

Family Ties to Anarchy: King Stephen and Empress Matilda

Clint Rodgers

A monarchy is a family relationship. When William the Conqueror invaded England in 1066, he established his family as the rulers of both England and Normandy. While the typical practice was primogeniture, where the father always established his eldest son as successor, it was not an absolute rule as it became in later periods of history. Therefore, when Henry I of England and Normandy died in 1135, the succession was thrown into incredible doubt. The two claimants were cousins: Stephen was Henry I's nephew and Matilda was Henry I's daughter. After Henry's death, Stephen and Matilda fought a civil war known as the Anarchy that consumed all of England for two decades, with severe consequences for peasants, gentry, and noblemen alike. The resulting destruction of civilized society has gripped historians for generations. Recently there has been more attention paid to the personalities of the two rivals and the effect these personalities had on the stability of the English state. Some biographers are pro-Stephen or pro-Matilda; others try to rectify the primary sources into a cohesive account of the confusing dispute. Yet, even by skimming the pages of the biographies, it is apparent that Stephen and Matilda had more in common than a blood relationship. Their political ties and previous experiences were remarkably similar, leaving the two monarchs with equal disadvantages. The relationship between King Stephen and the Empress Matilda is exceptional in its parallelisms; their background and familial ties from the pre-Anarchic period engulfed the realm in a stalemate of civil war.

Three chronicles represent the spectrum of perspectives on Stephen's reign: William of Malmesbury's *Historia Novella*, William of Norwich's *History of English Affairs*, and the *Gesta Stephani*. The *Gesta Stephani* was written anonymously by a supporter of King Stephen while he reigned in England. K. R. Potter, a contemporary editor of the *Gesta Stephani*, observes that in later years the *Gesta* became less detailed. In comparison, the majority of chronicles gain detail later in the text. Potter explains, "the author was writing a panegyric of

King Stephen and therefore had no wish to dwell on his final defeat, but the division of the work into two Books suggests that the author had planned his work at a time when he still believed in Stephen's ultimate victory."¹ In the structure of his work, the author expressed his strong conviction that the accession of Stephen as King of England was just. With a pro-Stephen account and chronicle extant, later historians would never be able to allege that Stephen was completely at fault for the Anarchy.

The account of William of Malmesbury completely contrasts with that of the *Gesta Stephani*. William's *Historia Novella* focuses on Empress Matilda's presence primarily by using her movements as structural bookends. William of Malmesbury begins by recounting the reasons Matilda returned to Normandy from Germany after her first husband, the Holy Roman Emperor, died.² Book I also ends with the deeds of the Empress. William of Malmesbury relates, "But because it will be enough to have extended the first book of the [*Historia Novella*] from the empress's return to her father, after her husband's death, up to this point, I shall now begin the second book from the year when that formidable lady came to England to vindicate her right against Stephen."³ His use of the Empress's movements to structure his history places her as his centerpiece in the *Historia Novella*. His language even suggests her power when he writes that the "formidable lady's inheritance was in need of 'vindication.'" These sentiments would never be expressed in the *Gesta Stephani*. The *Historia Novella* and the *Gesta Stephani* are completely different perspectives on the same event, providing the lens for bias of differing sides in the civil war; a historian must reconcile the pro-Matilda and pro-Stephen chronicles to tackle these events properly.

The final chronicle is entirely different. William of Norwich's *History of English Affairs* was written during the reigns of Henry II and Richard I in the latter half of the twelfth century. The perception of the Anarchy is different

than in the *Gesta Stephani* and the *Historia Novella*. William of Norwich could only have vague personal memories of the late period of Anarchy from his childhood. While the major events of the Anarchy were clear to William of Norwich, his account is tempered by lack of detail and Henry I's need to be considered a legitimate successor to the throne. His wisdom is in hindsight; William of Norwich is able to attribute meaning to events about which William of Malmesbury and the *Gesta Stephani* can only speculate. In one instance, William of Norwich makes a powerful observation: "Thus whilst the king and empress contested with each other in continual disharmony, sometimes the factions were equally matched, and sometimes one or other prevailed but would quickly experience the fickleness of fortune."⁴ William of Norwich looked back on the Anarchy and discerned a pattern that dominated the reign of King Stephen. By this point, William of Norwich can already discern that the cause of the Anarchy was a stalemate; he can also see the consequences in England due to civil war. His power as a historian is to provide criticism and commentary on the events that William of Malmesbury and the *Gesta Stephani* chronicler could only wonder about.

In the end, the rivalry was just a matter of disputed family inheritance. As grandchildren of William the Conqueror, the Empress Matilda and King Stephen were born into a family of diverse interests. A century before, the Conqueror's family did not have control over anything but Normandy. Duke William possessed great ambition and foresight when he organized the conquest from the Normandy coastline. The chronicler William of Norwich analyzed the Conqueror more than one hundred years later: "William, duke of Normans, whose soubriquet was The Bastard, made war on Harold, king of the English, either through lust of dominion or to avenge injustices."⁵ William of Norwich did not give his opinion on whether William pursued ambition or revenge. However, the Duke of Normandy's motivation was essential to William of Norwich's account. The family of the Conqueror needed to live up to his power, territory, and wealth. William's children, along with his grandchildren Stephen and Matilda, were quite aware of the precedent set before them.

Another dominant factor in the war between Stephen and Matilda was the Norman Conquest of England. Normandy and England were a singular unit during the reigns of William I and Henry I; Normans held lands in England due to William I's reorganization of property and the English now had a vested economic link to Normandy.⁶ The territories were split during the time of William II and Robert Curthose and the situation for the landowners became complicated.

Only wealthy barons could afford the expense of crossing the English Channel to maintain property; thus, the most powerful members of the aristocracy were affected. A simple act like the invasion of England perpetrated by Robert Curthose in 1101 was more of a civil war.⁷ The impact was clear: the nobility of England and Normandy were cohesive rather than fragmented. Nobles would not just consider their lands in England or on the continent, but instead viewed their estate as a whole. Matilda and Stephen had similar approaches when it came to the succession in Normandy and England. The two states were inevitably linked together by the Conqueror's organization of his realm.

The complications following William I's death would be on the minds of Stephen and Matilda after the death of Henry I.⁸ The immediate concern in both cases was the question of succession. William the Conqueror had three surviving sons when he died in 1087: Robert Curthose (the eldest); William Rufus (the middle); and Henry Beauclerc (the youngest). Robert, already invested with the Dukedom of Normandy, was allowed to retain that realm. His brother, William Rufus, was granted the Kingdom of England. Meanwhile, the youngest had to be satisfied with a monetary sum and a small estate of property.⁹ In the first transition of power in the Anglo-Norman conglomerate it was not the eldest son but the middle child who received the throne of England. During William I's life, Robert Curthose disputed with his father over his lack of authority in Normandy and England, even though he had already been granted the Dukedom of Normandy; therefore William Rufus inherited the crown of England in an act of paternal animosity toward the eldest son. This act established that mere birthright did not bring a Norman monarch to the throne; they had to be chosen by the previous king or accepted by the surrounding nobility and churchmen.

In King Stephen's family, primogeniture was also disregarded. His father was the Count of Blois and his mother was Adele, a daughter of William the Conqueror. Thus, the House of Blois was connected with Adele's brothers—Robert Curthose, William Rufus, and Henry Beauclerc. Adele and the Count of Blois had four surviving sons: William, Theobald, Stephen, and Henry.¹⁰ When the Count of Blois died on crusade, Adele preserved the Blois territory for her underage sons. She made an early decision that paralleled her father's choice to exclude her brother Robert from the English succession. William of Norwich describes one possible reason: Adele, "that remarkable mother, wisely set aside her firstborn because he was deficient in intelligence and seemed second-rate, and advanced her son Theobald, who was her favourite,

to the full inheritance.”¹¹ In elevating her second son, Adele breached the expected succession. William of Norwich respected this decision. Whether Adele actually elevated her second son because her eldest was deficient or for political reasons is a matter of debate. But, it provides clear evidence that disinheriting the eldest son was not unconventional in twelfth-century England. Stephen and Matilda would have understood inheritance as fluid; only membership in a family was required to actually succeed a dying magnate. Due to his brother Theobald’s accession as Count of Blois, Stephen would know these factors intimately. Matilda would only need to glance at a genealogy to understand that the favor of nobles and churchmen required more than birthright. When Henry I died, both monarchs had a chance to demonstrate their right to the throne.

Childhood for both Stephen and Matilda was dominated by powerful parental influences that added to the stability of the Anglo-Norman realm in the first few decades of the twelfth century. Stephen’s mother, Adele of Blois, was this influence for him. Besides setting her eldest son aside in the succession, she often extended her power throughout her years of activity. Edmund King states, “In over twenty years, between her husband’s second departure on crusade in the winter of 1098-99 and her retirement to the nunnery of Marcigny in the spring of 1120, she did not put a foot wrong.”¹² Respect for Adele came from her strong character and powerful leadership. Negative opinions for the Countess of Blois are difficult to find, even in the chronicles that are notorious for expressing their opinions, especially on women in power.¹³

Adele’s marriage to Stephen Henry, Count of Blois, around 1083 also advanced an alliance between Normandy and the County of Blois to the south. Stephen was born into an alliance that was meant to strengthen the Norman position in France and create allies against the Capetians and Angevins.¹⁴ Blois, situated south of Normandy, was in the heartland of France and very susceptible to their enemies in Anjou and France. For Blois, this was also an important relationship of kith and kin to maintain their position on the continent. The Blois-Norman axis increased the position of Stephen’s family. They became allies of their uncle, Henry I. An ally on the continent, like the Count of Blois, protected Norman interests when the king was distracted by events on the island. Stephen could draw on this alliance when it came to the Anarchy by using his relations on the continent to reinforce his authority.

However, Henry I Beauclerc was just as successful as his sister Adele. The runt of the Conqueror’s litter, Henry became

the ruler of England upon William II Rufus’ death in 1100. During Henry’s reign, England was a centralized state that paid homage to one sole ruler. Tranquility and peace resulted for almost the entire reign of Henry I after the invasion of his brother Robert Curthose was handled. In Normandy, peace was only twice breached by rebellions antagonized by the French and Angevins.¹⁵ In a time of almost constant warfare, this peace is remarkable. The “merry days of Henry” are a trope that permeates the chronicles incessantly. Edmund Kealey describes this perception: “The harsh, effective, and peaceful government of King Henry had been the marvel of the western world.”¹⁶ Such a talented father and uncle would give both Stephen and Matilda an example of what would be expected if they were to inherit the throne.

Henry I won the hand of Edith Matilda of Scotland in 1100. She became the mother of the Empress Matilda. Henry’s wedding created an alliance to parallel Adele’s marriage to the Count of Blois. Having an ally in Scotland was essential for an English king who desired peace. Scottish monarchs had the privilege of easily invading England from the north whenever they desired. This became a reality in 1136 when David, King of Scots, distracted Stephen, fresh in his reign, by taking control of Northumbria.¹⁷ Still, more than just border security was in this marriage. Matilda of Scotland’s mother was St. Margaret, the great-granddaughter of Edmund Ironside, an Anglo-Saxon king of the English.¹⁸ To gain security in England, the lineage of the pre-Conquest kings was necessary to pacify any lingering Anglo-Saxon support. The children of this union would be descended from the Kings of the English who reigned previous to the Norman Invasion in 1066 and those who reigned after it. Thus, Henry I’s two children, Matilda and William, were legitimate successors to the realm by conquest and heredity. While bringing in an alliance to parallel Adele’s, Henry’s marriage to Edith Matilda also brought another element that granted Henry’s children an advantage by birth that his nephews did not possess.

Thus, Matilda and Stephen faced similar challenges: they were both at a disadvantage to inherit the titles of their parents. Stephen, as the third son of the Count of Blois, would not inherit the bulk of his father’s wealth because he had three brothers. His mother Adele, recognizing this, sent him to his uncle Henry in order to give Stephen more opportunity for advancement at royal court.¹⁹ The chronicle of Abbot Suger depicts Stephen’s early importance to Henry I. In Suger’s account of *The Deeds of Louis the Fat*, Stephen assists Henry I in the wars with Capetian France.²⁰ As this comes from the mouth of a chronicler who was very pro-King

Louis, it is important to recognize that Stephen was decidedly on the side of the English at a very early age and perceived as such by his peers. After the battle of Tinchebray and the defeat of Robert Curthose, Stephen was granted the County of Mortain and attained the honors of Eye and Lancaster in England.²¹ These holdings significantly expanded Stephen's wealth and power; he became a major player in the court of his uncle, Henry I. Stephen had to prove himself to attain such a position rather than just inheriting such wealth.

Matilda's fate was determined for her at an early age. She, too, found it necessary to prove herself. As a royal daughter, her destiny was to provide England with a strong ally outside of its borders. So, instead of marrying a powerful magnate within the confines of her father's kingdom, her father betrothed her to Henry V, Holy Roman Emperor, and she was sent to the German court.²² This powerful connection gave Henry I another ally besides Blois and Scotland; he could now count on a son-in-law to keep the Capetians in check on their eastern border. Matilda, however, was able to earn esteem in the German court and learn matters of state associated with her title as Empress. During this time period she advanced in statecraft just as Stephen did in England and Normandy. Matilda and Stephen were not expected to make decisions that affected the entire empire. That was still up to Henry I and Henry V.

While Matilda was in Germany, the hope of Henry I lay with his son William. The future of the Anglo-Norman kingdom rested on the shoulders of Henry's only legitimate son and heir. In 1120, disaster struck when William was killed in the White Ship disaster without producing any issue.²³ With Matilda married to the Emperor in Germany, she could not be expected to succeed her father in England. Henry had no clear succession plan from the years 1120 to 1125. He hoped to produce a second son by a second marriage to Adeliza of Louvain, but that proved childless.²⁴ The possible heirs, while Matilda lived as Empress in Germany, were reduced to three nephews: William Clito, son of Robert Curthose; Theobald, Count of Blois; and Stephen, Count of Mortain. Robert, Earl of Gloucester, the natural son of Henry I, was excluded due to a prejudice among the English against illegitimate offspring.²⁵ Stephen, as the favored nephew, was able to extend his power. During this time period, he must have considered his role as an heir to the throne. With Matilda absent, he could easily have been the next heir to Henry I. With kingship in his grasp, it would make sense that Matilda's return would place a damper on their relationship.

Another marriage was negotiated while Matilda was Empress in Germany. Stephen married another Matilda,

the Countess of Boulogne. The power of this Countess was not just in land on the continent, but also in the honor of Boulogne in England. While Matilda of Boulogne often kept control of her own estates, Stephen was able to add the prestige of his wife to his own. She also had an incredible pedigree. She was the daughter of Mary of Scotland, granddaughter of St. Margaret, and great-great-granddaughter of Edmund Ironside.²⁶ Matilda of Boulogne was also the first cousin of the Empress Matilda, and thus they both possessed claims to a royal Anglo-Saxon lineage. Through Matilda of Boulogne, any heirs of Stephen would have a strong claim to the throne of England by heredity and conquest, just as the Empress attained through her maternal and paternal lineage respectively. Through Stephen, any child would descend from William the Conqueror; through Matilda of Boulogne they descended from the Anglo-Saxon rulers. In terms of heredity, Stephen's heirs gained equivalence to the Empress Matilda even though she retained the order of precedence.

During Matilda's time in Germany, the Empress must have observed her husband's difficult relationship with the papacy. She learned firsthand with Henry V about the dangers of playing games with the pope. Henry was excommunicated by Paschal II due to the emperor's attempt to reform the church.²⁷ Marjorie Chibnall discusses the difficulties of Henry V's reign and the impact it would have on Matilda's later life: "Matilda cannot have been blind either to the regret with which the symbols were renounced in both regions, or to the fact that the real issue was now the right to grant license to elect, exercise any customary rights of regale pertaining to the temporalities, and receive the fealty of the new prelate."²⁸ This quote recognizes that Matilda would have been affected by the events of Henry V's reign; she could not have been "blind" to the acts of her husband and this would alter her relationship with the papacy and Rome for the rest of her career. Even though Matilda struggled with ecclesiastic power throughout her life, she still appealed to the pope for support in her bid for the English crown. The only evidence for this appears in a letter of Gilbert Foliot, Abbot of Gloucester, to Brian FitzCount, one of the barons loyal to Matilda, in 1139.²⁹ Foliot, as the Abbot of Gloucester, had strong ties to Earl Robert, Matilda's half-brother born out of wedlock. Thus, his support for the Empress was strong and he even argued for her at the Lateran Council. Her relationship with the papacy while in Germany at least gave her an understanding of the importance of the church to a noblewoman. She needed the backing of the pope to advance her bid for the kingdom of England.

Henry V of Germany died in 1125, leaving Matilda a childless widow. She returned to her father in 1126, bringing skill at statecraft that she learned in the German court.³⁰ William of Malmesbury, in favor of the Empress, chose to begin the *Historia Novella* with the council Henry I called shortly after Matilda's return in 1127. The king desired to have his nobles swear an oath to accept Matilda as the rightful heir to the throne as his only legitimate child. William of Malmesbury paints a very formal ceremony:

Of the laity David, king of Scots, the empress's uncle, swore first; next Stephen, count of Mortain and Boulogne, King Henry's nephew by his sister Adela; then Robert the king's son, whom he had recognized as his before he came to the throne and made earl of Gloucester. . . . There was a noteworthy contest, it is said, between Robert and Stephen, who as rivals in distinction strove with each other for the honour of swearing first, the one claiming the prerogative of a son, the other the rank of a nephew.³¹

This oath set the tone for the succession conflict. The main players of the first few years of the Anarchy were introduced; the situation in 1127 was explained. David, King of Scots, another reigning monarch and the elder of Robert and Stephen swore first. His kinship with the Empress Matilda is highlighted in William of Malmesbury to show his devotion to her interests. Stephen swore next. His precedence before Robert, Earl of Gloucester, presents Stephen's importance in the England of 1127. If Matilda did not produce heirs, Stephen would conceivably be the next in line to the throne. While William of Malmesbury claims that Stephen and Robert had a "noteworthy contest" to determine order, other chroniclers claim that Robert willingly gave Stephen precedence by age and legitimate birth.³²

The *Gesta Stephani* justifies Stephen's oathbreaking by placing his argument in the words of a supporter:

"It is true," they said, "and not to be denied, that King Henry gave his daughter in marriage with a politic design, that he might establish peace more surely and securely between the Normans and the Angevins, who had often troubled each other from disputes. Also with that loud commanding utterance that nobody could resist he rather compelled than directed the leading men of the whole kingdom to swear to accept her as his heir."³³

If Henry I forced his noblemen to swear the oath, was it legitimate? This question emerges in the succession dispute quite rapidly. The supporters of Stephen maligned Matilda's legitimacy by claiming her mother was a confirmed nun at the time of her marriage. As a nun, any marriage would be null and any children declared bastards.³⁴ On the other hand, Matilda's supporters claimed that Stephen was an oath breaker and a curse to England. We have William of Malmesbury reporting that the moment Stephen arrived in England to claim the throne, "there was a terrible sound of thunder accompanied by fearful lightning, so that it was almost thought to be the end of the world."³⁵ According to Malmesbury, the omens were against Stephen from the beginning. It all hinged on this oath—Stephen needed to sully Matilda's legitimacy and the Empress had to promote the legend of Stephen the oath breaker, cursed by God. Matilda and Stephen both had a vested interest in the conclusions drawn about the oath of 1127.

One more marriage contract was made before Henry I's statecraft was complete. His daughter Matilda was wed to Geoffrey, the son of Fulk V, Count of Anjou. Two members of the Norman family had previously wed Fulk's daughters, but neither marriage lasted more than a year. Henry desired to make the alliance more permanent.³⁶ Carolyn Anderson claims that this alliance disturbed many contemporary nobles. The aristocracy viewed it as an attempt to build an empire uniting several territories in France with the kingdom of England in one heir—the child of Matilda and Geoffrey.³⁷ The Norman-Angevin alliance is, again, a parallel to the Blois-Norman axis created through the marriage of Stephen's parents.³⁸ That alliance, created with the intention of keeping the Counts of Anjou at bay, was still embodied in Stephen, Count of Mortain and Boulogne. Matilda's marriage represented a different option for England with the House of Anjou. Such marriages left Stephen with power in Blois through his brother and Boulogne through his wife; while Matilda had control of Anjou through her husband, along with the parts of Normandy she retained after her father's death.

The stage for the Anarchy was set. In the years before Henry I's death in 1135, Matilda and Stephen both produced male heirs.³⁹ According to the oath, the kingdom should have been left in the hands of Matilda upon Henry I's death, but instead Stephen was crowned at Westminster in late December.⁴⁰ Each account of the coronation is structured differently. William of Malmesbury reports omens of disaster that portend civil war. William of Norwich reports it decades later with very few details; Norwich's account is basic because

he was not living during the coronation. The *Gesta Stephani* speaks of Stephen's popular support in the country. No matter what, Stephen was once again ahead of his cousin Matilda, yet he was unable to clear away the stain of usurpation. Stephen was still perceived as an oath breaker by Matilda's supporters and though he initially received homage and support from almost everyone in England, the barons were very willing to change their minds.

The events of December 1135 left Stephen in the right place at the right time. He had been able to make the voyage to England, while Matilda and the Earl of Gloucester "delayed their return to the kingdom."⁴¹ While William of Malmesbury does not linger over the reasons Matilda remained in Normandy, one might draw conclusions. She was pregnant with her third son, born on July 22, 1136.⁴² A woman preparing for labor in a few months was not ready to make the channel crossing to England. Though few historians or chroniclers point to this issue, it seems that Matilda's pregnancy actually kept her rooted in Normandy when she could have immediately claimed the throne as her own. Her delay does not seem so strange when considering her pregnancy. However, when she finally became ready to confront Stephen in battle a year or two later he had been able to consolidate his power on the island.

As the Anarchy developed, a trend appeared in the actions of Stephen and Matilda. The two magnates could not forget the deeply rooted past. For instance, the chronicles report that Stephen, even after the Earl of Gloucester paid him homage in 1136, did not give him his trust. William of Malmesbury claims that Stephen "never showed the earl unqualified friendship, always regarding his power with suspicion."⁴³ Robert was a constant reminder of the oath that Stephen had sworn to uphold Matilda's inheritance; the former Count of Mortain could not forget Robert's past actions. While later events showed that Stephen had good reason to scrutinize Robert's friendship, the lack of trust may also have instigated later problems. Without a relationship of trust between Robert and Stephen, Matilda was able to get the support of her half-brother.

However, Matilda had difficulties too. Her resentment at being ousted by her cousin Stephen doused her performance as "Lady of the English" in malice. At the highest point in her campaign, she was received by the Londoners as their lady in 1141. Yet, according to the *Gesta Stephani*, Matilda did not offer the Londoners an easy transition into her control. Instead, she sought to punish them, perhaps as her father would and could have done. The *Gesta* claims she demanded a large sum from the Londoners for recompense. When they

professed that they had lost much of their wealth in the strife of the kingdom, the Empress gave a vehement response: she "blazed into unbearable fury, saying that many times the people of London had made very large contributions to the king, that they had lavished their wealth on strengthening him and weakening her, that they had previously conspired with her enemies for her hurt."⁴⁴ Matilda, rather than offering the Londoners redemption, expected to receive recompense for past ills. If the *Gesta* is to be believed, Matilda was not interested in healing the wounds of the country, but instead in exacting a high price for what she considered betrayal. One of the greatest parallels between Stephen and Matilda is this problem: they were completely incapable of forgetting the past transgressions of their mercurial subjects. Their lack of forgiveness led to their unpopularity during the wars and switching alliances based on the best offer.

The parallels between the rivals bound them in the stalemate of Anarchy. Their right to rule, their talent at statecraft, and their support among noblemen in England and on the continent were consistently equalized. One could easily describe their plight as an "epic"—the dramatic chronicles that permeate the time of the Anarchy, especially with such a strong female character, would be incredible in Hollywood. The true hardships of the period, however, are difficult to overlook. *The Peterborough Chronicle* describes the situation well:

Every man built him castles and held them against the king. They filled the whole land with these castles. When the castles were built they filled them with devils and wicked men....At regular intervals they levied a tax called *tenserie* upon the villages. When the wretched people had no more to give, all the villages were plundered and burnt.⁴⁵

This is the outcome of Stephen and Matilda's childhood, marriage alliances, and rising abilities. For nearly two decades they left the people of England at the mercy of the "wicked." Whether the chronicle exaggerates the situation is unanswerable. Regardless, the reign of Stephen and the invasion of Matilda left the English in a difficult situation that would not be forgotten. Not until the rise of Henry II was there a chance to heal the wounds the Anarchy created.

Endnotes

- ¹ K. R. Potter, ed., *Gesta Stephani* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), xix.
- ² William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, trans. K. R. Potter (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 5.
- ³ *Ibid.*, 43.
- ⁴ William of Norwich, *The History of English Affairs*, ed. and trans. P. G. Walsh and M. J. Kennedy (Warminster, England: Aris & Phillips, Ltd., 1988), 65.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, 37.
- ⁶ Judith A. Green, *The Aristocracy of Norman England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 48–9.
- ⁷ C. Warren Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates, and Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World* (London: The Hambledon Press, 1986), 77.
- ⁸ See Edmund King, *King Stephen* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010), 41–2. King explains the horrors that followed William the Conqueror's death and the fear that this situation would repeat itself with Henry I's death. William I died without respect and his body burst when they were trying to force it into a too-small casket.
- ⁹ Marjorie Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother, and Lady of the English* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, Ltd., 1991), 6.
- ¹⁰ King, *King Stephen*, 4–5.
- ¹¹ William of Norwich, *The History of English Affairs*, 53.
- ¹² King, *King Stephen*, 8.
- ¹³ See Carolyn Anderson, "Narrating Matilda: 'Lady of the English' in the *Historia Novella*, the *Gesta Stephani*, and Wace's *Roman de Rou*," *Clio* 29 (Fall 1999): 51. Anderson's article explores the misogyny of male chroniclers toward females, especially the Empress Matilda.
- ¹⁴ King, *King Stephen*, 4.
- ¹⁵ Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates, and Institutions*, 171.
- ¹⁶ Edmund J. Keasley, "King Stephen: Government and Anarchy," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 6 (Autumn 1974): 202.
- ¹⁷ David Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen, 1135–1154* (London: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), 39.
- ¹⁸ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 7.
- ¹⁹ David Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen*, 14.
- ²⁰ Abbot Suger, *The Deeds of Louis the Fat*, trans. Jean Dunbabin (Medieval Source Book, XXVI).
- ²¹ King, *King Stephen*, 12.
- ²² Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 16–7.
- ²³ Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates, and Institutions*, 145.
- ²⁴ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 37.
- ²⁵ Hollister, *Monarchy, Magnates, and Institutions*, 148–52. The tradition among the English of excluding bastards went back to the Council of Chelsea in 787. William the Conqueror only escaped this tradition because he conquered England rather than inherited it.
- ²⁶ King, *King Stephen*, 28.
- ²⁷ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 28.
- ²⁸ Chibnall, "The Empress Matilda and Church Reform," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 38 (1988): 114.
- ²⁹ Adrian Morey and C. N. L. Brooke, ed., *The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 60.
- ³⁰ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 43–4.
- ³¹ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 9.
- ³² King, *King Stephen*, 30–1. King points to John of Worcester as a primary detractor of the "noteworthy contest" between Stephen and Robert.
- ³³ *Gesta Stephani*, 11.
- ³⁴ Dom Adrian Morey and C. N. L. Brooke, *Gilbert Foliot and His Letters* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 121.
- ³⁵ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 29.
- ³⁶ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 54–5. William Clito, the son of Robert Curthose, and William Adelin, Henry I's son, were both married to daughters of Fulk V of Anjou. However, Clito was divorced from his wife after a year and Adelin died in the White Ship Disaster of 1120.
- ³⁷ Anderson, "Narrating Matilda," 51.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.
- ³⁹ The birth of Henry Plantagenet in 1133 was a moment of great happiness for Henry I, who finally had a legitimate male heir for the first time since 1120; see King, *King Stephen*, 37.
- ⁴⁰ *Gesta Stephani*, 13; William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 29; William of Norwich, *The History of English Affairs*, 53.
- ⁴¹ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 27.
- ⁴² Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 67.
- ⁴³ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 39.
- ⁴⁴ *Gesta Stephani*, 123.
- ⁴⁵ *The Peterborough Chronicle*, trans. Cecily Clark, 55–7, quoted in Edmund King, "The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 34 (1984): 135.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

- Abbot Suger. *The Deeds of Louis the Fat*. Translated by Jean Dunbabin. Medieval Source Book, XXVI.
- Morey, Adrian and C. N. L. Brooke, eds. *The Letters and Charters of Gilbert Foliot*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1967.
- Potter, K. R., trans. *Gesta Stephani*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.
- William of Malmesbury. *Historia Novella*. Edited by Edmund King. Translated by K. R. Potter. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.
- William of Newburgh. *The History of English Affairs, Book I*. Edited and translated by P. G. Walsh and M. J. Kennedy. Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1988.

Secondary Sources

- Anderson, Carolyn. "Narrating Matilda: 'Lady of the English' in the *Historia Novella*, the *Gesta Stephani*, and Wace's *Roman de Rou*: The Desire for Land and Order." *Clio* 29 (Fall 1999): 47-67.
- Chibnall, Marjorie. "The Empress Matilda and Church Reform." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 38 (1988): 107-30.
- Chibnall, Marjorie. *The Empress Matilda, Queen Consort, Queen Mother, and Lady of the English*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1991.
- Crouch, David. *The Reign of King Stephen, 1135-1154*. London: Pearson Education Limited, 2000.
- Green, Judith. *The Aristocracy of Norman England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- Hollister, C. Warren. *Monarchy, Magnates, and Institutions in the Anglo-Norman World*. London: Hambledon Press, 1986.
- Keasley, Edmund J. "King Stephen: Government and Anarchy." *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 6 (Autumn 1974): 201-17.
- King, Edmund. "The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign." *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 34 (1984): 133-53.
- King, Edmund. *King Stephen*. New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2010.
- Morey, Adrian and C. N. L. Brooke. *Gilbert Foliot and His Letters*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1965.