

CROSSING CONQUESTS: POLYGLOT ROYAL WOMEN AND LITERARY CULTURE IN ELEVENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND

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In the early 1080s, the Flemish monk, long-term resident of England, and prolific hagiographer of Anglo-Saxon saints Goscelin wrote to encourage Eve, a young nun who had recently left England for a hermitage in Angers. Meditating on earthly transience, he offered her a sympathetic, gendered, and specific image of exile, as he wrote:

Filie regum et principum in deliciis a lacte nutrite, nichil scientes preter gloriam et felicitatem natalitie terre, nubunt in exeras nationes, et aliena regna, barbaros mores et ignotas linguas disciture, seuisque dominis ac repugnantibus a naturali usu legibus seruiture, sicut nuper filia marchisi Flandrensiū nupsit Cunuto regi Danorum.¹

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¹ Goscelin, *Liber confortatorius*, ed. by C. H. Talbot, *Analecta Monastica*, series 3, 37 (1955), 1–117 (p. 41). ‘The daughters of kings and princes, raised from infancy in all delights, knowing nothing beyond the splendors and the happiness of their homeland, marry into foreign nations and far-away kingdoms. They are destined to learn barbarous customs and strange languages, and to serve fierce lords and repugnant laws that go against nature, as for instance recently the daughter of the Margrave of Flanders married King Knut of Denmark’ (*The Book of Encouragement and Consolation (Liber confortatorius): The Letter of Goscelin to the Recluse Eva*, trans. by Monika Otter (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 41–42). For details of Goscelin’s life, see *The Life of King Edward Who Rests at Westminster*, ed. by Frank Barlow, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1992), pp. 133–45 (hereafter *VE*). For discussion of this passage and Goscelin’s interest in language, see Elisabeth van Houts, ‘The Flemish Contribution to Biographical Writing in England in the Eleventh Century’, in *Writing*

Goscelin chose not to focus on his own life as an exile, but rather to develop an image consonant with Eve's multilingualism and expectations of queenship. Even before her departure for France, this Latinate daughter of a Danish father and a Lotharingian mother, whom Goscelin identified as English, had experienced considerable linguistic diversity. Moreover, as a girl, who entered the royal nunnery of Wilton by 1065, Eve weathered the upheavals of the Norman Conquest alongside women from the Anglo-Saxon royal families of Edward the Confessor and Harold Godwinson. She was thus in a position to know about the lives of royal women, including Queen Edith, Harold's daughter Gunnhild, and perhaps also princess Margaret, the Hungarian-born sister of Edgar Ætheling; indeed she may have known these women personally.²

Goscelin, in addressing a former nun of Wilton, was alert to the linguistic and cultural difficulties of marriage abroad. In this article, I will follow his lead to focus on the use which eleventh-century royal women — some of them Wilton educated — made of Latin in negotiating marriage abroad and the linguistic impact of the Danish and Norman conquests. My main concern will lie with the literary consequences of a series of political events which brought Latin and multiple vernaculars together as languages of English court culture in the eleventh century. This period is often seen as an interlude between Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman literary cultures; however, I will argue that, when we look at Latin texts through the lenses of multilingualism and gender, the eleventh century emerges as an intensely creative period for English literature.

My dual focus on gender and multilingualism requires attention to a number of intertwined threads throughout this article, including (1) the multilingualism of virtually all royal women in eleventh-century England, (2) women's social networks and cross-generational ties, (3) marriage patterns of royal women, (4) lay women's education and the role their Latinity played in a political landscape dominated by conquests, and finally (5) the increasing importance of the court, alongside the cloister, as a location of innovative literary culture. In bringing together the threads of my argument, I am building on the foundational work of Janet Nelson and Pauline Stafford on queenship to draw out the integral and distinctive role

Medieval Biography: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow, ed. by D. Bates, J. Crick, and S. Hamilton (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 122–24. (I am grateful to the author for kindly sending me this rich article in typescript as I finished this piece.)

² See below, pp. 187–91. Goscelin, *Liber*, ed. by Talbot, pp. 28–29 and 41 and in *Writing the Wilton Women: Goscelin's Legend of Edith and Liber confortatorius*, ed. by Stephanie Hollis (Turnhout, 2004), pp. 2–11 and 254. Hollis's book has been invaluable in the preparation of this essay.

royal women played in the growth of secular literary culture.³ Throughout the development of this argument, I have aimed to be alert, following Judith Bennett, to the continuities, as well as the discontinuities, of women's experience amidst political and social change. Women crossed the conquests of eleventh-century England differently than did men, especially, though not solely, because marriage to an Anglo-Saxon woman could bestow legitimacy on a conqueror — as for example when Cnut married Emma in 1017 and when, at the turn of the twelfth century, Henry I married the Anglo-Saxon princess Edith/Matilda.⁴

Recognition of the centrality of trilingualism to the vibrancy — intellectual, aesthetic, social, and political — of the literary culture of Norman England now shapes the study of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁵ Multilingualism, however, was just as much, if not more, a feature of the court in the previous century, with English, Danish, and French being spoken and contact extending to Flemish and Welsh speakers. In this context, as well as continuing as an ecclesiastical and scholarly language, Latin re-emerged as the language of history-writing and poetry, finding secular audiences. A consideration of the social and educational ties which unite the leading English royal women of the eleventh century in their patronage of Latin texts will allow for the exploration of the role multilingualism played in

³ Key discussions of queens appear in Nelson's essay collections, *Politics and Ritual in Early Medieval Europe* (London, 1985), *The Frankish World, 750–900* (London, 1996), and *Rulers and Ruling Families in Early Medieval Europe* (Aldershot, 1999) and in Stafford's *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1983) and *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford, 1997). Miriam Büttner's PhD thesis, which I have consulted in the final stages of preparing this study, makes important contributions to the study of the education of royal women: 'Education of Queens in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Cambridge, 2003).

⁴ Judith Bennett, 'Confronting Continuity', *Journal of Women's History*, 9 (1997), 73–94; Eleanor Searle, 'Women and the Legitimation of Succession at the Norman Conquest', *ANS*, 3 (1980), 159–70 and 226–29; Pauline Stafford, 'Chronicle D, 1067 and Women: Gendering Conquest in Eleventh-Century England', in *Anglo-Saxons: Studies Presented to Cyril Roy Hart*, ed. by Simon Keynes and Alfred Smyth (Dublin, 2005), pp. 208–23; and Jane Stevenson, 'Anglo-Latin Women Poets', in *Latin Learning and English Lore: Studies in Anglo-Saxon Literature for Michael Lapidge*, ed. by Katherine O'Brien O'Keeffe and Andy Orchard, 2 vols (Toronto, 2005), II, 86–107 (pp. 100–01).

⁵ Ian Short, 'Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England', *ANS*, 14 (1991), 229–49; Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints Lives and Women's Literary Culture: Virginity and its Authorizations* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 1–18; and the essays collected in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England c. 1100–c. 1500*, ed. by Jocelyn Wogan-Browne and others (Woodbridge, 2009).

shaping English literary culture.⁶ At the centre of this discussion will be four queens: Emma, Edith, Margaret of Scotland, and Edith/Matilda. In order to situate these women within larger social networks and historical developments, other women from their extended families will also be considered, though not in detail.

I

Before moving on to the substance of my argument about multilingual royal women, I will present three caveats that not so much qualify what is being put forward as sketch out the larger picture of which it is a part. First of all, a focus on women's linguistic skills does not imply that eleventh-century English kings and princes were not themselves also multilingual or at least capable of navigating their ways through linguistic difference: two conquests and much exiling insured that they most certainly were. For just a few examples, Æthelred was exiled in Normandy, where Edward the Confessor, his son by Emma, was raised; Godwin's son and Edith's brother Swein took refuge in Flanders, Denmark, and Ireland and went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, while another, Tostig, married Judith, daughter of Count Baldwin V of Flanders, and served as deputy commander of Saint-Omer; and Edgar Ætheling was born in Hungary, raised in the Confessor's court, and went on to establish close ties with the Conqueror's sons.⁷ However, as will be argued here, the linguistic expertise of the mothers, aunts, wives, daughters, and sisters of these men, who stood at the top of the changing elite of eleventh-century England, had a defining and direct impact on literary culture.⁸

Secondly, within the context of the European Middle Ages, England and its royal women were in no sense uniquely multilingual. Throughout the period, elite

⁶ Stevenson, 'Anglo-Latin Women Poets', p. 92.

⁷ Nicolas Hooper 'Edgar the Ætheling: Anglo-Saxon Prince, Rebel and Crusader', *ASE*, 14 (1985), 197–214; Simon Keynes, 'The Æthelings in Normandy', *ANS*, 13 (1991), 173–205; Renée Nip, 'The Political Relations between England and Flanders (1066–1128)', *ANS*, 21 (1998), 145–67 (pp. 147 and 150); and Frank Barlow, *The Godwins* (Harlow, 2002), pp. 38, 42, and 44.

⁸ For the greater education of laywomen than men before the twelfth century, see Lois Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland: A Study in Medieval Queenship* (Woodbridge, 2003), p. 43; for particulars, see Büttner, 'Education of Queens in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries'. On the importance of mother-daughter relationships among royal women (including intriguing comments on the use of literature to negotiate cultural difference), see John Carmi Parsons, 'Mothers, Daughters, Marriage, Power: Some Plantagenet Evidence, 1150–1500', in *Medieval Queenship*, ed. by John Carmi Parsons (Stroud, 1994), pp. 63–78.

women moved across linguistic borders to cement dynastic marriages: the marriages of the Ottonian princess Gerberga to the West Frankish king Louis IV, of the Greek princess Theopano to the Emperor Otto II, and of Agnes of Poitou to Emperor Henry III represent only a few high-profile examples. In the case of Agnes, contemporary clerics commented, critically, on her potential to act as cultural ambassador, bringing customs and fashions from Provence to the German court. That Agnes was a learned and pious woman and a conduit for the influence of French literary culture on Henry III's court reminds us, as well, that the multilingualism of English queens and princesses was not unusual in its impact on literary culture.⁹ However, English female royal multilingualism and learning had thus far unrecognized consequences for how we see Anglo-Saxon literary culture in the eleventh century and for its place within European literary culture across the eleventh and twelfth centuries.

Finally, both the male experience of exile and the female of foreign marriage need to be contextualized within wider European trends. Throughout Europe, the period from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries was marked by an 'aristocratic diaspora' to use Robert Bartlett's phrase. Elites, especially those from Frankish lands, like Normandy, became more mobile. This process simultaneously brought languages into contact and encouraged the emergence of a European identity of which Latin was a fundamental element, with expressions like *gens latina* (the Latin people) being used to denote Western Europeans.¹⁰ Yet even within this wider European framework, England's experience of two conquests within fifty years makes multilingualism a particular feature of this kingdom, especially its court, in the eleventh century.

⁹ Reto Bezzola, *Les Origines et la formation de la littérature courtoise en occident (500–1200)*, 3 parts in 5 vols (Paris, 1966–68), Part I, 284–86 and 290–94; C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Origins of Courtliness: Civilizing Trends and the Formation of Courtly Ideals, 939–1210* (Philadelphia, 1985), pp. 121–22; Régine Le Jan, *Femmes, pouvoir et société dans le haut Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2001), pp. 30–37. On cultural ambassadors, see Susan Groag Bell, 'Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture', in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, ed. by Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (Athens, GA, 1988), pp. 149–87, and June Hall McCash, 'The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women: An Overview', in *The Cultural Production of Medieval Women*, ed. by June Hall McCash (Athens, GA, 1996), pp. 1–49. For the use of Latin by women married across linguistic boundaries, see Büttner, 'Education of Queens in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', pp. 228–39.

¹⁰ Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change, 950–1350* (London, 1993; repr. 1994), pp. 19, 24–59, 197–204, 269–91.

II

Shifting marriage patterns across the tenth and eleventh centuries determined both the languages spoken at court and levels of education among royal women — two factors that would come to shape late Anglo-Saxon literary culture. When Æthelred married Emma of Normandy in 1002, England gained its first foreign-born royal bride since Æthelwulf married Judith, daughter of Charles the Bald, in 856. From Alfred's marriage to Ealhswith on, the kings of the united kingdom of England, which the House of Wessex forged over the course of the tenth century, married from within the English aristocracy. The absence of foreign brides becomes all the more striking when comparison is made with the Continent, where ruling dynasties were becoming closely interconnected through marriages which provided important avenues of cultural exchange. Early on in the period under discussion, although foreign brides were not coming into the West Saxon dynasty, Anglo-Saxon brides cemented Continental alliances. Alfred the Great's daughter Ælfthryth married Count Baldwin II of Flanders, and the high-status marriages of Edward the Elder's daughters created political ties which drew the Anglo-Saxon kings into the complex politics which marked the disintegration of Carolingian kingship in the West and the rise of the Ottonians in the East. Edward's daughters who did not marry entered the religious life, and in subsequent generations it became practice, as far as we can tell, to put all royal daughters in nunneries; thus the role English princesses could play as cultural ambassadors was minimized as the tenth century continued although they became more educated.¹¹ The insularity of royal marriage policy did not leave England outside of Europe — the Reform movement, of course, involved substantial exchange of clerics between England and the Continent, but the later tenth century was not a period when women were the nexus of multilingualism. Thus the arrival of Æthelred's bride Emma from Normandy represented a dramatic change that was to shape, directly, England's relationship to Europe and the literary culture of England in the eleventh century. Because of Emma's own linguistic competences and because William the Conqueror's claim to the throne stems from this marriage, it came to impact on the languages spoken in the English court for centuries to come.

¹¹ Stafford, *Queen Emma*, p. 92, and Barbara Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses* (London, 2003), p. 82. For a detailed study of the nunneries, see Sarah Foot, *Veiled Women*, 2 vols (Aldershot, 2000). On the marriage of Edward's daughters, see most recently Simon MacLean, 'Making a Difference in Tenth-Century Politics: King Athelstan's Sisters and Frankish Queenship', in *Frankland: The Franks and the World of Early Medieval Europe*, ed. by Paul Fouracre and David Ganz (Manchester, 2008), pp. 167–90.

Emma was the daughter of Richard I, duke of Normandy, and most likely his Danish wife Gunnor. The Norman court in Rouen was by this time Francophone, although Emma may also have been exposed to Danish through contact with her mother. During her marriage to Æthelred, she would have learned English. Her subsequent marriage to the Danish conqueror Cnut and her years in his court increases the likelihood that she was a Danish speaker. During her exile in Bruges from 1037 to 1040, she may have learned to speak Flemish, especially given its linguistic proximity to English. Flemish was the first language of the cleric who wrote the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* at her instigation. Emma's personal multilingualism was mirrored in the court of her son Harthacnut and, indeed, within the royal family itself. The leading nobles at Harthacnut's court included a volatile mix of Cnut's Danish followers and Englishmen. Harthacnut himself had been raised in Denmark. Towards the end of his short reign, Harthacnut recalled his Franco-phone half-brother Edward from Normandy to join him as co-king.¹²

Not only was it far from clear that the Anglo-Danish dynasty was secure under Harthacnut, Emma's own position was especially precarious. Suspected of a role in the murder of Alfred, her other son by Æthelred, she had particular reason to want to persuade Alfred's brother Edward of her innocence and of the value of his Anglo-Danish connections. Among the ways Emma chose to negotiate the factionalism of Harthacnut's court was to commission the *Encomium*. The central question here is how a history of the Anglo-Danish dynasty written in Latin could be an effective political intervention and whether its production can be seen as the active choice of its female, secular, non-Latinate patron. It has recently been argued by Simon Keynes, Andy Orchard, and myself that the *Encomium* was written for and from within the Anglo-Danish court.¹³ Thus Emma's text was

¹² *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, ed. and trans. by Alistair Campbell (London, 1949), reprinted with supplementary introduction by Simon Keynes (Cambridge, 1998). For a full discussion of the multilingual situation in which the *Encomium* was produced, see Elizabeth M. Tyler, 'Talking about History in Eleventh-Century England: The *Encomium Emmae Reginae* and the Court of Harthacnut', *EME*, 13 (2005) 359–83, esp. pp. 367–74 where full references are given; only works not listed there are cited here. My work on the *Encomium* is indebted to Stafford's *Queen Emma*. On the linguistic proximity of Flemish and Old English facilitating the literary patronage English queens bestowed on monks of St Bertin, see Elisabeth van Houts, 'Contrasts and Interaction: Neighbours of Nascent Dutch Writing: The English, Normans and Flemish (c. 1000–c. 1200)', *Queste*, 13 (2006), 3–11 (pp. 5–6).

¹³ *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, ed. and trans. by Campbell, pp. xxxix–xli, lix, and lxix; Andy Orchard, 'Literary Background to the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*', *JML*, 11 (2001), 156–83; and Tyler, 'Talking about History'.

aimed, not at learned clerics, but at lay speakers of English and Danish, and even French. The recent discovery of the version rewritten for Edward's court after Harthacnut's death further emphasizes the multilingual context of its production and reception.¹⁴ The text, viewed in its immediate linguistic context, provides an interesting opportunity to consider how multilingualism shaped Latin literary culture. Latin was attractive because it stood apart from court factionalism and could thus facilitate Emma's cause in a way that neither the Old English of the Chronicle nor the Old Norse of Cnut's poets could.¹⁵ However, regardless of the important symbolic value of Latin, if the *Encomium* were to influence opinion in Harthacnut's and Edward's courts, it would have had to have been translated extemporaneously into multiple vernaculars — a task which its clear episodic structure would have facilitated and which its prologue, addressed to Emma, implies when it represents history as written down in order to be heard.¹⁶

Emma's Continental experience may have shaped her decision to commission a Latin history. The most obvious place to look, given the identity of her *Encomiast* and her own period of exile, is Flanders. However, while eleventh-century Flanders was notable for the production of monastic histories and saints lives, lay patronage of secular history did not flourish, thus further underscoring Emma, rather than the *Encomiast*, as the instigator of the *Encomium*.¹⁷ The Norman court is likely to have exerted a more direct influence. While it is not certain that Emma grew up in this court, she certainly returned there when she and Æthelred fled the Danes in 1013. Their sons, one of whom, Edward, appears to have been a key target of the *Encomium*, spent much of their youth there. Her brothers, Duke Richard II and Robert, archbishop of Rouen, both supported Latin literary culture, including the production of Dudo of St Quentin's history of the Normans, a text which the *Encomiast* may have known. Although Dudo's work was aimed at an audience outside Normandy, this court was an audience for Latin texts, including verse,

¹⁴ Timothy Bolton, 'A Newly Emergent Mediaeval Manuscript Containing *Encomium Emmae Reginae* with the Only Known Complete Text of the Recension Prepared for King Edward the Confessor', *Mediaeval Scandinavia*, 19 (2009), 205–21, and Simon Keynes and Rosalind Love, 'Earl Godwine's Ship', *ASE*, 38 (2009), 195–97.

¹⁵ See Matthew Townend in this volume.

¹⁶ Lars Mortensen, 'Stylistic Choice in a Reborn Genre: The National Histories of Widukind of Corvey and Dudo of Saint-Quentin', in *Dudone di San Quintino*, ed. by P. Gatti and A. Degl'Innocenti (Trent, 1995), pp. 77–102 (pp. 89–90 and 99).

¹⁷ Van Houts, 'Flemish Contribution', pp. 112–14.

which, Elisabeth van Houts argues, satirized Emma's marriage to Cnut.¹⁸ Both Dudo and the poets of Richard's court name Emma's mother Gunnor as a patron, and she may thus have provided Emma with a model for using Latin literary culture to intervene in politics.¹⁹

Looking beyond issues of Latin language to how the myths and history of Rome, the 'Roman story-world', are deployed in the *Encomium* further underscores Emma's agency in the production of this text.²⁰ Not only is Emma the Encomiast's main informant about the events he recounts, as Stafford has shown, but she appears to take charge of how the Encomiast uses Trojan legends which is marked by the integration of English, Scandinavian, and classical traditions. For example, the ships which bring Cnut from Denmark to England simultaneously recall those in which Aeneas set sail for Italy and the ornamented ships of Scandinavia, familiar from later sagas. Likewise too, we can suspect Emma's influence on the way the text represents Cnut as a second Aeneas while carefully respecting Anglo-Saxon traditions of non-Trojan royal descent; no claim to Trojan ancestry is made. Emma's literary sensibilities and political sensitivities are key here rather than those of the Encomiast, which he acknowledges when he figures her as Octavian, patron of the *Aeneid*. In a multilingual environment, a non-Latinate woman turned to Latin history-writing and the legends of Rome, and in so doing she set a trend for the use of Latin texts in multilingual contexts which would continue to develop. The *Encomium* inaugurates a new phase of history writing, one that was neither wholly monastic nor, like the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, written in English. Looking at the *Encomium* from the perspective of the court's linguistic situation and its patron's gender opens up to view how multilingual queens were the impetus behind innovations in English literary culture. These innovations, moreover, point to the currency of the Roman story-world among the non-literate laity.

The movements of other royal women during the period of Anglo-Danish rule illustrates further how multilingual royal women opened up avenues for cultural exchange as they created political alliances which embedded the English court within Europe. Cnut's other wife, Ælfgifu of Northampton, also operated

¹⁸ Elisabeth van Houts, 'A Note on *Jezebel* and *Semiramis*, Two Latin Norman Poems from the Early Eleventh Century', *JML*, 2 (1992), 18–24.

¹⁹ Campbell (*Encomium Emmae Reginae*, pp. xxii and xxxiv–xxxv) suggests knowledge of Dudo, though I disagree with his assessment of the stylistic similarity of the two texts.

²⁰ For the expression 'Roman story-world', which includes both Roman myth and history and their long reception in the post-classical world, see T. P. Wiseman, *The Myths of Rome* (Exeter, 2004), esp. pp. 10–12.

internationally. She and her sons by Cnut may have gone to Denmark after his marriage to Emma. She acted as regent for her young son Swein, accompanying him to Norway when he ruled as king from 1030 to 1034. Like his father, Swein recognized the political utility of poetry and patronized skalds. One might wonder what role Ælfgifu played in this; Matthew Townend raises the ‘intriguing speculation’ that she is the woman addressed in the fragmentary poem *Sveinsflokkv*. She was, in any case, remembered in later skaldic verse and saga prose.²¹

Meanwhile, the marriages of Emma’s daughters reveal princesses were being used to foster international ties, as had not happened since the marriages of Edward the Elder’s daughters. In the pages of Guibert of Nogent’s famous early twelfth-century autobiography, we catch a glimpse of the possible cultural consequences of Godgifu’s first marriage to Drogo, count of the Vexin. Guibert develops his well-honed condemnation of simony by recounting the story of Hélinand, who became Edward the Confessor’s chaplain when he was recommended to Edith by Godgifu’s son, Walter. Despite Guibert’s contempt for Hélinand’s learning, the cleric rose to become Bishop of Laon, although he was thwarted in his attempt to become Archbishop of Reims. Here we see a French cleric moving from within the English royal court to two of the most famous centres of learning in the High Middle Ages.²² Godgifu’s gift of a gospel book to Rochester Cathedral may perhaps suggest her own literacy.²³

A much fuller picture can be proposed when we consider Gunnhild, daughter of Cnut and Emma. In 1036, Gunnhild was married to Henry III (an exceptionally learned and cultured prince whose mother took an active role in his education), before he became German emperor.²⁴ Perhaps escorted by Brihteah, bishop of

²¹ Matthew Townend, ‘Knútr and the Cult of St Óláfr: Poetry and Patronage in Eleventh-Century Norway and England’, *Viking and Medieval Scandinavia*, 1 (2005), 251–79, esp. pp. 254–57 and 266; and Timothy Bolton, ‘Ælfgifu of Northampton: Cnut the Great’s Other Woman’, *Nottingham Medieval Studies*, 51 (2007), 247–68 (p. 264).

²² Guibert of Nogent, *Autobiographie*, ed. by Edmond-René Lebande (Paris, 1981), pp. 270–72; John Williams, ‘Archbishop Manassess I of Rheims and Pope Gregory VII’, *American Historical Review*, 54 (1949), 804–24 (p. 807).

²³ London, British Library, MS Royal 1.D.3. C. R. Cheney, ‘Service-Books and Records: The Case of the “Domesday Monachorum”’, *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 56 (1983), 5–15 (p. 9, N.B. the manuscript number is misquoted), and Rebecca Rushforth, ‘The Crowland Psalter and Gundrada de Warene’, *Bodleian Library Record*, 21 (2008), 156–68 (p. 164).

²⁴ C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200* (Philadelphia, 1994), pp. 200–02; and Herwig Wolfram, *Conrad II, 990–1039: Emperor of Three Kingdoms* (University Park, PA, 2006), pp. 22 and 141.

Worcester, she arrived in the German court after an expensive send-off in England, likely via Denmark where she acquired a Danish chaplain, Timmo.²⁵ Her companions may indicate that Gunnhild was bilingual. After her death Timmo became Bishop of Hildesheim; it is recorded, in the life of his predecessor, that while he was good to his people and clergy as bishop, he was deficient in the knowledge of letters. In other words, he stood out as un-Latinate amidst the courtly bishops of Salian Germany.²⁶ Although Timmo's lack of learning suggests that we should see Gunnhild as an example of a royal daughter who was not herself Latinate (and this offers precious insight into the kind of education Emma and Cnut thought suitable for their daughter), we should not imagine that Gunnhild was cut off from the learned men who frequented Conrad II's court. A letter recounts how Bishop Azecho of Worms (famous for its cathedral school) was accustomed to visit Gunnhild — bringing her almonds to ease her homesickness. The letter also tells that Emma sent envoys to her daughter updating her on the succession crisis which followed Cnut's death.²⁷ During her time as a German queen, Gunnhild travelled as part of the itinerant court of her father-in-law Conrad II, reaching as far south as Monte Cassino, where she is recorded as receiving hospitality during a visit made by her husband and in-laws

²⁵ The marriage is recorded in many English and Continental sources, though not in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles or the *Encomium*; for examples, see Wipo, *Gesta Chounradi Imperatoris*, c. 35, ed. by Harry Bresslau, *Die Werke Wipos (Wiponis Opera)*, MGH SSRG, 61 (Hannover, 1915), p. 54; *Annales Hildesheimenses, s.a.* 1035 and 1046, ed. by Georg Waitz, MGH SSRG, 8 (Hannover, 1878), pp. 39 and 40; Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis ecclesiae pontificum*, II, 56, ed. by Bernhard Schmeidler, MGH SSRG, 2 (Hannover, 1917), pp. 116–17; *VE*, I, 1, p. 16; *Inventio et miracula sancti Vulfranni*, c. 18, ed. by J. Laporte (Rouen, 1938), pp. 29–30; William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, ed. by R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom, 2 vols (Oxford, 1998–99), I, 338 (hereafter *GR*). Harry Bresslau, *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reichs unter Konrad II*, 2 vols (Leipzig, 1879–84), I, 169–70; Hansmartin Schwarzmaier, *Von Speyer nach Rom: Wegstationen und Lebensspuren der Salier* (Sigmaringen, 1992), pp. 75–76; Simon Keynes, 'Giso, Bishop of Wells (1061–1088)', *ANS*, 19 (1996), 203–71 (p. 206); and Wolfram, *Conrad II*, pp. 142–43. Disagreement as to whether Gunnhild departed from England or Denmark can be reconciled by suggesting that she went from England to Denmark and from there to Germany.

²⁶ *Annales Hildesheimenses, s.a.* 1038, ed. by Waitz, p. 43; Wolphere, *Vita Godehardi episcopi posterior*, c. 33, ed. by Georg-Heinrich Pertz, MGH Scriptores, 11 (Hannover, 1854), pp. 196–218 (p. 215); Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, II, 79, ed. by Schmeidler, p. 136. Bresslau, *Jahrbücher des Deutschen Reichs*, pp. 331–32; and Wolfram, *Conrad II*, p. 283.

²⁷ *Die ältere Wörmser Briefsammlung*, Letter 5, ed. by Walther Bulst, MGH Die Briefe der deutschen Kaiserzeit, 3 (Weimar, 1949), III, 20–22. Schwarzmaier, *Von Speyer nach Rom*, pp. 72–75; Wolfram, *Conrad II*, pp. 275–78; and C. Stephen Jaeger, *Ennobling Love: In Search of a Lost Sensibility* (Philadelphia, 1999), pp. 61–64.

on the occasion of the installation of a new abbot.²⁸ Although the chronicles which recount this event give no indication of what that hospitality consisted of, it is worth remembering that in the mid-eleventh century, Monte Cassino was a vibrant centre of literary culture.²⁹ Gunnhild thus stood at the intersection of English, Danish, and international German imperial court culture and at the intersection of orality and literacy — in a manner which recalls the example of her own mother. Gunnhild died very young in 1038 leaving behind an infant daughter, Beatrix, who went on to become the Abbess of Quedlinburg and Gandersheim — foundations renowned for their role as keepers of German imperial history.³⁰

German connections were not forgotten with the death of Gunnhild. German ambassadors were present at the coronation of Edward who would later support Henry III against the Flemish. Edward in turn relied on Henry's help to find Edward the Exile, his half-nephew and potential heir who had fled to the Hungarian court.³¹ We need not doubt that Beatrix was known to her Anglo-Saxon family. The *Inventio et miracula sancti Vulfranni*, written in Normandy in the mid-1050s, mentions that she became a nun. Elisabeth van Houts identifies Robert of Jumièges as the source of this text's up-to-date knowledge of the English court. Robert, archbishop of Canterbury and disgraced advisor of Edward the Confessor, returned to Normandy in 1051. If he knew about Beatrix, it is likely that Edward's court did too. Similarly, Bishop Ealdred of Worcester, sent to Cologne in search of Edward the Exile, may have brought news of Beatrix back to England after meeting her father Henry III.³²

²⁸ *Chronica monasterii Casinensis*, II, 63, ed. by Hartmut Hoffmann, MGH Scriptores, 34 (Hannover, 1980), pp. 289–90. Wolfram, *Conrad II*, pp. 135–36.

²⁹ H. E. J. Cowdrey, *The Age of Abbot Desiderius: Montecassino, the Papacy, and the Normans in the Eleventh and Early Twelfth Centuries* (Oxford, 1983), pp. 19–27.

³⁰ Wipo, *Gesta Choumradi Imperatoris*, c. 37, p. 57; *Die Urkunden Heinrichs III*, ed. by Harry Bresslau and Paul Kehr, MGH Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae, 5 (Berlin, 1931), no. 135, pp. 170–72. K. J. Leyser, *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottonian Saxony* (London, 1979), pp. 63–73; Mechtild Black, 'Die Töchter Kaiser Heinrichs III und der Kaiserin Agnes', in *Vinculum Societatis: Joachim Wollasch zum 60 Geburtstag*, ed. by Franz Neiske and others (Sigmaringendorf, 1991), pp. 36–57 (pp. 52–53); Wolfram, *Conrad II*, p. 143.

³¹ *VE*, I, 1, p. 16. Frank Barlow, *Edward the Confessor* (Berkeley, 1970), pp. 98–99 and 215; and James Campbell, 'England, France, Flanders and Germany in the Reign of Ethelred II: Some Comparisons and Connections', in *Essays in Anglo-Saxon History*, ed. by James Campbell (London, 1986), pp. 191–207 (pp. 194–97).

³² *Inventio*, c. 18, ed. by Laporte, pp. 29–30. Elisabeth van Houts, 'Historiography and Hagiography at Saint-Wandrille: The "Inventio et Miracula Sancti Vulfranni"', *ANS*, 12 (1989),

On a more literary level, the ties of kinship which bound the English and Salian dynasties provide a context for the arrival of the *Cambridge Songs* in Canterbury by the middle of the eleventh century.³³ Jan Ziolkowski describes this collection as broadly Western European in their ancestry. Copied at St Augustine's Canterbury, these Latin poems appear to have come together in Germany, perhaps for Henry III. They include verse composed in Germany, France, and Italy, as well as classical and late antique verse.³⁴ Among the poems are six in praise of German emperors, including one which mentions the death of Gunnhild. Women's voices and perspectives are, moreover, prominent throughout the manuscript, including in poetry about nunneries and queens and in passionate laments excerpted from Statius's *Thebaid*. Ziolkowski identifies the way the popularity of Statian poetry contributed to the emergence of courtly romance (among the earliest romance is the *Roman de Thèbes*, a French reworking of the *Thebaid*), but a much closer connection can be found.³⁵ The preoccupations with women's voices, classical poetry, nuns, and queens which distinguish the *Cambridge Songs* become, as I will argue in the next section, driving forces in the literary culture of the women of the next generation of the Anglo-Saxon royal family.

III

When Edward the Confessor married Edith, he was reverting to the long-established marriage patterns of the English kings. In taking an English aristocratic woman for his wife, however, he was not retreating into a monoglot world. According to the anonymous author who wrote a life of the Confessor at Edith's behest, his patron was able to speak English, Danish, French, and Irish.³⁶ The first three of these are readily understandable. Edith's English father, Earl Godwin, rose to power under Cnut and married Gytha, a Danish woman.³⁷ Her husband, as we have already noted, was Franco- as well as Anglophone, and his court was notable for the presence of clerics from around the French-speaking world — Lotharingians and

233–51 (p. 249); and Michael Lapidge, 'Ealdred of York and MS. Cotton Vitellius E.XII', in his *Anglo-Latin Literature, 900–1066* (London, 1993), pp. 453–67 (p. 464).

³³ Lapidge, 'Ealdred of York', p. 464.

³⁴ *The Cambridge Songs*, ed. by Jan Ziolkowski (New York, 1994), pp. xvii–lxiii.

³⁵ *The Cambridge Songs*, ed. by Ziolkowski, p. 263.

³⁶ *VE*, I, 2, p. 22 (assuming this is not an addition by Richard of Cirencester).

³⁷ Barlow, *Godwins*, pp. 17–50.

Parisians, as well as Normans.³⁸ Although Irish may seem farfetched, her brothers spent repeated periods of exile in Ireland.³⁹ That exaggeration remains a possibility only serves to underscore the symbolic value of the multilingualism of a royal woman. Edith's linguistic skills were proclaimed by the anonymous writer of her text; they are part of what made her an ideal queen and alert us to the role queens played in facilitating cultural contact at court.⁴⁰

Edith was also Latinate, as the anonymous author of the life of her husband proudly announced, in a claim that was not mere flattery. The hagiographer of St Kenelm, the epigrapher Godfrey of Winchester, and William of Malmesbury all confirm her learning.⁴¹ Edith acquired her Latin at the royal nunnery of Wilton. Examining the Latinity of the *Vita Ædwardi* and considering its implications for the text's audience will allow us to see how royal nunneries became a major influence on the literary culture of the English court and how the advanced Latinity of a group of women assured that this court culture crossed the linguistic upheaval of the Conquest.

Edith commissioned the *Vita Ædwardi* at the end of Edward's reign and thus at the end of the long-lived West Saxon dynasty: Edward was by then an old man with no obvious heir from within his own family. In so doing she was carrying on directly from her mother-in-law's example in using the patronage of a text as a political tool.⁴² There is, moreover, filiation on a textual level; the *Vita*, also likely to have been written by a monk of Saint-Bertin, draws directly on the *Encomium*.⁴³ Protecting Edith's interests in the constantly shifting political landscape of 1065–67, which saw the rebellion of her brother Tostig, the death of Edward, the reign of her brother Harold, and the Battle of Hastings, was an even more complicated task than managing the factionalism of Harthacnut's court. This complexity

³⁸ Simon Keynes, 'Regenbald the Chancellor (*sic*)', *ANS*, 10 (1987), 185–222.

³⁹ See Julia Crick in this volume.

⁴⁰ Büttner, 'Education of Queens in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', pp. 228–39.

⁴¹ *VE*, I, 2, p. 22; *Vita et Miracula S. Kenelmi*, in *Three Eleventh-Century Anglo-Latin Saints' Lives*, ed. by Rosalind Love (Oxford, 1996), p. 52; Godfrey of Winchester, in *The Anglo-Latin Satirical Poets and Epigrammatists of the Twelfth Century*, ed. by Thomas Wright, 2 vols (London, 1872), II, 149; and *GR*, I, 352.

⁴² Stafford, *Queen Emma*, pp. 28–52. My discussion of the *VE* is indebted to Stafford's work on Edith.

⁴³ Elizabeth M. Tyler, "'When Wings Incarnadine with Gold are Spread': The *Vita Ædwardi Regis* and the Display of Treasure at the Court of Edward the Confessor", in *Treasure in the Medieval West*, ed. by Elizabeth M. Tyler (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 83–107.

is mirrored in the form of the text itself. In its first book the Anonymous combines a prose account of Edward's reign, from a broadly Godwinist perspective, with religious and classicizing verse. This classicizing verse works against the obvious meaning of the prose. For example, in the prose it is said about Godwin that 'eum ab omnibus Anglis pro patre coli'.⁴⁴ In contrast, in the verse account of the magnificent ship he gave to Edward on his coronation, classical allusion parallels the Earl to a Greek bearing gifts and to Pyrrhus who killed Priam, king of Troy.⁴⁵ When there appears no other way to redeem Edith's situation, the Anonymous sets aside his complex prosimetrum and takes up prose hagiography of Edward.

Looking closely at the classicizing verse has much to tell us about eleventh-century polyglot literary culture. Within the classicizing verse, the Anonymous self-consciously brings multiple interpretative frameworks to bear on the events of Edward's reign as he uses stories and modes of understanding from Virgil, Statius, Lucan, and Ovid. *The Metamorphoses*, for example, were not just a set of stories for the Anonymous. Shape-shifting is a way of understanding which he uses in trying to express how Harold and Tostig transformed themselves from heroes into monsters and thus turned 1065–66 into a long year of horror.⁴⁶ The Anonymous's use of Ovid places him on the cutting edge of a revolution in Latin poetry, which saw it engage with secular life, love, and women. This Ovidian poetics flowers fully in the twelfth century when it nourishes the beginnings of French vernacular poetry. The key figures in this revolution are a group of poets often called the 'Loire School' — Marbod of Rennes (c. 1035–1123), Baudri of Bourgueil (1045/46–1130), and Hildebert of Lavardin (1056–1134).⁴⁷ Poetic anthologies attest that the poetry of Marbod and Hildebert was popular in England into the thirteenth century.

⁴⁴ *VE*, I, 4, pp. 40–41. 'He was revered by all Englishmen as a father.' All translations are from Barlow's edition. See also Henry Summerson, 'Tudor Antiquaries and the *Vita Ædwardi Regis*', *ASE*, 38 (2009), 157–84, and Keynes and Love, 'Earl Godwine's Ship', pp. 213–18.

⁴⁵ Compare line 6 of the poem in *VE*, I, 1, p. 20 to Virgil's *Aeneid*, II, 49 and I, 17 to *Aeneid*, II, 475. My discussion of the poetry of the *VE* draws on a chapter, 'The Politics of Allusion in Eleventh-Century England: Classical Poets and the *Vita Ædwardi*', in my forthcoming book *Crossing Conquests: Women and the Politics of Literature in Eleventh-Century England* (Toronto) and preliminary discussion in Elizabeth M. Tyler, 'The *Vita Ædwardi*: The Politics of Poetry at Wilton Abbey', *ANS*, 31 (2009), 135–56.

⁴⁶ *VE*, I, 2, pp. 26–28.

⁴⁷ Gerald A. Bond, *The Loving Subject: Desire, Eloquence, and Power in Romanesque France* (Philadelphia, 1995), pp. 42–69; and Jean-Yves Tilliette, 'Troïae ab oris: Aspects de la révolution poétique de la seconde moitié du XI^e siècle', *Latomus*, 58 (1999), 405–31. Unlike the Loire poets, keen to emphasize Edith's reputation for virginity, the Anonymous avoids Ovidian erotics.

Established paradigms of literary history see the popularity of these French-Latin authors as a result of the Conquest bringing England, which ‘was simply an outpost of — or perhaps a jumping-off point for — Northern French monastic culture’, into Europe.⁴⁸

However, whoever wrote the *Vita* was already engaged with this school of poets. And given the date of the *Vita*, we must see him not as follower but as leader. Most of Baudri’s poetry dates from the period of his abbacy of Bourgueil which began around 1080, and Hildebert was not born until 1056.⁴⁹ The *Vita* shares a fine tissue of linguistic echoes with work of the Loire poets and others writing in their circle. Thus verbal and thematic links between the *Vita Ædwardi* and the poetry of the Loire shows that the Anonymous was not writing from the outer fringes but that he was at the centre of this poetic movement — driving it in new directions, especially the writing of Latin poetry for women, which others followed, built on, responded to.

Yet the Anonymous was writing from pre-Conquest England, and although a Fleming, his work was shaped by the Latin literary culture of England. In addition to the *Encomium*, he had clearly read poetry by Wulfstan Cantor and Frithegod. The *Vita* is not simply an example of Normanization *avant la lettre* or a work of Saint-Bertin produced in England. It is central to our understanding of the increasing internationalism of English literary history in the eleventh century that we not allow the accident of the timing of the Battle of Hastings to obscure pre-Conquest England’s participation in an emergent European Latin literary culture.⁵⁰

A key element in understanding how the *Vita* fits into English literary history involves taking women’s learning seriously and recognizing the agency which this learning engendered. The nature of the *Vita* suggests that Edith’s Latinity was not rudimentary. However, it is not simply Edith’s Latin that is at stake here. It is important to underscore, in this connection, how different a text the *Vita* is from the *Encomium* — in its reliance on classical allusion, it is a much more sophisticated

⁴⁸ A. G. Rigg, *A History of Anglo-Latin Literature, 1066–1422* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 11 and 63–64.

⁴⁹ Baudri of Bourgueil, *Poèmes*, ed. by Jean-Yves Tilliette, 2 vols (Paris, 1998–2002), I, pp. vii and xv.

⁵⁰ For an influential argument for the Conquest bringing England into Europe, see R. W. Southern, ‘The Place of England in the Twelfth Century Renaissance’, in his *Medieval Humanism and Other Studies* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 158–80. Hollis’s work on Wilton abbey (*Writing the Wilton Women*, pp. 419–30) has also led her to argue for the full participation of pre-Conquest England in the literary developments (including interest in classicism) associated with the twelfth century.

work whose broad outline could be conveyed by extemporaneous exposition in the vernacular but whose real weight and meaning requires Latin learning and a very different kind of audience. If the *Vita* was intended to address Edith's precarious situation — as it explicitly claims — it had to have been written for a wider audience. Wilton — the Anglo-Saxon royal nunnery where Edith was raised and to which she returned in 1066 — is an important part of the picture.⁵¹ From the tenth century onwards, Wilton, and other Anglo-Saxon royal nunneries, drew in and educated royal and aristocratic daughters. Nunneries functioned as schools and as places to put royal daughters.⁵² The Latinity of the *Vita* suggests that this marriage policy was to have a major impact on the levels of learning seen as desirable among Anglo-Saxon elite women, even after princesses began to marry again. The kind of audience required by the *Vita* would not have sprung up overnight, just before the Conquest. Rather it emerged over decades and was fed both by the currency of the Roman story-world among the English secular elite, to which the *Encomium* attests, and to a long-established nunnery literary culture.

Stephanie Hollis has recently used two texts from the early 1080s, Goscelin's *Liber confortatorius* and his prosimetrical *Vita Edithae*, to open up the impressive learning of the women of Wilton. The nunnery's educational tradition stretched back at least to Wulfthryth, St Edith's mother, who was abducted from its school-room by King Edgar.⁵³ Edgar later sent tutors from Reims and Trier, leading French and German centres of learning, to educate his daughter.⁵⁴ Edith's tutors, alongside the foreign diplomats she received at Wilton, are an important reminder that royal nunneries were not entirely Anglophone places and that Latin was likely to have been not only a language of texts and worship, but also to have enabled communication amongst speakers of different languages.⁵⁵

⁵¹ Full argument for Wilton as the audience of the *VE* will be presented in 'Reading through the Conquest' in my *Crossing Conquests*; for preliminary discussion, see my 'Politics of Allusion' article.

⁵² *Writing the Wilton Women*, ed. by Hollis, pp. 307–38 (emphasizing that the queens of Wilton, rather than the nuns, were most famous for their learning); and Yorke, *Nunneries*, pp. 72–186.

⁵³ Goscelin, *Vita Edithae*, c. 2, p. 41 as edited by André Wilmart, 'La Légende de S^{te} Édith en prose et vers par le moine Goscelin', *Analecta Bollandiana*, 56 (1938), 5–101 and 265–307. *Writing the Wilton Women*, ed. by Hollis, p. 318.

⁵⁴ Goscelin, *Vita Edithae*, c. 7, pp. 49–51. *Writing the Wilton Women*, ed. by Hollis, pp. 310–12.

⁵⁵ Goscelin, *Vita Edithae*, c. 10, pp. 62–63.

Although West Saxon female foundations did not function as the burial places of kings, as Ottonian nunneries did, there are indications that they, nonetheless, played a role in fostering royal saints' cults and in the cultivation of dynastic memory — a tradition within which the *Vita Ædwardi* (alongside the *Vita Edithae*) can be understood. Edward the Martyr was, for example, buried at Shaftesbury where his cult flourished, and St Edith was buried and culted at Wilton.⁵⁶ Learning and the cultivation of history-writing may have been dimensions of that memorial role, as in Germany, and knowledge of Latin may have extended beyond that needed for the liturgy.⁵⁷ Christine Fell thought it likely that Edward the Martyr's post-Conquest historiographer drew on oral and written sources from Shaftesbury.⁵⁸ Meanwhile, James Campbell's suggestion that a copy of Asser's *Life of Alfred* may have been made for Shaftesbury hints that a commemorative role was expected for the foundation Alfred made for his daughter Æthelgifu.⁵⁹ Malcolm Parkes argues for a Nunnaminster scribe for parts of the Parker manuscript of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. Nunnaminster is the nunnery founded by Alfred's wife, Ealhswith, where Edward the Elder's daughter Eadburga became abbess.⁶⁰

In Æthelweard's late tenth-century translation of the Chronicle for his distant cousin Abbess Matilda of Essen (granddaughter of Edward the Elder's daughter Edith and Otto I), as in the rule of Edward's niece Beatrix over Quedlinburg and Gandersheim, we also catch glimpses of specific genealogical connections between German and English nunneries.⁶¹ In making her request to Æthelweard for information about their shared royal ancestors, Matilda stimulated the growth of secular history-writing in Latin, rather than the vernacular, in England; her request draws attention to the propensity for the intersection of international marriage

⁵⁶ Stafford, 'Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen: Gender, Religious Status and Reform in Tenth- and Eleventh-Century England', *Past and Present*, 163 (1999), 3–35 (pp. 16–17); and Yorke, *Nunneries*, pp. 151–53 and 173.

⁵⁷ Stevenson, 'Anglo-Latin Women Poets', pp. 86–94.

⁵⁸ *Edward, King and Martyr*, ed. by Christine Fell (Leeds, 1971), pp. xvii–xx.

⁵⁹ Campbell, 'England, France, Flanders and Germany in the Reign of Ethelred II', p. 195.

⁶⁰ M. B. Parkes, 'The Palaeography of the Parker Manuscript of the *Chronicle*, Laws and Sedulius, and Historiography at Winchester in the Late Ninth and Tenth Centuries', *ASE*, 5 (1976), 149–71. David Dumville, *Wessex and England from Alfred to Edgar: Six Essays on Political, Cultural and Ecclesiastical Revival* (Woodbridge, 1992), pp. 55–139, strongly disputes the association of the manuscript with Winchester.

⁶¹ Elisabeth van Houts, 'Women and the Writing of History in the Early Middle Ages: The Case of Abbess Matilda of Essen and Aethelweard', *EME*, 1 (1992), 53–68.

and nunnery culture to stimulate Europe-wide literary developments. The *Vita Edwardi*, written some fifteen years before Goscelin's work, attests that the educational tradition which Hollis argues flourished in post-Conquest Wilton was well developed earlier in the century and that it included dynastic history and secular poetry alongside religious writings.

The identities of the Wilton women offer insight into how women created intertwined literary, political, and social continuities across the Conquest. Goscelin's beloved and highly learned Eve left Wilton for a cell attached to the Angevin nunnery of Le Ronceray — whose nuns were the poetic correspondents of Marbod, Baudri, and Hildebert.⁶² In the early twelfth century, the poet Muriel, praised by Baudri, Hildebert, and Serlo of Bayeux, appears to have come from Le Ronceray to Wilton; her presence there suggests too that we should see it as a place where Francophone ladies joined in the nunnery culture of the Anglo-Saxons, perpetuating it into the twelfth century.⁶³ This poetic convent sheltered and educated Anglo-Saxon royal women across 1066. Not only was Edith there, but so too was Harold's daughter Gunnhild, who may have had expectations of becoming the community's abbess. Towards the end of the eleventh century, Edgar Ætheling's sister, Margaret, sent her daughters Edith/Matilda and Mary to Wilton. Royal women in Wilton did not stay put — rather they moved between cloister and court. The mobility of these women is important to see if we are interested in the ways in which Anglo-Saxon literary culture contributed to that of the twelfth century. Gunnhild eloped with the powerful northern magnate Count Alan the Red. Her reported ambition to rule Wilton, coupled with the excoriating letters Anselm sent her when she left behind the celibate life, suggests that she too was educated. Richard Sharpe has recently argued that her union with Alan served to legitimate his possession of her mother Edith Swanneck's lands. Edith/Matilda left to marry Henry I — a marriage which was celebrated as a uniting of the Anglo-Saxon and Norman royal families — and her sister Mary wed Eustace III of Boulogne. Edith herself moved between Wilton and Winchester, appearing both at the nunnery

⁶² Peter Dronke, *Women Writers of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 84–91; Gabriela Signori, 'Muriel and the Others ... or Poems as Pledges of Friendship', in *Friendship in Medieval Europe*, ed. by Julian Haseldine (Stroud, 1999), pp. 199–212; and *Writing the Wilton Women*, ed. by Hollis, p. 229.

⁶³ J. S. P. Tatlock, 'Muriel, the Earliest English Poetess', *Proceedings of the Modern Languages Association*, 48 (1933), 317–21, and Stevenson, 'Anglo-Latin Women Poets', pp. 95–100; Signori dissents, 'Muriel and the Others'.

and in court; she continued to do so after 1066, when she was protected by the Conqueror as a visible sign of his legitimacy.⁶⁴

The identities of the Anglo-Saxon royal women who did not seek refuge in nunneries at the Conquest also reveal extensive multilingualism and its potential impact on literary culture.⁶⁵ Beginning with remnants of the West Saxon line, we see that although the women of the Ætheling's family would eventually return to the nunneries of Wessex, they initially fled with their brother and mother, Agatha, to Scotland. Agatha was the Hungarian-born widow of Edward the Exile. Her impressive ancestry — she was a kinswoman of either the Ottonian emperor Henry II or the Salian emperor Henry III — was celebrated in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. She and her children, who had lived in the Confessor's court, may have spoken English, French, German, and Hungarian. Her daughter Margaret also had Latin, likely a consequence of time spent in an Anglo-Saxon royal nunnery, most obviously Wilton.⁶⁶ Her other daughter Christina is found as a nun at the royal foundation of Romsey after the Conquest.⁶⁷ Margaret's marriage to King Malcolm brought her education and internationalism into the heart of the Scottish court.⁶⁸ This Gaelic-speaking court was itself a meeting point of languages: Malcolm, who had spent time as a youth in Northumbria and in the court of Edward the Confessor, spoke English; his mother, moreover, was of the family of Earl Siward of Northumbria. He also had connections northwards: his first wife, Ingebjorg, and

⁶⁴ *S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera omnia*, Letters 168 and 169, ed. by F. S. Schmitt, 6 vols (Edinburgh, 1946–61), IV, 42–50. Stafford, *Queen Emma*, pp. 274–79, and 'Queens, Nunneries and Reforming Churchmen', pp. 15–19; Yorke, *Nunneries*, pp. 72, 89–91, and 157–60; *Writing the Wilton Women*, ed. by Hollis, pp. 318–27; and Richard Sharpe. 'King Harold's Daughter', *Haskins Society Journal*, 19 (2007), 1–27. Sharpe's recent discussion of Gunnhild challenges the traditional view that she left Wilton shortly before Alan Rufus's death in 1093 and then quickly transferred her affections to his brother Alan Niger. Sharpe, tracing her possible descendants, argues that she was born as early as 1052 and that she left Wilton with Alan Rufus by 1072.

⁶⁵ *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, ed. by David Dumville and Simon Keynes (Cambridge, 1983–), VI: *MS D*, ed. by G. P. Cubbin (1996), *s.a.* 1067 (pp. 81–83). See Stafford's illuminating discussion of this entry, 'Chronicle D, 1067 and Women'.

⁶⁶ Barlow, *Edward*, pp. 163–64; Hooper, 'Edgar the Ætheling', pp. 199–200; Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, pp. 14 and 131; and *Writing the Wilton Women*, ed. by Hollis, pp. 333–34.

⁶⁷ Yorke, *Nunneries*, p. 90.

⁶⁸ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, p. 136; and *Writing the Wilton Women*, ed. by Hollis, pp. 333–34.

the mother of his older sons, was either the wife or widow of the Norse-speaking Earl of Orkney.⁶⁹

The *Life of Saint Margaret*, written by the Durham monk Turgot for her daughter Edith/Matilda, portrays her as a civilizing influence in this court on the edge of Europe. Her Latin literacy endowed her with an extraordinary authority. Turgot records that she not only fostered Church reform but presided over a synod, that she not only welcomed scholars to court, but participated in their debates, and that she took a direct role in the education of her children.⁷⁰ Though not a patron of secular letters, she too was remembered by the poets of the Loire, in poems for her daughter Edith/Matilda.⁷¹

Women from the house of Godwin — Harold's widow, mother, sister, and niece — also fled from the Conqueror. Ealdgyth, the daughter of Earl Ælfgar, widow of Gruffudd ap Llewelyn, king of Wales, and mother of his daughter Nest, was in quick succession wife and widow of Harold, disappearing from the historical record after 1066, although there are claims that she bore Harold a son.⁷² This woman, and her multiple relationships across the Welsh-English border, provides a context within which to situate the concern for Trojan origins which marks the *Vita Ædwardi*. We have already seen that the text figures Godwin as a Greek bearing gifts. The Anonymous also uses allusion to Aeneas's foundation of Rome ironically to underscore that Edward's death will mark the end of the oldest ruling dynasty in Europe.⁷³ Later, at the beginning of book two, as he celebrates Harold and Tostig's defeat of Gruffudd, the Anonymous alludes to the *Aeneid* to make fun

⁶⁹ I am grateful to Thomas Clancy and Matthew Townend for answering questions about the languages involved in Malcolm's court.

⁷⁰ Turgot, 'Vita Sanctae Margaretae', cc. I. 9, II. 10, and II. 13–16, in *Acta Sanctorum quotquot toto orbe coluntur vel a catholicis scriptoribus celebrantur*, ed. by Jean Bolland and others (Antwerp, 1658), vol. II for June, 10 June, pp. 329–31. Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, pp. 10 and 13; Rebecca Rushforth, 'The Bury Psalter and the Descendants of Edward the Exile', *ASE*, 34 (2005), 255–61 (p. 257) and G. W. S. Barrow, 'Malcolm III', in *ODNB*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/17859>> [accessed 6 January 2010].

⁷¹ Hildebert of Lavardin, *Carmina minora*, No. 35, ed. by A. Brian Scott, 2nd edn (Munich, 2001), pp. 21–22. Elisabeth van Houts, 'Latin Poetry and the Anglo-Norman Court 1066–1135: The *Carmen de Hastingsae Proelio*', *Journal of Medieval History*, 15 (1989), 39–62 (p. 51); and Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, p. 136.

⁷² K. L. Maund, 'The Welsh Alliances of Earl Ælfgar of Mercia and his Family in the Mid-Eleventh Century', *ANS*, 11 (1989), 181–90.

⁷³ My 'Politics of Allusion'.

of Welsh claims to Trojan origins.⁷⁴ Perhaps the likely presence of Ealdgyth in her new husband's court provides the occasion for this humour. In any case, at the end of Edward's reign and at the beginning of the new Godwinson dynasty, questions surrounding the antiquity and legitimacy of dynasties were likely to have been pressing. I would suggest that competing origin legends were more likely Edith's concern than the Anonymous's. What we most definitely do not see here is a cleric handing Trojan models to a secular aristocrat, but rather the Roman story-world being deployed to negotiate secular identities using language and models current across Europe.

Meanwhile, the flight to the Continent of Harold and Edith's closest female relatives reveals continued ties between England and Scandinavia as well as Flanders. Edith's Danish mother Gytha went first to the Flemish town of Saint-Omer where the Godwins had long-standing connections and from whence the anonymous author of Edith's *Vita Ædwardi* came; this is not, I think, a coincidence and underscores further the Queen's agency in commissioning this work. Gytha continued on to the Danish court of her nephew King Swein Estrithson. Her life thus extends from the Danish to the Norman Conquest and beyond, with post-conquest Danish claims to the English throne stemming from her, just as Norman claims stemmed from Emma. Her view of England would eventually find an outlet in the writing of a famous eleventh-century historian, when Swein Estrithson became Adam of Bremen's informant about eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon England. The women who fled with Gytha neatly demonstrate the elite aristocracy's participation in a world where daughters were raised either for the religious life or for dynastic marriage. She was accompanied to Flanders and Denmark by her daughter Gunnhild, who was dedicated to the religious life from childhood and who died later in Bruges, the location of the Flemish royal court. We can only speculate that she too had been educated, like her sister Edith, at Wilton or another royal nunnery. In this connection, it is relevant to note that she left a psalter glossed in Old English to Saint Donatian's in Bruges. Meanwhile, Harold's daughter Gytha, who went on to marry Vladimir, prince of Smolensk and (later) of Kiev, also left England with her grandmother and namesake. Tostig's wife Judith, who fled to Flanders with her husband after his banishment in 1065,

⁷⁴ See my 'Trojans in Anglo-Saxon England: Precedent without Descent', in *Troy and the European Imagination*, ed. by Elizabeth Archibald and James Clark (Cambridge, forthcoming). For the Trojan allusions, compare line 30 of the prologue to Book II of *VE* (p. 86) to Virgil, *Aeneid*, IV. 366–67 and lines 43–44 to *Aeneid*, I. 475. Mike Davies, 'Gruffudd ap Llywelyn, King of Wales', *Welsh History Review*, 21 (2002), 206–48 (pp. 243–47).

appears to have stayed there initially, later going to Denmark and finally marrying Welf IV, duke of Bavaria. The influence of the Anglo-Saxon gospel books made for her on Bavarian manuscript illumination is visible testimony to the cultural impact of the flight of royal women from Conquest England.⁷⁵

IV

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle represents Matilda of Flanders, wife of William the Conqueror, as arriving in England just as the women of the Godwin family and of the West Saxon dynasty fled.⁷⁶ Her arrival was not wholly a rupture. Both familial and cultural ties link Matilda to the royal women of Anglo-Saxon England. Related through marriage to the Godwins (via Tostig and Judith) and the West Saxon dynasty, she became the godmother of Margaret's daughter Edith/Matilda, born in 1080.⁷⁷ Literary culture also united these two groups of women. Although Matilda was not herself a patron of poets or history-writers (it would be another twenty years before Norman and French queens and princesses catch up with the patronage of their Anglo-Saxon predecessors), when she arrived in England in 1067 she was accompanied by Guy of Amiens, or so Orderic claims. Guy had already by this date composed the *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio* — a triumphalist and classicizing account of William's victory which Orderic considered to have been modelled on Virgil and Statius.⁷⁸

Matilda is an example of how the Flemish comital family began to attend to the education of its daughters over the course of the eleventh century; the education of elite women comes to be one of the unifying elements in the emergence of a

⁷⁵ Adam of Bremen, *Gesta Hammaburgensis*, ed. by Schmeidler, I. 48 (p. 48), I. 61 (p. 59), III. 54 (pp. 198–99). Barlow, *Godwins*, pp. 119–21; Philip Grierson, 'The Relations between England and Flanders before the Norman Conquest', *TRHS*, 4th series, 23 (1941), 71–112 (pp. 109–11); and Ann Williams, 'Godwine', in *ODNB*, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/54458>> [accessed 6 February 2008]. Patrick McGurk and Jane Rosenthal, 'The Anglo-Saxon Gospel Books of Judith, Countess of Flanders: Their Text, Make-Up and Function', *ASE*, 24 (1994), 251–308.

⁷⁶ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, ed. by Dumville and Keynes, *s.a.* 1067, pp. 81–83; and Stafford, 'Chronicle D, 1067 and Women'.

⁷⁷ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, p. 10.

⁷⁸ *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. by Majorie Chibnall, 6 vols (Oxford, 1968–80), II, 184–86, 214, and 224.

European courtly culture in the High Middle Ages.⁷⁹ Well educated herself, she ensured, in a move unprecedented in Normandy, that her daughters, both lay and religious, were too. She probably introduced Arnulf of Chocques, a Flemish-born scholar who had studied under Lanfranc at Caen, to the ducal court, where he taught Cecelia before she became a nun and then abbess at Holy Trinity, Caen (the convent her mother founded). It is likely that Adela, later Countess of Blois, mother of King Stephen and nun at Marcigny, was also educated by Arnulf.⁸⁰

Both daughters attained high levels of literacy and were the recipients or subjects of classicizing poetry written by Baudri and Hildebert, among others.⁸¹ Cecelia, for example, was addressed by Baudri as the 'regia virgo' of 'pater augustus'.⁸² Adela was a well-known literary patron of both history and poetry; here there is just time to consider the long poem written for her by Baudri. The poet recounts a vision of Adela's bedroom: on the walls hang tapestries which depict episodes from the Old Testament, Greek mythology, and recent history, specifically Adela's father's conquest of England. Baudri's poem requires an audience familiar with, or acquiring familiarity with, the story-world of Greek myth, which is deployed both explicitly and allusively. Mary Carruthers's argument that Adela commissioned the poem for the education of her children, a task in which she took a direct hand, emphasizes again the important role women played across the eleventh and twelfth centuries in the transmission of classical learning. The figure of a learned woman who married, educated children, supported scholars and poets, and retired to a convent is a familiar one which we saw come into focus over a generation earlier when Edith pushed her anonymous poet to do some of what Baudri would do for Adela.⁸³

⁷⁹ Büttner, 'Education of Queens in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries'; Kimberly LoPrete, *Adela of Blois: Countess and Lord (c. 1067–1137)* (Dublin, 2007), p. 30; and van Houts, 'Contrasts and Interactions', p. 7. I am grateful to Elisabeth van Houts for discussing Cecilia's education with me.

⁸⁰ LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, p. 31; and Raymonde Foreville, 'L'École de Caen au XI^e siècle et les origines normandes de l'université d'Oxford', in *Études médiévales offertes à M. le Doyen Augustin Fliche* (Paris, 1952), pp. 81–100 (pp. 84–86).

⁸¹ Bond, *The Loving Subject*, pp. 147–57; LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, pp. 31–34; van Houts, 'Latin Poetry', pp. 46–50.

⁸² Baudri, *Poèmes*, ed. by Tilliette, no. 136 (lines 1 and 4), II, 45.

⁸³ Baudri, *Poèmes*, ed. by Tilliette, no. 134, II, 2–43. Bond, *The Loving Subject*, pp. 149–50; Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Mediation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400–1200* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 213–20; and LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, pp. 197–204. Bond makes a strong claim for Adela as the first woman to use the patronage of poetry for political ends, p. 156.

I will conclude with Edith/Matilda, the woman who literally brings the educational traditions of the Anglo-Saxon royal nunneries into the Anglo-Norman court. Like her mother Margaret, Edith/Matilda — born in Scotland, educated at Romsey and Wilton, goddaughter of Matilda of Flanders and Robert Curthose, and wife of Henry I — also needed to command a range of languages, including English, French, Latin, and possibly also Gaelic. Her literary patronage at the court of her husband is well known, so I will not rehearse it here, except insofar as it reveals how her multilingualism and her education equipped her to bridge the literary culture of Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman England.⁸⁴ Like Edith, this Wilton woman is linked with the poets of the Loire: Hildebert and Marbod wrote for and/or of her.⁸⁵ Anselm's letters to her, furthermore, reveal his great respect for her learning and intellect.⁸⁶ In a prefatory letter to her daughter, the Empress Matilda, William of Malmesbury claims that Edith/Matilda instigated his *Gesta regum Anglorum* by asking for more information about her Anglo-Saxon ancestry: like the *Encomium* and the *Vita Æwardi*, this is a text which arises directly from a royal woman's need to know, keep, and use history.⁸⁷ In writing history for a woman which draws on models offered by classical writers, William reveals himself to be as much the beneficiary of the literary culture which produced the *Encomium* and the *Vita Æwardi* (the latter of which he certainly read) as he was of the new learning of the twelfth century, usually understood as brought to England as a result of the Conquest.⁸⁸ If Edith/Matilda was the patron of the Anglo-Norman *Voyage of St Brendan*, we can see too how the royal women of Anglo-Saxon England nourished not only Latin writing across the Conquest, but also the beginning of French written literary culture. If it was her successor, Adeliza of Louvain, we can see Henry I's second wife transposing Edith/Matilda's model of literary patronage from Latin into the vernacular.⁸⁹

⁸⁴ See most recently Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, pp. 125–43.

⁸⁵ Van Houts, 'Latin Poetry', pp. 50–51.

⁸⁶ There are numerous letters, including those from Edith/Mathilda to Anselm, in *S. Anselmi*, ed. by Schmitt, vols IV and V.

⁸⁷ *GR*, I, 8; and Rodney Thomson, *William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge, 1987), p. 31.

⁸⁸ *GR*, II, 466; Southern, 'The Place of England', pp. 160–62; and Rodney Thomson, *Books and Learning in Twelfth-Century England: The Ending of 'Alter Orbis'* (Walkern, Hertfordshire, 2006), pp. 1 and 7–10.

⁸⁹ See most recently Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, pp. 139–43 and my 'From Old English to Old French', in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain*, ed. by Wogan-Browne and others, pp. 164–78. For Adeliza, see now Thomas O'Donnell, Matthew Townend, and Elizabeth Tyler,

The tenth- and eleventh-century English practice of placing royal women in nunneries nurtured the emergence of an extended family of educated women. The integration of these women into the Anglo-Norman royal family allowed the courtly culture of eleventh-century Anglo-Saxon England to exert a crucial impact on the way in which a thriving literary culture developed in twelfth-century western Europe as a whole. All of this is hidden from us if we imagine pre-Conquest England as a monoglot island on the outer fringes of Europe.

The conquest of England by the Normans started with the 1066 CE Battle of Hastings when King Harold Godwinson (aka Harold II, r. Jan-Oct 1066 CE) was killed and ended with William the Conqueror's defeat of Anglo-Saxon rebels at Ely Abbey in East Anglia in 1071 CE. In between, William had to more or less constantly defend his borders with Wales and Scotland, repel two invasions from Ireland by Harold's sons, and put down three rebellions at York. The two countries of France and England became historically intertwined, initially due to the crossover of land ownership, i.e. Norman nobles holding lands in both countries. There was no significant population movement of Norman peasants crossing the channel to resettle in England, then a country with a population of 1.5-2 million people.

6. Middle English literature. 7. Formation of national language.

1. The Norman Conquest of England began in 1066. It had a considerable influence on the English language. The Normans were by origin a Scandinavian tribe. In the 9th century they began inroads on the northern coast of France and occupied the territory on both shores of the Seine. Since 912 this stretch of the coast belonged to Normans and was called Normandy. Mixing with the local population, they adopted the French language and in the mid-eleventh century, in spite of their Scandinavian origin, they were bearers of French feudal culture and of the French language. In 1066 king Edward the Confessor died. Harold Godwinson became king of England. The Norman conquest of England began in 1066. It proved to be a turning point in English history and had a considerable influence on the English language. The Normans were by origin a Scandinavian tribe (Norman < Norðman). In the 9th century they began inroads on the northern part of France and occupied the territory on both shores of the Seine estuary. Mixing with the local population, they adopted the French language and in the mid-eleventh century, in spite of their Scandinavian origin, they were bearers of French feudal culture and of the French language. Soon after Canute's death (1042) and the collapse of his empire, the old Anglo-Saxon line was restored but their reign was short-lived.

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