Succession and Interregnum in the English Polity: The Case of 1141*

S.D. Church

On 2 February 1141, outside the city of Lincoln, King Stephen of England fell into the hands of his enemies. Many contemporary or near contemporary authors noticed the events that took place on that fateful day as well as the consequences that followed on from it because it ushered in a traumatic year for the king and the kingdom.[1] Modern historians, too, have been drawn to the moment of Stephen's capture and the year that followed because it represents one of the key points in the reign when the conflict at the heart of the times might have been resolved. As events worked themselves out, Stephen's capture turned out to be no more than an interruption to the reign of that monarch. The king was released on 1 November 1141 and, after a cleansing second coronation ceremony which marked the end of that '*annus horribilis*',[2] the restored monarch resumed the tottering course of his reign. His rival, the Empress Matilda, was left to lick her wounds having been thwarted of her best opportunity to assume the throne in her own right.

The modern historiography of the capture of King Stephen and its political consequences begins with J.H. Round. It was he who established beyond doubt the dates for the stages by which Matilda came to style herself *domina Anglorum*, 'lady of the English' (the title that she wore, amongst others, between 1141 and 1148), a process which he saw as having been completed by 8 April 1141.[3] And it was he who first established definitively what the phrase *domina Anglorum* might mean in the context of its day. '…"domina"', he stated, 'possessed the special sense of the interim royal title' with the intention that 'the empress [was] to be crowned at Westminster, and so to become queen in name as well as in deed'.[4] Those who have taken up the

challenge of thinking through the implications of 1141 have been content to follow these two key points. First that the empress's formal reception at Winchester on 8 April as *domina Anglorum* was an indication that she was monarch-designate, awaiting coronation, and second that in the meantime she exercised royal power.[5]

The purpose of this article is to revisit that year to argue that a reconsideration of the lead up to and consequences of the ceremony of 8 April reveals more about the events surrounding Stephen's capture than has hitherto been understood. In particular, the argument presented here is that, when Henry of Blois, papal legate, brother of King Stephen, and bishop of Winchester, in the wake of Stephen's capture at Lincoln on 2 February 1141, accepted the proposition of the Empress Matilda that, by 'God's judgment',[6] Stephen had lost the kingdom of the English and that, henceforth, she should be accepted as its legitimate ruler, a state of interregnum prevailed in the English polity from the moment of Stephen's capture until it was brought to an end by Henry's reception of the empress as *domina Anglorum* on 8 April 1141. Furthermore, acceptance of this proposition gives us an important insight into the problems inherent in the way that power was held in the twelfth-century English polity and how it was transferred from one generation of ruler to the next.

In the English political context, the capture of a reigning monarch was unprecedented. Kings, of course, died, and when they did one of the consequences that followed on from the cessation of one man's rule was the commencement of an interregnum. Interregna existed in the interstice between the lapse of legitimate power and its resumption at a future point by the next holder of the office. In the twelfth-century English polity, that meant the time between the death of the old king and the coronation of the new. We may witness this phenomenon at its simplest level by noting that the king's regnal year began at his coronation, not at the time of his

predecessor's death. Other indications that interregna in England were characterized by the absence of legitimate central authority are evident in the chronicles. William of Malmesbury, for example, writing his *Gesta Regum* during the lifetime of Henry I, described how, on discovering William Rufus's death on 2 August 1100, 'all had other things to think about' rather than pursuing the king's killer. 'Some fortified their places of refuge, some carried away what spoils they could, [while] some looked about them every moment for a new king'.[7] As King Henry I stated when writing to Archbishop Anselm shortly after his coronation, 'I would have more willingly received coronation from you, but the need was such, because enemies wished to rise up against me and the people who I have to govern, and therefore my barons and the people did not want to delay it any longer.'[8]

The author of the *Gesta Stephani* paints a vivid picture of the disarray that befell the English kingdom in the immediate aftermath of Henry I's death on 1 December 1135. Although the author was a partisan of King Stephen, Henry's successor, and so might be expected to have exaggerated his case, his detailed picture of the violence and disruption caused by this interregnum is supported by the testimony of Richard Prior of Hexham, an eye-witness to many of the events he described. Richard noted that after Henry's death 'the justice and peace that had reigned in England and Normandy died with him' in acts of violence, rapine, and unheard-of cruelties perpetrated by tyrants unrestrained now the king was dead.[9] The Peterborough recension of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle confirms the state of the kingdom once the man who had kept the land safe was gone. The chronicler, looking back from the end of Stephen's reign, stated that after Henry's death 'these lands henceforth grew dark, for everyone who could forthwith robbed another' until Stephen assumed the throne.[10] The author of the *Gesta Stephani*, moreover, places

into the mouths of the elders of London, before their acceptance of Stephen as king, the words 'every kingdom was exposed to calamities from ill fortune when a representative of the whole government and fount of justice was lacking', a refrain that reflects the political thought of an age that saw the king as the head of the body politic.[11]

If the interregnum was short—the three days between the death of Rufus on 2 August 1100 and the coronation of Henry I on 5 August, for example—then the absence of royal rule could be suffered without too much damage being done to the polity. Even if the interregnum was longer, the absence of the king did not necessarily mean the absence of stability. In the seventeen days between the death of William the Conqueror on 9 September 1087 and the accession of Rufus on 26th of that month, the kingdom was in the hands of a capable man (in this instance Lanfranc, archbishop of Canterbury and the Conqueror's trusted deputy in England) and so long as the coronation were not delayed by too great a length of time, royal rule was suspended temporarily, but without political crisis ensuing. What if, however, an interregnum came into existence and then appeared to have no end in sight? What, then, should happen to royal rule? Who would hold the reins of power and what would happen to the English polity if no one could be found to be crowned king? The English polity placed much of its identity on the head of the consecrated monarch (whether that meant him as a person or the crown as representative of the other side of his *persona*).[12] It vested in him, *Dei gratia*, all its legitimate power.[13] What would happen to the kingdom if the break between rulers became a yawning chasm? It is my contention that it was the possibility of an interregnum without foreseeable end which faced the English political community in the wake of King Stephen's capture on 2 February 1141.

To say that in 1141 opinion was divided in the kingdom about how to take things forward after the king's capture would be to state the obvious: there was a civil war underway. Matters would have been marginally less complicated had Stephen died on the field of battle, but he had not; or had those in the empress's party had the audacity to dispose of the king after his capture, but they did not. A dead king was a straightforward political matter: it meant that his reign had come to an end and that the kingdom had entered a state of interregnum until the king's successor could be found and crowned. The path to finding a successor to the defunct king was well-trodden, if perilous, and Stephen's death would hardly have made things easy (he had two sons living for whom claims would certainly have been made) even if the participants would have known what to do in those circumstances. Stephen, however, lived, though he was now firmly and securely locked away in Bristol castle. What, therefore, had happened to royal rule? Had it stopped or did it continue even though the king was incapacitated? Had the kingdom been deprived of its head and therefore of its legitimate authority or did legitimate authority continue in Stephen's person? In short, had an interregnum begun or did Stephen's reign continue until the moment that he breathed his last breath? Was the report that Stephen's capture resulted in 'all England being disturbed more than it had before' a sign that some people were prepared to argue that the king's peace was at an end because there was no king ruling?[14]

The testimony of the London-based author of the *Gesta Stephani* would seem to suggest that some in Matilda's camp were making the claim that, on 2 February, Stephen's reign had come to an end. He insisted that while Stephen was in captivity his enemies 'could not prevent his being king.'[15] He tells his readers a story meant to refute the view that Stephen's reign had come to an end on 2 February 1141.[16] In

describing the lead up to the Battle of Lincoln, he told of the Mass that Stephen had attended before the battle. Here Stephen held a lighted candle which 'suddenly went out and the candle too, they say, was broken for the moment but, kept in his hand, mended and relit, which of course was a sign that he would lose the dignity of the kingdom (*regni honorem amitteret*) for his sin.' For our author, however, the story did not just mean that Stephen's reign had come to an end; the king's actions, and his penance, meant that 'he kept hold of the candle...[which] signifies that he did not utterly abandon the kingdom and did not even lose the name of king, [and] though imprisoned... his bitterest enemies... could not prevent his being king.'[17] It might be argued that these words refer to the fact that Stephen was never formally deposed, but the point that Stephen 'would lose the dignity of the kingdom' is strongly suggestive that some were of the opinion that Stephen stopped ruling on 2 February 1141, even if he still lived and retained the royal title. Given the vehemence of the author's counter-blast, this view must have been prevalent amongst Matilda's supporters.

As well as the reflected evidence provided by the author of the *Gesta Stephani*, we also have some positive evidence which suggests that the key players in the empress's party argued that the end of Stephen's reign was the judgement of God. The Gloucester continuator of John of Worcester's *Chronicle* (who was likely as not a partisan of Matilda's cause), held that, by Stephen's capture, the empress believed she had 'gained the right to the kingdom'.[18] Moreover, the actions of the Empress Matilda herself, along with her loyal lieutenant, her half-brother Robert earl of Gloucester, in the wake of Stephen's capture show that they also saw 2 February as the decisive moment in Stephen's fall and that Stephen's reign had indeed come to an end. The empress, 'ecstatic at this turn of events',[19] before she actually negotiated the settlement of matters with Henry of Blois, 'in the capital of the land subject to her,

actually made herself queen of all England, and gloried in being called so.'[20] The editors of the *Gesta Stephani* note that the sentence was construct to highlight the fact that Matilda was not actually queen, but that she was inappropriately claiming the title.

There are further indications that Matilda was claiming the mantle of queenship after 2 February 1141. The author of the *Gesta Stephani*, for example, continues his tale of the events to state that, once Henry of Blois had submitted to the empress, he then received her into his city of Winchester and 'bade the people to salute her as their lady and queen'.[21] William of Malmesbury, a reliable witness to the events of 1141, who heard first-hand much of what took place between the principal players in the drama unfolding before his eyes, tells us that, in the immediate aftermath of Lincoln,[22] both Matilda and her brother Robert earl of Gloucester sent messengers to Henry of Blois stating that Matilda, 'as she was the daughter of King Henry to whom all England and Normandy had been sworn, that without hesitation, she should be received into the church and the kingdom'.[23] But had an interregnum begun in the eyes of the empress and the earl, or were, perhaps, Matilda and Robert arguing that there could be two monarchs existing at the same time?[24]

The evidence that we have for king-making in mid-twelfth-century England indicates that the English polity could have only one anointed monarch ruling over it at any one time. Certainly no later than the summer of 1143, King Stephen made approaches to Pope Innocent II (23 February 1130–24 September 1143) to have his son, Eustace (born *c.*1129) anointed king during his father's lifetime.[25] Popes did not make it their business to anoint kings; bishops undertook to perform that task in the kingdoms where they held their offices. If, however, a ruler wished to break with accepted practice in his lands, he did need papal authority so to do. Count Roger of

Sicily, for example, in acquiring the royal title to his lands in 1130, very evidently needed the authority of the pope to make himself king.[26] Popes, too, also retained the right to depose kings.[27] The power to break with a nation's accepted practice, therefore, seems to have been enjoyed exclusively by the pope by right of his apostolic authority. Had it been possible in England for there to have been two kings reigning simultaneously, King Stephen would not have needed to seek papal sanction for his plan to have the son crowned while the father still lived; French kings, after all, had their sons crowned in their own lifetimes by no more authority than that given by the weight of custom.[28] In 1143, unfortunately for Stephen, the pope was not minded to sanction a proposal to change English custom and to allow Eustace to be crowned in his father's lifetime. There was certainly a practice of anticipatory association in the English and Norman polities going back to the eleventh century;[29] nonetheless, the pope made the point 'that it was not the custom in the realm of England to crown a son in the father's lifetime' and that therefore he would not sanction such an action.[30] Stephen would receive the same negative response to his question when he sent Henry Murdac, archbishop of York, to Rome in 1151 'on the business of the realm, of which the chief matter was that the king's son Eustace might be established by papal authority as heir to the throne.'[31]

In 1141, therefore, it was English practice that two anointed monarchs could not existence simultaneously. In order for a king's successor to receive consecration as king, his or her predecessor could no longer enjoy the status of king, whether through death (a well-practised route) or deposition (in an English context never yet performed, though seemingly a right that belonged exclusively to popes). However the status of anointed king was lost, what mattered is that one reign had to end before another could begin.[32] Since in the wake of Stephen's capture on 2 February 1141, the

Empress Matilda was claiming that the rulership of England should pass to her as 'queen-regnant', she must, therefore, have been claiming that Stephen's reign had come to an end on 2 February 1141. In her construct the English polity had, on the point of Stephen falling into her hands, entered the state of interregnum. This was the argument, it follows, that Empress Matilda made to Bishop Henry.

That Stephen's reign had stopped on 2 February was the central point of the empress's initial negotiating position. It was a bold position to take in the circumstances of the day, since in England, at least, there was no precedent for the capture of a prince to mark the end of his reign. Matilda may, of course, have been thinking about her uncle's fate. In 1106, Duke Robert of Normandy had fallen into the hands of his brother—Matilda's father—Henry I. Afterwards, Henry ruled Normandy even though Robert still lived, indeed lived on until 1134.[33] Did Bishop Henry of Winchester accept the Empress's argument and, perhaps, her analogy with that unhappy uncle, who had died imprisoned less than ten years earlier?

In the days after 2 February 1141, William of Malmesbury tell us that letters were exchanged between the parties (the empress and Earl Robert on the one hand, Henry of Winchester on the other), the content of which are not revealed to us, but which, presumably, stated the positions and ambitions of the respective parties until, on 23 February, the empress and Bishop Henry, Stephen's brother, papal legate, bishop of Winchester, abbot of Glastonbury, and the chief negotiator on the royalist side, met face-to-face;[34] a week later, on 2 March, 'on an open plain on the approach to Winchester', Bishop Henry agreed, in return for certain assurances that 'all the important business in England, especially gifts of bishoprics and abbacies, should be subject to his control', with Holy Church to receive Matilda 'as lady of England'.[35] Something, it appears, had changed in the process of the negotiations, for on 2

February 1141, the empress's opening gambit was to be accepted by Bishop Henry as *regina Anglorum*. By 2 March, however, she had agreed to be received as *domina Anglorum* and to have Bishop Henry as her principle adviser. On 3 March 1141, the bishop received her as *domina Anglorum* in Winchester cathedral 'in ceremonial procession...with [himself] escorting her on her right side and Bernard bishop of St David's on her left'.[36] If Matilda had been thinking about Uncle Robert's fate in negotiating her stance with Bishop Henry, Bishop Henry was not yet willing to allow the analogy to follow through to its, in Matilda's eyes, logical conclusion concerning Stephen.

On 2 February, therefore, the empress had gained possession of the king and so claimed the throne; by 3 March, despite still holding the king, she found herself having to accept a position which, on the surface at least, looks like one which was less than that which she had set out to achieve. She was not to be *regina*; she was to be *domina*: What had happened to mean that the empress was prepared to accept a plan which on first sight diminished what she had won at Lincoln? Why should she have settled for a lesser position than the one she had stated was her right a month before? A window into a possible answer is given by the absence of Theobald archbishop of Canterbury from the ceremony at Winchester on 3 March. He was summoned to meet the empress at Wilton by the legate but, according to William of Malmesbury, he 'declined to swear fealty to her as his lady... without consulting with the king'.[37] After the consultation, in which he 'and most of the bishops, together with a number of laymen... obtained courteous permission to change over as the times required, they adopted the legate's opinion'.[38] The 'legate's opinion' must have been that, in order to get to a position whereby the empress could achieve her ambition of enthronement as *regina Anglorum*, there needed to be an interim stage by which she

could assume royal powers before she was received as monarch precisely because too few people were willing, for whatever reason, to accept her coronation in the Spring of 1141.

Perhaps the most extraordinary thing about William of Malmesbury's retelling of the archbishop and the bishops' visit to King Stephen in March is that the king gave them permission to accept Matilda as their *domina*; Stephen, too, must have concluded that something significant had happened to his authority by his capture and that something had to be done to bring peace to the kingdom. Perhaps we are given an insight into the king's own view of his condition in one of the dramatic moments during the Council of Winchester in the second week of April 1141 when the negotiations and manoeuvrings that had taken place since 2 February came to a head. Again according to William of Malmesbury, a certain clerk of Queen Matilda, named Christian, came to the Council with a letter from Queen Matilda in his possession. The legate, having read the letter to himself, fulminated against it and one of its witnesses (this structure of the letter suggests that it was a formal statement of the royalist position rather than a private letter from a distraught queen); undeterred, Christian, 'with splendid boldness read the letter before that audience, the substance being as follows: "the queen earnestly begs all the assembled clergy, and especially the bishop of Winchester, her lord's brother, to restore to the throne that same lord, whom cruel men, who at the same time are his own men, have cast into chains."'[39] On 8 April 1141, it seems, the royalists accepted that Stephen had been 'cast down from his kingdom'.[40]

The Council of Winchester had begun on the Sunday after Easter (Easter falling on 30 March in 1141). It was an extraordinary meeting that was gathered together to address the question of the future rulership of the kingdom. With the king

held captive and the empress demanding that she be received as England's ruler, on 8 April, the legate made a statement to the assembled throng. He remembered that before his death, King Henry I 'had had the whole kingdom of England, and also the duchy of Normandy, confirmed on oath by all the bishops and barons to his daughter... if he failed of male successor by his' second wife. But because the empress took too long to come to England 'provision was made for the peace of the country and my brother was permitted to reign.'[41] Stephen, however, had turned out to be a hopeless king: bishops were arrested, abbacies left vacant, and no justice was enforced. 'Therefore', Bishop Henry intoned, 'since God has executed his judgment on my brother in allowing him to fall into the power of the strong, so that the kingdom may not totter without a ruler, by the right of my legation, I have invited you all to meet here.'[42] The legate not only claimed that papal authority gave him the right to resolve matters in the best way that he thought, he also claimed that 'the case was discussed in secret yesterday, before the senior part of the clergy of England, whose special prerogative it is to choose and consecrate a prince' so that, 'with divine help... we may choose the lady of England and Normandy.'[43]

According to William of Malmesbury's account, Bishop Henry's statement was accepted by 'omnes presentes', or at the very least acquiesced to (though as we have already seen, the royalist party represented by Queen Matilda's clerk, Christian, certainly did not accept Bishop Henry's formulation of the situation). The business of the Council was then postponed for a day while the arrival of the Londoners was awaited who, Bishop Henry saw, were central to the furtherance of his plan to have the empress accepted as England's ruler. They arrived on 9 April and stated that they had brought from the London commune 'a request that their lord king should be released from captivity'. Bishop Henry eloquently chastized them for wanting the

release of a failed king. On the Thursday, according to William of Malmesbury's account, the Council dissolved, 'having excommunicated many of the king's adherents,'[44] a further indication, if any were needed, that Bishop Henry's acceptance of Matilda's claim had not received widespread approval. Even on 10 April 1141, therefore, men (and women, including, crucially, Queen Matilda, Stephen's consort) were still to be won over to the idea that Stephen's reign was finished and the empress's had begun.

The Gloucester continuator of the Chronicle of John of Worcester also gave notice to the Winchester Council, though his recollection of events was presented in a shorter fashion and given from the position of an outsider to the unfolding drama rather than that of the insider that William of Malmesbury claimed to be. From this author's standpoint, the culmination of events was the empress's entry into the city of Winchester, which was 'handed over to her, and the crown of the English kingdom was given to her rule.' Following the Council, the empress came to Reading (6–8 May) 'where she was received with honour, and the chief men of the people assembled to submit to her.'[45] The London-based author of the *Gesta Stephani* likewise saw the Winchester Council as central event in the transformation of Matilda into the ruler of England, telling his audience that, in the market place at Winchester, Bishop Henry 'exhorted the people to acclaim her as their lady and their queen.'[46]

There seems to be no question, therefore, that 8 April 1141 marked a significant moment in the political life of England when Matilda was received into Winchester cathedral as *domina Anglorum*. From this point in time, the empress began to use the phrase *domina Anglorum* in many of her charters, certainly often enough to show that her scribes thought that the term meant something significant.[47] That significant something was that she ruled as uncrowned monarch.[48] As *Matilda*

imperatrix regis Henrici filia Anglorum domina she 'assumed a routine control of the central administration' of the realm.[49] She was monarch in all but name, acting as though she had been crowned even though she had yet to be crowned. Matilda was now (lady) ruler of the English enjoying all the rights of a crowned monarch without having gone through the formal ceremony to make her a (female) king of the English. We do not have to believe that everyone accepted that an interregnum had begun on 2 February and ended on 8 April 1141 to understand that this was the position that Bishop Henry adopted to deal, in part, with the fall out resulting from Stephen's capture. He could not know how events would turn out; all he knew was that Stephen was at the mercy of the empress and the kingdom was at the mercy of the fates. Someone had to step forward to take a leadership role during this moment of national crisis (the earls had either been captured or had withdrawn to await the outcome of events),[50] and that someone was Bishop Henry.

There are a number of pieces of evidence that have not been considered in the analysis so far, but which, in the light of the argument presented here, offer an astonishing insight into the attitude of the empress's camp to the position in which she found herself in Spring 1141. In one charter issued to Glastonbury Abbey, Bishop Henry's own monastery over which he presided as abbot, during the time that Henry was negotiating Matilda's entry into the rulership of the kingdom, the scribe began his text with an invocation of empress's titles: 'Matildis imperatrix Henrici regis filia Anglorum regina'.[51] That a charter in which the empress gave to the monastery over which Bishop Henry presided describes her as 'queen of the English' is remarkable. Some in the scholarly community have rejected its testimony because of its extraordinary nature, but there is nothing inherently wrong with the text which should alarm the reader.[52] If genuine, whether the charter was written by the scribes of the

empress's chancery or by the monks of Glastonbury Abbey,[53] the language reflects the excitement of the moment for both sides. A second charter, equally problematic in the eyes of some, yet in the view of others worthy of taking seriously, is one which also calls Matilda 'imperatrix Henrici regis filia et Anglorum regina.'[54] This charter is to Reading Abbey, her father, Henry I's foundation, his mausoleum, and likely to be a partisan of the empress.

A second category of evidence concerning claims being made about the empress's regal status can be found in the coinage. In a hitherto unnoticed pair of coins dating from the early 1140s, made by Elfwine, a moneyer based in Malmesbury, Wiltshire, the legends read 'IM : REX : AN' (I[mperatrix] M[atilda] Rex An[glorum]—Empress Matilda King of the English (here I have assumed that the feminine 'imperatrix' agrees with 'Matilda').[55] The coin-type was copied from the then current Cross Moline type (BMC 1), of Stephen which was in circulation between the king's accession and 1142x1145.[56] In the opinion of Marion Archibald, the copies were not made blindly and without thought, but deliberately aped the King Stephen coin then in circulation to show Matilda as *rex Anglorum*. The extended arm left to right as the coin in figure 1 is viewed is grasping the royal sceptre. The inscription 'Rex An', therefore complements and underlines the meaning of the image. These two coins are not completely isolated representatives of the 'rex Matilda' type. There is a further Malmesbury coin struck by a moneyer going by the name of Walter which came from the hoard found in Prestwich, Lancashire, in 1972.[57] This coin, also of the Angevin type, has the inscription REX AN and can only be of the 'rex Matilda' type, though it has been confused with an issue of her son, Henry. He, however, never used the title *rex* before his coronation in 1154.[58] A further half-cut penny, possibly also from Malmesbury, survives which is from a

different die to the original pair, also in the Box hoard. It reads on the obverse '[ ] REX[ ]'and on the reverse '[ ]PINE[ ]'.[59] We can say with some certainty, therefore, that we have three distinct Angevin-style dies (represented by our four coins) on which the title 'Rex' or 'Rex An' appears; that three out of the four coins are certainly from Malmesbury, and that a pair of die duplicates read IM:REX:AN and thus include a contraction of Matilda's title 'Imperatrix' along with a sovereign title of the English. The connection of these coins with the empress's claim to be queen regnant is therefore strong and they are not isolated examples created by a maverick moneyer.

These two categories of evidence, charters and coins, in combination suggest that some with the power to do so were expressing notions of the regalian authority exercised by Matilda through the use of sovereign ruler nomenclature.[60] A third type of evidence, well-known but because it was thought to be an outlier usually unregarded, is a sketch made of a seal that was said to have been appended to a charter by which the empress conceded to Geoffrey de Mandeville the earldom of Essex which had formerly been granted by King Stephen. In the language of the charter, Matilda is *regis Henrici filia et Anglorum domina*, but on the seal, according to the early modern sketch, she is MATILDIS IMPERATRIX ROM. ET REGINA ANGLIAE.[61] The seal, if genuine (and the likelihood of its genuineness is increased by the evidence of the coins) adds yet further weight to the view that some in Matilda's party were confident enough to use the royal title when describing their leader. These three separate categories of evidence make a convincing case that Matilda's party saw her as *rex/regina* in the Spring and Summer of 1141 even if, in the formal business of government, she had to use another title, *domina Anglorum*, which had been given to her by Bishop Henry.

That Matilda should become *rex/regina* was evidently important to many in Matilda's camp; the evidence presented here makes that point abundantly clear. The reason why coronation was seen by many as central was because of its decisive nature. In twelfth-century England, the power of the coronation to put an end to debates about the succession (we might characterize these debates as addressing the question 'who should we have as our next king?') was well attested.[62] We have already noticed how, after his coronation on 5 August 1100, Henry I wrote to Archbishop Anselm explaining that his hasty coronation had taken place 'because enemies wished to rise up against me and the people who I have to govern.'.[63] Henry was not alone amongst rulers in western Christendom in seeing coronation as decisive.[64] John of Salisbury reported that successive popes, too, from the mid 1140s, Celestine II, Lucius II, and Eugenius III, in the case of King Stephen, also took the view that, once a king had received the sanction of unction with oil by Holy Mother Church, none but God could put aside that decision; though all three recognized that the circumstances of Stephen's contested assumption of power barred the automatic succession of that king's son.[65] Contemporary commentators were also keen to stress the legitimacy of Stephen's position once he had received consecration at the hands of the archbishop of Canterbury, William of Corbeil.[66] In principle, therefore, the coronation ritual brought to an end the succession dispute, since a succession struggle that goes beyond the point of coronation becomes a rebellion against God's anointed.

For the moment, however, Matilda had to settle for the title *domina* whatever claims were being made on her behalf. The outcome of the Council of Winchester in the second week of April suggests that during February and March more people of influence had come around to Bishop Henry's way of thinking, including, perhaps also King Stephen.[67] But even then, Bishop Henry did not yet have widespread

support to allow Matilda into the position where she could be crowned as monarch (that remained, on 8 April 1141, the insoluble piece of the puzzle). The reception of the empress as *domina Anglorum* and the swearing of oaths to her with that title was not a perfect solution, but at least it was a plausible solution which persuaded enough people to adhere to the empress so that she could assume the reins of government (thus ending the interregnum) while further negotiations were conducted for the next stage in the transference of power. But not everyone was enamoured of Henry's interim solution for the crisis that faced the English political community. Neither did all men agree that the ceremony over which Bishop Henry had presided in April had put an end the crisis that faced the English polity. Men came to the empress's banner reluctantly in the months following her reception at Winchester,[68] suggesting that many influential people did not see Stephen's reign as having come to an end at Lincoln in the previous February and still needed convincing that it had. The queen consort, for one, was unpersuaded by 'the plan' to manoeuvre the empress into power, and, as they expressed it at the council of Winchester, the men of London, too, were doubtful about the proposal that the empress should assume complete control. Whether 'the plan' involved a proper coronation ceremony by which the empress would be made queen-regnant is a moot point. We simply do not know what Matilda argued when it came to the question of the coronation. There is no suggestion that Stephen was to be formally deposed (that would need papal sanction and we get no whiff of such a move from the sources). It may be that, since she had already received unction with holy oil when consecrated as queen of Germany on 25 July 1110, she could have argued that she was already an anointed queen.[69] Consecration was a sacrament and as such could be undertaken but once in a lifetime. We simply do not know what she argued or what was planned; historians have, therefore, been divided

in their opinion about what happened next. Did the empress attempt to receive consecration as queen-regnant or was she happy with the title *domina Anglorum*?

The author of the *Gesta Stephani* is one of our authorities on the events leading up to 24 June 1141, when the empress had to flee from Westminster to Oxford in fear for her life. The queen consort and the men of London brought their forces to bear on her, and the author described the empress's forces as having 'arrogantly gathering at London for a pompous enthronement of their lady.'[70] He uses the verb *inthronizare*, not one of the more normal verbs for coronation rites, *consecrare* or *coronare*, to describe the intentions for that day.[71] It is a word which conjures up images of the formal installation of a bishop, who would have already been chosen by those with the power to elect him. Perhaps, if the author of the *Gesta* was right, the empress was claiming to have already been made a queen, so had no need to go through another rite (indeed, by the rules of canon law, she could not repeat the sacrament). But another witness, William of Malmesbury, saw the events of 24 June as being the moment when Matilda would secure 'possession of the whole of England'.[72]

It looks as though, therefore, the events of 24 June were supposed to be another transformation ceremony by which the empress's status would be changed again, this time from *domina* to *regina Anglorum*. Whether the ceremony was to be an enthronement or a coronation is unimportant for the significance of the moment. The intention was to move Matilda to the next step in her assumption of royal office, and provides further evidence that what had occurred at Winchester in April had been an interim stage in the process by which Matilda was supposed to be taking Stephen's place in the English polity.

As events turned out, the high watermark of the empress's achievements in 1141 was 24 June. Shortly before she was to be 'enthroned', the citizens of London and the queen consort chased the empress and her supporters out of Westminster forcing her to scurry for safety to Oxford where she set up her court. From that moment onwards, the empress's cause went into decline until, because of the capture of her half-brother Robert of Gloucester, she was forced to release Stephen from captivity. After Stephen's release on 1 November 1141, matters moved to a council to be held at Westminster. According to William of Malmesbury, who is our sole witness to the Council, though he saw it from afar, the Council was called by Bishop Henry, 'a prelate of haughty spirit and unwilling to leave undone what he had once set himself to do.'[73] At the Council, King Stephen presented himself and laid a complaint against 'his men'. It may well have been that Stephen had in mind the actions of his brother, Bishop Henry, for there is little doubt that, in the autumn of 1141, Bishop Henry felt keenly the need to defend his actions in the aftermath of the king's capture at Lincoln.

The first act of Bishop Henry was to have read out to the Council a letter from Pope Innocent II, in which the pope 'made modest charges against the bishop... but, nonetheless, gave him his spiritual grace.'[74] No doubt Bishop Henry's proctors had been busying themselves at the papal court. Given the length of time it took to reach Rome from England (six weeks) and further the time required to negotiate one's business and then return with the appropriate letters, it is possible that Bishop Henry experienced early pangs of guilt. He may have sought papal admonition when Robert of Gloucester was captured on 14 September. The timing of the Council, meeting on the octave of St Andrew (7 December), three months after Earl Robert's fall, was perhaps no accident.

The second act of Bishop Henry at the Council was to explain himself, or, as William of Malmesbury put it, 'to diminish by his great eloquence his unpopularity for what he had done.'[75] After the king had been captured, Bishop Henry explained, the king's earls (the natural military leaders of the people) were nowhere to be seen, having been captured or waiting in the wings for the outcome of events. The empress and her forces, moreover, had besieged the bishop at Winchester, and the bishop had heard it on good authority that the empress 'plotted not only against his position, but against his life.'[76] What more Bishop Henry said in his defence escaped William of Malmesbury's hearing, but the bishop may well have made the further point that, if the empress plotted the bishop's death, she could easily be plotting the death of King Stephen. That, at least, is the implication of Bishop Henry's words as reported by William of Malmesbury. The king had 'recently been defeated',[77] and Bishop Henry was therefore forced, 'not out of choice but out of necessity, to receive the empress.'[78]

And surely, Bishop Henry was right to fear for his brother's future. What if Henry of Blois had refused to recognize that Stephen's reign had come to an end? Maybe the empress's party would have taken the final, logical step, which was to dispose of King Stephen. A simple lack of care would have achieved that aim even if the empress were unwilling to commit murder.[79] Bishop Henry had to tread carefully. What, moreover, would happen to royal rule if enough people agreed that Stephen's reign had come to an end and that the kingdom had entered a period of interregnum? Would that mean the end of government and, therefore, anarchy, as it had done when Henry I had died? And if the empress did not have enough support for an immediate coronation—which patently she did not—how long would the kingdom have to languish under an interregnum?

There were many problems that confronted Bishop Henry in February and March 1141, and he had, in his view, done his best to solve them, or, at the very least, done his best to reduce the impact of them on the king his brother and on the kingdom. That events made nonsense of Bishop Henry's solution to the problems confronting the realm after 2 February 1141 did not weaken the argument presented by him. For no one could have known that Stephen would live and would be released nine months after he had fallen at Lincoln. While the drama unfolded, everyone must have looked at the political landscape of England and remembered that Stephen's uncle, Robert Curthose, had not long entered the grave having spent twenty-eight years a captive in a castle on the opposite side of the Severn Estuary to the one where Stephen languished.[80] And the author of the *Gesta Stephani* openly stated that it was the intention of the empress and her brother that Stephen was to be 'kept in the Tower at Bristol until the last breath of life'.[81] Bishop Henry had acted in good faith and for the good of the kingdom in taking the lead, and in December 1141, King Stephen believed his brother and forgave him his actions.[82]

No doubt there was some re-writing of the past in the light of the way that events had unfolded. But there must have been more than a grain of truth in the bishop's reconstruction of events as virtually no one at the Council denounced him (save an envoy from the empress who sought to muddy, unsuccessfully, the waters for Henry),[83] including King Stephen, who received his brother back into his favour. At the cleansing ceremony held on Christmas Day 1141 at Canterbury by which Stephen and his queen consort, Matilda, were crowned anew by Archbishop Theobald (without the sacrament of unction for that had not been undone by Stephen's period of captivity),[84] Stephen granted to Geoffrey de Mandeville his earldom of Essex. The first witness was Matilda 'regina' (the queen consort and the only acceptable 'regina'

in the land); the second witness was Bishop Henry, whose attestation was followed by various earls.[85] He was the only bishop to witness the grant and his presence demonstrates that he was still, despite all that had transpired, at the head of Stephen's regime.

The argument presented in this article is that the capture of King Stephen at Lincoln on 2 February 1141 caused those involved at its center to consider royal power in an innovative and momentous way. What had happened to royal power at the moment of Stephen's fall? The empress's first position was that Stephen had stopped being king and that she should immediately be accepted as queen regnant. Bishop Henry rejected the argument that Matilda could move directly to coronation, but he was a quick-witted man, and soon came to realise that he had to accept that Stephen had been removed from power even if, as the author of the *Gesta Stephani* had it, 'his enemies could not take away the name king'.[86] Bishop Henry therefore proposed an interim position whereby he and the political community would accept the empress as *domina Anglorum*, for which there was a famous precedent. The Empress Matilda's illustrious Anglo-Saxon predecessor, Aethelflaed, *domina Merciorum*, who had wielded royal power in Mercia at the time of Edward the Elder in the early tenth century, was well known. Henry of Huntingdon, writing in 1130, said of Aethelflaed that 'some call her not only lady, or queen, but even king... worthy of a man's name... for you alone it is right to change the name of your sex: you were a mighty queen and a king who won victories.'[87] Henry of Huntingdon's testimony reveals the essence of Bishop Henry's solution for the kingdom proposed (at the latest) by March 1141. The title *domina Anglorum* was to mark Matilda out as the *rex/regina* in all but name and to solve the problem of the moment: how to bring about the end of the interregnum without bringing to an end King Stephen's life. In

other words, in an attempt to save his brother's life and to secure the political stability of the kingdom, Bishop Henry had separated the problem of succession from the problem of interregnum. The succession crisis, in the spring of 1141, he had yet to solve. But the problem of the interregnum, at that precise moment in time—either by a stroke of genius or in a fit of hubris—he did solve. On 2 March 1141, when the empress accepted his proposal for a temporary title as a step towards her ultimate goal, she also accepted a temporary solution to the problem of the interregnum. Bishop Henry did not yet know if he could persuade others to accept the proposition, but that he had already persuaded some by 2 March (such as Brian fitz Count) must have given him hope that he could. The presence of Brian also gave the bishop concrete evidence that he could present to the empress that his plan would work.[88] He still had to handle the matter with sensitivity and accept the occasional setback, such as the refusal of the men of London to be swayed by his arguments, and the impromptu monologue delivered by Queen Matilda's clerk, Christian, but, by April 1141, Bishop Henry had generated enough support to organise a proper installation ceremony to be held at his cathedral at Winchester.

In the construct offered here, therefore, Bishop Henry's justification for his actions given at the Westminster Council in December 1141 begin to look less an unconvincing attempt to brazen it out and more like a realistic representation of what Bishop Henry had been attempting to achieve.[89] People might not have liked Bishop Henry's explanation, and heard it in stony silence, but that it chimed as true is witnessed by the speed with which he was received back into royal favour. In his actions and in his political inventiveness, Bishop Henry was, in his construct, the hero of the moment: he had saved the king's life; he had brought some stability to an unstable position; and he had ridden out the events to help place his brother back on

the throne from which he had been (as events proved) temporarily toppled. King Stephen might not rule England unopposed, but he was, at Christmas 1141, in a much more secure position than he was enduring at Christmas 1140.

After 1141, the empress continued to adorn her charters with the title *domina Anglorum* until 1148 when she gave it up on handing to her son, Henry, her claim to the kingdom.[90] The title, thereafter, went into abeyance. When the empress's son, Henry, assumed the leadership of the Angevin party he did so not as *dominus Anglorum*, since he did not enjoy 'interim royal' status in the eyes of the church (who as well as making *reges* of kingdoms now, after Bishop Henry's actions, claimed to make *domini* of kingdoms). After the treaty of Winchester in 1153, Stephen was still king, and since the church had set its heart, for the moment, against the notion that there might be two *reges Anglorum* living concurrently, Henry still could not assume the title *dominus Anglorum*, though men sought out his confirmations while Stephen lived since they wanted to ensure that their lands would remain secure at the point of his succession. Henry, however, was Stephen's heir not his equal.[91] The term *domina Anglorum* reflects, therefore, a thought process which had emerged in 1141 out of a very particular political circumstance in which those involved could see no immediate end to an interregnum yet needed to find a way in which the kingdom could be ruled without an anointed monarch. That it had long-lasting consequences is a reflection of the fact that the English polity needed a solution to the problem of interregna because interregna brought the threat of anarchy while power was being transferred from one generation of ruler to the next.[92]

* I am indebted to the many scholars who have had the generosity of spirit to agree to comment on the following article: the late Marion Archibald, David Carpenter, Katy Dutton, Mark Hagger, Kate Hammond, Hetty Townsend (née Kaye), Edmund King, Tom Licence, Alheydis Plassmann, Jo Porter, Susan Reynolds, Colin Veach, Emily Ward, Megan Welton, the attendees at the Haskins Society Conference in 2016, and, finally, to the editor of this volume; I apologize to those who I have, inadvertently, forgotten to thank. The usual caveats about all views being my own are to be taken by anyone reading this article.

[1] Accounts of the day and of the subsequent events are to be found in the following places: William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, ed. and trans. K.R. Potter and E. King (Oxford, 1998); *Gesta Stephani*, ed. and trans. K.R. Potter and R.H.C. Davis (Oxford, 1976), 110–37; John of Worcester, *The Chronicle*, ed. and trans. P. McGurk (3 vols., Oxford, 1998), iii, 292–305; Orderic Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, ed. and trans. M. Chibnall (6 vols., Oxford, 1978), vi, 538–51; John of Hexham, *Historia Regum*, in *Symeonis Monachi Opera Omnia*, ed. T. Arnold, Rolls Series (2 vols., London, 1882–5), ii, 306–11; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, ed. and trans. D. Greenway (Oxford, 1996), 724–41.

[2] The term is used by E. King, 'A Week in Politics: Oxford Late July 1141', in *King Stephen's Reign (1135–1154)*, ed. P. Dalton and G. White (Woodbridge, 2008), 58–79 at 71.

[3] J.H. Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville* (London, 1892), 69.

[4] Round, *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, 80.

[5] Classic studies of the year can be found in the following places: R.H.C. Davis, *King Stephen* (3rd ed., London, 1990), 52–62; M. Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English* (Woodbridge, 1991), 96–102; D.

Crouch, *King Stephen* (London, 2000), 168–73; G. Garnett, *Conquered England: Kingship, Succession, and Tenure, 1066–1166* (Oxford, 2007), 213–221, 244 (Garnett is less certain that Matilda's title was a novelty in 1141 and in this he follows Round *Geoffrey de Mandeville*, 69); E. King, *King Stephen* (New Haven, CT, 2010), 145–74.

[6] The phrase is Henry of Huntingdon's, *Historia Anglorum*, 738–9.

[7] William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson, M. Winterbottom (2 vols., Oxford, 1998), i, 574–5.

[8] 'Sed necessitas fuit talis, quia inimici insurgere volebant contra me et populum quem habeo ad gubernandum, et ideo barones mei et idem populus noluerunt amplius eam protelari.' *S. Anselmi Cantuariensis Archiepiscopi Opera Omnia*, ed. F.S. Scmitt (6 vols., Edinburgh, 1938–61), iv, 109–10, number 212. The translation is mostly (although not entirely) that of Walter Fröhlich's from his *The Letters of Saint Anselm of Canterbury*, trans. W. Fröhlich (3 vols., Kalamazoo, MI, 1990–94), ii, 162–3.

[9] 'Unde statim justitia et pax, quae cum eo diu regnaverant in Normannia et Anglia, pariter cum eo occubuerunt. Et justitiae patrocinante (?*a line missing*] quod solum tunc ubique regnabat, violentiae et rapinae, caedes et depraaedationes, inauditae crudelitates, et innumerae calamitates, loco pacis ac justitiae, suam tyrannidem latenter et patenter exercuerunt.' (John of Hexham, 'The Acts of King Stephen', in *The Prior of Hexham*, ed. J. Raine, Surtees Society 44, 46 (2 vols., London, 1864–1866), i, 64.

[10] *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition, volume 7: MS E*, ed. Susan Irvine (Cambridge, 2004), 133. The translation is that found in *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Version*, trans. D. Whitelock with D.C. Douglas, and S.I. Tucker (London, 1965), 198.

[11] *Gesta Stephani*, 2–7; J. Dunbabin, 'Government', *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought*, ed. J.H. Burns (Cambridge, 1988), 477–519 at 483; Garnett, *Conquered England*, 185–201.

[12] George Garnett, 'The Origins of the Crown', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 89 (1996), 171–214 at 210–11.

[13] J.E.A. Jolliffe, *Angevin Kingship* (London, 2nd edn, 1963), 15–16.

[14] *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle MS E*, 136–7; *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Revised Version*, 201–2.

[15] *Gesta Stephani*, 110–13.

[16] E. King, 'The *Gesta Stephani*', *Writing Medieval Biography, 750–1250: Essays in Honour of Professor Frank Barlow*, ed. D. Bates, J. Crick, and S. Hamilton (Woodbridge, 2006), 195–206.

[17] *Gesta Stephani*, 110–13. The story of the broken candle at Mass is recounted by Orderic Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*, vi, 544–5 and Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 732–3. The fact that Henry and Orderic wrote independently of one another and of the author of the *Gesta* suggests that the tale had a wide circulation at the time.

[18] 'Utpote regum sibi iuratum, sicut sibi uidebatur' (*John of Worcester, Chronicle*, iii, 292–3).

[19] *John of Worcester, Chronicle*, *s.a*. 1141.

[20] 'Adeo ut in ipso mox dominii sui capite reginiam se totius Angliae fecerit, et gloriata furerit appellari' (*Gesta Stephani*, 118–19 & n. 1).

[21] 'Dominam et reginam acclamare praecepit' (*Gesta Stephani*, 118–19).

[22] The reconstruction is King's, William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, lvi.

[23] 'Tanquam regis Henrici filiam, et cui omnis Anglia et Normannia iurata esset, incunctanter in aecclesiam et regnum reciperet' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 86–9). John of Worcester thought that it was 'the crown of the English kingdom' that was at stake at this point in time ('datur eius dominio corona regni Anglie' (*John of Worcester, Chronicle*, iii, 294–5).

[24] Further evidence for Matilda's claim to the queenship is considered below, pp. 14-17.

[25] *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket Archbishop of Canterbury, 1162–1170*, ed. and trans. A. Duggan (2 vols., Oxford, 2000), letter 153.

[26] For a discussion of the role of popes in king-making, see S.D. Church, 'Political Discourse at the Court of Henry II and the making of the new kingdom of Ireland: the evidence of John's title *dominus Hibernie*', *History*, 102: 353 (2017), 808-23.

[27] The right of popes to depose kings is more easily perceived in the direct statement on the matter by Gregory VII (*Gregorii VII Registrum*, ed. E. Caspar, *MGH Epp, sel. 2* (Berlin, 1920–3), Book III. 10, 266–7, see also *The Register of Pope Gregory VII, 1073–85* trans. H.E.J. Cowdrey (Oxford 2001), III, 10a, 192–3.

[28] Andrew W. Lewis, ' Anticipatory association of the heir in Capetian France', *AHR*, 83 (1978), 906–27.

[29] John Le Patourel, 'The Norman succession, 996–1135', *EHR*, 86 (1971), 225–50; Tom Licence, 'Edward The Confessor and the succession question: a fresh look at the sources', *ANS* 39 (2017), 113–27 at 119–23.

[30] 'Dominus siquidem Papa litteris suis Cantuariensi prohibuerat archiepiscopo, ne filium regis, qui contra jusjurandum regnum usurpasse videbatur, in regem sublimaret. ' (*The Historical Works of Gervase of Canterbury*, ed. W. Stubbs, Rolls Series (2 vols., London, 1879–80), i, 150.

[31] King, *King Stephen*, 262–5, here citing John of Hexham. King's discussion highlights the centrality of the pope in the hopes of Stephen and his heir.

[32] The case of the coronation of the Young King Henry in 1170 makes the point yet more forcefully: From as early as 1161, Henry II had been manoeuvring to have his son crowned, but he could not achieve his aim until he received papal approval for his plan, which he did with the bull *Quanto per carissimum* in which he commanded the archbishop of York, 'ex auctoritate beati Petri ac nostra concedimus in Anglia coronandum' to crown the younger Henry as king 'whenever the older Henry desired it' (A.J. Heslin, 'The coronation of the Young King in 1170', *Studies in Church History*, ed. G.J. Cuming (London, 1965), ii, 165–78 at 168–70; the text of *Quanto per carissimum* is on 178.

[33] William M. Aird, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy* (Woodbridge, 2008), 245. But Henry did not wield power as duke, rather he ruled by his 'royal authority and avoided (unlike his Angevin successors) any ceremony of installation as duke of Normandy' (the words cited are C. Warren Hollister's, 'Henry I (1068/9–1135)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004) [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12948, accessed 18 July 2017]). Bishop Henry might have known this fact.

[34] Crouch, *King Stephen*, 169 and note 3.

[35] 'Si eam ipse cum sancta aecclesia in dominam reciperet' and later 'Nec dubitauit episcopus imperatricem in dominam Angliae recipere' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 88–9).

[36] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 90–1.

[37] 'Distulit sane fidelitatem dominae facere, inconsulto rege' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 90–1).

[38] 'In sententiam legati cessere' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 90–1).

[39] 'Ut eundem dominum regno restituerent' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 94–7.)

[40] Ordericus Vitalis, *Ecclesiastical History*, vi, 544–5 'regni rex precipitatus est'.

[41] 'provisum est paci patriat et regnare permissus frater meus' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 92–3).

[42] 'Ne regnum vacillet, si regante careat, omnes vos pro iure legationis meae huc convenire inuitavi' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 92–3).

[43] 'Ius potissimum spectat principem eligere, simulque ordinare'…'in auxilium diuinitate... in Angliae Normanniaeque dominam eligimus' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 92–3).

[44] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 96–7.

[45] 'Datur eius dominio corona regni Anglie' (*John of Worcester, Chronicle*, 295–5).

[46] 'Dominam et reginam acclamare praecepit' (*Gesta Stephani*, 118–19).

[47] M. Chibnall, 'The charters of the Empress Matilda', in *Law and Government in the Middle Ages: Essays in Honour of Sir James Holt*, ed. G. Garnett and J. Hudson (Cambridge, 1994), 276–98 at 277–80; Crouch, *King Stephen*, 170–1 and notes.

[48] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, lvii–lviii.

[49] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, lviii.

[50] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 108–9.

[51] *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066–1154*, ed. H.A. Cronne and R.H.C. Davis (Oxford, 1968), iii, no. 343.

[52] Chibnall, 'The charters of the empress Matilda', 279. As Crouch notes (*King Stephen*, 170 and note 6).

[53] Three copies survive in Glastonbury settings (Trinity College Cambridge MS 724 and BL Add MS 22934, 'W[ILLELMI DE] Malmesbury de antiquitate Glastoniensis ecclesie'; and Bodleian Libr MS Wood emp. 1 fol. 69v 'Cartulary of Glastonbury'), one in a Wells setting (Longleat House, Marquess of Bath mss, Longleat, Warminster, England, BA12 7NW, MS 39 ' inventory of royal and papal charters found, c1300, in the Treasury at Wells').

[54] *Regesta*, iii, no. 699; *Reading Abbey Cartularies*, ed. B.R. Kemp, Camden Fourth Series, 31, 33, (2 vols., London, 1986–7) i, no. 17, 45–6.

[55] British Museum, Box Hoard, 1994 7–19–16; British Museum, Box Hoard, 1994 7–19–17. These coins were brought to my attention by Johanne Porter, to whom I owe my thanks, and whose thoughts on the coins are to be published as 'A New Coin Type of the Empress Matilda: "*Rex Matilda*" Cross Moline Type?', (forthcoming). Before her death in April 2016, Marion Archibald was kind enough to share her thoughts with me about these *Rex Matilda* coins.

[56] M. Blackburn, 'Coinage and currency', *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign*, ed. E. King (Oxford, 1994), 145–205 at 194.

[57] J. Booth, *Northern Museums. Ancient British, Anglo-Saxon, Norman and Plantagenet Coins to 1279*, Sylloge of Coins of the British Isles 48 (Oxford, 1997), 45. The hoard consisted of 1,06 pennies and cut half-pennies of Henry I, Stephen, Matilda, David I of Scotland, Henry earl of Northumberland, and other baronial issues.

[58] Booth, *Northern Museums*, coin no. 1353.

[59] British Museum, Box Hoard, 1996 7–19–15.

[60] King, 'Week in Politics', 59, 61–3, 70. 76. Whether the assumption of regalian authority occurred on 8 April 1141 or earlier has been a matter for debate. King has

taken the view that the empress exercised regalian authority from the moment of her arrival in the West Country, citing as his evidence the comments of the continuator of John of Worcester, who was likely based at Gloucester, who stated that while at Bristol in 1139, she 'received homage from all and dispensed the laws of the English kingdom as she pleased'. But while she may have believed that she exercised regalian authority legitimately, the 'screams' of the citizens of Gloucester, 'tortured' and 'killed' because they refused to accept the empress's assessment of her own legitimacy, should act as sufficient testimony to warn us of the fact that not everyone thought that the empress was a legitimate ruler in 1139 (John of Worcester, *Chronicle*, iii, 270–3.) Even if, as King notes, her grants 'up to April 1141 and after April 1141 had alike to be treated as legitimate', that was only because she held Stephen captive and she looked as though she had won the 'succession' struggle. During the period of her triumph, the empress was accused, and modern historians have found substance in those accusations, of 'arbitrarily depriving... her political opponents... of their property', and even after April 1141, the politically astute must have worried that her grants were provisional until the seal was set on the future by her coronation. See also Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 102–5.

[61] *Regesta*, iii, no. 274; Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 103–4.

[62] Some were, however, willing to defend a continuation of the struggle against a consecrated ruler if that ruler had acquired the throne unjustly (Garnett, *Conquered England*, 238–9). There is a strong argument to suggest that it is hindsight that determines whether a struggle for power while a king lived is characterized as a 'succession dispute' or as a 'rebellion'. The outcome of Stephen's reign meant that the civil war was a succession dispute. A different outcome, however, would have had it characterized differently.

[63] Above p. 3.

[64] J. Green, *Henry I*, (Cambridge, 2006), 43–4 and note 10.

[65] King, *King Stephen*, 263.

[66] Garnett, *Conquered England*, 239 and his section 'the force of coronation', 238–45.

[67] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 94–5.

[68] Crouch, *King Stephen*,171–77.

[69] Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, 24–5.

[70] 'Ad dominam inthronizandam pompose Londonias et arroganter convenerant' (*Gesta Stephani*, 124–5).

[71] *Coronation Records*, ed. and trans. L.G. Wickham Legg (London, 1901) 30, 47. By this stage in events, Bishop Henry had been excluded from the empress's council, so she was now driving matters forward herself (King, *King Stephen*, 167).

[72] 'Dum ipsa putaretur omni Anglia statim posse potiri' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 98–9).

[73] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 108–11.

[74] 'Quibus modeste legatum argueret... Delecti tamen superioris gratiam facere' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 108–9).

[75] 'Ipsum legatum magnis eloquentiae uiribus factorum suorum inuidiam temptasse alleuiare' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 108–9).

[76] 'Non solum dignitati suae, sed et uitae' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 108–11).

[77] 'Cum recenti adhuc fratris sui clade' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 108–9).

[78] 'Quod scilicet imperatricem non uoluntate sed necessitate recepisset' (William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 108–9).

[79] Bérangère Soustre de Condat-Rabourdin, 'Feminea fraus: Adélaïde del Vasto (ca. 1075–1118), une princesse empoisonneuse sicilienne du XIIe siècle', *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes*, 17 (2009) 39–51.

[80] Aird, *Robert Curthose*, 276–81.

[81] *Gesta Stephani*, 114–15; Brian fitz Count certainly thought that the legate's meddling was what had made 1141 'a year of horror' for him and for the kingdom (King, 'A Week in Politics', 71–2; E. King, 'The Memory of Brian fitz Count', *HSJ* 13 (1999), 75–99.

[82] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 110–11.

[83] William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, 110–11.

[84] *Gervase of Canterbury*, ii, 524–7 in describing in detail Richard I's cleansing coronation after his return from captivity in Germany in 1194 preserves for us the details of Stephen's ceremony half a century before relying, it seems, on a manuscript copy of the *ordo* (the detail of the service is on p. 527).

[85] *Regesta* iii, no. 276; the detail is described vividly in King, *King Stephen*, 176–8.

[86] *Gesta Stephani*, 110–13.

[87] Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, 208–9, lxvi–lxxvii and esp. cix.

[88] H.W.C. Davis, 'Henry of Blois and Brian fitz Count', *EHR*, 25 (1910), 300–3; King, 'The memory of Brian fitz Count', 75–98.

[89] King, *King Stephen*, 173.

[90] Chibnall, 'Charters of the Empress Matilda', 276–98.

[91] J.C. Holt, '1153: The Treaty of Winchester', in *The Anarchy of King Stephen's Reign* ed. E. King (Oxford, 1994), 291–316 at 306–7; E. King, 'The Accession of Henry II', in *Henry II: New Interpretations*, ed. N. Vincent and C. Harper-Bill (Woodbridge, 2007), 24–46.

[9292] Church, ‘Political Discourse at the Court of Henry’, 808-23.