

EMILY JOAN WARD

## Diplomatic Women

Mothers, Sons and Preparation for Rule in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries \*

1. Diplomatic Justifications: Health, Salvation and *Felicitas*, p. 404. – 2. Diplomatic Interventions: Petition, Consent and Assent, p. 410. – 3. Diplomatic Authentications: Witnessing, Signing and Sealing, p. 420. – 4. Diplomatic Women: Mothers and Sons, p. 428.

On Pentecost Sunday [23 May] 1059, the city of Reims witnessed the coronation of a child king. Archbishop Gervais (1055–1067) anointed and crowned Philip, eldest son of Henry I (1031–1060), king of the Franks, on the boy's seventh birthday<sup>1</sup>. Associative coronation – crowning a son in his father's lifetime – was nothing unusual in the early and high Middle Ages. Many Carolingian and early Capetian kings adopted the practice, as did Ottonian, Salian, and later some Staufeu, rulers in the Empire<sup>2</sup>. Far more remarkable, especially in the context of eleventh-century France, is the evidence of a royal diploma dated the day of the coronation ceremony, now extant in both a *vidimus* copy of March 1308 and a seventeenth-century copy of the original. The document offers a tantalizing glimpse of the central role Queen Anne of Kyiv (c. 1024–c. 1075), Philip's mother and Henry's wife, played in her son's ongoing political education and

---

\* This article was written during a research fellowship at Darwin College, Cambridge, and draws on research undertaken during my AHRC-funded Ph.D. I would like to thank both Darwin College and the AHRC for their financial support. I benefited from presenting early versions of this work at the Kings & Queens Conference (2017), Haskins Conference (2017), and University of East Anglia Research Seminar (2018), and owe my thanks to those present in all cases for productive discussions which helped shape the final piece. I owe an especial debt of gratitude to Sarah Greer and Megan Welton for inviting me to participate in this special issue, and to the attendees of the *Verbis et Exemplis* workshop in June 2019 for their prescient comments at earlier stages of editing.

<sup>1</sup> Philip was born on 23 May 1052. *Recueil des actes de Philippe I<sup>er</sup>, roi de France (1059–1108)*, ed. MAURICE PROU (*Chartes et diplômes relatifs à l'histoire de France* 1), Paris 1908, pp. xv–xxiii. Archbishop Gervais mentions Philip's age in his memorandum of the child's coronation. *Ordines coronationis Franciae. Texts and Ordines for the Coronation of Frankish and French Kings and Queens in the Middle Ages*, ed. RICHARD JACKSON, 2 vols., Philadelphia (PA) 1995–2000, vol. 1, p. 227.

<sup>2</sup> ROBERT-HENRI BAUTIER, *Sacres et couronnements sous les Carolingiens et les premiers Capétiens. Recherches sur la genèse du sacre royal français*, in: *Annuaire-Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de France* 102, 1987, pp. 7–56; THILO OFFERGELD, *Reges pueri. Das Königtum Minderjähriger im frühen Mittelalter* (Schriften der MGH 50), Hanover 2001; WOLFGANG GIESE, *Die designativen Nachfolgeregelungen der Karolinger 714–979*, in: *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters* 64, 2008, pp. 437–511.

association with royal rule throughout his childhood<sup>3</sup>. Following Philip's coronation, at the request of the abbot of Saint-Philibert of Tournus, King Henry confirmed his predecessors' donations to the Benedictine community in Burgundy:

[...] *pro salute anime mee, coniugisque mee ANNE, filiique nostri PHILIPPI Regis, necnon et perpetua prosperitate nostra, ac statu regni nostri* [...].

"[...] for the health of my soul, and [the soul] of my consort ANNE, and [the soul] of our son King PHILIP, and furthermore both for our perpetual prosperity, and also for the order of our kingdom [...]"<sup>4</sup>.

Taking place during the Pentecostal festivities, the king's act of confirmation publicly celebrated his dynasty's augmentation through the coronation of a new king. The diploma which accompanied and recorded Henry's actions is the first surviving document to title Philip *rex*. It commemorates the child's new status, conveying shared optimism both for his future and for the prospects of the realm of which he was now an anointed ruler. A scribe by the name of William, possibly the abbot himself, claimed to have written the diploma in the style of the royal chancellor, likely drafting the document away from the royal court before the abbot presented it to the king for corroboration at Philip's coronation. Regardless of the extent of chancery participation, documents with the royal seal or the king's signature conveyed the same significance for the ruler and the beneficiaries<sup>5</sup>. The deliberate change from the first person singular (*meum*) to the plural (*nostrum*) in this context is a public display of collective identity which draws attention to the queen's centrality within the acts of celebration and commemoration<sup>6</sup>. Nicholas Vincent has suggested that similar shifts between first person plural and singular forms in late twelfth-century English royal letters may indicate the king dictating to a clerk<sup>7</sup>. Although Henry I's dictation of the 1059 diploma

<sup>3</sup> For the most recent scholarly treatments of Anne: WLADIMIR BOGOMOLETZ, *Anna of Kiev. An Enigmatic Capetian Queen of the Eleventh Century*, in: *French History* 19, 2005, pp. 299–323; EMILY WARD, *Anne of Kiev (c. 1024–c. 1075) and a Reassessment of Maternal Power in the Minority Kingship of Philip I of France*, in: *Historical Research* 89, 2016, pp. 435–453; TALIA ZAJAC, *Gloriosa Regina or "Alien Queen"? Some Reconsiderations on Anna Yaroslavna's Queenship (r. 1050–1075)*, in: *Royal Studies Journal* 3, 2016, pp. 28–70.

<sup>4</sup> PIERRE-FRANÇOIS CHIFFLET, *Histoire de l'abbaye royale et de la ville de Tournus*, Paris 1664, p. 312 [translation author's own]. Chifflet was copying from the original document. For the later *vidimus*, see Paris, Archives nationales, JJ 41, fols. 12v–13v. *Catalogue des actes d'Henri Ier, roi de France, 1031–1060*, ed. FRÉDÉRIC SOEHNÉE, Paris 1907, nr. 117, pp. 117–121; ZAJAC, *Gloriosa Regina* (as note 3), pp. 37 note 37, 58.

<sup>5</sup> CHIFFLET, *Histoire de l'abbaye royale* (as note 4), p. 315: *Scriptum manu Guilbelmi*; *Recueil des actes* (as note 1), pp. clxxviii–clxxix; OLIVIER GUYOTJEANNIN, *Actes royaux français. Les actes des trois premiers Capétiens (987–1060)*, in: JAN BISTRICKÝ (ed.), *Typologie der Königsurkunden. Kolloquium der Commission Internationale de Diplomatie in Olmütz 30.8.–3.9.1992*, Olmütz 1998, pp. 43–63, here pp. 44–45, 49.

<sup>6</sup> Similarly, see MIRIAM SHADIS, *Berenguela of Castile (1180–1246) and Political Women in the High Middle Ages*, New York (NY) 2009, p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> NICHOLAS VINCENT, *The Personal Role of the Kings of England in the Production of Royal Letters and Charters (to 1330)*, in: CLAUDIA FELLER – CHRISTIAN LACKNER (eds.), *Manu propria. Vom*

is unlikely, the English comparison serves as a reminder of the potential significance conveyed by even seemingly small shifts between plural and singular forms.

Anne's roles within the Saint-Philibert transaction, and in other similar diplomas during her son's childhood, shed light on the collaborative and familial context of the boy's preparation for rulership. This suggests an important point of revision to current scholarship on royal and aristocratic association, which often fails to attribute mothers any part in their sons' political education. By prioritising the evidence of charters and diplomas and by considering these documents as "written objects"<sup>8</sup>, not solely as texts, we can begin to appreciate elite women's activities in assimilating young heirs within networks of power and introducing them to routine, but fundamental, actions of governance and lordship. The vivid display of the special relationship between queen mother and young king in Abbot William's document illuminates how one monastic community's vision for the royal dynasty's future prosperity resolutely encompassed the queen at its heart. Scribal convention was not the reason the Saint-Philibert community chose to incorporate Queen Anne alongside her husband and son. Shared hopes for the state of the kingdom, and the continued patronage of the abbey, depended on Anne as well as on Henry and Philip. In return for assurance of Saint-Philibert's material goods, its abbot and monks committed to praying for Anne's soul, and her son's, entwining these spiritual devotions with prayers for the political future. Together with the linguistic shifts used to convey her significance on Philip's coronation day, the scribe employed graphic cues to associate mother and son within the diploma. Anne and Philip's names, entirely in majuscule, come together in the *pro salute* clause. Elsewhere in the document, majuscule script – an infrequent but not entirely unusual feature of French royal diplomas at this time – was reserved for the high status individuals considered most important to the transaction; in this case, King Henry, his imperial predecessor KAROLVS, and Abbot William as the petitioner requesting royal confirmation. No doubt the abbot hoped that, as the vision stylized in his community's charter became a reality, they would continue to benefit from royal patronage; and indeed, they did. After Philip's father's death, the eight- or nine-year-old boy king issued a further confirmation to the abbey in 1060/1061, when he was ruling with his mother alongside him<sup>9</sup>.

For royal and aristocratic women, charters and diplomas provide a far more comprehensive picture than narrative sources such as chronicles, which either ignore them or wilfully misrepresent their political involvement. Contemporary narratives from the eleventh and twelfth centuries rarely name mothers as part of the ceremonies which

---

eigenhändigen Schreiben der Mächtigen (13.–15. Jahrhundert) (Veröffentlichungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung 67), Vienna 2016, pp. 171–184, here p. 180.

<sup>8</sup> BRIGITTE BEDOS-REZAK, *When Ego Was Imago. Signs of Identity in the Middle Ages* (Visualising the Middle Ages 3), Leiden 2011, passim, especially here pp. 12, 22.

<sup>9</sup> CHIFFLET, *Histoire de l'abbaye royale* (as note 4), p. 316; *Recueil des actes* (as note 1), nr. 14, pp. 41–45. Anne similarly appears in the *pro salute* clause in this later document: *atque pro salute anime mee, patrisque mei donni Heynrici Regis, genitricisque mee Anne, necnon et perpetua prosperitate nostra, ac statu regni nostri*.

associate their sons with rule, even when they were almost certainly in attendance. In Anne of Kyiv's case, the 1059 diploma alone corroborates her presence in Reims for Philip's coronation<sup>10</sup>. Archbishop Gervais did not list her in the memorandum he wrote after the coronation, where he records the male ecclesiastical figures – two papal legates, two archbishops, twenty bishops and twenty-nine abbots – and the secular men – dukes and counts, or their envoys – who elected Philip as king with his father's agreement<sup>11</sup>. If the Saint-Philibert diploma did not survive, we could only assume Anne's attendance at Reims Cathedral that Pentecost; we would have little impression of how centrally she featured in the royal business accomplished that day. Geoffrey Koziol's re-examination of King Lothar's (r. 954–986) decision to anoint his thirteen-year-old son, Louis (d. 987), on Pentecost Sunday 979 – the first time an heir was associated with the throne in the kingdom of the West Franks – is important in this context. Although centred on a slightly earlier period than I consider here, Koziol demonstrated the value of moving beyond “old-fashioned institutional history” to place practices of association into a wider context which incorporates ideas of memory and political education and gives due weight to the evidence of royal diplomas<sup>12</sup>. The twin approach he advocates – a broader conception of political association alongside a detailed examination of documentary evidence – is especially essential to understanding women's roles alongside their sons (although, remarkably, Koziol hardly mentions Queen Emma II, Louis's mother and Lothar's wife, despite her inclusion in the royal diplomas he discusses)<sup>13</sup>.

Mothers could share in their sons' introduction to the actions and records of rulership and lobby for their inclusion in networks of political, social and spiritual power. As young boys received a foundational training in rulership and lordship, their mothers were often alongside them facilitating the process and ensuring their representation. Centring on documentary evidence for the maternal role in preparing royal and aristocratic sons for rule combats unfavourable contemporary impressions of mothers' political strategies, while also helping to address what has been called the

<sup>10</sup> I am not the first to note this, either for Anne, or more generally. ZAJAC, *Gloriosa Regina* (as note 3), p. 39 note 52. Joan Ferrante discusses the wider challenges of male writers either paying little attention to women or seeing them as a problem. JOAN FERRANTE, *To the Glory of Her Sex. Women's Roles in the Composition of Medieval Texts*, Bloomington (IN) 1997, pp. 68–106.

<sup>11</sup> *Ordines coronationis Franciae* (as note 1), vol. 1, pp. 217–232, especially pp. 228–232; AUGUSTIN FLICHE, *Le règne de Philippe Ier, roi de France (1060–1108)*, Paris 1912, pp. 3–6.

<sup>12</sup> GEOFFREY KOZIOL, *A Father, His Son, Memory, and Hope. The Joint Diploma of Lothar and Louis V (Pentecost Monday, 979) and the Limits of Performativity*, in: JÜRGEN MARTSCHUKAT – STEFFEN PATZOLD (eds.), *Geschichtswissenschaft und “Performative Turn”. Ritual, Inszenierung und Performanz vom Mittelalter bis zur Neuzeit*, Cologne 2003, pp. 83–103, here especially pp. 87, 93. I would like to thank Levi Roach for directing my attention to this article.

<sup>13</sup> See KOZIOL, *A Father, His Son* (as note 12), pp. 93–94, where Emma is only mentioned in passing. For Emma as queen: JEAN DUFOUR, *Emma II, femme de Lothaire, roi de France*, in: FRANZ STAAB – THORSTEN UNGAR (eds.), *Kaiserin Adelheid und ihre Klostergründung in Selz, Speyer 2005*, pp. 213–227; SIMON MACLEAN, *Ottonian Queenship*, Oxford 2017, pp. 164–166.

“largely motherless” historiography of medieval Europe<sup>14</sup>. The rare occasions chroniclers assign royal women roles in practices of association, they portray the queen’s involvement in an entirely negative light. Raoul Glaber, writing from Burgundy in the 1030s and 1040s, blames the coercive influence and entreaties of Queen Constance (d. 1032), wife of Robert the Pious (r. 996–1031), for the coronation of their ten-year-old son Hugh in 1017:

“[Robert] was anxious to settle the succession, so he chose the first-born, Hugh by name, to rule after him. He was still a child, but known for the nobility of his character. When the question of his highness’s sacring arose, the king consulted the wisest amongst the magnates of the realm, and they made this reply: ‘If it so please you, Lord King, allow the boy to grow to more mature years so that the burden of such a great kingdom shall not fall upon his tender youth as it did upon yours.’ The boy was barely ten years old. But the king paid no attention to their words, for he was swayed by the pleading of the boy’s mother [...] fearing that she would lose the royal office (*regnum*) if any misfortune befell her husband, alone (*sola*), and against all advice, she had achieved the coronation of her son [...]”<sup>15</sup>.

What follows focuses on mothers acting alongside sons who have not yet reached adulthood, since it is typically in the years of childhood that maternal involvement in a boy’s political education is most visible. I primarily concentrate on royal mothers across the eleventh and twelfth centuries, using examples from France, Germany, and Britain, but introduce aristocratic cases to strengthen comparisons. The roles these women played alongside their sons vary in line with regional diplomatic practices, and the visibility of mothers within the documentary evidence also changes over time. Adopting a comparative perspective over two centuries clarifies how shifts in documentary cultures steadily eradicated diplomatic evidence for women’s participation in their sons’ political education, although the maternal role as educator persisted, nonetheless.

<sup>14</sup> CONRAD LEYSER – LESLEY SMITH (eds.), *Motherhood, Religion, and Society in Medieval Europe, 400–1400. Essays Presented to Henrietta Leyser*, Farnham 2011, pp. xiii–xiv. Recent monographs and edited collections have drawn further attention to the historiographical neglect of the intersections between motherhood and political power: SHADIS, *Berenguela of Castile* (as note 6); ELENA WOODACRE – CAREY FLEINER (eds.), *Royal Mothers and their Ruling Children. Wielding Political Authority from Antiquity to the Early Modern Era*, New York (NY) – Basingstoke 2015; CAREY FLEINER – ELENA WOODACRE (eds.), *Virtuous or Villainess? The Image of the Royal Mother from the Early Medieval to the Early Modern Era*, New York (NY) – Basingstoke 2016.

<sup>15</sup> Raoul Glaber, *Historiarum libri quinque. The Five Books of the Histories*, ed. JOHN FRANCE, Oxford 1989, book 3, ch. 33, pp. 150–153 [translation slightly amended]: *prouidusque de regni successu, elegit regnare post se illorum primogenitum Hugonem nomine, puerum adhuc, clarissime indolis illustrem. Cumque de ipsius sacrando sublimio primates regni sagaciores consulisset, tale ei dedere responsum: „Sine puerum, rex, si placet, crescendo procedere in uiriles annos, ne, neluti de te gestum est, tanti regni pondus infirmae committas aetati.“ Erat autem isdem puer ferme decennis. Qui minime illorum adquiescens dictis, matre precipue instigante [...]. Nam que prius ne fastu regni careret, aliquo ingruente mariti infortunio, contra omnium sola decretum sublimauit puerum.* There are contrasting narratives of Hugh’s coronation which emphasize Robert’s agency alone and do not mention Constance. Helgaud of Fleury, *Vie de Robert le Pieux*, eds. ROBERT-HENRI BAUTIER – GILLETTE LABORY, Paris 1965, pp. 90–93.

## 1. DIPLOMATIC JUSTIFICATIONS: HEALTH, SALVATION AND FELICITAS

That queen mothers would piously teach their sons to honour God and the church was an expectation cultivated within medieval society, especially by popes or other prelates in contact with the royal court. Pope Nicholas II wrote to Queen Anne in October 1059, only a few months after the celebration of her son's coronation, urging her to teach her "renowned offspring" to love their creator. It was through Anne, who had been divinely blessed with "the gift of fecundity", that her children would learn to whom they should be most indebted, i.e. to God and to his church<sup>16</sup>. Although papal letters to queens could be conventional in their formulation, they demonstrate the societal and cultural pressures on royal mothers to be accountable for their children's spiritual wellbeing. Within this context, it is significant that charters frequently provide spiritual explanations for describing mothers and underage sons together. Rulers throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries regularly invoke the salvation of souls or general pleas for spiritual health and happiness to justify their transactions. And mothers mediate their young sons' inclusion within these prayers and appeals, which typically comprise a boy's earliest association with his father's administrative rule.

References to mothers and sons together in appeals for future health, salvation, or happiness served intertwined purposes in which it is impossible to disentangle the personal from the political, or the spiritual from the secular<sup>17</sup>. In the German realm, Empress Agnes of Poitou (c. 1024–1077), consort of Emperor Henry III (r. 1028–1056), gave birth to the couple's first son, Henry, on 11 November 1050. Agnes and Henry III already had three daughters together, but their female children leave little, if any, mark in imperial diplomas<sup>18</sup>. The young Henry, by contrast, first appears in his father's diplomas when he was less than a year old, and it is alongside his mother that

<sup>16</sup> Die Briefe des Petrus Damiani, ed. KURT REINDEL, 4 vols. (MGH Briefe d. dt. Kaiserzeit 4), Munich 1983–1993, vol. 2, nr. 64, p. 227: *Tu autem, gloriosa filia, quia fecunditatis donum divinitus meruisti, sic clarissimam instrue sobolem, ut inter ipsa lactantis infantiae rudimenta ad creatoris sui nutriantur amorem. Per te igitur discant, cui potissimum debeant [...]*.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, MECHTHILD BLACK-VELDTRUP, *Kaiserin Agnes (1043–1077)*. Quellenkritische Studien (Münstersche Historische Forschungen 7), Cologne 1995, pp. 110–118. Black-Veldtrup considers the political purposes behind the construction of *pro anima* clauses in Emperor Henry III's documents. For the problematic nature of the personal/political binary in medieval society, see ERIN JORDAN, *Women, Power, and Religious Patronage in the Middle Ages*, New York (NY) – Basingstoke 2006, pp. 22–25.

<sup>18</sup> Their daughters were Adelheid (b. 1045; d. 1096), Gisela (b. 1047; d. 1053) and Matilda (b. 1048; d. 1060), and Agnes gave birth to another daughter, Judith, in 1054. BLACK-VELDTRUP, *Kaiserin Agnes* (as note 17), pp. 9–13; EAD., *Die Töchter Heinrichs III. und der Kaiserin Agnes*, in: FRANZ NEISKE – DIETRICH POECK – MECHTHILD SANDMANN (eds.), *Vinculum Societatis*. Joachim Wollasch zum 60. Geburtstag, Sigmaringendorf 1991, pp. 36–57. Henry III had a daughter, Beatrix, by his first wife, Gunnhild. Beatrix appears in her father's diplomas once, in April 1045, when he made a gift to the nunnery of Quedlinburg at the time of her appointment as the foundation's abbess. *Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae*. Die Urkunden Heinrichs III. [henceforth DD H III], eds. HARRY BRESSLAU – PAUL KEHR (MGH DD reg. imp. Germ 5), Berlin 1931, nr. 135.

he makes his first diplomatic impressions<sup>19</sup>. On 25 October 1051, Henry III issued two documents at Hainburg, a town in the border district of Austria, both gifting property to the local church of Saint Mary. The emperor made the first gift “for the sake of our happiness (*ob* [...] *felicitem*) and that of the august Empress AGNES, consort of our realm and bed, and that of our beloved offspring HENRY, and for the divine blessing (*pro* [...] *beatitudine*) of our father Conrad, of happy memory, and of our mother Gisela, of blessed commemoration”<sup>20</sup>. The clerk incorporates the infant Henry, as the emperor’s *proles*, into his father’s current and future hope for the *felicitas* of the royal family, but the child’s future *felicitas* equally depends on his mother, who is essential to the dynastic vision of emperor, empress and male offspring. The addition of Henry III’s own parents, Conrad and Gisela, further stresses the importance of royal women as partners in rule in the Empire and reiterates the multi-generational familial framework of rulership. Yet it is the present-day pairing of mother and son which forms the focal point in justifying the gift to Saint Mary’s church. Agnes and the young Henry’s names are the only ones within this clause to be written in majuscule script, drawing the eye to their partnership. Visually, the diploma is a triumphant celebration of maternal power, both worldly and sacred. The only other name to appear entirely in majuscule is that of the dedicatee of the Hainburg church, the Virgin Mary (MARIAE)<sup>21</sup>. This scribal decision affirms both the divine and dynastic significance of the mother-son partnership, since the Virgin was intimately associated with the Salian dynasty as the patron of the imperial burial church at Speyer. The evangeliary given by Henry III to Speyer in 1046 (now called the Speyer Evangeliary or the Codex Aureus of Speyer) contains a famous image of the emperor and empress kneeling at the Virgin’s feet<sup>22</sup>. Several years later, and after Henry III’s death, Henry IV rein-

<sup>19</sup> DD H III (as note 18), nr. 265, p. 353. Agnes and the child Henry appear only as *coniunx* and *filius* and are not named. Harry Bresslau and Paul Kehr leave this diploma undated, but Tilman Struve dates it to March 1051. TILMAN STRUVE, Die Interventionen Heinrichs IV. in den Diplomen seines Vaters. Instrument der Herrschaftssicherung des salischen Hauses, in: Archiv für Diplomatik, Schriftgeschichte Siegel- und Wappenkunde 28, 1982, pp. 190–222, here p. 197.

<sup>20</sup> DD H III (as note 18), nr. 276, p. 377: *qualiter nos ob nostram nostrique regni ac thori consortis scilicet AGNETIS imperatricis augustae ac dilectae prolis nostrae HEINRICI felicitatem et pro patris nostri felix memoriae chunradi ac matris nostre beatae commemorationis gisilae simulque omnium parentum nostrorum beatitudine*. There is no way to distinguish from the edited text whether names within diplomas are written in majuscule or not because the modern MGH edition standardizes the lettering. However, many of these diplomas are digitized through an invaluable resource, *Abbildungsverzeichnis der europäischen Kaiser- und Königsurkunden*, and I provide relevant links where possible. Here, see <http://www.hgw-online.net/abbildungsverzeichnis/dh-iii-276> [accessed 21 September 2020]. See also BLACK-VELDTRUP, Kaiserin Agnes (as note 17), pp. 317–318.

<sup>21</sup> Mary as dynast and consort provided a model for earthly ruling mothers in the early Middle Ages, especially for the Carolingian dynasty. CONRAD LEYSER, From Maternal Kin to Jesus as Mother. Royal Genealogy and Marian Devotion in the Ninth-Century West, in: LEYSER – SMITH, Motherhood, Religion, and Society (as note 14), pp. 21–39.

<sup>22</sup> Madrid, El Escorial, Real Biblioteca, Cod. Vitras 17, fol. 3r (a similar portrait of Conrad II and Gisela at the feet of Christ is on the preceding folio). For the evangeliary’s depictions of Henry and Agnes,

forced the especial maternal significance of the Hainburg church within the imperial dynasty by gifting it to his mother to mark the betrothal of Judith, Henry IV's sister and Agnes's daughter<sup>23</sup>. Since the transaction took place in October 1058, while Agnes was governing the realm with her seven-year-old son, the empress likely directed the church's transfer into her own hands, further reiterating its personal importance to her.

The spiritual partnership of mother and son also had a contemporary secular and political context. In the opening to Henry III's first Hainburg diploma, the emperor had already bound the stability of his *regnum* to his personal *felicitas* – a word which conveyed a sense of flourishing in both the earthly and heavenly realms, and was also a Roman (and Carolingian) imperial virtue<sup>24</sup>. The subsequent mention of the *felicitas* of the emperor, his wife, and their son in harmony implied a similar connection to the kingdom's wellbeing for Agnes and young Henry. The second document issued at Hainburg on the same day places spiritual appeals for mother and son even more overtly within the context of the realm's security. Henry III conveys the additional grant to Saint Mary's "with hope for the salvation of our soul and those of our beloved consort AGNES and of our son HENRY and likewise of our parents, and also for the peace and stability of our kingdom"<sup>25</sup>. Henry III's Hungarian campaign of 1051 provides the immediate political context for these early extant documentary references to Agnes and her infant son together. Considering the military offensive, it is highly unlikely that the empress and child were with the emperor at Hainburg when Saint Mary's church received its endowments. Agnes's absence as petitioner or intervener in her husband's diplomas between March and November is a compelling indication that, for at least some of this time, she was not travelling with him<sup>26</sup>. Having been at war and away from his wife and new-born son for some months, Henry's thoughts likely turned to his family as he travelled back towards them, pre-empting the reunion which took place at Regensburg later in November. Henry's emphasis on the spiritual

---

see LUDGER KÖRNTGEN, *Königsherrschaft und Gottes Gnade zu Kontext und Funktion sakraler Vorstellungen in Historiographie und Bildzeugnissen der ottonisch-frühsalischen Zeit*, Berlin 2001, pp. 250–257. For Speyer's connections to the Salian dynasty, see BLACK-VELDTRUP, *Kaiserin Agnes* (as note 17), pp. 101–127.

<sup>23</sup> *Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae. Die Urkunden Heinrichs IV.* [henceforth DD H IV], eds. DIETRICH VON GLADISS – ALFRED GAWLIK, 3 vols. (MGH DD reg. imp. Germ. 6), Weimar 1941–1978, vol. 1, nr. 44; BLACK-VELDTRUP, *Kaiserin Agnes* (as note 17), pp. 163, 167–168, 318.

<sup>24</sup> DD H III (as note 18), nr. 276, p. 377: *hoc ad regni nostri stabilitatem ac utriusque vitae felicitatem nobis prodesse non dubitamus.*

<sup>25</sup> DD H III (as note 18), nr. 277, p. 378; <http://www.hgw-online.net/abbildungsverzeichnis/dh-iii-277> [accessed 21 September 2020]: *qualiter illa spe inducti donavimus pro remedio anime nostre dilectaeque nostrae coniugis scilicet AGNETIS nostraeque prolis HEINRICI seu parentum nostrorum, pro pace etiam et stabilitate regni nostri.*

<sup>26</sup> Agnes appears as petitioner in a document dated at Speyer on 15 March 1051. DD H III (as note 18), nr. 266. She is then absent, except in the context of the Hainburg documents, until 12 November 1051, when a diploma mentions her intervention (ibid., nr. 278). See BLACK-VELDTRUP, *Kaiserin Agnes* (as note 17), pp. 9 note 17, 14, 76–77, for Agnes's itinerary in 1051.



felicity of his wife and son, and the health of their souls, is understandable in these circumstances, providing further evidence of the profoundly emotive affection that medieval documents can convey<sup>27</sup>.

Agnes's diplomatic proximity to her infant son assumes an additional political function in the Hainburg documents. Henry III's hopes for future *felicitas* rested less on his son and heir alone and more on his wife's partnership with their child as, during the emperor's absence, she raised and guided the boy and steered provisions for the realm's stability. The emperor's diplomas reveal his preoccupation with the realm's stability as he travelled extensively over the course of 1051<sup>28</sup>. The stop at Hainburg in October came on the return from a successful military campaign in Hungary. David Bachrach has interpreted Henry III's decision to gift property in the newly conquered border territory to Saint Mary's as the emperor's declaration of his victory's divine sanction<sup>29</sup>. Since permanent chancery staff did not accompany the emperor on his Hungarian campaign, Henry likely played a far more active role in determining the content of the Hainburg documents<sup>30</sup>. He wanted both his victory and his donations to Saint Mary's to endure, and his decision to promote the diplomatic relationship between his wife and their son at this moment was highly symbolic. God's blessing through victory in battle brought glory to the entire ruling dynasty: those who had ruled before Henry III, the empress who was his consort in rule, and their infant son who, the couple anticipated, would one day rule after his father.

Transactions of specific familial significance to rulers across Europe often coupled pleas for the souls of mothers and sons, whose presence together stressed notions of legitimacy and dynastic continuity<sup>31</sup>. Yet donations to religious institutions for the soul's salvation served a variety of interrelated purposes. Recent scholarship has challenged the 'gift-counter-gift' narrative and moved away from thinking of the gift *pro anima* solely in terms of reciprocity. Instead, both the donor and the religious community intended these donations to establish a "friendship", whereby the latter would be responsible for ensuring the former's salvation<sup>32</sup>. Elite women were central

<sup>27</sup> Koziol provides a pertinent warning against ignoring feelings, memories, beliefs and values in favour of strategy, ambition, cunning and calculation. KOZIOL, *A Father, His Son* (as note 12), pp. 86, 92, 100.

<sup>28</sup> The kingdom's *stabilitas* is mentioned in thirty-two of Henry III's extant diplomas. DD H III (as note 18), nrs. 1, 2, 6, 11, 14, 46–47, 68, 81, 85, 94, 96, 103, 114, 127, 221, 244, 267, 270, 274–277, 279, 329, 332, 343, 346, 378, 387, 401, 405. There is a noticeable clustering of references to the *regni stabilitas* in diplomas from 1051 (*ibid.*, nrs. 267, 270, 274–277, 279).

<sup>29</sup> DAVID BACHRACH, *Religion and the Conduct of War*, c. 300–1215, Woodbridge 2003, p. 76.

<sup>30</sup> DD H III (as note 18), nr. 276, p. 377.

<sup>31</sup> As Stephen Marritt has shown in many Anglo-Norman examples. STEPHEN MARRITT, *Prayers for the King and Royal Titles in Anglo-Norman Charters*, in: *Anglo-Norman Studies* 32, 2010, pp. 184–202. I would like to thank Linsey Hunter for directing me to this article and for discussing *pro anima* clauses with me at an early stage in my research.

<sup>32</sup> BERNHARD JUSSEN, *Religious Discourses of the Gift in the Middle Ages. Semantic Evidences (Second to Twelfth Centuries)*, in: GADI ALGAZI – VALENTIN GROEBNER – BERNHARD JUSSEN (eds.), *Negotiating the Gift. Pre-Modern Figurations of Exchange*, Göttingen 2003, pp. 173–192; ELIANA

to developing and preserving such friendships<sup>33</sup>. Even when they were not a gift's primary donor, mothers were likely collaborators in promoting their children's introduction to these patronage and friendship networks and in educating their sons to fulfil expected spiritual and secular responsibilities. Anne of Kyiv was pivotal in helping her son Philip develop networks such as those centred around the monastery of Saint-Philibert of Tournus, as discussed above. Empress Agnes cultivated links between her offspring and the church of Saints Simon and Jude in Goslar, an institution at the heart of the imperial dynastic image. Goslar church was already closely linked to the imperial chapel and had received several gifts to mark significant events for the family and the dynasty, such as the births of Henry and Agnes's children<sup>34</sup>. When, in March 1052, Emperor Henry III made donations to Goslar church of property which had just come back into his hands through inheritance, he did so for the salvation of his soul and his own health, and likewise for Agnes and "our most pleasing son" Henry, as well as the emperor's ancestors and successors<sup>35</sup>. The young Henry's incorporation within *ob remedium anime* clauses, as in this Goslar example, shows that the emperor and empress considered their infant son ready to share in the spiritual community of redemptive salvation. The boy was still less than two years old and, as yet, unable to participate in the political community of reinforcing beneficial friendships and alliances himself, but the foundations jointly laid by his parents permitted the boy's acceptance into what Wendy Davies has described as a "patronage system"<sup>36</sup>.

Parents and religious communities intended these patronage systems to maintain and prolong longer familial and dynastic traditions, as is evident from a mid-twelfth-century Scottish example which intertwines patronage, salvation, and maternal influence across the generations. When Earl Henry, son of King David I (1124–1153), granted and confirmed his father's gift to the monks of Rievaulx at Melrose Abbey sometime between 1142 and 1147, Henry's concerns were for the spiritual salvation of his father and mother, his uncle Edgar (d. 1107), his wife Ada de Warenne (d. 1178), his sons (*fili*), and his ancestors and successors<sup>37</sup>. This is the only extant appear-

---

SOARES-CHRISTEN, *Transforming Things and Persons. The Gift pro anima in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, *ibid.*, pp. 269–284, here p. 283.

<sup>33</sup> See, for example, JORDAN, *Women, Power, and Religious Patronage* (as note 17).

<sup>34</sup> BLACK-VELDRUP, *Kaiserin Agnes* (as note 17), pp. 104–110.

<sup>35</sup> DD H III (as note 18), nr. 285, p. 387 (similarly, see nr. 286): *qualiter nos ob remedium anime nostrae vitaeque sanitatem simulque thori ac regni consortis scilicet Agnetis imperatricis augustae nec non dulcissimae prolis nostrae Heinrichi omniumque parentum seu successorum nostrorum*. Although note that the editors suggest *dulcissima* could be a misreading of *dilectissima*, since this diploma survives only in later copies. Other comparable examples are listed in STRUVE, *Die Interventionen Heinrichs* (as note 19), p. 192 note 7.

<sup>36</sup> WENDY DAVIES, *When Gift is Sale. Reciprocities and Commodities in Tenth-Century Christian Iberia*, in: EAD. – PAUL FOURACRE (eds.), *The Languages of Gift in the Early Middle Ages*, Cambridge 2010, pp. 216–237, here p. 231.

<sup>37</sup> Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland, GD 55/2: *p(ro) a(n)i(m)a mea et p(ro) a(n)i(m)abus pat(ri)s et mat(ri)s mee et auunc(u)li mei Edgari et uxoris mee Ade et filio(rum) meo(rum) et antecesso(rum) meo(rum) et successo(rum) meo(rum)*. The Charters of King David I. The Written Acts of David I King of Scots,

ance of Henry and Ada's sons in their father's documents, and the children's position immediately after their mother was a public display of precedence which inferred their subordination to her<sup>38</sup>. Henry's charter to the Rievaulx monks closely followed a contemporaneous grant he and his father, King David, had jointly made to the same monks at Melrose; both documents were likely written by a Melrose scribe. The joint grant, like the charter Henry issued alone, contained prayers for the salvation of a long list of family members, both living and dead. After a request for David's own soul follow pleas for his father and mother, his brother Edgar, all his other siblings, his wife Matilda (d. 1131), his son and heir Henry, and his ancestors and successors<sup>39</sup>. The father-son joint grant set a clear precedent for associating the ruler's wife with his son and heir; the importance of this association, in this case, persisted even after the mother's death. Henry's solo charter preserves both the intimate family grouping and the mother-son partnership. Previous familial practice thus anticipated that one of Henry and Ada's underage sons would, in future, issue their own confirmation for the Rievaulx monks at Melrose. Since the boys were only infants in the 1140s, Ada was crucial to preserving *memoria* of this relationship with the Rievaulx-Melrose community, and in educating her young sons to continue similar practices of dynastic commemoration and patronage. A story recounted by a canon of Merton Priory, an Augustinian foundation a few miles outside London, enchantingly illustrates how mothers understood these expectations placed upon them. Queen Matilda II (1080–1118) visited the canons of Merton shortly after they occupied the new residence founded for them by Gilbert the Sheriff in 1117. Bringing her young son, William (b. 1103), on this visit, the queen hoped the boy's childhood memories of the priory would inspire his continued devotion to Merton if he should become king<sup>40</sup>. William's death in the White Ship disaster at the age of seventeen tragically thwarted Matilda's strategy. Nevertheless,

---

1124–53 and of His Son Henry Earl of Northumberland, 1139–52, ed. GEOFFREY BARROW, Woodbridge 1999, nr. 121, p. 112; The Acts of Malcolm IV, King of Scots, 1153–1165. Together with Scottish Royal Acts Prior to 1153 Not Included in Sir Archibald Lawrie's "Early Scottish Charters", ed. ID. (Regesta Regum Scottorum 1), Edinburgh 1960, nr. 41, p. 157.

<sup>38</sup> The couple's eldest son, Malcolm (b. 1141), was only eleven when Henry died in 1152. The second son, William, was born c. 1142 and the third son, David, was born c. 1152. David I's grant to Kelso Abbey in 1144 names as witnesses Henry and his two eldest sons, Malcolm and William (then aged around three and one respectively), but Ada does not appear alongside them. The Charters of King David I (as note 37), nr. 130, p. 116; GEOFFREY BARROW, Witnesses and the Attestation of Formal Documents in Scotland, Twelfth–Thirteenth Centuries, in: *Legal History* 16, 1995, pp. 1–20, here p. 9.

<sup>39</sup> The Charters of King David I (as note 37), nr. 120, p. 111: *pro anima mea animabus patris et matris mee et fratris mei Ædgari et aliorum fratrum et Sororum mearum et uxoris mee Matildis et etiam pro anima Henrici filii mei et heredis et Antecessorum et Successorum meorum.*

<sup>40</sup> MARVIN COLKER, Latin Texts Concerning Gilbert, Founder of Merton Priory, in: *Studia monastica* 12, 1970, pp. 241–272, here p. 252: *Preterea regina Mathildis, prioris sue deuocionis non immemor, nouos noue habitacionis incolas uenit inuisere, filium suum Willelmum ea nimirum intencione secum adducens, ut scilicet locum uideret ac deinceps eidem deuocior excisteret si quando regni apicem obtineret.* Referenced in LOIS HUNEYCUTT, Public Lives, Private Ties. Royal Mothers in England and Scotland, 1070–1204, in: JOHN CARMICHAEL PARSONS – BONNIE WHEELER (eds.), *Medieval Mothering*, New York (NY) 1996, pp. 295–312, here p. 304.

the queen's actions show how vital maternal collaboration could be both at a child's introduction to networks of friendship and patronage, and for many years afterwards. The stories of many other mothers throughout the eleventh and twelfth centuries survive primarily in the form of scattered documentary fragments rather than monastic narratives. Yet the diplomatic discourse of intervention, petition, consent and assent provides further evidence for the active part these women had in instructing their sons for rule.

## 2. DIPLOMATIC INTERVENTIONS: PETITION, CONSENT AND ASSENT

Charters and diplomas indicate parental influence over a child's education rather than accurately representing the time parents spent raising their children in the Middle Ages<sup>41</sup>. Mothers were not passive observers of their sons' preparation for future political and lordly roles, even if modern scholarship overlooks women's contribution to childhood education in its focus on the paternal role<sup>42</sup>. Birgitte Bedos-Rezak has persuasively illustrated that the charter was "an agent for the structuring of society", and it is significant that boys learnt their place within familial, societal, and political structures through diplomatic interventions with their mothers<sup>43</sup>.

The close association of mothers and sons in imperial actions was common practice for the Salian dynasty throughout the eleventh century. Diplomas record the public intercessions of women and children in favour of individuals and communities, both secular and religious. Empress Gisela (d. 1043) appears with her son, the future Henry III, throughout the diplomas of his father, Conrad II (d. 1039). Conrad's royal succession took place in 1024, but Henry, the couple's sole son, only appears once in his father's documents – in a request for prayers and alms in his parents' memory – before Conrad's imperial coronation in Rome in March 1027<sup>44</sup>. Significantly, it is alongside Gisela in Rome that the nine-year-old Henry first performs an act of political

<sup>41</sup> For example, in northern France, documents illustrate paternal encouragement of their sons' involvement in judicial affairs and dispute settlement. JANE MARTINDALE, "His Special Friend?" The Settlement of Disputes and Political Power in the Kingdom of the French (Tenth to Mid-Twelfth Century), in: *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 5, 1995, pp. 21–57, here pp. 56–57. In twelfth-century Germany, the routine inclusion of noble youths in their fathers' charters introduced young men to regional political networks at the centre of familial power and authority. JONATHAN LYON, *Fathers and Sons. Preparing Noble Youths to be Lords in Twelfth-Century Germany*, in: *Journal of Medieval History* 34, 2008, pp. 291–310, here p. 298.

<sup>42</sup> For an important exception showing that mothers were not remote or distant from their male children, see AMY LIVINGSTONE, *Out of Love for my Kin. Aristocratic Family Life in the Lands of the Loire, 1000–1200*, Ithaca (NY) 2010, pp. 29–31, 33–34.

<sup>43</sup> BEDOS-REZAK, *When Ego Was Imago* (as note 8), p. 18.

<sup>44</sup> *Diplomata regum et imperatorum Germaniae. Die Urkunden Konrads II. [henceforth DD K II]*, ed. HARRY BRESSLAU (MGH DD reg. imp. Germ 4), Hanover 1909, nr. 51, p. 59; HERWIG WOLFRAM, *Conrad II, 990–1039. Emperor of Three Kingdoms*, transl. DENISE KAISER, University Park (PA) 2006, p. 141.

intercession, mediating his father's gift to the episcopal church of Paderborn with his mother<sup>45</sup>. Gisela's name always precedes her son's in imperial documents. Even at the end of Conrad's reign, when Henry was in his twenties, he never appears without his mother, and the precedence accorded to Gisela reinforces her place in rule alongside both husband and son<sup>46</sup>. Overtly pairing the intercessory actions of mothers and sons emphasizes maternal oversight of the heir's preparation for future political responsibilities. Gisela's daughter-in-law, Agnes of Poitou, was similarly at the heart of her eldest son's early political education. Agnes played an essential part in training her son, the future Henry IV, in strategies of rulership by facilitating his political intercessions throughout his childhood.

The political context to Agnes's diplomatic involvement is far more overt than most modern scholars have appreciated<sup>47</sup>. Her intercessory role as intervener and petitioner in her husband's transactions combined aspects of governance and education within the context of her underage son's association with the throne<sup>48</sup>. The mother's close partnership in the boy's political formation is clear from the ways in which Agnes's participation in imperial business changed as her son's status as heir advanced. During the first few years of his life, the infant Henry's diplomatic association with his mother was manifest solely within Emperor Henry III's appeals for the ruling family's spiritual health, salvation and happiness. The child began to appear more regularly in a prominent intercessory role from May 1054<sup>49</sup>, likely because preparations were underway for his coronation, which took place at Aachen on 17 July. Intercession was a public interaction functioning as both "a discrete political act" and "a flexible

---

<sup>45</sup> DD K II (as note 44), nr. 82, p. 111; SEAN GILSDORF, *The Favor of Friends. Intercession and Aristocratic Politics in Carolingian and Ottonian Europe*, Leiden 2014. Gilsdorf considers the significance of intercession prior to the Salian period and provides a breakdown of intercessions during Conrad II's reign (*ibid.*, p. 176).

<sup>46</sup> Struve suggests a slight change in Gisela and Henry's interventions following Henry's knighting on 29 June 1033. STRUVE, *Die Interventionen Heinrichs* (as note 19), pp. 210–211.

<sup>47</sup> CLAUDIA ZEY, *Frauen und Töchter der salischen Herrscher. Zum Wandel salischer Heiratspolitik in der Krise*, in: TILMAN STRUVE (ed.), *Die Salier, das Reich und der Niederrhein*, Cologne 2008, pp. 47–98, here p. 53. For opinions of Agnes in modern scholarship, see BLACK-VELDTRUP, *Kaiserin Agnes* (as note 17), especially pp. 4–5. Discussions of Agnes's role as regent for Henry IV in the period between 1056 and 1062 show similar efforts to diminish the empress's political involvement. CHRISTIAN HILLEN, *The Minority Governments of Henry III, Henry (VII) and Louis IX Compared*, in: *Thirteenth Century England* 11, 2007, pp. 46–60, here pp. 30–31. Hillen's judgement that Agnes only acted "as intercessor but not as an independent regent" relies on a flawed documentary comparison with the much later case of Constance of Aragon in Sicily.

<sup>48</sup> For the explicit pairing of a mother's involvement in governing with the education of future rulers, see KIMBERLEY LOPRETE, *Adela of Blois as Mother and Countess*, in: PARSONS – WHEELER, *Medieval Mothering* (as note 40), pp. 313–334, here pp. 313–314.

<sup>49</sup> Although Henry appears in an intervention clause with his mother before this date (5 March 1052), his initial appearance did not initiate a consistent intercessory role, as his later appearance in 1054 did. DD H III (as note 18), nr. 283, p. 384; STRUVE, *Die Interventionen Heinrichs* (as note 19), p. 203.

political and strategic instrument”<sup>50</sup>. The young Henry’s augmented diplomatic role publicly escalated his preparation for rule in the lead up to his inauguration, and his mother assisted his introduction to political intercession. Towards the end of May, Henry III responded to a request from Argyrus, a governor of southern Italy, that no one should be buried in his father’s grave in Bamberg cathedral. The emperor’s response records Agnes’s intervention followed immediately by the *petitio* of her son Henry, then only three-and-a-half years old<sup>51</sup>. Only through the mother’s preliminary approach to the emperor could their son shadow with his petition. The editors of Henry III’s diplomas note the importance of the political negotiation between the emperor and Argyrus, but they do not mention that this is only the second time the emperor’s son appears in an active intercessory role in imperial documents. When Argyrus’s father, Ismael-Melus, duke of Apulia, had died in 1020, Emperor Henry II had facilitated Melus’s burial in Bamberg cathedral<sup>52</sup>. Henry III’s agreement to reconfirm the imperial decision thirty-four years later stressed continuity between previous rulers and the present emperor at a time of great consequence for the renewal of alliances against the Normans in Italy<sup>53</sup>. The young Henry’s petitioning role was an influential and symbolic demonstration of the future generation’s equal investment in upholding decisions made through “imperial power” (*imperialis potestas*). Since Salian conceptions of *imperium* fully incorporated imperial women, it is imprudent to assume that emperors alone stage-managed exhibitions of the enduring permanence of imperial decision-making. Argyrus’s embassy had conveyed his appeal to the court where, in advance of an audience with the emperor, the envoys likely approached Empress Agnes to request her intervention in their case. Agnes was well acquainted with the systems of imperial governance by 1054, with over a decade’s experience of interceding in political affairs and routine transactions<sup>54</sup>. Did the empress sagely choose this occasion as an appropriate moment to push her son forward and incorporate him in the business of rule more prominently?

The resourcefulness of mothers, or the pursuit of family strategies discussed between a ruling couple, are other possible explanations for young sons’ documentary appearances, alongside a father’s initiative. It would be impulsive to assume decisions regarding a child’s political involvement were always paternally led, especially when

---

<sup>50</sup> GILSDORF, *The Favor of Friends* (as note 45), *passim*, quotes here p. 153.

<sup>51</sup> DD H III (as note 18), nr. 322, p. 440: *Cuius petitioni condescendentes ob interventum nostri thori ac regni karissime consortis scilicet Agnetis imperatricis auguste ac petitione filii nostri Heinrici.*

<sup>52</sup> Amatus of Montecassino, *The History of the Normans*, transl. PRESCOTT DUNBAR, revised by GRAHAM LOUD, Woodbridge 2004, p. 52 and note 29.

<sup>53</sup> GRAHAM LOUD, *The Age of Robert Guiscard. Southern Italy and the Norman Conquest*, Harlow 2000, pp. 95–97, 120.

<sup>54</sup> Agnes first appears in the intervention clauses of Henry III’s diplomas immediately after their marriage in November 1043. DD H III (as note 18), nr. 114; BLACK-VELDRUP, *Kaiserin Agnes* (as note 17), pp. 8–9; STRUVE, *Die Interventionen Heinrichs* (as note 19), p. 203.

the impetus behind “family-based politics” is often unclear<sup>55</sup>. Another diploma issued at Goslar two days after Argyrus’s request similarly reveals the conjoined nature of mother and son as intercessors. Henry III confirms the properties and self-government of the abbey of Santa Maria in the Tremiti islands for the love of God, for the salvation of his own soul, and through Agnes’s and Henry’s joint intervention and petition (*ob interventum ac petitionem*)<sup>56</sup>. Since Argyrus was also a patron of Santa Maria, members of the abbey may have formed part of his embassy to the imperial court<sup>57</sup>. Tilman Struve argued convincingly that the young Henry’s interventions in his father’s documents are not formulaic phrases introduced by chancery notaries. Rather, Henry’s diplomatic presence as intervener or petitioner reveals that he took part in the legal act underpinning the documentary record or, at the very least, was present when this took place<sup>58</sup>. The boy’s physical presence at the event, even whilst still an infant, would have been as important as the written record of his intercession, if not more so. Infants could have central ceremonial roles within the rituals associated with gift-giving, and parents sometimes involved their children forcefully, using acts such as slapping as a mnemonic device to ensure they would remember the event<sup>59</sup>. Considering young elite children, especially those under the age of seven, often travelled with their mothers<sup>60</sup>, there is a strong likelihood that women remained better informed as to the appropriate time to instigate their children’s incorporation within routine political transactions. Agnes may well have been responsible for bringing her son to observe and participate in the responses to Argyrus and to the abbey of Santa Maria. The intercession of the ruler’s heir symbolized their retention of knowledge of a transaction’s significance, and elite women had pivotal roles in ensuring their sons’ engagement with these events, educating them in examples of rule, and facilitating their sons’ *memoria*.

---

<sup>55</sup> For the need to consider such “family-based politics”, see KIMBERLEY LOPRETE, *Women, Gender and Lordship in France, c. 1050–1250*, in: *History Compass* 5/6, 2007, pp. 1921–1941, here p. 1923.

<sup>56</sup> DD H III (as note 18), nr. 323.

<sup>57</sup> SUSAN BOYTON, *Shaping a Monastic Identity. Liturgy and History at the Imperial Abbey of Farfa, 1000–1125*, Ithaca (NY) 2006, p. 168.

<sup>58</sup> STRUVE, *Die Interventionen Heinrichs* (as note 19), pp. 205, 210.

<sup>59</sup> STEPHEN WHITE, *Custom, Kinship, and Gifts to Saints. The Laudatio Parentum in Western France, 1050–1150*, Chapel Hill (NC) 1988, pp. 32, 44–5, 250 note 111; ELISABETH VAN HOUTS, *Orderic and his Father, Odelarius*, in: CHARLES ROZIER et al. (eds.), *Orderic Vitalis. Life, Works and Interpretations*, Woodbridge 2016, pp. 17–36, here p. 29; MICHEL PARISSÉ, *Croix autographes de souscription dans l’Ouest de la France au XI<sup>e</sup> siècle*, in: PETER RÜCK (ed.), *Graphische Symbole in mittelalterlichen Urkunden. Beiträge zur diplomatischen Semiotik*, Sigmaringen 1996, pp. 143–156, here p. 151.

<sup>60</sup> WILLIAM MARK ORMROD, *The Royal Nursery. A Household for the Younger Children of Edward III*, in: *English Historical Research* 120, 2005, pp. 398–415, here p. 401; JOHN CARMY PARSONS, *Eleanor of Castile. Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England*, Basingstoke 1995, p. 38; SHULAMITH SHAHAR, *Childhood in the Middle Ages*, London 1992, pp. 174, 209; NICHOLAS ORME, *From Childhood to Chivalry. The Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy, 1066–1530*, London 1984, pp. 16–18. Scholars working on the earlier Capetian kings or on Salian and Staufen rulers have devoted far less attention to the incorporation of children within royal households, and this is a topic deserving further research.

Agnes's importance to the process of political intercession as both consort and mother increased in line with her son's association with the throne. She had a heightened responsibility for incorporating her son in imperial decision-making after his coronation and remained central to his ongoing inclusion in rule<sup>61</sup>. The usual cautions regarding the numerical analysis of charters apply here, since it is impossible either to be certain of what has been lost or to assert that what survives is representative in any statistically meaningful way. Nevertheless, diplomas reveal how Henry's formal association through his anointing as king, and his new status as *rex puer*, intensified his pairing with both his father and mother in imperial transactions. Agnes's position in her husband's decision-making increased in tandem with her son's enhanced political role. Only seven of the sixty-nine diplomas Henry III issued between his son's birth in 1050 and the child's coronation in 1054 name the young Henry<sup>62</sup>. Agnes's name precedes her son's on all seven occasions, and the empress appears independently in a further twenty-eight diplomas. By contrast, mother and son appear together in forty-four of the fifty-eight acts extant in originals or later copies from the two years between Henry IV's coronation and Henry III's death on 5 October 1056<sup>63</sup>. There are only three occasions Agnes appears in imperial diplomas without her son after his coronation. In the case of a donation to Hildesheim on 15 October 1054, the empress's solo intercession may be due to the Marian references throughout. Explicit links are drawn between the honour of the Virgin Mary, called *dei genitrix* and *matris domine*, and the intervention of the emperor's "beloved wife" Agnes<sup>64</sup>. Perhaps including the boy Henry in this context would have made too overt a comparison with Christ, even if the audience could still tacitly draw such an implication from the text. The other two diplomas in which Agnes appears alone are, firstly, an almost verbatim repetition of an earlier episcopal document and, secondly, a forgery based on a diploma no longer extant<sup>65</sup>. That the remaining eleven of Henry III's diplomas from between July 1054 and October 1056 mention neither Agnes nor Henry IV is likely due to documentary

<sup>61</sup> Chronicle records of the coronation do not mention the empress: Lampert of Hersfeld, *Annales*, in: *Lamperti monachi Hersfeldensis opera*, ed. OSWALD HOLDER-EGGER (MGH SS rer. Germ. 38), Hanover 1894, pp. 3–304, here p. 66; Sigebert of Gembloux, *Chronica*, ed. LUDWIG BETHMANN (MGH SS 6), Hanover 1844, pp. 300–374, here p. 360; *Annales Ottenburani*, ed. GEORGE PERTZ (MGH SS 5), Hanover 1843, pp. 1–9, here p. 6. Agnes appears in documents with her husband in Goslar in May 1054 and again in October 1054, but does not appear in either of the surviving diplomas issued in July. DD H III (as note 18), nrs. 323–326.

<sup>62</sup> DD H III (as note 18), nrs. 276, 277, 283, 285, 286, 322, 323. In addition, there is one letter from Henry III to Hugh of Cluny regarding the young Henry's baptism and one diploma, likely drawn up outside the chancery, which refers simply to the emperor's *filius* (*ibid.*, nrs. 263, 265). The child is not named in either document. STRUVE, *Die Interventionen Heinrichs* (as note 19), p. 197.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 192.

<sup>64</sup> DD H III (as note 18), nr. 326, p. 447: *qualiter nos ob honorem dei genitricis et perpetuae virginis Mariae et interventum dilectae conlectalis nostrae Agnetis imperatricis augustae [...] sub honorificencia matris domini nostri Iesu Christi sublimatum.*

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, nrs. 327, 341.



deficiencies or the use of uncharacteristic formulas, rather than the deliberate exclusion of mother and son. Most of these eleven diplomas are either incomplete or were drafted using non-standard chancery formulas during the imperial visit to Lombardy and other Italian territories in 1055<sup>66</sup>.

The mother-son partnership publicly displayed the empress's role in preparing her son for his ruling responsibilities. Agnes's intercessions together with her son served a weightier purpose than merely counterbalancing the infant's incapacity; they are not simply a "glimpse of reality"<sup>67</sup>. Henry IV's more active intercessory role further transformed the authority of his mother's intercession. Agnes's interventions in her husband's decisions before 1054 had either been alone or heading a list of named intercessors, such as archbishops, bishops or, very occasionally, dukes. Additional ecclesiastical or secular endorsement virtually disappears following Henry IV's coronation; the intercession of mother and son together, or occasionally Agnes's intercession alone, suffices<sup>68</sup>. Irrespective of whether the scribes drafting and writing diplomas came from within the imperial chancery, they never present the young boy Henry as the means of approaching his father's presence without his mother alongside him. After Henry IV's coronation, Agnes hardly ever performed her intercessory role without her infant son in tow, and several diplomas issued from Italy between April and November 1055 refer to the boy's inclusion alongside his mother explicitly in terms of his developmental upbringing or education. For example, when the emperor confirmed the properties and rights of the episcopal church of Mantua, he claimed to have done so for the salvation of his soul and because of both Agnes's intervention (*ob interventum coniugis nostre*) and his son's development or growth (*propter incrementum filii nostri*)<sup>69</sup>. Struve interprets the creation of this new formula as an indication that the young Henry was left behind in Germany while his parents were in Italy and, consequently, was not physically present at these transactions<sup>70</sup>. I am less convinced that this formu-

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., nrs. 325, 336, 338, 339, 342, 345, 348, 349, 350, 362, 382.

<sup>67</sup> KURT-ULRICH JÄSCHKE, From Famous Empresses to Unspectacular Queens. The Romano-German Empire to Margaret of Brabant, Countess of Luxemburg and Queen of the Romans (d. 1311), in: ANNE DUGGAN (ed.), Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe. Proceedings of a Conference Held at King's College London, April 1995, Woodbridge 1997, pp. 75–108, here p. 93.

<sup>68</sup> STRUVE, Die Interventionen Heinrichs (as note 19), pp. 202, 212; AMALIE FÖSSEL, Die Königin im mittelalterlichen Reich. Herrschaftsausübung, Herrschaftsrechte, Handlungsspielräume (Mittelalter-Forschungen 4), Stuttgart 2000, pp. 131–132.

<sup>69</sup> DD H III (as note 18), nr. 355, p. 482: *qualiter pro remedio anime nostre e[st] ob interventum coniugis nostre dilectissime imperatricis Agnetis nec non propter incrementum filii nostri karissimi Henrici quarti regis [...]*. There are several other examples of this formula in use (ibid., nrs. 337, 343, 344, 346, 347, 351, 352, 353, 354, 356, 357, 359). The same formula only appears in Henry IV's diplomas once, in Verona in June 1084, to refer to his son Conrad, who was then ten years old. DD H IV (as note 23), vol. 2, nr. 363, p. 483.

<sup>70</sup> STRUVE, Die Interventionen Heinrichs (as note 19), p. 199. Modern biographies of Henry IV do not tend to discuss the period of his childhood between 1050 and 1056 in any detail or consider Henry's itinerary for 1055. IAN ROBINSON, Henry IV of Germany, 1056–1106, Cambridge 1999; GERD ALTHOFF, Heinrich IV., Darmstadt 2006.

la's introduction provides sufficient evidence for the child's absence. Struve's argument rests on dismissing the young Henry's presence as intervener in a diploma issued at Borgo San Donnino (modern-day Fidenza) on 15 May 1055<sup>71</sup>. This document, for which the original is still extant, is the sole diploma drawn up and written by a member of the German chancery during the Italian visit. It is a record of gifts to the church of Saints Simon and Jude in Goslar; a community intimately bound to the imperial dynasty, as already noted. Elsewhere, the German chancery made very deliberate attempts to regulate Henry's intervention as a sign of his presence at the legal transaction which the diploma records (as Struve himself argued). It therefore follows that we should not reject the Borgo San Donnino example outright without considering other possibilities. A plausible alternative is that the notary from the Italian chancery who introduced the new formula in Italy, Gunther A, did so deliberately to highlight the significance of the heir's presence over the Alps for the first time. From an imperial perspective, this visit certainly would have aided the child's *incrementum*. The last time an imperial heir remained behind in Germany while his parents crossed the Alps hardly provided a reassuring precedent for Henry III and Agnes to leave the young Henry. In December 983, Otto II died in Rome with his wife, Empress Theophanu, present at his side. More than eight hundred miles away in Saxony, their three-year-old son was taken into the duke of Bavaria's custody. The ensuing struggle Otto III's mother and grandmother faced to recover the child and the control of the realm served as a pertinent warning not to leave behind your imperial heir on any future *Romzug*<sup>72</sup>.

Beyond the Empire, a mother's presence alongside her underage son(s) remained just as significant, although the vocabulary differed. Mothers and sons together supplied the expected *laudatio parentum* – the approval of relatives to gifts of land – in the form of their consent or assent, rather than the intercession or intervention which was a central feature of Salian diplomas<sup>73</sup>. In 1120, Louis VI restored the crown of his father, Philip I, to the abbey of Saint-Denis “as much for the health of our soul as for the administration of our kingdom, [and] for the preservation of [our] wife and offspring”<sup>74</sup>. The king's son, Philip, was four years old at most, but the charter's dating clause incorporates his concession (*concedere*) immediately after his father's regnal year and, more unusually, also the regnal year of his mother, Queen Adelaide of Maurienne

<sup>71</sup> DD H III (as note 18), nr. 340; Regesta Imperii III. Salisches Haus 1024–1125. Zweiter Teil. 1056–1125. Dritte Abteilung. Die Regesten des Kaiserreichs unter Heinrich IV. 1056 (1050)–1106, eds. JOHANN BÖHMER – TILMAN STRUVE, Cologne 1984, nr. 31, p. 12; STRUVE, Die Interventionen Heinrichs (as note 19), p. 200.

<sup>72</sup> For the circumstances of Otto III's succession, see the contribution SARAH GREER – MEGAN WELTON, Establishing Just Rule. The Diplomatic Negotiations of the Dominae Imperiales in the Ottonian Succession Crisis of 983–985 in this issue.

<sup>73</sup> WHITE, Custom, Kinship, and Gifts (as note 59).

<sup>74</sup> Recueil des actes de Louis VI, roi de France, 1108–1137, ed. JEAN DUFOUR, 4 vols., Paris 1992–1994, vol. 1, nr. 163, p. 338: *tam pro salute anime nostre quam pro regni administratione, conjugis et prolis conservatione.*

(d. 1154)<sup>75</sup>. As his grandfather's namesake and the eldest son of the reigning king, Philip's active consent to the crown's restoration was important, as was his alignment with both his father and mother in rule. It was commonplace within aristocratic and noble society in northern France to seek and record the approval of relatives to land grants. By giving the *laudatio parentum*, both adults and children participated in elaborate social transactions with real significance for families and communities, as Stephen White has shown<sup>76</sup>. When Fulk V, count of Anjou, made a grant to the abbey of Saint-Serge in Angers in 1116, he claimed to have made both his wife, Ermengarde, and his son, Geoffrey (then barely three years old), approve (*concedere*) the transaction<sup>77</sup>. Thibaut V of Blois-Chartres (d. 1191) included his wife, Alix de France (d. c. 1197), with their children in gifts which demonstrated the family's "prestige, generosity and piety" and in acts concerning the family patrimony and lordship<sup>78</sup>. Later in the twelfth century, the future Philip II, aged ten, provided his assent (*assensus*) together with his mother, Adela of Champagne (d. 1206), to his father, Louis VII's (r. 1137–1180) grant of privileges to the inhabitants and garrison of Dun-le-Roi<sup>79</sup>. The presence and assent of the queen and heir together was a visual reinforcement of Louis's promise to uphold Dun-le-Roi's customs in perpetuity, integrating Adela and Philip into an "ongoing process" of assuring the permanency of royal decisions<sup>80</sup>. On several other occasions, however, Louis VII called on his son's concession and assent in acts in which Adela played no visible part<sup>81</sup>.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., nr. 163, p. 338: *Actum publice anno incarnati Verbi MCXX, regni nostri XII, Adelaidis autem regine VI, concedente Philippo filio nostro* [...]; JEAN DUFOUR, De l'anneau sigillaire au sceau. Évolution du rôle des reines de France jusqu'à la fin du XIIIe siècle, in: MARIE-ADÉLAÏDE NIELEN (ed.), *Corpus des sceaux français du moyen âge, tome 3: Les sceaux des reines et des enfants de France*, Paris 2011, pp. 11–25, here pp. 17–18. For the inclusion of infants in dating clauses in twelfth-century Castile, see SHADIS, Berenguela of Castile (as note 6), p. 35.

<sup>76</sup> WHITE, Custom, Kinship, and Gifts (as note 59), especially chapter 2.

<sup>77</sup> Chartes originales antérieures à 1121 conservées en France [henceforth *Charte Artem*], eds. CÉDRIC GIRAUD – JEAN-BAPTISTE RENAULT – BENOÎT-MICHEL TOCK, Orléans 2010, nr. 3322, <http://www.cn-telma.fr//originaux/charte3322/> [accessed 21 September 2020]: *ego Fulco comes Andecavorum [...] dedi et concessi uxoremque meam Eremburgem Eliæ Cenomannensis comitis filiam, filiumque meum Gosfridum concedere feci* [...]. Ermengarde and Geoffrey's cross signatures also featured with Fulk's at the foot of the charter.

<sup>78</sup> MICHELLE ARMSTRONG-PARTIDA, Mothers and Daughters as Lords. The Countesses of Blois and Chartres, in: *Medieval Prosopography* 26, 2005, pp. 77–107, here pp. 83–84.

<sup>79</sup> *Ordonnances des roys de France de la troisième race*, eds. LOUIS DE VILLEVAULT – LOUIS DE BRÉQUIGNY, 21 vols., Paris 1723–1849, vol. 11, p. 208: *assensu Adelae Reginae et dilectissimi filii nostri Philippi*. For additional examples of Adela and Philip together, see *Études sur les actes de Louis VII*, ed. ACHILLE LUCHAIRE, Paris 1885, nrs. 718, 738, pp. 324, 330.

<sup>80</sup> BEDOS-REZAK, When Ego Was Imago (as note 8), pp. 21–22; WHITE, Custom, Kinship, and Gifts (as note 59), pp. 82, 172.

<sup>81</sup> *Études sur les actes de Louis VII* (as note 79), nrs. 656, 692, 704, 765, pp. 306, 317, 320, 338. Even Philip's first appearance in his father's acts, when he was five years old, does not mention his mother (ibid., nr. 587, p. 285).

Royal documents continue to link the confirmatory actions of mothers and underage sons until the end of the twelfth century, but the increasing standardization of chancery formulas began to affect the diplomatic partnership of queen mothers and sons<sup>82</sup>. Queen Adela appears alongside her son with less uniformity than earlier queens and empresses, although this was due neither to her lack of prominence as queen consort nor to any restriction on her actions<sup>83</sup>. In 1178, Adela made a confirmation in her own right as *Dei gratia Francorum regina* (“by the grace of God, queen of the Franks”) without either her husband or son alongside her<sup>84</sup>. There is very little evidence that other Capetian queens issued similar charters while their husbands were still alive. The French chancery made serious headway in establishing more stabilized diplomatic forms during the lengthy chancellorship of Hugh of Champfleury (1150–1172), bishop of Soissons, an incumbent with conspicuous political influence at court<sup>85</sup>. During the period of Hugh’s chancellorship, Louis VII divorced his first wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine (d. 1204), mourned his second wife, Constance of Castile (d. 1160) who died in childbirth, and then took Adela of Champagne as his third wife. Had there been more consistency in the consort appearing alongside Louis at this stage, perhaps Hugh would have considered standardizing the queen’s role within chancery formulas.

---

<sup>82</sup> Modern scholarship has long challenged the “narrative of decline” in the position and power of queens between the early and central Middle Ages, and the enduring association of mothers and sons offers further evidence to reinforce these arguments. See JUDITH BENNETT – RUTH MAZO KARRAS, Women, Gender, and Medieval Historians, in: BENNETT – MAZO KARRAS (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe*, Oxford 2013, pp. 1–17, here pp. 4–5. For examples of scholars who argued for a “narrative of decline” in the position of women and their access to power and authority: MARION FACINGER, *A Study of Medieval Queenship. Capetian France 987–1237*, in: *Nebraska Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 5, 1968, pp. 1–48; GEORGES DUBY, *The Knight, the Lady, and the Priest. The Making of Modern Marriage in Medieval France*, transl. BARBARA BRAY, London 1983; JO ANN MCNAMARA – SUZANNE WEMPLE, *The Power of Women through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500–1100*, in: MARY ERLER – MARYANNE KOWALESKI (eds.), *Women and Power in the Middle Ages*, London 1988, pp. 83–101. Since the late 1960s and early 1970s, many historians have challenged this idea of decline, including: DAVID BATES, *The Representation of Queens and Queenship in Anglo-Norman Charters*, in: DAVID GANZ – PAUL FOURACRE (eds.), *Frankland. The Franks and the World of the Early Middle Ages. Essays in Honour of Dame Jinty Nelson*, Manchester 2008, pp. 285–303, here p. 302; MIRIAM SHADIS, *Blanche of Castile and Facinger’s “Medieval Queenship”*. Reassessing the Argument, in: KATHLEEN NOLAN (ed.), *Capetian Women*, New York (NY) – Basingstoke 2003, pp. 137–161, here pp. 138–139; AMALIE FÖSSEL, *The Political Traditions of Female Rulership in Medieval Europe*, in: BENNETT – MAZO KARRAS, *The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender* (as earlier in this note), pp. 68–83, here p. 81.

<sup>83</sup> *Études sur les actes de Louis VII* (as note 79), nrs. 656, 677, 689, 692, pp. 306, 313, 316, 317.

<sup>84</sup> *Monuments historiques*, ed. JULES TARDIF, Paris 1866, nr. 678, pp. 332–333; Paris, Archives nationales, K 25 n° 9.

<sup>85</sup> ROBERT-HENRI BAUTIER, *Les actes de la chancellerie royale française sous les règnes de Louis VII (1137–1180) et Philippe Auguste (1180–1223)*, in: BISTRICKÝ, *Typologie der Königsurkunden* (as note 5), pp. 101–113, here p. 101.

A combination of changing administrative practices and shifting social and cultural meanings made royal and aristocratic women less visible in their husbands' charters by the latter half of the twelfth century, concealing their roles both as ruling women and as mothers alongside their sons. Modern historians have typically considered developments in diplomatic practices in terms of their impact on queenship, to understand how these changes altered the queen's role as consort in the thirteenth century. Amalie Föbel, for example, has shown the relationship between innovations in the chancery and changes in the queen's role in the Empire. Witness lists began to replace intercession formula from the late eleventh century and political intercession had largely faded into the background by the mid-twelfth century<sup>86</sup>. The replacement of intercession formulas not only affected the queen's role as consort; this change also removed evidence of the political partnership between mothers and their underage sons. Conversely, in Capetian France, whereas the queen and her son(s) had sometimes appeared in witness lists in the eleventh century – as the next section will show – increasing standardization of practices of attestation throughout the twelfth century limited the act of witnessing to four royal officers<sup>87</sup>. Additional developments in royal government and administration across the second half of the twelfth century further diminished the documentary visibility of Capetian mothers and their sons. Louis VII's acts employed the assent of members of the royal family less frequently than before<sup>88</sup>. Royal charters issued in the three brief years of Louis VIII's reign (r. 1223–1226) contain reminiscences of his father, Philip II, but never mention the consent of Queen Blanche of Castile or of any of the couple's children<sup>89</sup>. This was a stark contrast to half a century before. The decline in third-party acts being brought to the king for confirmation from Louis VI's reign onwards probably contributed, in part, to the reduced prominence of familial assent<sup>90</sup>. Yet the decreasing frequency of relatives' assent to transactions between the 1170s and the 1220s was not confined to the royal chancery alone. White's analysis of the *laudatio parentum* shows a similar decline across northern France, especially after 1200, a trend he relates to the introduction of new warranty clauses to charters and a more routinized, legally enforceable process of

---

<sup>86</sup> FÖSSEL, Die Königin (as note 68), especially pp. 123–126; EAD., Gender and Rulership in the Medieval German Empire, in: *History Compass* 7, 2009, pp. 55–65, here pp. 59–60; GILSDORF, The Favor of Friends (as note 45), pp. 159–172.

<sup>87</sup> JEAN DUFOUR, Typologie des actes de Philippe Ier (1060–1108) et de Louis VI (1108–1137), in: BISTRICKÝ, Typologie der Königsurkunden (as note 5), pp. 65–99, here pp. 72–73. For an example of the challenge this standardization presents to uncovering the roles of women, see MARIE HIVERGNEAUX, Autour d'Aliénor d'Aquitaine. Entourage et pouvoir au prisme des chartes (1137–1189), in: MARTIN AURELL – NOËL-YVES TONNERRE (eds.), Plantagenêts et Capétiens. Confrontations et héritages, Turnhout 2006, pp. 61–73, here p. 62.

<sup>88</sup> Études sur les actes de Louis VII (as note 79), p. 13.

<sup>89</sup> Étude sur la vie et le règne de Louis VIII (1187–1226), ed. CHARLES PETIT-DUTAILLIS, Paris 1894, p. 14, appendix 6; LINDY GRANT, Blanche of Castile, Queen of France, New Haven (CT) 2016, pp. 9–10.

<sup>90</sup> DUFOUR, Typologie des actes (as note 87), p. 66.

alienating land<sup>91</sup>. At the same time, changing forms of authentication provide another clear example of the diminishing diplomatic opportunities for mothers to display their political partnership with their sons.

### 3. DIPLOMATIC AUTHENTICATIONS: WITNESSING, SIGNING AND SEALING

Mothers acted as educators guiding their young sons within the socio-political settings of routine transactions. Since mothers often endorse family decision-making jointly with their sons, the political significance of the mother-son partnership deserves greater attention than it has received thus far in modern scholarship, which tends to prioritize the partnership's social importance<sup>92</sup>. Maternal instruction focused as much on teaching practical skills of rulership as on social behaviour and family cooperation. The attestations of an entire ruling family represented collaborative social participation while simultaneously bestowing a diploma with superior divine and political value which augmented the document's sacrality and reinforced the transaction's binding nature<sup>93</sup>. As elite boys witnessed and authenticated actions they were expected to uphold when they succeeded their fathers in rule, their mother's presence provided a further guarantee of the permanency of these political decisions.

Religious institutions attached spiritual and political significance to the cross signatures which confirmed their lands and liberties, as an image in the eleventh-century 'Chronicle of Saint-Martin-des-Champs' illustrates handsomely (fig. 9). The drawing shows an enthroned Henry I, king of the Franks, presenting a charter of liberties to the abbot and canons of Saint-Martin at the abbey's re-foundation in 1060<sup>94</sup>. The illustrator's representation of the charter draws the viewer's attention to three features: first, the charter's purpose in confirming the liberties of the church of Saint-Martin, as recorded at the foot of the document; second, Henry's royal title and signature (*Henrici Regis signu(m)*), which appears at the head of the document in the genitive case, as the scribe would have written it on the original; the final, but most important feature due to its central placing, is the image of Henry's cross signature. The king gestures to his *signum*, which the illustrator has placed right at the document's heart. For the monks of Saint-Martin-des-Champs, the king's cross signature was of the highest consequence in authenticating and authorising their church's liberties; hence the illustrator's decision to focus on the figure of Henry alone. But the king was not the only member of the royal family to sign the foundation charter. Henry's original charter for Saint Martin is unfortunately no longer extant, but the chronicle manuscript, produced between 1072 and 1079, contains an incomplete transcription. It is possible to reconstruct the docu-

<sup>91</sup> WHITE, Custom, Kinship, and Gifts (as note 59), especially chapter 6.

<sup>92</sup> SUSAN JOHNS, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm*, Manchester 2003, p. 91.

<sup>93</sup> PARISSÉ, *Croix autographes* (as note 59), p. 150.

<sup>94</sup> London, British Library, ms. add. 11662, fol. 4r.

ment's full text with the aid of a mid-thirteenth-century copy of the Saint-Martin-des-Champs chronicle (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. nouv. acq. lat. 1359). The thirteenth-century scribe most likely transcribed the charter accurately since they reproduce the original text faithfully elsewhere. Within the act's main narrative, Henry stresses that the queen and his son Philip, with his brothers, had equally (*pariter*) corroborated the charter by hand<sup>95</sup>. Once again, we can see the first person singular (*ego*) set alongside a plural form, in this instance the first person plural of the verb *corroborare*, emphasising that it is the royal family as a whole who reinforce the charter's validity. The witness list then accentuates the especial parity of the corroborations of queen mother and eldest son, since the *signa* of the recently crowned King Philip and his mother, Queen Anne, immediately follow King Henry's *signum*<sup>96</sup>.

The foundation charter, in its reconstructed form, is an overt demonstration of dynastic commemoration, family cooperation, and royal rule across the generations, encompassing many of the aspects I have already touched on in earlier sections. Henry grants the act for the salvation of the souls of his father and mother, his own soul, and for the health of his consort and children, entwining Queen Anne's wellbeing with the health of their sons<sup>97</sup>. Towards the end of the document, Henry confirms the charter's contents with his seal (*sigillum*)<sup>98</sup>. Henry's seal, which he used from his succession in 1031, imitated the imperial seal of majesty used by the German emperors, showing the king seated and crowned, holding his sceptre and fleur de lis<sup>99</sup>. That the eleventh-century illustrator of the abbey's chronicle chose to depict the king pointing to his cross signature, not his seal, is crucial for understanding contemporary ecclesiastical conceptions of royal authority. Crosses on documents represented the invocation of divine authority and heavenly protection. Michel Parisse has described the cross as "une manifestation sacramentelle" which acted both as the guarantee of a transaction and as its control<sup>100</sup>. While the sacred significance of cross signatures contrasts with the secular and legal standing of seals, the cross also embodies the act's political force and, as such, serves as a written sign of royal intervention<sup>101</sup>.

<sup>95</sup> Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, ms. nouv. acq. lat. 1359, fol. 2r: *Ego ip(s)e rex henricus et regina pariter et philipp(us) filius meus cu(m) fratribus suis manu firmatam corroboravimus*; Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France, eds. MARTIN BOUQUET et al., 24 vols., Paris 1737–1904, vol. 11, nr. 36, p. 606.

<sup>96</sup> Ms. nouv. acq. lat. 1359 (as note 95), fol. 2r: *Signum regis henrici. Signum philippi regis. Signum Anne regine.*

<sup>97</sup> Ibid., fol. 1v: *ob remedium patris mei matris que mee animaru(m) atq(ue) pro mei necnon coniugis et prolis salute. Hec illis largior possidenda perpetuo iure*, Recueil des historiens (as note 95), vol. 11, nr. 36, p. 605.

<sup>98</sup> Ms. nouv. acq. lat. 1359 (as note 95), fol. 2r: *Hanc kartam in qua me p(re)cipiente hec omnia scripta sunt sigillo meo subter firmaui*; Recueil des historiens (as note 95), vol. 11, nr. 36, p. 606.

<sup>99</sup> Corpus des sceaux français du Moyen Âge, tome 2: Les sceaux des rois et de régence, ed. MARTINE DALAS, Paris 1991, pp. 17, 141.

<sup>100</sup> PARISSÉ, Croix autographes (as note 59), pp. 150–152, quote here p. 150; BEDOS-REZAK, When Ego Was Imago (as note 8), pp. 18–19.

<sup>101</sup> PAUL HARVEY – ANDREW MCGUINNESS, A Guide to British Medieval Seals, London 1996, pp. 1–2; PARISSÉ, Croix autographes (as note 59), p. 147; GUYOTJEANNIN, Actes royaux français (as note 5), p. 44.

In France, royal and aristocratic mothers regularly supervised their sons as they witnessed charters for monastic institutions and added their authenticating crosses to documents<sup>102</sup>. This authenticating partnership was important both for the family and for the beneficiaries of transactions. Recurrent connections between the *signa* of mothers and sons in the eleventh and twelfth centuries convey similar performative, educative and emotive significance to the ninth- and tenth-century joint monograms of fathers and sons which Koziol discussed<sup>103</sup>. A royal confirmation of properties for the monastery of Coulombs in 1059 lists together the signatures of King Henry, Queen Anne, and their eldest son King Philip<sup>104</sup>. Much as for the Saint-Martin example, no extant diploma survives. The seventeenth-century copy, transcribed from a now lost Coulombs cartulary, provides little insight into the layout of the royal *signa*, but the text hints at further familial involvement in the transaction. Henry states that the diploma was confirmed by his own hand, *manu propria*, and by the hands of his wife and sons (*et manibus uxoris et filiorum nostrorum*). Philip is the sole child to feature in the witness list, but the plural reference to Henry and Anne's sons suggests that their younger children, Robert and Hugh, may have appended their crosses to the original diploma as part of a larger performance of the family's pledge to Coulombs. The use of the verb *firmare* in a charter for the monastery of Saint-Remi de Sens, originally dated to 1059 or 1060 but surviving only in an eighteenth-century copy, offers further evidence for the significance of recording the queen mother and her eldest son, together, supporting King Henry's decision-making<sup>105</sup>. Witness lists or *signa* often provide the only evidence for reconstructing the diplomatic pairing of mothers and sons. A charter of Stephen, count of Blois, dated to 1100, provides a similar cautionary tale for the surviving aristocratic evidence<sup>106</sup>. The count authenticates the document for Notre-Dame in Paris with his own cross, followed by the crosses of his wife, Adela, and their sons, Stephen and William, both still underage<sup>107</sup>. The *signa* alone testify to

<sup>102</sup> Parisse noted an especial preference for documents signed with cross signatures in the regions of Normandy, south of the Loire, and Anjou and its surrounds, although other examples exist beyond these geographical confines. PARISSE, *Croix autographes* (as note 59), pp. 144–145.

<sup>103</sup> KOZIOL, *A Father, His Son* (as note 12), pp. 95, 103. Koziol focused on Charles the Bald with his adult son Louis II, and Lothar and his newly anointed son, the thirteen-year-old Louis V.

<sup>104</sup> *Recueil des historiens* (as note 95), vol. 11, nr. 35, p. 604: *Actum Vitriaci publice anno Incarnati Verbi MLIX, et regni Henrici Regis XXIX. S. Henrici Regis. S. Annae Reginae uxoris eius. S. Philippi filii Regis*. *Catalogue des actes d'Henri* (as note 4), nr. 120; ZAJAC, *Gloriosa Regina* (as note 3), nr. 4, p. 58.

<sup>105</sup> *Cartulaire général de l'Yonne. Recueil de documents authentiques pour servir à l'histoire des pays qui forment ce département*, ed. MAXIMILIEN QUANTIN, 2 vols., Auxerre 1854–1860, vol. 2, p. 12: *Henricus, rex Francorum firmavit; Anna, regina firmavit; et rex Philippus firmavit*; *Catalogue des actes d'Henri* (as note 4), nr. 123.

<sup>106</sup> Paris, Archives nationales, K 20 n° 6/22, in: *Charte Artem* (as note 77), nr. 2114, <http://www.cn-telma.fr/originaux/charte2114/> [accessed 21 September 2020]; PARISSE, *Croix autographes* (as note 59), p. 149.

<sup>107</sup> KIMBERLEY LOPRETE, *Adela of Blois. Familial Alliances and Female Lordship*, in: THEODORE EVERGATES (ed.), *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, Philadelphia (PA) 1999, pp. 7–43, here pp. 25–26.



the active part Adela and her sons play in authorising the charter, since the act itself features none of their names. It is therefore unwise to rely exclusively on later copies for elucidating the roles mothers played in their sons' early political education. Scribes copying documents into cartularies regularly abbreviated or removed witness lists, and they did not always depict palaeographic or material features which may shed further light on the authoritative importance of women and children in these transactions.

A mother's involvement in her son's political education likely incorporated additional visual and tactile elements which we can only begin to appreciate by approaching charters as material objects, rather than treating them solely as texts. At Melun in 1057 or 1058, King Henry granted a concession to the monks of Saint-Maur-des-Fossés, a monastery just outside the city of Paris, for the salvation of his soul with the assent of his "consort" Anne and "offspring" Philip, Robert and Hugh (fig. 10)<sup>108</sup>. The act's familial context is clear from the *laudatio parentum*, with the queen and all three sons jointly providing their assent to the gift<sup>109</sup>. The intimate political relationship between the queen mother and her eldest son, Philip, is obvious only in the layout and graphic imagery of the witness list. The names of the royal family – minus the youngest son Hugh, suggesting that his birth was still a recent occurrence and he was, as yet, unable to hold a pen – appear to the document's right-hand side, physically partitioning the king, his wife and their two eldest sons from the other witnesses. The separation of the royal names is a visual tool which reveals the shared power of the family grouping, something which David Bates has similarly emphasized for the pairing of king's and queen's *signa* in Anglo-Norman England<sup>110</sup>. Unlike the rest of the attestations, written in the scribal hand, the king, queen and their two eldest sons mark their crosses themselves. A dark, thick cross accompanies King Henry's name in a style like that of the much fainter cross for Robert. By contrast, Anne's and Philip's signatures come together, directly alongside one another in a similar penmanship differing from the king's signature (fig. 11). It is, of course, impossible to prove the exact provenance

<sup>108</sup> Paris, Archives nationales, AE II 101 (formerly K 19 n° 5/2): *Ista(m) concessione(m) p(ro) remedio anime mee feci annuente mea coniuge Anna et p(ro)le philippo rob(er)to ac hugone*. Catalogue des actes d'Henri (as note 4), nr. 102, pp. 103–105; JACQUES BOUSSARD, Actes royaux et pontificaux des X<sup>e</sup> et XI<sup>e</sup> siècles du chartrier de Saint-Maur-des-Fossée, in: *Journal des Savants* 2, 1972, pp. 81–109, here pp. 87, 105–107.

<sup>109</sup> Soehnée dates the charter to 1054 at the earliest. Catalogue des actes d'Henri (as note 4), pp. 103–105. A later date is more probable because of the likelihood that Robert and Hugh's births were spread further apart than Soehnée claims. Robert was probably born in 1054 and Hugh by the end of 1057, although Anne may also have given birth to a daughter, Emma, between the two youngest sons. WARD, Anne of Kiev (as note 3), p. 437 and note 16; ROGER HALLU, Anne de Kiev, reine de France (Pratsi Filosofichno-humanistychnoho fakul'tetu 9), Rome 1973, pp. 78, 134; BOGOMOLETZ, Anna of Kiev (as note 3), pp. 307–308; ZAJAC, Gloriosa Regina (as note 3), p. 34 and note 24. Zajac suggests Emma may in fact be the daughter of Henry I's previous wife, Matilda of Frisia (ibid., pp. 34–35 note 25).

<sup>110</sup> BATES, The Representation of Queens (as note 82), pp. 287–289. See also ELISABETH VAN HOUTS, Queens in the Anglo-Norman/Angevin Realm 1066–1216, in: CLAUDIA ZEY (ed.), *Mächtige Frauen? Königinnen und Fürstinnen im europäischen Mittelalter (Vorträge und Forschungen 81)*, Ostfildern 2015, pp. 199–224, here p. 202.

of cross signatures. Examples of *signa* added to diplomas at a much later date warn against undue haste in attributing these crosses to specific individuals, or even to the same dating as the charter itself <sup>111</sup>. Nonetheless, it is worth considering the possible significance of a mother's presence alongside her eldest son in this moment.

Anne was the interpreter of the diplomatic practices and political actions her son witnessed at a young age; she was the educator responsible for guiding him as he learnt and executed the diplomatic skills associated with rulership. It is plausible that the Melun diploma is evidence of Anne providing her authenticating *signum*, then passing the pen directly to her young son, who, aged six at most, endeavours to copy his mother. If so, the crosses of the queen and her son represent an additional tactile element of the mother's educational role, revealing her intimate mentoring of her child's early diplomatic imprints. The confident accomplishment of the right-hand signature, drawn below the "A" of *regine Anne*, suggests its execution by someone well acquainted with the task of signing charters. The flourish at the top of the cross's vertical stroke and its perfectly arched horizontal are good indications that the individual was familiar with the writing implement they were holding. Anne's diplomatic experience was perhaps not as extensive as that of her contemporary, Empress Agnes, but the French queen still features in seven of the thirty-six documents surviving from her husband's reign after their wedding in May 1051 <sup>112</sup>. Anne had involved herself in royal justice, sitting in *curia regis* with Henry to preside over a judicial appeal concerning the abbey of Saint-Thierry near Reims, likely while she was pregnant with Philip or shortly after his birth <sup>113</sup>. By comparison to the cross nearest Anne's name, the left-hand cross on the Melun diploma, almost directly above the "P" of *Philippi*, is much less polished and appears hesitant and unsteady, an evocative image for anyone who has witnessed young children gripping unfamiliar objects in attempts to practice their signature <sup>114</sup>. Parisse has called attention to badly drawn crosses betraying the inexperience of men and women holding the pen, but he gave little thought to children's participation in charters <sup>115</sup>.

<sup>111</sup> BOUSSARD, *Actes royaux* (as note 108), pp. 85–86; VINCENT, *The Personal Role* (as note 7), pp. 173–174; KOZIOL, *A Father, His Son* (as note 12), pp. 95–96.

<sup>112</sup> *Catalogue des actes d'Henri* (as note 4), nrs. 89, 102, 104, 117, 120, 123, 125; BOGOMOLETZ, *Anna of Kiev* (as note 3), pp. 310–311; WARD, *Anne of Kiev* (as note 3), pp. 439–440; ZAJAC, *Gloriosa Regina* (as note 3), pp. 58–63. One further grant to Hasnon abbey mentions Anne but is generally considered a forgery and I have discounted it here.

<sup>113</sup> Reims, Bibliothèque Carnegie, MS 85, fol. 3r: *iteru(m) reddidit in curia regis presente henrico rege et regina. Et Richero senonensi archi ep[iscop]o Elinando laudunensi ep[iscop]o Rodulfo comite*. *Catalogue des actes d'Henri* (as note 4), nr. 89, p. 93; ZAJAC, *Gloriosa Regina* (as note 3), pp. 35–36, 58. For the importance of women acting as judges and sitting in justice: BATES, *The Representation of Queens* (as note 82), p. 300; MARTINDALE, *His Special Friend?* (as note 41), p. 55.

<sup>114</sup> See KOZIOL, *A Father, His Son* (as note 12), pp. 101–102, for a similarly evocative description of the chevron possibly drawn by Lothar's thirteen-year-old son, Louis.

<sup>115</sup> PARISSÉ, *Croix autographes* (as note 59), p. 143.

Other elite women may also have guided their inexperienced sons in marking crosses to their fathers' transactions. When William the Bastard (1027/1028–1087), duke of the Normans, gave six churches on the Isle of Guernsey to the abbey of Marmoutier sometime in the 1050s, the signatures of his wife, Matilda of Flanders (d. 1083), and his eldest son, Robert Curthose (d. 1134), head the witness list after the duke's own<sup>116</sup>. According to Bates's dating of Robert's birth, shortly after William and Matilda's marriage in 1052, Robert must have been an infant when his father issued this charter<sup>117</sup>. Matilda and a likely underage Robert are also prominent together among the witnesses to further ducal charters<sup>118</sup>. The autograph *signa* of the mother and son may appear in the gift of a market to the abbey of Saint-Ouen at Rouen in 1066 which William made jointly with Robert, then around thirteen years old<sup>119</sup>. Marie Fauroux described the boy's cross as "particulièrement maladroit"<sup>120</sup>. Although there is not as clear a connection between Robert's and Matilda's *signa* in the ducal document as between those of the royal mother and son in the Melun example, it is potential further evidence of a young boy under his mother's supervision making the mark of his cross, or at least endeavouring to do so. Families even went to great lengths to ensure mothers and sons together attested documents of important social and political significance. Geoffrey, count of Anjou (1113–1151), made a grant of concessions to the citizens of Saumur in Le Mans in June 1138. From there, the scribe conveyed the document to the castle of Carrouges, on the southern border of Normandy, where Geoffrey's wife, Empress Matilda (1102–1167), and two of his infant sons, the five-year-old Henry (b. 1133) and nearly two-year-old William (b. 1136), added their cross signatures. Finally, the scribe travelled to the household of Geoffrey *Rotonardi* to secure the cross of Matilda and Geoffrey's four-year-old son, Geoffrey (b. 1134)<sup>121</sup>. Both Matilda of Flanders in Normandy and the Empress Matilda in Anjou facilitated their

<sup>116</sup> Recueil des actes des ducs de Normandie de 911 à 1066, ed. MARIE FAUROUX, Caen 1961, nr. 141, p. 321. The original charter is lost, and it is extant only in copies from the twelfth century onwards. David Bates notes the charter's problematic chronology, as well as Fauroux's mistake in naming William and Matilda's second son, William, as the witness rather than Robert Curthose. DAVID BATES, *William the Conqueror*, New Haven (CT) 2016, p. 104 note 51.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 104–105, 128.

<sup>118</sup> Rouen, AD Seine-Maritime, 16 H cart. 4, in: *Charte Artem* (as note 77), nr. 2700, <http://www.cn-telma.fr//originaux/charte2700/> [accessed 21 September 2020]; Recueil des actes des ducs (as note 116), nr. 124. I would like to thank Charlotte Cartwright for drawing my attention to this charter. See also *ibid.*, nr. 126. For the authenticity of both charters and the dating of their *signa* see, BATES, *William the Conqueror* (as note 116), p. 105.

<sup>119</sup> Rouen, Archives Seine-Maritime, 14 H 145, in: *Charte Artem* (as note 77), nr. 2708, <http://www.cn-telma.fr/originaux/charte2708/> [accessed 21 September 2020].

<sup>120</sup> Recueil des actes des ducs (as note 116), nr. 204, p. 391.

<sup>121</sup> Recueil des actes de Henri II. Roi d'Angleterre et duc de Normandie, concernant les provinces françaises et les affaires de France, eds. LÉOPOLD DELISLE – ÉLIE BERGER, 4 vols., Paris 1909–1917, vol. 1, nr. 1, pp. 120–121; MARJORIE CHIBNALL, *The Empress Matilda and Her Sons*, in: PARSONS – WHEELER, *Medieval Mothering* (as note 40), pp. 279–294, here p. 283.

sons' appearances in charters from infancy in similar ways to Empress Agnes in the German realm or Queen Anne in the Capetian royal domain.

Maternal supervision of young sons was important as children prepared for future positions of secular authority, and mothers could have a central part in the familial decision-making which advanced their son's position as heir. Matilda of Flanders's agency in choosing her eldest son Robert as heir is proclaimed in another extant charter for the abbey of Saint-Ouen. In June 1063, when Robert was around ten years old, Estigand, father of Duke William's late seneschal, confirmed several gifts to the abbey on the occasion of his son's burial. Estigand made his gifts:

[...] *per consensum Guillelmi comitis, domini sui et Mathildis uxoris eius, et Rotberti eorum filii, quem elegerant ad gubernandum regnum post suum obitum*<sup>122</sup>.

"[...] through the consent of count William, his lord, and Matilda his [William's] wife, and Robert their son, who they had chosen to govern the regnum (likely 'principality') after his [William's] death".

The plural form of the verb *eligere* asserts both Matilda's position in rule alongside her husband and her shared responsibility in providing for the future governance of the principality<sup>123</sup>. In addition to adding the weight of a ruling woman's authority behind a dynastically significant decision, a mother's visible support for her son's association in rule had a further practical aspect. The mother could play a crucial part in exercising rule if her son succeeded while still a child, and she could ensure the boy upheld the rights and privileges of religious communities who had received his father's favour. Monastic communities were aware of the debts they owed to maternal guidance of young sons. Five years after King Henry I's death in 1060, Philip I, now fourteen years old and the sole king of the Franks, confirmed land to the abbey of Saint-Martin-des-Champs. The monks copied this grant into the abbey's chronicle immediately after Henry's charter of liberties, which I discussed above. Between the main body of Philip's document and its witness list, the Saint-Martin monks inserted a verse which drew special attention to Anne's role, placing her actions firmly within a maternal and familial context: *Sic donum patris confirmat Rex, prece matris* ("Thus the king confirms his father's gift, at the request of his mother")<sup>124</sup>. Elsewhere in northern France, the association of aristocratic mothers with their sons in lordship seems

<sup>122</sup> Rouen, Archives Seine-Maritime, 14 H 774, in: Charte Artem (as note 77), nr. 2702, <http://www.cn-telma.fr//originaux/charte2702/> [accessed 21 September 2020]; Recueil des actes des ducs (as note 116), nr. 158, p. 344; BATES, William the Conqueror (as note 116), p. 171. The crosses in this document all appear to have been inserted by the scribe (Robert's, on the left-hand side, has in fact been cut off).

<sup>123</sup> WILLIAM AIRD, Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, c. 1050–1134, Woodbridge 2008, p. 47; RALPH DAVIS, William of Jumièges, Robert Curthose and the Norman succession, in: English Historical Research 95, 1980, pp. 597–606, here p. 604 note 3. Aird considers this charter in the context of the Norman succession while Davis records Marjorie Chibnall's suggestion that it was written after 1066, hence *regnum* would refer to England.

<sup>124</sup> Ms. add. 11662 (as note 94), fol. 7v [translation author's own].

to have served a similar preparatory role in case these women had to rule for their children<sup>125</sup>.

Many of the diplomatic features which had formerly displayed the spiritual, educational, and political relationships between mothers and sons were simply no longer feasible by the later twelfth and early thirteenth centuries. This does not mean that royal and aristocratic women had ceased all involvement in their sons' political education by this later date. Nor does it imply that the significance which contemporaries had earlier attached to the mother-son partnership had entirely disappeared by the thirteenth century. White's conclusion that a dwindling diplomatic role for the *laudatio parentum* did not denote any decline in family solidarity encourages equal scepticism in this case<sup>126</sup>. We cannot assume that the eradication of aspects of the mother-son partnership from charters indicates any corresponding decline in maternal support for the political education of young boys. Instead, changing diplomatic practices merely ensured that charters and diplomas issued by male rulers were no longer convenient or advantageous forums in which to stress the maternal aspects of a child's preparation for rule.

The elimination of cross signatures as material evidence of a mother's participation in her son's preparation for rule was a side effect of changing methods of attestation. Where the eleventh-century manuscript of the 'Chronique de Saint-Martin-des-Champs' reveals the social, spiritual, and political significance of cross signatures to religious beneficiaries, the later copy of the chronicle instead illustrates a crucial diplomatic change which altered the record of mothers and sons in familial and dynastic decision-making. The thirteenth-century copy replaces the striking opening image of the eleventh-century original – in which Henry I points to his own cross signature to confirm the abbey's re-foundation – with the king simply holding his charter (fig. 12)<sup>127</sup>. Royal crosses were no longer required to confirm a document's authority or as testament to its sacred significance. The greatest density of cross signatures occurred between 1000 and 1080 and their decline after this date was certainly linked to the rise of sealing over the twelfth century, even if there was no simple replacement of cross signatures by seals, as Parisse has shown<sup>128</sup>. Louis VI signed a document with his cross for the last time in 1118; henceforth, the impression of his seal and his monogram conveyed the weight of royal attestation<sup>129</sup>. Capetian queens did not receive diplomatic seals until the 1140s and, even after this date, royal women tended only to employ their seals on personal acts they issued themselves rather than attaching seals

---

<sup>125</sup> For example, see LOPRETE, Adela of Blois. Familial Alliances (as note 107), p. 20.

<sup>126</sup> WHITE, Custom, Kinship, and Gifts (as note 59), pp. 193–194, 197–198, 203, 206.

<sup>127</sup> Ms. nouv. acq. lat. 1359 (as note 95), fol. 1r.

<sup>128</sup> PARISSÉ, Croix autographes (as note 59), pp. 145, 153–155. See also BEDOS-REZAK, When Ego Was Imago (as note 8), pp. 31, 75–94.

<sup>129</sup> DUFOUR, Typologie des actes (as note 87), p. 68.

to their husband's documents<sup>130</sup>. Seals can still provide material evidence for maternal authority – as Jitske Jasperse has shown for Judith of Thuringia (1133/1134–1191) and Bertha of Lorraine (c. 1130–1194/1195) – but these objects were far less likely to reveal the ways in which a mother prepared her underage sons for rule<sup>131</sup>. Rulers' sons typically only received seals during their childhood if their fathers died, necessitating a display of their position as sole ruler<sup>132</sup>. In England, Henry the Young King received a diplomatic seal only when his father, Henry II, secured the fifteen-year-old boy's coronation in 1170<sup>133</sup>. Receiving a seal became a statement of independence from a father's rule or a legal marker of maturity in a way which receiving a pen to sign a cross had never been.

#### 4. DIPLOMATIC WOMEN: MOTHERS AND SONS

The partnership between mothers and sons as the latter received a formative political education over several years of their childhood is an important facet of the lives of ruling women. Mothers were often the means through which their children first accessed the processes and practices of rulership in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. When records of familial and dynastic significance began to incorporate infant boys in pleas for spiritual health and prosperity, a son's place at their mother's side legitimized their inclusion. As boys grew up, mothers encouraged their involvement in familial decision-making and fostered their political development. Children were introduced to different forms of political intercession and to the networks and alliances of lordship and friendship within which their families moved, frequently with their mothers' oversight. In some cases, especially in northern France, mothers tangibly facilitated their sons' involvement in authenticating records of familial decisions.

The extent of the documentary evidence showing maternal participation in children's political education necessitates an adjustment in how we assess and analyse practices of association. Previous scholarly attempts to move away from a constitutional focus have not resulted in accurate representations of the powerful political role mothers played. Andrew Lewis's conception of 'the royal family' as the context for understanding Capetian association and succession marginalized royal women. Lewis

<sup>130</sup> ID., *De l'anneau sigillaire* (as note 75), p. 25; JOHNS, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power* (as note 92), pp. 122–151; KATHLEEN NOLAN, *Queens in Stone and Silver. The Creation of a Visual Imagery of Queenship in Capetian France*, New York (NY) 2009, pp. 10–12, 21–34, 64–72, 78–98, 152–157.

<sup>131</sup> JITSKE JASPERSE, *To Have and to Hold. Coins and Seals as Evidence for Motherly Authority*, in: WOODACRE – FLEINER, *Royal Mothers and Their Ruling Children* (as note 14), pp. 83–103.

<sup>132</sup> Louis VI was the sole Capetian heir to receive a seal titling him designated king (*Sigillum Lodovici Designati Regis*), but he received this as an adult. *Les sceaux des rois* (as note 99), p. 144; BEDOS-REZAK, *When Ego Was Imago* (as note 8), pp. 91–93.

<sup>133</sup> ROGER SMITH, *Henry II's Heir. The Acta and Seal of Henry the Young King, 1170–83*, in: *English Historical Review* 116, 2001, pp. 297–326, here p. 299; MATTHEW STRICKLAND, *Henry the Young King, 1155–1183*, London 2016, pp. 95, 133.

failed to appreciate the significance of a mother's role in her son's preparation for rule, despite acknowledging the increased visibility of the consent of the queen and the king's sons in royal documents by the mid-eleventh century<sup>134</sup>. The paternal role in associating young boys with royal and aristocratic rulership was undoubtedly important, but a more comprehensive context should consider and incorporate the wide variety of strategies that families used to prepare their sons for political roles. Mother-son partnerships in family transactions were not so customary as to be mundane. Nor do charters and diplomas show mothers acting *sola* in facilitating their sons' political instruction and advancement, contrary to Raoul Glaber's depiction of Constance securing Hugh's coronation in 1017. Rather, ruling women acted within a familial and dynastic context in which the grouping of mother and son together preserved *memoria*, facilitated intercession and endorsed practices of authentication<sup>135</sup>. Maternal involvement carried significant meaning for both family and dynasty, but also for the religious communities approaching rulers to confirm their privileges, rights and properties. Mothers were far more than the symbolic lynchpins between one generation and the next. They acted with the support, advice and petitions of ecclesiastical individuals and communities who benefited from cultivating a relationship with a ruling woman: the wife of the current ruler and the mother of the young heir likely to succeed. Ecclesiastical communities encouraged mothers in their roles as political educators and as guardians of familial commemoration to which the monks and clerics could hold future rulers accountable. It is an all too familiar irony that the very monastic institutions whose historical writing often omitted to mention women simultaneously attached considerable symbolic importance to familial participation and eagerly emphasized mother-son partnerships to benefit their communities.

---

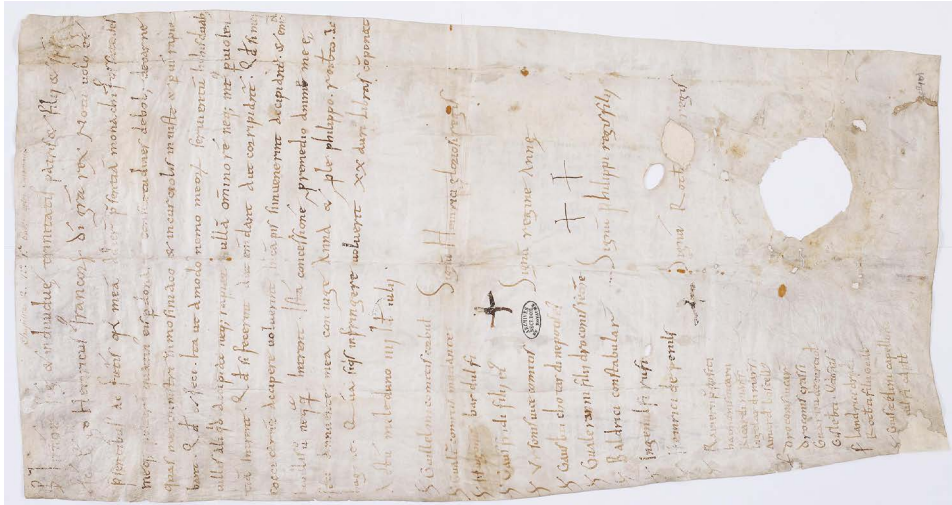
<sup>134</sup> ANDREW LEWIS, *Royal Succession in Capetian France. Studies on Familial Order and the State* (Harvard Historical Studies 100), Cambridge (MA) 1981, pp. 2, 42–43, 45–47, 55. See also ID., *Anticipatory Association of the Heir in Early Capetian France*, in: *American Historical Review* 83, 1978, pp. 906–927.

<sup>135</sup> JOHNS, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power* (as note 92), p. 85.



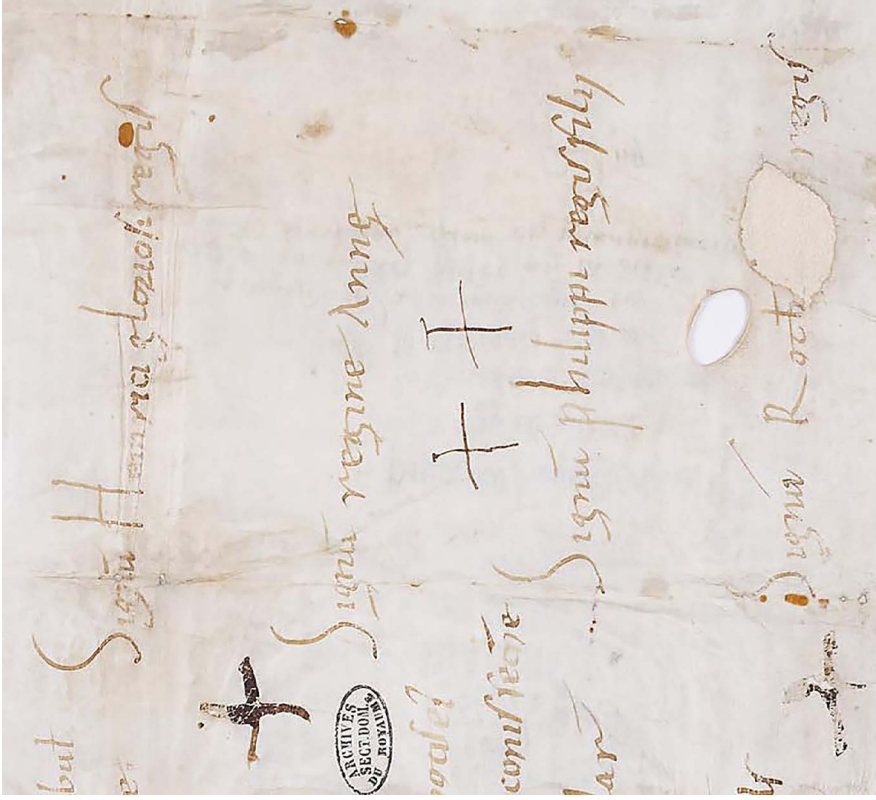
Abb. 9 Henry I confirming the foundation charter of Saint-Martin-des-Champs (versified chronicle, priory of Saint-Martin-des-Champs, Paris, 1072–1079).  
© British Library Board; London, British Library, Ms. add. 11662, fol. 4r.





10

Abb. 10 Henry II's concession to the monks of Saint-Maur-des-Fossés (Melun, 1057/1058). Paris, Archives nationales, AE II 101 (formerly K 19 n° 5/2).



11

Abb. 11 Close-up of possible autograph cross signatures of Anne of Kyiv, queen of France, and her eldest son, Philip (crowned King Philip I on 23 May 1059). Paris, Archives nationales, AE II 101 (formerly K 19 n° 5/2).



Abb. 12 Henry I confirming the foundation charter of Saint-Martin-des-Champs  
(later copy of the versified chronicle, c. 1245).  
Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. nouv. acq. lat. 1359, fol. 1r.