MATILDA OF FLANDERS IN NORMANDY: A STUDY OF ELEVENTH-CENTURY FEMALE POWER

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of Liverpool for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy by Charlotte Cartwright

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This thesis is dedicated to my parents, whose never ending support has meant the world to me; to Pauline, who has set the example for how to be the historian and colleague that I hope someday to be; and to Sarah, who is the best friend I could possibly ask for.

I have been grateful for the assistance of many individuals, but it would not have been possible to do this work without the computer expertise of my mother, my brother, and most especially my father, who gave considerable time and energy (not to mention server space) to aid the development of my database.

Abstract

Matilda of Flanders in Normandy: a study of eleventh-century female power

Charlotte Cartwright

Matilda of Flanders, as she is commonly known, was the wife of William II, count/duke of Normandy and, from 1066, king of the English. This thesis is a study of her, and specifically of her power and authority, with a focus on her activity in Normandy rather than in England. It is thus neither a biography nor a contribution to the study of queenship, though it does aim to contribute to the study of countesses, if not 'countess-ship'. The existing historiography of early medieval elite women has mostly neglected both countesses and women in the eleventh century. This is especially so for Normandy, where little study has been done on Matilda and her predecessors. However, the potential for this type of study has been shown by previous work on Matilda, as well as on queens and queenship.

This work builds on the existing historiography to examine Matilda in Normandy as a countess, and in comparison as a queen after 1066. The focus throughout is on contemporary sources, especially the writings of Dudo of Saint Quentin, William of Jumièges, William of Poitiers and the more than five hundred surviving Norman and Anglo-Norman charters from the period 996-1086. The issue of legitimate marriage, which made a woman a wife and gave her access to power and authority through her family role, was critical, and Matilda's marriage can be established as legitimate and secure. The bulk of this thesis considers the activity of the comital/ducal women recorded within the Norman charters, focusing on the actions which reveal power, and the descriptions which suggest the way in which they, and their authority, were perceived. Throughout, Matilda is compared with her predecessors, but also with contemporary men, especially the male members of the family. Close study of the source material reveals a Norman court in the tenth and eleventh century where family women, especially the legitimate wives of the count/dukes, were important actors.

Matilda, however, was distinct from her predecessors: her power and authority greater than theirs. During her lifetime, there are hints at the development of an office of countess, and she appears to have acted as both a regent and a deputy in Normandy after the Conquest of England. Her activity as a queen, and the comparison with her as a countess, sheds light on both roles, suggesting that countesses could exercise a quasi-

queenly power, but also that coronation and inauguration set queens apart. However, even after Matilda's coronation, the role of 'wife' was still important, as was family power. This work thus increases our understanding of tenth- and eleventh-century Normandy, as well as contributing to the wider study of the ducal family, eleventh-century countesses and the development of the role of the queen in the Anglo-Norman realm.

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Abbreviations

AN Annales de Normandie

ANS Anglo-Norman Studies

BL British Library

BnF Bibliothèque Nationale de France

EHR The English Historical Review

GND William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni, The *Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni*, E.M.C. van Houts, ed, 2 vols (Oxford, 1992-5)

HSJ Haskins Society Journal

JEH Journal of Ecclesiastical History

JMH Journal of Medieval History

MGH *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*

PL *Patrologia Latina*, J.P. Migne, ed (Paris, 1878-90)

RADN Fauroux, M., *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie de 911 à 1066. Complété d'un index rerum par Lucien Musset* (Caen, 1961)

RRAN Bates, D., *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I (1066-1087)* (Oxford, 1998)

TRHS Transactions of the Royal Historical Society

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Matilda of Flanders, as she is commonly known, was the wife of William II, count/duke of Normandy and, from 1066, king of the English. This work is a study of her, and specifically of her power and authority, with a focus on her activity in Normandy rather than in England. It is thus neither a biography nor a contribution to the study of queenship, though it does aim to contribute to the study of countesses, if not 'countess-ship'. Its primary sources are the contemporary eleventh-century texts, and in particular the charter evidence. It will place Matilda in comparison with her predecessors as wives and mothers of the count/dukes of Normandy. It will also broaden the comparison to include men, especially the male members of the family. Its focus, questions and method have been determined by the existing historiography; by the gaps but also the potential suggested by the previous work on Matilda, and by the historiography on powerful, elite women in the early middle ages more generally.

I. Historiography of Matilda

The historiography of Matilda of Flanders is relatively thin, although recent works have begun to examine her life and career in more detail. Only three works have been written specifically about her. The earliest, Strickland's biography in *The Lives of the Queens of England*, was written in 1891.[1] However, it is sentimentalized, concerned more with character and morality than with scholarly history based on primary source material. For the next ninety years Matilda was relatively neglected. Historians writing 'institutional' history ignored the family, and women in general. Matilda appeared as a secondary character in works about her husband and sons; her importance was confined to her role as a wife in the biographies of William II, and as a mother in the biographies of her sons Robert, William and Henry.

In the last thirty years, interest in Matilda has revived. Prah-Pérochon studied Matilda's marriage, power, cultural role, children, and religious patronage. This was the first work to discuss Matilda's power as a countess and a queen, although it is based on royal charters and thus centers on Matilda's royal power.[2] The most recent work on

[1] A. Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, Vol. 1 (London, 1891), pp. 17-18.
[2] A. Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde, essais* [sic] (Paris, 1980), pp. 85-9, 95.

Matilda, written by Gathagan in 2002, also deals mainly with Matilda as a queen.[3] She provides a biographical sketch of Matilda's life before 1066, but focuses on Matilda's royal power within the areas of the royal court, landholding, religious patronage, and royal justice. Although both are concerned with Matilda's power, neither of them ask detailed questions about the nature of power and authority, or the interaction of gender and office. Additionally, Matilda's connection with the foundation of La Trinité of Caen was studied by Musset, although his work on the charters of the Caen foundations focuses more on William than Matilda.[4] She has also been studied as part of broader examinations of female involvement in the Norman literary scene, and as one of the line of Anglo-Saxon, Anglo-Norman and Angevin queens of England.[5]

The studies of Matilda have been shaped by some of the same factors which contributed to her exclusion from earlier histories. The dominance of 1066, especially in English work, has led to a focus on Matilda as a queen, and Matilda's activity in the Anglo-Norman realm. Comparison has also been focused on earlier Anglo-Saxon queens, rather than on her Norman predecessors. However, the recent work on Matilda's queenly power has shown that new approaches and new sources can provide illumination. As will be seen, much of the historiography of Matilda has relied on narrative sources, many of which were not contemporary to the period they described. The use of charters by Gathagan and Prah-Pérochon, as well as the use of contemporary poetry by van Houts, has proved to be a richer source of evidence for Matilda's power and authority than the narrative sources relied upon by earlier generations. The application of new methods to the charter sources, with a focus on Normandy, will address many of the gaps in the existing historiography of Matilda.

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[3] L. Gathagan, *Embodying Power: Gender and Authority in the Queenship of Mathilda of Flanders*, unpublished Ph.D. thesis, City College of New York, 2002.

[4] L. Musset, *Les actes de Guillaume le Conquérant et de La Reine Mathilde pour les abbayes Caennaises* (Caen, 1967), pp. 13-23.

[5] D. Bates, 'The representation of queens and queenship in Anglo-Norman charters', in P. Fouracre and D. Ganz, eds, *Frankland: the Franks and the world of the early middle ages* (Manchester, 2008), pp. 285-303; L. Huneycutt, *'Alianora Regina Anglorum*: Eleanor of Aquitaine and her Anglo-Norman predecessors as queens of England', in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, eds, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 115-132; L. Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland: a study in medieval queenship* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 31-54; H.J. Tanner, 'Queenship: Office, Custom or Ad Hoc? The Case of Queen Matilda III of England (1135-1152), in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, eds, *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 133-6; P. Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 96, 121-7, 183-5; P. Stafford, 'Women and the Norman Conquest', *TRHS* Series 6, 4 (1994), pp. 221-49; E. van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest in the Latin Sources: Duchess Matilda, her daughters, and the enigma of the golden child', in P. Bouet, B. Levy and F. Neveux, eds, *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History* (Caen, 2004), pp. 135-53.

Much early scholarship on Matilda focused on a series of issues which are now recognized to be largely the stuff of later legend. Matilda was remembered in Caen in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the recipient of violence at the hands of her husband. These included tales of her being murdered for offending him, and dragged through the streets by her hair.[6] First, there is the account that Matilda initially refused to marry William, but was persuaded after he physically assaulted her.[7] Several different versions of this tale, some placing it at Lille, some at Bruges, were known in the Middle Ages.[8] The origins of this legend are now obscure, but it first appeared in the thirteenth century, and may have come from a satirical, anti-Norman source.[9]

The second legend concerns Matilda's jealousy over an affair which William had, and his murder of her in retaliation. Even Strickland, not known for close criticism of her sources, recognized that this tale is improbable, as the earliest source for this legend comes from William of Malmesbury, who wrote it down accompanied by the caution that he himself did not believe it.[10] Thirdly, there was also an allegation that Matilda arranged for the murder of a certain Anglo-Saxon named Brihtric, after he had spurned her love when she was a young girl.[11] This legend originated in England, possibly influenced by a perception of William and his family as tyrannical conquerors. The source for this story, Wace, wrote more than a century after the Conquest, and so can hardly be considered a contemporary account. Domesday Book does detail that most of the lands of the Anglo-Saxon 'Beorhtric' went to Matilda, but his fate is unknown, and he may have died before the Conquest even took place.[12] Finally, an eighteenth-century legend attributed the creation of the Bayeux Tapestry to Matilda, although the historical consensus for some time has suggested Odo of Bayeux as a more likely patron.[13]

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[6] M.J. Lair, 'La reine Mathilde dans la légende', *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de Normandie*, XVII (1896), pp. 301-308.
[7] Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, pp. 17-18.
[8] Lair, 'La reine Mathilde dans la légende', pp. 312-19.
[9] Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, pp. 32-3; Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, p. 41; M. de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant* (Paris, 1984), pp. 173-4.
[10] M. de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, p. 404; Lair, 'La reine Mathilde dans la légende', pp. 308-310; Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, Vol 1, p. 49; William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom, eds, Vol. I (Oxford, 1998), pp. 500-503.
[11] Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, pp. 34-5; Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, Vol. 1, pp. 16, 39-40.
[12] A. Williams, 'Beorhtric (*d.* in or before 1066?)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).
[13] N.P. Brooks and H.E. Walker, 'The Authority and Interpretation of the Bayeux Tapestry', *ANS*, I (1978), pp. 1-34; E.A. Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, pp. 563-75; F. Neveux, 'The Great Bayeux Tapestry Debate (19th-20th Centuries), in P. Bouet, B. Levy and F. Neveux, eds, *The Bayeux Tapestry: Embroidering the Facts of History* (Caen, 2004), pp. 19-20; L.

Much of this legendary material, coming as it does from later source material, will not be discussed further in this thesis. The investigation of Matilda's power and authority in Normandy will be focused on eleventh-century sources, and these topics lead into questions of later twelfth- and thirteenth-century elaboration and historiography. However, one exception is the legendary material that concerns the marriage of William and Matilda, which will be briefly considered.

The marriage has in itself been a central question for those historians who have commented at all on Matilda. It has been discussed mostly in the context of William's career and political situation.[14] William and Matilda may have been a particularly close couple, as William was said to be devastated when she died.[15] An entire chapter of this work is devoted to the marriage, and the controversy surrounding the sources. The influence of later sources from the twelfth century will be discussed, and the marriage itself studied in the context of the works produced in the eleventh century, allowing for an idea of how their union was perceived by contemporaries, and what effect their union may have had on Matilda, her position in Normandy, and her power and authority.

Marriage, along with Matilda's origins, children, and role both in and after 1066, are the major biographical areas of Matilda's life studied by historians. Matilda's royal bloodline and high birth may have strengthened William's claims to Normandy and England.[16] The question of legitimation is one which will be important in the study of the narrative sources in Chapters 6 and 7. Unfortunately, little else has been said about Matilda's early life.[17] Matilda was the daughter of Baldwin V, count of Flanders, and his wife Adela, daughter of Robert the Pious, king of France. King Henry I of France was therefore her uncle. Matilda's date of birth is not known: the most recent work suggests that she was born no earlier than 1031, and likely before 1034, based on the probable dates of the marriage of her parents, and her own marriage to William.[18]

Similarly, much of the attention paid to Matilda as a mother has centered on the attempt to identify and date the birth of her children. The simple questions of identifying the children, establishing their birth order and dates of birth are difficult for the sons, but

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Musset, *The Bayeux Tapestry*, R. Rex, trans (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 14-17; F. Stenton, ed, *The Bayeux Tapestry: a comprehensive survey* (London, 1957).

[14] P. Bauduin, *La première Normandie (Xe-XIe siècles)* (Caen, 2004), p. 306-308.

[15] Bates, *William the Conqueror* (Stroud, 2004), p. 250; de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, p. 423; R.A. Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest* (London, 1969), p. 199; Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, p. 651.

[16] Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 151; D.C. Douglas, *William the Conqueror* (London, 1964), p. 75; Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, Vol. 1, p. 24.

[17] Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 24-36.

[18] Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 24, 37.

acutely problematic for the daughters. The sons are known with certainty, and they were, in order, Robert Curthose, Richard, William Rufus and Henry.[19] Any attempt to assign dates of birth must be considered speculative. Most recent work has suggested between c. 1050 and 1053 for the birth of Robert, c. 1060 for William Rufus, and c. 1068 for the youngest son Henry.[20] Biographies have been written of all Matilda's sons except Richard, who was killed as a youth while hunting in the New Forest sometime after 1069.[21]

With the daughters, the problem is one of identification. The careers of three are known with certainty: Adela married Stephen of Blois, Constance married the count of Brittany and Cecilia became abbess of La Trinité of Caen.[22] Adela is the only daughter who has been written about at length. A contemporary poem by Godfrey of Rheims suggests that Matilda was pregnant with Adela when William embarked on the Conquest.[23] Adela was thus likely born in late 1066 or early 1067. There is no evidence for the birth dates of any of the other daughters.[24] A fourth daughter, Adelaide, is largely unknown. She died unmarried as a nun at Saint Léger of Préaux under the protection of Roger of Beaumont.[25] A fifth, Matilda, is the only daughter not recorded in the narrative sources, but evidence for her comes from Domesday Book and the obituary notice of her sister Abbess Cecilia.[26]

Adelaide and Matilda may have been involved in one of three betrothals known to have been proposed for unidentified daughters of William II: with Herbert of Maine, with a Spanish king – possibly Sancho or Alfonso, sons of Ferdinand I – and with Harold Godwinson.[27] The names of two other daughters have been proposed. One, Agatha, is only

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[19] F. Barlow, *William Rufus* (London, 1983), pp. 10-13; Bates, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 127-9; de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, p. 404; Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, pp. 111-13; F. Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois X^e^-XII^e^ siècle* (Rennes, 1998), p. 428; Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, pp. 140-47.

[20] W. Aird, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy* (Woodbridge, 2008), p. 26; Barlow, *William Rufus*, p. 3; C.W. David, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy* (Cambridge, MA, 1920), p. 4.

[21] Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, pp. 148-9.

[22] Barlow, *William Rufus*, pp. 10-13; de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, p. 405; Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, p. 660; Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, p. 45-6; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 428; Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, pp. 156-8; Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, p. 26; van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest in the Latin Sources', p. 136.

[23] K. LoPrete, *Adela of Blois, Countess and Lord* (Dublin, 2007), pp. 23-4; van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest in the Latin Sources', pp. 145-6.

[24] Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, pp. 86-7.

[25] van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest in the Latin Sources', p. 143.

[26] Barlow, *William Rufus*, pp. 10-13; Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, p. 45-6; van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest in the Latin Sources', p. 136.

[27] de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, p. 405; Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, pp. 660-662; Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, p. 43-5; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 428; Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, p. 155; van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest in the Latin Sources', p. 141-2.

recorded by Orderic Vitalis, who presented two conflicting lists of daughters.[28] However, the name Agatha only appears in the work of Orderic Vitalis, who sometimes confuses the names Agatha and Adelaide, and is thus likely an error on Orderic's part.[29] The other, Gundred (or Gundrada), was disputed in the late nineteenth century, before being dismissed historians.[30]

The source material makes the study of Matilda's motherhood and her relations with sons and daughters difficult. The most recent work can provide few specific dates, but suggests that William and Matilda had at least six children before 1066: Robert, Richard, William, Adelaide, Constance, and Cecilia. Henry and Adela were born after 1066, but the birthdates of the other children are unknown. The names given to the children – especially Cecilia, Constance, Adela and Henry – may show the importance of Matilda's royal and imperial lineage.[31] The sources for her relationship with them are slim (with one notable exception) although she was probably involved in their education.[32]

The historiography of Matilda presented here shows just how limited work on her has been. In many works on Normandy and on the Conquest of England Matilda is an incidental, passive character, notable only for her relationships with powerful men. Work which has focused on her has mostly been of a biographical nature: outlining Matilda's life without a greater consideration of her power and authority. There are some exceptions, discussed in Chapter 7: her coronation after the Conquest, her possible role as regent and the role of family members in the government of Normandy and England have all received attention from historians.[33] Matilda has also been studied as a queen, in the context of Anglo-Norman queenship, a study which has included considerations of her power, her lands in England, and her religious patronage.[34] The importance of the life-cycle is clear; her marriage was the moment when she moved to Normandy, perhaps gained power and a certainly presence in histories. But many questions still surround it. Her roles as wife, mother, and queen have had some recognition, though they have not been fully explored.

Little work has been done on Matilda's life, activity and power before 1066. Studies of her power and authority have focused on her royal power, and neglected the questions

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[28] de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, p. 405; Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, pp. 660-662; Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, p. 87.
[29] Barlow, *William Rufus*, pp. 10-13; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 428; van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest in the Latin Sources', p. 141.
[30] Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, p. 26; E.A. Freeman, 'The Parentage of Gundrada, wife of William de Warenne', *EHR*, No. 12 (1888), pp. 680-701.
[31] Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 153.
[32] LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, pp. 315-17.
[33] See below, pp. 169-71.
[34] See below, p. 172.

about her comital role. There has been no consideration of the difference between a countess and a queen. Although there has been some comparison made between Matilda and her predecessors/successors as queen of England, no comparison has been made between Matilda and her predecessors in Normandy.

II. Historiography of Early Medieval Elite Women

The lack of comparison and context for Matilda in Normandy is emblematic of the gap in the study of elite noble women in eleventh-century Europe, which exists despite the recent burgeoning interest in early and high-medieval women and especially in elite women.[35] In addition to general works on women and society, the study of early and high-medieval women has been especially focused on queens.[36] Much less work has been done

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[35] D. Baker, ed, *Medieval Women* (Oxford, 1978); D. Barthélemy, *La société dans le comté du Vendôme de l'an mil au XIV siècle* (Paris, 1993); J. Carpenter and S. MacLean, eds, *Power of the Weak: studies on medieval women* (Illinois, 1995); G. Duby, *Medieval Marriage: two models from Twelfth-century France* (Baltimore, 1978); G. Duby and M. Perrot, eds, *A History of Women in the West*, Vol. II (Cambridge, M.A., 1992); H. Leyser, *Medieval Women* (London, 1995); D. Herlihy, 'Land, Family and Women in Continental Europe, 701-1200, in S.M. Stuard, ed, *Women in Medieval Society* (Pennsylvania, 1976), pp. 13-45; D. Herlihy, *Women, Family and Society in Medieval Europe* (Providence, R.I., 1995); R. Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc (VII-XI siècle)* (Paris, 1995); C. Meek and C. Lawless, eds, *Victims or Viragos?* (Dublin, 2005); J. Nelson, 'Basilissai: power and its limits', *Basilissa*, 1 (2004), pp. 124-35; J. Nelson, ed, *Courts, Elites, and Gendered Power* (Ashgate, 2007); J. Nelson, 'Family, gender and sexuality', in M. Bentley, ed, *Companion to Historiography* (New York, 1997), pp. 153-78; J. Nelson, 'Gendering courts in the early medieval west', in J. Smith and L. Brubaker, eds, *Gender and the Transformation of the Roman World* (Cambridge, 2004) pp. 185-97; J. Nelson, 'Making a difference in eighth-century politics: the daughters of Desiderius', in A. Murray, ed, *After Rome's Fall: Narrators and Sources of early Medieval History.* (Toronto, 1998) pp. 171-90; J. Nelson, 'The problematic in the private', *Social History,* 15 (1990) pp. 355-64; J. Nelson, 'Women at the court of Charlemagne: a case of monstrous regiment?', in J. Parsons (ed.), *Medieval Queenship* (New York, 1993) pp. 43-62, 203-6; M. Parisse, ed, *Veuves et veuvage dans le haut moyen âge* (Paris, 1993); S. Shahar, *The Fourth Estate: a history of women in the Middle Ages*, C. Galai, trans (London, 1983); D. Stenton, *The English Woman in History* (London, 1957).

[36] A. Duggan, ed, *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 1997); J. Hyam, 'Ermentrude and Richildis', in M.T. Gibson and J.L. Nelson, eds, *Charles the Bald: Court and Kingdom* (Hampshire, 1990), pp. 154-68; J. Nelson, 'Early medieval rites of queen-making and the making of medieval queenship', in A. Duggan, ed, *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 1997) pp. 301-15; J. Nelson, 'Les douaires des reines anglo-saxonnes', in F. Bougard, ed, *Les douaires dans le haut moyen âge* (Rome, 2002) pp. 527-34; J. Nelson, 'Les reines carolingiennes', in S. Lebecq, et al., eds, *Femmes et Pouvoirs des Femmes à Byzance et en Occident (VIe-XIe siècles)* (Lille, 1999), pp. 121-32; J. Nelson, 'Medieval Queenship', in L.E. Mitchell, ed, *Women in Western Medieval Culture* (London, 1999) pp. 179-208; J. Nelson, 'Queens as Jezebels: Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian history', in D. Baker, ed, *Medieval Women* (Oxford, 1978) pp. 31-77; J. Nelson, 'The queen in ninth-century Wessex', in S. Keynes and A. Smyth, eds, *Anglo-Saxons* (Dublin, 2005), pp. 69-77; P. Stafford, 'Powerful women in the early middle ages: queens and abbesses', in P. Linehan and J. Nelson, eds. *The Medieval World* (London, 2001), pp. 398-415; P. Stafford, 'Political women in Mercia, eighth to early tenth centuries' In M.P. Brown and C.A. Farr, eds, *Mercia, an Anglo-Saxon Kingdom in Europe* (London, 2001), pp. 35-49; P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers* (London, 1998); Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*; P. Stafford, 'The portrayal of Royal Women

on noble women, and the wives of count/dukes, and 'countesses'.[37] This paucity is especially felt for the eleventh century, and the work which has been done has focused on individual women, or on limited areas.[38] Very little has been written on Normandy; only Bauduin, Musset and van Houts have given a detailed consideration to Matilda's predecessors.[39]

From the founding of the duchy c. 911 to the time of Matilda we know of the following women who were involved in unions with the count/dukes: Gisla, Popa, Liutgarde, Sprota, Emma, Gunnor, Judith, Papia, and Herleve. These nine women have been subjected to significantly less study than Matilda, but what has been done reinforces some of the central themes identified in the historiography. Consideration of them has always come in the context of their unions with the count/dukes of Normandy, and often includes a study of their natal families. These works are considered in full, along with a historiographical overview, in Chapter 5. Work on them has been as much a study of tenth-century Norman marriage practices as it has of the women in question. Only Gunnor has received attention beyond a study of her involvement in a union with a count/duke and her natal family, in an important article by Elisabeth van Houts.[40] There is a clear gap in the recent historiography of elite medieval women; particularly on Norman women, and on countesses. This thesis will address this gap, taking into consideration the questions raised by recent work on early medieval women, and on women, power and authority.

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in England, Mid-Tenth to Mid-Twelfth Centuries', in J.C. Parsons, ed, *Medieval Queenship*, pp 143-68; P. Stafford, 'Writing the Biography of Eleventh-Century Queens', in D. Bates, J. Crick and S. Hamilton, eds, *Writing Medieval Biography*, 750-1250 (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 99-110.

[37] F. Bougard, L. Feller and R. Le Jan, eds, *Dots et Douaires dans le Haut Moyen Âge* (Rome, 2002); R.C. DeAragon, 'Dowager countesses, 1069-1230', *ANS*, 17 (1995), pp. 87-100; S. Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm* (Manchester, 2003); Le Jan, *Famille et pouvoir dans le monde franc*; Le Jan, *Femmes, pouvoir et société dans le haut Moyen Âge* (Paris, 2001).

[38] P. Adair, 'Countess Clemence: Power and its Foundation', in T.M. Vann, ed, *Queens, Regents and Potentates* (Dallas, TX, 1993), pp. 63-72; P. Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos* dans la Normandie ducale (X^{e} – début du XII^{e} siècle)', in F. Bougard, L. Feller and R. LeJan, eds, *Dots et Douaires dans le Haut Moyen Âge* (Rome, 2002), pp. 429-55; G. Duby, *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest: the making of modern marriage in medieval France*, B. Bray, trans (Harmondsworth, 1985); A. Livingstone, 'Aristocratic Women in the Chartrain', in K. LoPrete and T. Evergates, eds., *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France* (Pennsylvania, 1999), pp. 44-73; K. LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*; Stafford, 'Women and the Norman Conquest', pp. 221-249.

[39] See below, pp. 64-9.

[40] E. van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy (c. 950 – 1031)', *Collegium Medievale*, 12 (1999), p. 7-24; See below, pp. 67-8.

III. Women, Power and Authority

In medieval historiography, power has traditionally been equated with public authority; law and force are the contexts in which it has been examined.[41] More recently, however, medieval historians of women have moved away from this limited definition, following work done on female power and authority by sociologists. In a seminal article, Rosaldo stated that in all societies men have authority over women, in that they have 'a culturally legitimated right to [female] subordination and compliance'.[42] However, women could have a great deal of informal influence and actual power, power here being the ability to act effectively, to make decisions, or to secure favorable decisions from those with authority.[43] Rosaldo drew on the work of M.G. Smith, who defined power as 'the ability to act effectively on persons or things, to take or secure favorable decisions which are not of right allocated to the individuals or their roles', and authority as 'the right to make a particular decision and to command obedience.'[44] Power is the capacity to act, while authority is acknowledged and legitimated power. It is important to recognize that female power does not necessarily indicate authority, and vice versa.[45]

Historians of women have thus considered forms of power which include the ability to act effectively, to influence people or decisions, and to achieve goals.[46] Even if women were excluded from some areas of political activity, they could still have power, for example through influence over men. Power is not necessarily defined by the ability to produce a desired outcome: women who were social actors and who were able to plan short- and long-term strategies had power, even if their strategies did not succeed. Such women worked to gain the support of others, which should be seen as a sign of their power as social actors, rather than as an indication of their lack of power due to their inability to act directly.[47] Of course, this is complicated by the difficulty of assessing the power of persuasion and influence as recorded in medieval sources.[48]

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[41] M. Erler and M. Kowaleski, *Women & Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1988), pp. 1-2.
[42] M.Z. Rosaldo, 'Woman, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview', in M.Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, eds, *Woman, Culture and Society* (Stanford, CA, 1974), p. 21.
[43] Rosaldo, 'Woman, Culture and Society', p. 21.
[44] M.G. Smith, *Government in Zazzau, 1800 – 1950* (London, 1960), pp. 18-19.
[45] P.R. Sanday, 'Female Status in the Public Domain', in M.Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, eds, *Woman, Culture and Society* (Stanford, CA, 1974), p. 190-91.
[46] P. Stafford, 'Emma: The Powers of the Queen in the Eleventh Century', in A. Duggan, ed, *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 10-11.
[47] Stafford, 'Emma: The Powers of the Queen', p. 11.
[48] J. Bennett, 'Public Power and Authority in the Medieval English Countryside', in M. Erler and M. Kowaleski, eds, *Women & Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1988), p. 20; Nelson, 'Medieval Queenship', pp. 200-201.

Central to the study of early medieval female power are questions about the household and its importance, especially in the context of the questioning of the distinction between public and private. Questions have been raised about the nature of 'public' (or masculine) power as opposed to 'private' (feminine, domestic) power. For Rosaldo the importance of the distinction between the 'domestic' and the 'public' sphere is that it accounts for the historical asymmetry of power that gives men prominence over women.[49] The role of women in childbearing gives them a place centered around the home, while men are free to create organizations outside the home. This separate 'public' sphere of activity is thus a masculine one which excludes women and confines them to a lesser 'domestic' status. But is this a meaningful distinction to make for the eleventh century?

In their seminal article on the power of women, McNamara and Wemple traced the developments in law, family power, public power, and the changes in female power through the early medieval period. They argued that the power of women grew in the fifth and sixth centuries, as society became focused around a small family unit, in combination with an increased ability for women to inherit and control property.[50] In the Carolingian period queens accessed public power through their family role as wife and mistress of the household. Because there was little distinction between the public and the private, the household of the king was the government of the period, and the wife of the king or emperor played a central role.[51] As Rosaldo noted when she presented her model, 'when public decisions are made in the household, women may have a legitimate public role.'[52] Carolingian queens were in charge of the royal treasury, and they, along with the wives of the nobility, were also involved in military defense of their homes when their husbands were absent.[53] As military unrest increased with the disintegration of centralized Carolingian power in the ninth and tenth centuries, this role for women would have become more important and prevalent.

For McNamara and Wemple, the tenth and eleventh centuries saw the apogee of familial, and thus of female, power in the Middle Ages.[54] As power in the former Carolingian Empire devolved to the great nobles, the key to its possession became the control of land; an area in which noble women could participate.[55] Women were able to

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[49] Rosaldo, 'Woman, Culture and Society', pp. 23-4.
[50] J. McNamara and S. Wemple, 'The Power of Women Through the Family', in M. Erler and M. Kowaleski, eds, *Women & Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1988), p. 84.
[51] McNamara and Wemple, 'The Power of Women Through the Family', p. 90.
[52] Rosaldo, 'Woman, Culture and Society', p. 39.
[53] McNamara and Wemple, 'The Power of Women Through the Family', pp. 90-91.
[54] McNamara and Wemple, 'The Power of Women Through the Family', pp. 92-7.
[55] McNamara and Wemple, 'The Power of Women Through the Family', p. 92.

hold land and exercise political power independently of their husbands, and sometimes could control the alienation to others or the identity of their heir.[56] There were no really effective barriers to female power, if the woman was a member of a powerful noble or royal family.[57] Thus McNamara and Wemple directly questioned the public/private distinction for early medieval Europe, argued for the central importance of family and household, and suggested the period was one of female power rooted there. Developments in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries changed this. However, eleventh-century Normandy falls within the period of political shifts in post-Carolingian France which, if anything, entrenched the central importance of family and household.[58]

The work of McNamara and Wemple – along with that which argues that the adoption of patrilineal inheritance strategies marginalized women – highlights the importance of older questions about landholding, dower and dowry.[59] Work on female power in the tenth and eleventh centuries often centers on the ability to control property.[60] This work also incorporates important questions about the difference between male and female landholding, as Stafford notes that in England, Queen Emma's landholding was affected by her life-cycle. It changed with her roles of wife, mother, and widow; differentiating her from her male contemporaries.[61] Stafford and Johns have both highlighted the importance of life-cycle changes when examining female power.[62] Daughter, wife, mother, widow: all these roles could limit female agency and power, but also could provide opportunities and give authority. The wife was a bridge between families, the mother a bridge between generations, and both roles gave women the authority to influence members of the family.

Further questions are raised by women, such as Matilda, who may have had an 'official' position. These questions have been especially raised for queens, who had a role

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[56] McNamara and Wemple, 'The Power of Women Through the Family', pp. 93-4.
[57] McNamara and Wemple, 'The Power of Women Through the Family', pp. 94-5.
[58] J. McNamara, 'Women and Power through the family revisited', in M.C. Erler and M. Kowaleski, eds, *Gendering the Master Narrative: Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY, 2003), pp. 21-9.
[59] Adair, 'Countess Clemence', pp. 64-5; McNamara, 'Women and Power through the family revisited', pp. 20-21; A. Poulet, 'Capetian Women and the Regency: the Genesis of a Vocation' in J.C. Parsons, ed, *Medieval Queenship* (New York, 1993), p. 98.
[60] P. Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos*', pp. 429-55; R. Le Jan 'Douaires et pouvoirs des reines en Francie et en Germanie (VIe – Xe siècle), in F. Bougard, L. Feller and R. Le Jan, eds, *Dots et Douaires dans le Haut Moyen Âge* (Rome, 2002), pp. 457-97; L. Musset, 'Actes inédits du XI[e] siècle, Les plus anciennes chartes normandes de l'abbaye de Bourgueil', *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaries de Normandie*, 54 (1959), pp. 15-37; J. Nelson, 'Les douaires des reines anglo-saxonnes', pp. 527-34.
[61] Stafford, 'Emma: The Powers of the Queen', pp. 11-12.
[62] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, pp. 1-2; Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 66-81.

which could give a woman authority as well as the legitimacy to exercise power, and which rested on a tradition of female power.[63] However, the 'office' of queenship is complicated, and the power of the queen could also rest on the traditionally powerful roles of wife and mother, which were not connected to a female office.[64] Queenly power could thus fluctuate in a way that kingly power often did not.[65] These questions have been neglected in work on countesses, where the title *comitissa* has often been equated with that of 'wife of the count', or 'woman from a comital family'.[66]

Any comparison with queens, however, also brings into sharp focus the question of female office and the problems of defining or recognizing it. It is clear that kingship was an 'office'; it was a position with a defined set of rights and expectations which both prescribed and, in an ideal world, limited behavior. Acquisition of this office was marked by a ceremony of consecration and coronation which set the king apart.[67] That queenship was an 'office' is rather less clear. Although queens were also set apart by consecration, the role and behavioral expectations for a queen are much less defined, and there is considerable debate about the extent to which 'queen' eclipsed or replaced 'wife of the king'.[68]

There is also uncertainty about the extent to which kingship can be compared to the 'office' of the eleventh-century counts in Northern France. The title *comes* in the tenth century was used for Carolingian royal officials. The debate among historians has questioned the continuity between the Carolingian *comes* and those of the eleventh century.[69] Does the use of the title indicate continuity with the powers of originally royal officials? Or did the title shift in meaning, indicating new developments in power or status, even quasi-regal developments? This debate remains unresolved. The 'office' of 'count' may have become more like that of 'king', but differences persisted. Notably, there is no

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[63] Stafford, 'Emma: The Powers of the Queen', p. 12-13; Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p. 14.
[64] Stafford, 'Emma: The Powers of the Queen', p. 13; Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 182.
[65] S. MacLean, 'Making a difference in tenth-century politics: King Aethelstan's sisters and Frankish queenship', in P. Fouracre and D. Ganz, eds, *Frankland* (Manchester, 2008), p. 190.
[66] LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, p. 74; Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, pp. 53, 67-8.
[67] J. Nelson, 'Kingship and Empire', in J.H. Burns, ed, *The Cambridge history of medieval political thought, c. 350–1450* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 235-236.
[68] Nelson, 'Kingship and Empire', 217–219; Nelson, 'Medieval Queenship', pp.179-180; Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 165, 175–178.
[69] K.F. Werner, 'Kingdom and principality in twelfth-century France', in T.Reuter, ed, *The Medieval Nobility: Studies on the Ruling Classes of France and Germany from the Sixth to the Twelfth Century* (Amsterdam, 1979), pp. 247-51; R. Helmerichs, *'Princeps, Comes, Dux Normannorum*: Early Rollonid Designators and their Significance', *HSJ*, 9 (2001 for 1997), pp. 60-61; F. Lifshitz, 'La Normandie Carolingienne: essai sur la continuité, avec utilisation de sources negligees', *AN*, xlviii (1998), pp. 518-20.

evidence to suggest that Norman count/dukes, or the countesses, ever had an inauguration like those of kings and queens.

For the countesses, the ceremony which made a woman a countess was the marriage ceremony which also made her a wife. The questions which arise for queens are thus posed even more urgently for countesses. Since power, if not authority, exists to a large extent in the eyes of others, and since office is defined by such perception, title usage is one way to examine this problem. Historians have examined these questions for counts, studying the use of the title *comes*, and considering how that title may have changed (or not) from one which originally indicated Carolingian royal officials. For Matilda and her predecessors the title *comitissa* was used, and that usage and the roles and activities to which it is attached are our clearest guide to the perceptions of contemporaries. To examine the similarities and differences between the wife and the countess, as well as the ambiguities and fluctuations in power, recent work has shifted the focus of source material from narratives to charter sources, important for the study of queens, but especially so for the work on other elite women.[70]

Work on the study of individual women using charter evidence has been done especially by LoPrete, where charter evidence is central to her work on Matilda's daughter Adela, as well as Johns and Stafford. Their methodologies are discussed in Chapter 2.[71] The failure to explore this type of evidence may account for the unbalanced image of women which has been promoted by medieval social historians.[72] Historians have thus used charters to look at landholding, but also patterns of appearances, titles and descriptions, and what these can tell us about the perception of power, and its recognition by others. This focus on charters does not mean that narratives will be, or should be neglected. Close reading of texts has been central to much work on women in the early middle ages, and will be continued.

Finally, alongside work on women, historians have called for a more holistic approach, which incorporates both women and their relational partners – men.[73] There is a clear need to focus on the activity and potential for power and authority of women, but also not to divorce them from the society in which they lived. Work which takes gender seriously must involve comparison of women and (comparable) men, as in the work on

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[70] Herlihy, 'Land, Family and Women', pp. 13-45; Livingstone, 'Aristocratic Women in the Chartrain', pp. 44-73; Nelson, 'Medieval Queenship', pp. 179-208.
[71] See below, pp. 26-8.
[72] K. LoPrete and T. Evergates, *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France* (Philadelphia, 1999), p. 3.
[73] J.W. Scott, 'Gender: a useful category of historical analysis', *The American Historical Review*, 91, No. 5 (Dec, 1986), pp. 1053-75; Nelson, 'Making a difference in eighth-century politics', pp. 171-90.

queenship and kingship. Only then can an analysis of the intersection of gender, power and authority be undertaken.

IV. Matilda of Flanders in Normandy

The historiography of Matilda has clear areas of strength. Her role and activity in England, and as a queen, has been recently covered; this, like her involvement in 1066, so recently well analyzed by van Houts, will not be studied here. The details of her biography have been debated extensively, and the issues of later sources make a full discussion and analysis of the historiographical debates impracticable within the context of this work. Some biographical detail will be discussed, especially the marriage of William and Matilda, important for its placing of Matilda in the comital household – thus in a position whose importance much of the work on women and power has demonstrated. Similarly, the descriptions of her family role as a wife and mother will matter, although the problems of dating both children and charters mean that it cannot be used to structure the discussion of Matilda.[74] While the previous work on Matilda will inform this thesis, it will focus on areas that have been neglected: Matilda in Normandy, and especially as a 'countess' and 'wife of a count', and serious study of her power and authority. The significance of 1066 and the acquisition of a royal title will not be ignored. Its potential importance as a turning point leads to the division of Chapters 6 and 7, which allows for testing of the impact which queenship had on Matilda's position in Normandy.

This thesis especially concerned with Matilda as an elite eleventh-century woman in Northern France, and in Normandy. Questions will be raised about her prominence, the perception of her, the recognition of her, and thus perhaps of her own power and authority. All this will be considered in the context of Matilda's predecessors in Normandy. An integral part of this discussion will be her familial roles, as well as potential 'official' roles. The methodology will follow recent work which stresses the close re-reading of narrative sources, and a special attention to charters, which will be analyzed systematically with the aid of a computer database. Emphasis will be placed on contemporary records, as later sources, although of great interest in themselves, involve a different sort of question.

Finally, gender will be taken seriously. In asking these questions this work will not only include some comparison to other women – predecessors and contemporary northern

[74] See below, p. 33.

Frankish queens – but also to elite men.[75] Those who are important as directly comparable to Matilda include male family members, others who hold debatable 'offices' and of course her husband, the count/duke and king. This thesis aims to increase our understanding of Matilda, but also to make a contribution to work on elite women in the middle ages, and especially women of this period in northern France.

[75] The serious gap in the historiography of eleventh-century comital women prevents comparison with Matilda's contemporaries in Brittany, Flanders, Anjou, etc.

Chapter 2: Sources and Methods

In this work two main types of sources will be used: narratives and charters. There can be an overlap between the two, as charters sometimes contain narrative sections, and chronicles and annals may draw on charter material.[76] The narrative works studied are chronicle histories of Normandy and the Norman count/dukes. The charters are those of the Norman count/dukes and first Anglo-Norman king collected by Marie Fauroux and David Bates, covering the period before and after 1066, respectively.[77] Each of these sources has its own problems, but they also present us with great possibilities and opportunities. Narratives are the sources on which historians of Matilda have traditionally focused. This is especially true of historians working in the early and mid-twentieth century, when charters were considered to be administrative records that provided information only about political institutions, and when political institutions were defined in ways which excluded the family, and thereby largely women. Narrative sources, however, still have more to tell us, especially if subjected to close reading with attention to author and audience. Recent work on women has begun to focus on charters as a rich source for the activities and contemporary perception of powerful women. That of Stafford, LoPrete and Johns is of particular importance for this thesis and will be discussed further below. Nelson has stressed the importance of using contemporary sources; her concerns about projecting later society and the concerns of later authors onto an earlier period are to be taken seriously.[78] With both charter and narrative sources the emphasis will thus be on the careful use of contemporary source material.

1. Narrative Sources

There has been considerable recent interest in the writing of history and narrative sources during the Early and High Middle Ages.[79] This interest has also begun to take a

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[76] M. Chibnall, 'Charter and Chronicle: the use of archive sources by Norman historians', in C. N. L. Brooke, D. E. Luscombe, G. H. Martin and D. Owen, eds, *Church and Government in the Middle Ages: Studies Presented to C. R. Cheney on His 70th Birthday* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 1-2.

[77] M. Fauroux, ed, *Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie de 911 à 1066. Complété d'un index rerum par Lucien Musset* (Caen, 1961); D. Bates, ed, *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum: The Acta of William I (1066-1087)* (Oxford, 1998).

[78] I would like to thank Professor Nelson for the discussion of the use of tenth-century sources which we had at the 2009 Leeds International Medieval Congress.

[79] E. Albu, *The Normans in their histories: propaganda, myth and subversion* (Woodbridge, 2001); D. Bates, 'The Conqueror's Earliest Historians and the Writing of his Biography', in D. Bates, J. Crick and S. Hamilton, eds, *Writing Medieval Biography* (Woodbridge, 2006), pp. 129-42; P. Geary, *Phantoms*

more gendered approach. Recent work has considered not only how women are portrayed in narrative sources, but also how that portrayal might be affected by the author and his/her informants and intended audience, which might include women. Does the interpretation of women differ if women are part of the intended audience of a work? What information might women provide to medieval chroniclers? How will this affect our impression of Matilda and her predecessors as countess of Normandy? Geary and van Houts have considered these issues more generally, while Stafford has applied them to eleventh-century narratives in England. Their work has brought forward important questions and lines of approach which should be considered when using narrative sources.

Historians of women began with questions about the portrayal of women, and about the potentially negative, even misogynistic, views of women in writings of professionally celibate male authors.[80] It is now recognized that considering works in these terms is too simple, especially given the role of women as both patrons and audience. This does not explicitly address the possibility of stereotypes, but it has also opened up new perspectives on women's involvement in the transmission and shaping of the past – as patrons, informants and audience, if not as authors. As van Houts noted, few medieval women wrote works of history.[81] This is not, of course, to say that women had no involvement in the transmission of information from and about the past. Geary argues that there was a medieval conception of women as carriers of family memory.[82] He notes medieval chronicles which give a view of women as responsible for ensuring prayers for the dead, and the remembrance of genealogy.[83] Geary, however, sees a shift during the eleventh century, stating that female memory was replaced by monastic memory as recorded by male monks.[84] Van Houts has taken up Geary's work and broadened the sources used, arguing that in fact women were involved in the making of histories, even histories written by monks.[85] Van Houts notes only two occasions when a male historian used and named a woman as an importance source of firsthand information.[86] Acknowledgement of female involvement was thus rare, but reading between the lines,

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of Remembrance: memory and oblivion at the end of the first millennium (Princeton, 1994); M. Innes and Y. Hen, eds, *Uses of the Past in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 2004); R. McKitterick, *History and Memory in the Carolingian World* (Cambridge, 2004); L. Shopkow, *History and community: Norman historical writing in the eleventh and twelfth centuries* (Washington, D.C., 1997).

[80] J. Dalarun, 'The Clerical Gaze', in C Klapisch-Zuber, ed, G. Duby and M. Perrot, gen. eds, *A History of Women in the West: II. Silences of the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA, 1992), pp. 15-17.

[81] E. van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe 900 – 1200* (Toronto, 1999), pp. 12-13.

[82] Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, pp. 51-2.

[83] Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, pp. 62-3.

[84] Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, p. 68.

[85] van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe*, p. 13.

[86] van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe*, pp. 25-6.

supplemented with evidence from charters and letters, suggests that women did provide information for chroniclers and annalists.[87]

Specifically in relation to Normandy, van Houts has argued that aristocratic women were concerned with recording the past.[88] Some of her evidence comes not from narrative sources as traditionally defined, but from charters in which female members of the ducal family provided detailed information about the history of certain properties which contemporary monastic chroniclers either did not know or chose not to record.[89] Van Houts has also discussed the possibility that Gunnor, the wife of the count/duke Richard II, provided an oral source of family history to Dudo of Saint Quentin, a question considered in greater detail below.[90] The possible involvement of a woman such as Gunnor in a written history affects our interpretation of the work. This debate also reminds us of the fact that these works were produced by men, and clerical men, and the probability that this affects how women are portrayed is something of which historians are aware.

One concern of historians who have written about the portrayal of women in clerical narrative sources is the possibility that the women described are representative archetypes rather than individuals. It has been argued that after the Gregorian Reforms of the eleventh and twelfth centuries women were likely to be portrayed either as the 'good wife' who guided her husband, or as the temptress Eve.[91] Others, however, have argued that the sources present us with more than just stereotypes. In her article 'Women in Orderic Vitalis', Chibnall defends Orderic against the charge that he uses stories of women to moralize, and that he condemns the entire gender based on one individual woman.[92] She suggests that his knowledge of certain families connected to his foundation and his interest in family history gives his account of women an air of individual description, rather than stereotype.[93] Yet as Chibnall describes, Orderic wrote approvingly of wives and queens who acted on behalf of their husbands, and promoted women who acted as good counselors and intercessors, while censuring those who led their husbands astray or ignored good counsel.[94] Orderic may not always have moralized, but he clearly wrote with

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[87] van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe*, pp. 71-3.
[88] E. van Houts, 'Les femmes dans l'histoire du duché de Normandie', *Tabularia*, 2 (2002), pp. 19-33; van Houts, 'The echo of the conquest in the Latin sources', pp. 135-53.
[89] van Houts, 'Les femmes dans l'histoire', p. 21.
[90] van Houts, 'Les femmes dans l'histoire', p. 20; van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe*, p. 72. See below, pp. 77-8.
[91] S. Farmer, 'Persuasive Voices: Clerical Images of Medieval Wives', *Speculum*, 61, no. 3 (1986), pp. 519-521.
[92] M. Chibnall, 'Women in Orderic Vitalis', *HSJ*, 2 (1990), pp. 107-108.
[93] Chibnall, 'Women in Orderic Vitalis', pp. 107, 121.
[94] Chibnall, 'Women in Orderic Vitalis', pp. 115, 120.

an idea of what acceptable wifely and queenly behavior was, and was ready to denounce those women who did not conform to it. Gathagan has argued that Orderic Vitalis's work can give historians an insight into the individual character of Matilda of Flanders, although she does note that Orderic took poetic license in his work.[95] Gathagan also sounds a note of caution concerning the legends surrounding William and Matilda's courtship, that these accounts may reflect the beliefs held by later generations about their predecessors, rather than the actual actions of the latter.[96] This caution should be remembered when working with non-contemporary narrative sources.

In her study of Queen Emma and Queen Edith, Stafford's discussion of sources centers around eleventh-century narratives, establishing the context for the *vitae* commissioned by Emma and Edith.[97] Stafford and others are aware of the fact that these narratives have authors and audiences.[98] Her work on Emma and Edith may be particularly informative for work on Gunnor, who seems to have influenced and provided information for the writer Dudo of Saint Quentin. Who is writing, for whom and in what context are crucial to our reading of narratives. The burgeoning recent interest in historical writing in the middle ages considers these to be fundamental questions. They are critical to reading all narrative sources, including in terms of the inclusion and exclusion of women.

Previous historians of Matilda of Flanders have used English and Norman narrative sources to provide a chronology of her life and actions, from birth, through marriage and death.[99] They have also been used to assess Matilda's opinions and feelings, especially in relation to her role in the dispute between William II and their eldest son Robert Curthose.[100] Similarly, narrative sources have been used as the primary source for all knowledge of Matilda's family: both her natal family and her children.[101] Historians have also used these narratives as sources of information about Matilda's activity as a patron of religious institutions and literary works.[102] The narrative sources used were produced in the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries; only one of these historians cautions about

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[95] Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 66-7.
[96] Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 40-41. For a detailed description of the various legends see Lair, 'La reine Mathilde dans la légende', pp. 301-327.
[97] P. Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, chapters 1 and 2.
[98] D. Bates, 'The Conqueror's Earliest Historians', pp. 129-30.
[99] Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 38-54; Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, pp. 170-215; Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, Vol. 1, pp. 15-61.
[100] Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 65-8; Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, Vol. 1, pp. 53-5.
[101] Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 42-6; Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, pp. 139-160.
[102] Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 197-202; Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, pp. 61-69; Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, Vol. 1, pp. 39, 60.

the dangers of using later source material.[103] In view of the dangers of using later sources, this thesis will focus on tenth- and eleventh-century Norman narratives. These will be read with an awareness of the possible use of stereotypes; description of other comital and royal women within the same work will provide a context of female appearance into which Matilda can be placed. Attention will be paid to informants and audiences. The recent approaches of women's historiography will inform my work, but so too will consideration of individual sources, their authors, audiences and context.

Although Frankish chronicles refer in passing to events in Normandy there is only one narrative source specifically concerned with tenth-century Normandy: the untitled work written by Dudo of Saint Quentin.[104] Dudo's work recounts the history of the Viking province of Normandy. His work is written in a combination of rhymed prose and metered verse; it is divided into sixty sections each containing a prose passage followed by a verse.[105] The first four sections cover the Viking raids of the late ninth and early tenth century, focusing on the career of one Hasting.[106] The next thirteen describe the raiding and eventual settlement of Vikings in Normandy under the rule of Rollo, a Dane who became the first count/duke of Normandy when he was granted the principality by Charles the Simple in 911.[107] Sections eighteen through twenty-seven give an account of the reign and eventual assassination of William Longsword.[108] The entire second half of the work, comprising thirty-two sections of prose and verse, is dedicated to the career of Richard I.[109]

Dudo's work is a crucial source for tenth-century Normandy, but it is arguably much more a source for Normandy in the context of early eleventh-century Northern France.

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[103] Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 40-41.

[104] F. Lifshitz, *Viking Normandy: Dudo of St. Quentin's* Gesta Normannorum (1996 and 2008), produced on the internet at http://www.the-orb.net/orb_done/dudo/dudindexe.html (English translation) and http://www.fiu.edu/~lifshitz/Dudo%20Table%20of%20Contents.htm (Latin edition); accessed March 9, 2009.

[105] F. Lifshitz, *Transcribing and Translating Dudo's "Gesta Normannorum"* (1996 and 2008), produced on the internet at http://www.fiu.edu/~lifshitz/files/dudo/Introduction.pdf; accessed December 15, 2009. Prior to Lifshitz's work the most recent edition of Dudo was one made by Jules Lair in 1865. See E. Christiansen, *Dudo of St Quentin: History of the Normans* (Oxford, 1998), pp. xxxiv-xxxvii, and F. Lifshitz, 'Dudo's Historical Narrative and the Norman Succession of 996', *JMH*, 20 (1994), pp. 10-104. Lair based his edition on seven manuscripts, excluding the oldest known manuscript and including one from the thirteenth century. His edition has been criticized for hasty and careless transcription, and is virtually unobtainable. Lifshitz's transcription and translation has taken into account more than 150 years of subsequent scholarship. Instead of producing a critical edition, Lifshitz transcribes and translates one particular manuscript copy, produced at Mont Saint Michel in the mid-eleventh century, now held in Berlin; her edition preserves the punctuation of the original manuscript. I refer passim to Lifshitz's edition instead of Lair's.

[106] Lifshitz, *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fols. 1v-14v.

[107] Lifshitz, *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fols. 14v-36v.

[108] Lifshitz, *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fols. 36v-47r.

[109] Lifshitz, *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fols. 47r-94r.

Dudo can be confidently placed at the Norman court of the count/duke Richard II, and it seems clear that the members of the court were at least one of his intended audiences, and also provided him with information.[110] Dudo calls himself *capellanus* of Richard II in two Norman charters.[111] He tells us in his preface that his work was commissioned by Richard I, and that after Richard's death in 996 Dudo was urged to continue under Richard II.[112] Lifshitz has seen in Dudo's work a deliberately constructed narrative designed to show the legitimacy of Richard II as count/duke.[113] The author names Raoul of Ivry, Richard I's half-brother, as one of his sources, and it has also been argued that Richard I's wife Gunnor was another of his informants.[114] Dudo's work can thus be placed into a context of family and succession, issues which have been identified as central to questions of female power. When considering Dudo's work it will be important to remember that the count/dukes and their immediate family, including a wife and mother, were at the core of Dudo's informants and audience.

It is arguable, however, that Dudo did not simply write for the Norman court. He was a product of the Frankish world of Northern France and that world constituted at least part of his intended audience. Dudo was likely a member of a minor noble family either from or associated with Vermandois.[115] His work on the Norman family shows signs of a classical education, and based on his style Shopkow has suggested that he was educated at Liège.[116] By 987 he was a canon at Saint Quentin and was involved in a diplomatic mission to the Norman court; by 1015 he was recorded as dean of Saint Quentin in a Norman charter.[117] In his preface he addresses his work to Bishop Adalbero of Laon. Lifshitz sees this as a move designed to bring the legitimacy of the Norman rulers to the attention of one of the major players in Capetian politics.[118]

Bates has captured the bulk of twentieth-century opinion in his dismissal of Dudo's work as 'a thoroughly untrustworthy document, a bombastic and rhetorical text, embroidering a long and frequently tedious discourse around a very small number of

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[110] Lifshitz, *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 7r, Raoul of Ivry is described as 'Rodulfum huius operis relatorem'.
[111] *RADN*, Nos. 13, 18.
[112] Lifshitz, *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fols. 3v-4r.
[113] Lifshitz, 'Dudo's Historical Narrative', p. 106.
[114] van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe*, p. 72; E. Searle, *Predatory Kinship and the Creation of Norman Power, 840-1066* (Berkeley and Los Angelos, 1988), pp. 66-7.
[115] L. Shopkow, 'The Carolingian world of Dudo of Saint-Quentin', *JMH*, 15 (March 1989), p.21.
[116] Shopkow, 'The Carolingian world of Dudo', pp. 23-7.
[117] Christiansen, *Dudo of St Quentin*, p. ix.
[118] Lifshitz, 'Dudo's Historical Narrative', pp. 107-108.

facts.'[119] However, there has been a movement to re-evaluate Dudo, with Searle calling for an assessment of his work based not on establishing 'facts', but rather on seeing in it a collection of tales and a historiography which served Dudo's patrons in the court of the Norman count/dukes.[120] Although his work predates the time of Matilda of Flanders, it is a very important source for ducal/comital women before her. His work, as we shall see, also forms the foundation for a tradition of Norman historical writing, and as such is of central importance to any study of Norman eleventh-century narrative sources.

In contrast to Dudo, who was a canon from a foundation outside the Norman border, the second major Norman narrative source was written by a monk, William of Jumièges.[121] William's origins are obscure, and little is known about his career. He refers to himself as a monk of Jumièges in the dedicatory letter which prefaces his work.[122] Van Houts suggests that he was born c. 1000, based on his own eyewitness accounts which he claims to provide from c. 1026 onwards.[123] It is likely that he entered the monastery of Jumièges in the first quarter of the eleventh century and was educated there. From Orderic Vitalis we know that William's nickname was 'Calculus'.[124] Van Houts has suggested that this nickname may indicate that William was in charge of *computus* at Jumièges, a role which would have included the responsibility for maintaining annals and writing history.[125] This is an attractive suggestion, but ultimately not provable. He evidently spent his entire career at Jumièges, although there are no records of his life in the documents from that foundation.[126] The abbey of Jumièges was located outside Rouen and had historical ties to the ducal house; William Longsword was associated with its re-foundation in the tenth century.[127] The Norman count/dukes patronized the foundation with gifts of land throughout the tenth and eleventh centuries.[128]

In the mid-eleventh century William began a history of the Norman count/dukes based on the earlier work of Dudo of Saint Quentin. Dudo's text provided the model for

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[119] D. Bates, *Normandy before 1066* (London, 1982), pp. xii-xiii.
[120] E. Searle, 'Fact and Pattern in Heroic History: Dudo of Saint-Quentin', *Viator*, 15 (1984), p. 121. For an overview of the 'renaissance of Dudo studies in the 1980s', see Lifshitz, 'Dudo's Historical Narrative', p. 109.
[121] William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni, *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, E.M.C. van Houts, ed, 2 Vols (Oxford, 1992).
[122] *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 4-5.
[123] *GND*, Vol. I, p. xxxi.
[124] Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History*, M. Chibnall, ed, 6 Vols, (Oxford, 1969-80), Vol. II, pp. 2-5; Vol. II, pp. 78-9; Vol. III, pp. 304-305.
[125] *GND*, Vol. I, p. xxxi.
[126] *GND*, Vol. I, p. xxxi.
[127] *GND*, Vol. I, p. xxiii.
[128] *RADN*, Nos. 4, 9, 31, 34, 35, 70, 85, 87, 94; *RRAN*, Nos. 140, 141, 144, 148.

William's work: both have a structure which divides the chronicle into books devoted to the reign of an individual count/duke.[129] William based his account of the reigns of the count/dukes Rollo, William Longsword and Richard I on Dudo's chronicle. He did not copy Dudo's work directly, but 'he drastically abbreviated Dudo's history, rewrote the text, and inserted his own information.'[130] While Dudo wrote a highly stylized Latin which has not found favor with modern readers, William's Latin is clear and he often simplifies Dudo's text. Albu referred to his work as 'the *Readers Digest* version' of Dudo's history.[131] It can be argued that the ease of reading William of Jumièges' Latin, exacerbated by the lack of a scholarly edition of Dudo's work, has led to some fundamental misunderstandings of tenth- and early-eleventh-century Normandy.[132]

The initial stage of revising and expanding the work of Dudo lasted from the early 1050s until just before 1060.[133] At this time William of Jumièges continued Dudo's work by adding events from the reigns of the count/dukes Richard II (996-1026), Richard III (1026-7), Robert I (1027-35), and William II up to the battle of Varaville in 1057.[134] The focus of the remaining chapters switches from Norman affairs to English ones, beginning with King Edward the Confessor making William II the heir to the English throne, and continuing through the events of 1066.[135] These chapters were probably written between 1067 and 1070.[136] During the second phase of writing, William of Jumièges added a dedicatory letter addressed to King William, and made a few minor changes; he added lines about William's future position as king, and foreshadowed Robert Curthose's succession.[137] Van Houts has suggested that Jumièges added the account of the Conquest of England to his chronicle at the urging of King William, which would suggest a royal audience for that part of the work.[138] It could also indicate that the chronicle in its earlier form was known in the Norman ducal court before the Conquest.

William of Jumièges' work was very popular. Forty-seven extant manuscripts of Jumièges' chronicle survive, compared to only thirteen of the works of Dudo.[139] Within a

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[129] *GND*, Vol. I, p. xxxv.
[130] *GND*, Vol. I, p. xxxv.
[131] E. Albu Hanawalt, 'Dudo of Saint-Quentin: The Heroic Past Imagined', *HSJ*, 6 (1994), p. 118.
[132] See below, pp. 70-72.
[133] *GND*, Vol. I, p. xxxii.
[134] *GND*, Vol. II, book vii, chapter 12.
[135] *GND*, Vol. II, book vii, chapters 13 – epilogue. Further chapters on the death of William II and the entirety of Book VIII were added by later redactors.
[136] *GND*, Vol. I, p. xxxii.
[137] *GND*, Vol. I, p. xxxv.
[138] *GND*, Vol. I, p. xxxii.
[139] *GND*, Vol. I, p. xxi. The suviving manuscripts of William of Jumièges' work are catalogued, *GND*, Vol. I, pp. xcvi-cxxi. The manuscript tradition of Dudo of Saint Quentin is described in G. Huisman,

few decades of 1070, William's writing was taken up and expanded upon by a number of redactors. Four redactors worked in the late eleventh or early twelfth century, making minor excisions and adding anecdotes about the ducal family.[140] Among other things, information was added about the death of William II and the eventual fate of Robert Curthose. More substantial revisions were made by Orderic Vitalis c. 1109-13 and by Robert of Torigni c. 1130.[141] Orderic added details about the main protagonists during William II's minority, information which William of Jumièges expressed an unwillingness to detail.[142] Orderic also added information on the families of southern Normandy who were benefactors of his own foundation of Saint Evroult, and he fleshed out William's account of the Conquest of England.[143] Robert of Torigni added even more detail about the Norman noble families, including genealogies of many connected to the abbey of Bec.[144] He also added an entirely new book which gave an account of the reign of Henry I of England.[145]

Orderic would go on to write his own work of history in the early twelfth century. As noted above, his work has been a central source for historians of Matilda of Flanders, and on some key issues he had access to at least one witnesses close to Matilda herself.[146] However there should be concern about the work of twelfth century authors such as Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigni. Their independent works, and the interpolations made into the work of William of Jumièges, may result in a backwards projection of later values onto the eleventh century. This will become especially apparent in the interpretation of the marriage of William II and Matilda of Flanders.[147] Attention will thus remain focused on the eleventh-century sources.

In addition to Dudo and William of Jumièges, Orderic also drew on the work of William of Poitiers.[148] William of Poitiers was a chaplain of William II and archdeacon of Lisieux who wrote a biography of the Conqueror.[149] His work was planned after the Conquest of England to justify William II's claim to the English throne, and to show how he

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'Notes on the Manuscript Tradition of Dudo of St. Quentin's *Gesta Normannorum*', *ANS*, 6 (1984), p. 123. Her catalogue has been discussed and amended by Christiansen, *Dudo of St Quentin*, pp. xxxiv-xxxvi.

[140] *GND*, Vol. I, pp. lx-lxvi.

[141] *GND*, Vol. I, p. xxi.

[142] *GND*, Vol. I, p. lxxi.

[143] *GND*, Vol. I, pp. lxxii-lxxiii.

[144] *GND*, Vol. I, p. lxxxii.

[145] *GND*, Vol. I, pp. lxxxiii-lxxxiv.

[146] See blow, p. 178.

[147] See below p. 44.

[148] William of Poitiers, *The Gesta Guillelmi of William of Poitiers*, M. Chibnall and R.H.C. Davis, eds (Oxford, 1998), p. xxxv.

[149] *Gesta Guillelmi*, p. xvi.

had planned and managed the invasion.[150] Internal evidence suggests that the bulk of the writing took place between 1071 and 1077; Orderic informs us that William of Poitiers was obliged to leave it unfinished.[151] Unlike William of Jumièges, Poitiers' work is not based on the account of Dudo. He is concerned with the Conquest of England, and does not discuss earlier dukes or early eleventh-century Normandy.

Only two manuscripts of William of Poitiers' work are known in the medieval period, although more may have existed.[152] Both are now lost.[153] The text as we have it was edited by André Duchesne in 1619 from a manuscript owned by Sir Robert Cotton, which may have been lost in the Cottonian fire in 1731.[154] The first and last folios of this manuscript were damaged; any introductory material has been lost. This would likely have included information about William of Poitiers, his motivation, and his patron. His connection to the comital/ducal house through his service as William's chaplain may suggest that William and his court were the intended audience, but no evidence exists beyond the circumstantial.

The works of William of Poitiers, William of Jumièges and Dudo of Saint Quentin are the eleventh-century chronicles which are central to the study of Matilda of Flanders. The three writers came from distinct backgrounds, monastic or ecclesiastical. Dudo and William of Poitiers were part of the comital/ducal household in Normandy, while William of Jumièges was not. We must remain aware of their backgrounds and possible direct commissions when reading what they have to say about the ducal family women. Author and audience could have an effect, and must be central to any consideration of narrative sources.

2. Charters

Charter sources have been relatively underused by historians studying women and power, but recent work has started to exploit them. This is part of a more general move to exploit charter sources for questions about power and authority. The eleventh-century charters are very rich sources for the study of individuals from noble and royal families. Charters are single-sheet legal documents. Most of the Norman charters record important activities surrounding land and privileges and their gift, transmission and dispute. We can

[150] Bates, 'The Conqueror's Earliest Historians', p. 132; *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. xx-xxi.
[151] *Gesta Guillelmi*, p. xx.
[152] *Gesta Guillelmi*, p. xliii.
[153] *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. xliii-xlv.
[154] *Gesta Guillelmi*, p. xv.

exploit them for information about activities of donation and patronage, but also consent, intercession and subscription. Additionally, we can use their descriptions of people, and use of titles to access political and social realities.

However, none of this is easy. Charter sources are beset with problems and pitfalls of which we must be fully aware, especially in respect of their original production, preservation and relationship to events they purportedly describe. We need to consider the interpretation of actions such as subscription, consent and intercession, which they record. We need to be aware of changes in this type of document across the tenth and eleventh centuries, and the questions these changes pose. Recent work on reading charters has called for awareness of both author and audience, and questioned how these individuals/groups may have influenced the contents and form of a document.[155] These can be difficult to assess, as many layers of selection lie between us and the original act. The preservation of documents within archives, which must be taken into account, can influence our understanding both of an individual act and of the wider context within which each act was produced and preserved.[156]

Recent studies of women in England and Northern France have begun to do this, examining women in the charter sources within the context of those sources as a whole. For historians such as Johns, charters are a type of evidence which show 'formal public power, spheres of influence, land holdings, economic interests and the religious and cultural roles' of women.[157] The women studied through charter evidence from the eleventh and twelfth centuries - and earlier - are almost exclusively titled noblewomen. The studies particularly relevant to Matilda of Flanders are those concerned with countesses and queens. The work done with the charter evidence raises questions about power and influence, or the perception thereof. It also raises questions about the distinction between 'public' and 'private' in the medieval period. Family relationships, 'office', and politics are all issues which have been central to the study of women in medieval charters. Charters have been important in the study of women and power from at least the Carolingian period onwards. Both Nelson and Hyam have drawn attention to

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[155] K. Heidecker, 'Introduction', in *Charters and the use of the written word in medieval society*, K. Heidecker, ed (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 1-9.

[156] B. Bedos-Rezak, 'Towards an Archaeology of the Medieval Charter: Textual Production and Reproduction in Northern French *Chartriers*', in A.J Kosto and Anders Winroth, eds, *Charters, Cartularies and Archives* (Toronto, 2002), p. 46; Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, p. 68; L. Morelle, 'The Metamorphosis of Three Monastic Charter Collections in the Eleventh Century (Saint-Amand, Saint-Riquier, Montier-en-Der)', in K. Heidecker, ed, *Charters and the use of the written word in medieval society* (Turnhout, 2000), pp. 171-204; S. Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred 'The Unready' 978 – 1016* (Cambridge, 1980), p. xvi.

[157] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, p. 53.

the activity of Carolingian royal women, especially intervention and patronage.[158] Le Jan has used titles in charters as evidence in her discussion of the changes in the position of Frankish counts and their wives in the tenth century.[159] These questions have been central to recent work on women and power in eleventh and twelfth-century England and Northern France. The work of Stafford, Johns and LoPrete is especially noteworthy and is thus a starting point for study of Matilda of Flanders in the Norman ducal charters.

Stafford uses charters as evidence for Emma and Edith's power and influence within the royal court and household, as does Johns' study of the countesses of Chester, which centers around an examination of the charter evidence from the earldom of Chester.[160] LoPrete's study of Adela of Blois also uses charters in this way, although less systematically than Stafford and Johns. These three historians all turn to charters instead of narrative sources when asking questions about power and influence, although Stafford cautions that these two may be difficult to distinguish. She calls for charters to be considered in the political and familial context of the period in order to understand the forces which shaped the perception and representation of these women.

Stafford, LoPrete and Johns all work with the charter evidence by examining the roles in which women are recorded as actors. All three raise concerns about the interpretation of these roles, and the significance of female presence in them. All three are thus concerned with the descriptions of women, but also with the interpretation of the way they and their actions are presented. LoPrete, for example, places special focus on charters in which Adela is a co-dispositor. In these documents Adela and her husband Stephen are jointly taking the action recorded: both are the grammatical subject of the charter.[161] This is evidence which to LoPrete suggests joint lordship, and an equality of power. In the Chester charter evidence the earliest countess – the only one active in the eleventh century – was Ermentrude, wife of Count Hugh I and mother of Count Richard. Johns sees Ermentrude as a wifely counselor, noting charters which record her counsel and consent.[162] She also acted jointly with her husband to endow a monastic foundation, although the charter evidence for this is late and may be suspect.[163]

Whereas Johns and LoPrete have focused on the roles which women play within the body of the charters, such as donating and consenting, Stafford's work on Emma and

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[158] Hyam, 'Ermentrude and Richildis', pp. 162-63; Nelson, 'Medieval Queenship', pp. 200-201.
[159] Le Jan, *Femmes, pouvoir et société*, pp. 26-8.
[160] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, pp. 53-80.
[161] LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, p. 84.
[162] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, p. 56.
[163] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, p. 57.

Edith focuses on appearance in the lists of subscribers at the end of each English charter. She uses the chronology of the appearances of the queen to suggest times of family change. She suggests that Emma's presence on the subscription lists of Æthelred II's charters may be linked to childbearing, as her activity is clustered in chronologically distinct periods, which may reflect the times when she was pregnant or had recently given birth.[164] In addition to a chronological study, Stafford examines where the names of women are recorded in the lists of subscribers. Stafford connects Edith's position in the subscription lists of Edward – her name was recorded next to that of her husband the king - with her status and power and notes that in Edith's case her role as wife is stressed equally with her power as queen.[165] As queen and wife of Cnut, Stafford emphasizes that Emma's name is among the first names recorded onto the subscription list of charters, suggesting precedence over ecclesiastical and lay nobility.[166] Stafford also uses charters to look at titles. Emma's title of *regina* is used frequently, and Stafford suggests that this title usage indicates that Emma's power came from her office of consecrated queen, rather than from her familial position as wife or mother of aethelings.[167] She further compares the representation of English queens in charter evidence to that found in the narrative sources of the period, providing greater context to her study.[168]

This work opens up questions about the significance of the different roles in which men and women appear in the eleventh-century charters. The work of Johns, LoPrete and Stafford should be continued, with an emphasis on a systematic analysis of the Norman ducal charters as a whole. To view the activity of women in isolation could be limiting, and this study will go beyond what has been done by the aforementioned historians.

I am using the Norman ducal charters to study one individual woman, Matilda of Flanders, and in particular to study her power and authority. Other historians have used charter evidence from tenth- and eleventh-century England and Northern France to study similar questions: Keynes, for example, studied a collection of charters for Æthelred II and looked at the composition of subscription lists for the English royal court. Similar work was done by Lemarignier on charters and the courts of the Capetian kings.[169] Both Keynes and Lemarignier used the charter evidence to answer questions about the makeup of the royal court, and to assess the power and influence of individuals within that court. Keynes and

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[164] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 221.
[165] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 261.
[166] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 231.
[167] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 231-2.
[168] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 58-62.
[169] J.F. Lemarignier, *Le gouvernement royal aux premiers temps capétiens, 987-1108* (Paris, 1965).

Lemarignier worked on royal charters from the tenth century onwards, and no comparable study has been done for comital charters in that early period. However, Guillot has used charter evidence as part of his study of the entourage of the counts of Anjou in the eleventh century.[170] Guillot was influenced by Lemarignier, and used a similar methodology.

Keynes emphasized placing each charter into the context of the collection of charters as a whole. He studied how individuals appear within the whole collection, and looked for patterns within the collection which might influence how individuals appear. Keynes argued that the subscription lists of the Anglo-Saxon royal diplomas were not idealized lists or speculative, but reflected the actual attendance at the king's *witenagemot*.[171] He drew attention to the fact that diplomas produced in different places show a consistency of titles for individuals, as well as a consistency of format and precedence.[172] Keynes also noted the evolution of titles, which corresponds with known details about promotion of individuals from other sources. This evolution occurs chronologically through charters produced in a variety of locations, suggesting a central authority providing the information.[173]

Lemarignier's study of the tenth- and eleventh-century French royal charters used a similar methodology. Lemarignier argued that the subscription lists of the French royal charters reflect those who were together at the same meeting of the royal court, a view in which he is followed by Guillot.[174] These three historians focus primarily on the male noble and official entourage of the ruler. Guillot neglects the family of the Angevin count in his study, and Lemarignier is concerned with the evolution of royal officials, although Keynes does discuss the influence of Æthelred II's mother as part of the royal court and household.

The historians discussed above have based their work on collections of charters, and Keynes especially emphasizes the importance of placing individual charters into the context of the collection to which they belong. These collections, however, are for the most part modern constructs, putting together charters from a range of sources to make a chronological and/or geographical collection. For example, Keynes does this to create a collection of the charters of Æthelred II, and Lemarignier collected the charters of the Capetian kings. The collections of charters created by Fauroux and Bates, which are used in this study, are constructed in the same way. Fauroux edited the charters of the Norman

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[170] O. Guillot, *Le comte d'Anjou et son entourage au XI^e siècle* (Paris, 1972).
[171] Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred*, pp. 130-31
[172] Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred*, pp. 130-31
[173] Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred*, pp. 131-3.
[174] Lemarignier, *Le gouvernement royal*, p. 55.

count/dukes from before 1066.[175] This includes forged charters, produced after the reign of the duke in question; some of these documents may have been based on earlier charters now lost, while others seem certain to have been wholly fabricated. I have excluded these documents. With these amendments, there are two hundred and twenty-two Norman ducal charters surviving from before 1066. Although these charters span a period of roughly one hundred years, from the mid-tenth to mid-eleventh centuries, only six predate the year 1000. The focus of this charter work is therefore on the eleventh-century count/dukes Richard II, Robert I and William II. Bates has produced an edition of the charters of William II post-1066, which includes documents produced both in Northern France and in England. There are two hundred and ninety-three charters in this edition, excluding the forgeries which Bates has identified.[176] Thus, two different charter traditions must be considered when using the post-1066 documents. As the focus of this thesis is on Matilda of Flanders in Normandy, the English charters will be used sparingly, and only for comparative purposes.

Working with this type of collection has many advantages. It enables us to see the context of a specific charter or appearance within the contemporary body of evidence for a particular individual. This can highlight chronological changes and fluctuations. In England such a collection may also directly relate to the way charters were produced, although there are still questions surrounding the centralized production of English royal charters. Keynes has argued strongly for the existence of an English royal chancery before the Conquest.[177] Keynes' definition of a chancery is not strictly a secretariat, but rather a central organism which had an influence on the documents written in the king's name. The scribes of each charter might still come from the ecclesiastical beneficiaries. Bates has suggested the existence of such a 'chancery' in England after the Conquest, and charted the chancellors of King William.[178] There is some evidence in the reign of Richard II (996-1026) for a Norman chancery, as four of the documents, benefiting Fécamp, Jumièges and Saint Ouen, all have similar styles of diplomatic and writing, and on one of these documents a scribe is named as Hugh the Chancellor.[179] In fact, there are four scribes who

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[175] Some alterations to Fauroux's collection have been made as the result of more recent work which has questioned her attributions, see K. Thompson, 'Une confirmation supposée de Guillaume le Batard', *AN*, 34, 4 (1984), pp. 411-12.

[176] Including an additional charter identified after the publication of the edition, see D. Bates, 'A charter of William the Conqueror and two of his sons', *Tabularia*, 5 (2005), pp. 17-27.

[177] Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred*, pp. 14-19, 39-83.

[178] *RRAN*, pp. 97-102.

[179] *RADN*, pp. 41-3 and Nos. 34, 35, 36, 53. 'Hugo cancellarius scripsi et subscripsit' is a witness on document number 34, a confirmation of Richard II to the monastery of Fécamp.

name themselves as *cancellarius*; Hugh, Dudo of Saint Quentin, Odo and Franco.[180] However, the diplomatic of the Norman charters suggests that they were produced by the ecclesiastical beneficiaries.[181] Ecclesiastical production and the presence of a ducal chancellor are not mutually exclusive, and is a reminder that the production of a charter would have involved input from all of the interested parties.[182]

In Northern France, if not in England, the collections of these charters are very much constructs. They take charters produced by a range of beneficiaries, and preserved in a variety of ways, and present them together. Although modern collections are valuable, some of the questions raised by their use need to be addressed. Both Fauroux and Bates constructed their editions by gathering charters from a range of surviving sources. The criterion for the inclusion of a document in both collections is the presence of the Norman count/dukes. Although both collections are in one sense Norman political collections, centered on the activity of the count/dukes, they are also essentially family collections, centered on him as a family head. Matilda is thus represented in a political context which is also familial – a point worth emphasizing in relation to both collections. These are collections of the charters of one individual family. Unfortunately little work has been done to collect the charters of other Norman noble families, and so it is not possible to compare Matilda's activity within the ducal family collection to other wives and mothers within their own families.

The charters collected by Fauroux and Bates were preserved in a variety of forms. Some survive as original documents written on single sheets of parchment. Others survive in contemporary copies, or in *pancartes*.[183] A *pancarte* is a document in which the contents of many earlier charters are selected and recopied together. Some, such as the pancarte for Montivilliers, are near contemporary copies of the charters that are recorded, while others may be copied years after the originals were written. Another medieval way of collecting charters together is the production of a cartulary. Many of the foundations in Normandy, Northern France and England produced cartularies to preserve their documents. The motives which governed the production of these cartularies, and the

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[180] *RADN*, Nos. 34, 13, 18, 22.
[181] *RRAN*, p. 10; *RADN*, pp. 41-7; C. Potts, 'The Early Norman Charters: a New Perspective on an Old Debate', in C. Hicks, ed, *England in the Eleventh Century: Proceedings of the 1990 Harlaxton Symposium* (Stamford, 1992), p. 36.
[182] *RRAN*, pp. 106-107, suggests that the chancellor's office would 'act on occasion as a secretariat; on other occasions – especially in the case of diplomas – their role was that of an inspectorate'.
[183] *RRAN*, pp. 22-30; D. Bates, 'The Prosopographical Study of Anglo-Norman Royal Charters', in K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, ed, *Family Trees and the Roots of Politics: The prosopography of Britain and France from the tenth to the twelfth century* (Woodbridge, 1997), pp. 91-2.

criteria for selection of documents varied widely from foundation to foundation; these motives and criteria are not explicated.[184] Simon Keynes noted evidence within English cartularies that 'very few bothered to record the endorsement or pictorial invocation, several abbreviated the witness lists, and some even took substantial liberties with the texts.'[185] Still other charters were copied in the early modern and modern eras; I will refer to such documents as late copies.

The range of beneficiaries producing these charters, and the different forms of preservation, raises many questions about the interpretation of the way individuals are presented. Simon Keynes, drawing on the work of Barlow on Edward the Confessor, has stated of the English royal charters that 'if it could be shown that the documents were invariably drawn up in ecclesiastical *scriptoria*, acting for themselves or on behalf of other beneficiaries, they have to be regarded as only "literary accounts of royal action", and would reflect directly on the work of the different religious houses that produced them; such an arrangement would itself indicate that the executive role in one of the king's important activities was delegated to others, and the witness lists would seem in consequence to represent unofficial or even idealized statements of those present at meetings of the king and his *witan*.'[186] Keynes' comments suggest that he is thinking within the administrative/political paradigm of charter studies. He is primarily concerned with the measurement and study of royal power imposed or exercised from the center, and with charters as centrally-produced instruments of that power. Beneficiary-produced charters may, however, have other things to tell us about power: for example, about the active acceptance and seeking of power and protection by beneficiaries who requested and recorded charters. Charters produced by beneficiaries may also be very useful in interpreting how power and the powerful are perceived, and how widely, in different places and at different times. As Johns has noted, even if the lists of subscribers are unofficial or idealized, it is significant that women are recorded there.[187] Recognition is an important part of power and authority. Charters produced by beneficiaries still have some relationship to the social and political realities they purport to describe. The challenge for the historian is to access these realities, with a constant awareness of all the wider contexts.

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[184] C.B. Bouchard, 'Monastic Cartularies: Organizing Eternity', in A.J Kosto and Anders Winroth, eds, *Charters, Cartularies and Archives* (Toronto, 2002), pp. 22-32; Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance*, pp. 83-114.
[185] Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred*, pp. 3-4; Bouchard, 'Monastic Cartularies', pp. 29-30.
[186] Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred*, p. xv.
[187] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, p. 84.

Keynes used his collection of English charters to see chronological patterns. Such a method has also been applied to Anglo-Saxon royal women by Stafford, and to Adela of Blois by LoPrete.[188] However, this is far more difficult in a Norman context. Unlike English charters, only a quarter of the surviving original Norman ducal and Anglo-Norman royal charters were dated. Fauroux has suggested some dates based on the presence of certain individuals, using known dates of death or dates of accession to an office. But many charters can only be loosely dated within a range of years. Some of the questions and lines of enquiry opened by English charters are more difficult to pursue for Northern France.

We need therefore to be aware of a number of general characteristics of Norman charters and of the collections in which they are now available. But there are also questions raised by the detailed terminology of the charters themselves, and by the roles and actions which that terminology may indicate. These are of considerable significance for any assessment of the activities and perceptions of individuals described here. In my database I have grouped the actions recorded in the Norman ducal and Anglo-Norman royal charters under the following roles: addressee, confirmer, consenter, countergifter, donor, intercessor, judge, recipient, recipient of a counter-gift, subscriber.[189] Subscriber is a general term which includes witnessing in the sense of an individual who is present and/or described as seeing or hearing the action described in the charter. It also includes signing, when an individual makes the sign of the cross at the end of a document. No role is exclusively gendered: at least one woman appears in every role. Distinguishing between certain roles and assigning categories is not always simple; as we shall see, each category encompasses actions recorded using a variety of terminology and not a little ambiguity. Not all roles and their descriptions are equally problematic, but many pose significant problems of interpretation.

A very few roles are clear. English writs are the only documents which are addressed to certain individuals, thus they are the only type of document in which addressees are found. Appearance in this role is firmly within an English context. Another clear role is that of intercession, the act of requesting that a donation be made or confirmed, or that consent be given. The following words are used in the surviving original Norman comital/ducal charters to indicate intercession of some sort: *interpellatione*,[190]

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[188] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 193-206. LoPrete's work is formatted around the different chronological phases of Adela's life, especially the absences of her husband on Crusade, LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, p. 18-20.
[189] Appendix A, p. 220.
[190] *RADN*, Nos. 30, 126.

suppliciter,[191] *impetrare*,[192] *petere*,[193] *per voluntatem*,[194] *per petitionem*,[195] *rogare atque precari*[196] and *adirex*.[197] Both Nelson and Hyam have highlighted the practice of intercession as a role which a Carolingian queen would play, and where female power, expressed as influence, could be seen.[198] Hyam has used the recording of the act of intercession in charters as evidence for a link between certain queens and foundations.[199] Hyam's work suggests the significance and the influence of Carolingian queens, not just with their husbands, but also with monastic foundations. Intercession viewed in this way makes the intercessor into a bridge, who can act and have an effect on both parties involved.

Other roles pose problems of interpretation. Matilda took part in judicial activity.[200] Distinguishing between a judgment and a confirmation is occasionally problematic. She was also the recipient of a unique *mandement* addressed to her from her husband.[201] There are questions, too, about counter-gifts and sales of land, which can appear similarly in the charters. However, the most problematic roles, and ones which overlap, are those of consenter and subscriber.

In the Northern French context of the Norman charters LoPrete has noted the difficulties in interpreting the contemporary perception of roles such as co-donor, consenter, and subscriber.[202] Studies of Northern French charters suggest that contemporary authors did not define the roles which they described, and did not consistently distinguish between different terminology.[203] Tessier blamed the authors of the 'private-style charters', written by the beneficiaries who were the recipients of royal donations and confirmations, for the 'sorte d'anarchie' of terminology which was introduced into the Capetian royal diplomas in the eleventh century.[204] This is especially the case when considering the vexed question of consent. The overlap between co-donation, confirmation, consent and subscription raises questions about how consent was recorded.

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[191] *RADN*, Nos. 18, 23, 43.
[192] *RADN*, Nos. 42, 159.
[193] *RRAN*, No. 175.
[194] *RADN*, No. 112.
[195] *RADN*, Nos. 114, 140.
[196] *RADN*, No. 113.
[197] *RADN*, No. 225.
[198] Nelson, 'Medieval Queenship', pp. 200-201.
[199] Hyam, 'Ermentrude and Richildis', pp. 162-63.
[200] E. van Houts, 'Gender and Authority of Oral Witnesses in Europe (800-1300)', *TRHS* Series 6, 9 (1999), pp. 201-202, 217-8.
[201] *RRAN*, No. 202.
[202] LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, p. 84.
[203] LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, p. 85.
[204] G. Tessier, *Diplomatique Royale Française* (Paris, 1962), p. 208.

Consenting may be generally defined as the recording of an individual in the body of a charter acting in a role which supported the grant being made. If we look at the original charters from Normandy, some of the following terms are used: *consentire*,[205] *annuere*,[206] *adjuvare presidium*,[207] and *authorizare*[208] from the reign of Richard II. There is also the use of *annuere*,[209] *per consensus*,[210] *favere*,[211] *concedere*,[212] *cum auctoritas*,[213] *sui permissione*,[214] *interesse*,[215] *astare*,[216] *corroborare*,[217] *consentire*,[218] *confirmare*[219] and *firmare*[220] from the reigns of Robert I and William II.[221] This variety of terminology must be remembered; while these actions are grouped together for statistical purposes as being of a similar 'type', they may not have been seen as identical by the authors of the documents in question. The practice of recording consent, especially the consent of kin (the *laudatio parentum*) is well attested in France during this period, but the legal status of this action is far from clear.[222] Modern historians have often conceived of subscribers/witnesses and consenters as fulfilling similar functions. Postles, working on twelfth-century charters, states that witnesses were present for assurance and corroboration, but that they were being supplanted in the twelfth century by other methods of ensuring the integrity of gifts, such as family consenting, or the consent and corroboration of the lord.[223] Giry has considered witnessing in a similar way, saying that third-party subscriptions had the value of 'consentement, d'autorisation, de confirmation'.[224] Johns, meanwhile, has taken a more nuanced view, noting that 'the importance of witnessing as a measure of consent to a transaction is particularly difficult to verify, since the references to consent in charters are

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[205] *RADN*, No. 19.
[206] *RADN*, No. 34.
[207] *RADN*, No. 43.
[208] *RADN*, Nos. 52, 55 (both for Saint Wandrille).
[209] *RADN*, Nos. 107, 112, 140, 218, 225; *RRAN*, Nos. 164, 248.
[210] *RADN*, No. 158; *RRAN*, No. 164.
[211] *RADN*, No. 162.
[212] *RADN*, Nos. 191, 218; *RRAN*, Nos. 30, 46, 48, 49, 162, 192, 246.
[213] *RADN*, Nos. 205, 210, 223.
[214] *RADN*, No. 218; *RRAN*, Nos. 164, 175.
[215] *RADN*, No. 218.
[216] *RRAN*, No. 229.
[217] *RADN*, No. 225; *RRAN*, No. 144.
[218] *RRAN*, No. 164.
[219] *RRAN*, Nos. 164, 248.
[220] *RRAN*, Nos. 46, 47, 49, 164, 281, 283, 284.
[221] This includes original Norman charters both pre- and post-1066.
[222] S. White, *Custom, Kinship and Gifts to Saints, The Laudatio Parentum in Western France, 1050-1150* (Chapel Hill, 1988), pp. 1-5.
[223] D. Postles, 'Choosing Witnesses in Twelfth-century England', *Irish Jurist*, 23 (1988), p. 330-31.
[224] A. Giry, *Manuel de Diplomatique* (Paris, 1925), p. 612.

inconsistent.'[225] If subscribers and witnesses are indicating their consent to a grant, what then is the function of the consenter? Or does the presence of a consenter in some charters indicate that subscribers and witnesses do not in fact consent, but fulfill some other function? One of the original charters has phrasing which seems closer to a subscribing/witnessing clause, but is in the body of the charter: *hujus conscriptum confirmo, et auctoritate supra... corroboro.*[226] Where and how do we – or did the charter scribe – draw the line between subscribing and consenting? For the purposes of this study, both the terminology and the location of the record within a document have been considered, grouping those statements of support and or approval recorded in the body of a charter together under the description of 'consent'. This has some value for broad statistical purposes, but awareness of the inconsistent terminology, and the possibility of beneficiary preference will guide the more detailed analysis.

Historians have given much more thought to the role of subscriber. Subscribing is the most common action for both men and women in the Norman and English charters. Most of the Norman and English diplomas have a list of names at the end of the recorded act. These lists range from one or two names to more than one hundred. Some lists are apparently affected by the size of the piece of parchment. Copies, including cartulary copies, may have been altered by the copyist. In addition, diplomatic has an impact here. Some *acta* record the lists of subscribers as those present, whereas the subscription lists of *pancartes* seem to record many *signa* compiled over time.[227] Some cartulary copies may also hide such accumulation. In contrast, it is uncommon to find more than one name, if any, at the end of English writs.[228]

In her work on the power of noblewomen in the twelfth century, Johns provides a short summation of the major themes in the historiography of subscription.[229] She describes subscription as a 'visible public activity'.[230] She also identifies several key problems in the interpretation of lists of subscribers, and she questions how historians have evaluated these lists as indicators of personal, social and political power.[231] She notes that in the twelfth century the use of documents became more routine, and the phrasing of charters may have become standardized to the point that it may not reflect what actually occurred. The lists of subscribers may reflect an idealized or formulaic content, as opposed

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[225] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, p. 82.
[226] *RADN*, No. 124.
[227] Bates, 'The Prosopographical Study of Anglo-Norman Royal Charters', pp. 91-2.
[228] Bates, 'The Prosopographical Study of Anglo-Norman Royal Charters', p. 90.
[229] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, pp. 83-5.
[230] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, p. 81.
[231] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, p. 82.

to a description of who was physically present.[232] Johns identifies as empiricists those historians likely to see presence on a witness list as a sign of political influence; the work of Keynes and Lemarignier fits this category. Keynes sees the subscription lists of the Anglo-Saxon royal charters of the tenth and eleventh centuries as reflecting the makeup of the *witan*. Keynes examines the title given to individuals and the order in which their names were recorded to assess prominence and influence.[233] Lemarignier also takes this approach, mapping the subscription lists to see which nobles appeared often at court, and tracing the appearance and disappearance of different groups over time. He states that the nobles with the most appearances were the most powerful, as they were the most able to guarantee the security of the grant being recorded. He thus extrapolates that there were fluctuations in the power of different groups of nobles and types of officials, who came and went from the royal court over time.

However, Bates has sounded a note of caution about using the counting of attestations as evidence of prominence. He notes that both documentary loss, documentary survival and forgery can distort the number of subscriptions credited to an individual.[234] Instead of counting subscriptions Bates calls for an analysis of the patterns of individual attestation, taking into account factors such as geography (English vs. Norman), the type of act and groupings of kin, especially notable in the *laudatio parentum*.[235] He has seen the attestations of Matilda of Flanders and her children as a sign of their prominence in England and Normandy, because 'their special role in consenting to and confirming grants clearly places them on a level above even the most powerful members of the aristocracy.'[236] He sees the subscription lists as showing her prominence among William's nobles, especially in the fact that her *signa* was always placed close to her husband's at the base of the parchment. Were the names on the list of subscribers the result of political importance? And if so, did political influence dictate only whose name was included, or did it also affect the order?[237]

Connected to these questions is the theory that the lists of subscribers may represent a physical gathering of people, placed in a specific order representing their power and influence. Bates notes evidence which supports the interpretation of lists as records of real attendance, whilst reminding us that not all charters tell the same tale. In the case of a

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[232] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, pp. 82-3.
[233] Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred*, pp. 156-8.
[234] Bates, 'The Prosopographical Study of Anglo-Norman Royal Charters', pp. 89-91.
[235] Bates, 'The Prosopographical Study of Anglo-Norman Royal Charters', p. 96.
[236] *RRAN*, p. 92.
[237] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, p. 83, notes historians who have asked this question, but does not elaborate.

Worcester Cathedral diploma, he suggests that the act of subscription was delayed so that Matilda could be present with William, indicating that here the lists of subscribers can show a group who were physically present together.[238] However, elsewhere he raises concerns about the lists of subscribers at the end of Norman *pancartes*, where evidence suggests that these lists were compiled over a long period of time.[239] He concludes that this type of subscription list cannot be taken as evidence of a physical gathering, but rather represents the names of those individuals whose subscription was desired by the beneficiary. Even here, of course, the inclusion or exclusion of individual women can still provide evidence as to the perception of their importance, if not to their presence and involvement.

Other historians have seen different motivations for the inclusion of wives as subscribers. Postles says that 'Including the donor's wife and potential heirs amongst the witnesses was an alternative to the *laudatio parentum*,'[240] and that 'wives were always included to bar rights of dower.'[241] One assumes that he means that every time a wife appears, she is there because of dower claims, not that she had to be present in every transaction, as this is clearly not the case. What, then, does it mean when a wife or heir was present as both a consenter and a witness? Does it indicate two different types of consent? Was it purely because a consenter was physically present? Did different beneficiaries have different preferences?

Postles was concerned with twelfth-century charters, which were becoming increasingly formulaic. Important work has been done on the question of consent and subscription in the tenth and eleventh centuries by Prell. The tenth- and eleventh-century charters were arguably written in a more fluid form, and Prell has seen changes within them corresponding to shifting social and political realities. Prell sees an evolution in the style of subscription as recorded in the charters of the count/dukes of Poitou/Aquitaine. There are many similarities between the charters that he was working with and the Norman ducal/comital charters of the eleventh century. Prell identifies two types of subscribers, and sees a chronological progression from one to the other. In the tenth-century charters of the count/dukes of Poitou/Aquitaine Prell believes that there was a standard legal role which subscribers played, and it was expressed in the charters as *signa* which were connected verbally with a *corroboratio* clause that charged the signatories with defence of the act if it were ever challenged. From the mid-eleventh through to the twelfth century

[238] D. Bates, 'The representation of queens and queenship', pp. 287-88.
[239] Bates, 'The Prosopographical Study of Anglo-Norman Royal Charters', p. 91-2.
[240] Postles, 'Choosing Witnesses', p. 335.
[241] Postles, 'Choosing Witnesses', p. 336.

Prell believes that there was a gradual shift away from this type of signatory to a witness, or 'témoin instrumentaire', who was not involved in the grant but who was present at the time of writing to confirm that the act or grant had been made and the charter written.[242] Along with the change from signatory to witness went a change in the connections of the people who were acting in these roles. Prell identifies signatories charged with defending a grant as being close to the granter, while the pure witnesses were more likely to have a connection to the beneficiary.[243]

These are important arguments, not least for the assessment of the power of the individuals listed. There are, however, some problems. Prell seems to assume that there was a widely accepted and understood legal definition of the role of a signatory – one which could be invalidated without the correct formula. However, it is clear from looking at the surviving original eleventh-century Norman ducal/comital charters that the formulas used to record witnesses were extremely varied, and that it was entirely possible that different scribes or *scriptoria* interpreted the use of *signa* in different ways and that this was not considered to be a problem at the time. Some signatories in the Norman ducal charters were connected with *corroboratio* clauses, but they were as often unconnected, being just a list of crosses and names with no explanation in the text as to their exact function.

Although Prell is aware of beneficiary production, he does not seem to consider its possible effects. In the Norman ducal/comital charters of the eleventh century there is good evidence that beneficiaries had an impact on the way the subscription lists were presented. When the surviving original charters are examined (for this purpose we must obviously leave out later copies and cartulary copies), some foundations, such as Saint Ouen of Rouen, show a great diversity in the style of the witness lists. Others, such as Jumièges, have near-perfect consistency, and in Jumièges' case, all but one of their original charters end with nearly identical *corroboratio* clauses and lists of *signa*.[244] If then, in some cases, the beneficiary had a preferred formula for recording subscribers, what effect might this have had on the people who were included, if any? Does this indicate that we should be wary of interpreting different ways of describing individuals, especially the wives of the count/dukes in this study, as indicating real difference in perception when it may simply be

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[242] J. Prell, 'La place des temoins par rapport à l'auteur et au bénéficiare des actes: la situation en Poitou aux X[e] et XI[e] siècles', in M.-J. Gasse-Grandjean and B.M. Tock, eds, *Les actes comme expression du pouvoir*, (Turnhout, 2003), pp. 205-7.

[243] Prell, 'La place des temoins', p. 214.

[244] *RADN*, Nos. 92, 100, 188. The form of *corroboratio* with *signa* is the same, but the wording is very different in No. 74.

a matter of diplomatic preference? In spite of these difficulties, Prell's work draws our attention to the very different types of activity which may lie behind subscription, and to the possibility of changes over time in this.

Prell's work reminds us of the changes in charters across these centuries. The changes in eleventh-century charter diplomatic in France have been the subject of some debate. Duby saw a change in style between 1000 and 1060 which he took as evidence for the crisis of centralized authority.[245] To Duby, the freer narrative style and greater diversity of expression showed a devolution of power from kings to feudal lords. As Bates has discussed, in Normandy these changes in diplomatic may affect the roles which were recorded in charters and what types of individuals were recorded in those roles.[246] However, Barthélemy has questioned the connection between diplomatic change and social change. He argues that the changing charter evidence may be illusory; the social reality and the power of the individuals involved may have stayed the same throughout the eleventh century.[247] Bates provides a supporting example from a series of charters recording a land dispute, which progressively record more and more instruments of lordly power.[248] These powers always existed, but were implicit in the earlier documents because they were not needed until the dispute escalated. Charters thus may hide as much as they reveal. Nonetheless, they are important sources of information, especially for the tenth- and early-eleventh-century women and female power, where the chronicle evidence is scanty, to say the least.

In the context of female power, Johns has also noted the debate over 'la mutacion documentaire', but argues that it is a postmodern debate about male power and action which contests the problems of reading social reality from constructed narratives. It does little to address the problem of measuring the power of women as subscribers. Johns argues that within the context of 'la mutation documentaire', all historians still consider subscribers to be important. Thus, she suggests that the presence of women in this role indicates that they are either high-status political players, or that women were an important part of 'the mythologized narrative which is reflective of the views of those party to and who created the document.'[249]

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[245] G. Duby, *La société aux XI^e et XII^e siècles dans la région mâcconaise* (Paris, 1971), p. 9.
[246] D. Bates, 'La "mutation documentaire" et le royaume anglo-normand', in M.-J. Gasse-Grandjean and B.M. Tock, eds, *Les actes comme expression du pouvoir* (Turnhout, 2003), p. 36.
[247] D. Barthélemy, *La mutation de l'an mil a-t-elle eu lieu?* (Paris, 1997), p. 18-19.
[248] Bates, 'La "mutation documentaire"', pp. 40-41.
[249] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, p. 84.

Historians such as Keynes and Bates have emphasized the need for a systematic study of charters so that individual appearances can be seen within a wider context. To facilitate such a study I have taken the collections of Fauroux and Bates and created a computer database of the charters and the appearances of individuals. This allows study of Matilda and her predecessors both statistically within the context of the collection as a whole, and within the different roles in which they were recorded. Gendered comparisons with comparable men, especially the male members of the comital/ducal family will be made, facilitating an understanding of how the women acted in relation to their peers. Changes through time can be tracked for both men and women, which should assist in addressing concerns about the 'mutacion documentaire'. Overall statistical analyses will be matched by detailed discussion in which some of the problems surrounding survival and interpretation raised above will be further addressed. The analysis of the entire corpus of charters, produced over time and by numerous beneficiaries, will allow for a study of changes and continuities in the perception of these women and their power in Normandy.

Chapter 3: The Marriage of William and Matilda

Matilda's position in Normandy and England, her roles as wife, countess and queen, and any power and authority which she wielded through these roles are all derived from her marriage with William II. With this marriage she was brought in to Normandy and took a place in the comital/ducal family and government. Historians of women and power have pointed to the significance of wife as a role in which women can potentially have power. Whatever it meant to be a countess or queen, these roles were ultimately derived from that of wife.[250] Power and security come especially from being a fully legitimate wife and the mother of legitimate heirs.[251]

The marriage of Matilda and William is of particular importance because there are significant questions in the historiography about its date and its fully valid nature, especially in the early stages. Historians have also raised questions about some of the earlier female partners of the count/dukes – and the status of their unions – which have obvious importance when assessing Matilda comparatively. Did she begin at a certain advantage or disadvantage *vis à vis* earlier sexual partners?

What was the political significance of this marriage and how did that affect Matilda's position in Normandy? Questions of date, validity and political importance are closely intertwined. In order to assess Matilda's status as a wife we must examine the marriage and its circumstances, especially the date and the alleged papal ban. We should consider the politics of this marriage – internal and external. In addition, it is necessary to provide a comparative context by discussing earlier unions, their nature and status (including possible changes in status of individual unions), and their politics.

What made a marriage in the eleventh century? Marriage at that time, especially among the nobility, involved a series of actions; marriage was a process rather than a single event. These actions included negotiations between two families, property transactions such as the settlement of dowry and dower, the giving of gifts, the leading of the bride to the home of her husband, and the final public rite to be followed by consummation.[252] Male nobility tended to be serially monogamous, marrying and remarrying.[253] The nature of eleventh-century marriage may have made this easier: the omission of any stage of the

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[250] See the comments on the role of the queen in Nelson, 'Medieval Queenship', p. 182; Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 65.
[251] Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, p. 92.
[252] J. Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 349; Duby, *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages*, J. Dunnett, trans (Chicago, 1994), pp. 18-19; Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 66-7.
[253] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 66.

marriage process could be grounds for the breaking of the marriage. Thus these transactions and negotiations were important for the security of the wife and her family.[254]

Questions have been raised about the status of the different female partners associated with early and high medieval nobility. Because Normandy was originally settled by Scandinavians, some historians have looked to Viking marriage practices for precedent, suggesting three types of union: full marriage, *friedelehe/frilla*, and concubinage. *Frilla* have been defined as free women living with a man in a union which resembled a marriage but without the financial settlement which made a marriage fully legitimate.[255] This may be equated with the Germanic concept of *friedelehe*. However the concept of *friedelehe* has been questioned, in particular by Esmyol whose work suggests that *friedelehe* and associated forms of 'freer' marriage are historical constructs unsupported by the primary sources.[256] This debate is of particular importance for Normandy, since the concept of *frilla*, or of some union whose nature lies between marriage and concubinage, has been used to describe several of the unions of the count/dukes.

The next two chapters will thus address a series of questions about Norman marriage, paying particular attention to the interpretation of the primary sources. Is there a 'freer' form of marriage recorded in the Norman sources, different from concubinage but without the full legitimacy and security accorded to a wife whose marriage followed all the appropriate financial and ceremonial preliminaries? How does the marriage of William and Matilda fit into these different categories, and what impact might that have on her power and authority? In this chapter and the next these questions will be examined through a close analysis of the contemporary Norman source material. The circumstances surrounding the marriage of William and Matilda will be analyzed, as will the unions of William's predecessors as count/dukes. Placing the union of William and Matilda into this wider context should allow for patterns to emerge, and for an assessment of Matilda's position in Normandy.

Matilda's marriage marks her first appearance in the historical record; almost nothing is known of her early life.[257] She was the daughter of Baldwin V, count of Flanders, and his wife Adela, daughter of Robert the Pious, king of France. King Henry I of France was therefore her uncle. Matilda's date of birth is not known: the most recent work suggests

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[254] G. Duby, *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages*, p. 9.
[255] E. Eames, 'Mariage et concubinage légal en Norvège à l'époque des Vikings', *AN*, 2 (1952), pp. 195-8.
[256] A. Esmyol, *Geliebte oder Ehefrau? Konkubinen im frühen Mittelalter* (Köln, 2002); R.M. Karras, 'The history of marriage and the myth of Friedelehe', *Early Medieval Europe*, 14 (2006), pp. 119-51.
[257] Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 24-36.

that she was born no earlier than 1031, and likely before 1034, based on the probable dates of the marriage of her parents, and her own marriage to William, although the date of both marriages is problematic.[258] Matilda's marriage was one of a series of marriage alliances between the counts of Normandy, Flanders and Ponthieu.[259] However, the date and context of this union remain problematic.

Discussion begins in 1049, when Pope Leo IX banned the proposed marriage of William and Matilda. Since we know that William and Matilda eventually did marry, this information has raised several questions for historians. Why did the pope ban the marriage? When did the marriage take place? Did William and Matilda defy a papal ban, or was a dispensation granted before they married? Additionally, most historians record opposition to the marriage within Normandy: from Lanfranc of Bec, who was quickly reconciled with William and Matilda, and from Archbishop Mauger of Rouen, who was deposed and exiled in 1054.[260] That Mauger's deposition was a result of his opposition to the marriage comes from the work of William of Malmesbury, who added this detail to the account of the deposition which he took from the work of William of Poitiers.[261] The claims concerning Lanfranc come from the twelfth-century *Vita Lanfranci.* According to this work, Normandy was placed under an interdict as a result of the illegal marriage before Lanfranc eventually obtained a papal dispensation to legitimate the marriage.[262] The twin abbeys founded by William and Matilda in Caen may be penitential abbeys built as a condition of the dispensation.[263] However, the sources used by historians were mainly produced in the twelfth century, and in some cases contradict the accounts given in eleventh-century sources. The important account of the *Vita Lanfranci* will be considered and compared with the few contemporary eleventh century sources which discuss or mention the marriage.

Although there is no official papal record of the council of Rheims in 1049, an account of the council was written as part of the *Historia Dedicationis Ecclesiae S. Remigii.*[264] The author, the priest Anselm of Rheims, states that he was asked to write an

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[258] Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 24, 37.
[259] F. Barlow, *The Feudal Kingdom of England* (London, 1955), p. 65; D. Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 76; D. Bates, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 55-6; Bauduin, *La première Normandie*, pp. 306-308; C.H. Haskins, *The Normans in European History* (New York, 1915), p. 61.
[260] Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 79-80; Freeman, *History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, pp. 103-4; Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, p. 39; F.M. Stenton, *William the Conqueror* (London, 1925), pp. 106-7; Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, Vol.1, pp. 24-6.
[261] *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Vol. 1, pp. 494-5.
[262] Freeman, *History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, pp. 103-4.
[263] Freeman, *History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, pp. 103-4; Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, p. 40; Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, Vol. 1, pp. 24-5.
[264] B. Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State* (Toronto, 1988), p. 31; Anselm of Rheims, *Historia Dedicationis Ecclesiae S. Remigii, PL*, J.P. Migne, ed, Vol. CXLII (Paris, 1880), p. 1437.

account of the visit of Pope Leo IX to bless the new basilica at Rheims. The council of Rheims took place after the pope oversaw the dedication of the new cathedral. Anselm was either an eyewitness to the council or had access to those among the monks of Rheims who were; his account was written within a decade, probably between 1055 and 1060.[265] This source is contemporary with the account of the marriage recorded by William of Jumièges, and predates the work of William of Poitiers. In this account the Pope prohibits the proposed marriage of William II and Matilda of Flanders, but no reason for the prohibition is given. It has been argued that because the ban is recorded just after the canons concerning the prohibition of incestuous marriage, and is part of a notice which includes other incestuous marriages, such an infraction was the cause of the ban.[266] However, this is a simplification of the text, and the prohibition of William and Matilda's marriage does not come directly after Anselm's list of canons. Additionally, it is not just part of a passage in which incestuous marriages are censured; there is also condemnation of two men who had put aside their first wives.

Anselm listed twelve canons, of which the first nine deal with ecclesiastical issues, with the final three directed exclusively towards the laity.[267] The tenth states that no one should injure poor men by theft or fraud. The eleventh and twelfth deal with lay marriage, stating respectively that no one should participate in an incestuous union, and that no one should desert his wife and marry another.[268] Following the canons is a short passage which records the excommunication of heretics in France, and a statement of damnation for sodomites.[269] Only then do we find the record of condemnation of specific lay marriages. As with the final two canons, the marriages mentioned here deal with either incest or repudiation. The passage reads, 'The pope excommunicated also the counts Angelrai and Eustace for incest, and Hugh de Braina who had repudiated his legitimate wife and united in marriage with another. And he forbade Baldwin of Flanders from giving his daughter to

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[265] J. Hourlier, 'Anselme de Saint-Remy: Histoire de la dédicace de Saint-Remy', *La Champagne Bénédictine: Contribution à l'année Saint Benoît (480 – 1980)* (Reims, 1981), pp. 182-4.

[266] de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, pp. 162-3.

[267] Canon three forbids the laity from holding ecclesiastical office, and canon seven unites both the laity and the clergy in a damnation of usury.

[268] *PL*, Vol. CXLII, p. 1437, 'Ne quis incestuosae conjunctioni se copularet. Ne quid legitima uxore derelicta, aliam duceret'. Tierney has noted that there was no condemnation of clerical marriage at this council, which is surprising as clerical marriage is generally considered to be a more important reform issue in this period than lay marriage practice.

[269] *PL*, Vol. CXLII, p. 1437, 'Et quia novi haeretici in Gallicani partibus emerserant, eos, eoxcommunicavit, illis additis, qui ab eis aliquod munus vel servitum acciperent, aut quodlibet defensionis patrocinium illis impenderent. Pari modo damnavit et sodomitas'.

William of Normandy in marriage, nor should (William) accept her. He also named the count Thibaud, who had sent away his wife.'[270]

In this context, the 'close to each other in the text' argument could either mean that William and Matilda were related, or that one of them had a previous relationship which in the eyes of the church was a legal marriage. It was at one time suggested that Matilda had been in a previous marriage, but the charter evidence for this theory has since been shown to have been forged, and since the early part of the twentieth century historians have discounted this.[271] The chronicle evidence produced in Normandy during the reign of William strongly suggests that either he had no previous partner, or that there was an orchestrated effort to write such a woman out of official history. Although the latter is not impossible, it would be foolhardy to argue for a previous union as the impediment in question here.

Historians have therefore focused on consanguinity as the most plausible explanation for a papal ban. Twelfth-century authors such as Orderic Vitalis, William of Malmesbury and the author of the *Vita Lanfranci* all cited non-specific 'consanguinity' as the cause of trouble over the marriage, but no historical source gives a specific relationship.[272] The theory that consanguinity is the most likely reason behind the papal prohibition of William and Matilda's marriage has been put forward by all other nineteenth-

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[270] *PL*, Vol. CXLII, p. 1437, 'Excommunicavit etiam comites Angelrai [Engelrai], et Eustacium propter incestum, et Hugonem de Baina, quia legitimam uxorem dimiserat, et alim sibi in matrimonio sociaverat. Interdixit et Balduino comiti FLandrensi ne filiam suam Willelmo Nortmanno nuptui daret, et ei ne eam acciperet. Vocavit etiam comitem Tetbaldum, quoniam suam dimiserat uxorem'.

[271] This theory arose from questions about the parentage of Gundrada of Warenne. In 1846 Thomas Stapleton asserted that Gundrada was the daughter of Matilda and the Fleming Gherbod. As a consequence, he promoted the theory that the papal ban of 1049 and delay in the marriage was due to Matilda's need to obtain a divorce, T. Stapleton, 'Observations in disproof of the pretended marriage of William de Warren, Earl of Surrey, with a daughter of Matildis, daughter of Baldwin, Comte of Flanders, by William the Conqueror', *Archaeological Journal* 3 (1846), pp. 1-2, 21-22. Freeman accepted most points of this argument, but believed that Matilda must have been already widowed in 1049, Freeman, *History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, pp. 85-7. This argument was disputed by Blaauw, who pointed out many of the problems with Stapleton's evidence, W.H. Blaauw, 'Remarks on Matilda, Queen of William the Conqueror, and her Daughter Gundrada', *Archaeologica* 32 (1847), pp. 111-16. The theory was based on charters from Lewes, and by 1888 Freeman had revoked his earlier support for it, Freeman, 'The Parentage of Gundrada', pp. 697-701. For the forged Lewes evidence, see C.T. Clay, ed, *Early Yorkshire Charters*, Vol. VIII, Yorkshire Archaeological Society Record Series (1949), pp. 40-46. Stapleton interestingly, and uniquely as far as can be told, believed that William's illegitimacy rendered any claims of consanguinity irrelevant. Of consanguinity he says that 'it is doubtful if this was the original motive which induced the prohibition [of the marriage], and the peculiarity of the birth of William the Conqueror, as being illegitimate, certainly forbids such a conclusion, coupled with the silence of the Pope at the council of Rheims.'

[272] *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, Vol. I, p. 494-5; Gibson, M, ed, *Vita Lanfranci*, in G. D'Onofrio, ed, *Lanfranco di Pavia e l'europa del secolo XI* (Rome, 1993), p. 676; Orderic Vitalis, interpolation into William of Jumièges, *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 146-7.

and twentieth-century historians of the marriage. Some are willing to cite general consanguinity, but believe that no specific relationship can be identified between the two.[273] Others have identified three connections which could have been cause for a papal ban.[274] However, all three of these relationships are uncertain, and there are problems with all of these possibilities, none of which are explicated in the primary sources.[275]

First, William and Matilda may have been related in the fifth degree through their common descent from Rollo of Normandy, whose granddaughter Adelaide may have been the wife of Matilda's great-grandfather Hugh Capet, and mother of her grandfather Robert the Pious.[276] The second potential tie of kinship was that created by the possible marriage of Matilda's mother Adela with William's uncle Richard III of Normandy.[277] It is unlikely that this marriage was consummated before Richard's death, but in the eyes of the eleventh-century church the betrothal may have created an affinity between members of their families. A third possible kinship could have come from the marriage of William's aunt to Matilda's grandfather Baldwin IV.[278] Matilda's father was born from Baldwin IV's first marriage to Ogiva of Luxembourg, so this would again be a case of affinity instead of a blood relationship.

One of the problems with all of these theories of consanguinity is that there is no clear consensus on how eleventh-century ecclesiastics calculated degrees of kinship, nor on how many degrees would preclude a marriage. Incestuous unions were condemned at the Council of Rheims, without any clarification of how such unions were to be defined.[279] Legal kinship, such as that created by the marriage of relatives, was common among the eleventh-century aristocracy, and may not have created a great impediment.[280] Although there is evidence that eleventh-century nobility in France attempted to avoid consanguineous marriages, they did not hesitate if the rank and family of the woman made

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[273] Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 201; Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 55; Stenton, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 106-7; Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, p. 38. None of these historians specifically address the three theories of consanguinity proposed by Douglas and de Boüard or give reasons for why they do not accept these possible connections.

[274] de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, pp. 163-4; Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 76-7.

[275] Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 392-3.

[276] Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, p. 14, cites Henri Prentout as the originator of this theory of consanguinity.

[277] Both Gaudemet and Esmein refer to this type of kinship as affinity, A. Esmein, *Le mariage en droit canonique* (Paris, 1929), pp. 414-426; J. Gaudemet, *Le marriage en occident* (Paris, 1987), pp. 211-12.

[278] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 28-9, n. 5. William of Jumièges is the only authority to mention the marriage of an unnamed daughter of Richard II and his wife Judith to Baldwin IV of Flanders. Historians have commonly identified her as having the name 'Eleanor', although there is no primary source evidence for this name.

[279] Tierney, *The Crisis of Church and State*, p. 32.

[280] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 125.

an alliance desirable, and many such alliances seem to have been conducted with near impunity.[281]

Before the eleventh century, there is very little clarity on the subject of consanguineous marriage, and contradictory sources. In the ninth century the Pseudo-Isidorian decretals set the prohibited degrees of kinship at seven, using the 'Germanic' method of calculation.[282] However, in the tenth century Pope Leo VII referred to the possibility of dispensations for marriages beyond just two degrees of kinship, and Matilda's grandfather Robert the Pious and his wife Berthe were related in three degrees when they married at the end of the tenth century. Although threatened with excommunication from the pope, no French clergy seem to have protested, and the threat was never carried out.[283] So although there were grounds on which the papacy could have declared William and Matilda's marriage illegal, there is nothing to suggest that there was an eleventh-century consensus regarding degrees of kinship which would have automatically made their union incestuous in the eyes of the Church. As the example of Robert and Berthe shows, 'The Church' is a misleading concept, suggesting an ecclesiastical unity that was not present in this period.

There are similar problems with uncertainties surrounding canon law regarding the possible affinity created by the marriages of William's uncle Richard III with Matilda's mother Adela, and William's aunt Eleanor with Matilda's grandfather Baldwin IV. The eleventh-century Gregorian reforms produced many canons and papal decretals which solidified some of these laws. Pope Leo IX himself was involved in this reform, and although lay marriage reform was not one of the central objectives of this movement, canons and decretals were issued on the subject in the latter half of the eleventh century.[284] However, the marriage of William and Matilda took place just before the Gregorian reforming period, and so later reformist canon law must be handled with care. For example, in 1059 Pope Nicholas II codified many of the reforms, and marriages within seven degrees of kinship were prohibited, with excommunication if the couple did not separate. It took a further 20 years for the French church to recognize the decree.[285] Can

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[281] C. Bouchard, 'Consanguinity and Noble Marriages in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries', *Speculum* 56, No. 2 (April, 1981), pp. 284-7; Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest*, p. 79.
[282] Bouchard, 'Consanguinity and Noble Marriages', pp. 270-71. See Pseudo-Isidore, http://www.pseudoisidor.mgh.de/html/uberblick_uber_die_falschungen.HTM, accessed June 16, 2011.
[283] Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest*, pp. 82-5.
[284] P. Corbet, *Autour de Burchard de Worms: l'église allemande et les interdits de parenté (IXème - XIIème siècle)* (Frankfurt-am-Main, 2001). J. Brundage, Medieval Canon Law (New York, 1995), pp. 35-43.
[285] J. Goody, *The development of the family and marriage in Europe* (Cambridge, 1983), p. 135.

we assume that this later law which was reluctantly adopted in France would have applied in 1049 when William and Matilda's marriage was banned?

From as early as the Council of Mayence in 847 decrees were issued prohibiting the marriage of individuals who were related through the marriage of their kin.[286] The same degrees of kinship applied to affinity as to consanguinity; along with the associated problems of inconsistency in how ecclesiastics calculated the degrees.[287] If these decrees were enforced, the marriage of Baldwin IV and Eleanor would have caused William and Matilda to be related within two degrees. They would have been related within one degree, first cousins, through their affinity stemming from the marriage of Richard III and Adela. When widows remarried, they were considered to bring the affinity of their first marriage to the children of their second union.[288] However, these prohibitions were first issued in the Pseudo-Isidorian decretals, and later promoted by the Gregorian reforming popes starting with Alexander II. Although these laws were increasingly important under the reforming Popes – starting with Leo IX - there is little evidence to suggest that they were consistently enforced before the later eleventh century.

There are also questions about the nature of Richard III and Adela's relationship, and whether it would actually have produced an affinity. Richard III was count/duke of Normandy for a very brief span of time from 1026 until his death in 1027. It is known that Adela was too young to marry Baldwin of Flanders when first engaged to him in 1028, so it seems likely that if she was betrothed to Richard III before his death the marriage would have been unconsummated, and may never have gone beyond the stage of a betrothal with the associated charter detailing the intended dower.[289] Adela's dower document is one of

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[286] Esmein, *Le mariage en droit canonique*, pp. 417-8.

[287] Esmein, *Le mariage en droit canonique*, p. 418.

[288] Esmein, *Le mariage en droit canonique*, pp. 423-4.

[289] Van Houts has disputed the identification of this Adela with Adela of France, because this does not seem to be compatible with the account in the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*. William of Jumièges says that Count Baldwin IV, 'asked Robert, king of the French, to give his daughter in marriage to his son Baldwin. When he had been given her, he took her from her father's palace while she was still in her cradle, brought her to his own house, where he educated her with diligent care until she was old enough to marry' ('*Rotbertum, Francorum regem, expetiit filiam eius poscens filio suo Balduino dari. Quam adeptam a palatinis ferens tricliniis ad domum propriam in cunis asportauit, annos usque ad nubile eam nutriens cura diligenti*'), *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 52-3. Thus van Houts argues that Adela of France's youth and her upbringing in Flanders is evidence that she was not the same Adela who married Richard III. However, in the same passage William of Jumièges says that Baldwin IV went to Robert with his request at about the same time (*tempore sub eodem*) as Bishop Hugh of Bayeux's rebellion against the duke of Normandy, which van Houts dates to between 1028 and 1032, well after the death of Richard III. The marriage between Baldwin V and Adela of France is also usually dated to c. 1028, as William of Jumièges says that it was after the consummation of the marriage, and with the support of his new father-in-law, that Baldwin V rebelled against his own father, causing Baldwin IV to go into exile in Normandy sometime between

only two surviving charters from Richard's short reign. This dower document has been cited as evidence of a marriage, even if one which was not consummated.[290] This charter may have been a binding *desponsatio*; in 1079 Pope Gregory VII wrote a letter which left no doubt that this type of *desponsatio* created a legal marriage in and of itself, which would have made William and Matilda first cousins in the eyes of the Church.[291] However, it must be stressed that this papal letter came from the reforming period which was more than fifty years after the possible marriage of Richard III and Adela, as well as thirty years after the Council of Rheims. Even in the later eleventh century the legal nature of the *desponsatio* was unclear. There seems to have been little consensus as to whether or not a marriage was already legal and considered completed if it was going to take place in the future, especially if one of the prospective couple was a child.[292] Writing in the late eleventh and early twelfth century Ivo of Chartres presented conflicting texts in his *Decretum* and some of his letters to other clerics show him struggling with unclear texts on the issue of the *desponsatio*.[293]

The final concern raised by historians when discussing possible kinship between William II and Matilda of Flanders is that there are problems with the identification of the wives of Hugh Capet and Richard III. There is no certainty that the Adela who was the recipient of a dower document from Richard III was the same Adela of France who eventually married Baldwin of Flanders and gave birth to Matilda. It is suggestive, however, that her dower charter – detailing land in Normandy – was recorded into two separate cartularies compiled in the archives of the foundation of Saint Pierre d'Aire in Flanders.[294] Saint Pierre d'Aire was founded by Adela of France and her husband Baldwin, and because the foundation has no other known Norman connections it is tempting to believe that their reason for preserving this dower charter was that it recorded the dower of the first,

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1028 and 1030, with father and son being reconciled before the death of King Robert in 1031, *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 52-5.

De Boüard's timeline of the marriage between Richard III and Adela, in which Richard III died before Adela was old enough to consummate the marriage would allow for a betrothal between Richard III and Adela of France (as a child, but not 'still in her cradle'), who would have been an adolescent in 1028 when given in marriage to Baldwin V of Flanders. She then would have spent between one and two years in the Flemish court before consummating her marriage to Baldwin before his rebellion in 1030, de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, p. 164.

[290] Blaauw, 'Remarks on Matilda', p. 110.

[291] de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, p. 164; *Register of Gregory VII*, VII.9, MGH, Epistolae Selectae, Vol. II (München, 1978), pp. 470-71.

[292] Gaudemet, *Le mariage en Occident*, pp. 181-2.

[293] Gaudemet, *Le mariage en Occident*, p. 144.

[294] *RADN*, No. 58.

unconsummated, marriage of their patroness. Even if this is the case, the dower charter alone does not resolve the questions about affinity that arise from this betrothal.

Eleventh-century Capetian narrative sources are not specific as to the origin of Hugh's wife; Capetian charters and letters also provide no evidence either for or against this theory.[295] The identification of Hugh Capet's wife as Adelaide of Aquitaine comes from a twelfth-century extract of an earlier chronicle of the *Translatio sancti Maglorii et aliorum Parisius*.[296] If this is correct, then William and Matilda would be considered to be related in five degrees using the 'Germanic' method of calculating kinship.[297] This kinship seems the most likely; it would have been close enough to give the pope cause to prohibit the marriage, but also distant enough to explain the eventual dispensation.[298]

Given the distance of these consanguineous connections, and the ambiguities regarding canon law and its enforcement, modern historians have also looked at political reasons which may have influenced Pope Leo IX. Both de Boüard and Neveux have argued that all the possible consanguinities were so distant that under normal circumstances a dispensation would have been easily obtained, or even unnecessary. However, in 1049 Baldwin V of Flanders was in conflict with one of his two overlords, the German Emperor Henry III. Historians have speculated that the conflict between Baldwin V and Henry III, a natural ally and cousin of the German Pope Leo IX, may have combined with Leo IX's own antipathy towards the Normans in Italy to create a circumstance where the Pope upheld canon law's restrictions on marriage as strictly as possible to prevent the alliance between Normandy and Flanders.[299] De Boüard noted that Baldwin had even razed an imperial palace in 1047, and believed that through the Norman alliance Baldwin hoped to gain an ally in Northern France, as well as effect a reconciliation with Edward the Confessor after Edward had supported Henry III against Flanders.[300] Douglas also makes much of Baldwin's conflict with Henry III, and framed the marriage as part of Baldwin's search for allies.[301] Bauduin believes the alliance was made, later sealed with the marriage, and designed as a bulwark against both the German Emperor and Count Eustace II of Boulogne, who was

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[295] Gerbert of Aurillac to Queen Adelaide, Spring 997, *Epistolae: Medieval Women's Letters*, http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/1.html, accessed May 25, 2009. Adelaide does not appear in any of the charters of Hugh Capet, Lemarignier, *Le gouvernement royal*, p. 46.
[296] R. Merlet, 'Les origins du monastère de Saint-Magloire de Paris', in *Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes* LVI (1895), p. 241-3, 247.
[297] Bouchard, 'Consanguinity and Noble Marriages', p. 270.
[298] Corbet, *Autour de Burchard de Worms*, p. 301-302.
[299] de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, p. 166; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, pp. 126-7. Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, pp. 14-5.
[300] de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, pp. 165-8.
[301] Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 77-8.

reconciled with the Emperor in 1049.[302] Bauduin sees this as a strengthening of ties between Henry I's allies, uniting them against the German Emperor and his ally the count of Anjou.[303] Of course, within a few years the reconciliation of Henry I and the count of Anjou would completely change the political landscape, but in 1049 when the proposed marriage was banned it had the support of Normandy, Flanders and the king of France.

The only evidence for political circumstances which may have influenced the marriage of William and Matilda is exactly that: circumstantial. Unfortunately, the majority of source material available for canon law on consanguinity and legal marriage is also circumstantial, and the account of the Council of Rheims gives no indication as to why the marriage was banned. It is possible that political circumstances may have been a factor in Leo's decision to ban the proposed marriage, but given his commitment to reform we must not discount a belief that they were proposing an incestuous union. In the context of the entire passage, the fact that incest is not specifically stated may suggest either that there was no consanguinity or that the consanguinity was very distant, but it is impossible to be certain. Although it is tempting to use later sources as evidence for possible consanguineous connections, the dangers of introducing anachronistic information is clear, especially in regards to canon law. Marriage restrictions could be contradictory and unevenly applied: it was not until the last decades of the eleventh century that they began to be sorted out by the church.[304] Thus, it seems that it is difficult, if not impossible, to be certain of the reasons which prompted the ban on the proposed marriage of William and Matilda. As we shall see, there are similar problems with the related questions about the date of a dispensation and the date of the marriage itself.

The problem for historians is the lack of eleventh-century source material concerning the marriage of William and Matilda. The account of the council of Rheims is the only contemporary source to address the papal prohibition of the marriage of William and Matilda. Thus historians have turned to twelfth-century sources when examining the aftermath of the decree at the council of Rheims. William and Matilda did eventually marry: that is clear from every chronicle source and from the charters of the period. The question of when they married and if or when a papal dispensation was obtained is much less clear. Most historians have stated that a papal dispensation was issued in 1059 by Pope Nicholas II after Lanfranc of Bec travelled to Rome to attend the Easter synod of that

[302] Bauduin, *La première Normandie*, pp. 306-308.
[303] Bauduin, *La première Normandie*, p. 308.
[304] Gaudemet, *Le marriage en Occident*, pp. 206-207.

year and argued on behalf of William and Matilda.[305] This account rests on the *Vita Lanfranci* as a source.

However, the *Vita Lanfranci* has limitations, of which historians are aware.[306] It was assembled nearly one hundred years after the marriage of William and Matilda. In some places the anonymous author drew heavily on eleventh century sources, but he may also have drawn on lost sources or on Norman oral tradition, although the marriage would have been beyond living memory by that point.[307] Drawing on the earlier *Vita Herluini*, the *Vita Lanfranci*, describes a dispute between Lanfranc and William of Normandy.[308] The author of the *Vita Lanfranci* then elaborates the reasons for this dispute – that Lanfranc had denounced the consanguineous marriage of William and Matilda, which had caused the pope to place 'all Neustria' under an interdict.[309] According to the *Vita Lanfranci*, after he was reconciled with William, Lanfranc went to Rome in 1059 during the pontificate of Nicholas II both to attend trial of Berengar of Tours and argue for William and Matilda's marital dispensation.[310] This account has been criticized because the correspondence between both Lanfranc and Berengar, and Lanfranc and Nicholas II, strongly suggests that Lanfranc was not at Berengar's trial in 1059.[311] However, as R.W. Southern has pointed out, the wording of the correspondence is not completely conclusive, and leaves open the possibility that Lanfranc attended part of the trial, although this argument rests on the account in the *Vita Lanfranci*.[312] The question of Lanfranc's presence is still debated.[313] Questions have also been raised about the *Vita Lanfranci's* claim of a papal interdict. It seems unlikely, although not completely impossible, that a serious event such an interdict would not have been recorded in any contemporary source. There are thus serious concerns about the account presented in the *Vita Lanfranci*.

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[305] Blaauw, 'Remarks on Matilda', pp. 111-12; Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 79-80; Freeman, *History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, pp. 104-6; Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, p. 40; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 128 (Neveux notes the arguments made against the use of the *Vita Lanfranci* by both Bates and de Boüard, but accepts it as a source); Stapleton, 'Observations in disproof', pp. 23-4; Stenton, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 106-7.

[306] Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 230 n. 31.

[307] *Vita Lanfranci*, p. 661.

[308] M. Gibson, *Lanfranc of Bec* (Oxford, 1978), p. 195; *Vita Lanfranci*, pp. 662-6.

[309] However, the *Vita Lanfranci* deviates from its source, the *Vita Herluini*, which did not ascribe the banishment to Lanfranc's opposition to the marriage. The author of the *Vita Herluini* was a contemporary who had known Lanfranc and wrote from his own personal memory, Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 200.

[310] *Vita Lanfranci*, pp. 676-8.

[311] Gibson, *Lanfranc of Bec*, p. 69; R.W. Southern, *Saint Anselm: a portrait in a landscape* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 20-27.

[312] Southern, *Saint Anselm*, p. 28.

[313] H.E.J. Cowdrey, *Lanfranc: Scholar, Monk and Archbishop* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 42.

If a dispensation was not obtained until 1059, then the date of the marriage is critical, especially for questions about the legitimacy of Matilda and her children. The earliest historians believed that 1053 – four years after the marriage was mooted – was the most likely date, coinciding with the capture and imprisonment of Pope Leo IX by the Normans in southern Italy, which could have emboldened Baldwin and William to flout the papal ban recorded at the Council of Rheims.[314] William and Baldwin were both in strong positions as allies of the King of France in 1049/50, and had no need to defy the papacy: they could be patient and wait for a dispensation.[315] That changed between 1051 and 1052 as Henry I withdrew his support from the rebels against Emperor Henry III (including Baldwin), and then allied with the count of Anjou against William. Faced with their now precarious political isolation, in 1053 Baldwin and William could have seized the opportunity presented by the incarceration of the pope and gone ahead with their marriage alliance.[316] However, these arguments are circumstantial, and predicated on both the idea that William and Matilda's marriage defied a papal ban, that this ban caused a delay in the marriage, and that the dispensation was granted later.

It would be helpful if the contemporary Norman sources provided evidence, but the chronicles of William of Jumièges and William of Poitiers are silent on the date of the marriage. William of Poitiers says nothing about the process by which the marriage came about, concentrating instead on the lineage of Matilda, to be discussed later.[317] William of Jumièges describes the marriage in his chronicle, saying,

> 'When [William] heard that Baldwin of Flanders had a daughter called Matilda, a very beautiful and noble girl of royal stock, he took counsel and sent envoys to ask her father for her hand. Count Baldwin, very pleased with the proposal, not only accepted it, but escorted his daughter together with many gifts as far as the town of Eu. When the duke accompanied by

[314] Freeman, *History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, pp. 90-93; Freeman, 'The Parentage of Gundrada, Wife of William of Warren', p. 681; Stapleton, 'Observations in disproof', pp. 21-2; Stenton, *William the Conqueror*, p. 105. This corresponds with the date given in the later chronicle of Tours, however, inconsistencies in the Chronicle of Tours make it an unreliable source, Blaauw, 'Remarks on Matilda', pp. 108-109; Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, pp. 391-2.
[315] Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, pp. 16-19. The alliance between Normandy and Ponthieu, sealed by the marriage of William's sister, and possibly related to these shifts in alliance, took place between 1050 and 1053, Bauduin, *La Première Normandie*, pp. 306-7.
[316] Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, pp. 19-22.
[317] See below, pp. 127-8.

his soldiers had arrived, he married her legally as his wife and led her with the greatest ceremony and honour into the walls of Rouen.'[318]

William of Jumièges clearly emphasizes the full legitimacy of the marriage, but gives no indication of the date. This account gives no hint of trouble with the papacy over the marriage, nor does it suggest that there was a delay in either the marriage ceremony or in the legitimation of the union. A later interpolation into William's text, written by Orderic Vitalis, gives the earliest Norman account of the marriage dispute and dispensation. Orderic states that after William and Matilda married there were accusations that they were kin. When William sent an embassy to the pope seeking advice, the pope refused to order them to divorce and instead granted them absolution, ordering them to build and endow two monasteries.[319]

The twelfth-century interpolation by Orderic Vitalis is important. The author knew at least one member of William and Matilda's household, and he wrote thirty years before the composition of the *Vita Lanfranci*; his work is more contemporary, and written within a time when the events of the marriage could be considered within living memory in Normandy.[320] According to Orderic, the penitential abbeys were the two foundations in Caen: La Trinité and St Etienne.[321] If so, William and Matilda must therefore have been married before the appointment of abbess Matilda of La Trinité, Caen *c.* 1059.[322] Orderic's account says nothing about an impediment before the union took place. It raises the possibility of two outcries over the marriage – one raised at the Council of Rheims, and one after the union took place. Might there have been two dispensations, possibly even involving two popes? It would be tempting to suggest that this outcry after the marriage was completed corresponds to the issue settled by Lanfranc. However, Orderic's account

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[318] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 130-31, 'Audiens autem Baldoinum Flandrensem quandam habere filiam regali ex genere descendentem, nomine Matildem, corpora ualde elegantem animoque liberalem, hanc suorum consultu missis legatis a patre petiit uxorem. Ex cuius proposito animi Baldoinus satrapa admodum gauisus non modo decreuit petiam dari, uerum etiam cum muneribus immensis eam adusque Ocense castrum adduxit. Vbi dux adueniens militum stipatus cateruis illam sibi despondit iure coniugali et cum maximo tripudio atque honore Rotomagensibus intulit menibus'.

[319] Orderic Vitalis, interpolation into William of Jumièges, *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 146-9, 'Willelmus dux, dum a quibusdam religiosis sepius redargueretur, eo quod cognatam suam sibi in matrimonio copulasset, missis legatis Romanum papam super hac re consuluit. At ille sagaciter considerans quod, si diuortium fieri iuberet, forte inter Flandrenses et Normannos graue bellum exsurgeret, maritum et coniugem a reatu absoluit, eisque penitentiam iniunxit. Mandauit enim ut ab eis duo cenobia conderentur, in quibus pro ipsius ab utroque sexu Deo sedule preces offerrentur'.

[320] *GND*, Vol. I, pp. lxviii. This interpolation was likely written in 1113.

[321] Orderic Vitalis, interpolation into William of Jumièges, *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 148-9, 'Quod illi gratanter opere compleuerunt. Nam apud Cadomum una constructa est abbatia in honore sancte Trinitatis altera vero in honore sancti Stephani prothomartyris'.

[322] Musset, *Les actes*, pp. 13-14.

makes clear that the papacy – at this stage, at least – did not condemn the union of William and Matilda. This certainly contradicts the *Vita Lanfranci 's* claim of a papal interdict. Orderic's account therefore provides as many questions as answers, and does not give firm evidence beyond a marriage date between 1049 and 1059.

An initial investigation of the charters from William's reign seems to confirm c. 1050 as the date for the marriage, because Fauroux has identified an original charter dated to the year 1051 with the *signa* of both Matilda and her eldest son Robert Curthose.[323] However, an examination of the original, hereafter referred to as RADN 126, uncovers significant problems. The charter in question is a record of a donation made by William II to the monastery of Saint Wandrille at the request of Baldwin Filleul and Turstingus; it is preserved as an original single-sheet parchment in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.[324] Unfortunately the surface of the parchment is degraded, and in places the ink has worn away completely. The right hand edge has also suffered damage. The main body of the text is still reasonably intact, but the list of subscribers at the bottom of the parchment is badly damaged and many names are difficult if not impossible to make out. Fauroux has filled in the missing text from a 1319 *vidimus* which is also preserved in the Bibliothèque Nationale, and from a copy made in the seventeenth century by Duchesne.[325] Her transcription gives the list of subscribers as William II (*Vuillelmi principis*), Count William of Arques (*Willelmi comitis*), Archbishop Mauger of Rouen (*Malgerii archipresulis*), Matilda of Flanders (*Matildis comitisse*), Robert Curthose (*Roberti junioris comitis*), Bishop William (*Willelmi episcopi*), Bishop Odo of Bayeux (*Otonis Bajocassini episcopi*), Baldwin Filleul (*Balduini*) and three others.

The *signa* of William II, William of Arques, Archbishop Mauger, Bishop William, and Odo of Bayeux are all reasonably easy to make out. Although some letters are missing or faded, the ones which remain strongly suggest that these are the names which were written at the base of the document. The *signum* of Robert Curthose is almost completely degraded. The final word *comitis* is clear, but no ink remains in the space where Fauroux has transcribed *Roberti junioris*. The *signum* which Fauroux attributes to Matilda is more difficult still. The second word is almost certainly *comitisse*. However, the name associated with this title does not appear to be Matilda, or any variation of her name. The names of the subscribers are written in the same hand as the main body of the text with spaces left

[323] *RADN*, No. 126.
[324] BnF, ms. Latin 16738, No. 5.
[325] BnF, ms. Latin 16738, No. 12. Duchesne did not note the source for his copy and Fauroux believes that he made it from the original parchment now held in Paris, *RADN*, p. 296.

for autograph crosses. Because of this, even though the parchment is damaged it is possible to compare the shapes of the visible letters in this name with those in the text. The first minim of the initial letter of the name associated with the title *comitisse* has a long descender, as we find with the letters 'r' and 'p'. It is very different from the capital 'M' of *Malgerii*, which has a short first minim. The second two or three letters are degraded (it is difficult to tell how many there might be), the next two appear to have some ascenders, but the shape is wrong for 'd' or 'l' as we would expect to find if the name were *Matildis*, or even *Matillis* as suggested by Lot.[326] Thus, it does not seem possible that this *signum* is that of Matilda of Flanders.[327]

There is another ducal charter which Fauroux has dated to 1051, and which has the *signa* of Robert Curthose and Matilda of Flanders.[328] It is preserved as an undamaged original single-sheet parchment in the Archives Départementales de la Seine-Maritime, hereafter referred to as RADN 124.[329] This charter records a donation made to Saint Wandrille by Baldwin Filleul, and his presence is important when comparing this charter with RADN 126, discussed above. In contrast to RADN 126, there is no strong evidence to suggest that RADN 124 was actually produced in 1051, as it does not have a dating clause. The donation itself took place by 1047/48, before the death of the Abbot Gradulphus who is described in an active role in the text.[330] The text of RADN 124 is written in a different hand from that of RADN 126, although the two have a similar style which is typical of the Saint Wandrille *scriptorium*.[331] The list of subscribers is almost identical to that of RADN 126. The list is Baldwin (*Balduini*), William II (*Vuillelmi principis*), Count William of Arques (*Vuillelmi comitis*), Archbishop Mauger of Rouen (*Malgerii archipresulis*), Matilda of Flanders (*Matildis comitisse*), Robert Curthose (*Roberti juvenis comitis*), Bishop William (*Willleelmi episcopi*), Bishop Odo of Bayeux (*Otonis Baiocasensis episcopi*), Count Robert of Mortain (*Roberti comitis de Montini*), and four others.

The names of the first four subscribers (Baldwin, William II, William of Arques and Archbishop Mauger) are written in the same hand as the body of the charter, and continue on the same line as the end of the text, with spaces left for autograph crosses. The rest of

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[326] F. Lot, *Études Critiques sur l'abbaye de Saint-Wandrille* (Paris, 1913), p. 76.
[327] I am grateful for the assistance of Professor Pauline Stafford and Professor David Bates with this difficult *signum*, both of whom have supported this conclusion. The identity of this *comitissa* is unclear; unfortunately the name of the wife of William of Arques in unknown, as it is tempting to attribute this *signum* to her.
[328] Lot, *Études Critiques*, p. 74; *RADN*, No. 124.
[329] AD Seine-Maritime, 16 H 27, No. 5.
[330] *RADN*, p. 294.
[331] I am grateful to Professor David Bates for his observations on the script of these two documents.

the subscribers made their crosses in a row at the bottom of the parchment. The crosses of the first four subscribers are small and simple (just two pen strokes), and are placed just above their names. The crosses of the others are larger, with serifs added to each end of the lines of the cross. The names have been added below the crosses by a different hand, distinct from that of the charter itself. It seems clear that these *signa* were added after the original production of the document, and possibly some time after the subscription of Baldwin, William II, William of Arques and Archbishop Mauger.[332]

The practice of adding additional *signa* to the end of charters was known at Saint Wandrille in the eleventh century, and it is extremely difficult to date when these *signa* were added.[333] Critical here is a possible correlation between these two documents. Both are grants to Saint Wandrille which involve Baldwin Filleul, and in both lists of subscribers Robert Curthose is allegedly called 'the young count.' Robert Curthose appears as a subscriber with his father twenty one times in the pre-1066 Norman ducal charters; he is recorded twice as a count, twice as the son of William and a count, once without a description, and fourteen times as the son of William. RADN 124 and 126 are the only two charters in which he is called *junioris/juvenis comitis*. Fauroux and Aird, the most recent biographer of Robert Curthose, suggested that the *signa* of Robert Curthose and Matilda of Flanders were added to RADN 124 in 1051 when they also subscribed RADN 126.[334] This argument combines the date of RADN 126 with the unique title form used to describe Robert in RADN 124. The argument made is that the use of *junioris/juvenis comitis* suggests that Robert was an infant and that he was being promoted beside his parents as the newly born male heir. If this is the case, then William and Matilda must have married in 1050 or early 1051. However, I believe that it is clear that Matilda did not subscribe RADN 126. It is possible that Robert was one of the subscribers, but the space where the later copies suggest his *signa* should be is so degraded that nothing can be seen except the word *comitis*.[335]

It is entirely possible that the *signa* of Matilda and Robert Curthose were added to RADN 124 in 1051, but unless we are willing to accept the fourteenth-century copy of RADN 126 there is no strong evidence to suggest that Matilda and Robert acted together in that

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[332] Lot, *Études Critiques*, p. 76.

[333] There is evidence that the *signa* of Robert Curthose and Matilda of Flanders were added to other early Saint Wandrille charters. A damaged original charter of Richard II (996 – 1026) which survived in the Saint Wandrille archives has the *signa* of *Matildis* and *Rotberti filii comitis*, *RADN*, No. 52.

[334] *RADN*, p. 294; Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p. 26.

[335] Given that Count Robert of Mortain, the half brother of William the Conqueror and full brother of Bishop Odo of Bayeux, did subscribe RADN 124, if there is a correlation between the two documents it is possible that he was the subscriber in the location where all that can be seen is the word *comitis*.

year. While it is tempting to accept this, close examination of the original document has shown clearly that the fourteenth-century copy is in error. Thus, these charters cannot provide evidence for the date of the marriage of William and Matilda. Unfortunately, the lack of dating which is common in the Norman ducal charters limits the utility of much surviving evidence for this debate. There are, however, several documents of interest for the dating of either William and Matilda's marriage or the birth of Robert Curthose.

The first is a charter recording donations made to the abbey of La Trinité du Mont in Rouen; within the text the date is given as 1053, and Matilda's *signum* as *comitissa* follows that of her husband on the list of subscribers.[336] The second is a charter recording donations made to the abbey of St Julien in Tours; the act was made in 1053 in the presence of William, with Matilda's subscription as William's wife recorded immediately after his.[337] William and Matilda's eldest son Robert Curthose's first dateable appearance seems to be 1057.[338] The potential problem with these charters is that none survive as original documents. Even though the La Trinité du Mont document was recorded in a late eleventh-century cartulary, making it close to contemporary, the *signa* of Matilda and Robert on these documents could have been added later – as happened at St Wandrille – and there is no way to tell.[339] The charter evidence therefore provides a tentative dating, and suggests that the marriage took place between 1050 and 1053, but this evidence is far from conclusive.

We are left, therefore, with a conundrum. There is good contemporary evidence that the marriage was proposed by 1049, and prohibited at the Council of Rheims in that year. Most likely this was for reasons of consanguinity, but distant consanguinity through common descent from Rollo of Normandy. The contemporary chronicles suggest, but most certainly do not prove, that there was no question of illegitimacy or doubt within Normandy over the nature of the marriage. One explanation for the lack of comment in the contemporary sources could be that any problem over the marriage was resolved before it took place, but there can be no certainty here.

The accounts of William of Jumièges and Orderic Vitalis cast doubt on much of the *Vita Lanfranci* – especially the claim that Normandy was placed under an interdict as a result of the marriage, and that there was a delay in the marriage or the granting of a dispensation; contemporary authors clearly consider the marriage to have been legitimate,

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[336] *RADN*, No. 130.
[337] *RADN*, No. 131.
[338] *RADN*, No. 139.
[339] Aside from the St Wandrille charters, the earliest date for the appearance of either Matilda or Robert Curthose in Normandy recorded in a surviving original charter is 1063, *RADN*, No. 158.

though Orderic suggests that there *were* questions within Normandy about the marriage, but aired *after* the event took place, and rejected by the papacy. The charter evidence points to a marriage which had taken place by 1053, but not necessarily by 1051.

All conclusions here must be extremely tentative. The nature of Orderic's statement does not point to a later garbling of the Rheims prohibition. Indeed it suggests two sets of objections: by Leo at the reforming council of Rheims in 1049, and again within Normandy at an unspecified later date; charter evidence would make this no later than 1053. Leo's objection in 1049 could well have formed the basis for later objection, now by political opponents of William II within Normandy, at the later date. There may have been no formal dispensation between 1049 and 1053: the evidence of the *Vita Lanfranci* on this score appears to be of little value.[340] The changing political circumstances, could, however, have led to a decision to go forward with the marriage nonetheless, and such circumstances point to a date c. 1052. Jumièges' account makes great play with the full legitimacy of its enactment, which may itself be linked to the sort of objection which Orderic notes. Those objections would then have been referred to the papacy, but the appeal now elicited a very different response from the ruling pronounced at the reforming council of Rheims in 1049. This is in line with other contemporary evidence that suggests the continuation of good relations between the Normans and the papacy after the Council of Rheims.[341]

However, this must remain very speculative. The closest we can come to dating the marriage is to suggest, based on the charter evidence, that the union took place by 1053. Without further evidence, the precise date of the marriage and the nature of any dispute over consanguinity will remain uncertain. Questions about the status of Matilda's union thus cannot be addressed simply through the study of the date and dispensation. However these questions have serious implications for the study of Matilda as a countess in Normandy. The *gesta* of William of Jumièges gives a description of the marriage process which emphasized negotiations, a public ceremony at the border, and the couple's return to Rouen. William's description must be read in the wider context of his treatment of marriage throughout his work. His work then needs to be placed within a broader

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[340] It is possible that the author of the *Vita Lanfranci* got the date of the dispensation wrong when he associated Lanfranc's trip to Rome to argue William and Matilda's case with the 1059 trial of Berengar of Tours under Nicholas II, rather than the 1050 hearings held during the pontificate of Leo IX. In fact, while there is no positive evidence that Lanfranc attended the 1059 council, he was one of the leading figures involved in the 1050 hearings and was certainly in Rome in that year. Cowdrey, *Lanfranc*, pp. 38-42; J. de Montclos, *Lanfranc et Bérenger: la controverse eucharistique du XI^e siècle* (Leuven, 1971), pp. 58-9; Gibson, *Lanfranc of Bec*, p. 67.

[341] *Epistola Joannis I Abbatis Fiscamnensis ad S. Leonem IX*, *PL*, Vol. CXLIII, pp. 797-800; Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 201; de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, pp. 176-7.

consideration of the unions of the tenth- and eleventh-century count/dukes. This will give us a context for what a legitimate union looks like, and for how the status of the unions affected (or did not affect) the status, power and authority of individual women including Matilda of Flanders.

Chapter 4: Norman Marriage in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries

William and Matilda's union created Matilda's position within Normandy. If we are to understand that position, it is important to be able to compare her with previous partners of the count/dukes. The first question is the nature of her union in relation to theirs. The nature of the earlier unions has occasioned some debate among historians, involving many of the questions about the definition of marriage raised above.[342] This chapter will thus consider these unions. Such consideration must center on the contemporary sources and their interpretation, especially the interpretation of their terminology and descriptions. Such questions have been central to modern debates about marriage, though, as we shall see, historians have often imported concepts into their interpretation which the sources themselves neither use nor justify. Because of questions surrounding legitimacy and legitimate marriage I shall prefer the more neutral terms 'union' and 'sexual partner' to 'marriage' and 'wife'. The works of Dudo and William of Jumièges are the contemporary sources here, and consideration of them will be central. However, they can be supplemented by and compared with a handful of external references to charters and Frankish narratives.

Both Dudo and William of Jumièges described the unions of Rollo, William Longsword and Richard I. Jumièges added descriptions of Richard II, Robert I and William II. At least two female partners were associated with each of the count/dukes except Robert and William II. Rollo was associated with Gisla, the daughter of Charles the Simple, and Popa 'of Bayeux'; William Longsword with Sprota and Liutgarde of Vermandois; Richard I with Emma, the daughter of Hugh the Great and sister of Hugh Capet, and with Gunnor; Richard II with Judith of Brittany and Papia of Envermou; Robert I with Herleve; and William II with Matilda. The unions of the tenth-century count/dukes – Rollo, William Longsword and Richard I – followed a pattern whereby each duke had two partners: one a Frankish noble woman (these unions were invariably sterile), and the other the mother of the eventual heir.[343] Historians such as Keats-Rohan, Jackman and Searle have cast doubt on this pattern, seeing it as suspiciously neat, and questioning the sterility of the Frankish marriages.[344]

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[342] See above, pp. 42-3.

[343] K.S.B. Keats-Rohan, 'Poppa of Bayeux and her family', *The American Genealogist*, 72 (1997), pp. 191-2.

[344] D. Jackman, 'Rorgonid Right – Two Scenarios', *Francia*, 26/1 (1999), pp. 139-47; Keats-Rohan, 'Poppa of Bayeux', pp. 190-198; Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, pp. 93-5, Searle in particular suggests that

Above all, historians have questioned the status of the unions which did provide sons and heirs. Historiographical examination of the marriage patterns of the early eleventh-century counts begins with questions about the nature of the tenth-century practices of marriage and concubinage. Neveux identifies two types of union conducted by the Norman count/dukes. The first is 'official marriages' made for political reasons: these are typically unions with Frankish noble women made as part of an alliance between neighboring Frankish lords and the Norman count/dukes.[345] The second form of union is concubinage, for which Neveux uses the Nordic term *frilla*, a term itself freighted with some of the meanings attached to the German *friedelehe*.[346] Similarly, Bauduin suggests that there were three types of ducal relationships in the tenth century: legal marriage in the Frankish mode, sexual relationships with concubines which seem to lack any legal value (and where the name of the women in question is not recorded), and matrimonial alliances with high-status women that Norman chroniclers never call concubines, although outside writers such as Flodoard do.[347] Bauduin notes that William of Jumièges calls this latter type of union a union *more Danico*, but William was a later writer, and tenth-century authors including Dudo never refer to such relationships in this way.[348] All this raises concerns that some of the terms used by historians, such as Neveux using *frilla* to describe Norman concubinage, may be transplanting concepts that are not really supported by contemporary Norman sources. Bauduin's own typology may be affected by a literature on early medieval marriage in which the idea of *friedelehe* has loomed large. Bauduin himself does not use the terms *friedelehe* or *frilla*, but those notions seem to be present in his categorizations.[349] In the case of *friedelehe* and *frilla*, those concepts have been fundamentally questioned in the modern historiography. Those questions alert us to the need to examine these unions and the way they are described very carefully.

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other children were born but deliberately eliminated from the line of legitimate succession in order to strengthen the position of the heir.

[345] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 55; Stafford discusses the 'full and legitimate' marriage of Emma and Richard I, Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 210.

[346] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, pp. 54-5, Neveux contrasts the Norman style of concubinage, where children from these unions were recognized alongside the offspring of 'official marriages' and were just as likely to inherit, with other Northern French practices, where illegitimate children rarely inherited. For the conflation of *friedelehe* and *frilla* see Karras, 'The history of marriage', p. 122.

[347] Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos*', p. 432.

[348] Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos*', p. 433.

[349] Karras has noted that historians of early medieval marriage often use the term *friedelehe* as a 'fuzzy term', even while noting that the *friedelfrau* were wives, and that the sources provide no evidence for such a union distinct from marriage, Karras, 'The history of marriage', pp. 124-5.

Gisla, Liutgarde, Emma and Judith are categorized by Neveux as being 'official wives' and by Bauduin as being 'legally married in the Frankish mode'.[350] That these four unions were full and legitimate has never been questioned by historians. It should be pointed out that Keats-Rohan, Searle and Jackman have all noted that the 'facts' of the marriage of Rollo and Gisla seem to be a fabrication on the part of Dudo, as Charles the Simple's daughter was probably not yet born in 911.[351] In the context of Dudo's work this marriage was a central part of a foundational Frankish alliance that included Rollo's conversion to Christianity and which legitimized his rule in Normandy. Keats-Rohan and Jackman have suggested that Dudo may have drawn his story from the marriage of Gisla, daughter of the Carolingian king Lothar II, with Godefrid of Denmark in 882.[352] Jackman goes further and suggests that Rollo himself was the son of Godefrid of Denmark and the Carolingian Gisla, which would have given him a Frankish ancestry.[353] There may have been a family, or Norman elite, legend surrounding the connection to a Frankish princess by the name of Gisla which helped Rollo gain acceptance and legitimacy in the eyes of Frankish neighbors, and if so, this may be where Dudo got the idea of Rollo's marriage to Gisla. Dudo may even have fabricated the union himself. In either case the story supplied a significant founding myth in which alliance through marriage is central. It was a myth which would have had obvious acceptability to late tenth-century count/dukes, as well as speaking to their situation in Northern Francia. In spite of doubts surrounding it, the union of Gisla and Rollo *as presented in the Norman chronicle sources* will still provide context to the marriage of William and Matilda.

Historians have not discussed the question of legitimacy in great detail with regards to these Norman unions. What made a legitimate marriage? Contemporary discussion of tenth- and early eleventh-century relationships shows how blurred the distinction between the modern concepts of marriage and concubinage could be. Early canon law stressed the

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[350] Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos*', p. 432; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 55.

[351] Douglas, 'Rollo of Normandy', *EHR*, No. 228 (October, 1942), p. 435; Jackman, 'Rorgonid Right', p. 142; Keats-Rohan, 'Poppa of Bayeux', pp. 200-201; E. Searle, 'Frankish rivalries and Norse warriors', *ANS*, VIII (1986), p. 204.

[352] In 882 the *Annales de Saint Bertin*, *Annales Vedastini*, and the *Chronicon* of Regino of Prüm all attest that Godefrid married Gisla, the daughter of Lothar II, K.L. Maund, '"A Turmoil of Warring Princes": Political Leadership in Ninth-century Denmark', *HSJ*, 6 (1994), p. 44; Jackman, 'Rorgonid Right', pp. 142-3.

[353] Jackman, 'Rorgonid Right', p. 142, Jackman believes that this dual ancestry explains why Rollo, as opposed to many other Viking settlers, was accepted as a ruler and an ally by the Franks in northern France, and also explains the onomastic evidence of a Frankish name for Rollo's son; saying that '[William] bore a Frankish name suggestive of a relationship with such powerful and prestigious families as the Guilhemids and the Konradiner,' and that such an association could have come from his descent from Gisla.

importance of consent as the critical action which made marriage: consent could be secret, and it could also be sexual. Even into the twelfth and thirteenth centuries there was much debate among popes and canonists such as Alexander III, Innocent II, Huguccio and Bernard of Parma on the question of exactly at what point a marriage was legal and binding, and whether long-term sexual relationships automatically should be presumed as a marriage.[354] Stafford has noted that long-term sexual relationships with concubines can look almost exactly like a marriage. Who was to say that consent had not been given in secret?[355] Reactions to this type of relationship included later eleventh-century works such as the writings of Lanfranc, after his elevation to be archbishop of Canterbury in 1070, and a synod held at Rouen in 1072, both of which stressed that the benediction of a priest was essential to a legal marriage, and that marriages should not be conducted in secret.[356] Can we read this later reformist opinion back onto the early eleventh century? It is clear from the thirteenth-century canonists mentioned above that despite the reformist reaction, this issue was still being debated and was unresolved.

What discussion has occurred concerns in particular the issue of dower, and the associated issue of *mundium*. The idea of *muntehe*, marriage in which *mundium*, the guardianship of a woman, was transferred from her natal family to her husband, has been questioned by both Karras and Weber.[357] Karras notes that historians have often equated *muntehe* with a marriage in which there was a transfer of *dos*; there is no medieval evidence for *muntehe* and *friedelehe*, but there is evidence for the importance of the *dos*/dower.[358] Stafford has noted that the *leges Gentium* in the early middle ages, when concubinage and marriage were common among Merovingian and Carolingian rulers, required a dower given from the husband to a wife in order for a marriage to be legitimate.[359] Charters of dower survive for Richard III's wife Adela and for Judith, while

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[354] Gaudemet, *Le mariage en Occident*, p. 180-81; This debate post-dates the twelfth-century tightening and codification of canon law, which has brought consent – and the consent of individuals – to center stage. In that sense the debate confronts a new, or at least newly defined, issue. It nonetheless demonstrates how problematic the distinction between a long-term relationship and marriage continued to be.

[355] Stafford, *Queens, concubines and dowagers*, p. 63; Karras, 'The history of marriage', p. 124.

[356] Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos*', p. 434. The importance of the involvement of a priest should be remembered when considering William of Jumièges' use of a term like *Christiano more*, which raises the question of whether such rites were developing in the eleventh century, J. Molin and P. Mutembe, *Le rituel du mariage en France du XII^e au XVI^e siecle* (Paris, 1974), pp. 27-30.

[357] P. Stafford, review of I. Weber, *Ein Gesetz für Männer und Frauen. Die frümittelalterliche Ehe zwischen Religion, Gesellschaft und Kultur*, 2 vols, Osfildern, 2008, in *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute*, 32, No. 2 (Nov, 2010), pp. 40-46; Karras, 'The history of marriage', pp. 127-30.

[358] Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos*', pp. 448-9; Karras, 'The history of marriage', pp. 129-30; Le Jan, 'Douaires et pouvoirs des reines', pp. 457-8; Le Jan, *Femmes, pouvoir et société*, pp. 57-9.

[359] Stafford, *Queens, concubines and dowagers*, pp. 62-3.

charter records of dower land confirm that Liutgarde, Gunnor and Matilda had been given such possessions.[360] Bauduin notes that Judith and Adela's dower charters both have long preambles which stress the legitimacy and the indissolubility of the marriages concerned.[361] While acknowledging the vagaries of archival preservation, Musset has wondered about the preservation of the dower details for Liutgarde and Gunnor, from a period in which information about the count/dukes of Normandy is scarce. He suggests that they may have been deliberately preserved as evidence of legal and binding unions, which could show a concern over the issue of legitimacy.[362] However this also raises questions about links between the places where these documents were preserved and the count/dukes.

When historians of Normandy have considered the issue of legitimate marriage, it has mostly concerned those unions seen as less than fully legitimate. The status of Popa, Sprota, Gunnor, Papia and Herleve has been questioned and debated. Neveux does not categorize the union of Rollo and Popa as an 'official marriage'.[363] However, Keats-Rohan has used naming evidence and genealogical evidence to argue that Popa was 'the high-born official wife of Rollo'.[364] She suggests that Popa may have been the daughter of the Marquis Berengar of Neustria, and that her Frankish heritage may have accounted for the entrance of Frankish name stock into the Norman comital family.[365] Berengar was a descendant of Louis the Pious, which would have made Popa a very high status woman. Implicit in Keats-Rohan's argument is the idea that a high status woman must have been fully and legitimately married.[366] Bauduin also accepts that she was of high status, but argues that she was the daughter of Guy of Senlis, based on the relationship between Guy's descendant Bernard of Senlis and Richard I.[367] Bauduin has additionally noted that Popa is named in Dudo's text, which he suggests is evidence of an official union as Dudo never names the women whom he considers to be concubines.[368] It should be noted, however, that Dudo does not name other women whose unions we have reason to believe may be

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[360] Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos*', pp. 438-9.
[361] Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos*', pp. 433-4.
[362] Musset, 'Actes inédits du XI[e] siècle', pp. 27-8.
[363] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 28.
[364] Keats-Rohan, 'Poppa of Bayeux', pp. 191, 204.
[365] Keats-Rohan, 'Poppa of Bayeux', pp. 196-202; Jackman, 'Rorgonid Right', p. 143.
[366] See also Karras, 'The history of marriage', p. 120. She argues that the distinction between a marriage and 'a union that was not a marriage' mostly depended on the status of the woman, and the position in society of both partners. Higher status women were more likely to have their rights as wives recognized, even if the creation of their unions did not distinguish them from unions entered into with lower status women.
[367] Bauduin, *La première Normandie*, p. 130.
[368] Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos*', p. 432.

legitimate. In fact, in the manuscripts which survive from the eleventh century only Popa and Gisla are named.[369]

Dudo does not name either of William Longsword's partners, though there is consensus that Liutgarde was a legitimate wife. There are two copies of a charter from the monastery of Jumièges which discuss Liutgarde's Norman dower. She took her dower land with her when she remarried, and the estates passed to her daughter Emma, who gave them to the foundation of Bourgueil. In 1012 Richard II and William of Aquitaine jointly oversaw an exchange between Jumièges and Bourgueil which allowed the latter foundation to trade its Norman estates for ones closer to home.[370] This charter names Liutgarde and gives a short history of her, her daughter Emma, and the process by which the estates in question came to Bourgueil. This charter was preserved at Jumièges; it is thus interesting that William of Jumièges does not name Liutgarde in his text. The name of William Longsword's second partner, Sprota, is only known from the work of William of Jumièges. Both Keats-Rohan and Jackman have dismissed this name as a linguistic improbability.[371] I shall, however, use this name for clarity and because it is the only name given in any sources. Keats-Rohan accepted that this woman was William's concubine, because there is contemporary evidence to support her status as such from the Frankish chronicler Flodoard.[372] However, she also argues that Sprota was of high status, possibly a noble Breton of the family of Alan Barbetorte, noting William's involvement in disputes over the Breton succession. Another possibility suggested by Keats-Rohan is that Sprota may have been a member of a family from the Viking settlements in western Normandy or Brittany, and that if she was a high-status woman as Dudo has suggested, a union with her may have been part of a policy of alliance with the local Danish nobility. Given that there is no direct evidence for Sprota's noble origins, there is a consensus among historians that Sprota was not an 'official wife', although for many the exact status of her union with William remains unclear.[373]

The most debated 'unofficial' partner is without doubt Gunnor. Searle has suggested a western Norman origin for Gunnor, seeing her union with Richard as an alliance between the count/duke in Rouen and a prominent family of Viking settlers in the

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[369] Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Preussischer Kulturbesitz Philipps ms. 1854; Bern, Burgerbibliothek Bongars 390; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College ms. 276; Rouen, Bibliothèque Municipale ms. 1173.
[370] *RADN*, Nos. 14, 14b.
[371] Keats-Rohan, 'Poppa of Bayeux', pp. 192-3; Jackman, 'Rorgonid Right', pp. 150.
[372] Keats-Rohan, 'Poppa of Bayeux', pp. 192-3.
[373] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 43; Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, p. 95.

Cotentin.[374] Neveux and van Houts have proposed a Scandinavian familial origin for Gunnor, and noted that her brother held land both in the Cotentin and the Pays de Caux.[375] Historians' descriptions of Gunnor's union with Richard I in the late tenth century combines elements of both concubinage and legal marriage. Neveux has little to say about Gunnor beyond describing her as married to Richard *in more Danico*, and suggesting that the marriage was recognized by the church in 980, which would have been long after the death of Richard I's first wife Emma.[376] For Neveux, Gunnor was a woman of Danish descent whose family held land in the Pays de Caux, and elsewhere. He describes her specifically as the *frilla* of Richard I.[377] A much fuller account of the marriage of Gunnor and Richard I is given by van Houts. She begins with Robert of Torigni's account of the meeting of Richard and Gunnor, which describes Richard desiring to sleep with Sainsfrida, the wife of one of his foresters, who cunningly substituted her unmarried sister Gunnor to sleep with him in her place. Van Houts notes that the story clearly reflects twelfth-century notions of marriage and fidelity, but also believes that the specific details of naming and place suggest that it may not be entirely fabricated.[378] It is not known when Gunnor and Richard married, and van Houts states that she cannot be specific about whether or not she was his concubine before the death of his first wife Emma.[379] Both Stafford and van Houts have suggested that the union was recognized in the 980s, following the evidence from Robert of Torigni.[380] However, questions remain about the status of the union before it was regularized.

There is also considerable debate over the status of Papia as a wife or a concubine. Neveux notes Judith's death in 1017, but does not say that Richard II married again afterwards. Instead he refers to Papia as Richard's 'concubine or wife', and singles out Judith's children as 'considered legitimate' to separate them from the children of Papia.[381] Later, when discussing William of Arques, he only states that Papia was Richard II's

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[374] Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, p. 225.

[375] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 55; van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', pp.7-8.

[376] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 55, Neveux cites no specific sources for the dating of Gunnor's relationship with William. He uses the phrase *more Danico*, which was used by William of Jumièges to describe the unions of Popa and Sprota, and has been generally adopted by historians as a term for a union which was not a full marriage, rather similar to *friedelehe*.

[377] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 107; Along similar lines, Bates describes Gunnor as a mistress who became a legal wife, Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 151.

[378] van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', p. 8.

[379] van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', pp. 10, 14.

[380] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 211; van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', p. 14.

[381] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 73.

concubine, not that she may also have been a wife.[382] Bates considers Papia to be Richard II's fully legitimate wife, although he also suggests that Papia was Richard's concubine before they married.[383] Musset recognizes the legitimate marriage of Papia, although he does raise questions about the lack of dower evidence.[384] The vagaries of survival could be the cause of this, and he notes that if dower evidence could be found it would be a strong argument for Papia's union as fully legitimate.[385]

The final comital union to be considered is that of Robert I and Herleve. Herleve is an elusive figure in much of the Norman historiography. Neveux notes that none of the eleventh-century narrative sources provide information about her, and uses the late twelfth-century work of Wace for his detail.[386] He suggests that Herleve and Robert were in a relationship *more Danico*, equating her status with that of a long-term concubine or a *frilla*.[387] From the twelfth-century sources van Houts has identified Herleve as the daughter of Fulbert, the ducal chamberlain, and Neveux suggests that her low-born status prevented Robert from legally marrying her.[388] From her union with Robert she bore two children: William and Adelaide.[389] Herleve then married Herluin de Conteville, and gave birth to William II's famous half brothers, Odo of Bayeux and Robert of Mortain. Bates has noted that an eleventh-century charter from the reign of William II confirms Herleve's name and her second marriage.[390] This charter also supports the later narrative evidence suggesting that Herluin was a minor Norman noble who was advanced at the court of the count/duke after his marriage. Herleve's marriage to Herluin likely took place in the early 1030s, before Robert's departure on pilgrimage.[391] If this was the case, it would seem impossible for her to have been married to Robert.

From this historiographical overview of the comital/ducal marriages in tenth- and eleventh-century Normandy some issues become clear. When considering medieval marriage there are terminological problems created by historians. The words that are used for unions and relationships come loaded with their own modern meanings, and historians

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[382] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 130.
[383] Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 151.
[384] Musset, 'Actes inédits du XI[e] siècle', pp. 27-8.
[385] Musset, 'Actes inédits du XI[e] siècle', p. 33.
[386] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, pp. 94-5.
[387] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 95.
[388] E.M.C. van Houts, 'The Origins of Herleva, Mother of William the Conqueror', *EHR*, No. 399 (April, 1986), pp. 403-404; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 96.
[389] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 96.
[390] D. Bates and V. Gazeau, 'L'abbaye de Grestain et la famille d'Herluin de Conteville', *AN*, 40, No. 1 (March, 1990), p. 22.
[391] Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 41; Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 151; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 96.

have not been as careful as they perhaps should be with words like marriage, concubinage, *frilla / friedelehe*, Christian marriage / marriage *Christiano more*, official marriage, and marriage *more Danico*. Nor have historians always been clear about how and why they distinguish between different types of union. For Musset, dower is clearly critical, though he is very aware that the vagaries of documentary survival make this a difficult test to apply universally. Keats-Rohan and others seem to argue that the status of the woman is critical: high status women would have a full marriage. But they are not consistent and problems with identifying some of the women make this a difficult argument, if not sometimes a circular one. Historians have found the surviving evidence problematic, not least because none of the Norman narrative sources are strictly contemporary for any of the unions pre-1000. Some information comes from sources written as late as the mid-twelfth century, and its status as evidence for tenth- and early-eleventh-century unions is very suspect.

Study of these unions must therefore begin with rigorous reconsideration of the contemporary narrative sources, and of other scraps of documentary evidence. Much of the debate over the different types of marriage unions and sexual unions comes from the terms used by William of Jumièges. His phrase *more Danico* has been used by historians as a conveniently fuzzy term. Searle captures the majority of historical opinion when she describes it as a marriage-type union of a lesser status than a legal marriage, an institution based on Scandinavian practices that gave the count/dukes the option of recognizing the children born of these unions; without such recognition the children had no claim to the patrimony.[392] Neveux specifically uses the term concubine for the women who were married *more Danico*, in contrast to 'mariage officiel'.[393] He uses the term to describe the unions of Popa, Sprota, and Gunnor. Duby extends the term even farther when he describes the union of Robert I and Herleve as being *more Danico*, stating that this made William II a 'second-class heir' and caused him to struggle to assert his authority as count/duke.[394] However, the term was first used by William of Jumièges, writing in the eleventh century, and he only uses it to describe two early tenth-century relationships: that of Rollo with Popa, and that of William Longsword with Sprota.[395] What exactly he meant by this term is now difficult to recover, although he clearly was not using it to describe a widespread institution that included the unions of Gunnor and Herleve. We can approach

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[392] Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, p. 95 n. 8; For the connection to the *frilla* and *friedelfrau* see Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, pp. 54-5 and Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest*, pp. 41-3.
[393] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 55.
[394] Duby, *The Knight, the Lady and the Priest*, pp. 42-3.
[395] *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 58-9, 'post more Danico sibi copulauit'; *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 78-9, 'Danico more iuncta'.

this question by considering the two unions where he uses the term, and by comparing his description and terminology with that of his source, Dudo.

The marriage *more Danico* of Rollo and Popa contrasts with Jumièges' description of the marriage *more Christiano* of Rollo and Gisla.[396] Rollo's marriage to Gisla is part of an alliance between Rollo and the Frankish king Charles the Simple: Charles is said to give Rollo his daughter along with control of Normandy.[397] Thus, in Jumièges' work Rollo had two unions, one *more Danico*, from which his son William was born, and one *more Christiano* which sealed an important alliance. Similarly, William Longsword's marriage *more Danico* was to the woman who gave birth to his son Richard. His second union is not described as *more Danico*, but is again a union with a woman related to a foreign ruler: Liutgarde of Vermandois.[398] William of Jumièges does not specify what type of marriage this union is, but he makes an explicit parallel with the marriage of Rollo and Gisla: he says that Herbert of Vermandois gave his daughter to William, just as Charles the Simple gave Gisla.[399] Both of these unions will be considered further below.

William of Jumièges wrote his work more than one hundred years after these unions took place. His source, Dudo, does not use the phrase *more Danico* to suggest two different types of relationships. Dudo first describes the union of Rollo and Popa: while Rollo was in Bayeux he bound himself to Popa, the daughter of prince Berengar, who would give birth to Rollo's son William.[400] Dudo here uses the Latin term *conubium*. This is translated in this passage by Lifshitz, Dudo's most recent editor, as 'sexual union', although Christiansen chose to translate this as 'marriage'.[401] Lifshitz notes that she chose 'sexual union' because Dudo had previously used the term *conubium* in the context of youthful sexual excesses.[402] Lifshitz's translation of Dudo makes a consistent distinction between a

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[396] *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 68-9, 'Christiano more in consortium thori duxit'.
[397] *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 64-5, 'terram... cum sua filia nomine Gisla se ei daturum fore'.
[398] Liutgarde of Vermandois is the only partner of a count/duke who remains unnamed in Jumièges' work. This situation is also worth noting, because there is a Norman charter which records Liutgarde's dower from her marriage to William, which was then passed to her daughter from a second marriage and eventually given to the abbey of Jumièges. The original charter naming Liutgarde and her dower was preserved in the archive at Jumièges, and later copied into the abbey cartulary. *RADN*, No. 14b; Musset, 'Actes inédits du XI[e] siècle', pp. 17-18. There is a different version of the exchange between Bourgueil and Jumièges, in which Liutgard's dower was transferred, copied into the cartulary of Bourgueil. Fauroux identified a substantial difference between the two versions, and listed them separately in her edition, *RADN*, No. 14.
[399] *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 80-81, 'filiam suam ei donauit'.
[400] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 23r, 'Quin etiam quondam popam uirginem spetiae decorem superbo sanguine concretam praeualentis. principis berengarii filiam. secum letus adduxit. eamque sibi conubio asciuit et ex ea filium nomine uuillelmum genuit'.
[401] Christiansen, *Dudo of St Quentin*, p. 38.
[402] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, English Translation, Chapter 11 n. 11.

'sexual union' (*conubium*) and 'marriage' (*conjugium*). However, a close reading of the context for the use of the two terms suggests a more ambiguous usage.

Dudo uses the phrase *conubium* to describe three other unions of the count/dukes. Two of these, Richard I's unions with Emma Capet and with Gunnor, will be considered below. Both, as we shall see, are presented as legitimate marriage at the point when the term is used. In this context it is especially notable that the third case is the union of Rollo and Gisla. Dudo uses the term *conubium* for this union, just as he did for the union of Rollo and Popa. He states that the Franks counseled Charles to 'join your daughter to Rollo in *conubium*.'[403] In a different passage Dudo uses the word *conjugium* to describe this union, and his description of it as a union involving the woman's father and accompanied by great celebrations suggests something which modern historians would recognize as an 'official' or 'legitimate' marriage union. '[Charles] will also give you [Rollo] in wedlock his daughter, Gisla by name, as your wife, from which bond you may be delighted by offspring, so that the peace and concord and friendship between you and him might endure forever.'[404] 'At last, having made wedding preparations of great splendor, he [Rollo] took to wife the king's daughter Gisla.'[405] Dudo uses both *conubium* and *conjugium* to describe the union of Rollo and Gisla, and also uses *conubium* to describe Rollo and Popa's union. How much of a distinction is he making between the two terms if he uses each of them to describe the same union?

Given Dudo's classical education and the fact that his work is based on the Aeneid, it is important to note that *conubium* was used in the Aeneid to mean legitimate marriage.[406] In Roman law *conubium* was the legal capacity of a couple to marry; having *conubium* made a marriage valid and gave legitimacy to children.[407] Dudo uses the term for a series of unions: Rollo's unions with Popa and Gisla, Richard I and Emma, and Richard I and Gunnor. William of Jumièges is certainly not picking up doubts or distinctions in Dudo's terminology here; indeed he uses *conubium* to describe the unions of William of Poitou with Gerloc/Adele of Normandy, Geoffrey of Brittany with Hawisa of Normandy and

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[403] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 27r, 'filiam quoque tuam ROLLONI conubio iunge'.
[404] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 27v, 'uult tibi dare quin etiam ut pax et concordia atque amicitia firma. et stabilis. atque continua omni tempore inter te et illum permaneat; filiam suam gislam nomine uxorem in coniugio dabit tibi qua copula prole laetaberis. regnumque in perpetuum tenebis'.
[405] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 30v, 'Denique praeparato magno nuptialium rerum cultu; gislam filiam regis uxorem sibi duxit'.
[406] Albu Hanawalt, 'Dudo of Saint-Quentin:', p. 113; *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*, Vol. VI, p. 814-5.
[407] S. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage: Iusti Coniuges From the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian* (Oxford, 1993), p. 43.

Richard II with Judith of Brittany, where his own descriptions suggest legitimate marriage by any criteria.

Dudo might nonetheless be seen to lay the basis for a differentiation between the two unions of Rollo, as that with Gisla is given, as we have seen, all the precise arrangements associated with full marriage. That makes his use of *conubium* for Popa all the more notable. Dudo is labeling this as a marriage. Dudo is arguably framing both the unions of Rollo as important and legitimate unions: one with the daughter of a Frankish lord already established in western Normandy, and one with the daughter of a Frankish king. By Dudo's day, these were the two foundational unions of the Norman founding father, whatever their original nature and significance. Dudo marks out their importance when he gives their names in his text; he does not name any other ducal partners. Popa was the 'founding mother' of the Norman ducal line. Before discussing further William of Jumièges' label of *more Danico* for this union, we should examine the other instance where this term was used – for the union of William Longsword and Sprota – and consider further the more unambiguously legitimate unions.

Dudo does not use the words *conubium* or *conjugium* to describe the union of William Longsword and Sprota. He describes this as a union which William Longsword entered into for the purpose of procreation, specifically the securing of the succession.[408] In a poem Dudo foreshadows the birth of Richard, and states that the union of William and Sprota (unnamed) was lawful, although he still does not specify it as a marriage.[409] The poem is difficult to read, especially in the light of the growing cult around William. But it hints at the union as one which might have caused hesitation if not shame: '*ne paveas trepidans formidans et verearis*'. The stress on its legality seems to answer questions precisely about that, and thus about its offspring, Richard I. Chronologically Dudo describes first William Longsword's relationship with Sprota, then his marriage to Liutgarde of Vermandois, and finally the birth of Richard I. It is at the point of this birth that Dudo describes Sprota as William's wife (*conjunx*).[410] As noted, it is known from a Jumièges charter that Liutgarde outlived William and took her Norman dower lands with her to her second marriage, which strongly suggests that William's relationships with Liutgarde and

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[408] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 37r, 'Cogentibus igitur comitibus suis. non urgente sexu humanae fragilitatis. sed ne deficeret. neque abesset heres tante progeniei tantique honoris et ducaminis; conexuit se geniali iure renouande successionis cuidam nobilissimae uirgini'.
[409] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 37r, 'Atque ne paueas trepidans formidans et uerearis. Ius liciti quo te pepigisti foedera lecti. Namque uoluptatis huius commixtio sacrae; Nec intacta fides, labem non passa pudoris. Neque libido sacri meritum cordis temerauit. Semine namque tuo succedet dux luculentus'.
[410] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 39v, 'esset ei filius ex coniuge dilectissima natus'.

Sprota overlapped. It should be noted that the Frankish chroniclers Raoul Glaber and Flodoard specifically refer to Sprota as a concubine.[411] Reading Dudo's work it seems possible that Sprota was a concubine, although Dudo is almost studiously inconclusive, despite being elsewhere very clear on the subject of concubines. He uses the term *concubina* only once to describe the women who gave birth to illegitimate children of Richard I like William and Godfrey.[412] He does not use this term for Sprota. Could Dudo have been deliberately ambiguous with regards to Sprota's status to avoid accusing William Longsword of bigamy? Or might Dudo be ambiguous because Sprota was in fact not legitimately married to William? Or was this a union over which there was still significant doubt and debate at the beginning of the eleventh century?

Dudo's audience, patron and sources of information are of great relevance to this discussion. Dudo wrote his history of the Norman count/dukes at the request of Richard I, the son of Sprota. One of his informants was Raoul of Ivry, another son of Sprota who was Richard I's half brother. It seems clear that Dudo was addressing possible questions about Richard and Raoul's mother and the nature of her union. Given that the sons of Sprota patronized the work and were among its audience, it should not be surprising that Dudo would describe the union as legitimate, even if it was not a marriage. His ambiguity is thus as remarkable as his defense. Given that his audience probably extended beyond his patrons, we may be seeing here an attempt to deal with a difficult and sensitive contemporary issue. Dudo defends, but cannot totally deny the problem. The doubts which Dudo's account leaves here might well have led William of Jumièges to see this as a different sort of union from some of the others which Dudo described. That alone, however, would not explain his coupling of it, as he does, with the union of Rollo and Popa. It is time to turn to the unions which are apparently unambiguously legitimate in the accounts of Dudo and William

In the work of William of Jumièges and Dudo each of the tenth-century count/dukes has one female partner who is related to a foreign lord. These unions involve high-status alliance, and have common elements according to both authors. When Rollo

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[411] Keats-Rohan, 'Poppa of Bayeux', pp. 192-3; Flodoard of Rheims, *The Annals of Flodoard of Rheims 919-966*, S. Fanning and B.S. Bachrach, eds (Peterborough, Ontario, 2004), p. 37, Flodoard states that Richard I was the son of William Longsword and a Breton concubine; Rodulfus Glaber, *Rodulfus Glaber Opera*, J. France and P. Reynolds, eds (Oxford, 1989), Raoul Glaber wrote Book III of his Histories before c. 1030-1036 (p. xlv). In this work he states of William Longsword that *'Erat enim Willelmo filius ex concubina, Richardus nomine, tamen adhuc adolescens'* (p. 164). In Book I he speaks approvingly of Norman rule, and especially both William Longsword and Richard II (p. 37).

[412] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 87v, 'genuit duos filios. totidem et filias. ex concubinis. quorum unus godefredus. alter uero nuncupatur uuillelmus'.

married Gisla, the daughter of Charles the Simple, it was as part of an alliance which gave Rollo control over Normandy. Dudo records that Charles was counseled by his *fideles* to give his daughter to Rollo; his offer was conveyed to Rollo who took counsel with his own men before accepting it.[413] Dudo also records that Rollo made preparations for a wedding event of great splendor at which he married Gisla.[414] This account contains elements identified by historians as essential parts of a fully legitimate marriage: negotiation between families, consultation, and a public ceremony to mark the occasion. As discussed above, historians such as Stafford have noted that these elements were not required for a marriage, but, as other historians have stressed, each one was part of making the union legitimate and gave the wife and children greater security.

The union between William Longsword and Liutgarde of Vermandois was part of an alliance between William, Herbert of Vermandois, William of Poitou and Hugh the Great. Dudo describes a meeting of these four lords at which Hugh the Great counsels William Longsword to give his sister Gerloc as a wife to William of Poitou.[415] Jumièges states that William of Poitou asked to 'be joined in *conubium* by marital law', again suggesting that for him *conubium* was a term of legitimacy, and that with the advice of Hugh the Great a betrothal was organized before the wedding ceremony.[416] In both works, Herbert of Vermandois then takes counsel with Hugh and gives his sister to William Longsword.[417] The description of both unions includes an account of the husband travelling to the court of his future wife's family and escorting her to his own home. Dudo also described the riches that both women took with them to their new homes, including gold, amber, slaves and horses.[418]

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[413] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fols. 27r-27v.

[414] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 30v, 'Denique praeparato magno nuptialium rerum cultu; gislam filiam regis uxorem sibi duxit'.

[415] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 39v, 'Et ut des sororem tuam uxorem mihi. ueni; utque connectamur inuicem federe insolubilis amicitiae et dilectionis... Sequenti namque die consilio hugonis magni. et heriberti comitum suorumque fidelium; dedit sororem suam Vuillelmo duci pictauensi'.

[416] *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 80-81, 'Inter quos secretorum tractatus Guillelmus Pictauensis comes sororem eius nomine Gerloc petiit, quatinus lege maritali illius connubio iungeretur. Cuius perorantis gratanter fauens uotis, consultu Hugonis Magni, descriptis sponsalibus et celebratis nuptiis, cum multis exeniis gaudentem illum ad propria remisit'.

[417] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 40r, 'Videns autem heribertus Vuillelmus rotomagensem confortari et conualescere. animique uirtute et corporis operibusque praemaximis sufficienter in christo enitere; consilio hugonis magni ducis. dedit filiam suam illi'; *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 80-81, 'Oblectatus denique Herbertus super hac nuptiarum festiua et magnifica hylaritate, cupiens et ipse magni et liberalis uiri affinitate suum et nomen et posteritatem propagare, adhortante Hugone Magno, filiam suam ei donauit. Quam a paterna domo sublatam cum innumera militum manu idem Normannorum dux Rotomagensibus intulit arcibus'.

[418] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fols. 39v - 40r, 'Quam uero nuptialium rerum copia honorifice redimitam; equisque femineis. faleris. honustis auro. electroque artificialiter praebalteatis subuectam; cum

The marriage of Gerloc/Adele is the first described by Dudo in which a Norman comital woman marries outside of Normandy, and it is telling that this is the first union where Dudo mentions the moveable wealth sent with the bride. Not only is this a way of showing the wealth of William Longsword, that he could afford to send such a dowry with his sister, it also may say something about her status and the status of her union. High-status women from powerful families were the most likely to have the most secure marriages in which all of the preliminaries such as negotiations, betrothal, property settlements and public ceremonies were observed, as their natal families wished to ensure that they could not be repudiated.[419] By emphasizing the ceremony which was performed and the property transactions Dudo may be anxious to show the strength of the Norman family, and its ability to ensure a union for Gerloc/Adele which would secure her position in her husband's court and household as well as provide legitimacy for her children.

There may also be an element of 'living memory' affecting Dudo's narrative here. The impact of such memory becomes more likely as he moved from writing a relatively distant historical narrative into chronicling the lives of the living and their direct predecessors. Dudo also draws attention to the arrangements made before a union was completed when he describes the union of Richard I and Emma Capet. With this union Dudo is now almost certainly drawing on 'living memory'; his first patron was Richard I, and Richard's half-brother Raoul and second wife Gunnor probably provided him with much of his information. Possibly reflecting this, Dudo gives more detail and devotes more lines to his account of the unions of both Emma and Gunnor than he does to any of the previous unions. As with Sprota, however, there may be other factors affecting his presentation here. The dialogue of author, informant and audience(s) is a complex one.

Emma was the daughter of Hugh the Great, and sister of Hugh Capet. She is the only tenth-century Norman comital/ducal female partner to appear in a charter with her husband; when Richard I made a donation to Saint Denis with the consent of Hugh Capet it is specified in the text that the transaction took place in her presence. She is here called *conjunx*.[420] Her marriage to Richard was arranged, according to Dudo, by her father and Richard's guardians, Bernard of Senlis and Bernard the Dane, when she and Richard were

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nimia innumerabilium utriusque sexu mancipiorum frequentia; multisque scriniis. sericis uestibus. auro intextis. repletis et oneratis constipatam; deduxit reuerenter ad pictauensem aulam... Quam Vuillilmus cum mirabilibus fescenninis apparatibus. inauditisque inedicibilis honoris et dignitatis hornatibus comptius suffultus; inestimabiliumque equitum multitudine undique secus constipatus; conduxit magnifice rotomagensis urbis arcibus'.

[419] Karras, 'The history of marriage', p. 126.

[420] *RADN*, No. 3, 'Ante presentiam nostram, conjugis nostre Emme, ceterorumque fidelium nostrorum'.

still too young to marry.[421] Dudo specifies that oaths were sworn by Hugh and that the negotiations fixed the all-important dower (*statute lege fescenninae coemptionis*) and the time of the marriage (*conexio conubialis*).[422] He again uses the word *conubium* to describe this union, and here leaves us with little doubt that he had a fairly clear idea in his own mind of the various elements of betrothal which made a legitimate marriage.[423] Jumièges also describes the counsel of Richard's guardian Bernard of Senlis and Hugh the Great, as well as the betrothal made while Richard and Emma were still young.[424] According to both Dudo and Jumièges the union was not completed until after the death of Hugh the Great. Dudo's account states that Richard's *fideles* counseled him to fulfill his oath to Hugh and marry Emma, with Richard then providing for an expensive wedding ceremony and betrothal gifts.[425] Dudo then tells us that Richard escorted her to Rouen amid a great ceremony.[426] Jumièges eliminates much of Dudo's detail, but chose to keep the emphasis on the fulfillment of the oath, and on the ceremonial arrival of the new bride at Rouen.[427] Again, in neither case are we left in much doubt as to the sort of elements which made a legal marriage, and of these authors' recognition of them.

Both authors then move to the union of Richard I and Gunnor. Dudo follows the final passage describing Emma's escort to Rouen with a poem which foreshadows Emma's lack of children and Richard's eventual marriage with Gunnor.[428] As noted above, Dudo also mentions that Richard had illegitimate children with concubines. Again we need to remember Dudo's immediate audience, if not patron; this is a work which Gunnor could be expected either to read or to hear read. Thus it is likely that the account of the wives of

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[421] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fols. 65v-66r.

[422] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 66r, 'Dedit itaque hugo dux magnus Richardo nobilissimo adolescenti filiam suam. firmamento sacramenti. non tamen statuta lege. fescenninae coemptionis; uerum denominato iuratoque termino. conexionis conubialis'.

[423] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 73r, 'Richardo northmannorum duci praepotentissimo. filiam meam licet tenere aetatis sit futuri nuptiis conubio'.

[424] *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 116-7, 'Post hec considerans Hugo dux puerum Ricardum uiribus conualescere, consult Bernardi Siluanectensis, sacramentis ab utraque parte iuratis, filiam suam nomine Emmam illi despondit, ut pubescens flore iuuentutis iungeret eam sibi lege coniugali'.

[425] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 73v, 'Quocirca filiam hugonis magni francorum ducis. quam illo superstite sacramento conectendam tibi conubio sanxisti; antequam praefiniatur terminus statuti temporis. si congrua habilisque et nubilis fuerit. lege maritali praedignum est tibi copulari. Quod sancitum est fide peractum iri; consequens est exsecutum iri. Ilico praeparantur nuptialis sumptus commoda; adhornabanturque mirificae compositionis sponsalia'.

[426] *Dudo of Saint Quentin*, fol. 73v, 'Northmannicae igitur brittonicaeque regionis optimatum manu asscita. praeparatisque omnibus fescennino cultui quae erant necessaria. cum incomputabili principum congressione. eam decenter et honorifice deduxit ad rotomagensis urbis palatia'.

[427] *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 120-21, 'Post cuius obitum filiam eius nomine Emmam a paterna domo sublatam idem dux, ut olim desponderat, cum maximo tripudio et honore Rotomagensibus intulit minibus, sibi eam iungens iure coniugali'.

[428] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 73v, 'Non hac quae uehitur. uirgine proles. Nascetur populumque reget heres'.

Richard I and his concubines was either partly shaped by Gunnor, or written partly to appeal to her. It emphasizes the legitimacy and sterility of Emma, as well as the legitimacy, suitability and fruitfulness of Gunnor, while contrasting both of their unions with Richard I's illegitimate unions with concubines. But Dudo was also recording events clear in living memory. His presentation of the union of Gunnor and Richard I demonstrates both the shaping of the chronicle to his patrons, but also the limits to that shaping.

Dudo is quite clear about the status of Gunnor's union; originally illicit (*prohibitae copulationis foedus*), it was legalized at the urging of Richard's *fideles.*[429] It is not known when Gunnor and Richard married or if Gunnor was Richard's concubine before the death of his first wife Emma, but the latter seems very likely.[430] There is evidence that this marriage included a provision of dower such as that made for Liutgarde; in a charter of 1015 Gunnor donates some of her Norman dower land to the foundation of Mont Saint Michel.[431] In the twelfth century Robert of Torigni provides the detail that the wedding between the two only took place so that their children, and especially Robert as an archiepiscopal candidate, could be legitimized.[432] Robert became archbishop of Rouen c. 989, and both Stafford and van Houts have accepted this as a possible date for the legitimating of the union.[433] However, as Bauduin has noted, Dudo says that the regularization of Richard and Gunnor's union was demanded by the 'great men' of Normandy, not by the need for Robert to be legitimate as an archiepiscopal candidate.[434] Dudo specifically says that this action was taken as the death of Richard I drew near so that Gunnor's children might rule after Richard was gone.[435] This suggests that Gunnor and Richard I lived together for twenty years before their union was made legitimate in c. 996. Dudo could not have denied this, though his presentation of both her and the union makes the best of the situation.

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[429] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 87v, 'atque omnium bonorum praemunitae affluentia se conexuit. eamque prohibitae copulationis foedere sortitus est sibi amicabiliter'; *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fols. 87v-88r, 'Hanc tibi inextricabili maritalis federis priuilegio; petimus conecti. ut salutifera sobole eius; tellus tui ducaminis. iminente extremae sortis tuae obitu; salubriter et constanter regatur. Huic igitur consilio libenter dux sanctissimus richardus fauens; asscitis episcopis cum clero. satrapisque cum populo; eam lege maritali desponsauit'.

[430] van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', pp. 10, 14.

[431] *RADN*, No. 17, 'Duo aloda... que michi meus sancte recordationis vir Richardus comes cum plurimis in dotalicium dedit'.

[432] van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', p. 14.

[433] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 210-211; van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', p. 14.

[434] Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos*', p. 433.

[435] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 88r, 'petimus conecti. ut salutifera sobole eius; tellus tui ducaminis. iminente extremae sortis tuae obitu; salubriter et constanter regatur'.

Fifty years or more later, William of Jumièges has no such limitations. He eliminates most of this account from his version of events: he states only that after the death of Emma Richard married Gunnor *Christiano more*.[436] William regularly abbreviates Dudo, but that amounts to a significant rewriting of events. Given Dudo's presence at the court of Richard I and Richard II, his account would seem to be the more reliable, and Gunnor's status more likely to have been that of a sexual partner whose union, and children, were legitimated in a public ceremony to provide a secure succession.[437] William's rewriting of it may be an indication of the way the story of Gunnor and Richard could be, and was being, told by the 1050s. He removes any hint of anything other than a full marriage, and underlines the latter with the term *Christiano more*.

By c. 1000 the women who mattered in the Norman story of the tenth century were clear, and were selected as much by the circumstances of the late tenth century as by earlier developments and situation. The recorded tenth-century unions (and women) included significant Frankish marriages – real or imagined – and unions which had produced particular count/dukes of the late tenth century. There may have been other unions and other women with whom the Norman count/dukes were involved, but by the late tenth century they were either irrelevant or eclipsed.[438] This is not a full account of the tenth-century Norman family, nor is it a simple reflection of tenth-century realities. For some of these women the story as presented by Dudo can be rewritten, especially for Sprota who was known to a Frankish audience and whose status was questioned by that audience. Closer to 1000 there is less scope for such adjustment; however, the closer Dudo got to his own day the less scope there was for mythologizing.

Dudo clearly knew the difference between marriage and concubinage; surely his audience did as well. His descriptions show this; they also show some pro-Norman boasting about the ability of the count/dukes to arrange legitimate unions with negotiations and property transactions. We should be very wary of importing any idea of a sort of 'half-way house' marriage into his story. What we seem to be seeing in Dudo's work is not a view of different types of marriage, but attempts to legitimize in some way unions which we should probably see as simply concubinage. Most concubines were irrelevant to his story. One

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[436] *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 126-9; 'uirginem nomine Gonnor, ex nobilissima Danorum prosapia ortam, sibi in matrimonium Christiano more desponsauit'.
[437] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 88r; 'Huic igitur consilio libenter dux sanctissimus richardus fauens; asscitis episcopis cum clero. satrapisque cum populo; eam lege maritali desponsauit'.
[438] Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, p. 93, Searle suggests that there was a deliberate elimination of other partners and especially of other children, saying that 'the suppression of the memory of any but a single child in Dudo's myth can be interpreted as a political act to maintain the unique legitimacy of Richard I.'

probable one – Sprota – had to be dealt with; one certain one – Gunnor – he recognizes as such. Dudo provides a legend of legitimacy, although not through marriage *more Danico*, or through a type of union which corresponds to *frilla / friedelehe*.

Dudo's treatment of the unions is based in the situation c. 1000. Dudo lefts behind a story which was picked up by William of Jumièges writing half a century later. William took up Dudo's work from the perspective of the mid-eleventh century, and perhaps had a different audience. Dudo lived and wrote within the Norman ducal court, whereas Jumièges was based outside of Rouen within a monastic foundation. Dudo's work ends with the accession of Richard II as count/duke of Normandy. We have already seen how William of Jumièges re-read and rewrote some of Dudo's story. For the eleventh-century unions of the count/dukes, including that of William and Matilda, the sole Norman narrative source is William's work.

Jumièges first describes the union of Richard II and Judith, made as part of an alliance between Richard and Judith's brother Geoffrey of Brittany. Geoffrey first approaches Richard about marrying his sister Hawisa. Richard, with the counsel and agreement of his fideles, grants Hawisa to Geoffrey in marriage *Christiano more*, celebrated with an extravagant public ceremony.[439] Richard then asks Geoffrey for the hand of his sister Judith.[440] Geoffrey prepares everything and brings Judith to the border at Mont Saint Michel where Richard meets them and the marriage takes place (*legitimo iure*).[441] Although Jumièges gives less detail than Dudo, this marriage description matches those which he gave for the marriages of Rollo and Gisla, William Longsword and Liutgarde, and Richard I and Emma. He hints at the negotiations and the property transactions which accompanied the public ceremony at the border. These facts indicate a full marriage, as Jumièges and his contemporaries would understand. This is borne out by the additional evidence for the property transactions which strengthened Judith's union. Her dower charter survives,

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[439] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 14-15, 'Videns autem Gaufridus se a duce tam excellenter tractari intra se deliberare cepit, quia, si eius iungeretur conubio sororis nomine Haduis, fortiori necteretur inter eos nodus amoris. Erat enim hec puella corpora ualde decora, morum honestate gratissima. Vnde post pactas amicitias eam sibi dari toto annisu poposcit. Cuius uoluntati dux gratanti animo fauens, assentientibus Normannorum principibus, petitam Christiano more tradidit celebratisque cum inestimabili honore nuptiis, non multo post cum immensis muneribus eos ouantes abire permisit'.
[440] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 28-9, 'Porro dux Ricardus de successione prolis sollicitus, Goiffredum Britannorum comitem quamdam habere sororem nomine Iudith audiens corpora admodum elegantem omnique morum honestate pollentem, hanc per legatos petiit in conubium'.
[441] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 28-9, 'Cuius propositum Goiffredus ultroneo animo satagens accelerare, omnibus que ad tantum negotium errant congrua preparatis, eam illi deduxit usque ad limina archangeli Michaelis. Vbi dux illam suscipiens competent honore eam sibi iunxit legitimo iure'.

detailing the lands in Normandy which she received from Richard. Judith was given an extensive dower of land in the Lieuvin, the Cinglais and the north of the Cotentin.[442]

In contrast to this marriage, Jumièges does not discuss the union of Richard II and Papia, another union on which historians are divided. Jumièges only mentions Papia when he discusses her sons with Richard – Archbishop Mauger of Rouen and William of Arques.[443] Musset has noted the lack of a preserved dower charter for Papia, compared with the charters of dower for her contemporaries, which in his view suggests that she may not have been a full/legitimate wife.[444] However, when Jumièges does refer to her, he describes her as Richard's second wife (*uxor*).[445] By this date we have charter evidence to set alongside the narrative sources, and that charter evidence suggests Papia's legitimacy. When Papia's brothers donated to the monastery of Saint Wandrille, before entering the foundation as monks, the charter of donation specifically says that Papia was Richard II's wife.[446] There is also a charter of donation, again to Saint Wandrille, that was preserved as an original and which contains Papia's own autograph *signum* as *comitissa*.[447] The strongest evidence for the legitimacy of Papia's union comes from Saint Wandrille, which appears to have been a family foundation of her natal family. However, she is recorded in other charters as Richard's wife, a description which conveys as much legitimacy as does the title *comitissa*. Questions remain about the date of her union with Richard, and whether she was a concubine before becoming a wife, like Gunnor before her, but her status as a wife should not be doubted.

Less doubt surrounds the status of William II's mother Herleve. Jumièges does not mention her. The only information about her and her union with Robert I comes from a twelfth-century interpolation into the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum* by Orderic Vitalis: Orderic specifically describes her as a concubine.[448] It has been suggested that she was

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[442] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 73.
[443] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 73.
[444] Musset, 'Actes inédits du XI[e] siècle', pp. 27-8.
[445] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 102-103, 'Nam Richardus dux secundus mortua Iudith aliam uxorem, nomine Papiam, duxit'. Jumièges does not often refer to wives; he generally describes the act of marriage without describing the woman as a wife. He does use *uxor* three times to refer to other wives. The first is the wife of the peasant at Longpaon, *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 68-9. The second is after the death of Rollo's first wife [Gisla], *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 72-3. The third occurance is when Jumièges describes Emma, late wife of Richard I, *GND*, Vol. I, pp. 128-9.
[446] *RADN*, No. 46, 'Richardi secundi comitis, qui eorum sororem Papiam in conjugo habebat'.
[447] BnF, ms. Latin 16738, No. 1; *RADN*, No. 30.
[448] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 96-7, 'Willelmus enim ex concubina Rodberti ducis nomine Herleua, Fulberti cubicularii ducis filia natus, nubilibus indigenis et maxime ex Ricardorum prosapia natis despectui erat utpote nothus'.

married to Herluin de Conteville in the early 1030s, before Robert I went on Crusade.[449] It is thus highly improbable that she and Robert were married. Additional supporting evidence comes from the Norman ducal charters, in which Herleve never appears. Given that William of Jumièges wrote during the lifetime of William II, his silence on the status of this union supports Orderic's assertion that Herleve was a concubine.

Thus in the 1050s, when William of Jumièges was writing, the reigning count/duke's mother had been a concubine, and his powerful uncles were born of a union which may have begun as concubinage before being legitimated. It is difficult to accept that the status of unions would not have been an issue in Normandy at this date and in the recent past, just as it was c. 1000 when Dudo was writing. Could this have affected the way William of Jumièges presents the tenth-century unions? He stresses the absolute legitimacy of Gunnor, from whose union all of the eleventh-century count/dukes were descended. It is clear from Dudo's work that Gunnor's union was originally not a full and legitimate marriage, but that her union was legitimized late in Richard I's reign.

Dudo is explicit about Gunnor, as he is explicit about the marriages of Gisla, Liutgarde and Emma. His language strongly suggests that Popa's union was legitimate, with the use of *conubium*. He is less specific, however, about her, and does not address the issue of Sprota's status at all. Given the other contemporary evidence, it seems likely that Sprota was a concubine. So William of Jumièges was faced with source material which raises doubts about the legitimacy of the unions of all the mothers of the Norman count/dukes. He removes any doubts about Gunnor – elevating her status to that of a legitimate wife. Might the invention of the term *more Danico* be a way of negotiating the dubious nature of the unions of Popa and Sprota?

Van Houts has shown that there were continued cultural connections between Norman history writers working in the Norman court and Scandinavia.[450] She has also suggested that William of Jumièges utilized Scandinavian sources when writing his chronicle. William, who was almost certainly a Norman himself, presents a Norman culture which was aware of its Scandinavian roots, and maintained contact with Scandinavia. It certainly seems possible that the use of the term *more Danico* was meant to convey a sense of legitimacy, sidestepping the issue of whether or not these unions were Christian marriages by connecting them to an older past.[451] Both of the *more Danico* unions involve

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[449] See above, p. 82

[450] E.M.C. van Houts, 'Scandinavian Influence in Norman Literature of the Eleventh Century', *ANS*, VI (1983), p. 112.

[451] Albu, *The Normans in their histories*, pp. 57-8.

William Longsword, who was celebrated by William of Jumièges as a pious duke who desired to become a monk, and a martyr who was assassinated.[452] The use of *more Danico* is thus unlikely to have been pejorative, but instead may be William of Jumièges' way of declaring the legitimacy of Longsword and the line of Norman count/dukes.

Thus William of Jumièges elevates the status of the partners of the count/dukes about whom Dudo expressed doubts. However, William does not use the term *more Danico* to describe Herleve's union with Robert I, nor does he describe anything like a marriage ceremony. Perhaps, just like Dudo before him, when William wrote about events that occurred within living memory, and about people who were still alive, he preferred to ignore evidence that the mother of William II was not legitimately married to his father. Given William of Jumièges' concern to emphasize the legitimate succession of the count/dukes, the lack of information about Herleve in particular suggests that she was a sexual partner rather than a wife. This must have been common knowledge in the Norman court, and forms the backdrop for the marriage of Matilda of Flanders.

In contrast to Herleve and Papia, William of Jumièges is very clear on the status of Matilda of Flanders and her union with William. Jumièges does not even hint that there was any delay in the negotiations before the marriage, as we might expect if the papal prohibition had caused a serious problem. Jumièges says that William sent envoys to Baldwin IV of Flanders to ask for Matilda's hand.[453] After these negotiations Baldwin brought his daughter to the border, along with many gifts. William arrived with an entourage, and he and Matilda were married in a public ceremony before Matilda was escorted to Rouen by her new husband. William of Poitiers gives a similar description of the border marriage followed by Matilda's arrival in Rouen.[454] Furthermore he tells us that the motivation for the union was an alliance; that William II wished to have neighbors as

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[452] Albu, *The Normans in their histories*, pp. 64-5.

[453] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 128-31, 'Iam itaque duce iuuenili robore uigente, transcensis annis adolescentie, ceperunt eius optimates de prolis successione cum eo attencius tractare. Audiens autem Baldoinum Flandrensem quandam habere filiam regali ex genere descendentem, nomine Matildem, corpora ualde elegantem animoque liberalem, hanc suorum consultu missis legatis a patre petiit uxorem. Ex cuius proposito animi Baldoinus satrapa admodum gauisus non modo decreuit petiam dari, uerum etiam cum muneribus immensis eam adusque Ocense castrum adduxit. Vbi dux adueniens militum stipatus cateruis illam sibi despondit iure coniugali et cum maximo tripudio atque honore Rotomagensibus intulit menibus'.

[454] *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. 32-3, '[Baldwin of Flanders] Marchio his fascibus ac titulis longe amplior quam strictim sit explicabile, natam suam nobis acceptissimam dominam in Pontiuo ipse presentauit soceris generoque digne adductam... Introductioni huius sponsae ciuitas Rotmagensis uacabat iocundans'.

kinsmen.[455] As we have seen throughout this examination of the tenth- and eleventh-century Norman sources, this marriage has elements of negotiation, of the transfer of property and of a public wedding ceremony at the border which suggests its legitimacy. Within the context of the previous marriages, there is nothing here to suggest any difficulties around the marriage, or that its status was ever in doubt.

Previous work done on the women of the comital family in Normandy has raised questions about the status of the unions of the count/dukes, and thus about the status of their partners. It also has recognized the broader issues of what made a medieval marriage, as well as raising questions about the status of wives, concubines and *frilla/friedelfrau*. There is no evidence in the work of Dudo of Saint Quentin for an institution which would correspond to *friedelehe*, that is to a legitimate union like a marriage but without the property transactions that accompanied a marriage union. On the contrary, both Dudo and William seem to have a concern to stress the legitimacy of the children born from the unions of women such as Popa, Sprota and Gunnor, which suggests that there were questions or doubts about the legitimacy of these unions, and the children born from them. William of Jumièges in fact invents a type of union, *more Danico*, which seems to be quite similar to the *friedelehe* idea invented by German historians. This invention gave legitimacy to unions which were possibly known to have not been marriages, but which produced heirs. Thus, in the context of Jumièges' work, Popa, Sprota and Gunnor were legitimate wives of count/dukes.

Both men wrote at a time when the count/duke may have faced questions about legitimacy and his right to rule. Their audience and its expectations and concerns seem to have shaped these chronicles. Dudo's work allows for more ambiguity about the status of the relationships of Popa and Sprota. Could this be an indication of a shift in attitudes towards marriage during the fifty years which elapsed between these two works? Is this a product of the different backgrounds of the authors? Did Dudo, a canon who lived in the early eleventh-century court of the count/dukes, have a more fluid conception of marriage than a monk who was living in an age of reform? Is that an indication that marriage was a more fluid institution at the end of the tenth century than it was fifty years later?

There are clearly some common elements which denote legitimate marriage throughout this period: unions which are conducted as part of alliances between the Norman count/dukes and foreign lords are described as accompanied by negotiations,

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[455] *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. 30-31, 'Reges de longinquo suas unice charas filias huic marito voluntarie locarent, ac affines habere quos confines potissimum placuit, multae rationis grauitate id persuadente'.

betrothal agreements, gifts of goods and property, and public ceremonies. Matilda's marriage has these elements, and fits into a pattern established in the unions of Rollo and Gisla, William Longsword and Liutgarde, Richard I and Emma, and Richard II and Judith. However, this does not mean that the women who did not have these elements prior to their unions were not wives. Gunnor was certainly a long-term partner who was present at court and known to the Norman nobility before she became a wife at the end of Richard II's lifetime. The status of Popa and Sprota is more difficult to assess: there is no indication of how they were perceived by contemporaries in Normandy. Sprota seems almost certainly to have been a concubine. Unsurprisingly, Dudo glossed over this, as elsewhere in his chronicle he contrasted the legitimacy of Gunnor's children with the illegitimacy of Richard I's sons by concubines. I would suggest that Popa was a wife, although perhaps not married with a ceremony or property transactions. That the children of Popa and Sprota inherited indicates that the offspring of these types of unions could inherit, and were not inherently illegitimate. That William of Jumièges, writing when the son of another concubine was count/duke, felt the need to legitimate these unions and their offspring, may suggest a shift in attitude toward these relationships, and that their offspring faced more questions and had a more dubious status in the eleventh century than they had a century earlier.

Both William and Dudo felt the need to address the status of certain unions. However, neither of these sources address the longer-term status of each of these female partners. Clearly there were high-status unions, alliance unions and politically significant marriages before that of Matilda. There were also unions of more debatable status. It will thus be interesting to see whether Matilda differs from her predecessors, and how far those differences, if any, mirror the possible differences in unions. How far is the marriage the key? Were women like Matilda, Judith, and Emma more secure than others such as Herleve, Papia, Gunnor and Sprota? Could female partners of the count/dukes exercise the same power and authority regardless of the type of union? For answers to these questions we will look again at the questions raised about the nature of power, family politics, the role of wives and mothers, and the succession. There will also be important questions about the possible development of a female office in Normandy. The next three chapters will begin from the little that Dudo and William of Jumièges have to tell us about power, household, politics and women. They will center on the much fuller evidence of the Norman ducal charters, most significantly from c. 1000AD onwards. The charter evidence will allow us to assess the activity and possible power and authority of the women of the comital/ducal family.

Chapter 5: Matilda's Predecessors in Normandy

Marriage made Matilda a legitimate wife, and questions about her legitimacy were probably dismissed very early. What power and authority did that position open up to her? How far did such power and authority derive from the position of wife, or other roles? The historiography of women and power surveyed in Chapter 1 suggested that the role of wife was important, and that this should include questions about her role in the household and court. That historiography also suggested that the maternal role could be a source of power and authority, and that in general what we would now define as 'private' familial roles should not be sharply distinguished from 'public /political' ones. It is also clear that women might possibly have more official roles, and it will be necessary to ask whether anything like an office of countess developed in eleventh-century Normandy.

Before these questions can be applied to Matilda, the situation in Normandy before her marriage to William must first be considered, as traditions of women's (and others') power may be important. We first need to establish as far as possible the legacy that Matilda inherited. We need also to establish a comparative framework to understand her. The pre-Matilda comital women will thus be the subject of this chapter. The narrative sources which were so important for marriage will have still more to contribute, but the major focus will now shift to charters, following the approach suggested by the work of LoPrete, Johns and Stafford.[456] Focus will be on the descriptions of the women, and thus the perception of them. We will look at the actions which they describe, and the patterns of activity which we can establish. Although the focus will be on women, as suggested in Chapter 1 no picture of women can be complete without comparative consideration of men. The men of the ducal family, other possible office holders, and especially the count/duke himself will thus also be examined and discussed.

I. Narrative Sources

We will begin with Matilda's predecessors as they are described in the narrative and poetic texts produced in the early- and mid- eleventh century. These sources and their treatment of women have been discussed in the previous chapter, but now we will consider how they describe women over and above the information given on the nature of their unions. What is praised? What do these descriptions suggest about roles, sphere of

[456] See above, pp. 26-8.

action, and desirable skills? Are these accounts just stylized or are they an indication of the sort of qualities needed in a count/duke's wife? This will bring us up against questions of stylization, of recurring *topoi*, and of the relationship of narrative and literary works to 'reality'. These are questions and problems, but not reasons to dismiss these sources, whose potential has still not been fully realized.

Dudo stands, in every way, at the beginning of this discussion of women. Dudo does not describe all the comital women in his text. Gisla, Sprota and Gunnor are described extensively, while Popa and Emma are only described briefly, and Liutgarde of Vermandois is only present in a passive role as a marriage object, and identified only as the daughter of count Herbert.[457] There is a subtle distinction, but an important one, between the identification of a woman as a relative of an important man, as here, and a description of her and her lineage. Dudo's description of Gisla as 'sprung royally from the seed of both sides [from both her mother and her father], is a description of her important royal bloodline, rather than simply being an identification of her as the daughter of Charles the Simple.[458] Similarly, Dudo describes Popa's strength as coming from her descent from the prince Berengar.[459] Gunnor's lineage is described twice: once Dudo tells us that she is descended from a famous Northern family, once she is 'descended from the well-known stock of an extremely noble seed'.[460] The lineage of these women is not singled out because these are the maternal lines of the count/dukes; that applies only to Popa and Gunnor. The emphasis on lineage in these cases may come from the rights which passed to the count/dukes with these women. In Dudo's history Rollo's union with Gisla sealed the alliance with Charles the Simple that gave Rollo the right to rule Normandy. Both Popa and Gunnor came from families based in the western half of Normandy; Popa's family associated with Bayeux, and Gunnor's most likely from the Cotentin.[461] It is thus suggestive that Dudo describes the strength of the lineages of these three women, but not the others. Is this a reminder of the strength of their family claims to land, and possibly status, which they brought to the count/dukes? Is it also a sign of the significance of these women in the family history, and the closely connected history of Normandy as seen c. 1000AD? As

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[457] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 40r, 'Heritbertus Vuillelmus rotomagensem... dedit filiam suam illi'.
[458] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fols. 27v-28r, 'Filia... utriusque progeniei semine regaliter exorta'.
[459] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 23r, 'sanguine concretam praeualentis. principis berengarii filiam'.
[460] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 87v, 'ex famosissima nobilium dacorum prosapia exortae. nobilissimo diffamate stirpis eam noscentes, exortam semine'.
[461] van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', pp. 7-8. Rollo united himself with Popa after his campaign in Bayeux, *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 23r.

previously discussed, in these histories the founding father and his partners, and Richard I and his partner, may be especially important.[462]

Dudo also describes the physical beauty of all the comital women excepting Liutgarde. When examined together, his phrasing becomes almost formulaic. Popa is described as 'beautiful in appearance.'[463] Gisla is described as 'fitting in the outstandingness of stature, most elegant, as we have heard, in appearance.'[464] Dudo tells us that Sprota was 'a certain most noble maiden, of extremely fine appearance'.[465] Emma is described as 'a virgin of most elegant appearance and figure'.[466] In contrast, the multiple descriptions of Gunnor are more effusive. Dudo first tells us in a poem that Gunnor was 'a celestial maiden' and 'beautiful'.[467] She is then described as 'a maiden of shining majesty... the most beautiful of all the Northern maidens.'[468] Dudo's final description of Gunnor echoes those of the other women, that she was 'beautiful, with grace and finely formed.'[469] The first point to note about these descriptions is the importance of Gunnor. Dudo wrote from the court of Richard II, and Gunnor may have been one of his sources of information for his work. [470] It should thus be unsurprising to find her so praised, even as that praise reinforces her status and position within Dudo's work, especially in comparison to the other comital women.

The second point is that Dudo's description of physical beauty is usually accompanied by, and fits into, a description which includes qualities such as prudence, eloquence, and administrative skills. Emma is the sole exception; her physical beauty alone is described. For all of the others, Dudo's inclusion of their 'courtly' skills suggests that his description of their physical beauty should be considered within that context. Jaeger has noted that in the courtly literature of this period, there is a 'notion that a courtly education tunes and harmonizes the inner world and that this inner harmony comes forth in graceful elegant manners.'[471] Dudo's use of the terms *decora* and *elegantissima* suggest that he may be working from the Ciceronian model of esteem for physical beauty which shows the

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[462] See above, pp. 71-3.
[463] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 23r, 'popam uirginem spetiae decorem'.
[464] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fols. 27v-28r, 'stature proceritate congrua. forma ut audiuimus elegantissima'.
[465] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 37r, 'cuidam nobilissimae virgini. elegantissime formae'.
[466] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 73v, 'uirgo elegantissimae speciei et formae'.
[467] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 73v, 'Coelestis uirgo... Pulchra'.
[468] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 87v, 'Denique luculentae maiestatis uirgini... omniumque spetiosissimae northmannicarum uirginum'.
[469] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 87v-88r, 'speciae decora. et formosa'.
[470] See above, pp. 77-8.
[471] C.S. Jaeger, *The origins of courtliness, civilizing trends and the formation of courtly ideals (939 – 1210)* (Philadelphia, PA, 1985), p. 148.

inner virtue.[472] Ciceronian ethics were likely taught in the cathedral schools, where Dudo was educated.[473] Jaeger speculated that from this education the courtly ideals of the high middle ages were cultivated by secular clergy and the clergy who acted as administrators at princely courts; Dudo seems to be an example of this.

Dudo's emphasis on certain attributes is typical of the (emerging) notions of courtliness in the eleventh century. In addition to the influence of Cicero, Gillingham has noted the third-century *Distichs of Cato*, which gave advice on practical morality and behavior which would win public esteem.[474] According to this work, the reader should cultivate temperance, prudence and patience. Jaeger discusses the rise of several courtly ideals in the tenth and eleventh century. Members of the court should have discipline, in the sense of self-control, in combination with beautiful and elegant manners.[475] These qualities are among those which Dudo highlights for his chosen women. Gisla is praised for her chastity, her prudent counsel, and for being circumspect in public affairs.[476] Sprota was also a woman who offered prudent counsel, and who was even more circumspect in public affairs.[477] Of Gunnor Dudo said in his poem praising her as a celestial maiden that she was also 'cautious in deliberation, prudent, discreet.'[478] Later he ascribes to her the qualities of being 'the most circumspect concerning the constantly-changing results of public and civil affairs.'[479] Echoing the descriptions of Gisla and Sprota, Dudo's final description of Gunnor describes her as a cautious counselor.[480]

In Dudo, then, three women – Gisla, Sprota and Gunnor – are described in terms of the emerging qualities of the ideal courtier. It is noteworthy that Dudo discusses women in this way, as historians such as Jaeger have focused on the description of courtly men. Clearly in Dudo's work the women were part of the courtly milieu. Of course, two of these three women are distinguished by the fact they are the mothers of the eventual heirs, although Dudo does not explicitly connect those two facts. Is this an indication of the female qualities which he felt made a woman a suitable companion for a count/duke in the

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[472] Jaeger, *The origins of courtliness,* pp. 147-8.
[473] Jaeger, *The origins of courtliness,* pp. 151-2.
[474] J. Gillingham, 'From Civilitas to Civility: Codes of Manners in Medieval and Early Modern England', *TRHS* Series 6, 12 (2002), p. 279.
[475] Jaeger, *The origins of courtliness,* pp. 133-41.
[476] *Dudo of St. Quentin,* fols. 27v – 28r, 'uirgo integerrima; consilio prouida. Forensium rerum negotio cauta'.
[477] *Dudo of St. Quentin,* fol. 37r, 'consilio profusius prouide. forensium rerum negotiis affluentius cautissimae'.
[478] *Dudo of St. Quentin,* fol. 73v, 'Cauta consilio. prouida prudens'.
[479] *Dudo of St. Quentin,* fol. 87v, 'permutantibusque ciuilium forensiumque rerum euentibus cautissime'.
[480] *Dudo of St. Quentin,* fol. 87v, 'consilio cauta et prouida'.

eleventh century? Is Dudo attributing these courtly qualities to the mothers of the heir because it was expected that they would pass on their courtliness to their sons? Or is this a form of flattery that does not correspond to the 'reality' of the ducal/comital women?

Dudo's praise for the courtly qualities of Richard I has been noted by Jaeger, especially in comparison with his contemporaries.[481] His praise is more effusive for Richard I than for any of the women, but some of the same ideas are included. His prudence is mentioned, and his wisdom, along with his strength at arms, and other qualities such as his humility, and his *mansuetudo*. These are of course the qualities of an ideal ruler, and include the battlefield as well as the court. Similar courtly qualities are used when Dudo describes Richard II, Archbishop Robert of Rouen, and Raoul of Ivry. Dudo's dedicatory poem to Richard II emphasizes his modesty, piety, mildness and comeliness.[482] Dudo compares Archbishop Robert to Hugh Capet, saying that like the duke who was later king, Robert was prudent, wise, just, and modest.[483] Of Raoul, the source of Dudo's information about the court, Dudo describes his good counsel, and his excellence of speech which promotes peace, as well as his gentleness.[484]

Jaeger highlights *mansuetudo*, or a gentleness of spirit, as a quality emphasized in the emergence of the courtly ideal; it was related to humility, patience and modesty.[485] Lack of this virtue could cause conflicts that would entangle the family and court in feuds or wars, and would prevent the courtier from acting as a peacemaker.[486] It was complemented by affability or amiability, which gave the courtier the ability to win the love and trust of the ruler, to win allies among his court, and to thus be able to act as an influential counselor, as Dudo describes Raoul of Ivry doing.[487] Dudo ascribes these qualities to Gisla, Sprota and Gunnor as well. He said that Gisla 'made conversation easily, and spoke with affability.'[488] Sprota was most appropriate in her conduct, and was

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[481] Jaeger, *The origins of courtliness,* pp. 198-9.
[482] *Dudo of St. Quentin,* fol. 5r, 'O te prerutilum Ricarde clemens / O te longanimem Ricarde prudens / O te percaelebrem Ricarde decens / O te iuridicum Ricarde mitis / O te promeritum Ricarde dulcis'.
[483] *Dudo of St. Quentin,* fols. 7r – 7v, 'HUGONISque ducis. Postea regis / Cuius corde sagax'. Menteque prudens / Expensas memora. Factaque dicta / Recte quo valeas Equiperari / Digne consimili. Iam bonitate / Tam digno comiti Tamque celebri / Tam iustoque bono. Tamque modesto / Tam sancto pio'.
[484] *Dudo of St. Quentin,* fol. 7r, 'Praepollens grauitate animi cordisque profundi / Ore salem fundis tranquilli pectoris almo / Vt salis unda cybos sic sensus tu quoque condis / Radix consilii fecundi nectaris hurna / Viuax ingenio mitis rutilante loquela / Sol velut hoc mundum refoues sic sirmate cunctos'.
[485] Jaeger, *The origins of courtliness,* p. 36.
[486] Jaeger, *The origins of courtliness,* pp. 37-8.
[487] Jaeger, *The origins of courtliness,* pp. 43-4.
[488] *Dudo of St. Quentin,* fols. 27v – 28r, 'conuersatione facillima. colloquio affabilissima'.

'judiciously eloquent in speech.'[489] He describes Gunnor as 'of devout mind, disciplined heart, discreet speech, [and] gentle comportment.'[490] She was also 'discreetly strong in richly fertile eloquence and profusely endowed with the treasure of a capacious memory and power of recollection and fortified by an abundance of all goods.'[491]

In addition to the courtly qualities that could enable a woman to forge alliances and act as an influential counselor, Dudo also suggests that these women had administrative and discrete skills. When describing Gisla he says that she was *peritissima manuum labore*, most skilled with work of the hands, adding that she was more distinguished than all other maidens.[492] Of Sprota Dudo states that was 'elegantly and with trained skill the most experienced in womanly practice'.[493] Gunnor he describes as diligent and wise in all things.[494] He also says that she was thoroughly informed with a natural capacity in woman's skills.[495] Unfortunately he does not specify the work that they were skilled at, or what types of skills were expected of women. Dudo may have had in mind the skills in needlework that were valued in the eleventh-century, but is that all?[496] Given that this is within the realm of the court, and within the context of a discussion of courtly skills, is Dudo offering praise for women who could oversee the household, and administration if necessary?

Dudo wrote within the Norman court, and emphasizes courtly skills. In contrast, when William of Jumièges updated Dudo's work in the mid-eleventh century, he eliminated much of Dudo's description. The influence of the author and his environment seem to have had an influence on their descriptions of the wives of the count/dukes. As noted above, Jaeger has identified the cathedral school and secular clergy as places where the language of the courtly ideal flourished. In contrast, the rejection of courtliness and protests against courtly behavior fomented in the reformed monastic movement of the tenth and eleventh

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[489] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 37r. 'conuersatione aptius congruentissimae. colloquio prudenter facundissimae'.
[490] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fols. 87v – 88r, 'Mente deuota. corde subacta. alloquio modesta. conuersatione mansueta'.
[491] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 87v, 'facundeque ubertatis eloquio modeste pollenti; capacisque memoriae. et recordationis thesauro profusius locupletate. atque omnium bonorum praemunitae affluentia se conexuit'.
[492] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fols. 27v – 28r, 'manuum labore peritissima. quin etiam uirginibus cunctis praecellentissima'.
[493] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 37r, 'muliebri exercitio comptius et artificialiter peritissimae'.
[494] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 88r, 'in omni re industris. et sagax'.
[495] *Dudo of St. Quentin*, fol. 87v, 'feminei artificii edocte ingenio'.
[496] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 101; see also her discussion of the queen's household, patronage of craftspeople, and role within the royal court, pp. 107-122.

centuries.[497] William of Jumièges, a monk, gives almost no description of courtly behavior, and Jaeger has contrasted his work with that of Dudo to show how different Norman authors treated the court differently. Instead of the qualities of affability, gentleness and moderation, Jumièges praises men such as William II for military might and Christian piety alone.[498]

How then does Jumièges describe the comital/ducal family women? Jumièges does not describe Liutgarde – like Dudo he identifies her as the daughter of Herbert of Vermandois but tells us no more about her.[499] He only describes Gisla and Emma by their lineages, stating that Gisla was the daughter of a king and that Emma was the daughter of Hugh the Great.[500] The three tenth-century wives who are described are Popa, Sprota and Gunnor, the mothers of the count/dukes. Compared with the language of Dudo, William of Jumièges' vocabulary is limited. Of Popa he tells us that she was the daughter of a distinguished man, and that she was well born, for which he uses the word *nobilissima*.[501] Jumièges uses *nobilissima* to describe Sprota as well, telling us nothing else about her, her lineage or her qualities.[502] When describing Gunnor he states that she was beautiful, *speciosissima*, as well as *nobilissima*.[503]

The limited vocabulary used in the descriptions and the brevity of them suggests a formula, rather than original observation. This is unsurprising, as William of Jumièges wrote well after the death of Gunnor, and more than a century after the time of Rollo. It is also in keeping with his general abbreviation of Dudo's work. Jumièges' simplicity of language makes this clear, but should we also see the same formulaic approach in the work of Dudo? Although his language is varied, he describes the same courtly qualities relating to comportment, speech and skill in Gisla, Sprota, and Gunnor. Dudo, of course, also wrote well after the time when Gisla and Sprota would have been alive, so I would suggest that his description is based more on the qualities attributed (or which he wished to attribute) to Gunnor than to any individual description of her predecessors. The image which he presents of Gunnor, and of the ideal wife and mother, is that of a woman who can operate

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[497] Jaeger, *The origins of courtliness*, pp. 176-7.
[498] Jaeger, *The origins of courtliness*, pp. 199-200.
[499] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 80-81.
[500] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 68-9, 'supranominatam tanti regis filiam'. Emma is identified twice as the daughter of Hugh, and then described by her lineage once, when she dies, *GND*, Vol. 1, pp. 128-9, 'Emma eius uxor, filia Magni Hugonis'.
[501] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 58-9, 'nobilissimam puellam nomine Popa, filiam scilicet Berengerii illustris uiri'.
[502] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 78-9, 'nobilissima puella... nomine Sprota'.
[503] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 128-9, 'speciosissimam uirginem nomine Gonnor, ex nobilissima Danorum prosapia ortam'.

in the court and administer a household, acting independently to support her husband if necessary.

Does Dudo's description of the women of the comital/ducal family and of some of their male counterparts, especially Raoul of Ivry, suggest a sophisticated Norman court which was comparable to others in the Frankish world? Or does Dudo just apply the terms of this emerging courtly ideal to the Norman court? Is he perhaps aware of his Frankish audience and catering to their tastes by projecting the *topoi* of the courtier inappropriately? Or are we unwisely making *a priori* assumptions about that court: that it was not a part of the world which was producing these ideas? Dudo's closeness to the Norman court should make us wary of his flattery, but should also lead us to take him seriously when describing the actors in that court. His is a precious early-eleventh-century voice from that milieu, and the information which he gives us about the role of family members, including the comital/ducal women, is especially important in comparison with William of Jumièges. The nature of the Norman court which Dudo addressed, and the role of Gunnor in it, are suggested by other evidence.

In addition to the narrative chronicles, the importance of Gunnor, and her role in the court, appears in the very few poems known to have been produced during this period in Normandy. In the first few decades of the eleventh century four Latin poems were written in Rouen. Two are of special interest for the study of comital/ducal women; the poems *Moriuht* and *Semiramis*. Van Houts' observations about their descriptions of the comital/ducal women are worthy of special note.[504] *Moriuht* tells the tale of the eponymous Irishman who was captured by Vikings along with his wife and child.[505] Separated and sold into slavery, Moriuht searches for his family. Eventually he comes to Rouen, where he is able, with the help of the dowager countess, to recover them, and to buy them out of their slavery.

Moriuht was written by the poet Warner of Rouen, and is dedicated to Archbishop Robert of Rouen and his (unnamed) mother.[506] Gunnor is never named in the poem, but the relationship described between her and Archbishop Robert provides the identification. In the passage devoted to her first encounter with Moriuht, she receives him in the comital/ducal court at Rouen. Warner says that Gunnor was the head of the realm after the death of her husband, and that she was seated on a lofty throne, with the nobles of the

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[504] van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy ', pp. 18-21.
[505] Warner of Rouen, *Moriuht: A Norman Latin Poem of the Early Eleventh Century*, C. McDonough, ed (Toronto, 1995); van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', p. 18.
[506] van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', p. 18, n. 48.

court around her.[507] Van Houts has shown that this account has a certain historical reliability, especially in the description of Gunnor receiving those who appealed to her for aid. Gunnor, e.g., is described as wearing a veil, which was common for aristocratic widows.[508] She agrees to aid Moriuht by buying his wife's freedom, a process which is attested to in contemporary sources.

The image of Gunnor found in the *Moriuht* poem is one of a powerful widow.[509] Her power as described is based on her relationships, including being the widow of a count/duke, and indirectly the mother of the local archbishop, although her role as mother of the current count/duke goes unmentioned. She is also presented as powerful in a court context, as a ruler, enthroned. David Bates has suggested that Richard II's government was a 'palace' style, centered around his court at Rouen, in contrast to the itinerant government of William II in the mid-eleventh century.[510] Could one hypothesize that when Richard II was obliged to travel, to the court of the French king or to defend the borders, the household in Rouen might be the province of his mother and brother? Is this an indication that Gunnor acted as a quasi-regent for Richard II in Rouen? Does it suggest that she stayed in Rouen and oversaw the household and court during Richard II's absences? Is Warner describing, admittedly in hyperbolic style, the role of a woman at court – the role of the count/duke's wife or mother?

Although the poem is dedicated to Archbishop Robert and Gunnor, there is little evidence to suggest the intended audience. McDonough had speculated that it may have been read in the court by Warner, translating from Latin into the vernacular, and that Gunnor may have understood the image of her which is presented.[511] In the original Latin it may have been intended for an audience of Rouen's ecclesiastics, possibly in the cathedral and local monasteries.[512] Musset has shown that Warner and Dudo were both members of a literary circle in Rouen.[513] Given the dedication of the poem to Gunnor, as well as her involvement with Dudo's work, it does not seem improbable that she was a patron of literature in Rouen, and that she was part of Warner's audience.[514] In contrast to Gunnor, Richard II's wife Judith goes unmentioned, within both the poem and the dedication. Could

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[507] van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', p. 19.
[508] van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', p. 20.
[509] Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos*', p. 429.
[510] Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 152.
[511] Warner of Rouen, *Moriuht*, pp. 52-3.
[512] Warner of Rouen, *Moriuht*, pp. 53-4.
[513] L. Musset, 'Le Satiriste Garnier de Rouen et son milieu (début de XI[e] siècle)', *Revue du Moyen Âge Latin*, 10 (1954), pp. 247-8.
[514] Warner of Rouen, *Moriuht*, p. 1.

the poem have been produced before she married Richard? The poem certainly dates from Richard II's reign, the three decades between 996 and 1026. McDonough has suggested a possible date soon after 1003, but there is no solid evidence to support or undermine this.[515] Are we seeing in this work a description of the court at Rouen within the first ten years of Richard II's reign, i.e. before his marriage? Or did Gunnor eclipse Richard's wife? These are questions on which the charters may provide more guidance.

The second of the early eleventh-century Norman poems which may describe the women of the comital/ducal family is the anonymous Latin poem *Semiramis*. *Semiramis* has an ostensibly classical setting; in the poem an augur named Tolumpnus attempts to revive his sister Semiramis, a dead queen/whore who had entered into an adulterous marriage with a horned bull that turned out to be Jupiter.[516] Van Houts, followed here by Stafford, has suggested that this poem is a critical satire of events in early-eleventh-century England and Normandy.[517] Semiramis is Emma, the daughter of Richard II and Gunnor, who married the Danish king Cnut, represented here as Jupiter. The poem satirizes her brother Archbishop Robert's attempts to convince Emma to rethink her marriage through the ineffective augur Tolumpnus. Van Houts has suggested that the satire uses Emma's independence to mock her male relatives and criticize them as weak.[518] Tolumpnus invokes their mother; a queen who is said to be like her daughter.[519] As van Houts argues, the implication is that Emma might listen to her mother Gunnor when she would not listen to her brother the Archbishop. Seen within the context of the writing of Dudo, it certainly seems that a picture of Gunnor as an independent and powerful ruling woman was being recorded in Rouen in the early eleventh-century. How much was this image shaped by Gunnor herself? Was this Gunnor's attempt to further legitimize herself and her sons, considering the questionable status of her union with Richard I? Even as flattery, it is testimony to the significance of the woman so presented.

Compared with Gunnor, there is virtually no narrative source evidence for the role and potential power and authority of her successors Judith, Papia, Herleve and Matilda. William of Jumièges is the only contemporary source for these women, and he does not describe Papia or Herleve. He does describe Judith and Matilda, but as discussed above it is in very brief terms, with no sense of individual description, and nothing which might hint at

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[515] Warner of Rouen, *Moriuht*, pp. 5-6.
[516] van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', p. 20.
[517] E.M.C. van Houts, 'A note on Jezebel and Semiramis', *Journal of Medieval Latin*, 2 (1992), p. 20; Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 12.
[518] van Houts, 'A note on Jezebel and Semiramis', pp. 20-21.
[519] van Houts, 'A note on Jezebel and Semiramis', pp. 22-3.

their role within the court. Of Judith, the wife of Richard II, Jumièges tells us that she was a person of great elegance, and a had character of strong integrity.[520] This description is virtually identical to that of Richard II's sister Hawise, who had married Judith's brother Geoffrey of Brittany only a few years earlier. Hawise is described as being very beautiful and with a character that had integrity and was most pleasing.[521] This description is echoed when Jumièges describes Matilda of Flanders, who, he says, was a person of great beauty and honorable character.[522]

There will be more discussion of Matilda in the next chapter, although there are few sources to add to Jumièges' description of her, and none with the prolixity of Dudo. It is noteworthy that Dudo, often disparaged by historians, is such an important source for the women of the comital/ducal family. His is a precious perspective, as he writes from close to the court, and from a non-monastic background. The brevity of Jumièges is striking in comparison, and with the end of Dudo's court-centered text and the court-centered poems, material on this aspect of the Norman family and court dries up. The charter evidence is thus very important as a major source of information on the eleventh century women such as Judith, Papia and of course Matilda. The charters may provide some answers to the questions about the importance of Gunnor, and as to whether there is a real difference between her and the later women, which the narratives seem to suggest.

There are undeniable problems with using the narrative sources for descriptions: the perspectives of authors and the possible influence of the audience, especially in the case of Gunnor, may affect the image presented. However, even if Gunnor shaped Dudo's presentation of herself and the other mothers, the way in which he presents her as a legitimate wife and mother is important. She is described as a courtly actor, one who could negotiate with nobles, have influence, give good/wise counsel, run a household, be independent and support her husband and son. This is reinforced by the poetry written in Rouen which shows her sitting in rule above the ducal court and the Norman nobles, and acting as a patron, and an intercessor. She clearly is presented as someone who had wealth and the power to act independently in this work. So this is the image presented in the narrative sources. But is this the image given in the charter evidence? And if so, does

[520] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 28-9, 'Iudith... corpore admodum elegantem omnique morum honestate pollentem'.
[521] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 14-15, 'Erat enim hec puella corpore ualde decora, morum honestate gratissima'.
[522] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 128-9, 'Matildem, corpore ualde elegantem animoque liberalem'.

this only apply to Gunnor or to the other women as well? What does female power and authority look like in a different set of sources?

II. Charters

The charters record the activity of individuals, including the women of the comital/ducal family. How do we assess the power of the women? One way is through patterns of appearance: are there chronological patters or developing trends? Do charters give us any indication of these women's networks? What roles or activities are they recorded in? How often do the individual women appear in the comital/ducal charters? Are there any patterns associated with specific roles? These patterns can be compared to those of men, especially male members of the family, and the count/duke himself. Do the women appear more or less often? How exactly do their patterns differ, and given the context of the activities and roles described above, how does that affect our interpretation of their power? These questions about the roles and activity of the women will be considered, as will the way in which they are described. Does the language of the charters suggest that they were widely perceived as powerful? Are there any indications that anything like an office of countess developed in this period?

Five charters survive from the reign of Richard I, forty-eight from the reign of Richard II, two from the short reign of Richard III and twenty-seven from the reign of Robert I. The charters of Richard I are all later copies; the sample size is too small and the provenance too dubious to be statistically acceptable. The twenty-seven charters of Robert I will not be used. The reasons behind this exclusion are based on the activities of the women of the comital/ducal family. No family women appeared in an active role in the charters from Robert's reign. Herleve, as discussed above, never married Robert.[523] Her absence thus raises the first possible conclusion: that only fully-married wives were recognized in charters.[524] That conclusion is difficult to test further, especially given the lack of pre-1000 charters.

When studying all patterns of appearances, the lack of tenth-century charters is problematic. No charters from the time of Rollo and William Longsword survive: there can be no discussion of Gisla, Popa, and Sprota. For Liutgarde, a later charter recorded some of her claims to dower land granted to her within Normandy. Emma only appeared once in the charters of her husband Richard I. She will be discussed, but analysis of patterns is

[523] See above, pp. 69, 81-2.
[524] Herleve also does not appear in any of the charters of her son William.

impossible here. Focus in this chapter will thus be on Gunnor, Judith and Papia, who were all recorded acting in the charters of Richard II.

Women appear less often than men, so when they do appear it is noteworthy. But this 'less' appears in relation to men, and while the comparison between women will be important, comparison with men will be equally so. Men's appearances also raise problems of interpretation, although these cannot be fully considered here. The most relevant men are those where there is an obvious parallel to the women. This includes family men, as well as those with 'official' titles, both the count/duke himself and those men given the title *comes* infrequently, where there may be a parallel to the usage of the title *comitissa*.

General Statistics

Gunnor never appeared in the few charters of her husband Richard I, but she was a prominent actor in the charters of her son Richard II. Gunnor appeared in some capacity in twenty-seven percent of the surviving Norman ducal charters from his reign.[525] Richard II's wives Judith and Papia collectively appeared in twenty-one percent of their husband's charters.[526] They were not the most prominent members of the ducal family, but they were among the most prominent. As the family tree in Figure 5.1 shows, Richard II had a number of sons, brothers and cousins, some of whom appeared in the Norman ducal charters. Two of the male members of the family immediately stand out. Richard II and Judith's son Richard appeared in forty-six percent of these charters: almost half as many again as Gunnor, and over twice as often as Judith/Papia.[527] Even more prominent is Archbishop Robert of Rouen, son of Gunnor and brother of Richard II, who was recorded in some role in seventy-three percent of the Norman ducal charters from this period. The

[525] Gunnor appears in thirteen of the forty-eight charters extant from Richard II's reign.
[526] Papia appears twice and Judith eight times. I have consolidated their appearances to represent Richard II's 'wife' across the whole of his reign. The reason for this is that many of the Norman charters are very difficult to date, and often the charters are dated on the presence of one or another of Richard's wives (as either before or after 1017, the date of Judith's death). I felt it would risk making circular arguments if I attempted to estimate the numbers of the charters in which it would be possible for either Judith or Papia to have appeared, when the dates on which I would be adjusting the numbers were themselves based often on the presence of the women in question. I have settled instead on the compromise of a combined entry.
[527] Richard III appears in twenty-one of the forty-eight charters extant from his father's reign.

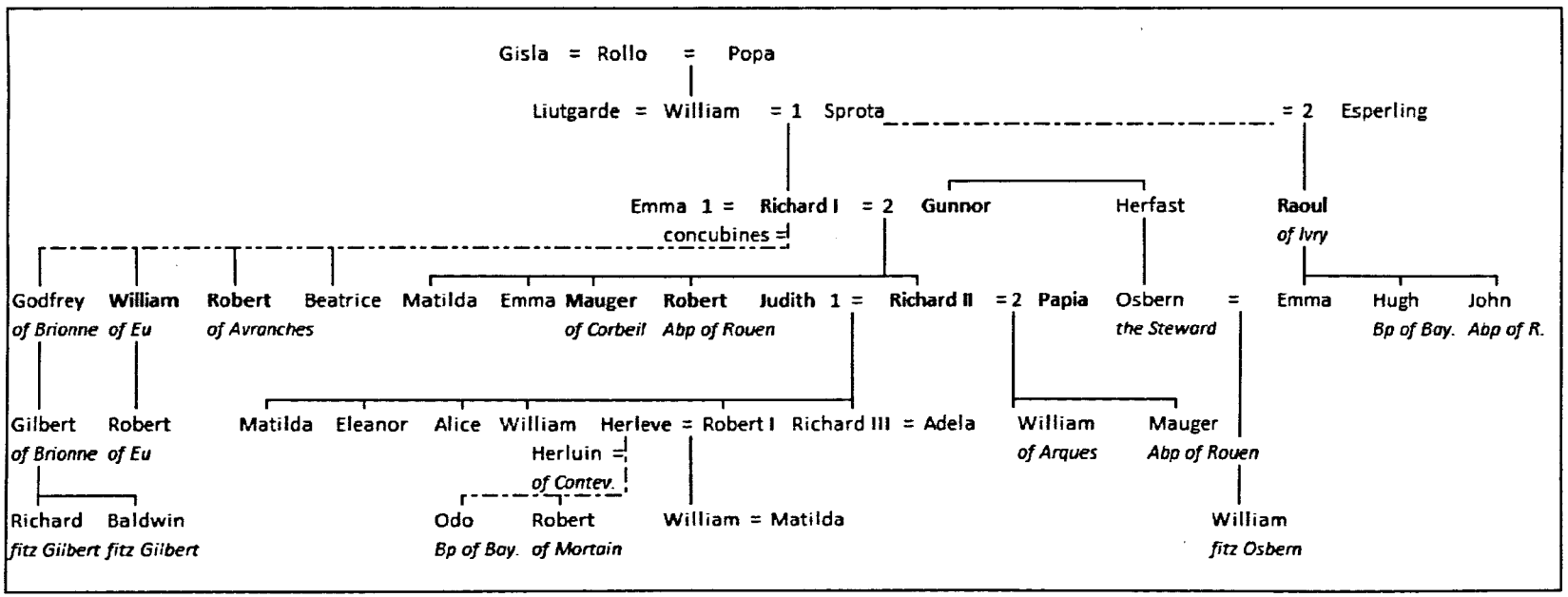

Figure 5.1 - *Family tree of the count/dukes of Normandy*

prominence of Archbishop Robert is unmatched in any reign, by any individual, ecclesiastical or secular, excepting the count/dukes themselves.

The other male members of the comital/ducal family who can be identified consistently and who thus will be considered here include, first, Richard II's uncle Raoul 'of Ivry', who was recorded in fifteen percent of the comital/ducal charters from his nephew's reign, and second, Richard II's brother Mauger 'of Corbeil', who was recorded in seventeen percent of these charters.[528] Mauger, like Archbishop Robert of Rouen and Richard II, was a son of Gunnor, but Richard I also had sons by other, unnamed, women. Two of these, William 'of Eu' and Robert 'of Avranches' are again identifiable in the charters, appearing in thirteen percent and ten percent of these charters, respectively.[529]

Of Richard II's own children, Robert, his second son with Judith, appeared in twenty-seven percent of the comital/ducal charters from his father's reign.[530] Their third son William, a monk at the monastery of Fécamp, was only recorded in six percent.[531] None of Richard and Judith's daughters ever appeared. Neither do his sons from his second marriage to Papia, William 'of Arques' and Mauger, later archbishop of Rouen, although both of them were prominent actors in the charters of Robert I and William II. Likewise, Richard II's daughter Beatrice, whose mother is unknown, did not appear in any of her father's charters, although she was recorded in a charter from the reign of her nephew Robert I, acting in her role as abbess of Montivilliers.[532]

So, comparing the overall patterns of appearance of the count/duke's wife and mother with those of the other members of the comital/ducal family, first Archbishop Robert and Richard II's eldest son stand out, not merely distinct from the women, but from all family members. This may be connected to Robert's official ecclesiastical position, or, more likely given his unusual charter prominence even for an Archbishop of Rouen, to some combination of this with family and household/court roles.[533] The future Richard III, as eldest son and heir, arguably had a prominent position in the family, but perhaps also in the ducal household, facts which seem to have been recognized throughout Normandy. Statistically, however, Richard II's mother and his 'collective' wife appear more important than any of the other family members except Richard and Judith's second son. Gunnor's significance, at least statistically, is confirmed: she is second only to her son Robert and her

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[528] Raoul appears in seven of the forty-eight charters extant. Mauger appears in eight of the forty-eight charters.
[529] William appears in six of the forty-eight charters. Robert appears in five.
[530] Robert I appears in thirteen of the forty-eight charters.
[531] William appears in three of the forty-eight charters.
[532] *RADN*, No. 90.
[533] D. Douglas, 'The Earliest Norman Counts', *EHR*, No. 240 (May, 1946), p. 132.

grandson Richard III. Her prominence, however, may be less widely recognized than that of her son and grandsons. Whether the relative prominence of these women is to be linked to family position, especially *vis à vis* land claims, or to a wider political role, albeit one rooted in family, remains to be seen. Certainly family members appear important in Richard's reign, and that too requires more exploration.

Roles and Context

However, it is not enough merely to count appearances. Statistics can be misleading. Bates has sounded a note of caution about counting appearances as a method of assessing prominence, let alone assessing power and authority.[534] Both documentary loss, documentary survival and forgery can distort the number of appearances credited to an individual.[535] Problems with survival may distort our view here. No charters from the reign of Richard I, nor from that of Richard III survive as originals. Of the forty-eight acts of Richard II, twenty-one, or slightly less than half, survive as original single sheet parchments. For statistical purposes, this is not a random sample, as each charter was selected for preservation.[536] The rest survive in cartularies, or as modern copies of lost originals, with the possibility of alteration by later copyists, including deletion and insertion. Originals will thus be very important as evidence of contemporary perception.

We must also consider the effect of diplomatic. Our evidence is textual, and overwhelmingly produced by the ecclesiastical beneficiaries.[537] The beneficiary could thus have an input on which individuals were included, as could the donor. On the one hand, beneficiary production means that the representation of individuals could be a product of specific ecclesiastical establishments. On the other, the possibility of examining a range of charters from different beneficiaries allows us to test how widespread particular representations were, and whether there was a common perception of when certain titles should be used. Moreover, the statistics refer to all categories of appearance in the charters, and such an overall picture has value. But some types of appearance may tell us more about power and authority than others, and all pose problems of interpretation. The statistics thus require further analysis according to the roles and activities which they record. Thus not only must the charter evidence be analyzed by role, but beneficiaries

[534] See above, p. 37.
[535] Bates, 'The Prosopographical Study of Anglo-Norman Royal Charters', pp. 89-91.
[536] *RADN*, Nos. 9, 12, 14b, 15, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 26, 30, 31, 37, 39, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 52, 55.
[537] *RADN*, p. 41; *RRAN*, p. 10.

must be factored in, along with the form of survival. Appearances must be interpreted in context. The women must be compared with relevant male groups, and also with the count/duke himself, who appeared in all of the charters and is an obvious point of comparison for his mother or wife.

First, the chronological pattern of changes and trends within the overall statistics should be considered. Was there a growth in significance over time; more appearances; more appearances in specific roles? This type of enquiry has yielded important insights for historians of the eleventh-century English royal court, and the royal women.[538] Unfortunately, as noted in Chapter 2, it is difficult to answer these questions for the early eleventh-century Norman women.[539] Only a quarter of the comital/ducal charters from the reign of Richard II were dated, and only two women were recorded in these dated charters.[540] Gunnor and Judith subscribed a charter recording an exchange between the foundations of Bourgueil and Jumièges dated 1012.[541] They also acted as subscribers to a donation made by Richard II to Notre Dame of Chartres dated 1014.[542] Lastly they subscribed the charter of donation from Richard II to Saint Quentin dated September 8, 1015.[543] Chronologically we can only place their activity as subscribers between the years 1012 and 1015, but this is not a significant range given the general absence of dates. None of the other activities are dateable in any way. Were there changes in the descriptions of Richard II's mother and wife? Again, all we can say is that between 1012-1015, Gunnor was described as *mater* in all these appearances, and Judith was described as *uxor*.[544] The lack of dated charters similarly limits the possibility of relating the activity of a wife to the birth of her children, and thus assessment of the importance of the additional role of mother.

However, comparisons between women can still be revealing. That between Gunnor and Judith/Papia will raise questions about the possible effect of the changes of life-cycle. The narrative sources suggested that Gunnor, a widowed countess, was very prominent in the court of her son, and may have overshadowed his wives. The charters allow for further examination of the possible effects of the change from wife to widow, with initial statistics showing an apparently significant increase in her activity as a widow.

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[538] Keynes, *The Diplomas of King Æthelred*, pp. 163-228; Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 193-206.
[539] See above, p. 33.
[540] *RADN*, Nos. 9, 12, 13, 14b, 15, 18, 22, 25, 26, 34, 36.
[541] *RADN*, No. 14b.
[542] *RADN*, No. 15.
[543] *RADN*, No. 18.
[544] *RADN*, No. 14b, 'mater Richardi comitis Gunnor / uxor comitis Richardi Judith'. *RADN*, No. 15, 'S. Gonnoridis matris ejus [Richard II] / S. Judith uxoris ejus [Richard II]'. *RADN*, No. 18, 'S. Matris ejus [Richard II] Gonnors / S. Uxoris ejus [Richard II] Judith'.

Within the charters of Richard II it is not possible to assess patterns over time or changes from woman to woman which might indicate that individual women were able to use their role differently, or whether there was an evolution in the role of wife or mother or countess. However, the comparison with Matilda of Flanders will raise these questions again in Chapter 6, when chronological changes and trends between the early- and mid-eleventh century can be assessed.

Closer analysis of the charter material reveals these women in the roles of donor, consenter and subscriber/witness. Given the importance of intercession in some discussions of female power, it is noteworthy that none of the comital/ducal women from the reign of Richard II were ever recorded acting in that role, though intercession, like countergiving and judgment, will appear in relation to Matilda and will be discussed further in Chapters 6 and 7. Analysis of charter appearances by role, and including information about the use of titles, is presented as follows: Gunnor, Judith and Papia in Figure 5.2; family men in Figure 5.3, Richard and Judith's two eldest sons in Figure 5.4, and Archbishop Robert in Figure 5.5. These tables give the following information (from left to right): the name of the donor (or main confirmer in the case of a pancarte), the name of the beneficiary, and the identification number from Fauroux's edition. The entries are organized alphabetically by beneficiary, so that any effects of beneficiary production will be readily apparent.

Figure 5.2 - *Charter appearances of Gunnor, Judith and Papia, 996-1026*

= no title = *comitissa*

		RADN #	Donor	Subscriber	Consenter	Recipient
Gunnor						
Bourgeuil	Jumièges	14b				
Richard II	ND of Chartres	15				
Robt of Avranches	Mont Saint Michel	16				
Gunnor	Mont Saint Michel	17				
Richard II	Mont Saint Michel	47				
Richard II	Mont Saint Michel	49				
Drogo	St Ouen of Rouen	19				
Richard II	St Ouen of Rouen	43				
Rotselinus	St Ouen of Rouen	21				
Richard II	St Père of Chartres	29				
Richard II	St Père of Chartres	32				
Richard II	St Quentin	18				
Richard II & Abp Robt	St Riquier	20				
Papia						
Richard II	Mont Saint Michel	47				
Richard II	St Wandrille	30				
Judith						
Richard II	Judith	11				
Bourgeuil	Jumièges	14b				
Richard II	ND of Chartres	15				
Drogo	St Ouen of Rouen	19				
Rotselinus	St Ouen of Rouen	21				
Richard II	St Quentin	18				
Richard II & Abp R	St Riquier	20				

Figure 5.3 - *Charter appearances of the comital/ducal family men, 996-1026*

= no title = comes

		RADN #	Donor	Subscriber	Consenter	Intercessor
Raoul of Ivry						
Richard II	Fécamp	9				
Richard II	Fécamp	34				
Richard II	Jumièges	36				
Raoul of Ivry	St Ouen of Rouen	13				
Rotselinus	St Ouen of Rouen	21				
Richard II	St Ouen of Rouen	53				
Richard II	St Quentin	18				
Robert of Avranches						
Richard II	Marmoutier	23				
Robert of Avranches	Mont Saint Michel	16				
Gunnor	Mont Saint Michel	17				
Richard II	Mont Saint Michel	49				
Richard II	St Ouen of Rouen	43				
Mauger of Corbeil						
Richard II	Fécamp	35				
Bourgeuil	Jumièges	14b				
Richard II	ND of Chartres	15				
Gunnor	Mont Saint Michel	17				
Rotselinus	St Ouen of Rouen	21				
Richard II	St Ouen of Rouen	24				
Richard II	St Quentin	18				
Richard II & Abp R	St Riquier	20				
William of Eu						
Richard II	Fécamp	9				
Richard II	Fécamp	35				
Bourgeuil	Jumièges	14b				
Richard II	ND of Chartres	15				
Rotselinus	St Ouen of Rouen	21				
Richard II	St Quentin	18				

Figure 5.4 - *Charter appearances of Richard III and Robert I, 996-1026*

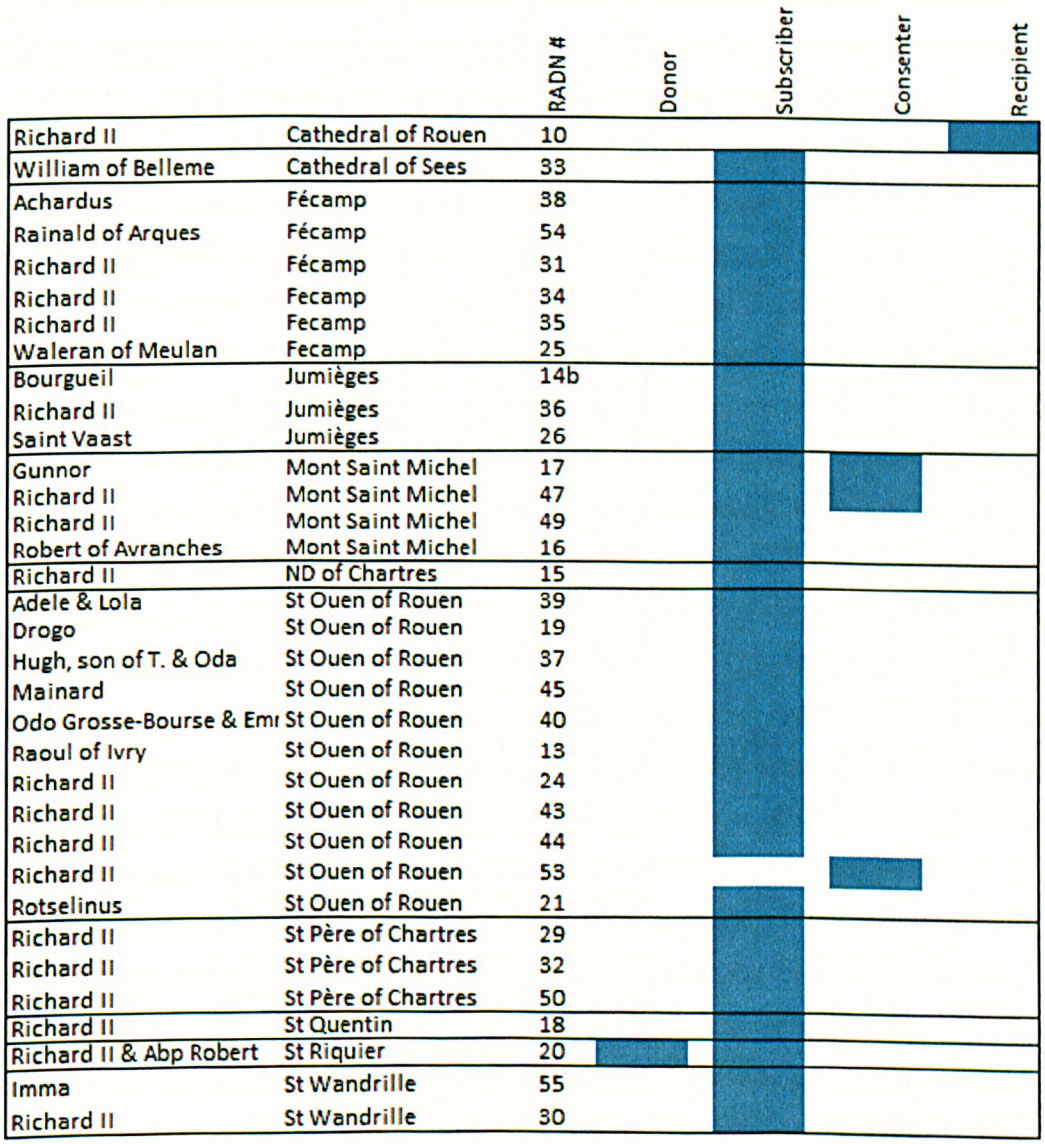
= no title = *comes*

Richard III		RADN #	Donor	Subscriber	Consenter
Richard II	Fécamp	31			
Richard II	Fécamp	34			
Richard II	Fécamp	35			
Bourgeuil	Jumièges	14b			
Saint Vaast	Jumièges	26			
Richard II	Jumièges	36			
Richard II	Marmoutier	23			
Richard II	Mont Saint Michel	47			
Richard II	Mont Saint Michel	49			
Richard II	ND of Chartres	15			
Mainard	St Ouen of Rouen	45			
Richard II	St Ouen of Rouen	41			
Richard II	St Ouen of Rouen	43			
Richard II	St Ouen of Rouen	44			
Richard II	St Ouen of Rouen	53			
Rotselinus	St Ouen of Rouen	21			
Richard II	St Père of Chartres	29			
Richard II	St Père of Chartres	32			
Richard II	St Quentin	18			
Richard II & Abp R	St Riquier	20			
Imma	St Wandrille	55			

Robert I of Normandy					
Richard II	Fécamp	31			
Richard II	Fécamp	34			
Richard II	Fécamp	35			
Saint Vaast	Jumièges	26			
Richard II	Jumièges	36			
Richard II	Mont Saint Michel	47			
Richard II	Mont Saint Michel	49			
Richard II	St Ouen of Rouen	53			
Richard II	St Père of Chartres	29			
Richard II	St Père of Chartres	32			
Richard II & Abp R	St Riquier	20			

Figure 5.5 - *Charter appearances of Archbishop Robert of Rouen, 996-1026*

Archbishop Robert of Rouen = Archbishop



		RADN #	Donor	Subscriber	Consenter	Recipient
Richard II	Cathedral of Rouen	10				
William of Belleme	Cathedral of Sees	33				
Achardus	Fécamp	38				
Rainald of Arques	Fécamp	54				
Richard II	Fécamp	31				
Richard II	Fecamp	34				
Richard II	Fecamp	35				
Waleran of Meulan	Fecamp	25				
Bourgueil	Jumièges	14b				
Richard II	Jumièges	36				
Saint Vaast	Jumièges	26				
Gunnor	Mont Saint Michel	17				
Richard II	Mont Saint Michel	47				
Richard II	Mont Saint Michel	49				
Robert of Avranches	Mont Saint Michel	16				
Richard II	ND of Chartres	15				
Adele & Lola	St Ouen of Rouen	39				
Drogo	St Ouen of Rouen	19				
Hugh, son of T. & Oda	St Ouen of Rouen	37				
Mainard	St Ouen of Rouen	45				
Odo Grosse-Bourse & Emi	St Ouen of Rouen	40				
Raoul of Ivry	St Ouen of Rouen	13				
Richard II	St Ouen of Rouen	24				
Richard II	St Ouen of Rouen	43				
Richard II	St Ouen of Rouen	44				
Richard II	St Ouen of Rouen	53				
Rotselinus	St Ouen of Rouen	21				
Richard II	St Père of Chartres	29				
Richard II	St Père of Chartres	32				
Richard II	St Père of Chartres	50				
Richard II	St Quentin	18				
Richard II & Abp Robert	St Riquier	20				
Imma	St Wandrille	55				
Richard II	St Wandrille	30				

First, the role of donor: almost all Norman comital/ducal charters from the reign of Richard II are donations of land to ecclesiastical foundations.[545] The capacity to give land indicates control over it, and control over land is one avenue to power and authority, for women as for men, as argued by McNamara and Wemple.[546] In their view, the tenth and eleventh centuries saw the apogee of female power, as noble women were able to hold land independently of their husbands.[547] Connected with this is the provision of dower, and thus arguments about the legitimacy of marriage, and the security of wives.[548] All of the surviving records of donation by the comital/ducal women during the reign of Richard II involve dower land; women as donors and dower land should be discussed together.

Figure 5.6 is a map of Normandy showing the dower lands of Judith, Adela, Gunnor, Liutgarde and Matilda. Only the dower charters of Judith and Adela survive.[549] Gunnor and Liutgarde's dower lands are only partially known. Liutgarde held land in a rich, wine producing area of the Evrecin.[550] Gunnor held two *allods* in western Normandy.[551] Judith's dower land was primarily rural estates clustered in three groupings: one in the Lieuvin south of Brionne, one in the Cinglais south of Caen, and one in the north of the Cotentin.[552] In contrast, Adela's dower was not rural: it included the town of Coutances, several ducal residences, trading rights in ports, administrative tithes, and other revenues.[553] Musset has suggested that this shift from rural estates to urban property and fees reflects the changing composition of the ducal lands. He sees the dower lands of the wives of the count/duke as evidence that during and after the reign of Richard II the count/dukes held fewer rural estates in Normandy, and relied on the collection of fees and tithes for their income.[554] Adela's dower was also drawn from the western half of Normandy; by the mid-eleventh century the ducal demesne in the eastern part of Normandy was reduced through alienation.[555] Nor was Adela's dower concentrated in one area: a lack of coherence which Musset suggests would also have weakened the power of the landholder. If Gunnor and

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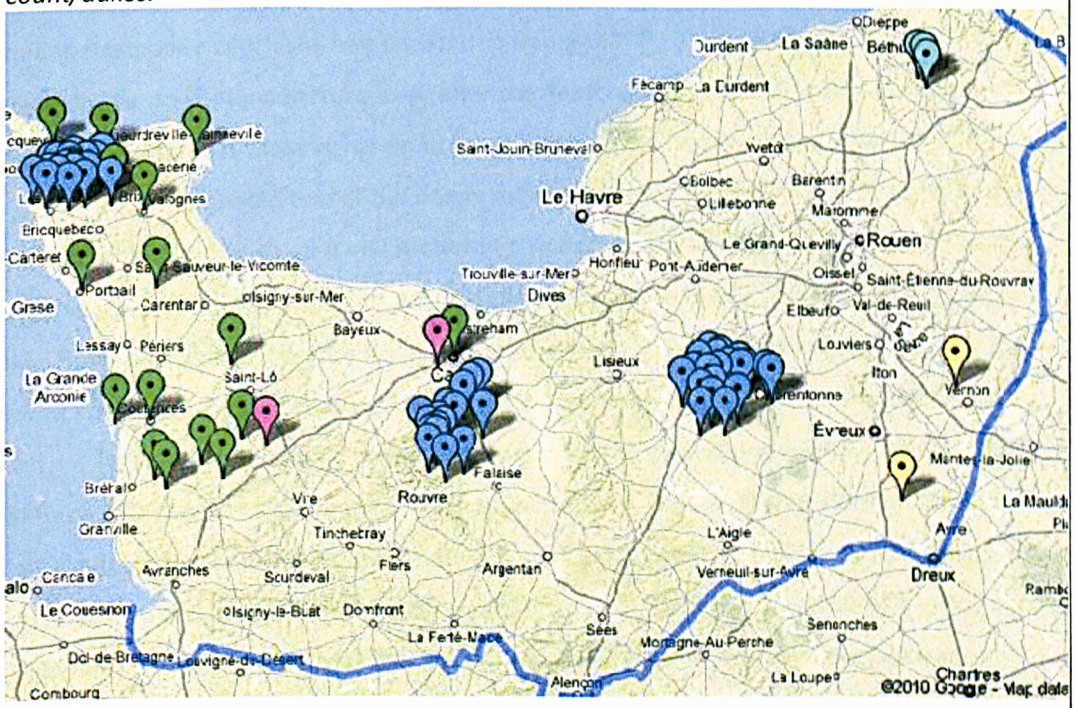
[545] Of the forty-eight charters from the reign of Richard II only one, the dower document of Judith, *RADN*, No. 11, has a lay recipient. Two are donations to episcopal churches: *RADN*, No. 10 to the archbishop and cathedral of Rouen, and *RADN*, No. 22 to the cathedral chapter of Noyon. All of the other recipients are monastic.
[546] McNamara and Wemple, 'The Power of Women Through the Family', p. 92.
[547] McNamara and Wemple, 'The Power of Women Through the Family', pp. 93-4.
[548] See above, pp. 65-6..
[549] *RADN*, No. 11 and 58.
[550] *RADN*, No. 14b; Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos*', p. 438.
[551] *RADN*, No. 17; Bauduin, 'Du bon usage de la *dos*', p. 438-9.
[552] Musset, 'Actes inédits du XI[e] siècle', p. 32.
[553] Musset, 'Actes inédits du XI[e] siècle', p. 33.
[554] Musset, 'Actes inédits du XI[e] siècle', pp. 33-4.
[555] Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 153.

Liutgarde's dower lands were more geographically compact, then this would have given them additional power in those areas, as it gave to Judith.

Figure 5.6: *The Norman dower lands of the tenth- and eleventh-century wives of the count/dukes.*



Key:

Blue = Judith (known from her dower charter)

Caorches, Fresne, Grandcamp, La Theil, Chambrais, Ferrieres, Les Loges, Grandchain, Menneval, St Leger, Valailles, Courbépine, Le Fay, Carentonne, Camfleur, Fontaine, Beaumont le Roger, Beaumontel (Lieuvin); *Cingal, Fresney, Bretteville, St Germain Langtot, Robertmesnil, Meslay, Pierrefitte, Gaumesnil, Plainville, St Omer, Esson, Thury, Donnay, Villers, Combray, Placy* (Cinglais); *Treauville, Rouville, Flamanville, Couville, Benoitville, Grosville,Psalmonville, Bricqueboscq, Sotteville, St Christophe, Breuville, Rauville, Le Mesnil, Sottevast, St Martin, Virandeville, Quesnay, Helleville, Brix, Tollevast, Quetteville* (Cotentin).

Green = Adela (known from her dower charter)

Coutances, Cherbourg, Brix, Ver, Cerences, Agon, Valognes, abbey of Port-Bail and the port, pagus *of Saire and the port,* pagus *of La Hague with its forests and port, Bauptois, Esglandes, Percy, Moyon, Hambye, Caen.*

Pink = Gunnor (incomplete, known from a donation to Mont Saint Michel)

Domjean, Bretteville sur Odon.

Yellow = Liutgarde (incomplete, known from an exchange between Bourgueil and Jumièges)

Longueville, Coudres.

Turquoise = Matilda (incomplete, known from a donation to Saint Amand of Rouen)

Maintru, Bures, St Osmoy.

Three donations of dower land by the comital/ducal women are known. Liutgarde's dower land is known from an original, dated charter detailing an exchange of land between the monasteries of Jumièges and Bourgueil, a monastery in Anjou. Bourgueil was founded in 990 by Emma of Blois, daughter of Liutgarde from her second marriage to Theobald of Blois. The charter in question records Emma's share of her mother's dower land in Normandy which she had donated to Bourgueil.[556] Thus, Liutgarde retained her rights to her dower land in Normandy after the death of her husband William Longsword, and was able to pass those rights on to her daughter from her second marriage.

Gunnor donated two of her dower estates to Mont Saint Michel in 1015, with the consent of her sons Richard II and Archbishop Robert of Rouen.[557] Was the consent of her sons necessary to secure the transaction against any future family claims to her dower land? She was able to alienate her dower land, using it to ensure prayers for her soul at Mont Saint Michel, and seemingly creating a link with the abbey through this patronage.

In the Lieuvin Judith's dower estates were clustered around Bernay; she used half of her estates there to found the monastery of Bernay.[558] No charter record of Judith's initial donation survives, but her activity is known from a charter of Richard II, in which he gives Bernay and its estates to the abbey of Fécamp.[559] Richard II's charter was written c. 1025, at the end of his reign, and this may have been a strategy to regain control over Judith's dower after her death.[560] By placing Bernay under the control of Fécamp, Richard II was ensuring that his wife's foundation would be under the guidance of a monastery which was founded by his father, and had close connections with the comital/ducal family. Richard II specifically entrusted Bernay to abbot William 'of Volpiano', the reforming abbot of Fécamp who had been brought to Normandy by Richard himself.[561] This charter illustrates the fact that during her own lifetime Judith was able to alienate her dower, but it seems that after her death moves were made to ensure that it was not completely removed from comital/ducal control.

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[556] Musset, 'Actes inédits du XI[e] siècle', p. 30.
[557] *RADN*, No. 17, 'Richardi comitis archiepiscopique Rotberi... quorum voluntate, consensu donationeque id ago'. The presence of Bishop Hugh of Bayeux, who became bishop in 1015, and Abbot Ospac of Jumièges, who died in that year, is the only evidence for the date of the charter.
[558] *RADN*, No. 11 lists twenty-nine estates that were dependencies of Bernay, of which sixteen were associated with the foundation in 1025.
[559] *RADN*, No. 35, states that, 'Judith... ejus quod illi dotali lege concesseram fundi ac familie... fundamenta posuit in loco qui Berniacus priscorum dictus'.
[560] *RADN*, No. 35. Judith died in 1017. Fauroux has suggested a date of 1025, based on the connection between this charter, and a dated 1025 pancarte in which Richard II confirmed many grants made to Fécamp, *RADN*, p. 132, n. 5.
[561] Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 66; *RADN*, No. 35, 'commitens venerabili Vuillelmo abbati'.

The women of the comital/ducal family had claims to their dower land once it was granted to them. Liutgarde was able to keep her claim to her land after remarriage, and to pass it on to her daughter. Control of this land enabled them to found monastic houses, and create patronage links with existing foundations. No evidence of disputed donation has survived to suggest that the power of these women was curtailed or limited, although Gunnor's donation with the consent of her sons may have been designed to ensure its security. Judith's donation was not negated, but it seems that her husband worked to ensure that after her death the lands which she had used to found Bernay were brought back under the control of a ducal foundation, to ensure that it benefited a foundation with close links to the ducal family. So, it is clear that the wives had a certain amount of control over their dower land, although questions remain about family claims and the need for family consent and confirmation which may have circumscribed female power to a degree.

Identifying donors is fairly straightforward, as is defining their activity. Identifying consent and subscription are more problematic.[562] Presence as a consenter may indicate that a particular individual had some claim to the land being granted, especially in the case of family land. The presence of women consenting to donations made by other family members will be important; but equally, if not more so, their consent or appearance where family connection to the donor seems absent. These latter cases raise particular questions about women's power and its relation to family. Are they there because of their own power? Because of their association with the powerful, including a husband or son? Because of their position in the family, household or court? 'Consent' can include such diverse activities as consenting, confirming, agreeing, being recorded as present when a grant is made, or aiding/supporting a grant. So context will matter, as will specific details of individual appearances.

Gunnor and Emma are the only two comital/ducal women recorded acting in a consenting role. Gunnor's consent was recorded between 1015 and 1026. In this document a certain Enna asked Richard II to make a donation to Saint Ouen of Rouen after the death of her husband. When Enna came into Richard's presence, the charter records the presence of his mother Gunnor, who helped and encouraged Enna's petition.[563] Gunnor's role here seems to be that of an influential counselor in the comital/ducal court, who supports those requests which she believes her son should agree to. This description

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[562] See above, pp. 35-6.

[563] *RADN*, No. 43, 'domini mei Ricardi illustrissimi comitis presentiam adii, genitricis ejus videlicet Gonnoridis adjuta presidiis, quem suppliciter diu deprecans ut desiderii mei votum perageret'.

of her activity suggests parallels between the representation of Gunnor in the charters and in the narrative sources, especially with the courtly language of Dudo of Saint Quentin.

Emma's consent was recorded in a charter of her husband Richard I.[564] In this charter, Richard confirmed the donations which his father and grandfather made to Saint Denis, in the presence of his wife Emma and his *fideles* in Rouen.[565] The grant also records the consent of Emma's brother Hugh Capet, saying that he gave his agreement along with Richard's *fideles*.[566] Emma may be present because of her family connection to the Capetian royals and the royal house of Saint Denis. Beneficiary production seems important here; it is probably no coincidence that it is a Saint Denis scribe who gives her this recognition. Her connection with the gathering of the *fideles* at Rouen may also suggest that she, as Richard's wife, was a public presence in the comital/ducal court there. This role for the wife is similar to the one which Gunnor plays as a widow.

Acting as a consenter set Gunnor and Emma apart from the women and most of the men of the comital/ducal family. Only Archbishop Robert of Rouen, Richard III and Robert I were recording acting as consenters. The two sons of Richard II consented together to three charters. All three are confirmation charters issued for foundations close to the ducal court at Rouen, and with close ties to the ducal house: Fécamp, Jumièges and Saint Ouen of Rouen.[567] The sons were the only family members who consent, which suggests that the foundations in question were concerned with the consent of the sons of Richard II specifically. This may be a result of the content of these pancartes, in which Richard II specifically confirmed the donations of his predecessors as count/duke: Richard I, William Longsword and Rollo. In this context, the additional consent of his sons as the next males in the comital/ducal line seems logical. Archbishop Robert of Rouen also consented to the charter recording family donations to Saint Ouen of Rouen. Although he was the most prominent actor in the charters of his brother Richard II, this is one of only three recorded acts of consent. The other two are records of his agreement to the donation of land by his mother Gunnor: one in her charter of donation, and copied again into a pancarte confirming it. These records of consent portray the comital/ducal family men differently from Gunnor and Emma: their agreement was recorded, but not their presence

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[564] *RADN*, No. 3.
[565] *RADN*, No. 3, 'Ante presentiam nostram, conjugis nostre Emme, ceterorumque fidelium nostrorum, in prefata Rotomis civitate'.
[566] *RADN*, No. 3, 'Cum assensu senioris mei Hugonis Francorum principis ceterorumque virorum meorum fidelium'.
[567] *RADN*, Nos. 34, 35, 53. The sons act as consenters but not subscribers to the charter for St Ouen of Rouen, but it should be noted that the pancarte in question was never signed, and it seems likely that they would have been recorded in that role if it had been.

in court, or, as with Gunnor, their influence over the decisions of the count/duke. However, it is noteworthy that in this period the members of the comital/ducal family – male and female – were rarely presented as consenters, and only to grants of family land.

Consent often seems to overlap with the role of subscription. The questions here involve not only the nature of the activity involved, but the interpretation of its significance for the assessment of power and authority. Historians have linked appearance, description, title and place in the subscription list with perception of power and of the capacity to guarantee and defend the act.[568] The presence of women in these lists may then suggest that they had influence at court, and that they were prominent in the comital/ducal court and household, much as the act of consent did for Gunnor. This power may also have extended outside of the household, if they were seen as potential guarantors who could ensure the security of a recorded grant. The presence of women in the charters of donation where non-family land is donated would seem to be especially critical here. Finally, subscription has been described as a 'visible public activity'.[569] There is evidence that subscribing was a public act which took place before witnesses, and that those who subscribed (or were recorded as subscribers) were in fact physically present at the time of subscribing.[570] The presence of women in this context would suggest that they were involved in the court activities, and that their power (or their association with the count/duke) was displayed and reinforced in public on such occasions.

Subscription was the only activity that either of Richard II's wives were recorded doing in the surviving charters.[571] Judith subscribed six times, and Papia twice. Gunnor also acted mostly as a subscriber; she subscribed eleven times. Subscription was also important when looking at the men of the comital/ducal family. Just as with the women, there is clearly some individual variety, but some general trends can be noted. Richard II's brother Mauger of Corbeil and half-brother William of Eu only ever appeared as subscribers. Mauger subscribed eight charters, and William six; these numbers are similar to those for Gunnor and Judith. Richard II's sons also mostly appeared as subscribers. Robert I was very similar to other members of the family: he subscribed ten charters. Richard III, however, subscribed twenty charters. Could this be a reflection of his status as the eldest son, heir and future count/duke?

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[568] See above, pp. 36-40.
[569] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, p. 81.
[570] Some of the charters which survive as originals specifically refer to subscribers 'seeing' or 'hearing' the act taking place. David Bates sees the *signa* as showing at the least who was expected to be physically present at the ducal court, Bates, 'The prosopographical study of Anglo-Norman royal charters', p. 95.
[571] Although we know that Judith made donations, the documents have not survived.

The context of these acts of subscription are important. The members of the comital/ducal family mostly subscribed charters where the donor was a member of the family, usually the count/duke. Archbishop Robert of Rouen was an exception to this: his pattern of subscription suggests a connection with the foundations close to Rouen: especially Saint Ouen of Rouen, Fécamp and Jumièges.[572] Is this pattern the result of his position as Archbishop of Rouen? He is clearly distinguished from the other members of the family. Judith, Mauger of Corbeil and William of Eu were most often recorded as subscribers when they are part of a consistent group of Richard II's extended family. Gunnor, Richard III and Robert I were recorded more often, and more often independently of a family group, but still as subscribers to donations of family land by the count/duke. There are five charters which show a coherent group of family members, seen in Figure 5.6, and they deserve our attention.

The common elements of these charters raise some important questions. Three of the four can be dated to within three years, 1012-15. Three of them record the place where the signing took place: Rouen, the center of the ducal household and court in this period. Are these charters recording the physical gathering of the count/duke and his closest relatives in Rouen? If so, does this suggest that the women had a central role in the public display of comital/ducal power in this period? Perhaps especially at the home of the ducal household, in Rouen? The first four were family donations involving foundations outside of Normandy. The first charter records the exchange between Bourgueil and Jumièges in 1012 which concerned Liutgarde's dower.[573] The second is Richard II's donation to Notre Dame of Chartres.[574] Richard donates in reparation for the damages caused in Chartres, most likely the result of his conflict with Odo II of Blois over claims to the dowry of Matilda, Richard II and Judith's daughter and Odo's late wife.[575] Matilda may have been buried at Notre Dame of Chartres, suggesting an additional family connection to the church.[576] This important charter survives in its original form. At the bottom of the parchment, in the center of a large blank space, there is a monogram of Richard II's initials and his name.[577] Next to this, on either side are the (non-autograph) *signa* of Gunnor, Judith, and Archbishop Robert of Rouen. Below the monogram are three columns of *signa*. The center column, directly below the monogram, has the names of Richard III, Mauger of

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[572] He subscribes six of seven surviving charters from Fécamp and eleven of thirteen from St Ouen of Rouen.
[573] *RADN*, No. 14b.
[574] *RADN*, No. 15.
[575] *RADN*, p. 93, n. 1.
[576] van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', p. 16.
[577] BL, Add. Charters 75473.

Corbeil, William of Eu and Berengar *cubicularius*. This charter clearly shows the family group together, with the addition of the chamberlain, a household official.

DATE	PLACE	DONOR	RECIPIENT	SUBSCRIBERS
1012	-	Bourgueil	Jumièges[578]	Richard II, Richard III, Gunnor, Judith, Abp Robert, William, Mauger, and others
Sept 21 1014	Rouen	Richard II	ND of Chartres	Richard II, Gunnor, Judith, Richard III, Mauger, William, and others
Sept 8 1015	Rouen	Richard II	St Quentin	Richard II, Gunnor, Judith, Richard III, William, Abp Robert, Mauger, Raoul, and others
-	Rouen	Richard II & Abp Robert	St Riquier	Richard II, Abp Robert, Gunnor, Judith, Richard III, Robert I, William son of Richard II, Mauger
-	-	Rotselinus	St Ouen	Richard II, Abp Robert, Bp Hugh, Bp Hugh, Gunnor, Judith, Richard III, Mauger, William, Robert, and others

Figure 5.7 – *Charters recording a consistent family group of subscribers 996-1026*

The third charter is that written by Dudo of Saint Quentin for Saint Quentin, which records the donations made by Richard II. The family group includes Raoul of Ivry.[579] Raoul was also recorded for his intercession, requesting that his nephew donate the estates of Dudo to Dudo's monastery after his death. It should be noted that Raoul, Mauger and William were described with a comital title, while Gunnor, Judith and Richard III were given their family descriptions. The representation of the comital/ducal women and men will be considered further below, but it is important to remember that in every other charter described here, when they are recorded as subscribers in this family grouping, both men and women were described by their relationship to the count/duke. The fourth charter records the donation made by Richard II and his brother Archbishop Robert of Rouen to the monastery of Saint Riquier, near Abbeville in Ponthieu.[580]

However, the fifth charter, recording a donation by a certain Rotselinus to Saint Ouen of Rouen does not record the donation of comital/ducal family land, nor does it involve a foundation outside of Normandy. Was Saint Ouen, a foundation close to the ducal household in Rouen, influenced by the practices of that household? Is this a record of the perception of ducal/familial power in Rouen as the members of the family wished to portray themselves? The dating of the charters suggests that there was a prominent group of family members, specifically Richard II's mother, wife, eldest son and three of his brothers, who were present in Rouen between 1012-1015 and were a central part of the

[578] Exchange between these two foundations.
[579] *RADN*, No. 18.
[580] *RADN*, No. 20.

family government of the period, associated with the count/duke in subscribing the grants that he subscribed. Was this family group dispersed after the death of Judith? Papia is never a part of such a group; could this be an indication of a limited period when the family were central to Richard II's court? Did the family become less important later in Richard II's reign?

In addition to subscribing the donation made by Rotselinus, Gunnor and Judith were recorded as subscribers to one other Saint Ouen of Rouen charter.[581] It records the donation of a certain Drogo. In this charter they were not part of a group of extended family around Richard II. In this charter both women were described not by their family connection to Richard, but were given the title *comitissa*. Were they acting in some capacity outside or beyond their family roles when recorded in this charter? Subscription is the only activity in which women were given a comital title, but as we have seen, the comital title was not used consistently for the men or the women of the comital/ducal family.[582] By contrast, when donating land, or when specifically mentioned as giving consent to donations, the family relationships of these women were emphasized, possibly because of the need to recognize a family claim on the land in question. Does the use of the title *comitissa* indicate a non-familial, perhaps even more 'official' power? In what way is *comitissa* different from 'wife' or 'mother'? Are there any patterns of usage in the Norman ducal charters which suggest that *comitissa* and the related male title of *comes* were signs of status or signs of office?

III. *Comes* and *comitissa*

There has been much debate about the use of the title *comes* and what that tells us about the power of the 'dukes of Normandy'. These men were called *comes* more often than *dux* in the charters. I refer to them by the joint title of count/duke to emphasize that fact, and also to differentiate them from other members of the ducal family who were titled *comes* in the eleventh century. As the problem of nomenclature indicates, the title was not confined to the ruler of Normandy. The debate among historians has especially

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[581] *RADN*, No. 19.

[582] The one exception to this is the dower donation made to Judith, where the title is used in the body of the document when describing her as the recipient of her dower land, *RADN*, No. 11. Judith is called *comitissae Normanniae* in this charter, and the attachment of a land description is never done for the women in the charters which predate 1066 except for this occasion, and one other which is also a very late copy and highly suspicious. The only other surviving dower document is for Adela, and does not use a title or a land description, *RADN*, No. 58. This suggests to me that the description of Judith was added in by a later copyist to clarify who she was.

concerned the use of the title *comes* in reference to questions of continuity from the Carolingian *comes* of the tenth century.[583] Does it indicate continuity with the powers of originally royal officials? Or did the title shift in meaning, indicating new developments in power or status, even quasi-regal developments?

Much less thought has been given to how *comitissa* is used and its significance. Le Jan has linked the emergence of the title to the shifting realities behind the title of *comes*, suggesting that in the ninth and tenth centuries the use of *comitissa* was related to shifts in the power of the counts, and that as counts took on a quasi-regal authority, the use of *comitissa* for their wives was derivative from the way in which *regina* was used for queens.[584] For historians of twelfth-century women, the role indicated by the title *comitissa* is clear: automatically obtained when a woman married a count, the title continued to be used if a woman ruled after the death of her husband.[585] This is also true of the title *regina*, however, the power and authority of queens and countesses was different. LoPrete notes both the inauguration of queens, and their presence within the distinct sphere of the royal court as factors which separated them from powerful wives lower down the social ladder.[586] For LoPrete and Johns, the interesting question is what effect the different stages of the female life-cycle had on the power of the countesses, not to what extent the use of the title might show shifts of perceptions of female power, or might hint at the growth of an office.[587] To them, the terms 'countess' and 'wife of the count' were synonymous. However, the comparison of countesses with queens raises questions about the possibility of a female comital office, along with the problems of defining or recognizing it.[588] Since power if not authority exist to a large extent in the eyes of others, and since office is defined by such perception, title usage is one way to examine this problem.

Gunnor, Judith and Papia were each described by the title *comitissa* at least once, but the usage was infrequent, and they were more often described by their family relationship to Richard II: *mater* or some variant of *uxor*. Only three foundations ever give them the title *comitissa*: Saint Ouen of Rouen, Saint Wandrille and Saint Père of Chartres. Could the usage of the title be a direct result of the diplomatic practices of these foundations? Even if this were the case, were these diplomatic practices themselves

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[583] See above, pp. 12-13.
[584] Le Jan, *Femmes, pouvoir et société*, pp. 26-7.
[585] Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, pp. 53–56.
[586] LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, pp. 2-3.
[587] LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, pp. 18-21; Johns, *Noblewomen, aristocracy and power*, p. 2.
[588] See above, pp. 11-12.

affected by political realities which might give us insight into the significance of the use of the title? Saint Ouen of Rouen was of course close to the ducal court which was centered in Rouen during this period, and it might thus be argued that its usages could reflect practice or developments at that court.[589] Saint Ouen does not seem to have had a diplomatic preference for one description over another. As we have seen, the title *comitissa* was only used once by Saint Ouen of Rouen. It is noteworthy that this charter shows that there could be more than one *comitissa* at the same time – perhaps differentiating this use of the title from the royal title? In this charter Gunnor and Judith were recorded outside of the family group discussed above, which may suggest that even here there were family descriptions which were just as important as the title *comitissa*. Was this a recognition of the power of these women even when not closely linked to such a group?

Saint Père of Chartres is especially interesting in this respect because it was outside Normandy and close to Capetian centers of power. Gunnor was described as *comitissa* in both the charters which she subscribed; both recorded donations made by her son Richard II, and she was the only familial woman who subscribed. Is the use of the title *comitissa* by such a beneficiary telling, especially since it has been suggested that the influence of perceptions of queenly status or office on perceptions of the wives and mother of the count/dukes of Normandy was significant?[590] Was the use of the title reflective of her more independent power, or her role outside of the family, as was suggested for Saint Ouen of Rouen? Although here she was not part of a group with Judith, William of Eu and Mauger, she was one of several family subscribers grouped together, including Richard II's sons and Archbishop Robert of Rouen. When Gunnor and Judith subscribed a charter for the cathedral of Notre Dame of Chartres they were not described as countesses, but as mother and wife of Richard II. So in Chartres there were two different representations of Gunnor: at Notre Dame as a mother and at Saint Père as *comitissa*. Proximity to Capetian power is thus not a simple answer here.

Several elements must be considered. One is the possible effect of the family group discussed above. Another is the family connection between Gunnor and Saint Père which may have influenced how she was recorded. Van Houts has suggested a double family connection between Gunnor and Saint Père, with her brother Herfast retiring to become a monk there and possibly donating family land to the monastery, and the

[589] Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 152.
[590] *RADN*, Nos. 29 and 32.

probable burial of Gunnor and Richard I's son 'Robertus Danus' at the monastery.[591] It is striking that it is Saint Père, the house with which Gunnor had a specific family connection, and which might thus wish to stress the status of Gunnor, where she was described with the comital title. In contrast, when the Norman comital women were described by houses with which they had such family connections within Normandy, which were more remote from Capetian royal influences, we are less likely to see the title *comitissa* used to indicate status. At Saint Père, although diplomatic tradition looks important, and family connection had influence, the parallel between queens and countesses may have affected the way that the status of the comital women was expressed.

A natal family connection may also have influenced the description of Papia as *comitissa* in the one Saint Wandrille charter from this period where the title is used. The relationship, however, is complicated. Papia was the only ducal family woman in this period to subscribe a charter at Saint Wandrille; she did so only once when her husband donated, and it was there that the title was used.[592] However, she was also described in two charters which recorded the donations made by her brothers when they entered the monastery and where the title *comitissa* was not used; instead it was her relationship to her brothers and her marriage to Richard II which is recorded.[593] It is worth noting the use of the title when Papia was subscribing, an active and possibly very public role. When she was not active, but recorded in the context of actions by members of her natal family, then the familial link which she created between that family and the ducal house was emphasized.

Perhaps more surprising is the fact that at Mont Saint Michel, a foundation with a known connection to Gunnor, Gunnor was never described as *comitissa* in any of the four charters in which she appears, all of which are known from the twelfth century cartulary.[594] When she donated her own land in 1015 she was not recorded as *comitissa* or as mother of the duke, but simply by her name.[595] Cartulary copying raises doubts here. Was her title omitted? But, why would Mont Saint Michel consistently do this in the twelfth century,

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[591] van Houts, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy', pp. 15-17.

[592] *RADN*, No. 30.

[593] *RADN*, No. 46, 'Osbernus et Anfredus fratres, tempore Ricardi secundi comitis, qui eorum sororem Papiam in conjugio habebat'.

[594] *RADN*, Nos. 16, 17, 47 and 49.

[595] *RADN*, No. 17. There is a connection between Gunnor and Mont Saint Michel, one which was remembered in the twelfth century: in addition to her donation to the monastery, which was recorded into the twelfth-century cartulary, there is an almost full page pen and ink drawing of Gunnor giving her charter to the monks on the folio facing her charter, one of only three illustrations in the cartulary, *Cartulaire du Mont-Saint-Michel: fac-similé du manuscrit 210 de la Bibliothèque municipale d'Avranches* (Mont Saint Michel, 2005), fol. 23v.

especially given Gunnor's prominence in the cartulary? As at Saint Ouen of Rouen, it appears different relationships were stressed at different times and in different contexts. It is noteworthy that a higher status does not seem to have been accorded to *comitissa* as opposed to 'wife' or 'mother' at Saint Wandrille or Mont Saint Michel, where special stress on Papia and Gunnor's status might be expected.

This early pattern seems to suggest that the title *comitissa* indicated status, but was not necessarily preferable as such an indicator to the familial descriptions of 'wife' and 'mother'. Nor, as we will see, was it an office like that of the count/duke which seems to have compelled a consistent title usage. *Comitissa* was used relatively infrequently, and interestingly, given Le Jan's argument, in the Norman charters there was no strong tradition of the use of *comitissa* bridging the period from the tenth to the eleventh centuries. There are some indications of diplomatic patterns, perhaps a connection with the houses physically close to the court at Rouen, or those so placed geographically as likely to be influenced by perceptions of queenly power. It should also be noted that the role in which women were described as *comitissa* is a public one, when the wives and mothers would have been present alongside the count/duke and other members of the ducal family. This role emphasized their status as members of the family, but also as participants in the most public aspect of comital/ducal family power in Normandy.

Any discussion of this title, however, cannot simply concentrate on women. *Comitissa* and *comes* are clearly related. Comparison of the uses of the two titles, and the wider gender comparison with other male *comites* may be illuminating. The first and most obvious comparison is with Richard II, the husband or son of all three women. He was described as *comes* in almost half of the charters in which he appeared.[596] In contrast to the women he lacked a title in only one charter, the aforementioned problematic eighteenth-century copy of Judith's dower donation.[597] Richard II as count/duke was set apart from his contemporaries not only by this consistency of title usage, but also by the fact that in more than half of the charters where he is recorded, quasi-regal descriptions were added to his title. The most common was the addition of a gentile designation, *comes*

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[596] Richard II is described by the title *comes* thirty-nine times, and it is clearly the most prevalent, as *dux* is used seventeen times, *marchio* seven, *dux et princeps* four, *princeps* once, *comes et dux* once and *princeps et marchio* once. Werner has proposed a theory of promotion, that there was a progression from the use of *comes* to *marchio* to *dux* as the count/dukes (and their overlords the Robertines) gained in power throughout the late tenth and early eleventh century, K.F. Werner, 'Quelques observations au sujet des débuts du "duché" de Normandie', in R. Aubreton, et. al., eds, *Droit privé et institutions régionales: études historiques offertes à Jean Yver* (Paris, 1976), pp. 700-701. However this has been disputed, most recently by Helmerichs, *'Princeps, Comes, Dux Normannorum'*, pp. 60-61, and Lifshitz, 'La Normandie carolingienne', pp. 518-20.

[597] *RADN*, No. 11.

Normannorum, count of the Normans. None of the titled women were ever so described in a contemporary charter.[598] Richard II was also described five times by a variation of the *gratia Dei comes* formula. Le Jan has associated this usage with the quasi-regal status of the counts in the tenth century, suggesting an associated quasi-queenly elevation of the countess.[599] These distinctions in Richard II's title were used by a variety of foundations across Normandy. It is certainly suggestive that the title *comitissa*, and these quasi-regal formulae are both first seen in the Norman charters at the same time, though there are, of course, very few surviving earlier charters. This is in line with Le Jan's argument that the promotion of the count as quasi-regal is directly related to the elevation of *comitissa* as quasi-queenly.

However, the consistency of the title descriptions given to Richard II, and the use of these quasi-regal appellations set him apart from his wife and mother, rather than suggesting comparable and parallel development. This is not to suggest that the women were not quasi-queenly. Countess-ship is in some ways comparable to queenship, but the issue may be complicated by the differences between count and king. The gentile additions for the count/duke may be a sign of more 'official' development, with a parallel to royal office. But at the same time it should be noted that the comital 'office' lacks the absolute clarity of inauguration. These ambiguities argue for caution and suggest the need to widen the frame of comparison to other uses of the title *comes*.

Three groups of men were described as *comes* in the Norman ducal charters from Richard II's reign. First, the foreign 'territorial rulers' who appeared much like Richard II such as Count Hugh of Maine and Count William of Poitou. Second, there are unidentifiable *comites* who appeared only on odd occasions. It is possible that these men were recorded in other charters without a comital title. However, because most of the individuals recorded were not given surnames, nicknames or territorial designations, this possibility cannot be further explored. Finally there are four members of the comital/ducal family: Mauger of Corbeil, William of Eu, Robert of Avranches and Raoul of Ivry.[600] Although

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[598] There are two instances of women being given the title *comitissae Normanniae/Normannorum*, but both survive only as very late copies, and both give reason for caution. Judith is titled *comitissae Normanniae* in her dower document, whose problems have already been discussed. Matilda of Flanders is titled *comitissae Normannorum* when acting as a subscriber in a charter which survives only in the *Gallia Christiana* and where the list of subscribers is suspiciously homogenized, *RADN*, No. 208.

[599] Le Jan, *Femmes, pouvoir et société*, p. 27; *RADN*, Nos. 12, 20, 23, 47 and 48.

[600] Following the 'promotion theory' outlined above (see note 596) has been suggested that these men were only given the title *comes* after the count/dukes began to use *dux*, G. Garnett, '"Ducal" succession in early Normandy', in G. Garnett and J. Hudson, eds, *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy: Essays in Honour of Sir James Holt* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 98. However, in

historians identify these men with particular areas of land, and I have added these land descriptions to help distinguish them, it must be stressed that none of them is ever given a land identifier in the Norman ducal charters.

The patterns of title usage for Mauger and William appear very similar to those of the countesses. They were recorded as *comes* only when subscribing, and even in that role they were described by a comital title infrequently. Richard II's uncle Raoul and half-brother Robert, however, are very different. They appeared in a wider variety of roles than any other member of the family excepting Gunnor. A charter from 1011 detailed donations made by Raoul and his wife Albereda to the monastery of Saint Ouen of Rouen during the tenures of Abbot Hildebert (*d.* 1006) and Abbot Henry.[601] Other donations of his which were made after 1011 are known from a confirmation charter of Richard II.[602] All of his donations were to monasteries located close to Rouen, close to the center of ducal power, and also to his own lands in the Evrecin. All but one of his subscriptions were also to charters for these three foundations. This pattern of regional donation and subscription presents a parallel to that of Robert of Avranches. Robert was recorded making a donation to Mont Saint Michel c. 1015.[603] He held other lands in the area around Avranches and Mortain, known from the confirmation charter of Richard II in which Richard restored those lands to Mont Saint Michel.[604]

It has been suggested that Robert may have been sent to the area around Avranches as part of Richard II's efforts to gain control over western Normandy; whether he did hold this land for his half-brother, or set himself up as an independent lord is difficult to determine.[605] The fact that the confirmation pancarte of Richard II states that William Longsword had granted the lands which Robert held in Avranches to Mont Saint Michel and that Richard restored them suggests that Robert may have at times acted against the wishes of the count/dukes in Rouen.[606] Raoul was also a very prominent figure in the government of his half-brother Richard I and his nephew Richard II. In the late tenth century he held land for the count/duke in the Evrecin, and may also have acted as an 'official' on behalf of Richard II in the early eleventh century.[607] Does this pattern of

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Douglas' view, the fact that these men now shared a title with the count/duke was an indication of their importance and their power, Douglas, 'The Earliest Norman Counts', pp. 130-131.

[601] *RADN*, No. 13; *Gallia Christiana* (reprinted Farnborough, 1970), Vol. XI, pp. 140-41.

[602] *RADN*, No. 53.

[603] *RADN*, No. 16.

[604] *RADN*, No. 49.

[605] Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, pp. 135-36.

[606] *RADN*, No. 49, 'Villulas quoque quas avus meus [Richard II] Willelmus in pago Abrincatino Sancto Michaeli tradidit, sed Robertus comes postea vi abstulit, reddo'.

[607] Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, pp. 109-111.

donation and landholding in specific areas of Normandy hint at the possibility that they had a more independent status, or provide evidence that they acted as officials or deputies of Richard II? Does this consistent usage of the comital title provide further evidence that these two men held something closer to an official position below the level of the count/duke, with the title a recognition in the perceptions of charter scribes of their 'office'?

So just as with the female members of the ducal family, some of the male *comites* were given this title when they acted in a public role as part of a group of the relations of the count/duke, but again, the title was not invariably used and does not always seem to suggest an 'office' (although the consistency of usage may hint at a more official or more independent role for Raoul and Robert).[608]

For the family members who were given the title infrequently, it has been suggested that the title *comes* in this period was as a sign of individual status given to some of the count/duke's closest male relatives, that it was an indication of trust and loyalty, and perhaps even an indication of closeness and influence, but no more.[609] The evidence suggests that some uses of the title *comes* have elements of 'office' in the sense of a recognized sphere of activity and perhaps even formally delegated powers. Both, however, are debatable. Equally interestingly, the evidence raises the possibility that these titles reflect the nature and usage of the ducal/comital court, and that there was the perception of the existence of a powerful group there, if not even some formalization of it. All of this is tantalizing. It has to be set alongside the chronologically parallel developments in female comital titles, which were themselves far from replacing *uxor* or *mater* in the charters from the reign of Richard II. Using the study of charters as insight into contemporary perceptions, there are hints of changes for both men and women, but the evidence remains ambiguous.

The patterns of appearance and descriptions of the members of the ducal family provide us with a great deal of information about the composition of the ducal court and household, and the perception of the women of the family. The women were able to control land and use it to create their own links with monastic foundations. They could also control the inheritance of their land, including taking it outside of Normandy, as was the case with Liutgarde. In addition to this power, Gunnor acted as a counselor, and had

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[608] Robert is recorded in the charters of different beneficiaries, and clearly separated in the charter evidence from the family group of men and women who are associated with the count/duke. See also Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, pp. 136-137.

[609] Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, pp. 125-126; Douglas, 'The Earliest Norman Counts', pp. 130-131.

influence over the decisions made by the count/dukes. In the court and household the women were part of the governing family, and appeared as part of a group with members of the extended family including sons and brothers.

Some of the men of the comital/ducal family appeared mostly within the family group, and only as subscribers. Richard II's wife Judith definitely appeared in this way. Papia also appeared rarely, and only as a subscriber. Judith's presence may have been recorded as a result of her association with the family group in Rouen, and may reflect the way the court and household promoted itself. The records of the other women – Gunnor, Emma and Papia – may have been influenced by connections between those women and the foundations which produced these charters. The connection between Gunnor and Saint Père of Chartres; Papia and Saint Wandrille; and Emma and Saint Denis involved their natal families, and these connections may have influenced the way that they were represented, including the use of their comital titles.

Gunnor was the only one of these women to be recorded as a donor, a consenter and a subscriber. She, like Robert of Avranches, Raoul of Ivry and Archbishop Robert of Rouen, appears able to transcend the family group and act more independently than the wives of her son. It has been suggested that Robert of Avranches and Raoul of Ivry had a more independent power, and possibly a more official role in Norman government: might Gunnor have been the same? However, there does not seem to be a strong geographical pattern to the attestations of any of the women; in contrast to Archbishop Robert, Raoul of Ivry and Robert of Avranches, who do seem to have geographical patterns which may correspond to particular areas of Normandy where their power and even their authority was recognized. Gunnor then was not an official of a particular area in the way that these men may have been.

Was she possibly a powerful widow based in Rouen and able to act independently, as is suggested by the *Moriuht* poem and by Dudo of Saint Quentin? There is further evidence to support this from the charters that survive from the reign of William II. The cartulary of the monastery of La Trinité du Mont in Rouen records a donation made by William fitz Osbern and his brother Osbern; they donated the land held by a certain Turoldus, *camerarius* of Countess Gunnor.[610] This donation was made after 1040, making it a decade after the death of Gunnor. Turoldus may have held this land from Gunnor's nephew, Osbern, the father of William and Osbern. The donation was made with the consent of their mother, and suggests both a continued connection between Gunnor and

[610] *RADN*, No. 118, 'Turoldus comitisse Gunnoris camerarius de illis tenebant'.

her natal family, but also that Gunnor maintained her own household, with at least one household official.

Gunnor is very clearly set apart from her son's wives in both the charter and narrative sources. But there does not seem to have been an official role such as countess or dowager countess, which gave her a power beyond that of 'mother of the count/duke'. Unlike Richard II, whose consistency of title usage set him apart, Gunnor did not have an 'office' in the sense that her son did. The use of the title *comitissa* for Gunnor, Judith and Papia seems to have been a recognition of status, and one which may be connected to quasi-regal practices emanating from within the comital/ducal court, but no more. The narrative and charter sources suggest that the power of these women was rooted in their family position as wives and mothers of the count/dukes of Normandy. The charter evidence in particular demonstrates how far the family in which they were rooted dominated early-eleventh-century Normandy and its court.

Chapter 6: Matilda before 1066

In the previous chapter questions were asked about Matilda's predecessors in Normandy. The context for a discussion of her power is a model of female power rooted in family government, which during the reign of Richard II was centered in Rouen. Questions about courtly language, and the associated implication that the women were courtly actors, were central to the study of narrative sources. The charter sources raised questions about the role of the family women within a family group. The issue of beneficiary production was also clearly important, and may have shaped the appearance of particular women who had family connections to certain foundation. The infrequent use of titles, and the patterns of usage, made it clear that their title was likely an indication of status, rather than recognition of an office. But, the historiography of women and power surveyed in Chapter 1 suggested that it will be necessary to ask whether anything like an office of countess developed in Normandy during Matilda's lifetime.

Matilda's marriage with William was legitimate, or concerns about legitimacy were dismissed very early on. She may have given birth to her first child soon after the marriage, and her children Robert, Richard, William, Adelaide, Constance, Adela and Matilda were likely born before 1066.[611] However, the births of the children, and thus Matilda's activity as a mother, cannot be dated. Aside from comment on her children, this is the period of Matilda's life in Normandy least explored by historians. As a legitimate wife, Matilda stepped into a role which had not been filled in Normandy for many years. Richard III had not married before his death, nor had Robert I, whose partner Herleve was never recorded into the charters from his reign. Matilda marries and appears in Normandy after a period without wives/mothers in the charters. So we are dealing with possible traditions, legacy and certainly with comparisons; but also with the possibility of a new situation, and a certain amount of discontinuity.

I. Narrative Sources

When comparing the description of Matilda of Flanders in narrative sources with those given to her predecessors, the lack of a source as loquacious as Dudo is keenly felt. As discussed in the previous chapter, the eleventh-century women are described in very brief terms by the monastic writer William of Jumièges. Of Matilda he says only that she

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[611] See above, pp. 4-6.

was a person of great beauty and had an honorable character.[612] This description is hardly individual, and conforms to a formula of description which can clearly be seen throughout Jumièges' work. His descriptions of Judith, the wife of Richard II, and Hawise, Richard II's sister, are virtually identical, briefly commenting on their physical beauty and good character.[613] When discussing Judith and Papia Jumièges uses the word *honestas*; the ninth-century use of this term by Hincmar was associated with the queen's ability to govern a household.[614] Jumièges may be hinting at the suitability of Judith and Papia to oversee the ducal household, but his description of Matilda gives no sense of her role within the family, comital/ducal household or court, nor does it hint at her status, power or authority.

There are few narrative sources to add to the work of William of Jumièges. William of Poitiers was a writer who was close to William II of Normandy, acting as his personal chaplain, and he recorded the marriage of William to Matilda. In his work, a biography of William, his focus is on Matilda's bloodline, and the political connections which she brings to William through their marriage. Thus, at the point when he described the marriage, Poitiers devoted several passages to the power and influence which Baldwin of Flanders had, his prowess in military affairs, and his role as a sought-after counselor to the great lords of France.[615] Some of the language which Poitiers used in these passages is similar to Dudo's courtly descriptions of women and men. However, Poitiers did not describe Matilda; he says that Baldwin brought his daughter to Ponthieu where she was presented to her new family.[616] Matilda is not named. William is not described as her husband, but rather as Baldwin of Flanders' son-in-law. However he does state that she was a 'most acceptable lady to us'; her value was acknowledged, connected to her bloodline. This tells us little about the exercise of her power and authority, but it furthers the impression that Matilda began her married life with the potential to maximize the power and authority available to a high-status woman and wife.

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[612] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 128-9, 'Matildem, corpore ualde elegantem animoque liberalem'.
[613] For Judith see *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 28-9, 'Iudith... corpore admodum elegantem omnique morum honestate pollentem'. For Papia, see *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 14-15, 'Erat enim hec puella corpore ualde decora, morum honestate gratissima'.
[614] E. Ward, 'Caesar's Wife: The Career of the empress Judith, 819-829' in P. Goodman and R. Collins, eds, *Charlemagne's Heir: New Perspectives on the Reign of Louis the Pious* (814-829) (Oxford, 1990), p. 221, n. 86.
[615] *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. 30-31, 'Stupuerunt mirantes sum comites, marchiones, duces, tum archipraesulum alta dignitas, si quando presentiam eius rari hospitis imperatoria cura promeruit. Ipsius uelut amici et socii, prudentiam in deliberatione maximorum negotiorum consulturi, beneuolentiam donis et multa honoris impensa comparaturi. Nomine siquidem Romani imperii miles fuit, re decus et gloria summa consiliorum in summa necessitudine'.
[616] *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. 32-33, 'Marchio hic fascibus ac titulis longe amplior quam strictim sit explicabile, natam suam nobis acceptissimam dominam in Pontiuo ipse presentauit soceris generoque digne adductam'.

That William of Poitiers' description of Matilda and William's marriage was one which centered on the advantages which the unnamed Matilda brought to William is confirmed by the subsequent passage. In it, Poitiers highlights Matilda's maternal bloodline, saying that 'her wise and blessed mother nurtured in her daughter a lineage many times greater even than her paternal inheritance. If you ask about her mother's lineage you should know that her mother's father was Robert, king of Gaul, who, son and grandson of kings, was himself the progenitor of kings.'[617] Poitiers' emphasis on her regal maternal lineage postdates Matilda's own acquisition of royal status: his description of her in that role will be considered in the next chapter.

Her bloodline was clearly important, and evoked comment. This can also be seen in her epitaph, inscribed on a black marble slab which today is the only surviving part of her tomb in La Trinité, Caen. Inscribed epitaphs were uncommon on tombs in the early and high Middle Ages; they were reserved for tombs of special importance until the thirteenth century, making Matilda's tomb and epitaph especially noteworthy.[618] The opening lines are devoted to her parentage:

'The lofty structure of this splendid tomb
Hides great Matilda, sprung from royal stem;
Child of a Flemish duke; her mother was
Adela, daughter of Robert king of the Franks,
Sister of Henry, who holds the royal seat.
Married to William, most illustrious king'.[619]

Her bloodline and her marriage to William are the connections by which she is celebrated. The epitaph does not describe her as either a countess or a queen, but it does give an indication of the types of activity which she undertook, or which were considered to have been proper. The verses highlight her foundation of La Trinité, the abbey which she founded in Caen before 1066, and where she was buried.

'She gave this site and raised this noble house,
With many lands and many goods endowed,

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[617] *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. 32-33, 'Enutrierat autem prudens et sancta mater in filia quod muneribus paternis multuplo praeponderat. Requirens genus maternum, matris patrem scias regem Gallie Rodbertum, qui, filius et nepos regum, progenuit reges'.

[618] P. Ariès, *Western Attitudes toward Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present*, P.M. Ranum, trans (London, 1994), pp. 46-7.

[619] R. Favreau and J. Michaud, *Corpus des Inscriptions de la France Médiévale 22: Calvados, Eure, Manche, Orne, Seine-Maritime* (Paris, 2002), pp. 51-4, no. 16, 'Egregie pulchri tegit haec structura sepulchri, moribus insignem germen regale Mathildem. Dux Flandrita pater huic exitit, Hadala mater, Francorum gentis Roberti filia regis, et soror Henrici regali sede potiti. Regi magnifico Guillelmo iuncta marito'.

Given by her, or by her toil procured,

Comforter of the needy, duty's friend

Her wealth enriched the poor, left her in need.'[620]

Matilda's epitaph does not describe her physical beauty, her chastity, her fecundity, or even her illustrious children, all of which have been identified as typical epigraphic material for medieval women.[621] Instead the virtues ascribed to her are ones which are more typically masculine, focusing on charity, the most common of subjects in medieval epitaphs.[622] The sense given of Matilda in Normandy is of a woman whose power was rooted in her natal family connections, her marriage to William, and her patronage of certain foundations. Her epitaph was of course written after Matilda became a queen. Likewise, it is as a queen that descriptions of her were recorded in poetry, but in order to examine her role before she obtained a royal title, and to compare her to her Norman predecessors such as Gunnor, Judith and Papia, we must again turn to the evidence from the Norman ducal charters.

II. Charters

To facilitate this comparison, the structure used for Gunnor, Judith and Papia will be followed here. Matilda's appearances will be considered statistically, then in the context of the role in which she appears. The question of titles was clearly important to the study of her predecessors, and will be here as well. Do family descriptions appear equally important, if not more so, than the title *comitissa*? Are there any hints at the development of an 'office'? Do beneficiaries perhaps influence the use of the title, as was suggested for her predecessors? Matilda will also be compared with the most prominent of her male contemporaries, including members of the comital/ducal family. Richard II's brothers and eldest son formed a group with Gunnor, Judith and Papia, so comparable men from the reign of William II will be compared with Matilda. Throughout, comparison to the previous countesses will raise questions about possible changes and continuities in the role, power and authority of the wife of the count/duke. The chronological gap between the activity of Matilda and her predecessors makes the question of the 'mutacion documentaire' critical when comparing the activity of women in the two periods, as

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[620] Favreau and Michaud, *Corpus des Inscriptions 22*, pp. 51-4, no. 16, 'Praesentem sedem, praesentem fecit et aedem, tam multis terris quam multis rebus honestis, a se ditatam, se procurante dicatam. Haec consolatrix inopum pietatis amatrix, gazis dispersis pauper sibi, diues egenis'.

[621] I. Kajanto, *Classical and Christian, Studies in the Latin Epigraphs of Medieval and Rennaissance Rome* (Helsinki, 1980), pp. 132-6.

[622] Kajanto, *Classical and Christian*, pp. 98-101, 104.

historians have raised important concerns about diplomatic shifts, and their possible effect on our interpretation of the perception of individuals.[623]

Of the two hundred and twenty-two surviving Norman comital/ducal charters from the tenth and eleventh century (before 1066, when the count/dukes also became kings), one hundred and forty date to the reign of William II. William began his reign as count/duke in 1035, when his father Robert died while on pilgrimage.[624] This collection includes charters from the period of his minority to the eve of the English Conquest, with the earliest dated charter of William's from 1038.[625] However, Matilda was only active in Normandy for half of this period; William was count/duke of Normandy for thirty-one years before the Conquest in 1066, and did not marry Matilda until c. 1050. Ideally, those charters which were written before William married Matilda in c. 1050 would be removed from consideration for statistical purposes; their inclusion could affect our perception of Matilda, and others like her who were active for limited periods. However, due to the lack of dates recorded in the Norman charters, only eight charters can be securely dated before the marriage.[626] Other charters can be assigned to early in William's reign based on the recorded action of individuals such as Osbern the steward, who was killed in 1040.[627] This methodology raises problems, however, and important questions about the way modern editors have dated charters.

For example, a grant of Osbern the steward survives as an original charter and was signed by Matilda.[628] Osbern's action must have taken place before 1040, but Matilda's *signum* cannot have been recorded until at least ten years later. The charter appears to have been recopied, as the names of William and Matilda next to their autograph *signa* are written in the same hand as the text. The date of the consent of Osbern's wife and sons, recorded in the text, is unclear. Similar problems arise from the donation made by William II to Saint Vigor of Cerisy, which is dated to April 20, 1042.[629] The text survives in a twelfth-century copy that records the *signum* of Matilda. Was her *signum* added later, an action hidden when the text was copied? Was the charter text copied after her marriage and re-signed in the ducal court? There is no way to answer these questions, and there is no good

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[623] See above, p.69.
[624] Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 45; de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, pp. 91-9; Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, pp. 153-5.
[625] *RADN*, No. 92.
[626] *RADN*, Nos. 92, 97, 98, 99, 101, 109, 114, 115. Only sixty-four of the charters are dated, or twenty nine percent.
[627] *RADN*, Nos. 93, 94, 95.
[628] *RADN*, No. 193.
[629] *RADN*, No. 99.

way to resolve all of the problems with dating the Norman ducal charters.[630] Therefore, in the following statistical analysis I will examine the general number of appearances within the entirety of the charters of William II, but note circumstances which might alter the statistics.

Matilda appeared in thirty percent of William's charters.[631] Her appearances can be seen in the table in Figure 6.1, created along the same parameters as those in Chapter 5.[632] This percentage is probably slightly low: if we discount all the charters which Fauroux assigns pre-1050 then Matilda appears in thirty-four percent of the Norman comital/ducal charters from 1050 to 1066.[633] Both numbers are slightly higher than for any of her predecessors. Richard II's wives collectively appeared in only twenty-one percent of the surviving charters from his reign, while his mother Gunnor was recorded in twenty-seven percent. Gunnor emerges from the eleventh-century narrative and charter sources as an independently powerful widow who had a prominent place in her son's court and seems to have overshadowed his wives. Matilda's percentage of appearances in the charters, greater even than Gunnor's, suggest that she was a similarly, if not more, powerful woman.

Such percentages take on significance through comparison, both with other women, and, as seen in Chapter 5, with men. Gunnor, Judith and Papia were compared to other male members of the comital/ducal family, including the uncle, brothers and sons of Richard II. These men were the most prominent lay men recorded in the charters from his reign. Their descendants appear in the charters of William II. However, the male members of the direct comital/ducal line were far less prominent during the period 1035-66 than during the reign of Richard II.[634] Archbishop Robert's son Richard of Evreux, William II's first-cousin-once-removed, was recorded in only four percent of these charters.[635] The sons

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[630] There are also twelve charters in which Fauroux has used the presence of Matilda as a means to date the charter as occurring in the latter half of William's reign. It is possible that one or more of these charters is an earlier document where the mention of Matilda was added later, *RADN*, Nos. 120, 121, 124, 126, 138, 160, 161, 163, 163b, 198, 193, 194.

[631] She appears in forty out of one hundred and forty documents, including the charter for Saint Vigor of Cerisy, where her *signa* is a later addition.

[632] See above, p. 103.

[633] Thirty nine out of one hundred and fifteen documents.

[634] Pierre Bauduin notes that the comital/ducal family relationships are rarely explicitly outlined in the charters, with the exception of Matilda as a wife and the couple's sons, P. Bauduin, 'La parentèle de Guillaume le Conquérant: l'aperçu des sources diplomatiques', in P. Bouet and V. Gazeau, eds, *La Normandie et l'Angleterre au Moyen Âge* (Caen, 2003)', p. 28.

[635] Richard is recorded in five out of one hundred and forty extant documents.

of William of Eu, Robert of Eu and Bishop Hugh of Lisieux, were recorded in six percent and eight percent of the charters from William's reign (see Figures 6.2 and 6.3).[636]

Figure 6.1 - *Charter appearances of Matilda of Flanders c. 1050-66*

= no title = *comitissa*

		RADN #	Donor/	Confirmer	Subscriber	Consenter	Intercessor
Roger Malus Filiaster	Beaumont-les-Tours	227					
William and Matilda	Canons of Cherbourg	224	2				
William II	Cathedral of Avranches	229					
William II	Cathedral of Bayeux	219					
Richard nephew of H.	Coulombs	230					
William and Matilda	La Trinité of Caen	231	5	2			
William of Vernon	La Trinité du Mont	130					
William of Echauffour	La Trinité du Mont	138					
Family of Herluin	La Trinité du Mont	202					
Fredebert	Marmoutier	163					
Fredebert	Marmoutier	163b					
William II	Marmoutier	141					
Roger	Mont Saint Michel	232					
William II	Mont Saint Michel	148					
Adela of Flanders	Abbess of Montiviliers	226					
William II	Montiviliers	198					
William II	Montiviliers	203					
William fitz Osbern	Notre Dame of Lyre	120					
William II	St Florent of Saumer	199					
William II	St George of Bosch.	197				*regina*	
William of La Ferté-Macé	St Julien of Tours	131					
William II	St Julien of Tours	142					
William II	St Julien of Tours	156					
William II	St Martin du Bosc	218					
William II	St Michel of Tréport	215					
Estigandus	St Ouen of Rouen	158					
Osbern the seneschal	St Ouen of Rouen	193					
Robert Bertram & Susanna	St Ouen of Rouen	205					
William II & R Curthose	St Ouen of Rouen	204					
William II & R Curthose	St Ouen of Rouen	204b					
Osbern Deschtoth	St Ouen of Rouen	210					
Berengerius Hespina	St Ouen of Rouen	211					
William II	St Pierre of Lisieux	194					
Count Richard of Evr.	St Sauveur of Evreux	208					
Alveredus Gigas	St Vigor of Cerisy	194					
Wigot of St Denis	St Vigor of Cerisy	196					
Baldwin Filleul	St Wandrille	124					
William II	St Wandrille	126					

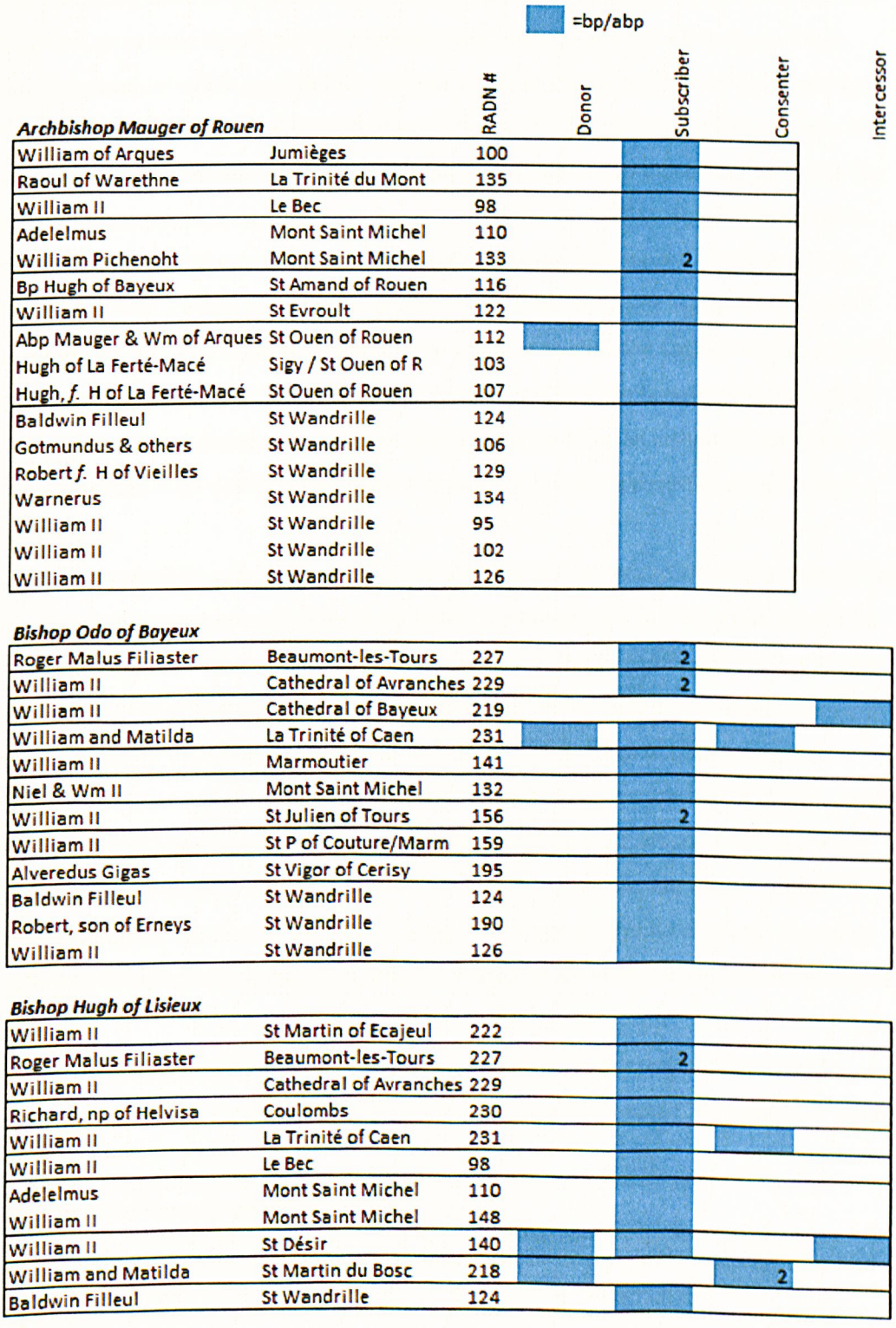
[636] Robert of Eu is recorded in eight out of one hundred and forty extant documents. Bishop Hugh is recorded in eleven documents.

Figure 6.2 - *Charter appearances of comital/ducal family* comites, *1035-66*.

= no title = *comes*

		RADN #	Donor	Subscriber	Consenter
Richard of Evreux					
Richard of Evreux	Jumièges	92			
William II	Jumièges	209			
Richard of Evreux	La Trinité du Mont	201			
John, *f.* Guy of Laval	Marmoutier	137			
Richard of Evreux	St Sauveur of Evreux	208			
Robert of Eu					
William II	Cathedral of Bayeux	219			
William II	Jumièges	220			
Abbt Isembert of LTdM	La Trinité du Mont	104			
Robert of Eu	La Trinité du Mont	123			
Roger of Bully	La Trinité du Mont	200			
William II	St Ouen of Rouen	105			
Roger of Clera & Wm II	St Ouen of Rouen	191			
Richard of Evreux	St Sauveur of Evreux	208			
Robert of Mortain					
William II	Cathedral of Avranches	229			
William II	Cathedral of Bayeux	219			
Richard, npw of Helvisa	Coulombs	230			
William II	St Désir	140			
William II	St Florent of Saumur	199			
William II	St Julien of Tours	156			
William II	St Père of Chartres	146			
Baldwin Filleul	St Wandrille	124			
Robert son of Erneys	St Wandrille	190			
William of Arques					
William of Arques	Jumièges	100			
Roger of Montgomery	Jumièges	113			
William of La Ferté-Macé	St Julien of Tours	131			
William II	St Julien of Tours	142			
William of Arques	St Ouen of Rouen	112			
Hugh, *f.* H of La Ferté-Macé	St Ouen of Rouen	107			
Gerard Flaitel	St Wandrille	108			
Baldwin Filleul	St Wandrille	124			
William II	St Wandrille	126			
William II	St Wandrille	128			
Robert, *f* H. of Vieilles	St Wandrille	129			

Figure 6.3 - *Charter appearances of comital/ducal family ecclesiastics, 1035-66*



The context of the appearances of these men suggests that instead of being part of a family group close to the center of comital/ducal power, their power and influence was localized, or at least that recognition of them was. Richard of Evreux appeared in five charters, three of which recorded his own donations to the foundations of Jumièges, La Trinité du Mont of Rouen and Saint Sauveur of Evreux.[637] He also subscribed charters for Jumièges and Marmoutier, possibly due to family connections to those houses, and to the specific donations recorded in those charters.[638] Bishop Hugh of Lisieux was recorded in charters for foundations within, or on the border with, his own diocese, including Saint Pierre of Préaux, Le Bec, Saint Martin du Bosc, Saint Désir and Saint Martin of Ecajeul.[639] However, he was also active in charters for Mont Saint Michel, the Cathedral of Avranches, Coulombs and Beaumont-les-Tours, so a simple geographical explanation will not suffice here. One of these charters recorded the *signa* of all the Norman bishops, raising the possibility that Hugh's activity was related as much to his episcopal office as to family connection.

Robert of Eu appeared mostly in the charters of foundations close to his lands near Eu. Six of his eight appearances were recorded by Jumièges, Saint Ouen of Rouen and La Trinité du Mont of Rouen. He was also a donor to La Trinité du Mont, possibly creating a connection to that foundation through his patronage. Robert did not consent to or subscribe any of the donations made by his brother Bishop Hugh of Lisieux and their mother Lesceline, including their foundation of Saint Désir in the suburbs of Lisieux. Nor did he subscribe the foundation charter of Saint Martin du Bosc, when his brother Hugh interceded to request William's confirmation of the re-establishment of that priory.[640] Robert, it seems, was mostly active and recognized in the area around Rouen, a possible reflection of his role in the region, where comital/ducal authority may have been delegated to him.[641]

William II's uncle William of Arques was recorded in only eight percent of the comital/ducal charters. However, William of Arques rebelled against his nephew c. 1052-3

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[637] *RADN*, Nos. 92, 201, 208. For the consolidation of power in the Evrecin under Richard see Bauduin, *La Première Normandie*, pp. 330-33.

[638] *RADN*, No. 137. There may be a family connection which influenced his involvement in the Marmoutier charter, which is a record of a donation made by John of Laval, donating land gained from his wife Berthe, who may have been the daughter or step-daughter of Richard's wife Godehildis. The two women were certainly both connected to the Tosny family, *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 98-9.

[639] *RADN*, Nos. 88, 98, 140, 218, 222. Hugh is considered to have been active in Lisieux, establishing the cathedral chapter and administrative positions, D. Douglas, 'The Norman Episcopate before the Norman Conquest', *Cambridge Historical Journal*, 13, No. 2 (1975), pp. 111-2.

[640] *RADN*, No. 218.

[641] Bauduin, *La Première Normandie*, p. 298.

and was exiled from Normandy.[642] Following Fauroux's dating of the charters, if we discount all of the charters post-1053, then William of Arques appears in twelve percent, which is comparable to William of Eu and Robert of Avranches in the charters of Richard II.[643] Nearly half (five out of eleven) of William of Arques' recorded appearances were in charters produced by Saint Wandrille, a house to which he had a known connection through his mother Papia.[644] He may have wielded a quasi-ducal power and authority in the area around Arques during William II's minority.[645] Four of his other appearances are recorded in the charters of two foundations: Jumièges and Saint Ouen of Rouen. William made donations to both foundations, and they were also geographically close to his lands around Arques.

William of Arques' brother Mauger followed their uncle Robert as Archbishop of Rouen from 1037 until his deposition in 1054. He was recorded acting in twelve percent of the charters from the reign of William II.[646] When discounting the charters dated later than 1054 by Fauroux, he appears in eighteen percent of the comital/ducal charters. This is more than his brother William, but far less than his predecessor Robert. Robert's peculiar prominence was suggested in the previous chapter.[647] This later pattern of Mauger's activity raises questions about how much of Robert's prominence was due to his official position as Archbishop of Rouen, and how much to his position as brother of Richard II. Mauger's activity suggests a special place for Archbishop Robert in his brother's household and court, one which neither Mauger nor William of Arques had in the court of their nephew William.

If the male relatives on William's paternal side appear less prominent than the group around Richard II, the same applies to his half-brothers on his mother's side.[648] William's half-brother Robert of Mortain also appeared in six percent of the charters.[649] His other brother Odo of Bayeux was recorded in nine percent.[650] Most of William's male relatives were recorded in four to twelve percent of the charters; Archbishop Mauger of

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[642] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 102-105.
[643] Eleven out of ninety-three documents.
[644] See above, p. 119.
[645] D. Bates, 'The Conqueror's Adolescence', *ANS*, XXV (2003), pp. 12-3; Bates, 'The origins of the justiciarship', *ANS*, IV (1981), p. 9; Bauduin, *La Première Normandie*, p. 291; Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, pp. 214-6.
[646] Mauger is recorded in seventeen out of one hundred and forty extant documents.
[647] See above, p. 98.
[648] His half brother Bishop Odo of Bayeux obtained his bishopric sometime between 1049-50. His career before the Conquest was unremarkable, D. Bates, 'The Character and Career of Odo, Bishop of Bayeux', *Speculum*, 50, No. 1 (Jan, 1975), p. 6.
[649] Robert is recorded in nine out of one hundred and forty extant documents.
[650] Bishop Odo is recorded in twelve out of one hundred and forty extant documents.

Rouen was recorded in eighteen percent. In contrast, Richard II's brothers and uncle appeared in ten to eighteen percent of the charters from his reign. His brother the Archbishop of Rouen appeared in seventy-three percent. It is clear that during the reign of William II the male members of the comital/ducal family appeared much less often than did their predecessors. There is also evidence that geographical factors may have influenced which foundations recorded their activity.

Figure 6.4 - *Charter appearances of Robert Curthose, c. 1050-66*

= no title = *comes*

Robert Curthose		RADN #	Donor	Subscriber	Consenter
Roger Malus Filiaster	Beaumont les Tours	227			
William and Matilda	Canons of Cherbourg	224			
William II	Cathedral of Avranches	229			
William II	Cathedral of Bayeux	219			
Richard, np of Helvisa	Coulombs	230			
Landricus Aculeus	Fécamp	139			
William and Matilda	La Trinité of Caen	231			
John, *f.* Guy of Laval	Marmoutier	137			
William II & R Curthose	Marmoutier	228			
Roger	Mont Saint Michel				
Adela of Flanders	Montivilliers	226			
William II	Montivilliers	203			
William II	St Florent of Saumur	199			
William and Matilda	St Martin du Bosc	218			
William II	St Michel of Tréport	215			
Estigandus, father of Odo	St Ouen of Rouen	158			
William II & R Curthose	St Ouen of Rouen	204			
William II & R Curthose	St Ouen of Rouen	204b			
Robert Bertram & Susanna	St Ouen of Rouen	205			
Hugh of Nirei	St Ouen of Rouen	212			
Balwin Filleul	St Wandrille	124			
William II	St Wandrille	126			

The most prominent male member of the comital/ducal family was Robert Curthose, William and Matilda's eldest son. He was recorded in sixteen percent of the charters from his father's reign, or nineteen percent if we eliminate those which Fauroux has dated pre-1050.[651] This is still significantly less than the forty-six percent of charters in which Richard III appeared as the eldest son of Richard II. But it places Robert significantly

[651] Robert Curthose is recorded in twenty two out of one hundred and forty documents (or out of one hundred and fifteen).

higher than the other men of the family, and distinguishes him from his brothers.[652] His younger brothers Richard and William appeared in respectively only three and four percent of the charters.[653] None of the daughters ever appeared.

There is, however, a prominent group in William's pre-1066 charters. Several individuals stand out; Matilda is one of them. The three most prominent men who appear during the reign of William II pre-1066 are all very distant members of the comital/ducal family, related through marriage and not descendants of the count/dukes. The first is Roger of Beaumont, who appeared in sixteen percent of the charters – comparable to Robert Curthose.[654] The famous twelfth-century genealogies of Robert of Torigni make him the son of Humphrey of Vieilles, the son of one of Gunnor's sisters.[655] Unlike some of the other men who were descendants of the count/dukes, there are no strong geographical or beneficiary patterns apparent in his appearances. He subscribed one charter each for the foundations of his father in Préaux, but is also recorded by foundations throughout Normandy and the surrounding principalities.

Even more prominent were Roger of Montgomery and William fitz Osbern. William fitz Osbern was the most prominent individual to appear in the pre-1066 charters of William II, William II apart. He appeared in thirty-six percent of the charters.[656] William fitz Osbern was William's second-cousin-once-removed, through his great-great-grandmother. He was in fact doubly related to the comital/ducal family, through his grandfather Raoul of Ivry, the son of Sprota, and through his father Osbern the steward, the nephew of Gunnor. He was thus a distant relation who was not a descendant of the male comital/ducal line on either side. Roger of Montgomery may also have been related to the comital/ducal family.[657] Robert of Torigni traced the Montgomery family back to a sister of Gunnor.[658] Thompson has suggested that Roger was the grandson of Hugh of Montgomery and Joscelina, a niece of Gunnor.[659]

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[652] See Figure 6.4. Robert, as the eldest and designated heir, was singled out in a number of ways, Aird, *Robert Curthose*, pp. 40-41, 60.
[653] Richard appears in four out of one hundred and forty, William in five. The numbers are small enough that even the chronological limitation of charters doesn't change the percentages.
[654] Roger of Beaumont appears in twenty two out of one hundred and forty documents.
[655] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 268-9. For an analysis of the genealogies see E.M.C. van Houts, 'Robert of Torigni as genealogist', in C. Harper-Bill, C. Holdsworth and J.L. Nelson, eds, *Studies in Medieval History presented to R. Allen Brown* (Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 215-33.
[656] William fitz Osbern appears in fifty one out of one hundred and forty documents.
[657] This Roger is actually the second of that name, the son of Roger I who appears in the charters of Richard II and Robert I.
[658] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 274-5.
[659] K. Thompson, 'The Norman Aristocracy before 1066: the Example of the Montgomerys', *Historical Research*, LX, No. 143 (October, 1987), pp. 253-5.

As with Roger of Beaumont, neither Roger of Montgomery nor William fitz Osbern show any apparent geographical patterns. There may have been a connection between Roger of Montgomery and Marmoutier: he subscribed almost twice as many of the Marmoutier charters as William fitz Osbern, which may be due to the location of his lands along the southern border.[660] However, he was also a prominent subscriber for other foundations such as Montivilliers, where he subscribed five out of a total of seven extant documents: one more than William fitz Osbern. There is evidence of family connections between these men and certain foundations: William fitz Osbern subscribed a charter of Saint Amand of Rouen, where his mother was abbess, Saint Ouen of Rouen where his father donated, and also founded Notre Dame of Lyre. But these connections do not influence the number of his appearances, and he was widely recognized throughout Normandy, as was Roger of Montgomery. This can be contrasted with the other men of the comital/ducal family, whose appearances seem much more affected by their connections with certain foundations.

Thirty seven recipient foundations recorded the activity of William II from 1035-66. William's widespread recognition is set apart from all others; William fitz Osbern and Roger of Montgomery were recorded in the charters of twenty-five and twenty-three foundations respectively. Matilda's activity was recorded in the charters of twenty-one different beneficiaries. These numbers are notably high: the next highest is the fifteen beneficiaries who recorded the activity of Robert Curthose and Roger of Beaumont. Matilda was never recorded in the charters for Saint Père of Chartres, Saint Pierre of Préaux, Saint Amand of Rouen, Le Bec, Fécamp and Jumièges; all of which are foundations with multiple surviving charters in this collection. That she was never recorded by Saint Père, where Gunnor was, further strengthens the suggestion that Gunnor's family connection to that foundation was important. Compared with her predecessors Matilda had fewer connections to individual foundations which might have affected her representation in the charters, and she was recorded in the charters of three times as many beneficiaries. The sheer number of beneficiaries, and the geographical spread which they represent suggests, at least *prima facie*, a widespread perception of Matilda's importance.

It is clear that the statistical analysis of individual appearances within eleventh-century charters is problematic. Nonetheless it points to some first conclusions and

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[660] He subscribes ten out of the twelve charters extant from Marmoutier in this period. Montgomery itself is in Calvados, in central Normandy, but Roger of Montgomery had claim to the strategic (and disputed) Bellême lands around Alençon on the southern border through his wife Mabel, the heiress of Bellême, Thompson, 'The Norman Aristocracy before 1066', pp. 260-61.

questions. It highlights those who should be compared with Matilda, and it shows a different group from that in the charters from the reign of Richard II. This evidence suggests a chronological change in the role of the comital/ducal family in government from the early- to mid-eleventh century.[661] Richard II kept a group of close family members with him. During the reign of William II from 1035-66, the family members seem to have had a more localized power associated with specific areas of Normandy, and they were not prominent actors in the charters of the count/duke.

There also appears to have been a shift in the power of the women of the comital/ducal family. In contrast to the reign of Richard II, when the wives of the count/duke were not the most prominent actors, Matilda was present in a higher percentage of charters than her eldest son, or the Archbishop of Rouen.[662] As a wife she was not a member of a group of close family. Nor does she seem to have had connections with specific foundations, like Gunnor with Mont Saint Michel and Saint Père of Chartres, or Papia with Saint Wandrille, which may have influenced the number of her appearances.[663] These differences, when viewed comparatively in this way, don't seem explicable just by diplomatic developments or changes. Together with William fitz Osbern and Roger II of Montgomery, Matilda was part of a group whom historians have identified as being close advisors to count/duke William and a central part of his government.[664]

Roles and Context

The overall statistics and patterns are telling, but, once again, more detailed analysis of context, roles and descriptions are necessary. Like her predecessors Matilda made donations, although no charter of donation recording her action in the first person survives as it did for Gunnor. However, Matilda's donations, recorded both in concert with her husband William and independently, set her apart from the wives and mother who came before her. One of these is recorded in the pancarte for Saint George of Boscherville in which William confirms the donations made to the abbey, including twenty acres of their

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[661] Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, pp. 173-9.
[662] The archbishops of Rouen during William's reign, Mauger and Maurilius, are collectively present in only twenty-one percent of the Norman ducal charters from 1035 - 1066, and only sixteen percent of the charters which can possibly be dated after the marriage of William and Matilda; this is a sharp contrast from the earlier activity of Archbishop Robert of Rouen.
[663] Matilda was connection to La Trinité of Caen, and appears in the only charter produced by the foundation for this period. Thus her relationship there does not affect the number of her appearances in general, or her general representation.
[664] Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 79; Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, pp. 193-7.

land and three *allods* which he and Matilda donated together.[665] None of Matilda's predecessors were recorded as being involved in a donation of land which was not specifically noted to be their dower land. The language of this donation may suggest joint ownership and partnership. None of the previous comital/ducal women were recorded acting jointly with their husbands in this way.

Like Judith, Matilda was involved in the creation and endowment of foundations – although not just as a donor of land. She and William installed canons at Cherbourg between 1063 and 1066.[666] This charter also recorded Matilda's gift of one hundred *solidi* towards the foundation of a new church at Cherbourg.[667] She and William were also involved in the dedication of Saint Martin du Bosc, the priory re-established as a dependency of Fécamp. The foundation charter of the priory records William's agreement to the re-establishment, and the joint action of William and Matilda, who summoned Bishop Hugh of Lisieux and the Abbot of Troarn, as well as their *fideles*, to the dedication ceremony.[668]

Most of Matilda's known recorded donations were to La Trinité of Caen, recorded in the abbey foundation charter.[669] Matilda founded the abbey with William. Together they donated two *vills* with their dependencies, a fourth of another *vill*, one hundred and forty acres of land in Caen, as well as parts of five other estates. Matilda bought land from two different people; she paid Milo and Lescelina twenty-four pounds, and paid the sons of Wimund Cufel thirty-two pounds and two pecks of grain.[670] She bought the *allod* held by Conan, son of Rannulf, for twenty pounds and a mark of gold.[671] She also made three purchases of land for undisclosed sums of money, and she gave a counter-gift of thirty pounds to Baldwin fitz Gilbert and his wife Emma for their donation.[672]

In contrast to Judith when founding Bernay, Matilda was not recorded using her dower land to endow La Trinité of Caen, although there is evidence from the post-1066

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[665] *RADN*, No. 197, 'Uxor quoque mea [William II] pro retributione justorum eisdem allegavit in Brunetot XX acras terre et tres alodii possessores'.
[666] *RADN*, No. 224.
[667] *RADN*, No. 224, '[William II] jussit fieri aliam ecclesiam extra castellum et incipi de suo proprio, ad cujus fundamentum incipiendum, Madhildis comitissa dedit centum solidos'.
[668] *RADN*, No. 218, 'Dux ergo cum conjuge sua, accito prefato pontifice [Hugh of Lisieux] atque Durando Troarcensi abbate ac fidelium maxima parte dedicationi interfuit honorifice, sponseque Deo ibi consecrate hec stabilivit in dote'.
[669] *RADN*, No. 231.
[670] *RADN*, No. 231, 'Emit comitissa de Milone et Lechelina uxore sua... IIII viginti libras. Emit etiam comitissa... de filiis Wimundi Cufel... XXXII libris et duobus modiis frumenti'.
[671] *RADN*, No. 231, 'Emit comitissa... Conanus in eadem villa tenuit in alodia, viginti libris et uno marco auri'.
[672] *RADN*, No. 231, 'Deditque illis comitissa in amicicia multisque retributionibus XXX libras'.

charters that she had a Norman dower and did donate some of it to another foundation. Most of her activity involved the use of money to purchase land. Given that Musset proposed a shift in the eleventh century between the reign of Richard II and Richard III from ducal revenue drawn from estates which were mainly rural lands to a reliance on income from tithes and fees, these references to gifts of cash and purchases are interesting.[673] Was Matilda's dower perhaps closer to that of Adela, which was mostly made up of administrative rights? This may have resulted in her being cash-rich, perhaps not rich in land. She was then able to translate her money into land, purchased from others, or use it to make counter-gifts in return for donations. These resources which perhaps came from her dower, enabled Matilda to donate, to endow and found, just as her predecessors did.

During the reign of Richard II, relatively few individuals were recorded in the action of consenting. This limited group included Richard II and Archbishop Robert of Rouen; Richard III and Robert I, who acted as consenters to pancartes recording the donations of their predecessors; and one record each for King Robert the Pious, Abbot Henry of Saint Ouen, Gunnor, and two women: the wife of Robert of Avranches and Wandelburgis, wife of Rainier.[674] With the exception of Gunnor, the women were recorded consenting to the donations of their husbands; they may have been present because of family claims to land, or family involvement in the grant. In the charters of Richard II, consenting was a limited activity, recorded as undertaken by family members or very prominent men. This pattern continued during the reign of Robert I: the only recorded acts of consent were those of Robert himself, his uncle Archbishop Robert, his cousin Bishop Hugh of Bayeux, and his son William.[675] No women were recorded as consenters in any of the charters from the reign of Robert I.

This situation changes in William's time. Many more men were recorded as consenters; the consenters were not always members of the ducal family, or otherwise prominent.[676] The shift is most remarkable in the case of women. If we include the actions of Matilda of Flanders, there were thirty-four recorded instances of female consent in the Norman ducal charters from the reign of William II before 1066. Compared with the early-eleventh-century charters, women were recorded as consenters almost twice as often

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[673] Musset, 'Actes inédits du XI[e] siècle', pp. 33-4.
[674] *RADN*, Nos. 16, 50.
[675] *RADN*, Nos. 60, 72, 74, 81, 82, 84 (Robert I), 60 (William II), 61, 64, 72 (Robert of Rouen), 64 (Hugh of Bayeux). The consent of William II, Roger of Beaumont and Archbishop John of Fécamp recorded in No. 88 may represent a later interpolation, as William is given his royal title.
[676] There are twice as many charters extant from William's reign before 1066 than from the reigns of Richard II, Richard III and Robert. However, there are six times as many recorded acts of consent (two hundred and thirty two from 1035-66, compared to forty from 996-1035).

during the period 1035-66.[677] This, combined with the increase in records of male consent during the same period, suggests a diplomatic change. There is clearly a general increase in the recording of female consenters, so it is unsurprising that Matilda was recorded in this role more often than her predecessors. However, the prominence and pattern of her consent is still worth consideration. She consented twelve times; one third of all acts of consent by women recorded between 1035-66 are records of Matilda's activity. Furthermore, the context of her consent suggests that the perception of her power in this role was very different from Gunnor, who was presented as an influential counselor in the court of her son, or from her predecessor Emma, who was recorded as present in the court of her husband, and whose presence was likely influenced by beneficiary practices.

In the case of women in general, the context of consent is usually familial. Twenty three of these acts of consent were made by women to donations or sales made by their husband, father, or son. This includes five times when Matilda was recorded as a consenter to a donation made by her husband [see Figure 6.5]. I have added the donation of Adela of Flanders, Matilda's mother, to this group.

DONOR	RECIPIENT	CONSENTERS
William II	Marmoutier	assensu et auctoritate meae conjugis, nomine Meheldis et filii mei Willelmi[678]
William II	Montivilliers	annuente filio suo Roberto et conjuge
William II	St Michel of Tréport	Concessu uxoris sue Matildis nomine et filiorum suorum Roberti et Willermi[679]
William II	Cathedral of Bayeux	in presentia uxoris mee Mathildis et filiorum Rotberti atque Ricardi[680]
William II	Cathedral of Avranches	Hanc vero donationem, favente Maltide, mea reverentissima conjuge, concedente Roberto filio meo
Adela of Flanders	Montivilliers	annuente Guillelmo comite cum Matthilda conjuge et filio ejus Roberto comite[681]

Figure 6.5 – *Charters recording Matilda's consent to family donations, c. 1050-66.*

When consenting to donations made by family members, Matilda was always recorded acting with at least one of her sons, but there was no consistent family group. The family did not always consent to the donations of the count/duke. Were these occurrences when

[677] Three of the forty consenters from the reigns of Richard II, Richard III and Robert are women, or eight percent. The percentage of women jumps to fifteen percent during the reign of William II before 1066.

[678] This charter survives in a copy from the twelfth century. This is a unique time when William Rufus appears without Robert Curthose as well. Given that William later became king of England, it seems likely that the list of consenters has been abbreviated.

[679] *RADN*, No. 215.

[680] *RADN*, No. 219.

[681] *RADN*, No. 226.

Matilda had some claim on land – perhaps land jointly held, as we saw in the donation to Saint Georges of Boscherville? The context here seems firmly familial.

However, this is not always the case, for Matilda or for other women. In addition to Matilda, there are four women who consented to donations when they were not related to the donor. The first is Adeline, the wife of Roger of Beaumont, who consented with her husband and her sons to a donation made by Geoffrey of Lamara. The record specifically stated that Roger was Geoffrey's lord.[682] Together, Adeline and Roger received a countergift of money in return for their consent. The second woman is Emma, the wife of Osbern the Steward, who consented to a donation in which she was specified as the lord of the donor, Ansfredus.[683] Emma's sons William fitz Osbern and Osbern fitz Osbern also consented, and the three of them together added their *signa* at the end of the charter. Although the donation of Ansfredus does not specify the fact, it has been suggested that the absence of her husband from the family group indicates that Emma was a widow.[684] Does the presence of her sons indicate that she was consenting as the widow of a lord, rather than as a lord herself? Was Emma an independent lord? The third woman consented to the donation of a certain Urso; she was named as Hermna, the widow of his deceased lord Azo, and consented with her three sons.[685] The donations of Ansfredus and Urso were made to La Trinité du Mont of Rouen, and were recorded in that foundation's cartulary.

All the above-mentioned women consented as part of a family group, but here the family group shared lordship, not merely claims to family land. It seems that wives could be recognized as part of a family group which shared some of the authority of the lord, although it should be noted that there are many more instances of lordly consent without wives and children present. It was typical for lords to sign charters to which they had given their consent, and both Emma and Hermna signed along with their children. It is entirely possible that Adeline and Roger also signed, but that their *signa* were lost when the document was copied into the pancarte in which it survives. It is noteworthy that Adeline and Emma were closely related to prominent men: Adeline the wife of Roger of Beaumont and Emma the mother of William fitz Osbern. This suggests that lordly consent, unsurprisingly, for women and men was the province of the highest levels of Norman

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[682] *RADN*, No. 218.
[683] *RADN*, No. 119.
[684] *RADN*, p. 283.
[685] *RADN*, No. 221.

society. Does it indicate that at this level women could share in lordship and power with their husbands?[686]

The fourth woman who consented when not related to the donor was recorded in an extremely abbreviated mention copied into a pancarte, this time for Montivilliers, where Walter Giffard and his wife Agnes consented and witnessed a donation made by four men: Gulbertus, Alveredus, Gilbert and Walter the chamberlain.[687] Any explanation of their connection has been lost in the copying process, but it is certainly possible that this is another case of lordly consent which included a woman. These women provide context and comparison for Matilda, who is also recorded acting in this way.

William II gave consent to donations where he was specifically named as the lord of the donor eleven times.[688] Matilda (and their son Robert) were only recorded with him once.[689] Matilda was clearly not always associated with William as a lord. The charter in question records the donation of a certain Estigandus to Saint Ouen of Rouen. Matilda's presence with her husband in this role does not seem to be the result of a beneficiary preference, as at Saint Ouen of Rouen, William was recorded consenting as the lord of two other individuals, Roger of Clera and Robert Bertram.[690] In neither case were members of his family associated with the action. However, when consenting with Matilda and Robert Curthose, William was not recorded as the lord of Estigandus, but of Estigandus' son, Odo, who was William's seneschal.[691] Estigandus made his donation for the soul of his deceased son. Is the household connection crucial here? Are the members of the comital/ducal family present because of the connection to a former official who was a member of the household?

These explicit references to lordship do not, however, cover all the reference to consent, either by William II or Matilda. Nor do probable family connections. In most of the cases of consent in these charters there was a connection between the consenter and the donor. However, this was not always the case with William II. William consented to donations sixty times in these charters. If we stretch the definition of his family members to its widest extent, including distant relations such as Adela of Flanders, Roger of Montgomery, Roger of Beaumont and William fitz Osbern, William gave consent to the

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[686] LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, pp. 84-91.
[687] *RADN*, No. 217.
[688] *RADN*, Nos. 147, 158, 167, 169, 170, 191, 195, 196, 205, 223, 225.
[689] *RADN*, No. 158, 'consensum Guillelmi comitis, domini sui et Mathildis uxoris ejus et Rodberti eorum filii quem elegerant ad gubernandum regnum post suum obitum'.
[690] *RADN*, Nos. 191, 205.
[691] *RADN*, No. 158.

donations of family members fourteen times.[692] This includes three of Matilda's purchases for La Trinité of Caen. Only a quarter of William's acts of consent were to donations where he is related to the donor. Only a fifth of his acts of consent were in circumstances where he is named as the lord of the donor. Most of his acts of consent were therefore to donations where there is no explicit connection between him and the grant or the donor.

Tabuteau has suggested that in these circumstances William's presence indicates an effort made by the recipients and donors to ensure the security of their transaction should a later claim be brought.[693] If we take Tabuteau's point that the count/duke was a desirable presence because he was the highest public authority in Normandy and likely to oversee any later claims made on the land being granted, then does the presence of his wife indicate an acknowledgement that she also could participate in that role and share that authority? Could it be a sign of her influence or even partnership with her husband? Matilda was recorded acting with William in this way four times [see Figure 6.6].

DONOR	RECIPIENT	CONSENTERS
Fredebert	Marmoutier	Guilelmo illius patriae comite cum uxore propria Adila favorabilem[694]
Fredebert	Marmoutier	confirmante nostro Guillelmo illius provinciae venerabili comite, cum uxore propria Madilla favorabilem prebente assensum[695]
Roger Malus Filiaster	Beaumont les Tours	favente Guillelmo nobilissimo Normannorum duce et conjuge sua Mathilde filiisque suis, videlicet Roberto, Richardo, Guielmo[696]
Richard, nephew of Helvise	Coulombs	sub favore et praesentia clarissimi Normannorum ducis Guillelmi et uxoris ejus nobilissimae Mathildis eorumque clarissimae [sic] prolis Rotberti[697]

Figure 6.6 – *Charters recording Matilda's consent to non-familial, non-lordly donations, c. 1050-66*

There are no apparent beneficiary patterns here which may have influenced the perception or presentation of Matilda: three of these four charters are for foundations outside Normandy, and none seem to have a connection to Matilda.[698] There are additional Marmoutier charters where William was recorded as a consenter without an explicit family

[692] *RADN*, Nos. 112, 118, 123, 129, 174, 180, 181, 201, 223, 226, 231, 233.
[693] E.Z. Tabuteau, *Transfers of Property in Eleventh-Century Norman Law* (Chapel Hill, 1988), pp. 188-90.
[694] *RADN*, No. 163, This charter is only known from an seventeenth-century analysis by Le Michel. Fauroux accepts the document, but believes that Le Michel has made a naming error here. *RADN*, pp. 353-4, n. 3.
[695] *RADN*, No. 163b.
[696] *RADN*, No. 227.
[697] *RADN*, No. 230.
[698] In contrast to Gunnor, for example, who was recorded in charters produced outside Normandy in circumstances where the family group or family connections to a foundation were likely influential.

connection or being named as lord of the donor; but Matilda was not associated with him.[699] Beneficiary preference is thus not an explanation. There were clearly certain circumstances in which Matilda was associated with William's power as count/duke of Normandy. It is thus noteworthy that Matilda was not given the title *comitissa* when consenting. Even when possibly acting in partnership with William in a role which expressed his authority over all Normandy, it was the family relationship which is recorded.

Matilda was only once recorded acting as a consenter independently of William. At some time between 1050 and 1066 William confirmed multiple grants made to the abbey of Saint George of Boscherville. One of the donations was made by a certain Goisbertus, with the consent of Matilda.[700] There are important caveats here. The pancarte only survives in a thirteenth century copy, and some alterations must have been made, because Matilda was given the title *regina*, which she could not have had before 1066. Was her consent made after 1066 and added into the pancarte at some later time? Or did the thirteenth century copyist, knowing that Matilda did become a queen, simply add in the title to an earlier consent that she made? Could she have made this consent as the wife of a count/duke, or was independent consent something that was reserved for queens? It will be interesting to see what types of roles Matilda plays in the charters written after 1066, and if her attainment of the title *regina* allows her to act in more independent ways, or otherwise influenced the recording of her actions.

Consenting is a role recorded more often in this period than at the beginning of the eleventh century. Matilda appears in ways which other very high-status women did: consenting to donations made by members of her family, possibly because of family claims on the land being granted and sometimes consenting to donations when her husband was the lord of the donor. She also acted as a consenter with William when he was recorded in a way which expressed his comital/ducal authority as the highest secular power in Normandy, although this association was infrequently recorded; William appears far more often alone. Nevertheless, Matilda was associated with comital/ducal power throughout the principality and is distinguished from other Norman women through this act. Additionally, Matilda's act of independent consent to a non-family donation is unique among women in this period, although she may have been recorded acting as a queen after 1066. This raises important questions about the differences and similarities between the

[699] Only one William II charter survives from Beaumont les Tours and Coulombs.
[700] *RADN*, No. 197, 'Matildis regina X VII acras Goisberti dedit ipsis in alodium, eo annuente cum filiis ejus Robert, Gisleberto'.

power of queens and wives of the count/dukes which will be raised in the subsequent chapter.

If consent sets Matilda apart from her predecessors, so too does the role of intercession; the women of the comital/ducal family were never recorded in this role during the reign of Richard II. Intercession has been highlighted by Hyam and Nelson as a role which a Carolingian queen would play, and where female power, expressed as influence, could be seen.[701] Hyam's work suggests the significance here of links between Carolingian queens and certain foundations. Intercession thus makes the intercessor into a bridge, who can act and have an effect on both parties involved.[702] Parallel to this is the argument that the counts in France took on a quasi-regal authority after the dissolution of centralized royal power; intercession is thus an important role which may suggest that the wife of the count/duke in Normandy had, or was perceived as having, a more quasi-queenly power.

The act of intercession was rare for a woman in the Norman charters which predate 1066. There was one recorded female intercession from the charters of the reign of Richard II, the aforementioned request of a certain Enna, who was supported by Gunnor.[703] There were two recorded during the reign of Robert I: a joint request made to Robert by *Vicecomes* Joscelin of Arques and his wife Emma, and a request made to Robert by his aunt Beatrice, the abbess of Montivilliers.[704] Between 1035-66 there were five. In the first, recorded between 1037-48, William of Arques and Archbishop Mauger of Rouen donated land to Saint Ouen of Rouen in accordance with the wishes of their mother Papia.[705] Papia's role in this charter is unclear: from the wording it is possible that she had died and left a will instructing her sons to make this donation, or that she was still living and asked them to make this grant. This is the only recorded act of intercession by a woman who does not have a known connection to the recipient foundation.

Matilda of Flanders interceded in 1066 on behalf of her own foundation of La Trinité of Caen.[706] Her action was recorded in the foundation charter of La Trinité. She requested that Baldwin fitz Gilbert and his wife Emma donate to her new foundation, and

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[701] See above, p. 34.
[702] Hyam, 'Ermentrude and Richildis', pp. 162-63.
[703] See above, p. 111.
[704] *RADN,* No. 61, 'ad suggestum quorumdam fidelium nostrorum, Gozelini videlicet vicecomitis et Emmeline uxoris ejus'; *RADN,* No. 90, 'amitta mea, nomine Beatrice, id agente et studente'; For Beatrice see E. van Houts, *The Normans in Europe* (Manchester, 2000), p. 183-4.
[705] *RADN,* No. 112, preserved as a single sheet original. William and Mauger's grant was made *per voluntatem matris mee Pavie.*
[706] *RADN,* No. 231, preserved in the cartulary of La Trinité of Caen.

made a counter-gift to them.[707] Another woman who interceded on behalf of a new foundation was Lesceline, the wife of William of Eu, and mother of Robert of Eu and Bishop Hugh of Lisieux. Lesceline, together with her son Hugh, requested that William II donate Saint Désir, on the outskirts of Lisieux, for the construction of a new foundation there.[708] Lesceline and Hugh also endowed their new house with land and privileges, including the protection of Hugh, the diocesan bishop.

The final two recorded acts of intercession were made by the abbess of Montivilliers. In 1048 the anonymous abbess interceded to protest a donation made by William II to Saint Riquier, but William judged against her and Montivilliers, denying their claim to the land in question.[709] The abbey was more successful when the abbess interceded with William again between 1050-66, as she successfully requested a donation of land, and made a counter-gift of a gold chalice.[710]

All these female intercessors are either women related to the comital/ducal family, or the abbess of a prominent house (and one in which a previous abbess, Beatrice, was William's great-aunt). Four of them had connections to the foundations on whose behalf they made requests, while Papia was related to the donor. Half of the male intercessors in this period are either members or patrons of a particular foundation.[711] One eighth were related to the donor: either family members, lords, or *fideles*.[712] Abbots were the most common intercessors, making requests on behalf of their foundations.[713] Female intercessors fall into the same categories. It seems that intercession is not a 'feminine' or 'masculine' role, but rather that there were types of high status people who acted as intercessors, and that status, connection to foundations, and presumably influence were as important as gender.

What does it say about Matilda that she was recorded in this role where her predecessors were not? That Matilda was recorded in this role is clearly influenced by the beneficiary who produced the charter; her relationship as the founder of La Trinité of Caen

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[707] *RADN*, No. 231, 'Balduinus filius Gilleberti comitis et uxor ejus Emma pro animarum redemptione dederunt... per deprecationem comitisse. Deditque illis comitissa in amicicia multisque retributionibus XXX libras'.
[708] *RADN*, No. 140, 'Petitionis affectum quorundam fidelium nostrorum Hugonis videlicet Lexoviensis episcopi et matris ejus Lieceline'.
[709] *RADN*, No. 115.
[710] *RADN*, No. 198.
[711] Twenty out of forty two recorded instances of intercession.
[712] Six out of forty two. These are the only two identifiable categories, with the count/duke making six intercessions, and eleven cases where relationships between intercessor, donor and foundation are not detailed. There is one act of intercession which counts in two categories: when Bishop Odo of Bayeux intercedes to ask his brother William II to donate to Bayeux, *RADN*, No. 219.
[713] *RADN*, Nos. 94, 95, 110, 114, 115, 137, 142, 146, 147, 148, 156, 159, 228, 232.

provides the context for this unique appearance. This recorded activity is still noteworthy, as other comital/ducal family women with known connections to foundations, including Gunnor as a patron of Mont Saint Michel and Judith as the founder of Bernay were not recorded in this role. The question here may be one of charter diplomatic, which changes during the eleventh century. Matilda was given the title *comitissa* when acting as a intercessor. Neither Papia nor Lesceline were given a title, rather they were described by their family relationships. Could this be an indication that, at least in Caen, Matilda's power and influence when acting on behalf of her foundation were perceived as being quasi-queenly, and given a special authority through the use of a title?

The final activity to consider is subscription, the most common activity for Matilda's predecessors and Matilda herself. Gunnor and Judith especially were recorded as part of a family group which subscribed the charters of Richard II. This family group may have been central to the comital/ducal court in Rouen, with the recorded acts of subscription a recognition of their public power, power which was based on their family connections. Subscription was also the only role in which the women were described with a comital title, and it was tentatively suggested that the use of the title at Saint Ouen of Rouen may have reflected a perception of an 'official' comital power when these women acted outside of the family group. Beneficiary patterns were extremely important, with the recorded activity and description of Gunnor and Papia possibly influenced by their natal family connections to the foundations of Saint Père of Chartres and Saint Wandrille. The issues raised in the previous chapter, of women recorded as part of a family group, of public power, of the use of titles possibly hinting at comital power for the women of the family, and the importance of beneficiary influence will all be important.

Matilda acted as a subscriber to thirty-five charters. She subscribed at a rate comparable to that of Gunnor, but far higher than her predecessors as wife of the count/duke.[714] The only contemporary men who subscribed more often than she did were William fitz Osbern and Roger of Montgomery.[715] Roger of Beaumont was recorded as a subscriber only twenty times. The male members of the comital/ducal family were recorded as subscribers less often than Matilda: Robert Curthose in twenty charters, Archbishop Mauger of Rouen in seventeen, William of Arques in eleven, Bishop Odo of

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[714] Gunnor was recorded as a subscriber in one out of four charters from the reign of Richard II. Matilda was also recorded at a rate of one out of four for the period 1035-66. However, her actual rate of subscription was likely closer to one in three for the period 1050-66. In contrast (taken together to represent Richard II's 'wife' across the entirety of his reign), Judith and Papia collectively were recorded as subscribers in one out of six charters.

[715] William is recorded as a subscriber to forty seven charters, Roger of Montgomery to forty four.

Bayeux in eleven, Bishop Hugh of Lisieux in ten, Robert of Mortain in nine, Robert of Eu in six and Richard of Evreux in five. As discussed above, the male members of the comital/ducal family seem to have been recorded because of connections with specific geographical areas or specific foundations, rather than because of their family relationship to the count/duke. Robert of Eu's *signum* may have been sought by La Trinité du Mont and Saint Ouen of Rouen, whereas William of Arques and Mauger of Rouen were both prominent subscribers for Saint Wandrille.

Matilda was recorded as a subscriber by twenty-one different beneficiaries. The number of different foundations and their geographical range distinguishes her from her predecessors. There is a similar spread of recognition for William fitz Osbern, recorded as a subscriber by twenty-five foundations, and Roger of Montgomery, recorded by twenty-three. In comparison with the next two most prominent men, Roger of Beaumont was recorded as a subscriber by fifteen foundations, Robert Curthose by fourteen. There are few notable beneficiary patterns to suggest that the number of Matilda's appearances was influenced by beneficiary preference. There were no foundations for which her subscription is always recorded.[716] She may have been sought as a subscriber by Saint Ouen of Rouen; her subscription was recorded in seven of the thirteen extant Saint Ouen charters, compared with only four for William fitz Osbern and only two for Roger of Montgomery. Conversely, her subscription is only recorded in one of twelve extant Marmoutier charters, in contrast to William and Roger, whose subscriptions were recorded respectively six and ten times. These patterns, while noteworthy, do not alone determine her appearances.

Matilda does not appear to be recognized as part of a family group, in the way that Gunnor and Judith were associated with Archbishop Robert, Richard III, Mauger of Rouen and William of Eu. The male members of the comital/ducal family from the mid-eleventh century appear in a significantly fewer number of charters: they were clearly not associated with Matilda in such a way that her presence would not be recorded unless they too were present and recorded. There is little overlap, and the few charters where several members of the comital/ducal family appear together do not suggest a family group in the comital/ducal household as we saw under Richard II. Nor does Matilda appear to have been associated with the two most prominent subscribers of the comital/ducal charters: William fitz Osbern and Roger of Montgomery, whether in general or by any particular

[716] This does not include the foundations for which only one charter survives from the period.

beneficiary. If we examine their subscriptions on a foundation-by-foundation basis, there does not appear to be any foundation which conceived of them as a group.

All three were recorded as subscribers in several charters for three houses: Mont Saint Michel, Montivilliers, and Saint Ouen of Rouen. Matilda was recorded as a subscriber with both William and Roger to a donation from her husband William to Montivilliers.[717] However, another Montivilliers charter recorded a donation of William II with Matilda's consent, and the subscription of Roger, without William fitz Osbern or Matilda.[718] Roger subscribed an additional two donations of William II, and William fitz Osbern subscribed a different donation of William, as well as a donation of Adeleia, wife of Gerald Boctoy.[719] There is no pattern here to suggest that the three individuals in question were conceived of as a group. In the charters of Mont Saint Michel, Matilda was recorded as a subscriber twice, once to a donation of her husband William, and once to the donation of a certain Roger.[720] William fitz Osbern subscribed two different charters: the joint donation of Neil and William II, and the donation of Roger of Montgomery.[721] Roger of Montgomery also subscribed these two charters, plus the donation of the certain Roger with Matilda.[722] All three were also recorded in different charters from Saint Ouen of Rouen. Matilda subscribed seven times, to donations by six separate donors.[723] The subscription of William fitz Osbern was recorded four times, twice with Matilda, and twice to charters which she does not subscribe.[724] Roger of Montgomery acted as a subscriber twice, neither time with Matilda or William.[725]

Additionally, there are notable foundations such as La Trinité du Mont in Rouen where Matilda subscribed three charters, each with a different donor, only one of which was also subscribed by William fitz Osbern.[726] William was recorded as a subscriber in four other charters for La Trinité du Mont, for four different donors, and Roger of Montgomery

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[717] *RADN*, No. 198. All three may have additionally subscribed the donation of Adela of Flanders, where it seems likely that the list of consenters and subscribers was condensed into a single list when the charter was copied into a pancarte, *RADN*, No. 226.
[718] *RADN*, No. 203.
[719] *RADN*, Nos. 166, 171, 172, 173.
[720] *RADN*, Nos. 148, 232.
[721] *RADN*, Nos. 132, 233.
[722] *RADN*, Nos. 132, 232, 233.
[723] *RADN*, Nos. 158, 193, 205, 210, 211. Of her seven appearances, two are to copies of a charter of joint donation by William II and Robert Curthose. These copies are substantially different, and thus considered separately, *RADN*, Nos. 204, 204b.
[724] *RADN*, Nos. 191, 193, 204, 204b.
[725] *RADN*, Nos. 105, 107.
[726] Matilda subscribes *RADN*, Nos. 130 and 202. She and William fitz Osbern are subscribers together on No. 138.

was only recorded once.[727] Le Bec recorded the subscription of William fitz Osbern four times, once together with Roger of Montgomery, and Matilda was never recorded.[728] William fitz Osbern made donations to both of La Trinité du Mont and Le Bec; neither Matilda nor Roger subscribed those charters.[729] In the Marmoutier charters there is one document which records the subscription of Matilda, William fitz Osbern and Roger of Montgomery.[730] William and Roger also acted as subscribers on another five donations, made by Fredebert, John of Laval, William II and jointly by William II and Robert Curthose.[731] Roger subscribed a further four charters: three additional donations by William II and the donation of Maino of Filgeriis.[732]

Nor was Matilda always associated with her eldest son Robert, although they were very often together. Robert Curthose was present with his mother forty-six percent of the time when she was recorded as a subscriber.[733] However, she was present eighty percent of the time when he subscribes.[734] It seems that his appearances were much more connected with her presence than hers were with his. There are no clear beneficiary patterns that may have affected the times when mother and son appear either together or apart. There is also evidence that their presence together was not the result of beneficiary preference, as they are not always recorded as subscribers together by either Marmoutier or Saint Ouen of Rouen.[735]

Not only is there no clear beneficiary-based pattern, there is no pattern which would associate Matilda, William fitz Osbern or Roger of Montgomery with a specific donor, including the count/duke. This is a contrast to Matilda's predecessors, who mostly acted as subscribers to donations made by Richard II. Only half of Matilda's subscriptions were recorded in charters where the donation was made by her husband, and many of her subscriptions were recorded in charters where she had no family connection to the donor.

This last type of subscription requires further attention. Of the thirty charters which record her subscription, seventeen record donations made by individuals who were

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[727] *RADN*, Nos. 96, 118, 119 and 123. Roger of Montgomery is a subscriber on No. 123.
[728] *RADN*, Nos. 179, 180, 181, 189. Roger of Montgomery is a subscriber on No. 179.
[729] *RADN*, Nos. 118, 180, 181.
[730] *RADN*, Nos. 141.
[731] *RADN*, Nos. 137, 151, 228.
[732] *RADN*, Nos. 150, 160, 161, 162.
[733] They are together sixteen of the thirty five times that she is recorded as a subscriber.
[734] Sixteen out of twenty.
[735] Robert subscribes twice for Marmoutier: once to a grant by John of Laval, once to a joint grant made by himself and his father, neither of these occasions record his mother, *RADN*, Nos. 137, 228. They are recorded together four times by Saint Ouen of Rouen, *RADN*, Nos. 158, 204, 204b, 205. Robert is recorded an additional time without Matilda, *RADN*, No. 212. Matilda is recorded as a subscriber three additional times without Robert, *RADN*, Nos. 193, 210, 211.

not members of the comital/ducal family.[736] Here it is important to compare Matilda with her husband. William was recorded as a subscriber one hundred and five times between 1035-66. Of these records of subscription, thirty-two were recorded in his own grants; only eight were recorded in grants made by members of the comital/ducal family, where family claims may have been important; sixty-five were to grants made by individuals who were not family members.[737] The bulk of William's recorded activity as a subscriber is thus within a non-familial context. This raises the possibility that in cases like this his subscription was a kind of consent as 'lord' of Normandy.[738] If so, Matilda's association with him in some of these instances would suggest that her subscription may sometimes be linked to comital/ducal power and authority. It may thus be significant that in all but three of these occurrences, Matilda was given her comital title when subscribing with William. The questions this raises about the indication of a more 'official' status will be addressed below.[739]

Matilda's activity as a subscriber in this way may be recorded more prominently in Rouen than elsewhere. Her three appearances recorded by La Trinité du Mont are three records of subscription to non-familial donations.[740] Her prominent record of appearances at Saint Ouen includes five records of subscription to non-familial donations, as well as her recorded subscription to a joint donation of William II and Robert Curthose, although unlike her husband she did not subscribe all of the surviving non-familial donations from either of these two foundations.[741] She was, however, recorded as a subscriber in this way throughout Normandy and in Tours: twice each in the charters of Saint Julien of Tours and Saint Vigor of Cerisy, and once each in the charters of Beaumont les Tours, Coulombs, Mont Saint Michel, Notre Dame of Lyre, and Saint Wandrille. It cannot be suggested that there is an overwhelming beneficiary pattern, but the fact that nearly half of Matilda's subscriptions to non-family donations were recorded in Rouen needs to be placed alongside the pattern

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[736] The donation made by Matilda's mother is considered to be a donation made by a family member. The donations of Osbern the steward and William fitz Osbern are not, as they were distant relations out of the direct comital/ducal line.

[737] The 'non-family' category includes Roger of Montgomery and Wm fitz Osbern, as they are not in the comital/ducal line (although they are distant cousins), as well as Henry I of France. William subscribes a charter of his where he (William) is grouped with non-Norman counts, including Baldwin. The document is from 1048 and thus predates William and Matilda's marriage (it's been suggested that this was the meeting where Baldwin and William began negotiations). This is thus a non-family charter, whereas the later donation of Adela of France to Montivilliers is a 'family' charter. William was married to Matilda by then, and on the witness list he is part of a family group with Matilda and the children.

[738] See above, pp. 35-40.

[739] See below, pp. 192-99

[740] *RADN*, Nos. 130, 138, 202.

[741] *RADN*, Nos. 158, 193, 205, 210, 211, and 204, 204b.

of her predecessors: whose association with comital/ducal authority may have been expressed in the same way by Saint Ouen.[742] Rouen, it seems, was still an important place where the power of the family women was expressed or recognized.

The other noteworthy point is that Matilda was not invariably associated with William in this way. No pattern seems to predict the appearances of his wife, nor equally of prominent men such as William fitz Osbern and Roger of Montgomery. Could some of these findings be explained by physical presence? In contrast to Richard II, where the evidence suggests a 'palace' style of government centered in Rouen and where a group of his family members may have been prominent in the court/and household, William II travelled widely throughout his territory.[743] Could the witness lists reflect both the fact that there was a small elite who were the most likely to be in attendance with William, but also that they were not always present?

One charter hints at how physical presence in the comital/ducal household may have shaped the lists of subscribers. It also may show how Matilda was perceived within the comital/ducal household and court during 1066, amid the preparations for William's departure. The charter records a donation by a certain Roger Malus Filiaster to the nunnery of Beaumont les Tours in Anjou, made with the consent of William II, Matilda, and their sons Robert, Richard and William.[744] William II then added his own donation. The text lists eleven witnesses to the grants, including Bishop Odo of Bayeux, Bishop Hugh of Lisieux, and Count Eustace of Boulogne. The scribe, archdeacon Richard, recorded where this took place: in the count/duke's room at Bayeux.[745] There is then a list of *signa*, which was headed by Matilda of Flanders.[746] William II's *signum* is notably absent.[747]

This is the only recorded appearance of Eustace of Boulogne in a Norman comital/ducal charter from the reign of William II. Given that Eustace was part of William's company when he conquered England, Fauroux has suggested that this charter can be dated to 1066, as William was making his preparations to leave. Is it possible that the

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[742] See above, p. 114-16.
[743] Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, pp. 151-2.
[744] *RADN*, No. 227.
[745] *RADN*, No. 227, 'apud Bajocas, in camera Guilelmi ducis'.
[746] This is the only list of subscribers to record Matilda's *signum* without also recording William's.
[747] There are some concerns with this charter. It survives in a seventeenth-century copy, which Fauroux has checked against a 'detailed analysis' from a twelfth-century confirmation charter of Henry II of England. There is evidence that the charter was amended after the initial record, as it records the witness of Archbishop John of Rouen, who did not take up the archbishopric until 1067. It may be that a later copyist substituted the archiepiscopal title for John's title as Bishop of Avranches (his position from 1060 – 1067) or added him to the previous list. However, it seems unlikely that both copyists would have omitted the *signum* of William II, or that any forger would have created a list of *signa* that was headed by Matilda without her husband.

grant was agreed, and the charter drawn up with a list of those who were witnesses to William's consent, before being presented for signing? Delays between the original agreement and the subscription of a charter are attested in other charters from this period.[748] What this may suggest is that when the representatives of Beaumont les Tours brought their charter to be subscribed, the count/duke was absent from his court, possibly in the course of preparing his fleet and men for departure to England. In his absence it seems Matilda signed the charter, accompanied by Roger Malus Filiaster, Bishop Odo of Bayeux, Bishop Hugh of Lisieux and Bishop Geoffrey of Coutances.

Matilda was not associated with a group the way that her predecessors were. However, she, along with William fitz Osbern and Roger of Montgomery, were the most prominent subscribers to the charters of William II, suggesting that they were often in attendance with him as he travelled throughout Normandy, and/or that there was the perception that they were the most powerful/influential members of that court. The sheer volume of Matilda's subscriptions, and the variety of foundations which recorded them, is noteworthy. The evidence that the subscription lists may be evidence of physical presence, is suggestive, and raises further questions about the itineraries of William and Matilda, and the possibility that she undertook independent travels. Unfortunately, only twenty-seven of the one hundred and forty surviving charters from the period 1035-66 record a location, and not all are clear if this is the location where the subscriptions were made. Thus an itinerary for either William or Matilda is difficult to work out, if not impossible.[749] The best evidence comes from the year 1066, when William and Matilda together subscribed charters at Fécamp, Bonneville and Caen.[750] Matilda also subscribed the aforementioned charter of Roger Malus Filiaster in Bayeux, and William and Robert Curthose subscribed a charter for Marmoutier in Rouen.[751] In this momentous year, at least, husband and wife were not always together.

If Matilda travelled apart from William, did she have her own household? Given the evidence for Gunnor's household, and the evidence that Matilda had a household when she was a queen, it seems likely that she did. This household may have been based in Caen, the city which she and William worked to build up as a center of power.[752] She may also have been based at Rouen, where her predecessors were. The evidence which

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[748] *RRAN*, pp. 39, 105-106.
[749] Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 152.
[750] *RADN*, Nos. 230, 231, 232.
[751] *RADN*, Nos. 227, 228.
[752] D. Bates, 'Rouen from 900 to 1204: From Scandinavian Settlement to Angevin "Capital"' in J. Stratford, ed, *Medieval Art, Architecture and Archaeology at Rouen* (London, 1993), p. 4.

suggests that the Rouennais foundations prominently recorded Matilda in the role of a subscriber to non-familial charters, where we may be seeing her associated with comital/ducal power, may underscore the continued importance of Rouen as a center of political power in Normandy. Matilda's travels may have been based around major centers: the only recorded locations of her subscription are at Rouen, Caen, Fécamp and Bonneville. William, without Matilda, was recorded in many more locations: Rouen, Le Bec, Senlis, Argentel, Domfront, Troarn, Préaux, La Hogue, Courdemanche, Jumièges and Brionne. That William was recorded in Rouen without Matilda suggests the complexity of the intersection of geographical location and the expression of power; the charter evidence is both tantalizing and difficult to interpret.

One further way of assessing Matilda's power, or the perception of it, is to examine the placement of the *signa* on those lists of subscription which have survived in their original form.[753] Matilda and William were almost always together, and usually her name follows his directly in any list of subscribers. Where the original charters have survived, William and Matilda's *signa* can be seen grouped together. I have identified three categories of lists to consider, each with their own possible effect on the placement of Matilda's subscription. In the first, crosses were made by the subscribers at the base of the parchment, with the names of the individuals written in later. In the second, the names were apparently written in by a scribe, with blank spaces left for the crosses to be made. The third type is where the list is ambiguous or shows evidence of multiple processes.

There are two instances where William and Matilda made their crosses before any names were written on the parchment. Their autograph *signa* can be seen together on a charter of donation from Osbern the Steward to Saint Ouen of Rouen; they have made their crosses to the lower left of the text of the charter, with the top of Matilda's cross just to the right, nestled under the horizontal line of William's.[754] Their crosses are distinctly separated from the other four, which are spread across the base of the parchment. The second is a joint donation of William II and Robert Curthose to Saint Ouen of Rouen which has autograph crosses, with the names written in after the crosses were placed. In the center of the parchment are the crosses of William, Matilda and Robert.[755] William's is to the left of center, with Matilda's again placed diagonally, slightly lower and to the right,

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[753] I would like to thank the Royal Historical Society, which provided me with a travel grant that enabled a visit to the BnF in Paris. Thanks also go to the archivists at the AD Seine Maritime, and the AD Calvados, who provided me with high quality facsimiles of the original charters in their collections.

[754] AD Seine-Maritime, 14 H 915, No. 2.

[755] AD Seine-Maritime, 14 H 145, No. 3.

from William's, and the top of her cross again nearly touches William's. Robert's cross is distinct from theirs, on the same line as William's, to the right of center. Other names are listed, but theirs are the only crosses. In both of these cases William and Matilda have clearly grouped their crosses together, distinct from all others.

Where the names have been written in first, there seems to be a recognition by scribes that William and Matilda were associated together. The list of subscribers to the donation of Osbern Deschtoth to Saint Ouen of Rouen shows William and Matilda again signing to the left of the parchment, just below the text.[756] Matilda's name was placed directly below that of William's. In the donation of Estigandus to Saint Ouen of Rouen, the *signa* follow on from the end of the text, and William and Matilda's *signa* were the only two on the same line as the last line of text, hers following his.[757]

The foundation charter of Saint Martin du Bosc is not clear as to the order of placing the crosses and the names. It records the confirmation of William, and his and Matilda's overseeing of the dedication of the Church.[758] The text of the parchment takes up the top half of the sheet. The bottom half of the parchment is empty, save for two lines of names halfway between the end of the text and the bottom of the sheet. The upper line has three names, regularly spaced across the sheet, from left to right they are William, Matilda and Robert Curthose. The script of this line is larger than the line below, distinguishing these three from those who follow. In the donation by Baldwin Filleul to Saint Wandrille, discussed in Chapter 3, the list appears to have been written in stages.[759] William's *signum* is part of a line of four *signa* that follows on from the original text, with the names written in the same hand as the text, and spaces left for crosses.[760] Other crosses were added below, in a haphazard row, with the names of those subscribers then written in a different script. Matilda and Robert's crosses are placed together at the left edge of the text; Matilda's is above Robert's, his is nestled just below and to the right of hers, on a diagonal.

These original charters are both important and tantalizing: not least because so few survive in which Matilda is a subscriber. The association of William and Matilda is consistent, whether by scribes compiling a list before the addition of crosses, or, perhaps especially significantly, when the autograph crosses were written first. The association of husband and wife, and their separation from other witnesses, is clear. This is especially

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[756] AD Seine-Maritime, 14 H 570, No. 2.
[757] AD Seine-Maritime, 14 H 774, No. 2.
[758] AD Seine-Maritime, 7 H 12, No. 1.
[759] See above, pp. 57-8.
[760] AD Seine-Maritime, 16 H 27, No. 5.

significant because four of these charters record donations made by individuals who were not members of the comital/ducal family. One of these is the donation of Estigandus in which Matilda was associated with William's lordly consent. Their association together as subscribers strengthens the evidence for Matilda's association with William's lordly power and authority in Normandy. Their partnership, however, was not necessarily equal. The diagonal presentation of Matilda's *signum*, below William's, seems to indicate secondary status and subordination as well as association and partnership. Robert's appearance in a similar relationship to his mother is suggestive here – both of the subordination of the much younger son to his parent, but also for her perceived significance as mother of the potential male heir.

The small sample size makes generalization hazardous. But these originals are invaluable testimony to contemporary perceptions. They underline the conclusions emerging from the overall statistics and from analysis of the different patterns of consent, intercession and subscription, namely, that Matilda was important both in Normandy and in Norman rule before 1066. The question becomes, how far is this importance linked to Matilda's individual circumstances, perhaps in connection with her bloodline, as emphasized in the narrative sources. Questions also arise about the possible development of a female office. How far is Matilda's importance the result of a more official position such as 'countess-ship'?

III. The use of *comitissa*

The consideration of the roles and patterns in which Matilda appeared has already suggested important things about recognition. Matilda was recognized in a range of activities, and the extent of the recognition has raised questions, especially about the importance of her familial roles as sources of her perceived power and authority. The association with her husband suggests that the role of the wife was important; Robert Curthose's association with her, though to a much greater extent than was hers with him, suggests a rather different conclusion about motherhood. Matilda did not appear with a strongly defined family group. This is not necessarily an indication that the familial role was not the source of her power, but especially when taken together with her appearances as a consenter and a subscriber alongside William in his comital/ducal role, does mean that we must ask seriously whether something more official, 'office-like', and more comparable to his power and authority are involved in perceptions of her.

We turn thus to the way Matilda was described when acting, seen in Figure 6.1: as *uxor/conjunx*, and as *comitissa*. Notably, she was never described as *mater*. Matilda was given the title of *comitissa* more regularly than her predecessors; they were only given a comital title in one third of their appearances, while she was described as *comitissa* fifty-seven percent of the time. The two descriptions were never combined. Matilda was always described as *uxor/conjunx* when acting as a consenter, which is especially noteworthy in the circumstances discussed above which may indicate an association of her with William's most public expression of 'lordly' power in Normandy. She was described with both titles on separate occasions when recorded acting as a donor. For Matilda, as for her predecessors, the comital title was used most often when she acted as a subscriber, and even more specifically when she acted as a signatory.[761] When Matilda subscribed charters, the title of *comitissa* was not used invariably, but the usage was far more consistent than it was for her predecessors. As far as we can tell, the pattern of use of the title for Matilda as a subscriber was consistent throughout the sixteen years she was married to William before the Conquest of England. Given the dating problems a firm chronology of Matilda's appearances is impossible; those charters which can be dated suggest the use of *comitissa* throughout the period.

Only three foundations gave Matilda's predecessors a comital title as subscribers, with the usage at Saint Wandrille and Saint Père possibly deriving from familial connections between the countesses and these houses. La Trinité of Caen apart, Matilda had no such connections to any Norman foundations. She was given the title of *comitissa* in charters written by many beneficiaries across Normandy, not simply those with close connections to the ducal court. Of the foundations where Matilda was recorded in several charters, it is interesting to note that the abbeys of Saint Ouen of Rouen and La Trinité du Mont of Rouen used the title of *comitissa* consistently when Matilda acted as a subscriber.[762] She was also always called *comitissa* when subscribing the charters of Saint Wandrille and Saint Vigor of Cerisy.[763] All of these foundations have a high proportion of documents surviving from the reign of William II. However, their recognition of Matilda as *comitissa* is balanced by other houses with many surviving charters such as Marmoutier and Montivilliers, where Matilda was never described by a comital title.[764]

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[761] Matilda is only recorded as a witness (part of a list of names governed by a *testes* clause) three times, all of which are recorded on heavily abbreviated pancartes, and she is not described by a title in this role, *RADN*, Nos. 198, 215, 224.
[762] *RADN*, Nos. 130, 138, 158, 193, 202, 204, 204b, 205, 210, 211.
[763] *RADN*, Nos. 124, 126, 195, 196.
[764] *RADN*, Nos. 141, 163, 163b, 198, 202, 226.

Montivilliers is an interesting case, because a record of a donation made to the foundation by Matilda's mother, Countess Adela of Flanders, survives here.[765] Adela herself was not only titled *comitissa*, but *Flandrensis comitissae*; a territorial descriptor is added, comparable, as we shall see in a moment, to titles for William II. William and Matilda were present with their son Robert Curthose, and gave consent to an agreement between Adela and the Abbess of Montivilliers. The charter survives in a pancarte written between 1068 and 1071, after the Conquest of England, and before Matilda's death in 1083. Both William and Robert Curthose were called *comes*, but Matilda was not given a comital title, nor was her relationship as the daughter of Adela recognized. She was described only as *uxor*. This is a salutary warning to be careful about how we interpret titles: for Montivilliers, even after Matilda was elevated to be queen of England, the relationship by which Matilda was described was that of wife, not of countess.

The representation of Matilda in the charters of Montivilliers and Marmoutier reminds us that in this period it would be misleading to think of *comitissa* as a title with necessarily more status than 'wife of the count/duke'. There appears to be no strong patterns which suggest circumstances that might dictate the use of *uxor/conjunx* as opposed to *comitissa*. The three charters which record the subscription of Matilda for Saint Julien of Tours illustrate the complexity. Two of these are donations from William to the foundation concerning the land of a certain Adam of Saint Brice; Matilda signed both charters, but in one she was described as *uxor*, and in the other as *comitissa*.[766] The third charter which Matilda subscribed is a donation made to Saint Julien by William de la Ferté, making this charter an occasion when Matilda's subscription may have been associated with William's in a way that equated a 'lordly' consent to the grant. Here, where we might expect the use of a title to be tied to the perception of Matilda sharing in comital/ducal power, she was not given her comital title, but was again described as *uxor*.[767] For some foundations, and in some roles, the title of *comitissa* was not used, even where Matilda's activities might seem to warrant a high-status designation. At the same time, it does seem that in this period *comitissa* was beginning to be used in ways which might suggest some embryonic notion of a 'female office' in Normandy. The association of the title with the act of subscribing, now more marked than with her predecessors, and combined with Matilda's activity as a subscriber of non-familial charters, is the first tentative indication of this. It is

[765] *RADN*, No. 226.
[766] *RADN*, No. 156, 'S. Matildis uxoris ejus'; No. 142, 'S. Mathildelinis comitis [sic]'.
[767] *RADN*, No. 131, 'S. Maidelindis, uxoris ejus'.

underlined by an interesting pattern which emerges when we examine the roles of donation and confirmation.

Matilda acted as a confirmer twice with her husband William: in the pancartes for Saint Georges of Boscherville and Saint Martin du Bosc.[768] In both cases Matilda was described as a wife. In the Saint Martin du Bosc pancarte she was titled *comitissa* when she subscribed the charter, suggesting a deliberate distinction made between wife and countess in these different roles. A distinction was also made between Matilda as an independent donor and co-donor with her husband. The foundation charters for Cherbourg and La Trinité of Caen both detail many grants made to support the new houses, and when Matilda and William acted as co-donors she was called his wife, just as when they confirmed pancartes together.[769] However, when Matilda made additional donations by herself, once to Cherbourg and four separate times to La Trinité of Caen, she was given the title *comitissa*. Again, the distinction between the two descriptions in the same charters suggests a deliberate use of the title *comitissa* to describe Matilda when she acted as a public figure when subscribing, and when she made her own independent donations without William.

Could the use of the title when Matilda acted independently be an indication that she was perceived as acting with comital authority in the absence of William? The only other female ducal family member to act as a donor, Gunnor, was not given the title when she made independent donations to Mont Saint Michel, so we may be seeing a shift in the perception of the wife of the count/duke. During the reign of William the title of *comitissa* may be being used to describe his wife when she acted in the more 'public' sides of the familial role. Any such conclusion must, however, take into account other shifts in title usage. Is the representation of Matilda a product of a wider shift in the use of titles in these charters? Certainly the use of the title *comes* also appears to change between the reign of Richard II and William II, but not in a way which is directly comparable to the use of *comitissa*.

In the Norman ducal charters from the reign of William II the use of the title *comes* was diverse and complex. It was still used for territorial rulers such as Count Hugh of Maine, and also for other foreign lords such as Count Eustace of Boulogne.[770] Usage of the title in Normandy was growing, but as before most men so described appeared in only one charter, and it is not possible to establish any patterns. However, there was again a group

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[768] *RADN*, Nos. 197, 218.
[769] *RADN*, Nos. 224 and 231.
[770] *RADN*, No. 107, 'S. Hugonis Cenomanensis comitis'; No. 227, 'Eustachio comite Boloniensi'.

of men who were relatives of the count/duke and who were consistently given the title of *comes* when they appeared in the Norman ducal charters of this period; during the reign of William II these men were more distant relations than those who formed a group of close kin around Richard II. Included here are Richard of Evreux, Robert of Eu and William of Arques from the generation of William II's father Robert I, and also Robert of Mortain from William's own generation [Figure 6.3]. The first points to note are that the titles of these men are consistently given a geographical description; suggesting that they may have been territorial lords who governed areas in the name of the count/duke, or that they may have been perceived as lords of these areas.[771]

As can be seen in Figure 6.3, except for Robert of Mortain, *comes* was used consistently for each individual acting in a variety of roles, including consenting, the role which for Matilda was always associated with her family relationship instead of her comital title. Robert of Mortain appeared more like his predecessors in that he only subscribed charters, his title was not used consistently, and he was most often a subscriber to donations of his half-brother the count/duke. This is in direct contrast to the other counts of this period, who were present in the charters of a variety of donors and beneficiaries.

Thus the male title in this period seems generally to have been more territorial and possibly more quasi-official, even for family members. However, the broader usage of the title in the Norman charters of this period suggests that it was also less familial, and that it was used less to describe the group closest to the duke. The three most prominent actors in the charters were two non-comital men, William fitz Osbern and Roger II of Montgomery, and Matilda. During the reign of Richard II the family counts were among the most prominent of actors in the charters, along with the wives and mother, eldest son, and the Archbishop of Rouen (who was also Richard's brother). By contrast, during the reign of William the family counts appeared in a smaller proportion of the charters: just five percent of William's charters, compared to eleven percent during Richard II's reign. So as titles were used more generally, *comes* became more territorial and less familial. Titled family members became less prominent, Matilda more so. She appeared twice as often as her predecessors. She was more likely to appear with a title, and the roles in which she was called *comitissa* were more defined and more public. All this points to clearer perceptions of her importance, and thus of her power if not her office.

However, the contrast between Matilda and her husband is still striking. No descriptions such as *Normannorum* or *Normanniae* were attached to her title as they were

[771] Hereditary comital families do not seem to have been established until the end of the eleventh century, Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 114; Douglas, 'The Earliest Norman Counts', p. 153.

with William's title in over seventy percent of charters from his reign.[772] Nor was she ever described by a combination of family relationship and comital title, as William was when he is both titled and called 'son of count/duke Robert'.[773] He was described as *Dei gratia comes*, as Richard II was. Thus it seems that the quasi-regal and more 'official' titles were his in a way which they were not hers.[774] However, this should not be taken to mean that the use of the title *comitissa* to describe her was not quasi-queenly. Capetian kings of the eleventh century were called *rex Francorum*, and *Dei gratia rex Francorum*, but the queens were called simply *regina*, without the appellations which their husbands used.[775] In this respect *comitissa* parallels *regina*, both contrasting with their male counterparts. Comparison with queens brings out some of the gendered ambiguity of women's position.

When we compare Capetian queens and Norman countesses in eleventh-century charters, the similarities are significant. Earlier Carolingian queens were usually associated in royal charters with the act of intercession, something which both countesses and Capetian queens are recorded as doing only rarely.[776] As with Gunnor, Judith, Papia and Matilda, the Capetian queens of the early eleventh century appear in the charters of their husbands primarily as subscribers, and in that role they are given the title *regina*.[777] Some of the differences between the activity of Carolingian and Capetian queens can be attributed to a diplomatic shift, as the early eleventh-century royal charters changed in form to become more similar to the 'private style' charters used in Normandy, and we should certainly remember the variety of activities which might lurk behind 'subscription'.[778] But the parallels between queen and countess are nonetheless significant.

During the reign of Robert the Pious (996-1031), Richard II's contemporary, we can see this shift. His second wife Berthe and his mother Adelaide both acted as intercessors in 'ancient style' charters, and they were described by their family relationships, not by royal

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[772] There is one charter in which Matilda is described as *Mathildis comitissae Normannorum*, but this charter survives only in a copy written in to the *Gallia Christiana*, and has a suspiciously homogenized list of subscribers.

[773] William is described in this way throughout his reign: e.g. *RADN*, No. 94, 'ego Willelmus gratia Dei Normannorum comes, filius Rotberti quondam Northmannorum nobilissimi comitis'; No. 98, 'Willelmus comes, Roberti comitis filius'; No. 101, 'Willelmi, fortissimi princeps, filii Rotberti comitis', and also Nos. 103, 111, 133, 149, 166, 199, 209, 214, 218, 229.

[774] See above, pp. 120-21.

[775] W.M. Newman, ed, *Catalogue des actes de Robert II roi de France* (Paris, 1937); F. Soehnée, ed, *Catalogue des actes d'Henri I^er^: roi de France (1031 – 1060)* (Paris, 1907).

[776] Hyam, 'Ermentrude and Richildis', p. 163.

[777] Newman, *Catalogue des actes de Robert II*, Nos. 14, 66; Soehnée, *Catalogue des actes d'Henri I^er^*, Nos. 92, 102, 123, 125.

[778] Lemarignier, *Le gouvernement royal*, p. 42.

titles.[779] His third wife Constance on the other hand was always given the title *regina*, and appeared in a wider variety of acts.[780] Unlike the contemporary countesses in Normandy, Constance did not act as a subscriber to charters recording donations made by her husband. Nor did she appear as part of a family group. Instead, Constance subscribed charters recording donations of other nobility with her husband.[781] The next queen to appear in the charters was Anne, the wife of Henry I, who ruled from 1031-60, and was thus roughly contemporary with William II and Matilda. Anne's activity was only recorded in charters recording grants of her husband. Unlike her predecessor Constance or her contemporary Matilda of Flanders, she did not act as a subscriber or a consenter to the grants of other nobles, and she was never recorded as a co-donor or a donor in her own right. Anne was recorded as a subscriber four times, and also once as a consenter to a grant in which she later acted as a subscriber.[782] Anne always appeared as part of a family group, unlike her predecessor, and unlike Matilda. However, the use of her title parallels the pattern observed for Matilda: when she acted as a subscriber she was titled *regina*, but when she acted as a consenter she was described as a wife.

There seems to be no linear development in the representation of queens in Capetian royal charters. Indeed, there is no simple pattern of appearance and title usage in charters for either queens or countesses in this period, no rule by which we can predict or completely define their representation. Simon MacLean has recently described early medieval queenship not as a fixed institution, but instead a range of possibilities.[783] Unlike kings, and the Norman count/dukes, queenship in the eleventh century was not a clear office which came with a fixed and expected set of behaviors, rights and responsibilities, though it was formally inaugurated. Instead, while queenship certainly affected what a woman could do, each individual queen could maximize or minimize the possibilities, depending on her own circumstances. This seems also to be what we see with *comitissa*, and it highlights Matilda's own individual prominence, as she seems to have been able to maximize her position in a way that her predecessors and contemporaries did not.

Matilda was also markedly different from her male titled contemporaries. During the reign of William these titled men became less prominent in the ducal charters, and were less often found acting as subscribers to the count/duke's own donations. Matilda, however, was a prominent subscriber of the charters of William, and those of other

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[779] Newman, *Catalogue des actes de Robert II*, Nos. 9, 13
[780] Newman, *Catalogue des actes de Robert II*, Nos. 14, 66, 78, 81, 91.
[781] Newman, *Catalogue des actes de Robert II*, Nos. 14, 66.
[782] Soehnée, *Catalogue des actes d'Henri I^er^*, Nos. 92, 102, 123, 125.
[783] MacLean, 'Making a difference in tenth-century politics', p. 190.

Normans. The high proportion of her husband's charters in which she appears, and the significance of some of her roles, like subscription and consent to non-familial charters, set her apart. The number of her subscriptions seems especially significant, and it was in this role that the use of the title *comitissa* was most marked, as well as in descriptions of her as an independent donor. Some of the comparisons here suggest a perception of Matilda which may argue for some tentative developments towards 'office'. The comparison with queens suggests how far the ambiguities of perception may be gendered. But those with men remind us that in the eleventh century these perceptions of status and office were still fluid, and firm distinctions unclear, for many men as well as for women. What is also clear is that the count/dukes of Normandy, like kings, stood apart from both their male titled contemporaries and their female partners.

The evidence from narrative sources is not as extensive for Matilda as it was for her predecessors, especially for Gunnor. However, the works of William of Jumièges and William of Poitiers and Matilda's epitaph suggest the importance of her bloodline and connection to the French royal family. This, combined with the legitimacy of her marriage, likely gave her a position of strength from which to maximize the potential of her position as 'wife of the count/duke'. The charter evidence allows us to expand on the narrative sources, as it illustrates Matilda's activity, and gives us an insight into how she, and her power, were perceived in Normandy.

As a donor, Matilda was associated with William in the ownership and control of land in Normandy. This was not specified as her dower land, and there is little evidence from this period that Matilda directly controlled her own land, but there is evidence that she had a source of income, possibly from administrative rights and fees. She was able to use her money to control land and direct patronage toward chosen foundations: most notably her own foundation of La Trinité. Matilda was also given a comital title when acting as a donor independently of William. It is clear that the family role was still important, but we may be seeing hints of a recognition that she had some comital authority when she was acting independently. Matilda was also only given a title when acting as an independent consenter, although questions about later copying and the possible effect of the acquisition of the royal title must be considered.

The role and power of the 'wife of the count/duke' are evident, as Matilda seems to have been associated with William when he acted as the highest secular authority in Normandy, consenting to grants which did not involve the donation of family land, and which were made to a diverse group of foundations. However, Matilda was recorded in this way only a few times, so there does not seem to be widespread recognition of her

activity in this type of a role. Are we seeing an embryonic acknowledgement of the wife as a 'joint lord' with her husband? Was Matilda shaping such a perception, not seen for her predecessors? There is also evidence that Matilda may have been associated with William's comital/ducal power and authority when she acted as a subscriber.

The notable pattern of subscription to charters is one where the donor was not a member of the comital/ducal family: when William did this it may have been a sort of 'lordly' consent, in his role as the highest secular authority in Normandy. Matilda was sometimes associated with him in this role. The original charters which have survived suggest that when Matilda and William subscribed together their names and crosses were placed together on the parchment in a way that both grouped them together, and separated them from others. Does this suggest a perception of William and Matilda as a joint partnership? It was as a subscriber that Matilda was most often recorded. In contrast to her predecessors, she was not part of a family group associated with family power in Rouen. We see hints that she sometimes accompanied William as he travelled through Normandy, but she was not always present with him. She may, like Gunnor, have maintained her own household.

The representation of her does not seem to have been shaped by the recognition of certain beneficiaries; she subscribed charters for a variety of foundations both inside and outside Normandy. There may be some effect of beneficiary preference on the use of a title: she was never given it, for example, at Marmoutier or Montivilliers. However, when she was recorded as a subscriber, she was almost always given the title *comitissa*, and this consistency of usage may suggest a wider perception of her having a more official role when present in William's court. These possible public occasions, and public displays of the comital/ducal household, associated her with William's comital/ducal power in a consistent way which contrasts to the infrequency of title usage among her predecessors.

When we compare Matilda to her predecessors, it is clear that she did not act in unique ways; other comital/ducal family women donated, consented and subscribed just as she did. Matilda also did not have an 'office' in the sense that her husband does. She was not inaugurated like a queen, though the representation of her in the Norman ducal charters shows important parallels with Capetian queens. However, her appearance in these charters, and the titles used there to describe her, show real difference from her predecessors. Clearly there is still inconsistency, and beneficiary patterns remain very important. But these appearances and especially the use of this title suggest we are seeing some recognition of a real change. Parallels with the queens show how far such shifts in the case of women can be explained in terms of individuals and their ability to maximize

potentials, though the case of Archbishop Robert might warn us that men, even male officials, could also fluctuate in importance. In the case of queens, that collection of potentials could be labeled 'queenship', with all the caveats about office, but at the same time with recognition that that was a role which carried some expectations. The usage of the title *comitissa* for Matilda, in conjunction with the activities it denotes, suggests we should take seriously the possibility that a similar, if similarly ambiguous 'countess-ship' was developing in mid eleventh-century Normandy.

Chapter 7, Matilda after 1066: Change and Continuity

For the purposes of this study, the Conquest of England in 1066 provides a dividing line. Before this date we can speak of countesses and of Normandy; after, we must take into account the new reality of queenship and of England and their possible impact on the power and authority of Matilda of Flanders. After the Conquest Matilda not only gained a new title, but also new lands, wealth, and opportunities. It is this phase of Matilda's life which has received most attention from historians. The focus here will be on Matilda in Normandy, but with attention to the changes which the acquisition of England and royal status may have brought. Matilda's activity as a queen has been studied, and while there is scope for further work on Matilda as an Anglo-Norman queen and the tradition of English queenly power, this work will remain focused on Normandy and female comital power.

Recent studies have suggested Matilda's active involvement in both the Conquest and in the rule of England and Normandy afterwards. In 1066 Matilda supplied William's flagship, called the *Mora*.[784] The ship bore the image of a child pointing towards England; Matilda was probably pregnant with the couple's youngest daughter Adela, and the golden child on the prow of the ship was meant to reflect that.[785] Here recent scholarship has tied in 'domestic' activities such as childbirth to great political events, and shown the importance of family. Matilda gave birth to two children after the Conquest: Adela and her youngest son Henry.[786] How the birth of children may or may not have affected her position as a queen has not been considered, although the important of motherhood for her predecessors in England is clear.[787]

A more established line of argument, but still one which emphasizes Matilda's political role, concerns regency. Rule of two territories after 1066 raised the problem of ducal absences. Historians have argued that Matilda was left in charge of Normandy when William sailed for England in 1066.[788] It has also been argued that after the conquest she

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[784] de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, p. 300; Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest*, p. 149; Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, p. 380; Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, p. 53; C.W. Hollister, 'The Greater Domesday Tenants-in-Chief', in J.C. Holt, ed, *Domesday Studies* (Woodbridge, 1990), p. 221; E.M.C. van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest in the Latin Sources', p. 135, 149; E.M.C. van Houts, 'The ship list of William the Conqueror', *ANS*, X (1987), pp. 159-83.

[785] van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest', p. 151-153.

[786] For the dates of birth see pp. 4-6.

[787] Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 200-202.

[788] Barlow, *The Feudal Kingdom of England*, p. 82; Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 151; Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 101; de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, p. 285, 358; Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest*, p. 146; David, *Robert Curthose*, p. 12; Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, p. 185; Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. III, p. 384;

acted as a regent/guardian for Robert Curthose, and that she ruled Normandy whenever William had to be in England after 1066.[789] She has not been seen as a sole regent, but at the head of a group of prominent men who included Roger of Beaumont and Archbishop John of Rouen.[790] Matilda's activity as a regent may have built on a tradition of English queenly power in that role, although some of her activities, such as presiding over a court, appear unique.[791] Queens were ideal regents as they were close family members who could not rebel and mount a challenge for the throne in their own right.[792] Questions about regency, however, once again direct attention to family. It has been argued that in England the king turned first to family to be deputies, and in the eleventh and twelfth centuries that often meant to his wife.[793]

Recent study of Matilda and regency is part of a wider recognition of the importance of family government.[794] As Bates' work makes clear, William relied on his family, including Matilda, to be a sort of kin-bureaucracy.[795] Norman regency government is now seen as centered on family and household, and thus was focused on Matilda after 1066.[796] The importance of family ties in the organization of power pre- and post-1066 has been noted in the role played by William of Arques during the minority of William II, and by Odo of Bayeux in England.[797] To quote Bates, 'the crucial point is that in England and Normandy, one member of the king's/duke's family could supply an authority which was regarded as equivalent to his own.'[798] Charter language may reflect this. As Bauduin has noted, from 1066 there is a change in language found in the Norman ducal charters in which Matilda is identified as both countess and wife with additional epithets such as

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Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 53-4; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 423; Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, p. 85; Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, p. 31.

[789] W. Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity: The Relationship between William the Conqueror and his Eldest Son', in D.M. Hadley, ed, *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (New York, 1999), p. 45; Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 151; Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 130, 156; Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest*, p. 189; R.H.C. Davis, 'William of Jumièges, Robert Curthose, and the Norman Succession', *EHR*, No. 376 (July, 1980), pp. 601-603; Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. IV, p. 123; J. Le Patourel, *The Norman Empire* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 141-5; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 422.

[790] Bates, 'The origins of the justiciarship', pp. 6-7; Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, p. 51.

[791] P. Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: a Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London, 1989), pp. 176-7.

[792] Stafford, *Unification and Conquest*, p. 177; Stafford, 'Women and the Norman Conquest', pp. 244-6.

[793] Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, p. 49.

[794] E. Searle, *Predatory Kinship*, p. 233.

[795] Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 150.

[796] M. Chibnall, *Anglo-Norman England* (Oxford, 1986), p. 122.

[797] P. Bauduin, 'La parentèle de Guillaume le Conquérant: l'aperçu des sources diplomatiques', in P. Bouet and V. Gazeau, eds, *La Normandie et l'Angleterre au Moyen Âge* (Caen, 2003), p. 34.

[798] Bates, 'The origins of the justiciarship', p. 8.

nobilissima and *honestissima*. The timing of these usages suggest to him that they were deliberately invoked as William was preparing to leave on the Conquest; a reminder that his wife shared in the comital/ducal authority over Normandy.[799]

Similar arguments have been made about the language used in Matilda's coronation *ordo* which stressed the equality and partnership of William and Matilda.[800] Given the central concern with 1066, legitimation and William's kingship, it is no surprise that historians have been much concerned with Matilda's coronation and consecration. Matilda's coronation took place at Whitsun in 1068, in front of a great assembly of English and Norman nobles and ecclesiastics.[801] She was anointed, and given a crown, scepter and a coronation ring such as those given to bishops.[802] *Laudes regiae* were sung for her, as they were for some of her English predecessors, but hers uniquely associated her with a share in William's royal power, and may have had continental influences.[803] This unique *laudes* was not sung for later Anglo-Norman queens, further emphasizing the distinct nature of Matilda's relationship with William.[804] The inauguration of Matilda as a queen was clearly important. However, given the focus of this thesis on Matilda in Normandy, the issue is not the debate over how this might have been seen in England and against English traditions, but rather the unquestioned acquisition of queenship and the possible impact of this on her situation in Normandy. It provides an important comparison between the nature and status of the role (and possible office) of 'countess' and that of 'queen'. It should thus be remembered that queenship remains a debatable 'office', with its potential realized in specific circumstances, and that historians have stressed the close links and overlap between queenship and the familial roles of mother and wife.[805]

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[799] P. Bauduin, 'La parentèle de Guillaume le Conquérant', p. 36.
[800] L. Gathagan, 'The Trappings of Power: the Coronation of Matilda of Flanders', *HSJ*, 13 (2004), pp. 28-9; Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, p. 51; Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 70, 183-4.
[801] Barlow, *The Feudal Kingdom of England*, p. 91; Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 116; Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest*, p. 192; Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, p. 213; Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, p. 54; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 422.
[802] Gathagan, 'The Trappings of Power', p. 30; Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, p. 30.
[803] H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'The Anglo-Norman *Laudes Regiae*', *Viator*, 12 (1981), pp. 50-52; Douglas, *William the Conqueror*, p. 249; Gathagan, 'The Trappings of Power', p. 26; J.L. Nelson, 'The rites of the Conqueror', *ANS*, 4 (1981), pp. 129-30.
[804] Gathagan, 'The Trappings of Power', p. 28. Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 162-8; 183-4. Stafford highlights the way that *laudes* for William and Matilda gave the king and queen equality, and notes that it is this which distinguishes them from English precedent.
[805] Nelson, 'Medieval Queenship', pp. 203-204; Maclean, 'Making a difference in tenth-century politics', p. 190; P. Stafford, 'The King's Wife in Wessex 800-1066', *Past and Present*, 91 (1981), pp. 3-27.

In addition to the acquisition of a royal title, Matilda gained significant lands and wealth in England; her lands are recorded in Domesday Book.[806] The writings of Orderic Vitalis also suggest that she had access to royal and ducal assets, and had authority in England and Normandy second only to William.[807] Her increased wealth can be seen in the truly international scale of her patronage of religious houses.[808] Her patronage was focused on continental foundations, especially of course to La Trinité of Caen, which she founded, and where she was buried after her death on November 2, 1083.[809] Together with William she gave her daughter Cecilia to the foundation as an oblate.[810] She also endowed La Trinité through extensive donations.[811] Her patronage to La Trinité has been linked to her power in Normandy, with especial focus on her acts of intercession, indicating personal influence, and her countergifting.[812] However, other historians have noted her general monastic patronage in both England and on the Continent; she gave gifts to Le Bec when she and William had to miss the dedication of the new church, and was a generous donor to Bury Saint Edmunds.[813] It has also been noted that she ransacked Abingdon for goods, which has been used as evidence of her power and her determination to build up chosen foundations at the expense of others.[814]

Anglo-Norman queenship and patronage are the main areas of published work on Matilda after 1066. In addition recent work, for example by Bates, Stafford and van Houts, shows the impact of the rethinking of family politics on our understanding of her. The purpose of this chapter is to focus on Matilda in Normandy, with special attention to questions of continuity or change across 1066. Questions surrounding the role of countess

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[806] Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 137-42.
[807] Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p. 84; Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 65-8.
[808] D. Bates, 'William the Conqueror and his Wider Western European World', *HSJ*, 15 (2004), pp. 74-5; L. Gathagan, 'A Traffic in Fingers: Piety, Relics, and Queenship in the 11th Century', paper given at the 2009 Leeds International Medieval Congress, July 15, 2009; L. Musset, 'Le mécénat des princes Normands au Xie siècle', in X. Barral i Altet, ed, *Artistes, artisans et production artistique au Moyen Age*, vol. II, (Paris, 1987), p. 127.
[809] de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, p. 420; Brown, *The Normans and the Norman Conquest*, p. 199; Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, p. 52; Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, p. 68; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 436-7.
[810] de Boüard, *Guillaume le Conquérant*, p. 285; M. Chibnall, *Charters and Custumals of the Abbey of Holy Trinity, Caen* (London, 1982), pp. xxi-xxv; Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. IV, p. 383; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 153, 252-3, 311, 359.
[811] J. Walmsley, 'The Early abbesses, nuns, and female tenants of the abbey of the Holy Trinity, Caen', *JEH*, 48, no. 3 (1997), p. 428-34.
[812] Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 205-6; L. Musset, 'La reine Mathilde et la fondation de la Trinité de Caen (Abbaye aux Dames)', *Mémoire de l'Académie Nationale des Sciences, Arts et Belles-Lettres de Caen*, 21 (1984), pp. 191-210; Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, pp. 118-9.
[813] Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 152; G. Beech, 'Queen Mathilda of England, 1066-1083, and the abbey of La Chaise-Dieu in the Auvergne', *Frühmittelalterliche Studien*, 27 (1993), pp. 350-74; E. Cownie, *Religious Patronage in Anglo Norman England 1066-1135* (Woodbridge, 1998), p. 71.
[814] Bates, *William the Conqueror*, p. 152; Cownie, *Religious Patronage*, p. 40.

thus remain central, now sharpened by comparison with the newly acquired status of queen. Matilda's family roles of wife and mother remain equally important, and must not be forgotten.

I. Narrative sources

After the Conquest of England, a plethora of writings celebrated the achievements, and defended the legitimacy, of William and the Norman conquerors. For the purposes of this study these sources can be divided into two groups: those written before the death of Matilda in 1083, and those written after, by authors who were contemporaries of Matilda or who knew members of her household. These sources present a number of problems for the study of female power in eleventh century Normandy, continuing earlier questions and raising new ones.

Before Matilda's death both William of Poitiers and William of Jumièges wrote accounts of the Conquest of England. These sources hint at Matilda's position in Normandy, her activity, and her power. However, they focus on the activity of William II, who was often separated from Matilda during this period. Thus, although these sources provide the starting point for most historical discussion of Matilda and her position post-1066, they must be supplemented with the charter evidence.[815] Nevertheless, a close reading of them highlights important issues and questions about the nature of Matilda's power post-1066.

As discussed in Chapter 6, William of Poitiers began his work after 1066. His discussion of Matilda's marriage with William focused on her bloodline, with a mention of her suitability to be William's wife. Stress was placed on her maternal, regal descent.[816] This may suggest the importance of this bloodline to the situation post-1066. Matilda next appears in the narrative when Poitiers tells us that William did not wish to be crowned immediately upon reaching London. William's reasons for wishing to wait are given as: the unsettled situation in England (he desires peace), his wish to wait for his wife to be crowned with him, and his concern over rushing to obtain such a rank.[817] Two of these suggest Poitiers was trying to promote his patron's natural humility, modesty and concern

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[815] Bates, 'The origins of the justiciarship', pp. 6-8; Davis, 'Robert Curthose and the Norman succession', pp. 597-606; C.H. Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (Cambridge, MA, 1918), pp. 241-9; F. West, *The Justiciarship in England 1066-1072* (Cambridge, 1966), pp. 2-9.

[816] *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. 32-33, 'Requirens genus maternum, matris patrem scias regem Gallie Rodbertum, qui, filius et nepos regum, progenuit reges'.

[817] *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. 148-9, 'Preaterea si Deus ipsi hunc concedit honorem, secum uelle coniugem suam coronari'; Nelson, 'The rites of the Conqueror', pp. 117-8.

for the kingdom of England. The importance of the presence of Matilda as a reason for delay may suggest Poitiers' perception of William and Matilda as a partnership. Matilda's royal bloodline may have been important in arguments about the legitimacy of William as a king. It was certainly important for her children, as in times of uncertainly the denial of status to the mother could negatively affect the claims of her sons.[818] In this context, the 'royal' names given to the two children born after 1066 – Adela and Henry – can be seen as part of an ongoing promotion of legitimacy after the Conquest.[819] Poitiers was certainly part of this: he was as much reacting to the new situation after 1066, and promoting Norman legitimacy, as providing a simple narrative account.[820] Matilda's royal bloodline and coronation may be central to the narrative of Norman legitimacy in England. The coronation *per se* will not be explored further in this work. Still, it is noteworthy that Matilda's regality was an issue for at least one Norman writer, and Matilda's bloodline may have been important for her position and power in Normandy pre-1066. Arguably the issues raised by the Conquest made it more so.

William II returned to Normandy from England in March 1067.[821] Poitiers says that William 'found his native land... in the state which he desired. For its government had been carried on smoothly by our lady Matilda, already commonly known by the title of queen, though as yet uncrowned.'[822] He also says that she was assisted by Roger of Beaumont, and that men like him had added their prudence to her counsel.[823] Poitiers presents Matilda as the center of the Norman regency, assisted by others as needed, but with power and authority over the Norman government.

In contrast, William of Jumièges' treatment of the events after the Conquest is much briefer, and Jumièges does not mention Matilda. Her possible role in the regency of Normandy, and her coronation, go unremarked. Jumièges rather states that in 1067, when William returned to England after visiting Normandy, he 'entrusted the lordship of the Norman duchy to his son Robert.'[824] This divergence presents questions. The two

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[818] Nelson, 'Medieval Queenship', p. 183; Stafford, *Queens, Concubines and Dowagers*, pp. 163-4; Stafford, 'The portrayal of royal women in England', passim.
[819] Barlow, *William Rufus*, pp. 10-11.
[820] P. Bouet, 'La *felicitas* de Guillaume le Conquérant dans les *Gesta Guillelmi* de Guillaume de de Poitiers', *ANS*, IV (1981), pp. 47-9.
[821] *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. 175, n. 7.
[822] *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. 178-9, 'Patriam non minus regno caram sibi, praecipue causa probae gentis, quam principibus terrenis fidam, culturae Christi ualde deditam, nouerat, in statu quem uolebat inuenit. Optime quidem egerat in gubernaculo domina nostra Matildis, iam nomine diuulgato regina etsi nondum coronata'.
[823] *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. 178-9, 'Illius prudentiam uiri adiuuere consilio utilissimi'.
[824] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 178-9, 'Rex, ergo, iam ad uotum dispositis omnibus pro quibus uenerat, Rodberto filio suo... Normannici ducatus dominium tradidit'.

contemporary sources seem at odds; which of them is right? Orderic Vitalis, writing later, attributed rule to Matilda, supported at various times by Roger of Montgomery, Robert Curthose, and William fitz Osbern.[825] Bates has suggested, based on the contemporary charter evidence, that this was an 'association in authority under the care of guardians', and that Robert was likely a figure-head for the government run by Matilda.[826] Given the tentative suggestion above that Matilda's predecessor Gunnor may have overseen the court of her son during his absences, the role of Matilda in the ruling of Normandy has implications for our understanding not only of her own power, but also that of the wives of the count/dukes (later kings).[827]

Gunnor's regency, after her husband's death, appears based in motherhood, as was that of Matilda's contemporary, Anne of Kiev.[828] The comparison is imperfect, as Gunnor and Anne were both described after the death of their husbands. Still, Matilda's maternal role is not mentioned in the works of William of Jumièges and William of Poitiers. Matilda's epitaph, discussed in Chapter 6, used no titles, but the role of wife was emphasized. It was written post-1066, and picked up the importance of her family bloodline, especially her mother's descent from the French royal line, and the importance of her marriage to William, themes which were also significant to Poitiers post-1066. The role of wife as opposed to mother was clearly prominent for Matilda in the pre-Conquest charters, and in all narrative sources discussed so far. The difficulties in sharply differentiating wife and queen are relevant here. It was as William's wife that the contemporary writers perceived her, a role which was as fundamental to queens as to countesses.

In light of this, the portrayal of Matilda as a mother in sources written after her death – even by those who were contemporaries of her, or drew on contemporary sources for their knowledge – shows how perception could change, or how much they may be affected by context: witness two poems written within a few years of Matilda's death by Fulcoius of Beauvais, archdeacon of Meaux. Meaux was in an area ruled by Stephen of Blois, who married Matilda's daughter Adela, probably in 1083.[829] The poems were written after Matilda's death later in that year, and before Fulcoius' death, the date of which is

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[825] *The Ecclesiastical History*, vol. II, book IV, pp. 208-211, 222-3, 280-281.
[826] Bates, 'The origins of the justiciarship', pp. 6-7.
[827] See above, p. 94.
[828] Anne was consistently described as both *regina* and *mater* in the charters written after her husband's death, M. Prou, *Recueil des Actes de Philippe I^er^, Roi de France (1059-1108)* (Paris, 1908), Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12. Her association with her son's rule is explicit in a charter of 1061, Prou, *Recueil*, No. 13, 'Domno vero Henricuo rege obeunte, ego Philippus, filius ejus, admodum parvulus, regnum unacum matre suscepissem, plurimi ex proceribus nostris, in quorum tutela et nos et regnum nostrum esse decebat, coeperunt insistere plura a nobis exigentes'. See below, p. 207.
[829] LoPrete, *Adela of Blois*, p. 55.

unfortunately unknown, but likely after 1096.[830] Van Houts has suggested that ecclesiastics and poets in that area would have been eager to praise the new wife of their lord, as the poet Baudri of Bourgueil sought to please Adela by praising William II; could this include the mother of Adela?[831] Fulcoius had already written a poem dedicated to William II, probably in 1075 when William and Matilda's daughter Cecilia took her vows and entered La Trinité as a nun.[832] Van Houts has argued that the poem, based on the biblical story of king Jephthah, suggests that Fulcoius was aware of, and acknowledged, Matilda's especial pain as a mother parting with her daughter.[833] It is noteworthy that the role of the mother did not appear in the source story. This emphasis on motherhood is also found in Fulcoius' poems written specifically about Matilda, although they also return to her roles as wife and queen.

The first of these, *Certe si fortis*, described her as courageous, prudent, sober and just.[834] This courtly language evokes the writing of Dudo; he and Fulcoius may have come from a similar ecclesiastical background, in contrast to the monastic writer William of Jumièges.[835] In *Certe si fortis*, Matilda was called a queen, and her wealth, beauty, noble birth, husband and children were celebrated.[836] Her role as a mother was emphasized, along with her own upbringing; this is the first source to discuss Matilda as a mother.[837] But when the poet suggested an inscription for her tomb, he returned to her queenly status and role: he believed it should describe her as Matilda, queen of the English, who ruled over the Normans.[838] Matilda is presented as a woman with the courtly attributes of a good ruler discussed in Chapter 5.[839] The poet stressed her role as queen, and her royal birth. Here again, as in Poitiers – and in the case of Fulcoius, very late in date – Matilda's birth is prominent, and possibly felt to appeal to her daughter Adela.

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[830] M.L. Colker, 'Fulcoius of Beauvais, Poet and Propagandist', in M. Herren, et. al., eds, *Latin Culture in the Eleventh Century* (Turnhout, 2002), p. 145.
[831] van Houts, 'Latin Poetry and the Anglo-Norman court', pp. 48-9.
[832] Cecilia was given as a child oblate in 1066, but did not take her vows until 1075, van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest', p. 139.
[833] van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest', p. 140.
[834] Fulcoius of Beauvais, 'Certe si fortis', *Mélanges Julien Havet: Recueil de Travaux d'Érudition dédiés à la mémoire de Julien Havet, 1853-1893*, M.L. Delisle, ed (1895, reprinted Geneva, 1972), pp. 223-4, 'Certe si fortis, si prudens, sobria, justa / Femina si qua fuit, si presens, si qua futura, Mathildis prudens et fortis, sobria, justa'.
[835] Colker, 'Fulcoius of Beauvais', p. 145.
[836] *Mélanges Julien Havet*, pp. 223-4, 'Si res, si species, si vir, si partus et ortus / Carmen reginae cuiquam, vel sola dedere / Cum re, cum specie, cum conjuge partus et ortus / Debent reginae carmen collata Mathildi'.
[837] *Mélanges Julien Havet*, pp. 223-4, 'Heroum mater, matrum pulcherrima, felix / Rego, rege viro nulli pare regibus orta / Corporeis animaque bonis formatur utrisque'.
[838] *Mélanges Julien Havet*, pp. 223-4, 'Anglorum regina, Mathildis, haec dominata Normannis'.
[839] See above pp. 89-91.

The second of Fulcoius' poems, *Tempore quae nostro*, opens with the image of Matilda as a queen dressed in royal purple, with a crown and scepter.[840] The poet invokes the biblical paradigm of Mary and Martha, stating that Matilda was equal to Mary in her virtue, and resembled Martha in her care for her children.[841] Again, we have Matilda glorified as a mother and as a queen. There are similarities and differences between these works and the portrait of Matilda as a wife which emerges from the Norman narrative sources. It is clear that being a queen mattered – there was an element of flattery, obviously – but her royal birth is emphasized here (as by Poitiers), and may again respond to uncertainties and questions about legitimacy after 1066. This suggests Matilda's place in the narratives of legitimacy after the Conquest. But Fulcoius's statements leave open questions about her role, power and authority in Normandy.

The date at which Fulcoius wrote may have affected his presentation of Matilda. Especially if Fulcoius was writing after 1086, he would have been writing in the knowledge that two of her sons ruled England and Normandy, and two of her daughters were married to the rulers of Brittany and Blois. This would certainly explain the emphasis on motherhood not found in the contemporary narrative sources produced during Matilda's lifetime. The emphasis on her as a queen, a consecrated, crowned woman, is also at the forefront; the fact of her consecration would have been as important for her sons as for her. But the invocation of regal, courtly virtues, the attributes of rule and authority, are remarkable, not least in the descriptions of a woman. They cannot be explained away as simple flattery, or as an image created to appeal to her children.

The importance of the role of mother in these poems clearly evokes the other major source to treat Matilda: Orderic Vitalis. Orderic, like Fulcoius, wrote at a time when her children were prominent rulers of England, Normandy and Blois; Matilda's motherhood may have assumed increased prominence in these circumstances. Certainly it is as a mother that Orderic presents her, especially her relationship with her eldest son so much discussed by historians. Orderic Vitalis wrote his *Historia Ecclesiastica* in the mid twelfth century, and it therefore does not provide evidence for contemporary perception of Matilda as William of Jumièges and William of Poitiers do. However, for one episode

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[840] *Mélanges Julien Havet*, pp. 224-5, 'Tempore que nostro spectari posset in ostro / Conditione nona, cum sceptro cumque corona / Hic jacet Anglorum regina, Mathildis'.
[841] *Mélanges Julien Havet*, pp. 224-5, 'Sollicita cura quae mater Martha futura / Partis ad eximiae precium par facta Mariae / In simili vita fuit altera visa tabita'.

unique to his work Orderic explicitly drew on an eyewitness source from Matilda's own household.[842] This is one of the most famous episodes of Matilda's life.[843]

In the 1070s William II and his eldest son Robert Curthose quarreled; Robert went into exile from Normandy as a result.[844] According to Orderic, Matilda defied her husband to send her son money and presents that he could use to support himself. Orderic's account includes a speech from Matilda on the rightness of her maternal care for her son that has been used as evidence for medieval attitudes toward motherhood.[845] Historians have also tied this into questions about female power and authority in the eleventh century, emphasizing that although Orderic clearly fabricated the speeches of his two protagonists in this episode, they suggest Matilda's independent wealth and ability to distribute it.[846]

Matilda's maternal concern for Robert and defense of him may have extended to mediation between William and Robert.[847] The extent of Matilda's involvement is unknown; prominent men known to have mediated between Robert and William in 1080 include Roger of Montgomery, Hugh of Chester, and Simon of Amiens-Valois-Vexin.[848] It is surely significant in this context that in May 1080 Gregory VII addressed letters simultaneously to Robert, addressing his fraught relationship with his father, and to

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[842] Orderic's source was Samson the Breton, a messenger in queen Matilda's household who was forced to flee as a result of Matilda's conflict with her husband, and who became a monk at St Evroult; in all likelihood he and Orderic were together there for twenty years, although Orderic probably did not write his account until another twenty years after Samson's death, *The Ecclesiastical History*, vol. II, p. xiv; vol. III p. xiv; vol. III, book V, pp. 104-105.

[843] Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p. 33-4; Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity: The Relationship between William the Conqueror and his eldest son', in D.M. Hadley, ed, *Masculinity in Medieval Europe* (New York, 1999), pp. 52-3; David, *Robert Curthose*, p. 24. Freeman, *The History of the Norman Conquest of England*, Vol. IV, pp. 640-41; Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois*, p. 431; Lair, 'La reine Mathilde dans la légende', p. 310-12; Strickland, *The Lives of the Queens of England*, Vol. 1, pp. 52-8; van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest in the Latin Sources', p. 140; E.M.C. van Houts, 'Les femmes dans l'histoire du duché de Normandie', *Tabularia*, 2 (2002), p. 28.

[844] For a comprehensive consideration of William II's relationship with his sons during this period, see G. Garnett, *Conquered England: Kingship, Succession, and Tenure, 1066-1166* (Oxford, 2007), pp.152-85.

[845] *The Ecclesiastical History*, vol. III, book V, pp. 102-5, 'Ad haec illa respondit, "Ne mireris domine mi obsecro. si ego primogenitam prolem meam tenere diligo. Per uirtutem Altissimi si Rodbertus filius meus mortuus esset, et in imo terrae septem pedibus ab oculis uiuentium absconditus esset, meoque sanguine uiuificari posset. cruorem meum pro illo effunderem, et plusquam feminea imbicillitas spondere audet paterer anxietatem. Quanam putas ratione, ut me delectet diuitiis abundare, filiumque meum nimia patiar opprimi egestate? Procul absit a corde meo tanta duricia. nec uestra debet hoc michi iubere potentia.'; Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, p. 76.

[846] Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p. 84; Gathagan, *Embodying Power*, pp. 65-8.

[847] Aird, 'Frustrated Masculinity', p. 53; David, *Robert Curthose*, p. 29; Prah-Pérochon, *la reine Mathilde*, p. 145.

[848] Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p. 89-90; Bates, 'William the Conqueror and his Wider Western European World', p. 79.

Matilda.[849] This is one of only two surviving letters which Gregory addressed directly to Matilda.[850] Both make clear that she was wrote to Gregory, an important fact in itself. The letter of 1080, however, suggests her role in producing family harmony, and the Pope's recognition of such, not least through its co-incidence with Gregory's letter to Robert. Robert's final break from his father came soon after Matilda's death, and it seems that without her support and voice at court Robert and William were unable to remain on good terms.[851] Such mediation would suggest that Matilda had power and influence in the Anglo-Norman court, and that she used it to intercede on behalf of her son with her husband. However, in the papal letter of 1080, as in that of 1074, Gregory appeals to Matilda as a wife, invoking her influence over her husband William. Thus, while this letter thus confirms Orderic's view of Matilda's importance in intra-family disputes, it also underlines that contemporaries like Gregory VII saw her influence primarily as a wife, not a mother.

It is only Orderic who, in the exchange between William and Matilda discussed above, has Matilda pit her motherhood against William's invocation of the duties of a wife. Throughout his work Orderic describes Matilda as a mother in a way which sets his writings apart from those who wrote during Matilda's lifetime. Orderic alone, when describing the marriage of William and Matilda, does not discuss the ceremony, or the alliance between William and Baldwin, but instead directly connects it to the birth of Matilda's children.[852] Orderic also immediately follows his account of Matilda's coronation with the birth of Henry I within a year to this 'royal lady'.[853] Orderic's writings, along with those of Fulcoius of Beauvais, show a perception of Matilda as a mother after 1066. But Orderic wrote retrospectively. By the twelfth century the mother of future royal sons had replaced the wife and the queen. We would do well to remember the rather different picture presented in strictly contemporary sources.

Matilda after 1066 is rather better served by non-charter sources than Matilda before. This is in part a result of the greater attention which William and Normandy attracted after the conquest of England; the letters from Gregory are a case in point. It is

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[849] H.E.J. Cowdrey, ed, *The Register of Pope Gregory VII, 1073-1085* (Oxford, 2002), pp. 357-9; P.A. Maccarini, 'William the Conqueror and the Church of Rome (from the *Epistolae*)', *ANS*, VI (1983), p. 185.

[850] Cowdrey, *The Register of Pope Gregory VII*, p. 75; Maccarini, 'William the Conqueror', p. 181

[851] Aird, *Robert Curthose*, p. 95; Barlow, *The Feudal Kingdom of England*, p. 142; D. Bates, 'The Conqueror's Charters', in C. Hicks, ed, *England in the eleventh century* (Stamford, 1992), p. 4.

[852] *The Ecclesiastical History*, vol. II, book III, pp. 104-5.

[853] *The Ecclesiastical History*, vol. II, book IV, pp. 214-5, 'Decorata regio diademate matrona priusquam annus perficeretur filium nomine Henricum peperit.'

also because the prominence of her children, itself related to that conquest, ensured that memories of her were preserved at places like St Evroult. Some of these later sources especially must be handled carefully, though they still have contributions to make to our understanding of her position. But one final point emerges from almost all of them: there was a widely recognized perception of Matilda's wealth and capacity for patronage. Orderic himself makes it central to her aid of Robert; Gregory VII refers to it and her offers of gifts to him, if only to suggest that a chaste and virtuous life is a greater good than earthly wealth. The early twelfth-century Life of Simon of Amiens-Valois-Vexin, a kinsman of Matilda, confirms Matilda's wealth, as well as her role within her husband's court where men like Simon were educated.[854] Her wealth is described not only in the gifts which she and William offered him, but in the gold and silver which she personally sent to Rome to pay for his burial. Matilda's patronage is one of the areas well covered by the existing historiography; it is worth re-stressing.[855] The fact that reference to it comes especially in sources dealing with her after 1066 may owe something to the balance of sources in general after that date. But that should not be allowed to obscure the fact that such incidental references cumulatively point to contemporaries' perception of a very wealthy patron. Whatever else 1066 meant for Matilda, it surely increased her wealth in this way. In the late eleventh-century world, this also meant an increase in her power if not her authority.

The eleventh- and early-twelfth-century narrative and non-charter sources provide us with limited, but important, information about Matilda in Normandy after 1066. Her royal status may have been especially important to her sons, and in this respect we must be wary of sources written after her death, and during the lifetime of her children. However, it is clear that legitimacy was a concern during her own lifetime, and that Matilda's royal bloodline and consecration were important to this issue. Depictions of her as a ruler, however formulaic, are especially noteworthy. Her wealth is a recurring theme, and although not linked with such depictions, has obvious relevance to them. These sources give us tantalizing hints of Matilda's significance. To study that in more detail, to explore Matilda's activity, power and authority as a queen, a wife, and a mother, as well as to answer the questions raised about the importance of Matilda's royal line and queenly title, we must turn to the charter evidence. As before, we will consider representations of her activity in various roles, comparing it with her activity pre-1066, and alert for possible family groupings or evidence of independent action or authority. We will also look for

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[854] van Houts, *The Normans in Europe*, pp. 198-9.
[855] See above, p. 172.

evidence that Matilda acted as a regent for her husband, as indicated by William of Poitiers. Once again, a study of the family descriptions and titles used to describe Matilda post-1066 will be examined. This may shed light on the issues of motherhood, 'wifehood', queenship and legitimacy raised in the narrative sources.

II. Charters

Before 1066 Matilda of Flanders exercised power as a wife and a countess. She was a prominent actor in the Norman charters, and appeared distinct from any family grouping, including from her sons. In this way she was different, and her power and authority seem different, from her predecessors as countess. Thus 1066 again raises questions of change and continuity. What active roles was she described in, and what does this activity suggest about her potential power and authority? Was she associated with particular individuals such as her sons or her husband? Were there changed here which point to new opportunities for power and authority? Did her 'official' role and position change? Did her new legitimate position as queen and her bloodline, which were clearly important for her children and perhaps thus remembered in later narrative sources, seem significant in the charters? How was she described? Finally, what does the appearance of Matilda's power as a queen suggest about her role as a countess? The comparison with Capetian queens of the eleventh century was thwarted by a lack of evidence, and so this study will use the ample evidence for Matilda herself to make the comparison. Was queenship an office distinct from countess, or does it appear that countess was in some way 'quasi-queenly'?

The structure followed in the earlier chapters is still appropriate. Matilda's appearances in the charters will be considered statistically, and then in the context of the different roles which she played. Finally we will examine the titles used. Throughout Matilda will be compared with other prominent men, and especially with the men of the Norman ducal/Anglo-Norman royal family, of which Matilda was part. We will look for evidence of regency, family power, and possible family groupings such as were seen for Matilda's predecessors. Many of the methodological problems remain the same. It is still difficult to construct chronological patterns or assess trends throughout the period 1066-86. Of the two hundred and ninety three charters only sixty-five are dated. It is not possible to assess Matilda's activity in relation to the birth of her children, or to analyze possible changes in the perception of her over this twenty year period. It is also difficult to reconstruct her movements; most of her recorded appearances are in Normandy, although

she did travel to England.[856] Matilda's first recorded appearances in England date from 1068, which is consistent with William of Poitiers' assertion that she was not crowned until after 1067, and the historiographical consensus that her coronation took place in 1068.[857] Aside from her coronation, using the charters for chronological study remains virtually impossible.

After the Conquest of England we are dealing with two different charter traditions, and two different contexts of production.[858] The most notable difference was the English writ, a documentary form rarely produced in Normandy.[859] In total, two hundred and ninety three charters survive from William's reign post-1066. One hundred and forty-nine of these are English, of which one hundred and twenty-five are writs (eighty-four percent). The evidence from some foundations – Bury Saint Edmunds, Canterbury, Saint Martin le Grand, Worcester – is that the relatively few diploma-style charters preserved in England may represent particularly important diplomas, all of which record Matilda.[860] The English writs (and the very few issued in Normandy) did not have subscribers, which is critical for the study of Matilda, as subscription was an important role for her and her predecessors pre-1066. All this raises special concerns about the study of the English charters through the database. Matilda is both statistically insignificant in England, because of the predominance of writs, but clearly important in the context of a certain type of document. Use of the English documents, especially Matilda's issuance of a writ, also raises questions about the continuity with the activity of earlier English queens, and the context of English royal power. These latter are questions especially relevant to Matilda as an English queen. The English charters will be used for context and some comparative work, but not to pursue study of Matilda in an English context. This work will be concerned with Matilda as a queen, but only as far as the acquisition of a royal title affects the perception or reality of her and her power in Normandy.

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[856] In 1067 she was in Normandy, recorded at Le Vaudreuil and Lyons-la-Forêt, *RRAN*, Nos. 251 and 196. In 1068/9 she was in England at Westminster and Winchester, *RRAN*, Nos. 181, 232 and 254. In 1069 she was in Normandy at Valognes, *RRAN*, No. 256. In 1072 she was in England at Winchester, *RRAN*, No. 68. From 1074-80 she was in Normandy at Rouen, Caen, Boscherville and Bonneville, *RRAN*, Nos. 26, 229, 46, 29, 266, 175, 175b. In 1081-2 she was in England at Salisbury, London and Downton, *RRAN*, Nos. 154, 193 and 253. In 1083 she was in Normandy at Rouen, *RRAN*, No. 230..

[857] See above, p. 171.

[858] Bates, 'The Conqueror's Charters', pp. 10-11; D. Bates, 'The earliest Norman writs', *EHR*, No. 395 (April, 1985), pp. 266-7; Potts, 'The Early Norman Charters', pp. 25-6.

[859] Bates, 'The earliest Norman writs', pp. 266-270.

[860] *RRAN*, p. 93.

General Statistics

When we examine the appearances of individuals in the charters from this period in basic statistical terms, Matilda stands out from all others, with the exception of her husband. Before the Conquest, Matilda appeared in thirty percent of William II's charters, and was part of a prominent group with Roger of Montgomery and William fitz Osbern.[861] After 1066 she appears in twenty-eight percent of the total charters, but that rises to fifty-one percent if we eliminate all writs, and all charters datable to post-1083.[862] Matilda was prominent in the non-writ English charters, appearing in forty-two percent, but it is her importance in Normandy and the Continent that is especially noteworthy.[863] Of the Continental documents not in writ form and predating 1083, Matilda was recorded in fifty-six percent. This is the second highest percentage for any individual in the tenth or eleventh century, surpassed only by Archbishop Robert of Rouen during the reign of Richard II. Clearly, Matilda after 1066 was recognized to a greater extent in Norman charters, at a level which is comparable to the archbishop who may have acted as a virtual co-ruler with his brother.[864]

These statistics are at least suggestive of Matilda's power, and possibly of her position as regent or co-ruler, but caution, and comparisons, are needed. There is a small group of individuals who are statistically significant in the Anglo-Norman charters post-1066. This includes Matilda, Robert Curthose, William Rufus, Archbishop Lanfranc of Canterbury, Bishop Odo of Bayeux, Bishop Geoffrey of Coutances, Roger of Beaumont, Roger of Montgomery and Robert of Mortain.[865] Most of these individuals have been associated by historians with regency in either England or Normandy.[866] However Robert of Mortain and William Rufus have not, and it would be imprudent to suggest a simple, direct correlation between statistical prominence and regency or deputy power.

In fact, it seems that family connection and family power may be as important as regency here. William II's half-brothers Odo of Bayeux and Robert of Mortain were both

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[861] See above, pp. 137-8.
[862] Matilda was recorded in eighty-two out of two hundred and ninety-three charters, or eighty-two out of two hundred and seventy which predate her death in 1083, or eighty out of one hundred and sixty non-writs.
[863] Matilda was recorded in ten out of twenty-four documents which predate her death in 1083 and were not writs.
[864] See above, p. 98.
[865] These are the only individuals who appear in more than ten percent of the post-1066 charters.
[866] Bates, 'The origins of the justiciarship', pp. 2-6; Bates, 'Character and Career of Odo', p. 6-8; Cowdrey, *Lanfranc*, pp. 188-96; Gibson, *Lanfranc of Bec*, pp. 156-61; J. Le Patourel, 'Geoffrey of Montbray, Bishop of Coutances, 1049-1093', *EHR*, No. 234 (May, 1944), pp. 148-50.

prominent. Odo was recorded in twenty-nine English, and thirty-three Continental charters, that is twenty-one percent of the total charters post-1066.[867] Robert was recorded in seventeen percent: forty-one Continental and ten English. The statistical percentage of his appearances is the same as his nephew Robert Curthose, who was recorded in forty-seven Continental acts and three from England.[868] According to William of Jumièges, Robert Curthose was left in charge of Normandy by his father.[869] We might therefore expect him to be a more prominent actor in the Norman charters than other family members. Yet this is not the case, as is also emphasized by comparison with his brother William Rufus. In the charters pre-1066 Robert was recorded four times as often as his younger brother. However, in the post-1066 charters William Rufus was recorded in forty Continental charters and three from England – fifteen percent of the total *acta*. This is notably similar to the seventeen percent for both Curthose and Robert of Mortain. This suggests that instead of seeing greater recognition for Curthose as a regent or as the heir, we are seeing a relatively equal level of recognition for the sons and half-brother of the Conqueror.

Family and family power are clearly important. Could it be that the lower percentage of close family members appearing in the charters from 1035-66 resulted from a lack of suitable candidates, possibly due to the youth of Robert of Mortain and William Rufus?[870] William II, who seemed to have more distant cousins as prominent members of his household pre-1066, may have relied more on his brother and son once they came of age. Nonetheless, it is significant that Matilda was the most prominent of the close members of the comital/ducal family, and appeared significantly more often than any of the men. She was also more often recorded without other members of the comital ducal family; almost half of her appearances were recorded in charters which do not record any of her sons.[871] Family was important, but Matilda was not always associated with the family, unlike her predecessors in the early eleventh century.

The men whom historians have traditionally associated with William's regencies in both England and Normandy (however ad-hoc these arrangements may have been), appear

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[867] If we subtract the twenty-three charters dated after the death of Matilda (as Odo was in exile already by then) he appears in twenty-three percent: sixty two out of two hundred and seventy.
[868] Seventeen percent. Or nineteen percent if we elimate the charters after 1083, when Robert left his father's court.
[869] *GND*, Vol. II, pp. 178-9.
[870] Barlow, *William Rufus*, p. 3; Bates, 'Notes sur l'aristocratie normande: i Hugues évêque de Bayeux (1011-env. 1049); ii Herluin de Conteville et sa famille', *AN*, 23, pp. 28-9.
[871] Thirty six out of eighty two appearances.

less than half as often as Matilda.[872] In this period she was clearly, at least statistically, the most prominent. Her number of appearances approaches that of Archbishop Robert of Rouen during the reign of Richard II; Archbishop Robert's combined family power and office may have contributed to his prominence, and this may be the case for Matilda too. The statistics initially support William of Poitiers' assertion that Matilda governed Normandy during William's absences, but they also show that family members were as prominent as non-family regents. Matilda's power may be based as much on her roles as wife and queen as they were on her position as a regent for her husband, and only further analysis will answer that question.

As in the pre-1066 material, broad statistics require careful handling. This evidence may reflect changing diplomatic, with more detail, or selective preservation. But this should apply to all appearances, and the difference in patterns here is very striking. Matilda was recorded in Norman charters more often after 1066 than before, and statistically her prominence is notable. She was recorded more often than her contemporaries, both male and female, and also than her Norman predecessors, with the exception only of Archbishop Robert. *Prima facie* the new situation and opportunities in Normandy after the Conquest appear important for Matilda, and for a widespread recognition of her.

Roles and Context

Matilda's appearances may have increased statistically, but to understand if her activity, power and authority changed we must examine the roles which she played in more detail. Donation, consenting and subscription will again be considered, as will intercession, traditionally a queenly role, but one which was not prominent for Matilda and her predecessors as wives and countesses. The new role of judicial activity, not prominent in the earlier charters, warrants examination. We must be alert to any evidence of independent activity, but also of Matilda acting with William's authority, or associated with his authority, as possible evidence of regency power or co-rulership. Was Matilda able to act in new ways, or perhaps expected to act in new ways, or presented as acting in new ways once she obtained the royal title? Does the presentation of her activity after 1066 suggest a change in power and authority in Normandy?

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[872] Especially notable are those whose activity is focused on Normandy. Roger of Montgomery and Roger of Beaumont both appear in only twenty-seven percent of Continental *acta*, compared to fifty-one percent for Matilda.

Donation, and the associated control over wealth and property, was an important role for Matilda and her predecessors. In the pre-1066 charters Matilda acted jointly as a donor with William, and was recorded independently in one charter produced by her own foundation of La Trinité of Caen. The importance of her connection to La Trinité is clear post-1066, as more than half of her activity as a donor was recorded, or preserved, by that house. This includes records of her joint activity with William. Together she and William donated four estates in England to La Trinité.[873] They also jointly donated a Norman estate, and two of Matilda's English estates.[874] Another charter records that William and Matilda jointly granted a street in Caen and tithes to La Trinité.[875] They also assigned lands and tithes to La Trinité: dictating which incomes should be dedicated to the various parts of the church, the sacristy, canons, almonry, refectory, etc.[876] Some of this may indicate that they held land together in both England and Normandy, although it could also be an indication that William's consent was necessary for some of Matilda's donations.

Matilda additionally made independent donations to La Trinité. Her purchases are notable. There are two important pancartes which detail Matilda's activity. In one she bought land from thirteen different landholders for her abbey.[877] In the other, she made twelve purchases, as well as one act of intercession, two acts of consent to the donations of other Norman nobles, and nine countergifts of money in return for donations.[878] All this activity was presented as independent of William, and separate from the seven joint donations which they made, although again we must use caution when assessing basic numerical statistics. Matilda's endowment of her foundation continued until her death; shortly before she died she gave the church an English chasuble, a cloak worked in gold from her chamber, two gold chains each with a cross, candlesticks, an English chalice and vestment, her crown and scepter, a horse's accoutrements and all of her vases.[879]

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[873] *RRAN*, No. 60, 'Ego Willelmus Anglorum rex et Normannorum atque Cenomannensium princeps et uxor mea Matildis regina, Balduni Flandrensium ducis filia neptisque Henrici Franchorum illustrissimi regis, damus et inperpetuum concedimus'.

[874] *RRAN*, No. 65, Matilda's English estates were donated after her death, and the charter is likely a copy of two notices which has been brought together into one by the nuns.

[875] *RRAN*, No. 61, 'Ego Willelmus Anglorum rex, Normannorum et Cenomannorum princeps, uxorque mea Matildis... dedimus'.

[876] *RRAN*, No. 62, 'Gwillelmus Anglorum rex excellentissimus ac Normannorum dux, Roberti comitis filius, coniunxque reginarum nobilissima, Baldoini incliti ac strenuissimi Flandrensium comitis filia regisque Francorum Henrici neptis clarissima, Mathildis nuncupata... attribuerunt'. This charter was never signed, and it may have been unfinished.

[877] *RRAN*, No. 61.

[878] *RRAN*, Nos. 59 and 59b, The foundation charter is recorded in two copies: 59b is longer, and records an additional four countergifts made by Matilda.

[879] *RRAN*, No. 63, 'Ego Mathildis regina do Sancte Trinitate Cadomi casulam quam apud Wintoniam operatur... et clamidem operatam ex auro que est in camera mea ad cappam faciendam, atque de

The prominence of La Trinité of Caen as a recipient of Matilda's donations raises the question of the extent to which her connection with La Trinité, and the foundation's preservation of the records of the donations which she made, shapes our perception of Matilda.[880] However, she was recorded as a donor to other foundations, acting independently of William.[881] She gave an English estate to Le Bec, and donated some of her Norman dower land to Saint Amand of Rouen.[882] That the bulk of Matilda's donations were recorded by her own foundation does not set her apart from her contemporaries. Many of the donations and purchases of Roger of Beaumont, Roger of Montgomery and Robert of Mortain were recorded in the foundation charters and confirmation charters of their own houses, or houses founded by their close kin.[883] In contrast, none of William and Matilda's sons were recorded as donors. Although they were prominent actors in the charters, their power was clearly different from that of their mother, who had access to property and wealth through her dower and dowry.[884] Gender and familial position thus did not necessarily disadvantage a woman – quite the contrary in this case.

All Matilda's land donations were made with the recorded consent of her husband. Matilda's sons did not consent. Her activity as a donor was separated from them and from her role as a mother. Her purchases were made without the recorded consent of William, although all are possibly abbreviated notices in pancartes which William confirmed. This

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duabus ligaturis aureis in quibus cruces sunt... candelabraque... coronam quoque et sceptrum, calicemque ac vestimentum quod operatur in Anglia, et cum omnibus ornamentis equi atque omnia vasa mea'. For the transfer of moveable wealth to Normandy and Norman elites after the Conquest see D. Dumville, 'Anglo-Saxon books: a treasure in Norman hands?', *ANS*, XVI (1994), pp. 83-5; C.R. Dodwell, *Anglo-Saxon Art: A new perspective* (Manchester, 1982), pp. 216-34.

[880] Musset, 'La reine Mathilde', pp. 191-210.

[881] Matilda made donations in England, both to Malmesbury and Wells. *RRAN*, Nos. 193 and 289. However, these donations raise issues about English queens and English royal activity which are outside of the remit of this work. This is especially the case with Matilda's donation to Wells, which was issued in the form of a writ in her own name informing the sheriff William of Moyon and all the men of Somerset that at her request Bishop Osbern of Exeter had conceded an estate to Bishop Giso of Wells which Giso had often claimed. Matilda was the only person besides William and Odo of Bayeux to issue a writ in her own name. For comparable activity of Matilda's predecessors in England see Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 182-3.

[882] *RRAN*, No. 167, 'Dedit Matildis regina uxor mea'; No. 239, 'Ego Mathildis regina... concedo de dotario meo'.

[883] More than half of Roger of Beaumont's recorded donations were to his father's two Préaux foundations, *RRAN*, Nos. 217, 218. Three quarters of Robert of Mortain's donations were made to his father's foundation at Grestain and to his own at Mortain, *RRAN*, Nos. 152, 215. He also donated to his half-brother William's foundation at Caen, *RRAN*, No. 49. Roger of Montgomery's donations were more diffuse, but he made notable donations to his own foundation in Troarn, *RRAN*, Nos. 280, 281.

[884] Aird, *Robert Curthose*, pp. 71-83, Robert Curthose's rebellion again his father may have been motivated at least in part by his lack of resources. Robert had some estates in Normandy, though none in England, but gave them away to his fellows; records of such donation and use of his wealth do not survive or were not recorded in the way that his mother's were, see Garnett, *Conquered England*, p. 164.

does not necessarily indicate that William's consent was needed to legitimate Matilda's donations, or that this need circumscribed her own power derived from the control of resources. But it is suggestive that his consent was sought and/or recorded. When Gunnor made a donation – after the death of her husband – her sons Richard II and Archbishop Robert acted as consenters, possibly because of their family claims on her land. In both of these cases it can be difficult to separate the consent of the count/duke or king as a figure of secular authority from his role as husband or son. It must be remembered that Matilda's position as queen or countess was based on her position as a wife, and the records of William's acts of consent can acknowledge both aspects.

Matilda's activity as a donor, both in conjunction with William and independently of him, increased notably after 1066. This is clearly influenced by the founding of La Trinité in that year, after which Matilda directed patronage there, and was recorded doing so in the charters. Connections with foundations are important in shaping our perception of individuals. However, Matilda did not only donate to La Trinité, and the records of donation from other foundations confirm that she had access to wealth, and thus to a specific type of power. Her increased activity may reflect an increase in wealth, as Matilda benefitted from the Conquest. This would have increased her resources and her scope for activity in Normandy, and is evidence of the effect which the Conquest had on Matilda's ability to act on both sides of the Channel, although not on the way she acted.

A more notable change post-1066 is that Matilda was recorded as involved in judicial activity. Judicial activity was not used as a category for analysis of the pre-1066 material, as it was not a role which featured in the charters.[885] This shift after 1066 may be diplomatic, recording activity which previously was ignored, hidden by the charter diplomatic, or not preserved. It is nonetheless significant, especially given that Matilda was presented as active in this role, while her sons were not. Two of her sons – William Rufus and Henry – were recorded once as witnesses to a dispute settlement made by their father, but they were not named in the clauses describing William II's judicial activity, and so were not individually associated with this role in the way that their mother was.[886] There are two aspects to this type of activity and its record. One is when men such as Roger of Beaumont, Roger of Montgomery, Geoffrey of Coutances and Odo of Bayeux were ordered by the king to act as judges.[887] The second, and more important for Matilda, is when an individual is

[885] Appendix A, p. 220.
[886] *RRAN*, No. 146, the dispute between Fécamp and William of Briouze took place in 1086, after the death of Matilda. Both William Rufus and were named as witnesses to the action among a list of barons at the end of the document.
[887] *RRAN*, Nos. 29, 69, 201, 214, 225, 235, 347, 348, 349, 350.

recorded as calling a judicial court or overseeing the process of an inquiry. Such activity was used as evidence of regency and independent authority in England for Odo of Bayeux.[888]

On two occasions William and Matilda were recorded jointly overseeing a judicial action. In their palace at Rouen they heard the claims of the canons of Saint Leonard of Bellême against Bishop Robert of Sées, and then jointly ordered Archbishop John of Rouen and Roger of Beaumont to make a judgment based on the arguments presented.[889] At Bonneville William and Matilda were together when a certain Ulberga came before them claiming that she had sold her child to a childless couple, but now wished to reclaim him. Although Matilda was present at this initial claim, the ruling was made by William, Roger of Beaumont and Archbishop John of Rouen.[890] After Ulberga reclaimed her son, the land of the childless couple was claimed by the king, who gave it to Matilda. She in turn passed it to Rainald the chaplain, who then donated it to Jumièges with her consent.[891] This charter also records the claims made by a certain Samson, which were found to be groundless following Matilda's testimony.[892] As with the initial stages of the case, the complaint of Samson was brought before William and Matilda together.[893]

In these two charters, Matilda was associated with William's power and authority over Normandy when claims were brought before them for redress. She also gave testimony at least once, and so had the potential to be involved in judicial cases.[894] However, she was far from invariably associated with William in this role.[895] There is also no evidence that claims were independently brought before her, or that she ordered judicial courts to convene, as Odo of Bayeux did in England. But, none of the prominent men in Normandy were recorded acting as Odo did in England. William II is never recorded overseeing a court jointly with anyone except Matilda. Even his son and heir was not associated with his judicial activity in the way that Matilda was.

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[888] Bates, 'Character and Career of Odo', pp. 6-8; Bates, 'The origins of the justiciarship', pp. 3-4.
[889] *RRAN*, No. 29, 'Inde placituari devenimus Rothogamum. Ibi in palatio et in presentia regis et regine Anglorum... ad hec rex et regina scicitati sunt'.
[890] *RRAN*, No. 162, 'Et diiuidicavit rex Willelmus et Iohannes archiepiscopus et Rogerus Belmontensis et alii conplures'.
[891] *RRAN*, No. 162, 'Cuius femine clamor previens ad Willelmum ducem, iam factum regem, et ad Matildam uxorem eius in villa que dicitur Bona villa'.
[892] *RRAN*, No. 162, 'Et hoc fuit factum testimonio regine'.
[893] *RRAN*, No. 162, 'Et tun temporis bene erat Samson cum rege WILLELMO et MATHILDE regina, qui illi facerent rectum de suis clamoribus si aliquid iuste clamaret'.
[894] *RRAN*, pp. 93-4.
[895] *RRAN*, Nos. 64, 143, 145, 146,149, 201, 214, 230, 235, 262, 267. Both 145 and 146 can be dated after the death of Matilda.

Two important records surviving from the abbey of Marmoutier show not just the complexity of judicial activity in this period, but also what actions may be hidden by the surviving documentation. Both hint at Matilda's independent role in Normandy. The first charter records that when the monks of Marmoutier had a dispute with Robert Bertram, the *vicecomes* who was withholding customs donated to the foundation, they travelled to England to bring their claim to William. However, William sent them to Normandy and ordered Matilda to ensure justice was done. The charter recorded that she did so, forcing Robert to return what he had taken to Marmoutier.[896] It is noteworthy that the monks did not initially approach Matilda in Normandy. This might suggest that she was not perceived as having the authority to act independently. However, once William ordered her to address the monk's claims, she clearly had the power in Normandy to ensure that his will was carried out.

Confirming this evidence for Matilda's position in Normandy is the second document in question, a *mandement* unique among the Anglo-Norman corpus. This document records notification from William to Matilda that he has granted land and freedom from dues to Marmoutier, and that Matilda ordered Hugolin of Cherbourg to cease interference in the matter.[897] This document may have been sent to Matilda with the same Marmoutier monks who travelled from William's court in England with the orders regarding Robert Bertram; Matilda was at Cherbourg when she received those instructions.[898] The document reads like a writ, and is similar to the writs William used in England to order Archbishop Lanfranc to look into certain affairs.[899] None of Matilda's sons were ever ordered to act on their father's behalf in this way, and these documents certainly show that Matilda was able to act on William's behalf, although they raise questions about the independence of her role in Norman government. The *mandement* addressed to Matilda is equally important because, as Bates discusses, we would normally expect a document such as this to be converted into a diploma, and the more ephemeral instructions to have been lost. This raises questions about how many documents like this may have been lost, and thus how often Matilda may have been instructed in this way. This

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[896] *RRAN*, No. 200, 'Tunc Gauslinus monachus, ex precepto Rainaldi monachi, pro hac re mare transgrediens, clamoruem fecit regi, qui iratus remisit predictum monachum cum capellano suo, Bernardo Hospac filio, regine, precipiens ei quod de Bertranno justitiam faceret sancto Martino, et predam redderet. Regina autem regi obediens coegit Rotbertum quecumque de rebus sancti Matini rapuerat reddere'.
[897] *RRAN*, No. 202.
[898] *RRAN*, pp. 638-9.
[899] *RRAN*, No. 127.

document is thus a precious survival, and should alert us to the possibility of much lost activity which the surviving charters do not record.

The increase in judicial proceedings corresponds to an increase in the records of claims brought before William II, a sort of judicial intercession. Given the connection between intercession and earlier queenship, we might expect to see more intercession recorded for Matilda once she obtained the royal title.[900] This is not the case. Half of the post-1066 intercessions recorded in Normandy are judicial – disputes in which one party appealed to William, or records of claims which were denied (without specifying the venue in which the claim was made).[901] Matilda was never recorded acting as an intercessor in a judicial context, and this absence is doubly significant, since documentary changes might be expected to reveal it more frequently. Other women were recorded – as was seen with Ulberga – but records of this sort of activity for women are extremely rare. However, the record of Ulberga's claim comes from a first-person account given by Rainald the Chaplain, and is unique among the charters. Women otherwise did not appear in any of the judicial disputes, which mostly concern land, although the action of Ulberga raises the possibility that they were involved in court cases that were not recorded in the more traditional style of document.

Women were more likely to be recorded as intercessors making requests for donations from family members.[902] Matilda, however, did not act in this way. Matilda only acted as an intercessor once, on behalf of her foundation of La Trinité, requesting a donation from the men of Bénouville.[903] This fits a pattern in which connection to the beneficiary seems to determine the recording of intercession. Before the Conquest the most common form of intercession was requests for donation made by members or lay patrons of a foundation. Discounting judicial intercession, this was again the case after 1066 in Normandy.[904] The records of lay male intercession provide important comparison

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[900] See above, pp. 33-4.

[901] There were forty seven recorded acts of intercession in the one hundred and forty charters from 1035-66, of which five were made by women. Of the comparable one hundred and forty four non-English charters from the reign of William II post-1066 there were also forty seven recorded acts of intercession, of which four were made by women. Seventeen of the forty seven continental intercessions from this period are recorded in a judicial context.

[902] *RRAN*, Nos. 59, 59b, 168, 173, 201, 212, 217, 232, 253. This includes the intercession of William fitz Osbern, who requested that William II donate to La Trinité du Mont of Rouen and is recorded as William II's *fidelis* in this charter. Two of these eight record female intercession. The mother of Robert of Moyon requested that he make a donation to Montivilliers, and Albereda, the wife of Humphrey of Vieilles requested that he found Notre Dame of Préaux, *RRAN*, Nos. 212, 217.

[903] *RRAN*, No. 59b, 'mei Mathildis regine rogatu... dederunt homines de eadem villa [Burnoldivilla]'.

[904] *RRAN*, Nos. 28, 251, 259, 269, and 275 record the intercession of ecclesiastics on behalf of their own foundations.

for Matilda's activity. Men such as Raoul II Taisson, Eudo son of Thurstan Haldup, Robert of Mortain, Robert of Beaumont and Roger of Beaumont were only recorded interceding on behalf of family foundations.[905] The records of their acts of lay intercession on behalf of their family foundations are all recorded in confirmation charters detailing the foundation or a history of grants to the abbeys. Beneficiary production surely has an influence here. The influence of beneficiaries and the charter diplomatic may obscure Matilda's activity, and her ability to use influence as a facet of her power. This does not, however, represent a change after the Conquest, as pre-1066 intercessors, both ecclesiastical and lay, were recorded most often acting on behalf of foundations to which they were connected. Overall, the pattern of intercessory activity suggests that Matilda's activity in that role was a direct result of her connection to La Trinité, rather than an indication of family, comital or royal power. That Matilda's activity as an intercessor did not increase upon attainment of the royal title also suggests that her absence from this traditionally queenly role pre-1066 was not due to a perceived difference between the power of countesses and queens, but more likely a result of the diplomatic practices of Norman *scriptoria*.

The final two roles, of consenter and subscriber, are more numerous, more varied and more complex, and raise questions about changes to Matilda's power and authority. Consenting was an activity for which a diplomatic shift between the early and mid-eleventh century charters resulted in the recording of a greater number of individuals, including women.[906] Despite this general increase, the record of Matilda's consenting before the Conquest was noteworthy. Women in general were recorded as consenters when they were related to the donor, as was the case with Emma and Gunnor during the reign of Richard II. For Matilda, and a small group of other women, records of their consent indicated an association with the lordship of their husbands and sons. Matilda, however, was also recorded acting with William when he had no familial or lordly relationship to the donor, and in these circumstances she may have been associated with his authority as the count/duke of Normandy. How, if at all, did these patterns change after 1066?

The record of Matilda's activity as a consenter is again noteworthy in comparison to contemporary Norman women. Compared to the dramatic rise in the number of consenters between the reigns of Richard II and William II, the post-1066 increase in

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[905] *RRAN*, No. 149, 'Radulfi Taxonis filii Alberede, filie Wimundi de Molins... deprecante'; *RRAN*, Nos. 175, 175b, 'Eudoni petenti'; *RRAN*, No. 215, 'prefato comite Roberto hoc impetrante, consilio et assensu comitis Roberti, precibus et assensu comitis Roberti, etc'.
[906] See above, pp. 35-6.

recorded consenters is small.[907] However, the percentage of consenters who are female declines, from fifteen percent 1035-66 to nine percent 1066-86. Overall, women were less likely to be recorded in this role. Matilda stands out: she alone accounts for nearly half of recorded acts of female consent.[908] It is also noteworthy that in the post-1066 charters, consenters were most likely to be recorded in pancartes and large confirmation charters which bring together records of multiple gifts. Forty eight percent of the acts of consent from this period were recorded in just eleven charters.[909] Pancartes represent a second stage of editing a charter and the account of a gift, and in this stage women may be more likely to be edited out. Only five of Matilda's twenty-two acts of consent were recorded in one of those charters. Diplomatic may thus have an effect on the statistical counting of women's appearances, but it is noteworthy that Matilda's recorded activity here increases after 1066, at a time when diplomatic conventions may have resulted in fewer women being recorded.

Perhaps more significantly, Matilda was one of only two women who were recorded as consenters when they did not have a family relationship to the donor, or a provable direct claim on the granted land. Abbess Emma of Notre Dame of Préaux is the other.[910] Matilda consented to only four donations by William II; thus the bulk of her recorded consent was to non-familial donations.[911] In three of these charters William II was specifically said to be the lord of the donor: the donations of Richard of Courcey to Marmoutier and the two donations of Ingelrannus son of Ilbert to Saint Ouen and La Trinité du Mont. In the donations of Ingelrannus, William was recorded as *dominus*, followed by a list of family members: Matilda, Robert Curthose and William Rufus.[912] However, in the donation of Richard of Courcey, which survives as an original parchment, William was described as *dominus* and Matilda as *domina*; they are separated in the text of the charter from their sons Robert and William, who also acted as consenters, but were not associated

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[907] There were six times as many consenters from 1035-66 as there were from 996-1035. In comparison, there were 1.7 recorded acts of consent per charter from 1035-66, which increases to 2.1 between 1066-86.

[908] Twenty-two out of fifty-seven.

[909] Two hundred and sixty two out of five hundred and forty one acts of consent. *RRAN*, Nos. 49, 53, 59, 59b, 149, 158, 164, 166, 212, 215, 217.

[910] *RRAN*, No. 217, 'Hunfredus vero constructor sepe dicte ecclesie, dum moreretur, sex hospites terre in Aincuriam, quam iam dederant sancto Leodegario, dedit Gosselino filio Osmundi, annuente Emma abbatissa, et tali pacto ut serviret sancto et inibi famulantibus'.

[911] *RRAN*, Nos. 27, 141, 169, 235.

[912] *RRAN*, No. 236, 'concessu domini mei Willelmi Anglorum regis et Mathildis regine, coniugis eius filiorumque eorum Rotberti atque Willelmi'; No. 246, 'concessu domini mei Willelmi Anglorum regis et Mathildis regine coniugis eius filiorumque eorum Rotberti atque Willelmi'.

with lordship.[913] There is a clear continuity between the charters before and after 1066; Matilda was associated with William as a lord, but only to a limited extent. William was explicitly recorded as a lord twenty-nine times of his one hundred and forty-six acts of consent post-1066, and Matilda was only recorded with him three times.[914] All of this activity was recorded by Norman foundations, and the acquisition of royal titles and power did not change the way that William and Matilda were recorded when William was the lord of the donor.

However, Matilda also continued post-1066 to be recorded as a consenter with William when there was no known family or lordly connection to the donor. William and Matilda jointly consented to the donations made to La Trinité by Adeliza daughter of Richard called Thurstan Haldup, and by Raoul Taisson.[915] They consented to the donation of Rainald the Chaplain to Jumièges.[916] William, Matilda and their sons added their consent to one of the copies of the foundation charter of Lessay.[917] They consented to the donations by Hugh of Chaumont en Vexin, and Humphrey of Bohon to Marmoutier, and to the charter of donation from Nigel of Brevands to the priory of Saint Gabriel, which was also confirmed in the presence of William, Matilda and Robert Curthose.[918] Slightly more than one third of Matilda's acts of consent post-1066 are therefore occasions where she may be recorded in a way which acknowledges her inclusion with William's role as the highest secular authority in Normandy. Notably, this percentage is almost identical to Matilda's activity in this role pre-1066.[919] Again, it seems that the acquisition of the royal title and possible role as regent or co-ruler in Normandy did not significantly change the perception of Matilda as a consenter with her husband, nor did Matilda's association with William's public authority change when recorded as a queen instead of a countess.

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[913] *RRAN*, No. 198, 'auctoritate mei domini regis Wilelmi et domine mee regine Meheldis... concedo et concedens annuo, iure perpetuo possidendum quatinus supradictus dominus meus rex et regina et filii eorum Rotbertus videlicet et Guillelmus'.

[914] *RRAN*, Nos. 46, 47, 48 (2), 49 (3), 55, 59 (5), 59b (5), 63, 93, 94, 95, 101, 198, 236, 244, 246, 248, 281.

[915] *RRAN*, Nos. 59, 59b, 'Prebuimus etiam assensum... nostro concessu'.

[916] *RRAN*, No. 162, 'rege Willelmo et Mathilde regina, eorum concessu et sigillo eodem loco concessi'.

[917] *RRAN*, No. 175b, 'confirmavit ipse hanc chartam, cum uxore sua et filiis'.

[918] *RRAN*, No. 196, 'precellentissimus Normannorum dux idemque rex Anglorum Guillelmus anno primo ipsius regni, una cum precellentissima Mahilde uxore sua, proprio illud auctoramento firmavit'; No. 199, 'Willelmus rex Anglorum, uxore mea Mathildi et filiis Rotberto videlicet et Wilelmo annuentibus, confirmavi auctoritate mea'; No. 256, 'coram Willelmi rege Anglorum et duce Normannorum, et coram Mathilde regina uxore sua, atque Roberto filio ipsorum qui hoc pariter concesserunt'.

[919] Pre-1066 Matilda was recorded in this way four out of twelve times, post-1066 nine out of twenty-two.

The comparison between Matilda as a consenter and the activity of her sons in that role is important. We have already seen one charter where Matilda's association with William as a lord was separated from her sons, although their consent was also recorded. When the sons were recorded as consenters, William II, Matilda, Robert Curthose and William Rufus were consistently together as a group. However, there were five charters where William and Matilda's consent was recorded without their sons: all were discussed above, instances where Matilda was associated with William's authority. In contrast, there are only three occasions within Matilda's lifetime where the consent of William II, Robert Curthose and William Rufus was recorded without her.[920] This suggests that Matilda was associated, in the eyes of charter scribes from multiple beneficiaries, with William's authority as a consenter to a greater extent than her sons, including Robert Curthose, the heir. Beneficiary production may be important here, as two of the three charters recording only her sons were produced at Saint Etienne of Caen and Fécamp. Matilda was never recorded as a consenter by Saint Etienne of Caen, and Fécamp is notable as a foundation with connections to the comital/ducal house which only rarely recorded the activity of any of the family women during the late-tenth and eleventh centuries. However, these documents do serve to show that Matilda was not invariably associated with the family group when consenting.

In addition, Robert Curthose twice acted as a consenter with his father, but without his mother or brothers.[921] Both documents record donations to Manceau foundations, and one, for Saint Pierre de la Couture, specifically gives Robert the title *comes Cennomanensis*. Robert's role as count of Maine possibly gave him a recognition there not accorded to Matilda. However, Matilda's activity as a consenter was not unknown in Maine: she and Robert together consented to a donation made by William to the Cathedral of Le Mans.[922] Diplomatic conventions likely affect how individuals were recorded, but cannot account for all the patterns which emerge. The patterns for Robert Curthose's activity in Maine suggest that the recorded activity in the charters reflects political reality to some extent. We should take this suggestion seriously, especially as the pattern of recorded activity which emerges for Matilda is one which fairly consistently associates Matilda with William, and not primarily with a family group. This pattern underlines the role of wife as critical to her position, as both a countess pre-1066 and as a queen post-1066. However there is no simple answer or rule to explain recorded family grouping and activity. That said, it is

[920] *RRAN*, Nos. 49, 205, 257.
[921] *RRAN*, Nos. 172, 173.
[922] *RRAN*, No. 169.

important that Robert Curthose and William Rufus never acted independently of their father, whereas Matilda was recorded consenting independently of William twice.

In late 1075 or early 1076 Simon of Amiens-Valois-Vexin restored land to the Cathedral of Rouen, and placed his hand into Archbishop John's in the presence [*presente*] of Matilda, with Roger of Beaumont, the *pincerna* Hugh, and others standing by/with her [*astante*].[923] The phrasing of the charter suggests a gathering of Norman nobles, perhaps even the ducal household, headed by Matilda. That Roger of Beaumont's presence was recorded seems to correspond with the statement from William of Poitiers that this was how William II organized the government of Normandy during his absences.[924] Similarly, in 1075 the donation of the castle of Le Homme to La Trinité of Caen by Adeliza of Burgundy, William's aunt, took place *in presentia* Matilda.[925] Following the record of Matilda's presence is a list of witnesses, including Baldwin fitz Gilbert and the *pincerna* Hugh. These two charters record a very visual and public type of consent, and remind us of the problems and dangers of distinguishing too strictly between 'consent' and 'subscription', since both may record a publicized, and possibly ritual, activity that conveyed approbation. Comparison should thus be made with Matilda's only independent subscription, recorded in 1066 and discussed in Chapter 6.[926] Of that appearance, it was suggested that the charter provided evidence that in William's absence, as he prepared for the Conquest, Matilda led the members of the ducal household. Taken together, these three charters portray Matilda acting independently of her husband when he was absent from Normandy, in a public display of power with herself at the head of the Norman nobility.[927] Her children were not named as part of either group of consenters, and there is no evidence that those drafting these charters saw her power in this role as based on her position as a mother; the opposite, in fact. That these records date before and after the Conquest suggests that the activity, and/or the perception of it, may not have been queenly, or royal, but perhaps based on Matilda's position as William's wife and the closest member of the family. It also suggests that it was Matilda who acted as the public face of comital and royal power during William's absences, which certainly increased after 1066. The records of consenting,

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[923] *RRAN*, No. 229, 'Haec redditio atque restitutio in primis facta est de manu Simonis comitis in manum Iohannis archipiscopi, presente Mathilde nobilissima ac gloriossissima regina, astante Rogerio Belmontensi et quampluribus nobilis viris, scilicet Hugone pincerna, Guidone de Oilei, Rogerio de Blossevilla'.

[924] *RRAN*, p. 80, William was in England from autumn 1075 until May 1076.

[925] *RRAN*, No. 58, 'in presentia videlicet Matildis Anglorum regine'.

[926] See above, pp. 155-6.

[927] The presence of Hugh the *pincerna* certainly suggests that the household, or some part of the household officials were with Matilda at these times; see also Bates, *Normandy before 1066*, p. 155.

therefore, suggest continuity between the role and power of the countess and queen, and that queenship did not result in a material change to Matilda's perceived power and authority in this role.

Statistically, subscription was again the most common role in which Matilda was recorded in these charters, as it was for Matilda and her predecessors in Normandy before the Conquest. Matilda was recorded as a subscriber sixty-eight times, to one in four of all charters from 1066-83, comparable to the statistics pre-1066. However, if we focus on the Continent, discounting the charters from England (most importantly the writs), she subscribed fifty-nine times: a rate of one in two. In comparison Robert Curthose acted as a subscriber forty-five times; forty-two times (or one in three) to Continental documents. His activity is comparable to that of Robert of Mortain, who was recorded as a subscriber in forty-one Continental documents. Both were notably more active than Roger of Beaumont and Roger of Montgomery, who respectively subscribed thirty-two and thirty-three Continental charters. Robert's younger brother William Rufus was recorded as a subscriber in thirty-seven Continental documents. These men were the most prominent in the Continental documents; the statistics thus again suggest Matilda's prominence in comparison to her male contemporaries.

As with the comparable recordings of consent, Matilda was never presented as part of a consistent subscribing group with male family members, although she does appear more often with both Robert Curthose and William Rufus than either of her other sons. This may, however, be affected by the years in which her sons could possibly be active – Richard was killed c. 1069 and Henry was not born until c. 1069, circumscribing the years in which they could be recorded compared to their elder brothers, both of whom were alive throughout this period. In the charters from 1035-66, Robert Curthose was recorded with Matilda forty-six percent of the time when she subscribed; he was recorded with her fifty-one percent of the time when she subscribed post-1066.[928] In contrast, she was present with him seventy-eight percent of the time when he subscribed post-1066, and with William Rufus seventy-nine percent of the time.[929] As was the case before the Conquest, she was more likely to be recorded with her sons than they were with her.

Nor was Matilda part of a subscribing group with any of the other prominent men: Robert of Mortain, Roger of Montgomery or Roger of Beaumont. There were only four

[928] They are together thirty five of the sixty eight times she subscribed.
[929] Thirty six out of forty six subscriptions. This percentage may be slightly low, as two of the times Robert subscribed without Matilda were charters written after her death, and his subscription may be a later interpolation, *RRAN*, Nos. 156, 252. Matilda was recorded with William Rufus thirty four out of forty three times.

foundations which recorded the presence of all four individuals in more than one charter – Saint Etienne of Caen, La Trinité of Caen, Fécamp and Marmoutier – and in none of their charters is there a consistent group, or any evidence that these individuals were seen as associated with each other when subscribing.[930] Nor are there any patterns associated with specific donors, including William II.

In fact, the only person with whom Matilda could be said to be associated in the post-1066 charters as a subscriber is William II. He was always recorded acting with her. Additionally, in forty-one percent of Matilda's appearances with William as a subscriber none of their children were recorded. This again supports the evidence from the narrative sources: it was Matilda as a wife and a queen who was recognized in the post-1066 charters, not Matilda as a mother. The recognition of Matilda as a subscriber was also as widespread as it was before the Conquest. Matilda was recorded as a subscriber by twenty-one Continental beneficiaries 1035-66, and by twenty-seven between 1066-83.[931] Of the fifteen Norman foundations from which more than one document survives, only two – Saint Wandrille and Saint Pierre of Préaux – never record Matilda's activity. However, there is also no single foundation which recorded her in every one of their charters. There is no clear correlation here with specific beneficiaries, although Matilda was connected to La Trinité of Caen, and possibly to a lesser extent to Saint Etienne.[932] Her sons Robert and William were recorded as subscribers by respectively twenty-two and twenty foundations. The sheer breadth and frequency of Matilda's recorded activity as a subscriber is remarkable, and suggests that her significance was widely perceived, especially in comparison with other important men in Normandy.

The overall statistics of appearances, and the statistical appearances in certain roles, suggest individuals who are perceived as prominent or important, but do not provide the critical information about independent activity or association with royal power and authority. Matilda's activity, especially as a consenter, and as an overseer of judicial courts with her husband hints that she had such a role in Normandy post-1066. Her activity suggests independence and authority in a way which that of other prominent men, including her sons, does not. At the same time, the close family group – father, mother and

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[930] *RRAN*, Nos. 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 53, 54, 57 (St. Etienne, Caen), 59, 59b, 60, 64, 64b (La Trinité, Caen), 140, 141, 142, 144 144, 146, 147 (Fécamp), 198, 199, 201, 203, 204, 207 (Marmoutier).

[931] Fifty-two and fifty-eight percent of beneficiaries, respectively.

[932] Ten charters survive from La Trinité, and thirteen from St Etienne. Matilda was only recorded as a subscriber by St Etienne, and in two of the four charters that she was not recorded, William II also does not subscribe, *RRAN*, Nos. 55, 56. William also was recorded twice as a subscriber when Matilda was not also recorded by La Trinité: however one was in one of two copies of an adjudication charter, *RRAN*, No. 64b. Both he and Matilda subscribed the other copy, *RRAN*, No. 64.

sons – were given recognition in the charters, with the latter as sons, but Matilda as a wife, not as a mother. Familial power and familial rule were thus still important, and still recognized in Normandy. The evidence of appearances suggests some continuity between her activity pre- and post-1066, but also an intensification of it, or at least the perception of such. Questions remain about the extent to which Matilda's power, including her ability to exercise regency power, was affected by the acquisition of the royal title, and to what extent it was rooted in her familial role.

III. The use of titles post-1066

One way to examine the impact which acquisition of the royal title had on Matilda's power and authority in Normandy, and to compare it both with her family role and her power as countess pre-1066, is to examine the descriptions used of her after the Conquest [see Figure 7.1]. Of immediate note is the fact that post-1066 *regina* entirely replaces *comitissa*.[933] In contrast, William II was described as both *rex* and *dux/comes/princeps* in forty-one percent of the Norman charters post-1066.[934] Therefore, while the title of *rex* alone is most often used, there is a significant percentage of charters where the title shows a recognition of both William's royal and comital/ducal power. That William was often both a 'count/duke' and a 'king', suggests separate roles if not offices, and is further evidence for the 'official' nature of *comes*. In Normandy his role as a count of the Normans was important; before and after the Conquest his comital/ducal title was often associated with the *gens Normannorum*. Neither *comitissa* nor *regina* associate Matilda with the Normans. William's multiple titles seem to celebrate his Norman role, whereas her simpler title underlines her lack of association with the *gens Normannorum*, in either office, pre- or post- 1066. This suggests that the perception of both roles may have been similar, as each rooted in the role of wife to a ruler, and again suggest that the perception of Matilda's position may not have changed significantly after 1066.

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[933] Of the one hundred and seventy one times Matilda was recorded, she was called *regina et comitissa* only once, in a charter recorded in the St Etienne cartulary, where her titles clearly parallel those of William (she is *regina Anglorum et comitissa Normannorum et Cenomannorum*, he is *rex Anglorum, princeps Normannorum et Coenomannorum*), *RRAN*, No. 52. However, in three other St Etienne charters when Willam and Matilda subscribed together he was given double titles that were not extended to her, *RRAN*, Nos. 45, 49, 51.

[934] Fifty nine out of one hundred and forty four documents. The titles used to describe William suggest that the variations were the result of individual beneficiaries' styles. Ater 1066 the use of *comes* to describe William declines; he is most often titled *dux* or *princeps*, *RRAN*, pp. 86-92.

Figure 7.1 – *The use of the titles* comitissa *and* regina, *pre- and post-1066*

Pre-1066:	DON	CONF	CONS	INT	CG	SUBS
COMITISSA	7 (70 %)			1	1	25 (71 %)
UXOR/CONJ	3 (30 %)	2	10			10 (29 %)
Post-1066:						
REGINA	**55 (89 %)**		10 (45 %)	1	24	**64 (93 %)**
UXOR/CONJ	2 (3 %)		7 (32 %)			1 (1 %)
REG ET UXOR	5 (8 %)	2	5 (23 %)			4 (6 %)

This table shows the number of times each description of Matilda was recorded in the charters both pre- and post-1066, as well as the percentage of appearances from each period which that number represents. Note especially the striking increases in title usage when donating and subscribing, but also the continued ambiguity of consent.

One indication that *regina* was perceived differently from *comitissa* is the use of a compound title, *regina et uxor*. The description *comitissa et uxor* was never used in tenth- or eleventh-century Normandy. *Regina et uxor* was used infrequently – in eight percent of donations, twenty-three percent of consents and six percent of subscriptions – although it was used in the only two occasions when Matilda acted with William to confirm a charter of donations. Nor was there a strong beneficiary pattern: it was used twice when she donated to La Trinité of Caen, once when she donated to Le Bec, twice when subscribed charters for Jumièges (out of three times), once when she subscribed a charter for Saint Florent of Saumur (out of three times), once as a subscriber for Saint Ouen of Rouen (out of three times, and a different charter from the one which records her consent with a combined title), and once each when recorded as a consenter by Le Mans, La Trinité du Mont of Rouen, Bayeux, Saint Ouen of Rouen and the priory of Saint Gabriel.[935] The combined title was not used consistently in relation to joint action with William, or activity as part of a family group. However, what it does suggest is the difference, widely perceived in Normandy, between countesses and queens. Countess, even when used to describe a woman acting as a subscriber in a public family group (where the usage was most consistent), could be synonymous with wife. Queen apparently could be distinct from wife. The fact that it was *uxor*, and not *mater*, used to describe her also suggests that her familial power was that of a wife, and not of a mother. The combination of 'wife' with *regina* reminds us that in this period the role of wife is still important, as is family power derived from that role.

[935] *RRAN*, Nos. 27, 59, 59b, 65, 161, 164, 167, 169, 236, 244, 246, 256, 266 (she is titled *regina* only in an alternate version, see No. 266b).

The use of the title *regina* suggests that it was seen as distinct from the family role of wife in a way that *comitissa* was not, and the consistency of usage hints at an 'official' status which was also seen as distinct. The difference for queens is of course coronation. Coronation and consecration were issues highlighted when comparing the pre-1066 count/dukes to contemporary French kings; coronation changed the status and perception of kings and queens in a way that was not applicable to counts and countesses. Matilda is interesting in this regard, as she was crowned two years after her husband.[936] We know that William II was crowned in 1066 after the Battle of Hastings, and that Matilda was not with him at this time. William of Poitiers states that in 1067 William returned to Normandy, where Matilda was acting as regent, and that she was already commonly called queen, even though she was not crowned.[937] This suggests both that Poitiers made a distinction between the wife of a king and a crowned queen, and that he recognized Matilda as having the status of a queen even before her consecration in 1068.

Four important charters can be dated to the year 1067, before Matilda's coronation, which allow further analysis of the perception of her at this point. The first is from Marmoutier. In it William II confirms grants made to Marmoutier by Hugh de Chaumont-en-Vexin, and it is recorded that this was done in the first year of William's reign at Lyons-la-Forêt.[938] Matilda confirms with her husband, and is described as a wife. This must be put into context. At Marmoutier – where most charters survive together in the abbey's eleventh-century cartulary – Matilda was never given the title *comitissa* before 1066. She was always described as the wife of William. The pattern continued in 1067, where the charter makes it clear that William was a duke and a king but that Matilda was his wife. However, every other Marmoutier charter post-1066 describes Matilda with the title *regina* at least once. Therefore, at Marmoutier there was a change in the way Matilda was recorded, a shift from wife to queen, and that shift can be dated to later than 1067. Matilda as the wife of a king appears at Marmoutier to be perceived as different from Matilda after she was crowned.

A charter dated April 1067 provides similar evidence.[939] It contains an account of a grant made to Saint Benoît sur Loire by Richard II of Normandy and his brother Robert, count of Avranches, followed by a record of disputed rights between William II and the

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[936] See above, p. 171.
[937] *Gesta Guillelmi*, pp. 178-9.
[938] *RRAN*, No. 196, 'precellentissimus Normannorum dux idemque rex Anglorum Guillelmus anno primo ipsius sui regni, una cum precellentissima Mahilde sua uxore, proprio illud auctoramento firmavit'.
[939] *RRAN*, No. 251.

monks over the church in question. The charter was written as an account of things that happened in the past, which was then presented to William for his subscription at Le Vaudreuil in 1067. The subscriptions of William and his immediate family are as follows:

Willelmi regis Anglorum et ducis Nortmannorum

Mathildis coniugis sue

Roberti filii sui Normannorum comitis

Richardi filii sui[940]

This is the only post-1066 charter where Matilda was recorded as a subscriber without a royal title. Furthermore, there is clearly a distinction made between the two sons, with Robert identified as the count of the Normans (whereas his father was *ducis Normannorum*). Richard and Matilda were identified by their familial descriptions, rather than by titles. If Matilda governed Normandy with her son in 1067, what does it say when she was not given a title as her husband and son were? Only two charters for the abbey of Saint Benoît survive from William II's reign, and the other is dated to 1084, after the death of Matilda, so unfortunately there is nothing to compare this with from that foundation. Taking into account the Marmoutier charter from 1067, and the fact that the role of subscription is otherwise always one where Matilda is described with her royal title, this is tantalizing evidence that William of Poitiers may have been presumptuous in claiming a perception of Matilda as a crowned queen. This also is evidence of Robert Curthose's more formal position as the heir, and seems to support William of Jumièges' account that he was the family member associated with William's rule in Normandy after the Conquest.

The Marmoutier and Saint Benoît charters are the only two documents in which Matilda appeared that have dating clauses specifically identifying them as being from 1067. Two other charter records can be dated to 1066-67 through external factors, and these add an interesting complexity to the picture of how Matilda was perceived at this juncture. The charters in question record donations made to Saint Ouen of Rouen; William, Matilda and Archbishop Maurilius of Rouen appeared on both lists of subscribers.[941] The presence of Archbishop Maurilius, who died on December 1, 1067, is evidence for the possible date of 1066 or 1067.[942] In both of these lists of subscribers Matilda was recorded as *regina*. So four charters with Matilda predate her coronation in 1068. Two give her the title of *regina*, and two do not. The two Saint Ouen charters were preserved in the abbey's fifteenth-century cartulary, which raises the possibility that Matilda's title was added retrospectively.

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[940] *RRAN*, No. 251.
[941] *RRAN*, No. 243, 244.
[942] *RRAN*, pp. 743-4.

However, we may be seeing here the influence of [political] geography. Neither Marmoutier nor Saint Benoît were Norman foundations (Marmoutier near Tours and Saint Benoît near Orleans). Saint Ouen of Rouen on the other hand, was central to the city of Rouen which seems to have been an important place for the ducal court, even in this later period. Was there a promotion of Matilda as a royal woman, or a woman with queenly power, within Normandy, and especially around the court, before her coronation in 1068, perhaps as part of the debate about legitimacy? In this context Poitiers' emphatic statement appears designed to address such a debate.

It is clear that there was perception in the eleventh century that a queen was different from, and perhaps more than 'the wife of a king'. Coronation was undoubtedly important to the recognition of Matilda as a royal woman. However, the charters from Saint Ouen may hint that there was a perception of Matilda as having the power of a queen, or acting like a queen, before her inauguration. William of Poitiers suggested as much in his work, while acknowledging the importance of the ceremony which distinguished queen from wife. But both sources raise questions about the possible debate over legitimacy after the Conquest; they suggest the importance of Matilda to that debate.

Countess may have been quasi-queenly, but the elaboration of titles reveals differences. The title *regina* was augmented in two ways: by the addition of the gentile description *Anglorum*, and by the addition of Matilda's lineage, which may have been crucial to the debate over legitimacy. There is definitely a beneficiary pattern associated with attention to Matilda's lineage, which was only explicated by her own foundation of La Trinité of Caen, just as was seen in the pre-1066 charters. Matilda's title of *regina* was augmented with descriptions of her lineage in three charters produced at La Trinité, always when she acted jointly with William to confirm a pancarte or make a donation.[943] Like the pre-1066 La Trinité foundation charter, these charters survive in the twelfth-century cartulary of the abbey, and it is possible that the similarity of descriptions comes from editing done in the process of the production of their common source. However, there is evidence that the cartulary reflects the realities of the copied charters, and not

[943] *RRAN*, No. 59, 'Willelmus Anglorum rex, Normannorum et Coenomanorum princeps, sed et Mathildis regina uxor mea, Baldwuini gloriosi Flandrensium ducis filia'; No. 59b, 'Willermus rex Anglorum, Normannorum atque Cenomannorum princeps, reginaque Matildis uxor mea, Balduini Flandrensium ducis filia'; No. 60, 'Willelmus Anglorum rex et Normannorum atque Cenomannensium princeps, necnon et uxor mea Matildis regina, Balduni Flandrensium ducis filia neptisque Henrici Franchorum illustrissimi regis'; No. 62, 'Gwillelmus Anglorum rex excellentissimus ac Normannorum dux, Roberti comitis filius, coniunxque sua reginarum nobilissima, Baldoini incliti ac strenuissimi Flandrensium comitis filia regisque Francorum Henrici neptis clarissima, Mathildis nuncupata'.

retrospective practice. In one charter, when William and Matilda appeared after the long preamble, the title *regina* was not used to describe Matilda: she was *uxor*.[944] The long preamble, unusual for La Trinité documents, is a form that appears in documents written for Saint Etienne of Caen. This charter was most likely written in the Saint Etienne *scriptorium*.[945] If this is the case, this may also indicate that the compilers of the twelfth-century cartulary at La Trinité were not retrospectively editing the wording of the charters they copied in order to produce consistent titles and descriptions, but that the cartulary records the diplomatic practice of the original documents.

Given this, it is noteworthy that at La Trinité, Matilda's title was not always consistent, nor was the most elaborate recitation of her lineage always given. In the record which was almost certainly drawn up in 1083 shortly before Matilda's death in which she bequeathed her crown, scepter and vestments to the abbey, she was simply *Mathildis regina*.[946] Was the record written up after she died? Does this perhaps hint that Matilda might have had a personal influence over how she was described in charters produced at the La Trinité *scriptorium*, and that her preference for an emphasis on her natal lineage was then dropped after her death?

What is even more striking is the difference between the titles of William and Matilda recorded in the La Trinité *scriptorium*. At La Trinité, William's titles of *rex* and *princeps/dux/comes* associated with England, Normandy and Maine were described in detail.[947] But when Matilda's title was elaborated, it was not with the multiple titles *regina et comitissa*, or with gentile descriptions, but with her lineage.[948] Her noble birth seems, at her own foundation, to be a significant basis for her high status. The fact that this elaboration is only found at La Trinité suggests that Matilda's lineage was not the sole basis for her power in Normandy, nor was the promotion of her royal lineage widespread. In view of the possible argument that emphasis was placed on this in the narrative sources as an aspect of legitimation, it is noteworthy that in the charters the promotion of Matilda's lineage was limited to her own foundation's promotion of their patroness.

Matilda's connection specifically with Normandy and a Norman role was never explicated with the use of the descriptor *Normannorum*, but she was, very rarely, given the gentile description *Anglorum*. She was addressed as *regina Anglorum* by Gregory VII in

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[944] *RRAN*, No. 61, 'ego Willelmus Anglorum rex, Normannorum et Cenomannorum princeps, uxorque mea Matildis'.
[945] Musset, *Les actes de Guillaume le Conquerant et de la reine Mathilde*, p. 36, No. 11
[946] *RRAN*, No. 63.
[947] *RRAN*, Nos. 59, 59b, 60, 61, 62, 64, 64b, 65.
[948] *RRAN*, Nos. 59, 59b, 60, 62.

both of the letters he wrote to her; the charter evidence here can be supplemented by letters and poetry.[949] She was also called *regina Anglorum* in the poetry of Fulcoius of Beauvais.[950] Her title was not given a gentile description in her epitaph, nor in the works of William of Poitiers or William of Jumièges. Thus, the description *Anglorum* was used to describe Matilda in writing produced outside Normandy, so the Norman charters provide an important perspective. The usage of this title in original documents is especially important, due to concerns about later *glossae*. In contrast to her husband, Matilda was only associated with the descriptor *Anglorum* twice in surviving original or contemporary copies of charters, both of which are charters written for Continental foundations, although only one has a Norman, and non-English context.[951] In the first, a dispute between Bishop Robert of Sées and Roger of Montgomery over the Episcopal customs of the church of Saint Leonard of Bellême was settled *in presentia regis et regine Anglorum*.[952] This charter almost certainly is a record of a public act; the subscribers are all described as 'having seen' the settlement made before the king and queen, and the location at Rouen is also recorded. This seems to be a record of William and Matilda sitting together in judgment at a court held in Normandy's main city. Is the wording of the charter merely a result of scribal grammar, the *Anglorum* of William's *rex* applied, sloppily to both? Alternatively, the use of *Anglorum* and the language of partnership may be a reflection of the role that William and Matilda played here, and their public display of royal authority in Rouen.

The language of partnership and shared power/authority highlights the need to carefully contextualize the charters and other sources. To isolate the 'post-1066' sources risks misleading, and suggesting a separation between the two periods that does not seem supported. While the language of shared power and authority was found in Matilda's coronation *ordo*, the charter evidence shows that this was not entirely new, and not only associated with queenship. As a countess and a wife Matilda was associated with William's authority and lordly power before the Conquest when they were recorded consenting together. This continued when she was a queen, as she and William consented together

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[949] Maccarini, 'William the Conqueror', p. 181, 185, 'Mathildi regine Anglorum'.

[950] See above, pp. 176-7.

[951] *RRAN*, No. 376. The second charter records a donation from William of Warenne and his wife Gundrada to Cluny. Both William and Matilda act as subscribers; the attestations are non-autograph crosses with William's identified as *Signum Willelmi regis Anglorum*, and Matilda as *Signum Mathildis regine Anglorum*. The land given to Cluny is English, and the charter is written in a hand that has been identified as belonging to one of William's English chancery scribes. However, the use of *regina Anglorum* was unusual in England pre-1066, Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith*, pp. 55-64. This may represent Cluniac practice.

[952] *RRAN*, No. 29, both William and Matilda were subscribers, and neither was given a descriptor with their royal title when acting in that role.

and oversaw judicial proceedings. Rather than distinguishing between countesses and queens, even before the Conquest this recorded activity set her apart from her predecessors in Normandy. That she continued to be recorded in this way after the Conquest suggests that gaining the royal title did not completely change the way she was perceived in Normandy.

There are important parallels between her activity both before and after the Conquest in every role that she was recorded in, with the exception of judicial activity, where changing diplomatic practice likely shaped the charter evidence. Although her activity increased statistically after the Conquest, the roles that she played and the way her actions were recorded do not suggest a significant gain of power upon acquisition of the royal title and status. Matilda was recorded as a donor, both jointly with her husband and independently, and her association with La Trinité as founder and patron seems to have influenced her activity in this role, just as it did before 1066. Her connection with La Trinité was also apparent when she acted as a intercessor, a role which, for men and women, increasingly seems to have been shaped by connections to ecclesiastical houses throughout the eleventh century. She was not presented participating in the newly recorded activity of judicial intercession, and never brought a claim before William in the royal/ducal court.

There were clearly changes in the opportunities for Matilda to act after the Conquest, as can be seen with the increased wealth that enabled her patronage and donations. In addition, after the Conquest it appears that Matilda may have had more opportunity to act independently. She had the power to enforce William's decisions, seen in the Marmoutier charter in which William ordered Matilda to enforce the settlement he had made. Matilda, therefore, could act as a deputy of William, although questions remain about the extent to which she acted with his authority in Normandy. Alongside the Marmoutier charter and *mandement* we must set the two charters which recorded Matilda independently giving approbation to a grant with her presence. In both of these documents, Matilda was recorded at the head of a group of nobles and members of the ducal household, providing the strongest evidence for her possible position as a regent acting with delegated royal authority. This must be seen in connection with the earlier evidence of Matilda acting as William's proxy before 1066, in the important charter of Roger Malus Filiaster. Combined, these charters suggest that Matilda's activity as a regent was not an opportunity available to her because of her new position as a queen, but rather was recognized as a power and a role a wife could play.

In that respect she both parallels her contemporary Anne of Kiev, but differs from her. Anne's position too was familial, and she is recorded alongside Philip as *mater*, but

also as a queen: in most cases she was called *regina*. The questions about whether Anne was or was not a formal regent, which have exercised historians, are arguably as ill-conceived for her as for Matilda.[953] But, unlike Matilda, the French charters record a dramatic increase in perception of Anne's importance after Henry's death which is linked to a new role. Matilda's regency, if that is how we should describe it, is more of a seamless development from her earlier significance. Thus the importance of family, and family power, continue to be seen in Normandy. Rather than looking for novel, formal regency, we may be seeing the role of the wife in the absence of her husband, acting in his stead at the head of a group of Norman nobles – as his absences increased, so too would Matilda's opportunities to act in this way.

This perception of Matilda's position may be the basis for the claims made by William of Poitiers and Orderic Vitalis that it was Matilda who ruled in Normandy when William was absent. Here the charter evidence and narrative sources support each other, although the charter evidence should make us wary of interpreting Poitiers' and Orderic's statements to mean that 'regency' was a formal institution or that 'regent' was an office. In contrast, where William of Jumièges' work claims regency in Normandy for Robert Curthose, the charter evidence does not support this claim. In the charters, none of the other prominent individuals, including Robert Curthose, were ever recorded acting independently in Normandy as Matilda was. Nor were they associated with William's lordly power in the same way. Combined with the statistical analysis, which showed her clearly set apart from all other men, this suggests that it was Matilda, and not her son, who had some responsibility for the governance of Normandy during William's absences.

William of Jumièges and William of Poitiers also highlighted Matilda's lineage in their works. Her lineage, especially her royal descent, seems significant for her husband and sons, but apparently was not the basis for, or associated with, her position in Normandy. She may have influenced the promotion of her lineage at La Trinité, but it was not recorded in Normandy outside of that foundation, and the widespread perception of her power and authority seems rooted in her position as wife, countess and queen, not in her lineage. Her epitaph, and the poems written in the late eleventh century, emphasized not only her lineage, but also her rule as a queen with courtly qualities. This again reminds us of the need for context, as these works evoke the language used by Dudo to praise the

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[953] R.H. Bautier, 'Anne de Kiev, reine de France, et la politique royale au XIe siècle: étude critique de la documentation', in R.H. Bautier, ed, *Recherches sur l'histoire de la France médiévale. Des Mérovingiens aux premiers Capétiens* (Brookfield, VT, 1991), pp 539-64; F. Olivier-Martin, *Les Régences et la Majorité des Rois sous les Capétiens directs et les premiers Valois, 1060-1375* (Paris, 1931), pp. 1-25; Prou, *Recueil*, pp. xxxi-xxxii.

courtly qualities of tenth-century Norman women like Gisla and Gunnor. That this language is used both before and after the Conquest again suggests continuity of the perception of female power, and highlights the lamentable lack of such a source during the early part of Matilda's Norman career.

Both charters and other sources reveal Matilda's wealth and the scale of her patronage after 1066. Even allowing for all the caveats about a possible increase in source material after that date, this looks like a real change. It must surely be linked to the Conquest, although we should not underestimate the importance of, for example, her dower arrangements. This apparent increase in wealth would just as surely have fed an increase in her capacity for the sort of action which historians have linked with female power.[954] That activity is partly captured by the evidence for increased donation recorded in the charters, though its prominence in incidental references to Matilda should alert us to the fact that the charters here may not capture all the shifts which occurred after 1066. However, it is possible that the near universal use of the title *regina* in the Norman charters, and the complete replacement of *comitissa*, may be witness to this change in wealth and associated power. The royal title invoked Matilda's legitimacy, but also perhaps reflected some of the awe and pride in, evoked by the splendor of, a post-1066 Norman countess now accessing the wealth of the English. And it was, of course, as William's wife that she filled this position.

Matilda's role, power and authority in Normandy does not seem to have significantly changed in kind post-1066. Her activity as a queen has clear parallels with that as a countess before the Conquest, and the study of the charters suggests both that countess was quasi-queenly, but also that queenship continued to be an office with certain ambiguities. However, coronation and consecration were clearly important. There was a difference in perception, as queenship was separated from wife, and sometimes both aspects of Matilda's status were recognized. Although in the narrative sources written in the twelfth century she was remembered as a mother, during her lifetime and immediately after (as seen in her epitaph) she was remembered as a powerful wife and queen. What we see of her suggests that questions about autonomy, and about formal regency, are misplaced. A more accurate late-eleventh-century formulation, one which has been noted in the most recent work on Matilda, recognizes her power alongside that of William, and as part of a husband-wife partnership.[955] This is also how she emerges from the charter evidence, a woman who maximized her position, and acted with greater power and

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[954] See above, p. 11.
[955] Bates, 'The representation of queens and queenship', pp. 288-9.

authority in Normandy than any other member of the ducal/comital/royal family in the second half of the eleventh century.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

This thesis set out to study Matilda of Flanders, specifically in Normandy, and with special attention to questions about her power and authority. This work thus aimed to address the gaps in the existing historiography, and to take up some of the questions generated on marriage, on the impact of 1066 and the acquisition of queenship, and on regency. This thesis follows recent trends in historiography with an emphasis on family, and on a rethinking of early medieval politics which brings family to the forefront. Thus the attention to Matilda's marriage, as a contentious and unresolved issue, but also as the union which placed Matilda within Normandy. Consideration of this union, and the implications for Matilda's family position, necessitated a longer perspective, one which took into account the unions of previous partners of the count/dukes of Normandy back to the tenth century, and thus the tradition of female legitimacy and power which Matilda inherited.

Two issues were central to the study of female power and authority in Normandy: family and 'official' positions. This thesis examined how important position within the family and household, family politics, and family power and authority were to understanding and explaining the situation of these women. It also asked how important were the arguably more 'official' bases of power and authority in Normandy such as 'countess-ship', and after 1066, queenship. 1066 has long been seen as a watershed in many ways, and the issues surrounding the impact of 1066 were to be addressed in relation to both of these issues, not least because of the introduction of the new queenly status in Normandy.

These questions were approached by a return first to narrative and poetic sources, which have recently yielded such significant results in the hands of historians such as van Houts and Nelson, as well as other non-charter sources, such as hagiography and letters.[956] This included Matilda's epitaph, a quasi-narrative, biographical source. Some twelfth-century sources were used, where they appear to have very good eleventh-century evidence behind them, but in general the focus was on sources contemporary to Matilda's lifetime, as less likely to suffer from hindsight, or from twelfth-century agendas which might

[956] Nelson, 'Women at the court of Charlemagne', pp. 56-7; van Houts, 'The Echo of the Conquest', passim; E.M.C van Houts, 'Latin Poetry and the Anglo-Norman court 1066-1135: The *Carmen de Hastingae Proelio*', *JMH*, 15, no. 1 (1989), pp. 39-62.

distort the picture. This proved to be especially important when considering marriage, wifehood and motherhood.

As a result of the study of 'narrative' sources, the questions around the source material were sharpened, and some conclusions can be drawn about their use. Close reading of the narrative sources, with attention to author, informants and audience showed that they still have much to tell us. This was especially the case for the writings of Dudo of St Quentin, which were crucial to the study of the unions/marriages of Matilda's Norman predecessors. Dudo also provided a precious court-centered view of women's power and authority at the beginning of the eleventh century. I would certainly endorse the current trend to rehabilitate Dudo's reputation and use of his work, with the important caveat that it be considered within the context of its creation, as a product of the Norman court of Richard II. Just how precious Dudo's court-centered view is was made clear by the comparison with the late-eleventh-century poetry that described Matilda of Flanders. These rare sources record the perception of powerful women from inside the court and household that they were a part of, although we must always use caution and be aware of the potential for flattery. Nevertheless, they contrast to the view from outside court, such as the monastic setting in which William of Jumièges wrote. It is clear from the dearth of narrative sources that describe Matilda before the conquest what is lost to the historian when such court-centered sources do not survive.

It is not only the narrative sources that required an awareness of the context of their production. The charters too required careful handling. The overall statistical analysis through the database and the more detailed analysis by role had to account for the limitations and the challenges set by the vagaries of survival and transmission. The possibility of retrospective editing was a concern for pancartes, cartulary copies, early-modern and modern copies. There were additional concerns, including the dangers inherent in drawing too rigid distinctions between different 'roles' and of distinguishing these roles consistently given the varying and inexact terminology of the charter scribes (who were not in the business of providing legal precision). There were also very specific questions raised by the so-called 'mutacion documentaire' of the eleventh century, which could provide a false record of social change, study of which was complicated by the overall lack of recorded dates in the charter evidence. For these reasons, the detailed analysis of individual documents or groups of documents was often less problematic than general statistical comparison, and certainly provided important results. This can especially ben seen in the study of title usage and family grouping for Gunnor, Judith, Papia which centered on a small group of important Rouennais charters, and later in the Marmoutier

documents which showed Matilda's involvement in enforcing judicial rulings and the transmission of written instructions from William.

However, a statistical approach was ultimately validated, ironically precisely because of the beneficiary production often seen as a limitation of these charters for the study of central power and authority. In the context of the systematic analysis provided by the database, beneficiary production was a positive, as it allowed us to see the sheer breadth (or lack thereof) of the recognition of Matilda and her predecessors, and the patterns in the way they were perceived. Authority, if not power, comes from the recognition of others of the right to act, and thus the perception of Matilda and her predecessors throughout Normandy is critical. When combined with the comparative methodology adopted in this thesis, the statistics provided evidence for the changes and continuities in the perception, power, and authority of Matilda and her predecessors, over time as well as between different beneficiaries. There were clearly shifts over time in the type of information recorded, especially the increase in records of consent between 1026-*c.*1050, and the appearance of a new type of activity, judicial activity, after the Conquest. Seeing these overall changes that affected both men and women then allowed for comparison between patterns of the individual women and the changing general pattern. Gender was kept to the fore throughout. This was not merely a study of women, but of women and comparable men. This comparative approach paralleled the comparison with earlier women, and was a major feature of the methodology, following the approaches of gender history, as opposed to women's history.

Thus we could see that even as records of consent increased, which set Matilda apart from her predecessors, Matilda herself was distinguished from the general population in the way she was recorded. Her activity was not different because of the 'mutacion documentaire', but due to other factors, possibly including her perceived partnership in authority with her husband. Likewise, with the increase in the number of documents which survive after 1066, all statistical appearances increased. But a comparison of Matilda and contemporary men, including her sons and William II's half-brothers, showed that her activity increased significantly in Normandy after 1066, at a time when the general records of male ducal family activity decreased. This suggested there was a widespread perception of Matilda's prominence in Normandy, in contrast to her sons and other Norman magnates. The percentage of surviving documents in which Matilda was recorded was so high after 1066, and so much greater than any of her contemporaries (both male and female), that it suggested comparisons with Archbishop Robert of Rouen during the reign of Richard II, who

appears from his prominence in the charters to have been perceived as a virtual co-ruler with his brother.

This broad approach also brought out the changes, and continuities, in the description of Matilda and of the Norman comital/ducal family women more generally, across a wide range of beneficiaries. Again an apparent weakness was actually a strength for this study. All of this came together to form the basis for the conclusions about the significance of queenship, of 'countess-ship', of office, and of the familial roles of wife and mother. This was especially true of the study of the role of subscription, where we can track a clear rise in the percentage of charters which recorded the *signa* of the ducal family women as *comitissa*, and the continued increase of the use of titles, both comital and royal, throughout the eleventh-century. Gunnor and Judith subscribed as part of a family group, in contrast to Matilda, who was associated only with her husband in that role. Changes and continuities like these can be seen in comparisons between Matilda and her predecessors, especially Gunnor, as well as for Matilda both before and after the Conquest of England.

I suggested that the increasing use of the title *comitissa* to describe the comital women when they subscribed may be an indication that something like an 'office' of countess developed in Normandy during the eleventh century, but what become most clear from this study is the importance of the family position for all of these women. Inclusion in the sources, both narrative and charter, appears predicated on the position of wife or mother, and particularly mother of the count/duke. None of the other family women – daughters, sisters, aunts – were recorded, with the exception of Gerloc and Hawise, who were recorded in narrative sources when their respective brothers arranged alliance marriages for them, and Beatrice, who was recorded in Norman charters in her official capacity as abbess of Montivilliers. This stands in sharp contrast to the male ducal family members, the brothers, uncles and sons of the count/duke. The activity of sons is especially notable, and not just the eldest: during the reign of Richard II his sons Richard III and Robert I were recorded together on numerous occasions, as were Robert Curthose and (to a lesser extent) William Rufus during the reign of William II.

Other men, including brothers and uncles, were also recorded. Some may have been recorded not for their family position, but because of their power as territorial counts and bishops. Archbishop Robert of Rouen was recorded in a way that suggested he held power and authority based on both his ecclesiastical and his family position as brother of the duke. Other brothers of Richard II such as Mauger of Corbeil and William of Eu were present at the court in Rouen and formed part of a family group with Gunnor and Judith. There are no comparable women to these ducal brothers. So for women more than men it

was marriage and the role of wife, or motherhood, and particularly motherhood of the reigning count/duke, which was critical. Either the ducal sisters, aunts, and daughters did not act within Normandy (perhaps because of alliance marriages outside the territory), or they did act with the family, but were not perceived in the same way as sons and brothers, and not recorded. In either case, women in the ducal family in Normandy gained recognition, power, and authority through the family roles of wife and mother.

Family power remained important, even as the title *comitissa* was used to describe the wives and mothers of the count/dukes. The idea that we are looking for signs of an official position which replaces the family one is misleading. The possible 'office' of countess, as indicated by the use of the title *comitissa*, a word which meant 'wife of the count', was rooted in the family role of wife. Women were called either *comitissa*, or *uxor/mater*; there was never a record of a woman acting as both *comitissa* and *uxor/mater*, which would indicate a perception of distinct roles, and of a woman acting in both capacities at the same time. But having said that, there are indications that the use of *comitissa* indicated status, and perhaps also power and authority. In Normandy there was no strong tradition of the use of *comitissa* to describe wives and mothers in the tenth century. In the eleventh century the first uses of the title are in documents associated with Rouen, the home of the ducal court. This geographical pattern suggests that the use of the title may have been promoted from within the comital/ducal court and household. *Comitissa* was used to describe the duke's wife and mother when they acted as subscribers, recorded as taking part in what could be a public ceremony that displayed ducal power. But, usage was not invariable, and the family description was clearly still one of importance in this period.

When charters begin to appear which record the title *comitissa*, during the reign of Richard II, we also see the use of the title *comes*, on occasion, for the male members of the wider ducal family. The usage again was inconsistent for the most part, and for some of Richard II's brothers it can be interpreted in the same way as *comitissa* for the members of the ducal family who acted as a group in Rouen. Other uses suggest the perception that some *comites* held official positions. For Raoul of Ivry and Robert of Avranches, the title was used more consistently, and was more geographically widespread. I suggested that this use of the title was a recognition that these men acted as territorial deputies on behalf of the count/duke Richard II, and in this context, the use of *comes* suggests an office, rather than a recognition of status in a public role. Still, these titles never had territorial or gentile descriptions attached, which distinguishes them from the title used to describe Richard II. The use of these descriptors set the count/duke of Normandy apart from all his

contemporaries, and it is clear that there was a perception throughout Normandy that the title *comes*, when used for the count/duke, indicated a different type of position, one that was more like an 'office' and more like the position of a king, than that held by the members of his family.

There is a gap in the charter evidence between Matilda and her predecessors. No wife or mother was recorded between c.1026-1050, and there are many contrasts between her activity and that of her predecessors. Matilda was associated with William in joint donation, and also clearly cash-rich, as was shown by the purchases she made on behalf of her foundation of La Trinité of Caen. Her connection with La Trinité was important, and would continue to be so post-1066. Her joint activity with William was also important, as none of the previous wives were recorded with their husbands in that way. She and William acted together as consenters, notably to donations where neither had a familial or lordly connection to the donor. In these charters, we saw Matilda associated with William's authority as the 'lord' of all the Normans. The roles of subscription and consent overlapped, and as a subscriber Matilda was most often associated with William in a role which suggests a record of public gatherings of the court and public displays of power and authority. Their crosses on the surviving autograph charters suggest a perception, from both within and outside the court, that their power was associated together.

Matilda was also associated with William alone, as opposed to a wider family group as seen for Gunnor and Judith. The family group of Richard II's relatives was based in Rouen, and there is evidence that the use of the comital title for the women may have been influenced by court practice there. In contrast, Matilda was recognized throughout Normandy; this supports Bates' assertion that there was a shift in government during the eleventh century, from Richard II's 'palace' style, to William's more itinerant form. Matilda's association with William's authority outside of a family group and throughout Normandy raised questions about the perception of her power and authority compared with his. This association in partnership was not seen for Matilda's predecessors.

As the male title of *comes* for family men became territorial in the second half of the eleventh century, Matilda's title *comitissa* was used consistently throughout Normandy in the role of subscriber. The connection with a role that was associated with a publicized, possibly ritual, display of comital/ducal power is not insignificant. Matilda's title was also used when she acted independently as a donor, whereas she was described as a wife when acting jointly with William. Was this a recognition both that as a wife she was associated with comital/ducal power and authority, but also that as a countess she could exercise it on her own when she acted independently? The evidence from this period hints at a

developing office of 'countess' which carried some expectations, and some share of comital/ducal authority, but which still had the ambiguities associated with queenship, and with power which was based on the family role of wife.

The extent to which this emerging office was or was not quasi-queenly became clearer when compared with the recorded perception of Matilda after the Conquest. There are differences: queens were inaugurated with a coronation while countesses were not. The Marmoutier and St Benoît charters show that at some foundations Matilda's coronation led a to change in the title she was given when recorded in their charters, as she became a queen instead of a wife. However, within Normandy there is evidence from St Ouen that Matilda may have been described with a royal title during the two years between the Conquest of England and her own coronation in 1068. It was at St Ouen where the practice of using the female comital title to describe Gunnor and Judith may have been influenced by court practice. William II's government was not centered in Rouen like that of his grandfather, but it is possible that the St Ouen charters reveal a Norman promotion of Matilda as a woman with queenly power even before her coronation.

'Queen' also seems to have been perceived as being distinct from 'wife' in a way that 'countess' was not. Before the Conquest Matilda and her predecessors were described either by their comital title or by the family description of wife or mother. In this context, it seems that the title *comitissa* could include the familial description as well, that the 'countess' really was 'wife of the count'. *Regina* is different. In some charters written after 1066 Matilda was described as both *regina* and wife; suggesting an acknowledgement that these two roles were could be distinct, but also that Matilda's family role continued to be important and to be recognized. Importantly, her position as the mother of children was never recorded in the charters. For other women mother was a role of strength, such as Anne of Kiev and Gunnor, but both of those women were recorded as mothers after the death of their husbands, and while their sons ruled their respective territories. For Matilda it is clearly wife which was the important role during her lifetime; in the narrative sources written before 1083, she was always *uxor/conjunx* and not *mater*, just as it within the charters she was a wife and a queen.

The patterns of usage of the title *regina* also suggest the more 'official' activities as seen for countesses. Most notable is the use of the title when Matilda subscribed – she was always described as *regina* when acting in this public, and possibly ritual way alongside

her husband the king.[957] Matilda was also titled *regina* more often as a donor and as a consenter. She was given a gentile description with her title, *regina Anglorum*, albeit infrequently. Her husband William was notably given a gentile description more often than she was, and it seems that king was still different from queen. William was also given compound titles – *rex et dux*, for example – that suggest a perception of different offices in England and Normandy. For Matilda, 'queen' entirely replaced 'countess' in both England and Normandy, which further underlines the fact that for women these descriptions are based not on a territorial position, but on the family position of wife. The more ambiguous nature of queenship – as noted for early medieval queens by Stafford, Nelson, and MacLean – is apparent here.[958]

This continuity before and after 1066 can been seen in Matilda's activity, although there were clearly changes caused by the Conquest. She continued to patronize religious foundations, especially her own house in Caen, La Trinité. However, her increased wealth certainly allowed her to expand her donations and purchases. The charters may not reveal everything here, and there are indications of her wealth in letters and narratives which indicate the extent to which the Conquest led to her increased property and ability to distribute it. After the Conquest she was also recorded as involved in judicial activity. We may see a diplomatic shift here, and judicial activity may have been hidden in the earlier charters, but this also may be a reflection of the perception of how royalty behaved as opposed to counts and countesses. As queen Matilda was associated with William's royal authority to call courts and hear pleas.

After the Conquest it also appears that Matilda may have had more opportunity to act independently. From the Marmoutier charters we have two documents which show her receiving instructions from her husband. One, a rare writ, suggests the possibility that many more of these documents were written than now survive. Matilda, it seems, had the power to enforce William's decisions, and acted as a deputy in Normandy. Additionally, in William's absence Matilda was recorded acting at the head of a group of Norman nobles and members of the ducal household, not just after the Conquest, but also before it as well. Combined, these charters suggest that Matilda's activity as a deputy, and one who was association with the authority of her husband, was not an opportunity available to her

[957] The sole exception is the St Benoît charter of 1067, written before Matilda's coronation, *RRAN*, No. 251.
[958] Nelson, 'Medieval Queenship', pp. 203-204; Maclean, 'Making a difference in tenth-century politics', p. 190; Stafford, 'The King's Wife in Wessex', pp. 3-27.

because of her new position as a queen, but rather was recognized as a power and a role a wife could play.

Looking at Matilda's career in Normandy in its entirety, it seems clear that Matilda's position in Normandy both built on the earlier precedents for female power, especially that of Gunnor, but also that Matilda was able to maximize her position both before and after 1066 in a way that her predecessors did not, although the long gap between their recorded activity does raise questions about a possible 'mutacion documentaire'. The 1066 date, although it provides a divide because of changes in circumstances, sources and title, does not represent the importation of new traditions or a break with the past with regards to the perception of her power and the way her activity was recorded in Normandy. Quite the opposite, in fact. The continuities are striking, especially the language which associated Matilda with a share of William's power and authority in the role of consenting and judicial activity. Matilda was recorded in this way both as a countess and a queen; this seems to be linked to the position of wife which underlay both titles. It also separates Matilda from her predecessors, since they were never recorded in partnership like this.

In this context, the questions about regency seem to be slightly misleading, insofar as they sometimes perpetuate an over-administrative paradigm, but also as they often end with family rather than starting there. In the Norman ducal and Anglo-Norman royal charters it is the husband and wife, and the view of that as a potential partnership, which is apparent for William and Matilda. That partnership is fundamental - and extended to rule in William's absence - rooted as it was in ideas about the family as a unit, and particularly in ideas about the conjugal unit at its heart. In the case of William and Matilda, pre and post 1066, it was the narrowest definition of family, the core unit of the married couple, which became paramount. The role of wife in that unit underlies queenship, countess-ship and 'regency'. It is the specific importance of Matilda was a wife in Normandy, for whatever reason, which seems to explain her ability to maximize the possibilities of queen, of countess, and of wife, including as the wife-as-ruler-in-absence.

The obvious question, therefore, is why was the role of wife so important for William and Matilda, when it was not during the lifetimes of Matilda's predecessors? Matilda's marriage was fully legitimate, but so were the unions of women like Judith and Gunnor. However, the circumstances of Matilda's union seem auspicious. Unlike Gunnor, whose marriage was only legitimated as her husband neared the end of his life, Matilda's union was seen as fully legitimate, if not from the beginning, certainly from within a few years. In contrast to Judith, Matilda entered a Norman court and household which lacked the presence of a dowager countess whose marriage was legitimate, and who might

overshadow her son's wife. The general lack of extended family at the court, or at least extended family whom William II was willing to trust, is also notable. This lack of reliable family in all likelihood made the role of the wife even more important.

William may have been unwilling to rely on his extended family because of questions about his legitimacy; his cousin and uncle challenged his rule during his early years in power. All accounts of his marriage to Matilda emphasize her legitimate descent, and her comital and royal connections. Her bloodline may have helped to legitimate William's rule, both at the time of her marriage, and again after 1066 when the narrative sources emphasize her royal connections. Her marriage also brought an important political alliance with Flanders. She thus began her time in Normandy from a position of strength, which was likely increased by her fertility, although that is not emphasized in the sources. Matilda's power and position in Normandy were clearly perceived as being based in her role as a wife, not a mother, although motherhood likely strengthened her wifely credentials.

It seems that the acquisition of queenship does not change this fundamentally. Instead, Matilda continued to act in the same way, although it is clear that the perception of her after her coronation was different. Wife underlies queen, but queen crowned wife, and that coronation was important. The acquisition of the royal title allowed Matilda to maximize the role of wife. However, there is already evidence for her power as a wife before she became a crowned queen, and all the evidence from eleventh-century Normandy suggests that while Matilda was given circumstances which allowed her the possibility of maximizing her position, she likely exercised her own agency to take full advantage of those opportunities. This included her support for William as he sailed to conquer England, and as he governed two realms separated by the English Channel. If, as has been suggested, the office of Anglo-Norman queenship as one of joint rule with the king was modeled on the Norman comital/ducal wives, it was clearly modeled on Matilda, and her role in Normandy as a powerful wife, countess and queen.

Appendix A: Notes on the charter database

At an early stage in process of researching this thesis, the need for a systematic study of charters so that Matilda of Flanders' individual appearances and activity could be compared with her contemporaries and peers. This work has shown patterns in both perception and activity central to understanding the authority and power of comital/ducal and royal women in tenth and eleventh century Normandy. To facilitate such a study I have taken the charter editions of Fauroux and Bates and created a computer database of the charters and the appearances of individuals. The rationale behind this being that the database allows for the quick sorting of large amounts of information, and the speed with which information can be organized in response to a specific query encourages the asking of complicated questions based on multiple factors, where such study might be too labor intensive to be done by hand. It also encourages the testing of a hypothesis against a wide range of data: this should reduce the urge to cherry-pick individual pieces of information from the charters without a reference to the context of the whole. The computer also helps to reduce human error in the counting and handling of large collections of information. This is vital for the appearances of individuals in the Norman ducal and Anglo-Norman royal charters, as there are more than eight thousand individual entries. Finally, the database allows the opportunity for independent verification. With the information from the charters already entered, it is far easier for another scholar to examine the data and test any conclusions. Such verification would be prohibitively time consuming if done by hand.

With these considerations in mind, in the spring of 2007 a trial database was produced using the fifty five charters from the reigns of the count/dukes Richard I, Richard II and Richard III. From this trial database it became clear which areas to focus on, and what type of refinements were needed. It was at this stage that the decision to expand the amount of information recorded about each individual was taken. Initially this included only an 'English name' (an accepted modern name allowing for text searches), the role which they played and the Latin text of each entry. Following the trial, this information was expanded to include a standardized English name and 'qualifier' (a territorial designation or identifying nickname), as well as the gender of each individual, and the title given in that particular entry. The addition of the title was the most important change made after the trial, as this decision has proved invaluable in the assessment of the perception of comital and royal power. This trial database also showed which roles were relatively common, and which were so rare that it was not useful to have a separate category. The judgment of

when a certain action can fit into a particular category has been taken case by case as the entries were coded, and each category represents a range of related activity. Many entries are accompanied by extensive notes files detailing the nuances of each record and providing context. This is especially the case of judicial activity, where each court proceeding has its own unique circumstances. These must be read with care when assessing individual activity in the database.

After the trial database was refined, the full charter editions were coded; the pre-1066 charter database, called Charters 2, was completed in the spring of 2008 and the post-1066 database, called Charters 3, in the summer of 2009. The format and software behind both Charters 2 and Charters 3 is identical. Both databases are built in three tables. The first, Charters, gives information about the document. The second, People, contains the information about the appearances of individuals, and the third, Xrefs, brings the two tables together and allows for cross referencing. The Xrefs table is thus an artifact, an interface for accessing the other two tables, and contains no information of its own. The majority of this work is based on information contained in the People table, supplemented by the information from the Charters table, which includes the specific date and location of the act (if recorded, or a range of possible dates if not), the type of charter (pancarte, grant, confirmation, writ, etc.) and the preservation (original, cartulary copy, late copy, etc.), as well as the reference number of the edition which it is taken from.

The People table, in addition to the descriptive information discussed above, gives important information about the role which an individual plays, and which is critical for the study of the context of Matilda's appearances. The categories used for roles are as follows:

Addressees are the people to whom a writ is addressed.
Countergifters are people who make gifts of money in return for donations, *if* the exchange of money is not specifically described as a sale. The notes for each entry should connect the countergifter to the donor.
Countergift recipients are the donors who receive countergifts, and the notes connect them to the countergifter.
Consenters are individuals who agree to a grant in the body of the text. Consent can often overlap with subscription, the notes will explain why the judgment has been made to code an action as consent rather than subscription. Consent can be visual, and includes record that an action was taken in the presence of an individual (as this implies their agreement). Individuals overseeing or recorded attending a judicial procedure are often categorized as consenters, but their action will be noted as such in the notes.

Donors are always the main actor, are generally recorded in the first person, and also include the overall confirmer of a pancarte or confirmation charter recording many donations, if they are phrased as the main actor.

Intercessors are those who request donations, or who bring claims about a donation. This category also includes those who present evidence in a judicial court, activity which will be noted in the notes.

Judges are individuals who act to decide the outcome of a judicial case. In most instances they are ordered to act in this way by the count/duke or king.

Original Donors are donors or whose grants are recorded as part of pancartes or confirmation charters, they are not the main actor of the charter, and often record action which happened prior to the date of the charter being produced. Purchases and sales are recorded here if they are not the main action

Recipients are the individual or foundation receiving the donation; there can be multiple recipients in the case of charters which record exchanges, this will always be noted in the notes attached to each entry.

Scribes are individuals named as the writer of a specific document.

Subscription is coded in two stages. Witnessing, for the purposes of the database, indicates any form of subscription. Signatories is the category for any subscribers who form a secondary grouping, to distinguish them from the witnesses. Thus, in the database, the two names bear no relation to the form the subscription takes. In pancartes and confirmation charters, witnesses are those recorded in the body of the charter as subscribers to the original donations, while signatories are those who subscribe to the charter as a whole.

There are also two 'non active' roles, which are not used in the thesis, but were part of the database coding in case they proved useful. For soul of records the individuals named in a *pro anima* clause. Monogram, seen only in the charters of Richard II, indicates that a ducal monogram was recorded.

Having the database makes the charters, and the actions of individuals which they record, accessible in a way that they are not at the moment, especially allowing for context. At the moment this database it not a public resource, as the design and interface are idiosyncratic, and would need work to make it usable by a wider audience. However, the process of creating the database has caused me to encode the information contained in the charters in a format which would allow it to be uploaded, and used, by any interface which works with SQL. This opens up the possibility of transferring the work done in this thesis to

a project on prosopography, or on other members of the Norman elite during this period. The work of coding has been substantial, and could be prohibitively time consuming. Thus this work has, in addition to providing a study of female power in the eleventh century, opened the possibility of future work on eleventh century Normandy.

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