

Chapter I

STAGING THE BRIDE AND HER TREASURE

MEDIEVAL MARRIAGE GIFTS of landholdings, both from *dowry*—property given with the bride by her natal family—and *dower*—property handed over to the bride by her husband—have primarily occupied historians due to the struggles over territories that resulted from marital alliances.¹ While all sisters received dower lands from their husbands, Henry II and Eleanor endowed neither Matilda nor the youngest sister Joanna (1165–1199) with dowry.² It would not have made much sense for King Henry II to give his eldest daughter part of his or his wife's lands, as her future husband's territories were too far away from those held by the English king. The same argument can be made for Joanna when in 1177 she married King William II of Sicily. Whether Matilda's younger sister Leonor (1161–1214) was given Gascony as dowry when she married Alfonso VIII, king of Castile, is debated among historians, since no English records make mention of such a grant.³ While Alfonso certainly went to great lengths to claim Eleanor of Aquitaine's land, it was never successfully consolidated in his kingdom. The absence of dowry was compensated for by the *auxilium*—payments made by his subjects, in this case to facilitate the marriage—Henry II raised: Matilda brought £5,102 sterling to Saxony, a sum higher than the £4,549 he would later collect for Joanna's marriage in 1177. Matilda's *auxilium* matched that of the money spent by her great-grandfather King Henry I on the occasion of his daughter Matilda's engagement to the German king (and later emperor) Henry V, who received 10,000 Cologne marks of silver, which corresponds to £5,000.⁴ Even though no similar large sums of money are documented for Leonor, it is only reasonable to assume that she brought a substantial sum of silver into her marriage with Alfonso.

In addition to the silver, Matilda was accompanied by many treasures that are examined here to demonstrate the ongoing importance of artefacts in marriage politics.⁵

¹ A vast amount of references to scholarly discussions of dowry, dower, and their developments as well as a critique of the general idea that medieval transformations in property management are evidence of a loss in status for women, can be found in Cynthia Johnson, "Marriage Agreements from Twelfth-Century Southern France," in *To Have and To Hold: Marrying and Its Documentation in Western Christendom, 400–1600*, ed. Philip L. Reynolds and John Witte (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 215–59. The documents she studied are concerned with immobile property and money. Although moveable goods are sometimes mentioned, they are never specified.

² For their dowries and dowers, see Bowie, *The Daughters*, Part III.

³ José Manuel Cerda Costabal, "La dot gasconne d'Aliénor d'Angleterre. Entre royaume de Castille, royaume de France et royaume d'Angleterre," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 54, no. 215 (2011): 225–42. For a positive assessment of Gascony as dowry, see Bowie, *The Daughters*, 119–22.

⁴ Ehlers, "Anglonormannisches am Hof Heinrichs des Löwen?" 213. A Cologne mark differed from an English mark in that it was worth half a pound, not two thirds of a pound.

⁵ For the different meanings the word treasure could hold to medieval people, see Elizabeth M. Tyler, ed., *Treasure in the Medieval West* (York: York Medieval Press, 2000). For sumptuous

These treasures included gold, silver, vessels, vestments, chairs, saddles, and many other items. By asking how such pieces reflected the royal status of Matilda's natal family and added to the creation of her social identity, Matilda's sumptuous goods can be understood as a first step in the performance of power of royal daughters. To this end, comparisons are made with moveable objects that can be connected to her paternal grandmother Empress Matilda (d. 1167) and to the younger Matilda's sisters in the context of their respective marriages. In a way, Princess Matilda followed in the footsteps of her eponymous grandmother, who as an eight-year-old had journeyed to Germanic lands to meet her future husband, King Henry V (d. 1125). Matilda's sister Leonor went to Iberia to become the wife of King Alfonso VIII of Castile (d. 1214) while Joanna was to marry first King William II of Sicily (d. 1189) and later Count Raymond VI of Toulouse (d. 1222).

Matilda, Leonor, and Joanna were twelve, eight/nine, and eleven respectively when they entered the households of their husbands-to-be. In Colette Bowie's discussion of the marriages of the three sisters, she traced Leonor's and Joanna's travel routes; together with the possible routes I suggest for Matilda, it is possible to map the way-stations on the journey of each to her new court (see [Map 1](#)).⁶ Henry II placed his daughters strategically across western Europe, dispersing them as he did other gifts.⁷ Equally importantly, the

artefacts as part of a woman's marriage arrangements in the early medieval period, see in the same volume: Leslie Webster, "Ideal and Reality: Versions of Treasure in the Early Anglo-Saxon World," 49–59 at 51; and Pauline Stafford, "Queens and Treasure in the Early Middle Ages," 61–82. For the central Middle Ages, see Laura Brander, "Mit großer Pracht zur Ehe gegeben," *Mediaevalia Historica Bohemica* 12 (2009), Supplementum 3: 393–421; Therese Martin, "Caskets of Silver and Ivory from Diverse Parts of the World: Strategic Collecting for an Iberian Treasury," in *The Medieval Iberian Treasury in the Context of Cultural Interchange*, ed. Therese Martin, special issue, *Medieval Encounters* 25 (Leiden: Brill, 2019): 1–38; Talia Zajac, "Remembrance and Erasure of Objects Belonging to Rus' Princesses in Medieval Western Sources: The Cases of Anastasia Iaroslavna's 'Saber of Charlemagne' and Anna Iaroslavna's Red Gem," in *Moving Women, Moving Objects, 500–1500*, ed. Tracy Hamilton and Maria Proctor-Tiffany (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 33–58. For non-western brides and their precious items, see for example the daughter of the Seljuq sultan Malikshāh who married 'Abbāsīd caliph Abu'l Qāsim in 1087, whose "dowry was borne on 74 mules draped in various sorts of regal brocades, horse bells and harness were of gold and silver. On six of them [the mules] were 12 silver chests containing jewels and finery that were beyond price. Preceding the mules were 33 horses of excellent stock, whose stirrups were of gold encrusted with various jewels." Cited in Anthony Cutler, "Significant Gifts: Patterns of Exchange in Late Antique, Byzantine, and Early Islamic Diplomacy," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 38 (2008): 79–101 at 96n29. See also Noelia Silva Santa-Cruz, "Ivory Gifts for Women in Caliphal Córdoba: Marriage, Maternity and Sensuality," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 6 (2014): 103–25 esp. 116.

6 Bowie, *The Daughters*, 74–75 (Leonor) and 89–91 (Joanna).

7 For women as gifts, see Stafford, "Queens and Treasure," 64; and Jitske Jasperse, "Women, Courtly Display and Gifts in the *Rolandslied* and the *Chanson de Roland*," *Mediaevistik. International Journal of Interdisciplinary Medieval Research* 30 (2017): 125–41.



Map 1. The way-stations on the journeys of Matilda, Leonor, and Joanna to their courts in Saxony, Castile, and Sicily respectively. Design: Sebastian Ballard.

young women's travels demonstrate that their journeys were a vital part of the communication of the English king's power.⁸ Each journey can be seen as a theatrical stage that allowed Henry to promote himself and his daughters through the display of both goods and people, from bishops, counts, and dukes to the princesses' personal entourage and other relatives. At the same time, this ostentatious representation was a means to reconnect with sometimes estranged allies, and also to acknowledge the high prestige of the future bridegrooms. After all, these marriages were political actions as well as political events, strategically conceived by the English king and his carefully selected sons-in-law. Based on the material, visual, and performative aspects of the sisters' travels, these journeys should be understood as formative experiences for Henry's daughters. They learned that the display and gifting of artefacts were crucial when aiming to impact others. My analysis of the materiality of these objects also shows that the precious items themselves held agency. Here, materiality refers to the materials used to craft the artworks (such as silver, gold, silk, and fur) as well as to the communicative meaning these materials held in the eyes of the beholder. The underlying assumption is that viewers were aware of the history of materials and their symbolic and economic value.⁹

From England to Saxony

Arrangements for the marriage of Matilda and Henry the Lion, duke of Saxony and Bavaria, commenced in April 1165, when she was nearly nine years old.¹⁰ This marriage, like that of her grandmother the Empress Matilda as well as those of her sisters Leonor and Joanna, provided ample opportunity to display the status and wealth of the young princess and her natal family during the long journeys to their new homes. From the entries in the Pipe Rolls, in which expenditures concerning England were recorded, it is possible to distil a general impression of what Matilda brought with her. Between July and September 1167 envoys from Germany had arrived in England to accompany Matilda to Saxony. In September of that year, the princess and her mother travelled from Winchester (?) to Dover, accompanied by Henry the Lion's and Henry II's envoys, who took Matilda to Saxony while her mother stayed behind.¹¹ Matilda departed from England in a royal ship (*esnecca*), accompanied by six other vessels, clearly displaying her royal status.¹² The

⁸ For medieval brides' travels and dynastic politics, mainly focusing on the later Middle Ages, see Karl-Heinz Spieß, "Unterwegs zu einem fremden Ehemann. Brautfahrt und Ehe in europäischen Fürstenhäusern des Spätmittelalters," in *Fremdheit und Reisen im Mittelalter*, ed. Irene Erfen and Karl-Heinz Spieß (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 1997), 17–36.

⁹ Karen Eileen Overbey and Ben C. Tilghman, "Active Objects: An Introduction," in *Active Objects*, ed. Karen Eileen Overbey and Ben C. Tilghman, special issue, *Different Visions: A Journal of New Perspectives on Medieval Art* 4 (2014): 1–9.

¹⁰ Detailed analyses are made by Jens Ahlers, *Die Welfen und die englischen Könige, 1165–1235* (Hildesheim: Lax, 1987), 66–73; and Ehlers, *Heinrich der Löwe*, 206–8.

¹¹ Bowie, *The Daughters*, 38.

¹² Royal vessel for Matilda's crossing to Saxony (£7 10s), six ships which crossed with her (£8 15s) and equipment for the ships which went with her (£7 10s). PR 13 Hen II, 193–94.

ships brought with them twenty bags (*paribus*) and twenty chests (*cofforum*) filled with golden and gilded household utensils (*auro ad deauranda vaisella*), textiles (*pannis*), two large silk cloths (*magnis pannis sericis*), two textile coverings or hangings (*tapetis*), three Spanish silk cloths (*pannis de Musce*), and a cloth of samite (a compound twill-weave in silk), as well as seven gilded chairs covered with scarlet and seven gilded saddles. The goods were carried by thirty-four pack mules (*sumar*) to be loaded onto the ships.¹³

From this entry, it is possible to get an idea of the exotic nature of the cloths in Matilda's holdings, silks that in all likelihood originated from Byzantium and Iberia.¹⁴ Introduced by the Muslims, silk production in Spain was booming in the twelfth century and was exported to the rest of Europe, with London as an important centre for the trade of silks and furs. *Drap de Mulce* frequently appears in French and English romances, and it is possible that *pannis de Musce* refers to the cloth made in Murcia.¹⁵ The sable furs were imported as well. Sable, a Siberian animal of the marten family, has very valuable fur;¹⁶ Henry II paid £16 for the twelve sables he gave to Matilda, which is more than he paid for the seven chairs and seven saddles she also brought with her. Sable fur reappears in the Pipe Rolls, indicating that it was held in high regard, with its costliness further underscored when mentioned together with other high-priced items, such as scarlet and silk. The samite cloth, also a silk, is the only piece that provides some insight into its appearance, as it refers to a specific weaving technique.¹⁷ Woven fabrics were used for clothing as well as for decorating chambers, widows, and tables. The gilded chairs of Matilda's dowry were suitable to be covered with cloth, such as scarlet (*scarleta* or *escarlata*), which is a fine woollen shaved cloth that was dyed with kermes from the Mediterranean. The use of expensive materials and the combination of

13 PR 11 Hen II, 2–3: “Et pro 20 paribus bulgarum et 20 paribus coffrorum ad opus Matilda filiae Regis 26l. 15s. 4d. per breve Regis. Et pro auro ad deauranda vaisella ejusdem filiae Regis 28l. 14s. per breve Regis. Et pro 7 sellis deauratis et coopertis exscarl et 7 paribus lorimorum deaur’ 14l. 13s. 8d. per breve Regis. Et pro 1 fugatore et 1 palefrido ad opus ejusdem filae Regis 36s. Et pro pannis ejusdem filiae Regis quando missa est in Saxoniam 63l. 13s. 7d. per breve Regis et per visum Edwardi Blundi et Willielmi Magni. [...] Et willelmo filio Aldelm £34 7s adquitand’ 34 sumar’ ad opus filiae Regis per breve Regis. Et pro 2 magnis pannis sericis et 2 tapetis et 3 pannis de Musce et 1 Samit 24l. per breve Regis. [...] Et pro 12 Sabelinis ad opus filie Regis 16l. per breve Regis.” See also Eyton, *Court, Household*, 109; and Schröder, *Macht und Gabe*, 230.

14 Rebecca Woodward Wendelken, “Silk: Silk in the British Isles,” in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Dress and Textiles of the British Isles c. 450–1450*, ed. Gale Owen-Crocker, Elizabeth Coatsworth, and Maria Hayward (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 517–20.

15 Rebecca Woodward Wendelken, “Wefts and Worms: The Spread of Sericulture and Silk Weaving in the West before 1300,” *Medieval Clothing and Textiles* 10 (2014): 58–78 at 74n75. Sybille Schröder suggests that Musce was short for Musceraves or Mozarabs; see Schröder, *Macht und Gabe*, 215.

16 Eva I. Andersson, “Clothing and Textile Materials in Medieval Sweden and Norway,” *Medieval Clothing and Textiles* 9 (2013): 97–120 at 108.

17 Samite is a “silk fabric in weft-faced compound twill, plain or patterned, in which the main warp threads are hidden on both sides of the fabric by the ground and patterning wefts, with only the binding wefts visible.” It was also used to indicate a rich, heavy silk fabric. See Elizabeth Coatsworth, “Samite,” in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Dress*, 475.

the colours red and gold were unlikely to escape the attention of the viewers. Matilda's cargo also included twelve sable furs (*sabilinis*), a riding horse (*palefrido*) and a hunter (*fugatore*). The palfrey and hunter, for which thirty-seven shillings were paid, are specified as being Matilda's and were meant for hunting, an event also suitable to display status, wealth, and privileges. Like the silks and distinctly coloured materials, the furs and horses wielded symbolic, economic, and aesthetic agency.

Evidently, King Henry II sent off his daughter with sufficient pomp when he bestowed upon her an impressive variety of textiles, although the Pipe Roll entry lacks references to their colour. Equally, no explicit allusions to the appearance of Matilda's outfits are made, whereas entries referring to mantles lined with fur (*pelliciis*) or a large pallium of the finest wool dyed with red kermes and lined with sable fur (*pallio magno de escarlata de bissis cum sabellinis*) do exist for other members of Henry's household.¹⁸ Visual sources, such as the seal belonging to Matilda's sister Joanna and a miniature in Henry and Matilda's psalter, which we will examine in detail in [Chapters 3 and 4](#), demonstrate the presence of fur-lined mantles in the wardrobe of elite men and women ([Figure 15](#) and [Figure 17](#)). In their psalter, Henry and Matilda are humbly depicted at the foot of Christ's cross. Henry's red mantle has slipped from his shoulders, but the grey and white fur collar is still visible. Matilda's green mantle is trimmed with similar fur, with the grey fur perhaps being vair, which is the grey winter fur of the red squirrel. The highest quality of winter squirrel furs was found in Scandinavia and Russia; they were exported to Western Europe via the Baltic.¹⁹ On her seal matrix, Joanna wears the same type of cloak held together by a tassel. With her left hand, Joanna touches this fringed cord that fastens the mantle. The lining of her mantle is prominently displayed and its pattern suggests that it could be miniver; that is, vair furs stitched together so that only the white bellies and some grey around them remained. The small size of vair furs meant that large numbers were needed for lining mantles, making them very costly.²⁰ The colour, texture, and size of furs, whether real or represented, were wrapped around the bodies of men and women to communicate their wearer's position in society; they signalled wealth, prestige, and fashion.

Sybilla Schröder's extensive analysis of the material culture mentioned in the Pipe Rolls has revealed that textiles were an important part of Henry II's royal representation and that of his *familia*.²¹ Acquiring, shipping, and presenting fabrics and vestments

¹⁸ For Queen Margaret in 1175/1176, see PR 22 Hen II, 198: "Et pro 4 ulnis et dimidia escarlati et pro 1 pena varia et pellicia et 1 sabelina et 32 ulnis lineae tele ad opus filie regis Francie contra Pascha 4l. et 5s. et 6d. per breve regis. Et pro 3 ulnis de biso ad opus cujusdam pueri sui 3s. et 6d. per idem breve." See also Schröder, *Macht und Gabe*, 214. For Queen Eleanor in 1178/1179, see PR 25 Hen II, 125: "Et pro 1 magna cappa et 1 pallio magno de escarlata de bissis cum sabellinis et 1 pellicia de biso ad opus Regine, et 1 cappa et pallio de escarlata et 1 pellicia ad opus Amarie que est cum Regina 18l. et 3s. et 6d. per breve regis et per visum Edwardi Blundi." See also Schröder, *Macht und Gabe*, 116.

¹⁹ Maria Hayward, "Squirrel Fur," in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Dress*, 542.

²⁰ Maria Hayward, "Miniver," in *Encyclopedia of Medieval Dress*, 367–68.

²¹ Schröder, *Macht und Gabe*. A further examination of the Pipe Rolls may reveal more about the gendered nature of material culture.

to friends, family, and followers was a way to show off status while simultaneously cementing alliances. In this respect Matilda's endowment was not unusual, for the crown's expenses were certainly not limited to marriages. This is evidenced, for example, by Henry's expenditures for his daughter-in-law Margaret of France, wife of Henry the Young King and daughter of Louis VII and Constance of Castile. On several occasions she received a *roba*, which can mean a complete outfit as well as baggage containing textiles and perhaps also non-textiles. For Margaret and Henry's coronation in Winchester in 1172, their robes cost over £88, a huge amount compared to other expenses made for Margaret's apparel.²² Henry II took care of Margaret's needs not only because she belonged to his family, but also because she herself was a royal daughter, and she therefore required trappings that acknowledged and displayed both qualities.

Yet what makes Matilda's sumptuous silks different from Margaret's is that she took them overseas to a new court. Matilda could have used part of these goods to adorn her new home, but her father knew very well that golden vessels and saddles also made for desirable gifts and would therefore aid the young Matilda to consolidate her position in Saxony. Gold and silver vessels had a material and artistic value, as well as a functional and representational one since they could be used during liturgy, meals, and court rituals. The two gemellions, or basins, donated by Matilda's brother, John Lackland, to his nephew King Otto IV (Matilda's son) should be understood this way.²³ The water basins from Limoges—located in the centre of Angevin territory—are adorned with the three Angevin lions. Decoration and recognizable place of manufacture served as vivid and enduring reminders of the German king's Angevin connections, as the basins would have been used not only by Otto, but were the type of objects that we can imagine to have been displayed permanently.

The ships accompanied Matilda to Dover and it seems likely that from there the cargo moved onto other ships or carts that set sail to Wissant (Witsand) in Flanders, as can be inferred from other journeys the royal family undertook from Dover to the mainland.²⁴ The Flanders route was the shortest way to reach the continent. While there is not enough data to reconstruct Matilda's route from Wissant to Saxony in detail, two possible routes are the most likely for this interregional travel (Map 1). The first would have been to continue over water from Flanders (Bruges, Ghent, or Antwerp), taking the River Scheldt and then passing a network of waterways up north until reaching the Dutch lakes IJ and Almere. The count of Flanders, Philip of Alsace (d. 1191), and Matilda's father were well acquainted, although the relationship was not without tensions due to feudal disputes.²⁵ Nothing in the written sources suggests that the strained relations impacted

²² PR 18 Hen II, 144: "Et in Soltis per breve Regis pro Roba Regis filii Regis et Regine sue in coronation eorum apud Wintonia 88l. et 10s. et 4d. per breve Regis et per testimonium Aedwardi Blundi."

²³ Jitske Jasperse, "Is It All about Empire? The Angevins through the Lens of Gift Giving," in *The Angevin Empire. New Interpretations*, ed. Stephen Church and Matthew Strickland (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, forthcoming).

²⁴ Eyton, *Court, Household*, 256, 263, and 277–78.

²⁵ Schröder, *Macht und Gabe*, 165–69.

Matilda's journey in a negative way. From the Low Countries Matilda would have continued over the North Sea, going either to Bremen via the River Weser, or to Hamburg via the Elbe. Both Bremen and Hamburg were within the lands her future husband claimed; from there it was relatively easy and safe to reach Brunswick.

The second travel option would have entailed an overland route: after her arrival at Wissant, Matilda would have passed through Boulogne and, via Tongres (Tongeren) and Maastricht, she then would likely have visited Aachen and Cologne. From there the rest of the travel continued through Henry the Lion's territories, halting at abbeys and monasteries such as the Abdinghof in Paderborn before reaching Brunswick. Whatever Matilda's route may have been, we know that she had arrived by February 1, 1168 at her final destination: on that date, her union with Duke Henry was formalized by Bishop Werner in Minden Cathedral, according to a charter issued by Henry.²⁶

Transport on land from Wissant to Minden would have been approximately 600 kilometres and over water about 1,000 kilometres. Despite such great distances, it is unlikely that Matilda and her entourage needed four and a half months for this journey, even when taking into account that they might have been slowed down by carts loaded with goods and the winter weather conditions, not to mention upstream travel. It is possible that along the way the princess and her retinue spent time at important places, engaging with influential people. Or Matilda might have arrived at Brunswick weeks before the marriage, so that she could get acquainted with her future husband and his court. If we are to believe Albert of Stade (writing 1204–1264), the nuptial feasting occurred at Brunswick in great splendour, perhaps an indication that after the religious ceremony at Minden the crowd travelled to Brunswick to magnificently celebrate Henry's marriage to a princess.²⁷ Although no details about these festivities are known, it is likely that Henry the Lion would have taken the opportunity to present his royal bride with much pomp. As the daughter of the king of England, Matilda deserved a great feast that acknowledged her high status and integrated her into the court, while also allowing the duke to present himself in a most favourable light.

As noted above, the Empress Matilda, grandmother of Duchess Matilda, had also journeyed from England to Germany when she, as an eight-year-old, was on her way to marry King Henry V in 1110.²⁸ Accompanied by a magnificent company, the future empress brought with her an impressive dowry of 10,000 marks in silver along with

26 "Acta sunt hec Minde anno dominice incarnationis MCLXVIII, indictione I, quando Heinricus dux Bawarie et Saxonie Machtildem filiam regis Anglie ibidem subarravit, kalendis februarii. Data Minde per manum Hartwici Utledensis Bremensis canonici." MGH DD HL, 111–13, no. 77. The *subarravit* (espoused) and the absence of the words *uxor* (wife) and *ducissa* could indicate that Henry and Matilda were engaged, but not yet married. If this was the case, the nuptial feast mentioned by Albert of Stade (see note 83) may have been the actual wedding ceremony.

27 "Dux Heinricus repudiata sorore ducis Zaringiae Bertoldi, duxit filiam regis Anglorum, relictam regis Franciae et nuptias Brunswich magnifice celebravit." *Annales Stadenses*, ed. I. M. Lappenberg, MGH SS 16 (Hanover, 1859), 346.

28 Marjorie Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 44.

many splendid gifts.²⁹ From England her retinue had crossed the Channel to Boulogne and on to Liège where she met her twenty-year-old bridegroom-to-be, King Henry V, for the first time. The couple proceeded on to Utrecht for a formal ceremony of betrothal at Easter, and a few weeks later, on July 25, 1110, Matilda was crowned *Romanorum regina* at Mainz Cathedral. There Archbishop Bruno of Trier was appointed her guardian, and he took her to Trier in order to teach her German and to further educate her.³⁰ In January 1114, Matilda and Henry were married in Mainz; the anonymous so-called *Imperial Chronicle* (ca. 1114) provides some details:

The nuptials were attended by such a great concourse of archbishops and bishops, dukes and counts, abbots and provosts and learned clergy [...]. So numerous were the wedding gifts which various kings and primates sent to the emperor, and the gifts which the emperor from his own store gave to the innumerable throngs of jesters and jongleurs and people of all kinds, that not one of his chamberlains who received or distributed them could count them.³¹

Clearly this wedding feast was filled with elite attendees, who brought wedding gifts for the imperial couple, were entertained lavishly, and perhaps even returned home with luxury objects the emperor had given to them. The *Imperial Chronicle* makes no references to women who attended the feast, perhaps an indication that the writer was not interested in their presence or that women did not partake in the mentioned celebrations. The festivities were overshadowed by disgruntled territorial princes—including bishops—whose honour was affronted by Henry's harsh treatment of some of their peers.³² Notwithstanding the historical reality of the day, the event was deemed important enough to be illustrated in the chronicle by a pen-and-ink drawing, which

29 *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, vol. 5: books IX and X, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969–80), 200–201.

30 Chibnall, *The Empress*, 24–25; Amalie Fößel, *Die Königin im mittelalterlichen Reich: Herrschaftsausübung, Herrschaftsrechte, Handlungsspielräume* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000), 105–8.

31 Cited in Chibnall, *The Empress*, 26. The text is from a manuscript at Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 373; see <https://parker.stanford.edu/parker/catalog/rg420yp8320>. See also “Anonymi Chronica imperatorum,” in *Frutolfs und Ekkehards Chroniken und die Anonyme Kaiserchronik = Futolfi et Ekkehardi chronica necnon anonymi chronica imperatirum*, Ausgewählte Quellen zur Deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters 15, ed. and trans. Franz-Josef Schmale and Irene Schmale-Ott (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), 262–63. Monumenta Germaniae Historica has made the Latin text of this edition available online, accompanied by a new introduction, www.mgh.de/fileadmin/Downloads/pdf/kaiserchronik.pdf. A similar statement is Lambert of Hersfeld's account of gifts presented by Prince Sviatoslav Yaroslavich (d. 1076) to Emperor Henry IV; see Zajac, “Remembrance and Erasure,” 43.

32 Franz Reiner Erkens, “Fecit nuptias region, ut decuit, apparatu: Hochzeitsfeste als Akte monarchischer Repräsentation in salischer Zeit,” in *Feste und Feiern im Mittelalter. Paderborner Symposion des Mediävistenverbandes*, ed. Detlef Altenburg, Jörg Jarnut, and Hans-Hugo Steinhoff (Sigmaringen: Thorbecke, 1991), 401–21 esp. 412–17.

precedes the textual narrative in the manuscript (Figure 3).³³ There is no doubt that Henry V and Matilda, who are centrally seated at a richly furnished table, are at the heart of the festivities. The crowned couple are flanked by two clerics and served by two cupbearers. This drawing visualizes a key moment in the history of Henry V, a history that was magnified by incorporating Matilda, who, according to the *Imperial Chronicle*, “was held to bring glory and honour to both the Roman empire and the English realm.”³⁴ The chronicle also includes a painted miniature depicting the crowned Henry V receiving the orb from Bishop Ruthard of Mainz.³⁵ Both episodes from Henry’s life are narrative scenes, breaking with the tradition of static, enthroned images that represent his royal and imperial predecessors in the same manuscript.³⁶ Even though the visual depiction of this festive matrimonial meal is unique, written descriptions of nuptial celebrations in chronicles appear relatively frequently. In the *Chronicle of Frutolf* (ca. 1103) the 1044 marriage celebrations of Emperor Henry III and Agnes of Poitou in Ingelheim are commemorated. By contrast with the largesse Henry V displayed towards jesters and jongleurs, here we are told that Henry III “left many performers and jongleurs not only without gifts, but even let them go without food and drink.”³⁷ Franz-Reiner Erkens has pointed out that Henry III’s behaviour was the result of his religious belief that entertainers disrupted the aura of sacred kinship. By withholding their reward, the emperor promoted himself as a supporter of the church reformers.³⁸ Nonetheless, jesters and jongleurs were part of the festive, political, and public nature of wedding celebrations, and their presence helped to represent and affirm rulership.

The public act of a wedding feast would have been the culminating moment of the long journey from England of Matilda and her entourage, serving as an excellent stage for the dual roles of king/daughter and duke/consort to be performed through the display of material culture. On the occasion of Henry the Lion’s marriage, Helmold of Bosau (writing 1163–1172) states that the envoys “brought homewards the daughter of the English King together with gold and silver and extensive treasures.”³⁹ Might the writer, who was well-informed about Henry the Lion, have actually seen the costly goods, or did he simply know of King Henry’s wealth? In the *Draco Normannicus* (1167–1169), Helmold’s contemporary Stephen of Rouen—a monk at Bec Hellouin—wrote of Matilda’s treasure that “no one was able to count the large amounts of gold and silver. The splendour of

33 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 373, fol. 95v.

34 Cited in Chibnall, *The Empress*, 26.

35 Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS 373, fol. 83r.

36 www.mgh.de/fileadmin/Downloads/pdf/kaiserchronik.pdf.

37 “Frutolfi Chronica,” in *Frutolfs und Ekkehard’s Chroniken und die Anonyme Kaiserchronik*, 64–65.

38 Erkens, “Fecit nuptias region,” 410–11.

39 “In tempero dierum illorum misit Heinricus dux Bawariae et Saxoniae legatos in Angliam, et adduxerunt filiam regis Angliae cum argento et auro et diviciis magnis, et accepit eam dux in uxorem.” *Helmolds “Slavenchronik,”* ed. Bernard Schmeidler, MGH SS Rer. Germ. 32 (Hanover, 1937), 209. Also Helmold von Bosau, *Chronik der Slaven*, trans. J. C. M. Laurent and W. Wattenbach, *Die Geschichtschreiber der deutschen Vorzeit* 7 (Berlin, 1852), 221. On Helmold’s account and others concerning Matilda’s travel and marriage, see Brander, “Mit großer Pracht,” 404–6.

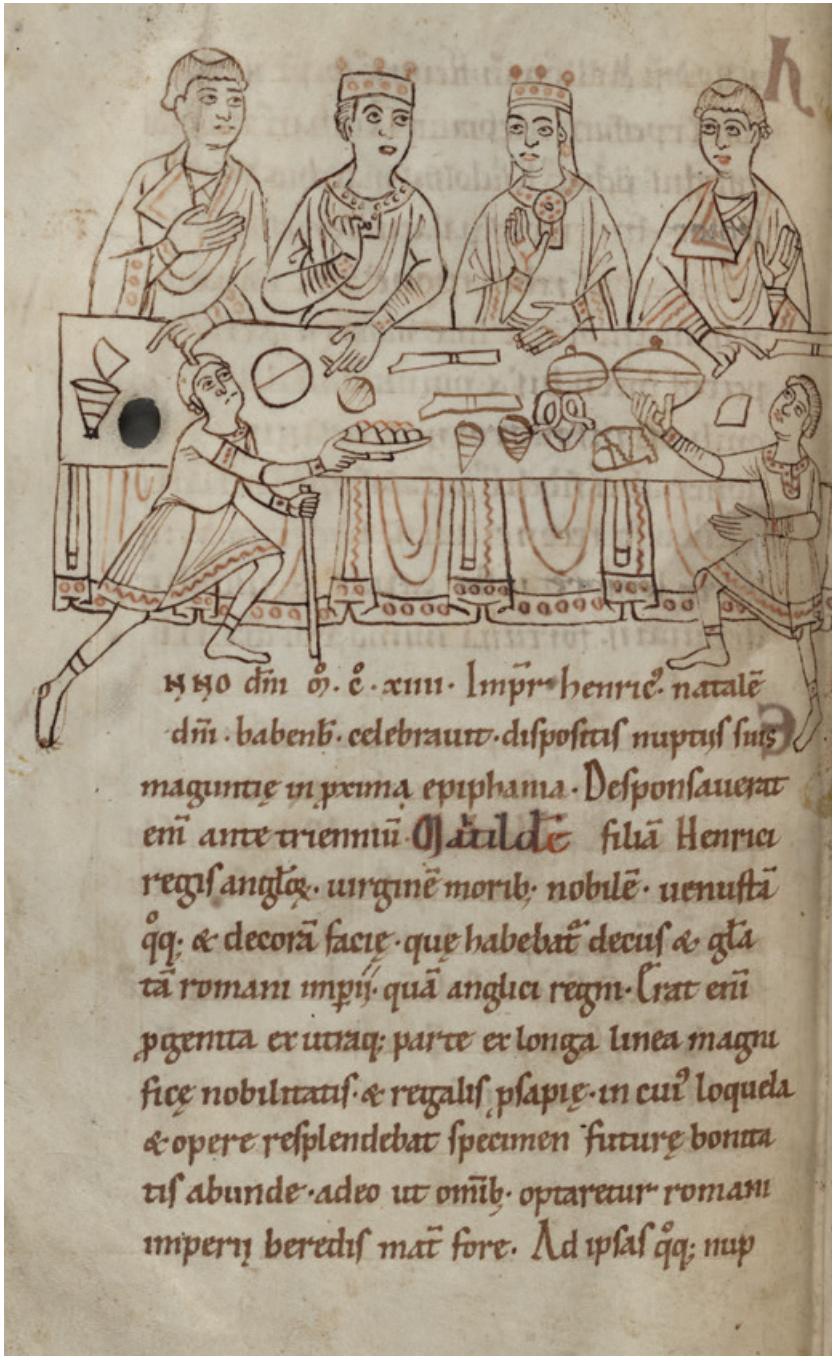


Figure 3. *Imperial Chronicle*, ca. 1114. The Parker Library, Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, MS 373, fol. 95v. Photo: Master and Fellows of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.

the vessels was incomprehensible. What and how many royal ornaments of different variety and value the royal princess carried is beyond description.”⁴⁰ To Stephen, it must have been obvious that King Henry II—one of the main characters in the *Draco*—would bestow on his daughter many precious objects because this reflected positively upon his own rule and showed that he respected his future son-in-law, who—as the chronicler points out—was the cousin of Emperor Frederick Barbarossa. Although written only a couple of years after Matilda arrived in Saxony, with the event of the marriage still fresh in memory, the tales told by both Helmold and Stephen describe the precious items in terms of impressive quantities of silver and gold rather than detailing the ornaments in the treasures. Chroniclers referring to the event decades after it had taken place used similar wording, although Ralph Niger distinguishes between vestments and vessels, perhaps reflecting the common liturgical division between the two.⁴¹ Despite the topoi in these descriptions, their insistence on Henry II’s wealth bestowed upon the ducal couple in terms of the movement of gold, silver, treasure, ornament, vestments, and vessels demonstrates a clear representational understanding of such things. At the same time, the active potential of these riches surfaces if we interpret their mobility not merely in terms of wealth going from England to Saxony, but as transmitters of status, stories, and connections.

Entering Palermo Resplendent with Regal Garments

That artefacts were made to work with and for people becomes even more evident when turning to Matilda’s sister Joanna. Negotiations for Joanna to marry King William II of Sicily were carried out during the summer of 1176. The planning for this marriage involved the coming and going of ambassadors, and with them gifts must have been brought back and forth. The reliquary pendant of Queen Margaret of Sicily (d. 1183), mother of William II, serves as an example of such gift-giving (Figure 4a–b). Queen and bishop are depicted on the back of the small gold pendant, with Margaret holding out her hands as if to receive the precious object from Reginald, who raises his right hand to bless her. They can safely be identified by the inscription around the border: ISTUD REGINE MARGARETE SICULOR[UM] TRA[N]SMITTIT PRESUL RAINAUD[US] BATONIOR[UM] (That [which] was transmitted to Queen Margaret of Sicily by Bishop Reginald of Bath).⁴² The text running along the edge on the front reveals that it once held parts of Thomas

40 “Cum quantis opibus dicere nullus habet. / Aurum quis numeret, argenti copia quanta, / Vasorum species mens memorare nequit. / Quam varii generis, pretii, quot regia virgo / Ornamenta tulit, scribere nemo valet.” (v. 199–204). Stephen of Rouen, *Draco Normannicus*, ed. Richard Howlett, *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, 4 vols. (London, 1885) 2: 4. See also Ehlers, “Anglonormannisches am Hof Heinrichs des Löwen?,” 211.

41 “cum incomparabili suppellectile tam in vestibus et vasis pretiosis quam in auro et argento” (Matilda came with “incomparable sumptuous so much as costly vestments and vessels in gold and silver”). Radulphus Nigri, *Chronicon*, ed. Robert Anstruther (London, 1851), 171. See also Ahlers, *Die Welfen*, 68n300.

42 Inscriptions taken from www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/468600.



Figure 4a–b. Reliquary pendant of Queen Margaret of Sicily, 1174–1177.
New York, Metropolitan Museum, Acc. No. 63.160. Creative Commons Licence.

Becket's blood as well as pieces of the garments he wore during his murder (cloak, belt, hood, shoe, and shirt) and which were soaked in his blood. These relics would have been displayed under a crystal.⁴³ Bishop Reginald of Bath (d. 1191), a supporter of Henry II against Archbishop Becket, had the pendant especially made for Margaret in England in the late 1170s. The queen had interceded with Pope Alexander III for Reginald of Bath's father, Jocelyn of Salisbury, whom Henry II had appointed chancellor of Normandy and who had been excommunicated by Thomas Becket.⁴⁴ The reliquary is likely to have figured in the exchange of diplomatic items, and the marriage of William and Joanna would have been a suitable event for the presentation of the gift, although Reginald himself was not present.⁴⁵ This reliquary has often been used as an example of the rapid spread of the

43 DE SANGUINE S[AN]C[T]I. THOME. M[ARTY]-RIS. DE VESTIBU[S] SUI SANGUINE SUO TINCTIS (outer ring) DE PELLICIA. DE CILITIO. DE CUCULLA. DE CALCIAMENTO. ET CAMISIA (Part of the blood of St. Thomas Martyr. Parts of the vestments stained with his blood: the cloak, the belt, the hood, the shoe, the shirt).

44 G. A. Loud, "The Kingdom of Sicily and the Kingdom of England, 1066–1266," *History* 88 (2003): 540–57 at 554.

45 Neil Stratford, "Reliquary Pendant of Queen Margaret of Sicily," in *English Romanesque Art 1066–1200*, exh. cat. Hayward Gallery London, April 5–July 8, 1984, ed. George Zarnecki, Janet Holt, and Tristram Holland (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1984), no. 303; Dirk Booms and Peter Higgs, eds. *Sicily: Culture and Conquest* (London: British Museum, 2016), 240–43, and fig. 193.

Becket cult and the involvement of the Plantagenet princesses in doing so.⁴⁶ It also gives an idea of the type of small-scale luxury items that were exchanged and highly valued, yet not detailed in the medieval written record.

The Pipe Rolls for 1175/76 list “small supplies” (*minutis apparatibus*) which the daughter of the king needed as Joanna advanced into her new kingdom on the royal vessel accompanied by seven ships.⁴⁷ From Winchester they sailed to Normandy, where Joanna met her brother Henry, who escorted her overland to Poitiers.⁴⁸ The journey continued to Toulouse where count Raymond VI welcomed them. They then set sail to Naples, taking the sea route along the coast;⁴⁹ finally, Joanna arrived at Palermo via Salerno and Calabria. The small supplies brought with the royal princess are not specified, but they must have been only a fraction of the sumptuous goods that were loaded on the seven ships. Pomp was a matter of prime importance, as is testified by an entry for that same year mentioning that in London a suit of clothes (*roba*) was bought for Joanna for the staggering amount of £114, significantly more than the £88 that had been spent on the coronation robes of Joanna’s brother Henry and his wife Margaret.⁵⁰ The expenses made for the future bride’s garments should not come as a surprise when we take into account that King Henry II and his advisors must have known that textiles played an important representative (and commercial) role at the Sicilian court, which had its own textile workshop.⁵¹ Anglo-Norman ambassadors returning from Sicily as well as Sicilian magnates who visited England surely informed Henry about the splendours of

46 One of the first to draw attention to the importance of the daughters in the spread in the Becket cult was Kay Brainard Slocum, “Angevin Marriage, Diplomacy and the Early Dissemination of the Cult of Thomas Becket,” *Medieval Perspectives* 14 (1999): 214–28. For recent research on the cult, including the role of the Plantagenet sisters, see Webster and Gelin, *The Cult of St Thomas Becket*; and Gregoria Caveró Domínguez et al., *Tomás Becket y la península ibérica (1170–1230)* (León: Universidad de León, 2013), 52–57.

47 PR 22 Hen II, 198: “Et servientibus episcopi Wintoniensis 6l. et 7s. et 11d. ad procurandos nuncios regis Sicilie per breve regis. [...] Et pro 40 ulnis de canevas tiguendo ad cameram regis [painted linen for the king’s chamber] et aliis minutis apparatibus quando filia regis ivit in Siciliam 42s. per idem breve.” PR 22 Hen II, 199: “Et item in liberation esnece quando filia regis transfretavit itura in Siciliam 7l. et 10s. per breve regis. Et in liberation.vij. navium que cum ea transfretaverunt 10l. et 13s. per breve regis.” See also Schröder, *Macht und Gabe*, 103n104.

48 Bowie, *The Daughters*, 90.

49 Bowie, *The Daughters*, 91.

50 PR 22 Hen II, 12: “Et mercatoribus Lond’ 91l. et 6s. et 9d. ad adquietandam robam filie Regis per breve regis quod attulit de 114l. et 5s. et 5d. [...] + Et pro roba filie Regis 114l. et 5s. et 5d. per breve regis.” For garments as part of dowries in Bari, see Lucia Sinisi, “The Marriage of the Year (1028),” *Medieval Clothing and Textiles* 9 (2013): 45–54, and, in the same volume, Antonietta Amati Canti, “Bridal Gifts in Medieval Bari,” 1–44.

51 Isabelle Dolezalek, *Arabic Script on Christian Kings: Textile Inscriptions on Royal Garments from Norman Sicily*. Das Mittelalter, Beihefte (Berlin: de Gruyter, 2017). For the workshop, see esp. 85–86.

the Palermitan court.⁵² The English king assured that his youngest daughter would be dressed splendidly, thereby promoting her royal status while also acknowledging that of the Sicilian king.

A lively picture of the regal magnificence that framed Joanna's marriage is painted in Roger of Howden's *Gesta* (ca. 1169–1192).⁵³ The royal chaplain was almost certainly present at Henry's court in 1176–1177 and therefore informed about the early stages of the marriage negotiations.⁵⁴ In 1176, the king delivered his daughter into the care of his ambassadors and those of her future husband, King William of Sicily, and he also presented to them horses and dress, gold and silver, and valuable vessels.⁵⁵

In the same year before the feast of the Purification of Holy Mary [February 2, 1177], Joanna, daughter of the aforementioned king of the English, who was sent to be given into marriage to King William of Sicily, arrived in Palermo together with Bishop Gilles of Evreux, and the other envoys the king had gathered; and it was by night that they entered the city of Palermo, the whole city welcomed them, and lamps, so many and so large, were lighted up, that the city almost seemed to be on fire, and the rays of the stars could in no way bear comparison with the brilliancy of such a light. The said daughter of the king of England was then escorted, mounted on one of the king's horses, and resplendent with regal garments, to a certain palace, that there she might in becoming state await the day of her marriage and coronation.⁵⁶

⁵² For the connections between England and Sicily, see Bowie, *The Daughters*, 81–97 esp. 84–85. Written accounts detailing the beauty of Palermo are mentioned in Dolezalek, *Arabic Script*, 139–40. See also Laura Sciasci, “Palermo as a Stage for, and a Mirror of, Political Developments from the 12th to the 15th Century,” in *A Companion to Medieval Palermo: The History of a Mediterranean City from 600 to 1500*, ed. Annliese Nef (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 299–323.

⁵³ For Roger of Howden, see Michael Staunton, *The Historians of Angevin England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 51–66.

⁵⁴ Loud, “The Kingdom of Sicily,” 555.

⁵⁵ “Tunc dominus rex tradidit filiam suam nunciis regis Wilelmi simulque nunciis suis, et praeeparavit eis necessaria sua; et dedit eis equos et vestes, et aurum et argentum, et vasa pretiosa. Et cum omnia complisset region more, et condigno honore, permisit eos abire.” Roger of Howden, *Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi Benedicti Abbatis*, ed. William Stubbs, 2 vols. (London: Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867), 1:120.

⁵⁶ “Edodem anno ante Purificationem Beatae Mariae, Johanna filia praedicti regis Angliae, quae missa fuerant maritanda regi Willelmo Siciliae, Panormum venit, cum Aegidio Ebroidensi episcopo, et aliis nunciis regis patris sui eam conducebant; et cum ipsa et sui civitatem Panormi de nocte intrassent, tota civitas eis applausit, et tot et tante accensa sunt luminaria, ut civitas penitus crederetur comburi; et stellarum radii prae fulgore tantorum luminum, nullatenus possent comparere. Ducta est ergo praedicta filia regis Angliae super equum regium, vestibus regalibus insignita, in quoddam palatium, ut ibidem desponsationis et coronationis suae diem gratius posset expectare.” *Gesta Regis*, 1:157. This episode is also in Roger of Howden, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri de Houedene*, ed. William Stubbs, 4 vols. (London: Longman, 1868), 2:95. The royal weddings of Henry the Young King and Margaret, Richard Lionheart and Berengaria, John and Isabella of Gloucester, Leonor and Alfonso VIII, Matilda and Henry the Lion are mentioned, but not described by Howden.

Ten full days after the night-time entry, on February 13, the dual ceremonies of marriage and coronation took place in the royal chapel of Palermo cathedral, performed by its archbishop, Walter. Again, Sicilian clergy and nobles as well as high-placed English envoys witnessed the events.⁵⁷

Even though the exact sources for Howden's chronicle are unknown, the vivid description may have resulted from his intimate knowledge of Henry's court and his access to written court documents, such as the Pipe Rolls in which he himself appears several times. His description of Joanna's splendid entry demonstrates an awareness of the impression dress was designed to make and is suggestive of the sensational experience of entries. The otherwise dark streets of Palermo were the brightly lit stage on which the body of the bride was presented. This was highlighted by focusing on Joanna's regal dress and the royal horse that lifted the princess above her audience. Howden's sensorial language stimulated the memory and imagination of his readers.

In his *Chronica* (ca. 1201) Howden achieved something similar with his portrayal of Empress Matilda's escape from Oxford after it had been besieged by King Stephen shortly before Christmas 1142. Clothed in white garments, Matilda fled across the frozen River Thames. The reflection of the snow and her white dress deceived the eyes of the besiegers and Matilda managed get to the castle of Wallingford, and Oxford was at length surrendered to the king.⁵⁸ Whereas the ostentatious outfit of Joanna is used to display and promote the royal body, her grandmother's white garments are meant to conceal her figure and identity.⁵⁹ Yet, in both cases, the element of dress is employed to underscore the importance of these women and their actions. Howden provides no further detail about Joanna's garments than the descriptor regal or royal (*vestibus regalibus*), perhaps in reference to the typical colors of scarlet or purple and gold. The clothes were likely similar to the set (*roba*) her father had paid for. There can be little doubt that the representation of apparel in chronicles, literary texts, and art, as well as surviving items of medieval clothing, highlights the importance attached to dress as a communicative tool by elite medieval societies.⁶⁰ Garments could be made to reveal—or conceal—high

⁵⁷ Bowie, *The Daughters*, 91.

⁵⁸ "Et parum ante Natale fugit imperatricem per Tamensem glaciata, circumamicta vestibus albis, reverberatione nivis et similitudine fallentibus oculos obsidentium; fugit ad castellum de Walingford, et sic Oxeneford regi tandem est reddita." Roger of Howden, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, 1:206; *The Annals of Roger de Hoveden: Comprising the History of England and of other Countries of Europe from A.D. 732 to A.D. 1201*, trans. Henry T. Riley, 2 vols. (London: Bohn, 1853), 1:246. Howden took this episode from Henry of Huntingdon's *Historia Anglorum*: see Henry of Huntingdon, *Henrici archidiaconi huntendunensis Historia Anglorum*, ed. Thomas Arnold (London: Longman, 1879), 276.

⁵⁹ When Richard the Lionheart returned from crusade and passed through the Holy Roman Empire, he tried to conceal his identity through dress as well, although he did not succeed. Richard was held by Leopold of Austria between 1192 and 1193 and then imprisoned between February 1193 and February 1194 by Emperor Henry VI. See Roger of Howden, *Chronica Magistri Rogeri*, 3:185–86; *The Annals of Roger de Hoveden*, 2:269–70.

⁶⁰ Janet E. Schneider, *Early Gothic Column-Figure Sculpture in France: Appearance, Materials, and Significance* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011); E. Jane Burns, ed., *Medieval Fabrications: Dress, Textiles,*

birth and social status. Outward appearance was understood to be strongly connected to inner virtue and character.⁶¹

Combining Joanna's itinerary with the incidental references from the Pipe Rolls and the account by Roger of Howden, we can perceive the visual, ritual, sensorial, and representational potential of such a journey. By providing Joanna with the means and matter for her bridal trip, Henry II had undoubtedly meant to empower his daughter. And in writing about the event, Roger did not just paint a textbook scene concerned with Henry's magnificence; he also promoted Joanna as a worthy bride for William.

Celebrating Royal Nuptials in Iberia

As for Leonor, the second of the three Plantagenet sisters, King Alfonso VIII of Castile had sent an embassy to England to petition for her hand in November 1169. Leonor married Alfonso in the cathedral of the city of Burgos some time before September 17, 1170, when the first of the royal couple's many joint charters was issued.⁶² Departing from Bordeaux, Leonor and her entourage travelled through Col du Somport and Jaca to reach Tarazona in the Kingdom of Aragon.⁶³ It was in Tarazona, shortly before the couple were to celebrate their nuptials, that Alfonso confirmed Leonor's *arras* (dower). He stated explicitly that he did so in "the presence of the lady, my mother Eleanor, illustrious queen of England" while also acknowledging Henry as "the illustrious king of England, my father."⁶⁴ José Manuel Cerda Costabal has demonstrated convincingly that Eleanor was deeply involved in the negotiations for her daughter's *arras*, an example that "kings and queens were co-operators."⁶⁵

Clothwork, and Other Cultural Imaginings (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004); and Sarah-Grace Heller, ed., *A Cultural History of Dress and Fashion in the Medieval Age* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), esp. chaps. 6, 8, and 9.

61 Michael Staunton investigated these issues in relation to descriptions of dress found in historical writing in Angevin England. Michael Staunton, "Dress, Appearance and Power in Angevin England," unpublished paper presented at *Inside Out: Dress and Identity in the Middle Ages*, 38th Annual Conference, Center for Medieval Studies, Fordham University (New York), March 17–18, 2018.

62 For the marriage negotiations and wedding, see Bowie, *The Daughters*, 71–75, 107–9.

63 Bowie, *The Daughters*, 75.

64 This charter is studied in detail by José Manuel Cerda Costabal, "Matrimonio y patrimonio. Las arras de Leonor Plantagenet, reina consorte de Castilla," *Anuario de estudios medievales* 46 (2016): 63–96 at 65. For an image of the charter and an incomplete transcription, see Julio González, *El reino de Castilla en la época de Alfonso VIII*, 3 vols. (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1960), 1:192. For the relation between *arras* and women's power, see Ana Rodríguez, "Stratégies matrimoniales, stratégies patrimoniales: Autour du pouvoir des femmes au royaume de León-Castille (XIIe–XIIIe siècles)," in *Les stratégies matrimoniales (IX–XIIIe siècle)*, ed. Martin Aurell (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), 169–91.

65 Theresa Earenfight, "Without the Persona of the Prince: Kings, Queens and the Idea of Monarchy in Late Medieval Europe," *Gender & History* 19 (2007): 1–21 at 12.

Because Leonor departed from France instead of England, no Pipe Roll entries exist that reveal what this princess brought with her on the occasion of her marriage.⁶⁶ However, the poet Ramón Vidal de Besalú gives some idea of the splendour of the Castilian court when he described Leonor's "beautiful and well-made mantle of silk cloth, which is called a *ciclatón*; it was red with a silver edge and was embroidered with a golden lion."⁶⁷ While this description in the *Castia gilós* was surely meant to flatter the queen, it equally shows the courtly etiquette of display. Additionally, the remains of the royal couple's clothes found in their tombs at the female Cistercian monastery of Las Huelgas, just outside the city of Burgos, offer an insight into the prestige expressed through clothing.⁶⁸ Apart from these references, the sources connected to Leonor and Alfonso are largely silent in the matter of material culture. It is difficult to reconstruct the splendour that accompanied the Plantagenet princess and the nuptial festivities that apparently continued for a month.⁶⁹ However, the *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, written ca. 1150 for Alfonso VIII's grandfather, Emperor Alfonso VII of León-Castile (d. 1157), paints a picture of how a royal wedding was celebrated just one generation earlier. The chronicle details at some length the splendid nuptials of the emperor's daughter Infanta Urraca when she married King García of Pamplona in 1144. In dual processions, bride and bridegroom rode through the city of León to the royal palace. The infanta entered the walled city through the Roman portal known as the Puerta Cauriense, escorted by her

66 From 1175/76 to 1180/81 annual payments were made to a certain Johannes, cleric of the Spanish Queen A (short for Alienora) and in 1180/81 an entry mentions that 39s 6d was paid to Fierebrachius to make a case and a small vessel to transport vessels and textiles to the king's daughter in Iberia. See PR 27 Hen II, 157: "Et Fierebrachio 39s. et 7d. ad faciendas malas et alia minuta vasa ad portandum vassellam et pannos quos Rex misit filie sue in Hyspanium per breve regis."

67 The text by Ramón Vidal de Besalú is cited in Miriam Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile (1180–1246) and Political Women in the High Middle Ages* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 47. A *ciclatón* is "a red silk interwoven with gold thread made in Almería, one of the most important medieval centres of silk production in Al-Andalus." Kristin Böse, "Beyond Foreign: Textiles from the Castilian Royal Tombs in Santa María de las Huelgas in Burgos," in *Oriental Silks in Medieval Europe*, ed. Juliane von Fircks and Regula Schorta, *Riggisberger Berichte* 21 (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung, 2016), 213–30 at 226.

68 Kristin Böse, "Cultures Re-Shaped: Textiles from the Castilian Royal Tombs in Santa María de las Huelgas in Burgos," in *Dressing the Part: Textiles as Propaganda in the Middle Ages*, ed. Kate Dimitrova and Margaret Goehring (Turnhout: Brepols, 2014), 95–105; and María Barrigón, "Textiles and Farewells: Revisiting the Grave Goods of King Alfonso VIII of Castile and Queen Eleanor Plantagenet," *Textile History* 46 (2015): 235–57. For the ritual context of textiles and importance of cloths in Iberia and its impact beyond the peninsula see María Judith Feliciano, "Medieval Textiles in Iberia: Studies for a New Approach," in *Envisioning Islamic Art and Architecture: Essays in Honor of Renata Holod*, ed. David J. Roxburgh (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 46–65.

69 Bowie, *The Daughters*, 108. The reference that the celebrations continued the whole month of September can be found in the sixteenth-century *Anales de la Corona de Aragón*: see Jerónimo Zurita, *Anales de la corona de Aragón*, 7 vols. (Zaragoza, 1610–1621), 1:77.

aunt, noble knights, clerics, women, and girls. In the royal palace a chamber for Urraca was installed and around it a great crowd gathered and many festivities took place.⁷⁰

The emperor gave valuable gifts of silver and gold, horses and mules and many other riches to his daughter and to his son-in-law, King García. [...] For her part, the Infanta Sancha [the sister of the emperor] gave her niece many gold and silver dishes, and mules and she-mules loaded with royal riches. [...]. King García held a magnificent royal banquet [in Pamplona] for the Castilians who were with him and for all the knights and nobles of his kingdom, and they celebrated the royal nuptials for many days.⁷¹

This passage shows that Urraca received abundant riches from her father and aunt, with the latter also presenting gold and silver dishes, perhaps similar to the sort of household utensils Matilda brought with her to Saxony. Like Matilda and Joanna, Urraca was accompanied by these treasures when she joined her husband García in Pamplona, where a second round of celebrations took place. The *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris* paints a different picture from the earlier *Imperial Chronicle* in that separate events for male and female attendees at the wedding are carefully delineated. Both chronicles, nonetheless, evidence that marriage festivities were excellent opportunities to make the presence of prestigious brides and their powerful fathers visible through processions and meals that were witnessed by audiences from near and far. The display of a wide-ranging variety of riches also underscores that both bride and bridegroom were treasured as important assets, instrumental in establishing political and economic bonds. It is quite likely that Leonor, like Urraca, festively entered towns surrounded by luxury items carried by horses, mules, and carts.

The scraps of evidence discussed in this chapter have brought to light the crucial role played by clothing—including furs, Iberian silks, and fine woollen cloth—and other sumptuous artefacts in imbuing medieval princesses with an aura of power. Although Matilda and her sisters were young when they journeyed into the lands of their future husbands, they were not completely inexperienced in matters of display. As royal daughters, they were familiar with costly artefacts and the splendour that accompanied them as essential manifestations of power. While it is true that the specific selection of objects and the royal self-fashioning for Matilda resulted from her parents' decisions, throughout her long travel the English princess must have observed how important sumptuous goods were to the promotion of her status, as well as to the establishment of bonds with influential people who might serve her in the future. Matilda and other splendidly wrapped brides, armed with richly filled chests, learned that appearance and wealth were of utmost importance when setting the stage for the performance of power.

⁷⁰ For a gendered reading of the chamber in the royal palace at León and the wedding festivities, see Therese Martin, "Chronicling the Iberian Palace: Written Sources and the Meanings of Medieval Christian Rulers' Residences," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 2 (2010): 109–39 at 125–26.

⁷¹ *The World of El Cid: Chronicles of the Spanish Reconquest*, ed. Simon Barton and Richard Fletcher (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 202–3. For the Latin edition, see Antonio Maya Sánchez, *Chronica Adefonsi Imperatoris*, Corpus Christianorum Continuatio Mediaevalis 71 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1990).

