kings.⁶⁶ The *Benedictional* was commissioned by Bishop *Æthelwold*: the Christological views were his, and it was he who used these views to enhance the image of the king.

The royal theme also embraces the queenship, not as is the case in the San Paolo miniature, that is as an adjunct to kingship, but as distinct from the kingship, and is given the support of the newly introduced Mariological image of the Queen of Heaven. The Virgin's first appearance in the manuscript is among the *Chorus Virginum* (f.2) but as yet has not acquired any royal attributes. In the Annunciation (f.5v) she is seated under an imperial baldachin, which, according to Corippus, represented the vault of Heaven,⁶⁷ presumably a reference to the extent of both divine protection and imperial authority. But the Dormition miniature is the most outstanding testimony to the queenship of Mary in the manuscript. The *manus Dei* was not an uncommon image in

⁶¹Lawrence, 'Maria Regina', p.153.

⁶²*ibid.*, p.150.

⁶³*ibid.*, p.157; Deshman, 'Christus Rex et Magi Reges', p.398.

⁶⁴Deshman, *ibid.*, p.368.

⁶⁵*ibid.*, p.377.

⁶⁶*ibid.*, pp.380f gives further examples and discussion.

⁶⁷Corippus, *In Laudem Justiniani*, 3, 191, line 197, *simulaus convexi climata caeli*.

early medieval art but was usually depicted in a gesture of blessing. The depiction of the hand grasping the crown is a distinct statement of the doctrine of divine intervention at the time of Mary's death, demonstrating that her induction into the queenship of Heaven included her body as well as her soul. Similar iconography may be seen on the Lothar Cross in the Cathedral Treasury at Aachen (usually dated c.1000 and thought to have been a gift from Otto III or Theophanu). It bears, on the reverse side, a *manus Dei* crowning the crucified Christ with a laurel wreath.

There is also a representation of St Æthelthryth who is the only female saint to be accorded a personal portrait in the *Benedictional*, although she does not appear crowned. She was a queen-saint who founded a monastery, and here she symbolises the alliance between Æthelwold, who designed the *Benedictional*, and the queens who assisted him in his monastic reforms.⁶⁸ In Chapter 7 I have discussed Æthelwold's role in the enhancement of the queen-making rite, and of the office of queen. He also worked closely with two queens: the dowager Eadgyfu, and Ælfthryth. Given that Æthelwold was committed to enhancing the queenship, and that he commissioned the *Benedictional*, and that it has an unusual and distinctly royal theme which makes much of Mary as Queen, it seems likely that this book was designed as much for the prestige of the earthly queen as for the development of the cult of the Queen of Heaven. The representation of the Virgin as Queen was quickly taken up in England and was of a clearly religious and mariological nature, but this first appearance was not purely for the advancement of the cult: it had, if not a primary purpose, at least a purpose of equivalent importance in enhancing the image of the earthly queen.

* * *

The artistic production of the Carolingian age declined after the reign of Charles the Bald. He had been committed to enhancing the image of the kingship, encouraging the production of ruler portraits and the development of king- and queen-making *ordines*, and introducing such innovations as royal anniversary celebrations and Greek-style apparel. No other West Frankish, nor any Anglo-Saxon king is known for his interest in manuscript production. Æthelstan and Cnut used manuscripts as gifts and were aware of their value: their dedication portraits appear in the copy of Bede's *Lives of St Cuthbert* presented by King Æthelstan to the shrine of St Cuthbert at Chester-le-Street, c.934,⁶⁹ and the New Minster *Liber Vitae*.⁷⁰ However, it is not until the

⁶⁸Deshman, 'The Iconography of the Full-page Miniatures of the *Benedictional* of St Æthelwold', p.235.

⁶⁹Cambridge, Corpus Christi College MS 183, f.1v.

production of the New Minster Charter a century after the *San Paolo Bible* that an Anglo-Saxon royal representation begins to approach the magnificence of those of the reign of Charles the Bald. There were later artistic revivals in Ottonian Germany and in England. The Ottonian emperors were great patrons of scriptoria where ruler portraits were created to enhance the royal image and in acknowledgement of royal support. The appearance in the late tenth century in Anglo-Saxon manuscripts of crowned figures of Christ and crowned Magi suggests that political theology was beginning to influence art.⁷¹ Ottonian art from this period depicts queens being crowned by, or crouched at the feet of, Christ, in the same way as kings (fig.19), but there is no equivalent for this type of iconography, where Christ or the Virgin are shown touching the heads of emperors and empresses, in Anglo-Saxon or West Frankish ruler representations. The coronations of secular rulers are seldom represented, and in any instance of the presence of the divine hand there is no contact between it and the head of the ruler. In the ruler portrait of the *Metz Sacramentary*⁷² the *manus Dei* grasps the crown above the head of the king. Often angels act as ministers, as in the *Liber Vitae* miniature. The appearance of Byzantine and Ottonian Christ coronations contrasts markedly with the hierarchical imagery of West Frankish and Anglo-Saxon ruler representations: the unpretentiousness of the latter says much about the differences in the eastern and western concepts of rulership.

There is evidence for the movement of manuscripts between German and Anglo-Saxon courts, and for the slight influence of the Ottonian king- and queen-making *ordines* appearing in England at the very end of the Anglo-Saxon period, though they appear not to have had any influence in West Francia, and the ruler theology expressed in representations of the Ottonian emperors and empresses was not adopted at all by their western neighbours. With the exception of the Cynethryth pennies we have no Anglo-Saxon representations of queens before the mid-eleventh century. The royal programme of the *Benedictional of St Æthelwold*, and the crowned images of Emma coincide with the period of the height of Anglo-Saxon queenship, which extended from the mid-tenth century to 1066. The Anglo-Saxon royal consecration *ordines* were also being expanded and embellished during this period. The heyday of West Frankish queenship had passed by this time, and there were no changes in the West Frankish royal inauguration *ordines* after the mid-tenth century. We would also look in vain for representations of West Frankish queens from this time.

⁷⁰London, BL Stowe MS 944, f.6.

⁷¹Deshman, '*Christus Rex et Magi Reges*', p.367.

⁷²Metz Sacramentary, Paris BN lat. 1141, f.2v.

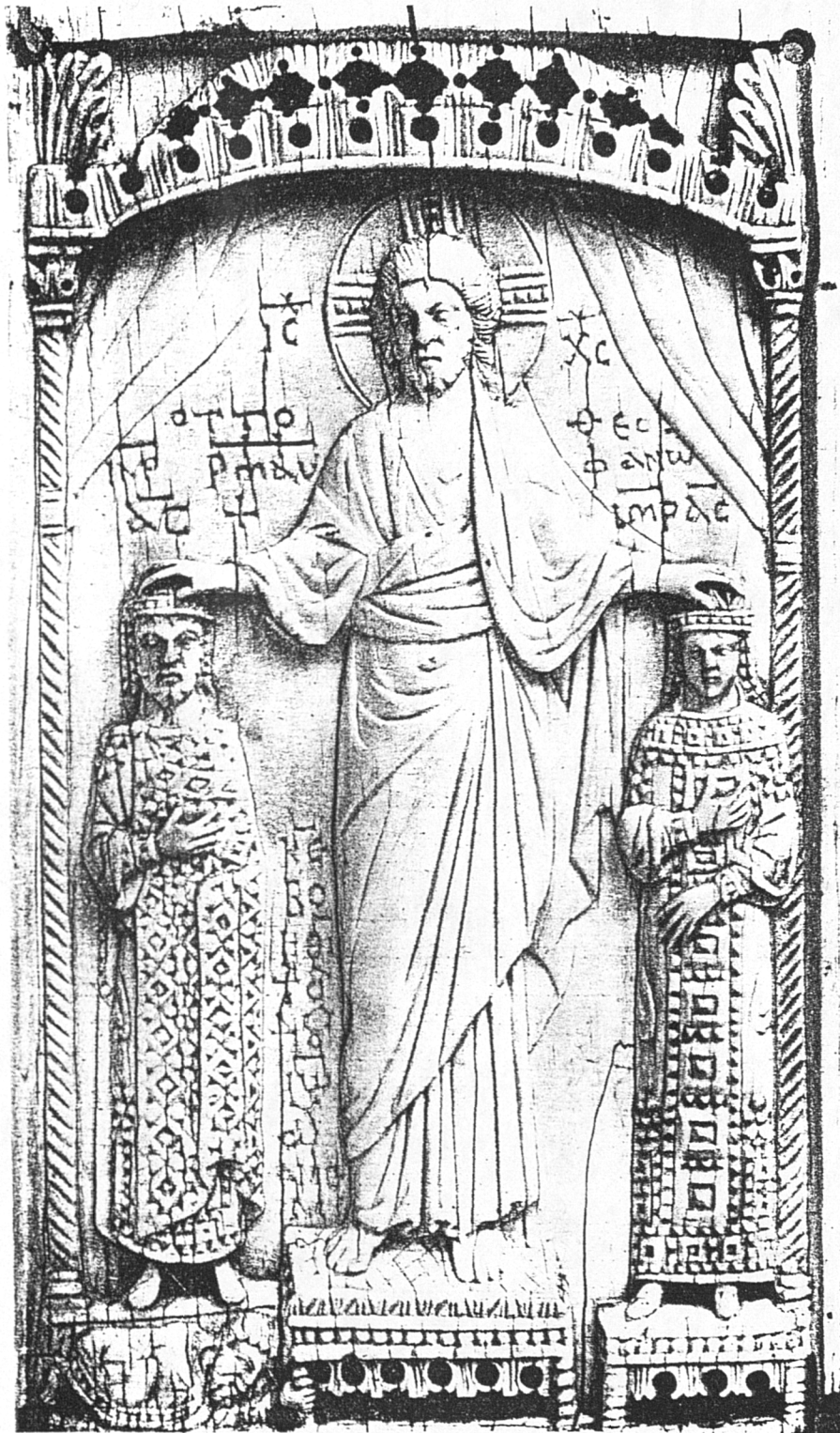


Fig. 19: Christ crowning Emperor Otto II and Empress Theophanu.

Ivory plaque (Paris, Musée Cluny)

The surviving representations of Anglo-Saxon and West Frankish queens are limited and scattered, and could not alone form the basis for a study of queenship and the image of the early medieval queens. However, they do form a relevant facet of queenship, which supports the discussions of the foregoing chapters. It is clear that representations of queens, and therefore the image of queenship, were recognised as exploitable assets. There is only one distinctly public image: in general, representations of queens were not given a high public profile and of the representations discussed here only those of Cynethryth would have achieved any measure of circulation amongst the general community. The private nature of the remaining representations means that we cannot expect that their impact was significant for, or formative of, general opinion of ruler prestige. But it is well to remember that few representations of kings found their way beyond the confines of the court, or of church or monastic precincts. Sometimes manuscripts achieved a wider audience than at first intended through being passed on as gifts to other courts with other audiences. This was the case with the *San Paolo Bible*. Charles sent this *Bible* to Pope John VIII as a gift, and it is significant that of all the illuminated bibles of which Charles was the owner, it was this particular manuscript with its representation of the queen serving to enhance the image of the West Frankish king which he chose to find an audience at the papal court.

In each of the representations considered in the present chapter the image of queenship was being exploited as a means of emphasising or increasing prestige. In the case of the Chemise of St Balthild it was not a representation of her person but the aura of queenliness which surrounded her worldly status that the nuns of Chelles were exploiting for the material benefit of the convent. They had fashioned a funeral pall for the queen-patroness and soon-to-be saint that was a visual text of faith and propaganda. With the Cynethryth pennies, the queen herself was given an unusually public image, but her representation served in a comprehensive programme for the expansion and underscoring of the prestige of the Mercian kingship in general and Offa's dynasty in particular. The Judith portrait reflected the personal opinion of the author concerning the queen, for whom he had a high regard. It was designed to enhance the image of the subject but was not expected to encompass the generic prestige of the queenship. In the Charles the Bald miniature we had our first case where the presence of the queen in a ruler portrait served the single purpose of enhancing the image of the king and his dynasty. The *Benedictional of St Æthelwold* is not a simple, nor a simply conceived, manuscript, and was designed to encompass the promotion of the cult of the Virgin as Queen of Heaven as well as the enhancement of the prestige of both queen and king. None of the miniatures directly represent the royal couple and their significance is not therefore confined to the particular reign in which they were created. They are a

general enhancement of queenship and kingship through the royal imagery of Mary and Christ. The Emma miniatures must be seen in the context of her whole career: her personal programme was to ensure her own status and political participation. In the first portrait she shares the honours with Cnut, but in the second she is clearly enthroned and crowned, and is the central figure. Representations of Anglo-Saxon and West Frankish queens were diverse, unevenly exploited, and there were probably not many ever produced, but when they were created it was always in a context of enhancement of the image of the king, sometimes of a religious house, and often of the queen herself. In each case her image was presumed to possess a value which was easily recognisable to the community, and its rareness should not inhibit our recognition of the prestige which was inherent in the office of queen.

CONCLUSION

The development of West Frankish and Anglo-Saxon queenship was only linked from the mid-ninth to the mid-tenth centuries, and that was through the introduction and enhancement of the inauguration rites. For about one hundred years there was a fairly steady communication across the Channel between the fashioners of king- and queen-making *ordines*. Prior to the development of queen-making rites, queenship was legitimised by marriage with a king: this was all the moral and legal sanction necessary. The introduction of queen-making *ordines* meant that other sanctions had become necessary. Divine sanction with sacerdotal intervention became essential for the queen in the same way as for the king. Before the mid-ninth century we have random glimpses which suggest that individual queens may have been inaugurated to their office, and we are aware that there were certain activities and attributes which were appropriate to a queen, although these appear to have been largely independent of cross-Channel influence. After the mid-tenth century, the Anglo-Saxons continued to expand and embellish the king- and queen-making rites, while the West Frankish churchmen, and kings, were content to continue using the *ordines* which had been devised during that one hundred^{yea} of cross-Channel exchange of ideas. Changing attitudes of the two peoples towards queenship are not as readily linked, and there does not appear to have been any comparison between the two countries concerning the nature of queenship, or the expectations which might be placed upon the king's wife. There were similarities but these occurred at such different times that there can really be no suggestion of exchange of ideas. The times at which the Anglo-Saxon queens experienced enhancement of power and prestige did not coincide with those at which West Frankish queens were at their most powerful. And, with the exception of the reign of Charles the Bald, periods during which the *ordines* were being developed cannot be linked with expanding ideas concerning the nature of queenship. Among both peoples, the degree and scope of influence the queens enjoyed fluctuated, and personality could have much effect upon the exercise of non-institutionalised roles of queenship.

The appearance of queen-making rites was late in comparison with the much earlier presence of king-making rites and the formulas for the consecration of abbesses and virgins. It was not until the refining of concepts of queenship and the apprehension of the queen as office-holder that impetus was given to the formal recognition, and ritual anointing, of the king's wife. Some form of inauguration rite for queens may have existed prior to the ninth century, but it is only from the time of Charles the Bald and Hincmar of Reims that we have any firm evidence for queen-making, and from this time queen-making rites were copied into bishops' books as often as king-making rites. The

actual *ordines* devised by Hincmar were never re-used, but 'Erdmann' and its derivative *ordines* were developed either at the same time or shortly after. Though the development of queen-making rites seems to have begun in West Francia, the idea was quickly taken up by the Anglo-Saxons who continued to use and adapt the rites. The movement of expanded Anglo-Saxon royal inauguration rites back to West Francia appears to have been limited to the first half of the tenth century, and there seems to have been no interest in adapting these repatriated rites in West Francia before the end of the period under discussion. The Anglo-Saxons, on the other hand, were apparently more given to ritual elaboration, and continued to adapt and copy royal inauguration *ordines* regularly till the end of the Anglo-Saxon period. There seems to be no explanation for this pattern of events and it no doubt reflects individual interest on the part of clerical and royal participants. This pattern, if such it can be called, is similar for both the king- and queen-making *ordines* from the end of the ninth century. The king-making rites were more regularly and more extensively revised and expanded than those for the queen, but the numbers of copies and additions to the queen-making *ordines* point towards regular use.

Queen-making *ordines* (after Hincmar) do not appear to reflect what one might call 'political realities'. The queen took no vows and made no promises concerning her relationship with Church and people, neither did she receive oaths or acts of homage from the magnates of her husband's realm: according to the texts of the *ordines* she was answerable to no-one. Neither the queen- nor the king-making rites of the period could be said to define the offices which they conveyed. The queen had no commitments placed upon her by her consecration, no onerous duties were imposed upon her in terms of defence of Church and realm, which are at least alluded to in the king-making *ordo*. *Honor* and *dignitas* were bestowed upon her that she might fulfil the good works which are, nevertheless, left undefined by the formulas of the *ordo*. The queen is only made accountable for the Faith of her people, though her only practical means of fulfilling this duty is through her exemplary behaviour. The queen-making *ordines* were more concerned with the gifts to be bestowed upon the new queen than for the roles to be expected of her. The queen-making rite was not a fertility rite, neither was it designed to enable her to produce throneworthy offspring as the prayer formulas of the *ordines* themselves reveal. The fact that a prayer formula stressing the fertility of the queen was present in the 'Romano-Germanic' *ordo* indicates that the idea of introducing a fertility element to queen-making was not disregarded among other peoples, and suggests that it was rejected among the Anglo-Saxons and the West Franks. It was certainly ignored in England in the eleventh century, when additional formulas to the Anglo-Saxon queen-making *ordo* taken from the 'Romano-Germanic' rite did not include the fertility

formula from the latter. There seems to be a glimpse into the contemporary political situation in the queen-making rite of the 'Sherborne' manuscript and its descendent *ordines*. The preface of this queen-making *ordo* requires acknowledgement of the new queen by the first men of the kingdom, and refers to a decree ordering that the queen-making should take place. The anointing of a queen did not guarantee her position on the throne. Throughout the early medieval period kings repudiated queens and took new ones. Towards the end of the period this was relatively infrequent, but this may reflect contemporary political situations, or even the strengthening of the bonds of marriage, rather than surety of queenship. Queen-making did not give a woman power any more than king-making could give a king power in real terms. The consecration of a king put the seal on his right to rule, but the possession and exercise of real power stemmed from personal ability and the willingness of the magnates to recognise his assumption of the position. King-making rites might underline right to rule but were never believed to imbue the new king with power. Early medieval queen-making rites did not express practical aims, and therefore must have had their foundations in ideas concerning queenship and the office of queen. They do not define the office, but simply set out to create a worthy vessel.

According to the formulas of the rites, it was God who made the queen: the 'Erdmann' rites do not make any reference to the king or his relationship with the new queen. Not until 'Sherborne' would the *ordo* acknowledge that the queen-making was to take place at the requirement of secular authority. The final benediction of the eleventh-century 'Canterbury' queen-making *ordo* (Prayer 8) portrays the uncertainty of at least one churchman as to whom did belong the power to institute a queen. The confused first formula of this prayer leaves its audience uncertain as to whether it was God or the king who required her consecration. However, this uncertainty did not recur and the absorption of the formulas from the 'Romano-Germanic' *ordo* into the Anglo-Saxon *ordines* of the late eleventh and twelfth centuries left no doubt that it was God who elevated her to her place beside the king.

The roles of a queen did not change very much during the period: she might at any time have fulfilled the roles of nurturer in the *aula regis*, manager of her own household and estates, and caretaker of the spiritual welfare of the kingdom and the spiritual suitability of the royal dynasty. Her ability to fulfil these roles, to take advantage of the potential of her position, was limited by the power of the king and his willingness to countenance her actions, the power of her own party, and her own personal will to realise her potential. Queenship, during the early part of the period, bore a distinctly religious complexion, especially in the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Merovingian queens appear to have been more active in secular affairs, but this

impression may be the result of the nature of the surviving sources. Queens were expected, perhaps preferred, to concern themselves with the spiritual welfare of the dynasty, the *aula regis*, the religious communities of the kingdom, and, by extension of all these, the kingdom in general. It is from this early period that most of the early medieval queen-saints derive. Royal sainthood was more favoured among the Anglo-Saxons than among the Franks, for few Merovingian queens and no Carolingian or Capetian queens joined the ranks of the saints in comparison with the numbers of Anglo-Saxon royals, especially queens, who attracted cults mainly in the post-conversion period. Of course, queens who became saints usually did so as a result of having entered a religious community. The atmosphere of the convent was certainly more conducive to manifesting saintly behaviour, but the mechanisms for creating saints' cults were not present at court, though cults were judiciously encouraged and exploited by kings. Towards the end of the period, queens were still associated with religious houses, but the kingdom no longer seems to have depended upon the queen for its spiritual welfare. Queens were no longer largely restricted to religious activities as means of fulfilment or aggrandisement. It is perhaps significant that the number of queen-saints was reduced to almost none after ritual anointings came to be regularly used. Her unction seems to have shifted the arena in which the queen might function as the guardian of the spiritual welfare of the kingdom from the convent to the court.

Having been a king's wife or a consecrated queen, a woman retained her altered status during widowhood and even after repudiation. She was expected to behave according to the higher dignity she had attained, and could expect to be treated in a manner which recognised her status. There were exceptions to this but, by and large, all ex-queens retained the title of queen, held lands and possessions in accordance with their rank, and some even retained place and influence at court.

The ideological contexts which were mooted as possible influences in Chapter 1, with one or two exceptions, have not really shown themselves to have had any notable impact. Influence from the Byzantine court, can be observed in West Francia in a few instances, most notably during the reign of Charles the Bald, but is difficult to detect at all in any of the Anglo-Saxon courts. Likewise, the direct influence of ideas from the Bible, or from late antiquity, is too scattered to be able to point to any distinctly biblical or patristic themes either in queen-making *ordines* or in ideas concerning queenship. It is only in the rites of Hincmar where direct references to Old Testament queens and heroines are made, or where allusion to the blessing by Isaac of Jacob suggests that the new queen was linked with the destiny of her people. The exploitation of the Marian cult of the Queen of Heaven may be an exception, but the introduction of the cult does not appear to have resulted from external (that is, Byzantine) influence, rather the

impetus seems to have come from within, a spontaneous response to personalities and political factors of the time. The new devotion to the Queen of Heaven was part of a programme to enhance the image of the earthly queen, but this was never incorporated into the queen-making *ordines*.

The development of queen-making *ordines* was not inevitable. *Ordines* for consecrations of kings, and of abbesses and virgins, and other blessings for women were in use long before rites were developed for queens. Kings' wives had also long been fulfilling the roles pertaining to queenship without benefit of royal unction. The work of Hincmar and Charles the Bald, and the interest they demonstrated in the functions and potential of queenship, suggested to them the expedience of ritual queen-making. The Hincmarian style of *ordo* was not adopted generally, and the *ordines* which survive are all of non-Reims provenance. However, the fact that queen-making *ordines* were developed, copied and used from this period suggests that the intellectual climate of the reign of Charles the Bald, fostered the development and use of queen-making *ordines*.

During the course of my research, some doubt was expressed by colleagues as to whether there was 'such a thing as queenship' in the early medieval period. Even if one does not regard the office and functions of the early medieval queen as elements of queenship, the preceding chapters show that there was an awareness of its conceptual aspects among contemporaries. Though no treatises were ever written defining the concepts which pertained to the queen, there can be no doubt that contemporaries saw the queen as bearing certain virtues and prestige, as fulfilling certain roles, and as being entitled to appropriate treatment, which seems to imply something which should be called queenship. And from the time that anointing became necessary to the consecration of the queen, the idea of queenship could not be separated from the act of queen-making.

APPENDIX

THE 'JUDITH' *ORDO*¹

Benedictio super reginam,
quam Edelulfus rex accepit in uxorem.

Nubas in Christo obnupta nube caelesti et refrigerata gratia spiritali ac protecta ab omni illicita concupiscentia; pangas foedus cum oculis tuis, ut non videas alienum virum ad concupiscendum eum et non moecheris in corpore vel corde tuo; et avertas oculos tuos, ne videant vanitatem, quatenus in via Domini vivificeris, ut possis dicere cum propheta: 'Ad te levavi oculos meos, qui habitas in caelis'; et 'Levavi oculos meos in montes, unde veniat auxilium mihi'. Per conditorem et redemptorem ac dominum nostrum Iesum Christum, qui cum Patre et Spiritu sancto vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum.

Benedic, Domine, has dotes, et accipientes tua benedictione dotare digneris, ut coniugii fidem et thorum immaculatam servantes sanctorum patriarcharum adscisci mereantur consortio. Per Dominum.

Accipe anulum, fidei et dilectionis signum atque coniugalis coniunctionis vinculum, ut 'non separet homo, quos coniungit Deus', qui vivit et regnat in omnia saecula saeculorum.

Despondeo te uni viro virginum castam atque pudicam, futuram coniugem, ut sanctae mulieres fuere viris suis, Sarra, Rebecca, Rachel, Hester, Iudith, Anna, Noëmi, favente auctore et sanctificatore nuptiarum Iesu Christo domino nostro, qui vivit et regnat in saecula saeculorum.

Deus, qui in mundi crescentis exordio multiplicandae proli benedixisti, propitiare supplicationibus nostris et huic famulo tuo et huic famulae tuae opem tuae benedictionis infunde, ut in coniugali consortio secundum beneplacitum tuum affectu compari, mente consimili, sanctitate mutua copulentur. Dita eos fructibus sanctis et operibus benedictis. Fac illos talem sobolem generare, quae ad tui paradisi pertineat hereditatem. Aperi, Domine, ianuas coeli et visita eos in pace. Inriga terram eorum, ut germinet fructum spiritalem. Sanctifica eos, qui datus es nobis ex virgine, et praesta eis tempora salutis, quae ante tuum adventum praedixit sanctus propheta Iohannes, ut hic fideliter credant et beate viventes vitam et regnum consequantur aeternum, gratia tua, Christe salvator noster, qui cum Deo patre in unitate Spiritus sancti vivis et regnas Deus per omnia.

Benedictio reginae.

Te invocamus, Domine sancte, pater omnipotens, aeterne Dues, ut hanc famulam tuam, quam tuae divinae dispensationis providentia in praesentem diem iuvenali flore laetantem crescere concessisti, tuae pietatis dono ditatam plenam veritatis de die in diem coram te et hominibus ad meliora semper proficere facias, ut in regimine suo gratiae supernae largitatem congaudens suscipiat et misericordiae tuae muro adversitate undique munita cum pace propitiationis vivere mereatur. Per Dominum.

Sursum corda.

Domine sancte, pater omnipotens, aeterne Deus, electorum fortitudo et humilium celsitudo, qui in primordio per effusionem diluvii crimina mundi purgari voluisti et per columbam ramum olivae portantem pacem terris redditam demonstrasti, iterum Aaron famulum tuum per unctionem olei sacerdotem unxisti et postea per huius unguenti infusionem ad regendum populum Israeliticum sacerdotes, reges et prophetas perfecisti vultumque ecclesiae in oleo exhilarandum prophetica famuli tui voce David esse praedixisti; qui hoc etiam unguento famulae tuae Iudith ad liberationem servorum

¹*MGH Capit. II pars 2, pp.425-7.*

tuorum et confusionem inimicorum vultum exhilarasti et ancillae tuae Hester faciem hac spiritali misericordiae tuae unctione adeo lucifluam reddidisti, ut efferatum cor regis ad misericordiam et salvationem in te credentium ipsius precibus inclinaret: te quaesumus, omnipotens Deus, ut per huius creaturae pinguedinem, columbae pace, simplicitate ac pudicitia decoram efficias. Per dominum nostrum Iesum Christum filium tuum, qui venturus est iudicare.

Coronatio.

Gloria et honore coronet te Dominus, et ponat super caput tuum coronam de spiritali lapide pretioso, ut, quicquid in fulgore auri et in vario nitore gemmarum significatur, hoc in tuis moribus, hoc in actibus semper refulgeat. Quod ipse praestare dignetur, cui est honor et gloria in saecula saeculorum.

Benedictiones.

Benedic, Domine, hanc famulam tuam, qui regna regum a saeculo moderaris. Amen. Opera manuum illius suscipe, et benedictione tua terris eius de pomis fructuum caeli et rore atque abyso subiacente repleatur. Amen.

De vertice antiquorum montium et collium aeternorum, de frugibus terrae et plenitudine eius tua benedictione laetetur. Amen.

Benedictio illius, qui apparuit in rubo, veniat super caput eius. Da ei de rore caeli et de pinguedine terrae abundantiam frumenti et vini, ut serviant illi ac semini eius populi et in honore tuo tribus illam et semen eius adorent. Amen.

Reple eam benedictionibus uberum et vulvae. Benedictiones patrum antiquorum confortatae sint super eam et super semen eius, sicut promisisti servo tuo Abrahae et semini eius in saecula. Amen.

Concede, quaesumus, omnipotens et misericors Deus, ut haec dona tua, quae fideles tui acceperunt de manu tua, dantibus, accipientibus et dispensantibus ad praesentis vitae subsidium ac redemptionem animarum atque ad vitam capessendam proficiant sempiternam. Per Dominum.

THE 'HERMINTRUDIS' ORDO²

Adlocutio duorum episcoporum in ecclesia sancti Medardi,
quando Hermintrudis fuit consecrata in reginam.

Volumus vos scire, fratres, quia dominus et senior noster Karolus rex gloriosus nostrae humilitatis petiit devotionem, ut auctoritate ministerii nobis a Deo conlati, sicut ipse in regem est unctus et consecratus episcopali auctoritate, unctione sacra et benedictione, veluti in scripturis legimus Dominum praecepisse, ut reges ungerentur et sacrarentur in regiam potestatem, ita uxorem suam dominam nostram in nomine reginae benedicamus, sicut et a sede apostolica et a nostris decessoribus antea de aliis factum comperimus. Et ut non vobis sit mirum, quare hoc petat, fraternitati vestrae rationem reddere maturamus: videlicet quia, sicut multis est cognitum, Deus omnipotens sua gratia istud regnum in manus suorum antecessorum mirabiliter adunavit, quod ipsi decessores sui nobiliter gubernaverunt et per successiones sua progenies usque ad haec tempora rexit. Et isti nostro seniori Deus filios, sicut vobis notum est, dedit, in quorum nobilitate ad sanctam ecclesiam et regnum, quod Deus illi ad regendum commisit, fideles illius spem maximam se habere sunt gratulati. De quibus ipse aliquos Deo obtulit, ut etiam de fructu ventris sui oblationem Deo offerret; aliquos Deus adhuc aetate immatura sua gratia de hoc seculo rapuit, 'ne', ut scriptum est, 'malitia mutaret corda eorum'; aliquibus autem, quod vos non latet, suo iudicio talem passionem permisit incurrere, sicut fideles illius agnoscuntur dolere. Propterea petit benedictionem episcopalem super uxorem suam venire, ut talem sobolem ei Dominus de illa dignetur donare, unde sancta ecclesia solatium et regnum necessariam defensionem et fideles illius desiderabile adiutorium et ista christianitas optabilem tranquillitatem et legem atque iustitiam cum illis, quos adhuc habet annuente et cooperante Domino possit habere. Et de hoc in sanctis scripturis habemus auctoritatem, quia, sicut Dominus ad Abraham dixit: 'In semine tuo benedicentur omnes gentes', cui iam centenario de nonagenaria uxore Isaac filium dedit, ita et ipsum Isaac uxorem sterilem accipere fecit, ut et in hoc, sicut in multis solet facere, misericordiae suae largitatem ostenderet. Et inde dicit scriptura, quia 'deprecatus est Isaac Dominum pro uxore sua, eo quod esset sterilis', et concepit. Et non sit vobis mirum, cur antea hoc non fecit; quia, sicut sacra scriptura dicit, in primordio coniunctionis masculi et feminae dixit Dominus ad Evam: 'Ad virum tuum erit conversio tua, et ipse dominabatur tui'. Et cum iam essent moribus in legitima coniunctione maturi et provectae aetatis Abraham et Sarra et, ut sanctus Petrus dicit: 'Sarrah obediebat Abrahae dominum eum vocans', dixit Dominus ad Abraham, quod antea nec ipsi nec alio homini legimus illum dixisse: 'Omnia, quae dixerit tibi Sarrah, audi vocem eius'. Iam enim et Abraham presbyter merito vocabatur, et defecerant muliebria, id est omnis lascivitas Sarrae, et tunc acceperunt benedictionem seminis benedicti a Domino, in quo benedicuntur omnes gentes. Amen.

His ergo fulti auctoritatibus in dispensandis Dei donis, qui ab illo ministri eius sumus ad hoc constituti, ut Leo dicit, 'non debemus esse difficiles' nec devotorum petitiones negligere, maxime si ipsas petitiones evidentibus indiciis 'ex Dei viderimus inspiatione conceptas'; quia multiplex misericordia Dei ita saluti humanae subvenire decrevit, ut praecipue sacerdotum supplicationibus ipsa salus debeat obtineri. Cui operi, ut in sacris literis legimus, ipse salvator intervenit, nec unquam ab his abest, quae ministris suis exequenda commisit dicens: 'Ecce ego vobiscum sum omnibus diebus'. Et 'si quid per servitum nostram bono ordine et gratulando implemus affectu', ut Leo dicit, 'non ambigamus per Spiritum sanctum nobis fuisse donatum'. Et ideo, fratres, quoniam ita est et nostra pro vobis ministratio et vestra erga nos coniuncta devotio, ut una fiat apud Dominum supplicatio, sicut legimus, quia ad hoc constituti sunt sacerdotes, ut prius pro suis, deinde pro populi orent peccatis, et oratio fiebat sine intermissione ad Deum pro

²*MGH Capit. II pars 2, pp.453-5.*

Petro, id est pro omni episcoporum choro, orantibus nobis pro communi nostra, immo pro totius ecclesiae ac populi necessitate atque salute, commune votum etiam vestra communis prosequatur oratio apud eum, qui facit unanimes habitare in domo et vivit et regnat in secula seculorum. Amen.

Oratio.

Domine sancte, pater omnipotens, aeternae Deus, qui potestate virtutis tuae de nihilo cincta fecisti et dispositis universitatis exordiis homini ad imaginem tuam facto inseparabile mulieris adiutorium condidisti ac femineo corpori de virili dedisti carne principium docens, quia, quod ex uno placuit tibi institui, non liceat ab homine separari, respice propitius super hanc famulam tuam maritali iunctam consortio, quae tua se expetit protectione muniri. Sit in ea iugum dilectionis et pacis. Fidelis et casta nubat in Christo imitatrixque sanctarum permaneat feminarum. Sit amabilis ut Rachel viro, sapiens ut Rebecca, longaeva et fidelis ut Sarra. Nihil in ea ex actibus suis auctor praevaricationis usurpet. Nexa fidei mandatis permaneat, uni thoro iuncta contactus illicitos fugiat. Muniat infirmitatem suam robore disciplinae. Sit verecundia gravis, pudore venerabilis, doctrinis caelestibus erudita. Sit foecunda in tibi placita sobole, sit probata et innocens. Percipiat per hanc sacram misericordiae et laetitiae et exultationis olei unctionem sanitatem mentis, incolumitatem corporis, tutelam salutis, securitatem spei, corroborationem fidei, plenitudinem caritatis. Corona eam, Domine, corona iustitiae, corona eam fructibus sanctis et operibus benedictis. Sit meritis et nomine atque virtute regina adsistens in hoc seculo fide recta et operibus bonis et in futuro honore et gloria coronata a dextris regis, in vestitu bonorum operum, circumdata virtutum varietate. Fac illam talem sobolem generare, quae ad paradisi tui pertineat hereditatem. Praesta, Domine, huic famulae tuae tantum caritatis affectum et misericordiae studium atque religionis augmentum, ut tuum iugiter promereatur auxilium. Callidi serpentis ab ea venena repelle, et lorica fidei indutam scuto salutis eam defende, actus eius corrige, vitam emenda, mores compone et eam in senectute bona ad coelestia regna digneris perducere. Per eundem Dominum nostrum.

Coronet te Dominus gloria et honore et sempiterna protectione. Qui vivit et regnat.

Deus omnipotens, qui benedixit Adam et Evam dicens: 'Crescite et multiplicamini', et patriarcharum benedixit coniugia quique cum Tobia misit Raphael angelum suum, cuius ministerio daemonium effugavit a Sarra uxore ipsius, benedicat te et illam futuram uxorem tuam ut secundum praeceptum Domini 'effectu duo in carne una, quod Deus iungit, homo non separet' et det vobis benedictionem de rore caeli et de pinguedine terrae. Benedicimus enim vobis in nomine Domini, qui mittat angelos suos bonos, ut vos custodiant semper et omnem phantasiam et nequitiam atque versutiam omnium malignorum spirituum et hominum a vobis depellant et ab omni inquinamento omnis adulterii omnibusque insidiis humanis et diabolicis protegant, muniant et defendant gratia domini nostri Iesu Christi, qui amorem et timorem suum iugiter cordibus vestris infundat, ut consenescat pariter in senectute bona et videatis filios filiorum vestrorum florentes in voluntate Domini et pax vobiscum permaneat atque in fide recta ac bonis operibus et concordia bona et amore coniugali sincero necnon et in confessione sanctae trinitatis et ecclesiae catholicae communionem perseverantes ad vitam perveniatis aeternam. Quod ipse praestare dignetur, cuius regnum et imperium sine fine permanet in secula seculorum. Amen.

THE 'ERDMANN' *ORDO*³
Leningrad, MS Qv.1 #35.

Incipit ordo ad ordinandan reginam.

Veniente ea in aecclesiam prosternat se ante altare
ad agendam orationem. Expleta uero oratione. producatur
ab episcopis ad altare. Et inclinatio capite. ab archiepiscopo
dicatur super eam haec oratio:

1) Adesto Dominè supplicationibus nostris, et quod nostrae humilitatis ministerio
gerendum. sempiternae uirtutis tuae impleatur effectus. per Dominum.

Tunc inoleato capite illius ab archiepiscopo
dicat isdem pontifex:

2a) In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus sancti prosit tibi haec unctio olei. in honorem
et confirmationem aeternam. Amen.

Sequitur oratio:

3a) Omnipotens sempiterne Deus diuinum tuae benedictionis Spiritum super hanc
famulam tuam nostra oratione propitiatus infunde. ut quae per manus nostrae
impositionem hodie regina instituitur. sanctificatione tua digna et electa permaneat. et
ineffabilis gratiae tuae praesidio hic et in aeternum munita consistat. Per.

Tunc summus episcoporum accipiens anulum et digito
illius imponens dicat:

4a) Accipe anulum fidei. signaculum sanctae Trinitatis. quo possis omnes hereticas
prauitates deuitare. barbaras quoque gentes uirtute tibi praestita ad agnitionem ueritatis
aduocare.

Sequitur Oratio:

5a) Deus cuius est omnis potestas. omnisque dignitas. da famulae tuae illius fidei signo
prosperum suae dignitatis effectum. quo semper firma maneat. tibi que iugiter placere
contendat. Per.

Tunc imponatur corona capiti illius.
atque dicatur:

6a) Accipe coronam gloriae. honorem iocunditatis. qua splendida fulgeas. et aeterna
exultatione coroneris.

Sequitur Oratio:

7a) Omnipotens sempiterne Deus. fons et origo omnium bonorum. et cunctorum dator
prouectuum. tribue quaesumus huic famulae tuae adeptam bene gerere dignitatem. et
a te sibi prestitam in eam bonis operibus corrobora gloriam. Per Dominum nostrum.

Eo die offerre et communicare debet.

³*Les Manuscrits Latins du Ve au VIIIe Siècles conservés à la Bibliothèque Impériale de Saint-Petersbourg* Ed. A Staerk (St. Petersburg, 1910).

RATOLDUS PONTIFICAL⁴
Paris, BN 12052.

Item ad Reginam Benedicendam.

Debet enim adduci in ecclesiam et prosterni ante altare. Eleuata ab oratione ab episcopis et inclinato capite, dicat archiepiscopus hanc orationem.

1) Adesto, Domine, ... impleatur effectum. Per.⁵

Tunc debet caput eius ungui oleo.

2a) In nomine Patris ... confirmationem aeternam.

Sequitur oratio post unctionem.

3b) Omnipotens sempiternus Deus, affluentem spiritum super hanc famulam tuam nostra oratione propitiatus infunde, ut, quae per manus nostrae impositionem hodie regina instituitur, sanctificatione tua digna et electa permaneat, ut numquam postmodum de tua gratia separetur indigna. Per.

Tunc debet ei anulus mitti digito.

4a) Accipe anulum, ... ueritatis aduocare.

Sequitur oratio.

5a) Deus, cuius est omnis potestas ... placere contendat.

Tunc debet imponi corona in capite.

6a) Accipe coronam ... exultatione coroneris. Per Dominum.

Item oratio.

7a) Omnium, Domine fons bonorum, ... in eam bonis operibus corrobora gloriam. Per Dominum.

⁴*Ritus olim observatus in Unctione Regum Francorum. Ex Codice Ratoldi, PL 78, cols.260f.*

⁵Where a prayer formula remains unchanged from a formula represented in an earlier *ordo*, it will not be written out again in full.

PONTIFICAL OF ARCHBISHOP ROBERT⁶
Rouen, BM Y7.

Incipit Consecratio Reginae.
Ab Episcopo Dicenda.

2a) In nomine patris ... confirmationem aeternam.

Sequatur oratio.

3b) Omnipotens sempiternae deus. affluentem spiritum super famulam tuam ... ut
numquam postmodum de tua gratia separetur indigna.

Hic detur anulus.

4a) Accipe anulum ... tibi premere et ad agnitionem ueritatis aduocare.

Sequatur oratio.

5a) Deus cuius est omnis potestas ... da famulae tuae .N. signo ... placere contendat.
Per.

Hic coronetur.

6a) Accipe coronam ... exultatione coroneris. per dominum.

Sequatur oratio.

7b) Omnium dominum fons bonorum ... tribue famulae tuae .N. adeptam bene regere
dignitatem. ... corroborare gloriam. per dominum.

⁶*Benedictional of Archbishop Robert* Ed. H.A. Wilson (London, 1903), p.148.

THE SHERBORNE PONTIFICAL⁷

Paris, BN lat. 943.

Quam ~~consecrat~~ regine sequitur. quæ propter honorificentiam
ab episcopo sacri unguinis oleo super uerticem perfundenda est.
et in ecclesia coram optimatibus ut in sequenti pagina demonstratur.
cum condigno honore regia celsitudine in regalis thori consortium
benedicatur et consecretur. sed et hanc etiam anulo pro integritate
fidei et corona pro aeternitatis gloria decorari decernimus.

Incipit consecratio regine. ab episcopo ut sacerdote.

2a) In nomine patris ... confirmationem aeternum.

Sequatur haec oratio.

3b) Omnipotens sempiternus deus. affluentem spiritum tuae benedictionis super famulam
... ut numquam postmodum de tua gratia separetur indigna. per dominum.

Hic detur ei anulus.

4a) Accipe anulum fidei. signaculum sanctae trinitatis. quo possis ... et ad agnitionem
ueritatis aduocare.

Oratio.

5a) Deus cuius est omnis potestas ... placere contendat. per dominum.

Hic coronetur.

6a) Accipe coronam gloriae ... exultatione coroneris. per dominum.

Sequatur oratio.

7b) Omnium domine fons bonorum ... tribue famulae tuae .N. adeptam bene regere
dignitatem. et a te sibi prestatam. in ea bonis operibus corroborare gloriam. per.

⁷Paris, BN. lat. 943, ff.74f.

PONTIFICAL OF BISHOP SAMPSON⁸
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 146.

Quam consecratio reginae sequitur. quae propter honorificentiam
ab episcopo sacri unguinis oleo super verticem fundenda est.
et in aecclesia coram optimatibus ut in sequenti pagina demonstratur.
cum condigno honore regia celsitudine in regalis thori consortium
benedicatur et consecretur. sed et hanc etiam anulo pro integritate
fidei et corona pro aeternitatis gloria decorari decernimus.

Incipit consecratio reginae. ab episcopo
uel presbitero dicenda.

2a) In nomine patris ... confirmationem aeternam.

Oratio.

3b) Omnipotens sempiterne deus. affluentem spiritum ... separetur indigna. per.

Hic detur anulus.

4a) Accipe anulum fidei ... tibi premere. et ad agnitionem ueritatis aduocare.

Sequatur oratio.

5a) Deus cuius est ... placere contendat. per.

Hic coronetur.

6a) Accipe coronam ... exultatione coroneris. per.

Oratio.

7b) Omnium dominum fons bonorum ... corrobor^{ae} gloriam. per.

⁸Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 146, pp.148-50. Also in *English Coronation Records* Ed.
L.G.W. Legg (Westminster, 1901), pp.21-22.

THE ANDERSON PONTIFICAL⁹
London, BL Addit. 57337.

Quam consecratio regine sequitur. quæ propter honorificentiam
ab episcopo sacri unguinis oleo super uerticem perfundenda est.
et in ecclesia coram optimatibus ut in sequenti pagina demonstratur.
cum condigno honore regia celsitudine in regalis thori consortium
benedicatur et consecretur. sed et hanc etiam anulo pro integritate
fidei et corona pro aeternitatis gloria decorari decernimus.

Incipit consecratio regine. ab episcopo
uel presbitero dicenda.

2a) In nomine patris ... confirmationem aeternam.

Sequatur oratio.

3b) Omnipotens sempiterne deus ... separetur indigna. per.

Hic detur anulus.

4a) Accipe anulum fidei ... ueritatis aduocare.

Sequatur oratio.

5a) Deus cuius est ... placere contendat. per.

Hic coronetur.

6a) Accipe coronam ... exultatione coroneris. per.

Oratio.

7b) Omnium domine fons bonorum ... corroborare gloriam. per.

⁹London, BL Addit. 57337, f.63.

CLAUDIUS II *ORDO*¹⁰
London, BL Cotton Claudius A3.

Quam sequatur consecratio regine que propter honorificentiam
ab episcopo sacri unguinis oleo super verticem perfundenda est.
et in ecclesia coram optimatibus cum condigno honore
et regia celsitudine in regalis thori consortium benedicenda
et consecranda est. que etiam anulo pro integritate fidei. et
corona pro eternitatis gloria decoranda est.

Incipit consecratio regine ab episcopo dicenda est.

2a) In nomine patris ... confirmationem aeternam in secula saeculorum. Amen.

Oratio.

3b) Omnipotens sempiterne deus. affluentem ... separetur indigna. per dominum.

Hic detur ei anulus.

4a) Accipe anulum fidei ... ueritatis aduocare. praestante.

Alia.

5a) Deus cuius est ... placere contendat. per dominum.

Hic coronetur.

6a) Accipe coronam gloriae ... exultatione coroneris. per.

Alia.

7b) Omnium domine fons bonorum ... corroborare gloriam per dominum nostrum.

¹⁰London, BL Cotton Claudius A.3, ff.16v-17v. Also in *The Claudius Pontificals* Ed. D.H. Turner (London, 1971), pp.95-6.

PONTIFICAL OF CANTERBURY¹¹
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 44.

Quam sequitur consecratio reginae. quae propter honorificentiam
ab episcopo sacri unguinis oleo super uerticem perfundenda est.
et in ecclesia coram optimamus [sic.] cum condigno honore
et regia celsitudine in regalis thori consortium benedicenda
et consecranda est. quae etiam anulo pro integritate fidei.
et corona pro aeternitatis gloria decoranda est.

incipit consecratio regine ab episcopo dicenda.

2b) In nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti. prosit tibi haec unctio olei in honorem.
et recte fidei confirmationem aeternam. in secula seculorum amen.

exinde canatur antiphona. Benedicat te deus.

Quam sequatur oratio.

3b) Omnipotens sempiternus deus. affluentem ... separetur indigna. per dominum.

postea moduletur.

Ant. Letur gens anglica domini imperio regenda et regine
uirtutis prudentia gubernanda. quam regum glorioso
subarrauit fidei anulo alleluia.

Subsequente oratio hac.

5a) Deus cuius est ... placere contendat. per.

Hic coronetur.

6a) Accipe coronam gloriae. Honorem quoque iocunditatis. ut splendida fulgeas. et
eterna a domino exultatione coroneris. qui uiuit et regnat.

Post datam reginae coronam. cantetur haec antiphona.

Ant. Hodie nobis dei prouidentia. caeli stillauerunt karismata.
hodie coronatur angli saxonica diuine uirtutis gloria. hodie
letamini iocunditate in regis et regine consecratione. hinc
deo gloriam promamus et tota deuotione dicamus alleluia.

Hanc sequatur oratio.

7b) Omnium domine fons bonorum ... in ea dignare bonis operibus corroborare gloriam.
qui uiuis et regnas deus.

In consummatione consecrationis reginae. haec benedictio
super eam dicatur.

8) Benedictionis suae dominus omnipotens ancillae suae uidelicet reginae nostrae
conferat largitionem. qui regalis imperii te uoluit esse participem et in suae uoluntatis
desiderio eam semper faciat perseuerabilem. Amen.

¹¹Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 44, p.305. Also in *Three Coronation Orders* Ed. J.W. Legg (London, 1900), pp.62-63.

Quique eam sua miseratione reginam constituit in populo. tranquillitatem pacis tribuat in tempore tuo. atque omnium bonorum affluentiam iure perpetuo. Amen.

Annuat sic eam per bona uoluntate fideliter transire terrena temporalia. quatinus cum omnibus sanctis capere merearis perhennia quibus iugiter aeternae uitae cum domino perfruaris gaudia. Amen.

Quod ipse.

THE 'ROMANO-GERMANIC' *ORDO*¹²
Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 163.

Benedictio Regine in ingressu ecclesia.

9a) Omnipotens sempiternus deus fons et origo totius bonitatis. qui feminei sexus fragilitatem nequaquam reprobando auersaris. sed dignanter comprobando propitius eligis. et qui infirma mundi eligendo fortia quaeque confundere decreuisti. quique etiam glorie uirtutisque tue. triumphum in manu iudaeae plebi de hoste seuissimo resignare uoluisti. respice quaesumus preces humilitatis nostrae. et [super hanc famulam tuam ill. quam supplici deuotione in reginam]¹³eligimus, benedictionum tuarum dona multiplica. eamque dexterae tuae potentiae semper et ubique circumda. ut umbone munimus tui undique secus firmiter protecta. uisibilis seu inuisibilis hostis nequitas triumphaliter expugnare ualeat. et una cum sara atque rebecca. [lia] et rachel beatis reuerendisque feminis fructu uteris sui fecundari. seu gratulari mereatur. addecorem totius regni statumque sanctae dei ecclesiae regendum nec non protegendum. Per christum dominum nostrum qui ex intemerato beatae mariae uirginis utero nasci. uisitare ac renouare hunc dignatus est mundum. qui tecum uiuit et gloriatur deus in unitate spiritus sancti. Per immortalia secula seculorum. Amen.

Item benedictio eiusdem ante altare.

10a) Deus qui solus habes immortalitatem. lucemque habitas inaccessibilem. cuius prouidentia in tua dispositione non fallitur. qui fecisti quae futura sunt. et uocas ea quae non sunt tanquam ea quae sunt. qui superbos equo de principatu moderamine deicis. atque humiles dignanter in sublime prouehis. ineffabilem misericordiam tuam supplices exoramus. ut sicut hester reginam israelis causa salutis de captiuitatis suae compede solutam ad regis assueri thalamum regni sui consortium transire fecisti. ita hanc famulam tuam .N. humilitatis nostrae benedictione christiane plebis gratia salutis addignam sublimemque regis nostri copulam regni sui participem misericorditer transire concedas. et ut in regalis federe coniugii semper manens pudica. proximam uirginitati palmam continere queat. tibi quoque deo uiuo et uero in omnibus et super omnia iugiter placere desideret. [et te inspirante quae tibi placita sunt toto corde perficiat.] Per.

In sacri olei unctione.

11) Spiritus sancti gratia humilitatis nostrae officio. in te copiosa descendat. ut sicut manibus nostris indignis oleo materiali oblita pinguescis exterius. ita eius inuisibili unguine delibuta impiguarum merearis interius. eiusque spiritali unctione perfectissime semper imbuta. et illicita declinare tota mente et spernere discas seu ualeas. et utilia anime tuae iugiter cogitare. optare atque operari queas. auxiliante domino nostro iesu christo. qui cum patre et eodem spiritu sancto uiuit et regnat deus. in secula seculorum.

Ad corone impositionem.

12) Officio indignitatis nostrae seu congregationis in reginam benedicta. accipe coronam regalis excellentiae. quae licet ab indignis. episcoporum tamen manibus capiti tuo imponitur. Unde sicut exterius auro et gemmis redimita enites. ita et interius auro

¹²Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 163, pp.198-9. See also R. Elze Ed., *Ordines Coronationis Imperialis* (Hanover, 1960), pp.6-9 for a continental exemplar of this *ordo*.

¹³The sections in square brackets occur in some of the continental manuscripts of this *ordo*, but not in this Anglo-Saxon exemplar.

sapientie uirtutum que gemmis decorari contendas. quatinus post occasum huius seculi cum prudentibus uirginibus sponso perenni domino nostro iesu christo. [digno et laudabiliter occurrens regiam caelestis aulae merearis ingredi ianuam. Auxiliante eodem domino nostro iesu christo.] qui cum patre et spiritu sancto uiuit et regnat deus. per infinita secula seculorum. amen. (explicati)

THE WINCHESTER PONTIFICAL¹⁴
Cambridge UL Ee.2.3.

Incipit consecratio regine. que propter honorificentiam
regis ab episcopo sacro oleo super uerticem perfundenda est.
et in ecclesia coram optimatibus ante altare deducenda.

10) Deus qui solus habes immortalitatem lucemque ... et super omnia iugiter placere
desideret. et te inspirante que tibi placita sunt toto corde perficiat. Per.

Hic unguatur oleo Sancto.

2a) In nomine patris ... et confirmationem eternam in secula seculorum. Amen.

Oratio.

3b) Omnipotens sempiterne deus affluentem ... separetur indigna.

Hic detur anulus.

4c) Accipe anulum fidei. signaculum sinceritatis quo possis omnes hereticas ... ueritatis
aduocare.

Sequitur oratio.

5a) Deus cuius est ... placere contendat. Per dominum.

Benedictio corone.

13) Deus tuorum corona fidelium. Require retro.

[From f.125v of the same manuscript: Deus tuorum corona fidelium qui in capitibus
eorum ponis coronam de lapide precioso. benedic + et sanctifica + coronam istam.
quatinus sicut ipsa diuersis preciosisque lapidibus adornatur. sic famulus tuus .N.
gestator ipsius mulitplici pretiosarum uirtutum munere tua largiente gratia repleatur.
Per.]

Hic coronetur.

6a) Accipe coronam glorie. honorem ... coroneris.

Oratio.

7b) Omnuim domine fons bonorum ... corrobore gloriam.

¹⁴Cambridge, University Library Ee.2.3, ff.128-129.

CLAUDIUS III *ORDO*¹⁵
London, BL Cotton Claudius A3.

Benedictio regine que ab episcopo in ecclesia coram
optimatibus ante altare facienda est.

Oratio.

10) Deus qui solus habes immortalitatem ... toto corde proficiat. per dominum.

Hic effundatur oleum sanctum super uerticem ipsius
in modum crucis dicente episcopo.

2a) In nomine patris ... confirmationem eternam in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Sequatur oratio.

3b) Omnipotens sempiterne deus. affluentem ... separetur indigna. per dominum.

Hic detur anulus dicente episcopo.

4c) Accipe anulum fidei. signaculum sinceritatis ... ueritatis aduocare.

Sequitur oratio.

5a) Deus cuius est omnis potestas ... placere contendat.

Benedictio corone regie.

13) Deus tuorum corona fidelium. ut supra.¹⁶

Hic coronetur.

6a) Accipe coronam glorie. et honorem ... exultatione coroneris.

Sequatur oratio.

7b) Omnium domine fons bonorum ... corroborare gloriam. per dominum.

¹⁵London, BL Cotton Claudius A3, ff.28-29v. Also in *Claudius Pontificals* Ed. D.H. Turner (London, 1971), pp.121-2.

¹⁶The complete formula appears in the preceding king-making *ordo*, and the letter *a* has been inserted above the words *famulus tuus* rendering the prayer suitable for use for the queen.

MAGDALEN PONTIFICAL¹⁷
Oxford, Magdalen College 226.

Incipit consecratio regine. Quae propter honorificentiam
regis ab episcopo sacro oleo super uerticem perfundenda
est. et in ecclesia coram obtimatibus ante
altare benedicenda.

10) Deus qui solus habes immortalitatem ... toto corde perficiat. Per.

Hic unguatur oleo sancto.

2a) In nomine patris ... confirmationem eternam in secula seculorum.

Oratio.

3b) Omnipotens sempiternus deus. affluentem ... separetur indigna.

Hic detur anulus.

4c) Accipe anulum fidei. signaculum sinceritatis ... ueritatis aduocare.

Sequatur oratio.

5a) Deus cuius est omnis potestas ... placere contendat. Per.

Hic coronetur.

6a) Accipe coronam glorie ... exultatione coroneris.

Sequatur oratio.

7b) Omnium domine fons bonorum ... corroborare gloriam. Per.

Benedictio corone regie.

13) Deus tuorum corona fidelium. qui in capitibus eorum ponis coronam de lapide
pretioso. benedic et sanctifica coronam istam. quatinus sicut ipsa diuersis preciosisque
lapidibus adornatur. sic famulus tuus gestator¹⁸ ipsius multiplici pretiosarum uirtutum
munere tua largiente gratia repleatur. Per dominum.

¹⁷*Pontifical of Magdalen College* Ed. H.A. Wilson (London, 1910), pp.95-6.

¹⁸Feminine endings have been added above the line for these last three words.

TIBERIUS PONTIFICAL¹⁹
London, Cotton Tiberius B8.

Benedictio regine dicenda in ingressu ecclesiae secundum
ordinem romanum.

9) Omnipotens sempiterne deus. fons et origo ... in unitate spiritus sancti.
perimmortalia secula seculorum. Amen.

Post hanc sequitur benedictio dicenda ante altare.

10) Deus qui solus habes immortalitatem ... toto corde perficiat. per.

Item post hanc in sacri olei unctione. sequitur hec oratio.

11) Spiritus sancti gratia humilitatis ... uiuit et regnat deus in secula seculorum. amen.

Hic unguatur oleo sancto.

2a) In nomine patris ... confirmationem eternam in secula seculorum. amen.

Oratio.

3b) Omnipotens sempiterne deus. affluentem ... separetur indigna. Per.

Hic detur anulus.

4c) Accipe anulum fidei. signaculum sinceritatis ... ueritatis aduocare. Per.

Sequitur oratio.

5a) Deus cuius est omni potestas ... placere contendat. per dominum.

Benedictio corone.

13) Deus tuorum corona fidelium. ... sic famula tua .N. gestatrix ipsius. multiplici
preciosarum uirtutum munere tua largiente gratia repleatur. per dominum.

Item in eodem ordine. ad corone impositionem.

Postquam benedicta fuerit coronabitur.

6a) Accipe coronam glorie ... exultatione coroneris. Per.

Alia.

12) Officio indignitatis ... per infinita secula seculorum. amen.

Oratio.

7b) Omnium domine fons bonorum ... corroborare gloriam. per dominum nostrum
ihesum christum.

¹⁹London, BL Cotton Tiberius B8, ff.105-105v. Also in *English Coronation Records* Ed. L.G.W. Legg (Westminster, 1901), pp.37-39.

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