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Women and the written word : textual culture in court and convent during the twelfth-century Renaissance

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Chapter Two

BOOKS MADE FOR WOMEN IN THE TWELFTH CENTURY – COURT



The previous chapter set the historical backdrop establishing how twelfth-century women, specifically those within a socio-economic context of convent or court, could acquire levels of literacy ranging from a basic knowledge of Latin used for liturgy, to reading books in a variety of genres written in Latin or vernacular. Building upon this foundation, this chapter introduces manuscripts made for noblewomen during the twelfth century, addressing how the books were acquired, as well as how they were used. The chapter is arranged into two main sections; first highlighting the books made in Latin, followed by books made in vernacular. The translation of Latin sources into vernacular becomes a guiding trend significantly connected to the literary patronage of twelfth-century aristocratic women throughout Western Europe.

The range in subject, genre, and language of the manuscript evidence speaks to the breadth and depth of noblewomen's contribution to twelfth-century written culture. This chapter will show that many of the books belonging to women at court reveal a strong interest in histories, religious texts, and poetry, with notable attention to works of romance and a demand for books in vernacular languages. Noblewomen, as active readers within a lay context, used their financial currency and social status to support the genres of texts they deemed entertaining, elucidating, or spiritually valuable. Women not only acquired books through dedication, but also actively supported written culture whether as patron of an author or through a direct commission of a book. Moreover, the variety of book genres indicates that noblewomen were engaged in personal reading interests such as romance or history, in addition to reading works of a pious nature. Each section of this chapter presents examples of manuscripts from my corpus which were made for women in a court setting, thus demonstrating noblewomen's reading preferences, whether implicit or explicit, their agency in acquiring the books they found valuable, and their contribution to the textual culture of the Twelfth Century Renaissance.

In 1982, Susan G. Bell stated in her valuable article that medieval women were "ambassadors of culture."¹ It becomes evident from Bell's research, as well as from scholarship in the thirty-five years since her article appeared, that medieval women were specifically influential in the spread

of textual culture through dynastic, and especially matrilineal, networks during the “long twelfth century.”² Owing to marriage alliances formed between royal and noble rulers, women’s textual culture expanded beyond regional domains and engaged new audiences.³ Noblewomen could exert their influence beyond the household through supporting the arts; often choosing textual pursuits acting as a patron to an author or scribe.⁴ Joan Ferrante argues for a broad perspective of what should be considered support of textual culture. Ferrante writes, “literary patronage can be both the active inspiring of works by setting specific subjects for composition or by asking questions that require treatises to answer them, and also the passive acceptance of works dedicated to or composed for the favor of the (female) patron.”⁵ This definition creates a space for the range of textual activities women in the twelfth century supported, while it further suggests the varying levels of authority and influence women held regarding the books they owned.⁶ As Elisabeth Tyler points out, “the commissioning of a Latin text was itself an assertion of authority,” especially when made by a woman.⁷ Thus, the books twelfth-century noblewomen owned, read, and shared helped to shape the textual culture around them.

¹ Susan G. Bell, “Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture,” *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 7 (1982): 742–768; Reprinted in Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowalski, eds. *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988).

² June Hall McCash, “The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women: An Overview,” in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, ed. June Hall McCash (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 9–12. Margaret Schaus, ed. *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia* (London: Routledge, 2006), 259.

³ Or the movement of a female community from a convent in one location to populate another.

⁴ For more on the patronage of art by twelfth-century women, see Christine Havice, “Women and the Production of Art in the Middle Ages: The Significance of Context,” in *Double Vision: Perspectives on Gender and the Visual Arts*, ed. Natalie Harris Bluestone (Plainsboro, NJ: Associated University Press, 1995), 67–94. Also, Marilyn Dunn, “Convents,” in *Dictionary of Women Artists, Vol. 2*, ed. Delia Gaze (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 1997), 21–27, at 27. For medieval women’s patronage of architecture, see Therese Martin, ed., *Reassessing the Roles of Women as “Makers” of Medieval Art and Architecture* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

⁵ Joan M. Ferrante, “Women’s Role in Latin Letters from the Fourth to the Early Twelfth Century,” in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, ed. June Hall McCash (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 74. Ian Short argues for a distinction between the active and passive forms of patronage. See Ian Short, “Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth Century England,” in *Anglo-Norman Studies XIV, Proceedings from the Battle Conference, 1991*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1992), 231–232. Further, Short suggests a recognition of the special instances of vernacular patronage in the monasteries.

⁶ Madeline H. Caviness, “Anchoress, Abbess, and Queen: Donors and Patrons or Intercessors and Matrons?” in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, ed. June Hall McCash (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 105–155. Caviness comments that “ownership begins to sound a lot like patronage,” 106.

⁷ Elisabeth M. Tyler, “Talking about History in Eleventh-Century England: The *Encomium Emmae Reginae* and the court of Harthacnut,” *Early Medieval Europe* 13, no. 4 (2005): 359–383, at 379.

Mary Dockray-Miller posits two modes of patronage by noblewomen, from very little, where the “patroness” approves expenses and accepts the finished manuscript, to total control, where the patroness makes “all decisions about texts, design, colors, composition and presentation of the page.”⁸ Support of manuscript production displayed the wealth and piety of a woman in addition to her education and literary abilities. For example, Ermengard of Narbonne (d. 1197), in charge of the important trade city located on a bay of the Mediterranean, was known for her long history of literary support. During her fifty years as viscountess, she became known as a patron of poets, specifically the troubadours popular in Occitania, including a female *trobairitz* known as Azalais de Porcraignes, in a rare example of female-to-female patronage.⁹ The well-known contemporary troubadour poet Bernard de Ventadorn praised Ermengard’s learning, King Louis VII of France wrote to her acknowledging her political authority, and she is even mentioned in a Norse skaldic poem in the *Orkneyinga Saga* that tells of her love and support of lyric poetry.¹⁰ Ermengard exemplifies the ways twelfth-century noblewomen used their literacy, social and economic status, and religious devotion to leave their mark on the textual culture of the period.

1. BOOKS WRITTEN IN LATIN FOR NOBLEWOMEN

Since the early Middle Ages, aristocratic women acquired books through inheritance, as a dedication or gift, as well as through commission.¹¹ Noblewomen sought to have books made for them for variety of reasons, including political, religious, educational, or entertainment motives. An eleventh-century example of contribution to manuscript production is that of Queen Sancha of Spain (d. 1067). Her commissions represent the continuity of literary support by noblewomen in the High Middle Ages. Sancha commissioned a copy of Beatus of Liebana’s *Commentary on the Apocalypse* made by Facundus of Léon (c. 1047), a copy of the *Etymologiae* of St Isidore (c. 1047), as well as two prayerbooks.¹² First, Sancha had the *Libro de Horas de Fernando I y Sancha* (c. 1055) made as a gift for her husband, King

⁸ Mary Dockray-Miller, *The Life and Books of Judith of Flanders* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 30.

⁹ Fredric L. Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), 25; Cheyette, “Women, Poets, and Politics in Occitania,” in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 136–178. Also, Eva Martin Sartori and Dorothy Wynne Zimmerman, eds. *French Women Writers* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1994), 499.

¹⁰ *Orkneyinga Saga: The History of the Earls of Orkney*, Hermann Palsson and Paul Edwards, trans. (London: Hogarth Press, 1978). Also see “Ermengard of Narbonne, viscountess of Narbonne,” *Epistolae: Medieval Women’s Latin Letters*, <http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/woman/5.html> (accessed 11 November 2017).

¹¹ Women were more likely to receive “moveable goods rather than land” as inheritance. See Dockray-Miller, *The Life and Books of Judith of Flanders*, 96.

¹² *Facundus Beatus, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Vitrina 14-2 (1047); Etimologias de San Isidoro*,

Ferdinand, and second, *Liber canticorum et horarum* (c. 1059) made for herself.¹³ The prayerbook for her husband was completed under Sancha's direction, representing an instance of a book commissioned by a woman specifically as a gift dedicated to a man. The prayerbook intended for Ferdinand, copied by the scribe Petrus and decorated by Fructuosus, provides two features which point to Sancha's role in the manuscript's commission: a donor portrait and a colophon.¹⁴ (Figs. 2 and 3) The second prayerbook, exclusively made for the personal use of Sancha, was inherited by her daughter, the Infanta Urraca (d. 1126), who added further texts thus making the book her own.¹⁵



Figure 2: Donor Portrait (fol. 6v: presently 3v) *Libro de Horas de Fernando I y Sancha*, Santiago de Compostela, Biblioteca de la Universidad, ms. 609/Res. 1 (1055).

El Escorial, Biblioteca del Real Monasterio, ms. & I 3 (1047); *Libro de Horas de Fernando I y Sancha*, Santiago de Compostela, Biblioteca de la Universidad, ms. 609/ Res. 1 (1055); *Liber canticorum and horarum*, Salamanca, Biblioteca General Universitaria, ms. 2668 (1059).

¹³ Therese Martin, *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propoganda in Twelfth-Century Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 57. Also, Emmanuelle Klinka, " 'Ego misera et peccatrix...': El Liber mozarabicus canticorum et horarum" (Salamanca, ms. 2668), e-Spania [online], 13 June 2012, put on-line 25 June 2012, <http://e-spania.revues.org/21044> (accessed 11 November 2017). For images and discussion of the visigothic script used in these manuscripts, see Ainoa C. Castro, <http://litteravisigothica.com> (accessed 11 November 2017).

¹⁴ *Libro de Horas de Fernando I y Sancha*, Santiago de Compostela, Biblioteca de la Universidad, Ms. 609/Res. 1 (1055), colophon on fol. 208v; acrostic on fol. 3r. See David L. Simon, "Late Romanesque Art in Spain," in *The Art of Medieval Spain, 500–1200*, ed. John P. O'Neill (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), 290.

¹⁵ Ainoa C. Castro, "Codex of the month (VII): Santiago, BU, ms 609," *Littera Visigothica* (April 2015), <http://litteravisigothica.com/codex-of-the-month-vii-santiago-bu-ms-609/> (accessed 11 November 2017). Lucy Pick, "Rethinking Cluny in Spain," *Journal of Medieval Iberian Studies* 5, no. 1 (2013): 1–17.



Figure 3: *Libro de Horas de Fernando I y Sancha*, Santiago de Compostela, Biblioteca de la Universidad, ms. 609/Res. 1 (1055). Detail of colophon (fol. 208v).

Regarding a noblewoman's reading practice, perhaps most interesting is Sancha's commission of the commentary on the Apocalypse. Produced in Spain during the middle of the eleventh century, this was not a typical request from a (female) lay patron according to Williams, especially during this period, stating that although this copy remained at the palatine church of San Isidoro, it is "the only known Beatus Commentary not created for a monastery or convent."¹⁶ The manuscript is richly illustrated, and includes a colophon on fol. 316r identifying Sancha's support in its production, as well as an acrostic on fol. 7r which indicates her shared ownership of the book along with her husband.¹⁷ Sancha's commission of the Apocalypse commentary reflects a preference to read in a similar devotional manner as done in religious communities.¹⁸

¹⁶ John Williams, "Commentary on the Apocalypse by Beatus and Commentary on Daniel by Jerome" in *The Art of Medieval Spain, A.D. 500–1200, Parts 500–1200*, ed. John P. O'Neill (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1993), 289. Wogan-Browne argues that illustrated apocalypse commentaries did not become a "new genre of lay patronage" in England until the early thirteenth century, "customized and formatted for both clerical and lay users." Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "'Cest livre liseez...chescun jour': Women and Reading c. 1230–c. 1430," in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England, c. 1100–c. 1500*, eds. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne et al. (York: York Medieval Press, 2009), 240.

¹⁷ Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional, Vitrina 14-2 (c. 1047); Acrostic fol. 7r: FREDENANDUS REX DEI GRA[TIA] M[EMO]R[I]A LIBER/SANCIA M[EMO]R[I]A L[I]BRI. Transcription taken from John Williams, "Fernando I and Alfonso VI as Patrons of the Arts," *Anales de Historia del Arte* 2 (2011): 413–435, at 413. Also see Lucy K. Pick, "Liturgical Renewal in Two Eleventh-Century Royal Spanish Prayerbooks," *Traditio* 66 (2011): 27–66. Simon, "Late Romanesque Art in Spain," 289.

¹⁸ Another noblewoman, possibly Berenguela, Queen of Castile, donated a copy of Beatus of Liebana's Apocalypse commentary to the monastery at Las Huelgas; *Las Huelgas Commentary of Beatus*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 429 (c. 1220). "A colophon on fol. 184 reveals that it was made copied for a woman but gives no clues to her identity or

Sancha's collection of manuscripts show that she was interested in prayerbooks for piety, books for education, such as Isidore of Seville's *Etymologiae*, and the richly illustrated *Beatus* to show her wealth and dynastic (Spanish) heritage. Moreover, the inclusion of colophons and acrostics in the manuscripts demonstrate Sancha's agency in their production. The reading preferences, display of piety and wealth, along with the acknowledgement of a woman's role in book production as demonstrated here by the manuscripts belonging to Queen Sancha, will remain a guiding theme throughout the following examples in this chapter. Madeline Caviness points to the "...constant blurring of boundaries among patrons, donors, recipients, and users," as especially important when discussing books made for noblewomen during the twelfth century.¹⁹ In fact, the "blurring of boundaries" among genre, format, and function of a manuscript belonging to a twelfth-century noblewoman should be factored in as well.

1.1 HISTORY CHRONICLES

A reading interest in the genre of history by noblewomen shows a support for their dynastic heritage and an understanding of how books could be of value to secure a particular woman's own political place. In 1110, Adela of Normandy, countess of Blois (d. 1137), commissioned a monk of Fleury, Hughes de St Marie, to make for her a copy of the Latin chronicle *Historia ecclesiastica* written by Orderic Vitalis.²⁰ Adela likely used the book for its educational purposes, as well as for the book's political, and even entertainment value. As the daughter of William the Conqueror, Adela would likely have been taught Latin and French. She acted as regent of Blois for both her husband and her sons for over two decades, composing and receiving plentiful correspondence from

where she resided." See Williams, "Commentary on the Apocalypse," 293; Nigel Morgan, "Illustrated Apocalypses of Mid-Thirteenth-century England: Historical Context, Patronage and Readership," in *The Trinity Apocalypse: Trinity College Cambridge, MS R.16.2*, eds. David McKitterick, Nigel J. Morgan, and Ian Short (London: The British Library, 2005), 5. Further, a thirteenth-century copy of the *Liber Floridus*, which includes the *Apocalypsis depictus*, Paris, **Bibliothèque Nationale de France, MS lat. 8865 (c. 1250–1275)** contains a letter by Blanche of Castile (fol. 188r); see Colum P. Hourihane, "Apocalypse," in *The Grove Encyclopedia of Medieval Art and Architecture, Volume 1*, ed. Colum P. Hourihane (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 120. The *Lambeth Apocalypse*, London, **Lambeth Palace Library, MS 209 (c. 1265–1274)** was commissioned by Lady Eleanor de Quincy, Countess of Winchester, and has an image of a woman at fol. 48r; Wogan-Browne, "Cest livre liseez," 240 n. 5.

¹⁹ Caviness, "Anchoress, Abbess and Queen," 113.

²⁰ Lynn K. Barker, "Ivo of Chartres and the Anglo-Norman Cultural Tradition," in *Anglo-Norman Studies XIII, Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1990*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1990), 28. Adela's copy was the second version of this work that Hugh produced.

political and religious dignitaries, such as Ivo of Chartres, Baudri of Bourgueil, and Anselm, archbishop of Canterbury.²¹

Also early in the century, Matilda of Scotland (d. 1118), who was educated at Romsey Abbey by her aunt the Abbess Cristina, as queen of England commissioned William of Malmesbury to compose the *Gesta regum Anglorum* (c. 1125–1134), a book which recounted the history of the kings of England.²² In the dedicatory preface to the work, William states that Matilda "asked for a written account explaining the connection between the English royal family and the (Malmesbury) abbey's founder St Aldhelm."²³ Matilda's motivation behind her request for the book was probably political, suggesting that she wanted to read historical works that supported her aristocratic and religious affiliations. The book was unfinished at the time of the queen's death, but once completed, was dedicated by William in c. 1134 to her daughter, Matilda (d. 1167), the former Holy Roman Empress. The continued association of this work with a female reader indicates the respect and influence tied to commissions by noblewomen, the political and social status that they exerted, as well as their sustained interest in historical genres. Moreover, Empress Matilda returned to England after the death of her husband in 1125, with at least one book, the Latin *World Chronicle* by Ekkehard of Aura, which contains an image of her wedding feast.²⁴ (Fig. 4) Matilda may have held an interest in keeping this book as a personal object of historical memory, bringing it with her back to England as part of her moveable goods.

²¹ *Epistolae: Medieval Women's Latin Letters* "Adela, countess of Blois, Chartres, and Meaux," <http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/woman/21.html> (accessed 11 November 2017). Also, Kimberley LoPrete, *Adela of Blois, Countess and Lord (c. 1067–1137)* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007).

²² William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum Anglorum*, Oxford, **Magdalen College, MS lat. 172 (1125–1134)**. Queen Matilda was the sister-in-law to Adela, and may have known of Adela's manuscript commission.

²³ P. A. Hayward, "Medieval Primary Sources: Genre, Rhetoric and Transmission (Seminar Hist 424), Lancaster University, www.lancaster.ac.uk/staff/haywardp/hist424/seminars/Malmesbury.htm (accessed 11 November 2017). Rodney M. Thomson, *William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1987), 77.

²⁴ Ekkehard von Aura, *World Chronicle*, Cambridge, **Corpus Christi College, MS. 373 (c. 1114–1125)**. Marjorie Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother and Lady of the English* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), 26. Considered "to be an autograph of Ekkehard and points out that the work is dedicated to Henry V, whose widow Matilda probably brought it to England (c. 1125)." Cited from *Parker Library on the Web*, "Ekkehard of Aura OSB, Ekkehardi Historia," http://parkerweb.stanford.edu/parker/actions/manuscript_description_long_display.do?ms_no=373 (accessed 11 November 2017).



Figure 4: Ekkehard von Aura, *World Chronicle*, Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, MS. 373, c. 1114–1125, (fol. 95v). Image of Matilda and Henry's wedding feast.²⁵

SAINTS' LIVES

Within the genre of history, I include accounts of the lives of Christian saints and martyrs, known collectively as saints' lives or *vitae*.²⁶ While not necessarily accurate accounts of historical events, the reading of the lives of the saints was both a spiritual and educational endeavor, often conveying the stories of the pious ancestors of a political dynasty or monastic foundation. Saints' lives that told the narratives of women became especially popular for female readers.²⁷ This reading preference demonstrates that during the twelfth century, women were interested in books about the life and deeds of women from past historical periods, which they could read for emulation and commemoration. For example, in addition to Matilda of England's request for the *Gesta* by William of Malmesbury, she also commissioned a *vita* of her mother, Margaret, queen of Scotland, from the monk Turgot of

Durham.²⁸ We can infer from this commission that Matilda was patron to more than one writer to produce her books, depending on the author's area of expertise. Her commission to Turgot, who was her mother's personal chaplain, is recounted in a letter from Turgot to Matilda where he agrees to her request for a written account, "so that you who knew the face of your mother too little might have a fuller knowledge of her virtues."²⁹ This suggests that Matilda wanted a book which commemorated the memory, piety, and social status of her mother, in spite of the fact Margaret was neither a confessor nor a martyr.³⁰ This new interpretation of what was considered *vitae* was spurred by noblewomen's desire to commemorate their own dynastic history.

Similar to the manuscript considered above, the *Vita Mathildis* is a historical and spiritual account about Countess Matilda of Tuscany, composed by her personal chaplain.³¹ This work is unique in that it was produced with the intent that Matilda herself would read it. Donizo's illustrated manuscript, recounting the ancestry and the deeds of the countess' life, was finished and presented to Matilda just before her death in the summer of 1115. The book includes an image of Matilda acting as peacemaker during the Investiture Controversy between the Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII. The manuscript also includes a second image of Matilda in a dedication portrait, which shows her receiving the book from her chaplain, Donizo. Although Matilda may have been advanced in age when this manuscript was being produced, it is likely that she financially supported the production and possibly guided the choices made regarding physical features, as Verzar notes, specifically the portrayal of the images representing the repentance of the Emperor.³² (Figs. 5 and 6)

²⁸ *Epistolae: Medieval Women's Latin Letters*, "Matilda of Scotland, queen of the English, A letter from Turgot, monk of Durham (1100)" <https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/800.html> (accessed 11 November 2017).

²⁹ *Epistolae*, "Letter from Turgot."

³⁰ Margaret was canonized in c. 1225.

³¹ Donizo, *Vita Mathildis celeberrimae principis Italiae*, **Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Vat. Lat. 4922 (1115)**. Christine B. Verzar, "Picturing Matilda of Canossa: Medieval Strategies of Representation," in *Representing History, 900–1300: Art, Music, History*, ed. Robert Allan Maxwell (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 73–91. Robert H. Rough, *The Reformist Illuminations in the Gospels of Matilda, Countess of Tuscany* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 12–15. Hourihane, *The Grove Encyclopedia of Medieval Art*, 252.

³² For a fuller account on the implications of this image, see Verzar, "Picturing Matilda of Canossa," 76–77.

²⁵ Images online at *DMS: Stanford's Digital Manuscript Index*, "Cambridge, Corpus Christi College, Parker Library, CCC MS 373," http://dms.stanford.edu/catalog/CCC373_keywords (accessed 11 November 2017).

²⁶ Felice Lifshitz, "Beyond Positivism and Genre: 'Hagiographical' Texts as Historical Narrative," *Viator* 25 (1994): 95–114.

²⁷ Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, "Saints' Lives and the Female Reader," *Forum for Modern Language Studies* 27 (1991): 314–332. Also, Margaret Cotter-Lynch and Brad Herzog, eds. *Reading Memory and Identity in the Texts of Medieval European Holy Women* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).



Figure 5: *Vita Mathildis*; Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Vat. lat. 4922 (c. 1115), fol. 7v, Dedication Portrait.



Figure 6: *Vita Mathildis*; Rome, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Vat. lat. 4922, (c. 1115), fol. 49r, Repentance of Emperor.³³

These examples of Latin *vitae*, both made for noblewomen and about noblewomen, represent not only an account of the pious and political role they held, but also their support and interest for reading books about women. David Herlihy notes the rarity of composing a *vita* of a woman who was not a saint.³⁴ Yet, these two instances demonstrate how noblewomen used their social and political economy of patronage to produce the manuscripts they found important. Given that the twelfth century saw a rise in new positions of political power, noblewomen may have commissioned historical accounts in the form of *vitae* and chronicles to further secure their own political position, as well as memorialize their contributions for future readers.

1.2 RELIGIOUS WORKS

Returning to the perspective given by Joan Ferrante at the beginning of this chapter, women's literary patronage can be both asking questions that require treatises to answer them, and works dedicated to or composed for a (female) patron.³⁵ When considering books of a devotional or religious nature made for noblewomen, these two aspects defined by Ferrante are prominent in the following examples which show noblewomen's continued participation in the textual culture of the twelfth century. Their requests to religious advisors for prayers or commentary on theological topics often resulted in a manuscript which directly addressed their devotional reading needs.³⁶ In this section I will highlight examples of prayerbooks, Bibles, psalters, Gospel books, and sermons as instances of twelfth-century noblewomen's contribution to manuscript production within the broad genre of "religious works."

PRAYERBOOKS

Although the original manuscript is now lost, a surviving letter from Anselm of Canterbury to Princess Adelaide (sister to Adela, countess of Blois) refers to a book of prayers that Anselm of Canterbury dedicated to her c. 1071, which she had personally commissioned.³⁷ As Rachel

³⁴ David Herlihy, ed., *Women, Family and Society in Medieval Europe: Historical Essays, 1978–1991* (Providence: Berghahn Books, 1995), 28.

³⁵ Ferrante, "Women's Role in Latin Letters," 74. Ian Short argues for a distinction between the active and passive forms of patronage; Short, "Patrons and Polyglots," 231–232. Further, Short suggests a recognition of the special instances of vernacular patronage in the monasteries.

³⁶ Jennifer C. Ward, *English Noblewomen in the Later Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 145.

³⁷ *Florilegium of the Psalms, LOST Manuscript. Epistolae: Medieval Women's Latin Letters*, "A letter from Anselm of Bec (of Canterbury) (c. 1071) to Adelaide/Adeliza/Adelida, royal nun," <https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/383.html> (accessed 11 November 2017). See

³³ Images online at *Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index*, https://inpress.lib.uiowa.edu/feminae/DetailsPage.aspx?Feminae_ID=31036 (accessed 11 November 2017). The abbot is Hugh of Cluny.

Fulton notes, Adelaide “requested from Anselm...an abbreviated cycle of prayers for herself and her household to follow, presumably under the direction of her private chaplain.”³⁸ The letter states that the manuscript, “a little book,” contained a *Florilegium of the Psalms* along with seven prayers, one of which was a prayer to Mary Magdalene, which Anselm suggested be read in a meditative, contemplative manner.³⁹ Also in the letter, Anselm writes that the book he has sent to her “is not encrusted with gold and gems,” suggesting that this was a commonly known way books were made for noblewomen of her status.

Following this, Anselm dedicated a version of his *Orationes sive Meditationes (Prayers and Meditations)* in c. 1104 to the Countess Matilda of Tuscany. Politically prominent for her role in the Investiture Controversy, Matilda was also a patron of the arts, which included the support of manuscript production.⁴⁰ She personally requested a collection of prayers from Anselm through a correspondence they maintained.⁴¹ The resulting manuscript sent by Anselm was intended for Matilda’s devotional reading.⁴² As discussed in chapter one, the letter Anselm sent back to Matilda along with his manuscript (now lost) included instructions on the way the prayers were meant to be read, giving a description of affective meditation for a noblewoman to follow.⁴³

also, R. W. Southern, *Saint Anselm and his Biographer: A Study of Monastic Life and Thought 1059–1130* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963). And Sally N. Vaughn, *Archbishop Anselm 1093–1109: Bec Missionary, Canterbury Primate, Patriarch of Another World* (London: Routledge, 2016).

³⁸ Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800–1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 170.

³⁹ Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, 148 and 240–241.

⁴⁰ Verzar, “Picturing Matilda of Canossa,” 80. Matilda also commissioned two *vitae* of Anselm of Lucca, her appointed spiritual advisor, from two separate scribes. The first was assigned to a follower of Anselm’s named Bardone, while the second was commissioned to Anselm’s successor, Bishop Rangerio. *Epistolae: Medieval Women’s Latin Letters*, “Matilda of Tuscany, countess of Tuscany, duchess of Lorraine,” <https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/woman/29.html> (accessed 11 November 2017).

⁴¹ *Epistolae: Medieval Women’s Latin Letters*, “Matilda of Tuscany, countess of Tuscany,” <https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/woman/29.html> (accessed 11 November 2017). Anselm was a prominent correspondent with women, both noble and nun, during his time as Archbishop of Canterbury.

⁴² *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm, LOST Manuscript*. Anselm of Canterbury, *The Prayers and Meditations of St. Anselm with Prologion*, trans. and intro. Sister Benedicta Ward, fwd. R. W. Southern (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1973), 172–173 and 51–56. Eileen C. Sweeney, *Anselm of Canterbury and the Desire for the Word* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2012), 13. The prayers were initially composed for monks between 1063 and 1078 when Anselm was prior of Le Bec. See Sally N. Vaughn, “St. Anselm and Women,” in *The Haskins Society Journal Studies in Medieval History*, ed. Robert Patterson (London: The Hambeldon Press, 1990), 83–93. Duncan Robertson, *Lectio Divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), n. 21. Verzar, “Picturing Matilda,” 80.

⁴³ *Epistolae: Medieval Women’s Latin Letters*, “A letter from Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury,”

Otto Pächt has argued that the manuscript made for Matilda was illustrated, thus adding a further dimension to her practice of devotional reading.⁴⁴ Originally, the *Prayers and Meditations* was written by Anselm for monks, and probably did not include elaborate decoration. The addition of images demonstrates the care made in the book for Matilda, in accordance with the social status of the noble patron, and perhaps her desire for a book with images to better focus her devotion.⁴⁵ Further, Matilda’s spiritual advisor, Anselm of Lucca, composed at least five prayers specifically for her to supplement her devotional reading.⁴⁶ The content, form, and intended use of the prayerbooks made for Adelaide and Matilda demonstrate a shared focus toward reading that was intended to be done in private, similar to the manner of slow meditation alike to *lectio divina* practiced in the monasteries, yet with features that promoted selective reading.

GOSPEL BOOKS

Returning to the early margins of the “long twelfth century,” there is evidence of several Gospel books made for noblewomen, and acquired through dedication or commission. First, although an enigmatic example, a “treasure binding” now held at the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art includes an inscription surrounding the ivory centerpiece which names Felicia, queen of Aragon and Navarre (d. 1085), as the owner, or at least patron, of the manuscript the bindings once covered.⁴⁷ Scholars have connected the binding to an evangeliary, now lost, that Felicia is known to have donated to the community of Benedictine nuns she established at Santa Cruz de la Serós.⁴⁸ The use

<https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/236.html> (accessed 11 November 2017). The letter to Matilda is different than the prologue Anselm wrote for the original set of prayers. See also, Sarah McNamer, *Affective Meditation and the Invention of Medieval Compassion* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010).

⁴⁴ Otto Pächt, “The Illustrations of St. Anselm’s Prayers and Meditations,” *The Warburg and Courtald Institutes* 19 (1956): 68–83. Images and use of reading aids will be further discussed in Chapter Five.

⁴⁵ Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion*, 172. The *Prayers and Meditations* given to Matilda would prove a popular book during the following decades, especially in a convent context.

⁴⁶ Andre Wilmart, “Cinq textes de priere composes par Anselme de Lucques pour la Comtesse Mathilde,” *Revue d’Ascetique et de Mystique* 19 (1938): 23–72; as cited in Duncan Robertson, *Lectio Divina: The Medieval Experience of Reading* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2011), n. 21. Matilda’s spiritual advisor Anselm of Lucca, was “appointed” to her by Pope Gregory VII.

⁴⁷ *Book cover for Gospel of Queen Felicia, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, acc. no. 17.190.33 and 17.190.134 (c. 1085)*. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/464306> (accessed 11 November 2017).

⁴⁸ William Wixom, “Byzantine Art and the Latin West,” in *The Glory of Byzantium: Art and Culture of the Middle Byzantine Era, A.D. 843–1261*, eds. Helen C. Evans and William D.

of precious metals, stones, and the ivory centerpieces would visually indicate the wealth and piety of the manuscript's patron. It is possible that Queen Felicia used the evangeliary for her personal devotion, or she commissioned it with the intention of donation to the convent's book collection. Either way, adding her inscription to the binding assured the queen's commemoration as a patron of books.

Similarly, the Gospel lectionary belonging to Margaret of Scotland, queen of England (d. 1093), may not have been made for her expressly, but it belonged to her for some years, and is recounted in her *vita* as her "most favorite book to read."⁴⁹ Margaret would have used this book for her personal devotional reading. The *vita* describes the book as having a jeweled binding, gold lettering, and full-page images of the evangelists. Margaret's Gospel book, now held at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, corroborates this account where on fol. 1v, a description is supplied in a twelfth-century hand. However, the original binding no longer accompanies the manuscript. The possibility it once had a treasure binding, added to the use of gold and decoration, shows the value of the book and Margaret's role as an aristocratic reader.

Countess Judith of Flanders (d. 1094) also utilized her social and financial currency to shape the manuscripts she commissioned.⁵⁰ The Gospels of Judith of Flanders is a set of four books commissioned by Judith and produced sometime around 1051–1064; three of the Gospel books were part of her donation to Weingarten Abbey upon her death in 1094.⁵¹ Two of the four manuscripts still retain their luxury bindings, which presumably all originally had, and all four are richly decorated with

illuminations, rubrics in gold, and full-page miniatures of not only the evangelists, but of Judith herself in the frontpieces of two manuscripts.⁵² One is found in the manuscript held at the Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 709; on fol. 1v Judith is shown at the foot of the cross. The second image is in the manuscript now held at the Hessische Landesbibliothek in Fulda; on fol. 2v Judith is depicted as giving the book to Jesus. (Fig. 7)

The study of these manuscripts by McGurk and Rosenthal in 1995, and the more recent work of Mary Dockray-Miller, indicate the unique structure of all four of Judith's Gospel books; they do not have the standard canon tables as an introduction, but begin directly with an image and text, and further leave out large passages common to other Gospel books. McGurk and Rosenthal deem this a "deliberately selected 'package' of texts," copied primarily by one scribe.⁵³ These choices may indicate Judith's preferences and influence over the collection's production. Scholarship further suggests that the unusual arrangement of the Gospel texts could imply these books were made for use in Judith's chapel (*capella*), and that of the four, the manuscript now located in Montecassino was intended for Judith's personal use.⁵⁴ This argument is based on the texts included in this Gospel book, which "were chosen deliberately for their suitability for personal reading," along with "sections devoted to women, which could be regarded as appropriate for a female patron."⁵⁵

Judith may have actively directed the production of these books, influencing how the images and decoration in the manuscripts portrayed her piety and political status, as well as selecting texts that reflected her reading preferences. Since the donor-portraits of Judith were included in the books used in the chapel, and not in the manuscript she used for personal reading, the images would have been viewed, and thus remembered, by others in her court.⁵⁶ The jeweled bindings and gold lettering demonstrate how the physical object itself was meant to display

Wixom (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1997), 466. Also, Janice Mann, *Romanesque Architecture and its Sculptural Decoration in Christian Spain, 1000–1120: Exploring Frontiers and Defining Identities* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 93.

⁴⁹ *Gospel Lectionary of Margaret of Scotland*, Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Lat. liturg. f. 5 (1050–1060). Richard Gameson, "The Gospels of Margaret of Scotland and the Literacy of an Eleventh-Century Queen," in *Women and the Book: Assessing the Visual Evidence*, eds. Jane H. M. Taylor and Lesley Smith (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1996), 149–171. Margaret also possibly donated to Durham "a copy of the Gospels written in letters of silver". See W. Forbes-Leith, ed., *The Gospel Book of St Margaret, Being a Facsimile Reproduction of St Margaret's Copy of the Gospels Preserved in the Bodleian Library Oxford* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1896), 5.

⁵⁰ *Gospels of Judith of Flanders*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS. 708 (1051–1064); *Gospels of Judith of Flanders*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS. 709 (1051–1064); *Gospels of Judith of Flanders*, Fulda, Hessische Landesbibliothek, Aa 21 (1051–1064); *Gospels of Judith of Flanders*, MonteCassino, Archivio della Badia, MS BB 437 (1051–1064).

⁵¹ Patrick McGurk and Jane Rosenthal, "The Anglo-Saxon Gospelbooks of Judith, Countess of Flanders: Their Text, Make-up and Function," *Anglo-Saxon England*, 24 (1995): 251–308. Also, Mary Dockray-Miller, *The Books and the Life of Judith of Flanders* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 29. One of Judith's Gospel manuscripts ended up in MonteCassino during the same century. See Meta Harrsen, "The Countess Judith of Flanders and the Library of Weingarten Abbey," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America*, 24 (1930): 1–13.

⁵² Treasure bindings remain on the Morgan manuscripts, M. 709 and M. 708. The jewels are now modern replacements. McGurk and Rosenthal, "The Anglo-Saxon Gospelbooks of Judith," 272–273.

⁵³ McGurk and Rosenthal, "The Anglo-Saxon Gospelbooks of Judith," 255. The collection was copied by two scribes, one who is prominent in all four manuscripts, writing in English Caroline minuscule, and a second, less skilled scribe who only worked on two of the four manuscripts. See McGurk and Rosenthal for a full discussion of the scribal hands, their possible exemplars, and their mistakes or omissions.

⁵⁴ *MonteCassino, Archivio della Badia, MS BB 437 (1051–1064)*. McGurk and Rosenthal, "The Anglo-Saxon Gospelbooks of Judith," 274. Francis Newton, *The Scriptorium and Library at Monte Cassino, 1058–1105* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 233–252.

⁵⁵ McGurk and Rosenthal, "The Anglo-Saxon Gospelbooks of Judith," 272–273.

⁵⁶ Dockray-Miller, *The Books and Life of Judith of Flanders*, 29.

Judith's role as a noble patron. Further, Judith also owned two illuminated Gospel books which she acquired from Winchester Abbey.⁵⁷ Judith supported the acquisition and production of books which addressed the liturgical needs of her chapel as well her own reading preference for a book which she could use for personal religious devotion.



Figure 7: *Gospels of Judith of Flanders* – Donor Images; (top) New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 709, fol. 1v. (bottom) Fulda, Hessische Landesbibliothek, Aa 21, fol. 2v.⁵⁸

The daughter-in-law of Judith of Flanders, the Countess Matilda of Tuscany (d. 1115) discussed above, also commissioned a Gospel book. Matilda requested a luxury Gospel book to be made for the Benedictine monastery of San Benedetto di Polirone, to be copied by the community's scribes, sometime between 1099 and 1109.⁵⁹ Befitting the commission of a noblewoman, the manuscript was highly decorated, and produced in a large format (342mm x 225mm). It also includes a canon table, which indicates

⁵⁷ Susan M. Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 36.

⁵⁸ *Gospel book, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS. M 709, fol. 1v.* Image source: <https://thejesusquestion.files.wordpress.com/2014/01/crucifixion-weingarten-gospels.jpg> (accessed 22 January 2018) and <http://www.themorgan.org/collection/gospel-book/128484/4> (accessed 22 January 2018). *Gospel book, Fulda, Hessische Landesbibliothek, Cod. Aa 21, fol. 2v.* Image source: The Image Source: PBS Learning Media to Bridgeman Images (New York: New York, 2018). (accessed 11 November 2017).

⁵⁹ *Gospel book, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 492 (1090s).* Curatorial description of the manuscript is online at The Morgan Library & Museum, CORSAIR

a specific purpose for communal use likely as a display manuscript, rather than a book for individual reading. (Fig. 8) Matilda further bequeathed her personal library to San Benedetto upon her death.⁶⁰



Figure 8: *Gospel of Matilda of Tuscany*, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 492 (1075–1099). Left: Opening (fol. 13r), Right: Cleansing of the Temple (fol. 84r).

Equally, Matilda of England (the former Holy Roman Empress) also owned Gospel books which she donated to the monastery of Le Bec. In 1134, she gave two “gospelbooks studded with gems,” and at her death in 1167, the monastery received the “books from her chapel.”⁶¹ The description of the Gospel books she donated shows yet again the luxury production of a manuscript made for a noblewoman. Moreover, Matilda's bequests

Online Collection Catalog, corsair.themorgan.org (accessed 11 November 2017). See Sir George Warner, *Gospels of Matilda, Countess of Tuscany 1055–1115, Nineteen Plates in Gold and Colour and Twelve in Monochrome from the Manuscript Library of John Pierpont Morgan*. Privately printed for presentation to the Roxburgh Club (New York, 1917), 10. Images from The Morgan Library & Museum, Medieval & Renaissance Manuscripts, <http://ica.themorgan.org/manuscript/page/23/133203> (accessed 11 November 2017).

⁶⁰ Warner, *Gospels of Matilda*, 13. Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power*, 36. The Abbey of San Benedetto was founded by Matilda's grandfather, and she was known as its patroness.

⁶¹ Elisabeth van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900–1200* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 117.

show her awareness that the donation of manuscripts to a favored monastic community would secure her status and perpetual commemoration.

The examples presented tell us that Gospel books made for noblewomen represented in a physical way a woman's status and piety; a material object that would act as a remembrance of her contribution to manuscript production during the twelfth century. Whether the books were used for communal or personal reading, the addition of donor portraits, inscriptions, and treasure bindings show the active influence women exerted as patron and reader. Further, the donation or dedication of books from noblewomen's private book collections shows the agency these women held over their personal belongings, especially the valued status of owning books.

BIBLES

The Bible was regarded as the most important book throughout the Middle Ages, yet it was not common to own a personal copy. Bible manuscripts were often produced in multiple volumes, in a large format meant for display. The commission and donation of a Bible was considered a prestigious endeavor, and many of the most lavish Bibles were produced under the patronage of the royal and noble classes. It is not until the end of the century that we have evidence of Bibles specifically produced for the use of a female reader. Of the two examples from my corpus, both represent the quality production that would have been attributed to such an important book, made for an important noble female reader. These two Bible manuscripts, although separated by distance and stylistic influences from both the north and south of Europe, each demonstrate a high-level decoration, where the images are just as important as the text. This style of manuscript has been often referred to as a (moralized) "picture-bible."⁶²

First, produced c. 1199–1212, a richly illustrated copy of the *Pamplona Bible* was made for a female member of the royal court of King Sancho el Fuerte of Navarre.⁶³ Known as the *Second Pamplona Bible*, the manuscript contains 976 full- and half-page miniatures, with only two to five lines of Latin text on each folio.⁶⁴ Scholars have argued that the emphasis placed

on the stories of women in this Bible manuscript, thirty-nine female saints in eighty-three illustrations, indicate it was meant to address the interests of a female reader.⁶⁵ Troncerelli posits that the book was made as a wedding gift for Sancho's sister, Berenguela (d. 1230), or perhaps for his mother, Sancha of Castile (d. 1208).⁶⁶

Approximately a decade later, the well-known, richly decorated *Bibles moralisées* (c. 1223–1230) produced in France, were initiated under the patronage of Blanche of Castile (d. 1252).⁶⁷ Copied into multiple volumes over several decades, the Bible manuscripts were, according to John Lowden, made "at the command and expense" of Blanche, for the purpose of education as well as creating a textual legacy for her son and his court.⁶⁸ Blanche's role as patron is evidenced by the dedication page from the manuscript held at the Pierpont Morgan Library, which contains an illuminated image of Blanche portrayed alongside her son, Louis IX (fol. 8r).⁶⁹ In addition, as Gerald Guest points out, of the two earliest exemplar manuscripts in this collection, Vienna, ÖNB ms. 2554 was "tailored to a specific reader."⁷⁰ Guest has argued that this manuscript was created for Blanche's personal use owing to the fact

⁶⁵ Jennifer Borland, "Violence on Vellum: St Margaret's Transgressive Body and its Audience," in *Representing Medieval Genders and Sexualities in Europe: Construction, Transformation, and Subversion, 600–1530*, eds. Elisabeth L'Estrange and Alison More (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 84 and no. 55. Also, Madeline H. Caviness, *Visualizing Women in the Middle Ages: Sight, Spectacle, and Scopic Economy* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 108. François Bucher, *The Pamplona Bibles: A Facsimile Compiled from Two Picture Bibles with Martyrologies Commissioned by King Sancho El Fuerte of Navarra (1194–1234): Amiens Manuscript Latin 108 and Harburg Ms. 1.2. Lat. 4^o15* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1971), 37.

⁶⁶ Fabio Troncarelli, "Teste David cum Sibylla: The Tiburtine Sibyl at the Court of Sancho el Fuerte," in *Joachim of Fiore and the Influence of Inspiration: Essays in Memory of Marjorie E. Reeves (1905–2003)*, ed. Julia Eva Wannemacher (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 104.

⁶⁷ **Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex 2554 (c. 1220); Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Codex 1179 (c. 1220); Toledo, Tesoro del Catedral, Mss. 1–3 and New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Ms M. 240 (c. 1230); Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Bodley 270b – Paris, BnF, MS Latin 11560 – London, British Library, MSS Harley 1526 and 1527 (c. 1240).** Alexandra Gajewski, "The Patronage Question Under Review: Queen Blanche of Castile (1188–1252) and the Architecture of the Cistercian Abbeys at Royaumont, Maubuisson, and Le Lys," in *Reassessing the Role of Women as "Makers" of Medieval Art and Architecture*, ed. Therese Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 197–244, at 198–199. Blanche is also credited with the donation of a Bible (**Paris, BnF, lat. 14397**), to St Victor Abbey in Paris; see Hourihane, "Apocalypse," 515.

⁶⁸ John Lowden, "Beauty or Truth? Making a Bible Moralisée in Paris Around 1400," in *Patrons, Authors and Workshops: Books and Book Production in Paris Around 1400*, eds. Godfried Croenen and Peter F. Ainsworth (Louvain: Peeters, 2006), 205; Lowden, *The Making of the Bibles Moralisées; vol. 1 The Manuscripts* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000), 4–5 and 132.

⁶⁹ **New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, M. 240 (c. 1230) fol. 8r.**

⁷⁰ Guest, "Picturing Women," 109. **Vienna, ÖNB, 1179** is the Latin version.

⁶² Gerald B. Guest, "Picturing Women in the First Bible Moralisee," in *Insights and Interpretations: Studies in Celebration of the Eighty-fifth Anniversary of the Index of Christian Art*, ed. Colum Hourihane (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 106–130.

⁶³ *Second Pamplona Bible, Augsburg Universitätsbibliothek (Fürstlich Oettingen-Wallersteinschen Bibliothek), Cod. 1.2.4.15 (c. 1199–1212)*. The companion manuscript is known as *Pamplona Bible I*, Amiens, Bibliothèque Communale, MS Latin 108 (c. 1194–1197).

⁶⁴ Digital facsimile available at Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek Digitale Sammlungen, http://digital.bib-bvb.de/R/?func=dbin-jump-full&object_id=6993141&local_base=UBA&pds_handle=GUEST&bvb=suma (accessed 11 November 2017).

this volume was written in vernacular French, along with an emphasis on the stories and images of Biblical women.⁷¹ Further, the *Oxford – Paris – London* manuscript (c. 1240) was likely made as a wedding gift for Marguerite of Provence at the behest of Blanche of Castile.⁷² These examples tell us that noblewomen shaped their reading preferences by focusing on the portrayals of women in the Bible, thus providing a guide for emulation. Further, they demonstrate how women shared a textual culture and reading practice through the gifting of books between noblewomen.

SERMONS

Rather than being read aloud in a communal setting, as was common within the convent, sermons composed for noblewomen were written expressly to address the concerns of an individual noble female reader and would likely have been read in a private manner. In the early margins of the “long twelfth century,” John of Fécamp provided the Holy Roman Empress, Agnes of Poitou (d. 1077), with a sermon on widowhood (c. 1060).⁷³ In the letter that accompanied the sermon, he comments how it was at her request that he should “collect bright and brief words from scriptures” for her personal reading as she retired to a convent in Rome.⁷⁴ Another example of a sermon manuscript meant to specifically address the reading needs of a noblewoman was made for Ermengarde of Anjou, countess of Brittany (d. 1147). Robert d’Arbrissel produced a sermon (c. 1109) at the request of Ermengarde that provided her with “a regime of prayer and spiritual advice” when she was seeking an annulment of her first marriage.⁷⁵ Robert d’Arbrissel writes to Ermengarde: “So when you are occupied with much business, make short prayers. In the morning hear the canonical hours properly: Matins, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, and later Vespers and Compline. Hear the hours of the Blessed Virgin everyday.”

⁷⁶ According to Bruce Venarde, the text addresses Ermengarde in the style of a letter, yet still shows the rhetorical technique of a sermon, “using

abundant quotation of and allusion to Christian scripture.”⁷⁷ Ermengarde was active as regent for Brittany while her husband was on Crusade, she herself traveled to Jerusalem where her brother was married to Queen Melisende, and she held strong connections to the Abbey of Fontevraud, visiting there more than once.⁷⁸ As such, Robert’s *Sermo* presents “advice to a privileged woman on how to fuse Christian practices and ideals with a busy life in the aristocratic milieu.”⁷⁹

At the end of the century, Countess Blanche of Navarre (d. 1229) sent a letter to the Cistercian monk, Adam de Perseigne, asking him to send her a copy of his sermons. In the reply accompanying his work, Adam points out that he has written his sermon in Latin, so that his words would not lose meaning in translation.⁸⁰ His comment suggests that Blanche could read both Latin and vernacular texts.⁸¹ From the examples I have highlighted, it is evident that noblewomen requested manuscripts in the style of monastic sermons to be made for them as part of their reading repertoire. These books provided advice or instruction from religious advisors for women in positions of power, and represented an important means of communication, as well as shared textual culture between the court and the church.

PSALTERS

Of the manuscripts made for noblewomen during the twelfth century, the Latin psalter represents the most prominently read book owing to its use as both a devotional and educational text. Deriving from a court milieu within Western Europe, at least fifteen psalter books are attributed as belonging to an aristocratic woman during the twelfth century.⁸² The surviving manuscripts primarily represent luxury productions: books with high-quality illuminations, some with treasure bindings, similar to the Gospel books discussed above. We must keep in mind that manuscripts with these decorative features, along with the attribution to a court context, whether belonging to a woman or man, likely influenced the books rate of survival.

The Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 71. *Sermo domni Roberti de Arbruessello ad comitissam Britanniae*.

⁷⁸ *Epistolae*, “Letter from Robert d’Arbrissel to Ermengard of Anjou, countess of Brittany,” <https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/woman/31.html> (accessed 11 November 2017).

⁷⁹ Arbrissel, *A Medieval Religious Life*, 68.

⁸⁰ *Epistolae*, “A letter from Adam, abbot of Perseigne to Blanche of Navarre, Countess of Champagne,” <https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/749.html> (accessed 11 November 2017).

⁸¹ Stevenson, *Women Latin Poets*, 178. Adam of Perseigne also wrote in Latin to Alix, countess of Chartres.

⁸² By their “common name”: Saint-Évroult Psalter, St Albans Psalter, Melisende Psalter, Helmarhausen Psalter, Laurette Psalter, St Fuscien Psalter, Fécamp Psalter, Ingeborg

⁷¹ Guest, “Picturing Women,” 108. Text contains Genesis to 4 Kings 8. Vienna, ÖNB, 2554 is a large book, measuring 345 x 260mm.

⁷² London, British Library, Harley ms. 1526 and ms. 1527 (c. 1240).

⁷³ John of Fécamp also sent a sermon for the nuns the Empress resided with at the convent in Rome.

⁷⁴ *Epistolae, Medieval Women’s Latin Letters* “A Letter from Jean de Fécamp to Agnes of Poitiers, empress,” <https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/129.html> (accessed 11 November 2017).

⁷⁵ Constant J. Mews, “The Speculum dominarum (Miroir de Dames) and Transformations of the Literature of Instruction for Women in the Early Fourteenth Century,” in *Virtue Ethics for Women, 1250–1500*, eds. Karen Green and Constant J. Mews (Dordrecht: Springer, 2011), 17.

⁷⁶ Sarah Hamilton, *Church and People in the Medieval West* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 228.

⁷⁷ Robert of Arbrissel, *A Medieval Religious Life*, trans. Bruce L. Venarde (Washington DC:

Noblewomen acquired psalters through various means, including inheritance, as a gift, or as acting as patron providing social and financial support toward production. During the Middle Ages, the psalter held a prominent place as the book used for education, from learning the alphabet to an acquisition of Latin. For example, the “Leiden Psalter” initially produced for Geoffrey Plantagenet, was later owned by Blanche of Castile, Queen of France.⁸³ She used the manuscript to educate her son, Louis IX, “who in turn gave it to his daughter, Agnes.”⁸⁴ In addition to its usefulness for education, the psalter stands out as a popular book given as a gift or dedicated to a medieval noblewoman. As such, psalters were often high-quality books supplied with elaborate decoration indicating the status and piety of the recipient.⁸⁵ Noblewomen also commissioned their own psalter books. Their role as patrons of this genre is supported by representations of women in either a posture of prayer, or offering, found in many of these manuscripts. Additional elements that would focus the female readers’ connection to the physical book could include entries to the calendar of family obituaries, a litany that addressed local or patron saints, and other supplemental texts such as prayers, often written with feminine Latin endings.

For example, the manuscript known as the “Melisende Psalter” (c. 1135) was dedicated to queen Melisende of Jerusalem (d. 1161), possibly commissioned by her husband, Fulk V, Count of Anjou and King of Jerusalem, upon their reunion after he returned from Crusades.⁸⁶ Produced in Jerusalem, the book’s use of illumination, elaborately decorated miniatures and initials, and treasure bindings demonstrate a luxury style of book made for a woman of royal standing. It is unclear if Melisende had any direct role in the decisions regarding

the manuscript, yet we can presume that her status as a queen, and her dynastic connection to the Kingdom of Jerusalem, influenced the choices regarding the Byzantine style of the images and inclusion of the jewels and ivory panels to the bindings.⁸⁷

Also produced at a scriptorium in Jerusalem, although in this instance made at the end of the “long twelfth century,” is a manuscript known as the “Riccardiana Psalter” (c. 1225).⁸⁸ Both the Melisende Psalter and the Riccardiana Psalter were produced outside of Western Europe, yet within a Christian context that remembered a Latin Jerusalem. The intended female reader behind the initial production of the Psalter manuscript has been debated as to whether it was made for a noblewoman at court, or perhaps a nun from a noble family. Based on the division of Psalms, the images used to mark these divisions, and the “conventual context” they reflect, scholars have argued that the manuscript was produced at a religious community in Acre, after the loss of Jerusalem, and was originally made for a nun of noble background.⁸⁹ However, another possibility has been suggested that the Psalter was commissioned as a wedding gift given to Isabel d’Brienne (d. 1228), queen of Jerusalem. When Isabel married Frederick II, she left Jerusalem for Italy and remained there until her death, taking this Psalter book with her as part of her moveable goods.⁹⁰ In either case, the manuscript displays a high-quality of production, small enough to be held in the hands, with numerous images in a Byzantine style.⁹¹ As Fleck has argued, the images which portray various scenes of Jerusalem, as well as the design of the decoration, would have reminded both the anonymous nun and the young queen living outside of Jerusalem of her heritage and home.⁹²

In various regions of France and Germany, several twelfth-century Psalters were produced with the specific intent of use by a noblewoman,

Psalter, Landgrafen Psalter, St Elisabeth Psalter, Christina Psalter, Blanche of Castile Psalter, Psalter de Saint Etienne, Leiden Psalter, Riccardiana Psalter. See Appendix for a full list of psalter manuscripts in this corpus.

⁸³ *Leiden Psalter*, Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, BPL 76A (1190–1200). This psalter, along with the Ingeborg Psalter (Chantilly, Musée Condé, MS 1695), and the Psalter of Saint Louis (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS lat. 10525) were given inscriptions at a later date (13th c.) that identified them as books belonging to St Louis, which imparted a holy status as a relic, and were passed into the ownership of Blanche of Navarre queen of France (d. 1398) in the 14th century. See Marguerite Keane, *Material Culture and Queenship in 14th-century France: The Testament of Blanche of Navarre (1331–1398)* (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 88–89.

⁸⁴ Vidas, *The Christina Psalter*, 32. Also, Keane, *Material Culture*, 89–93. Keane provides a provenance of the manuscript, which traces it back to Agnes of Burgundy. Keane also mentions that Blanche of Navarre owned a Gospel book with sermons in French, which may have belonged to Blanche of Castile.

⁸⁵ James McKinnon, “The Late Medieval Psalter: Liturgical or Gift Book?” *Musica Disciplina* 38 (1984): 133–157.

⁸⁶ *Melisende Psalter*, London, British Library, Egerton MS 1139 (1131–1143). The bindings are kept separately.

⁸⁷ The manuscript measures 215mm x 145mm.

⁸⁸ *Riccardiana Psalter*, Florence, Biblioteca Riccardiana, MS 323 (c. 1225). Cathleen A. Fleck, “The Crusader Loss of Jerusalem in the Eyes of a Thirteenth-Century Virtual Pilgrim,” in *The Crusades and Visual Culture*, eds. Elizabeth Lapina et al. (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), 130–156.

⁸⁹ Cathleen A. Fleck, “‘Vergine Madre Pia’: Text and Image in a Medieval Psalter at a Renaissance Dominican Convent,” *Notes in the History of Art* 34, no. 2 (2015): 5–13, at 5; Fleck, “The Luxury Riccardiana Psalter in the Thirteenth Century: A Nun’s Prayerbook?” *Viator* 46, no. 1 (2015): 135–160, at 135. Jaroslav Folda, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land, From the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre, 1187–1291* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 212 and 214; Folda, “Before Louis IX: Aspects of Crusader Art at St Jean d’Acre, 1191–1244,” in *France and the Holy Land: Frankish Culture at the End of the Crusades*, eds. Daniel Weiss and Lisa Mahoney (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 138–160.

⁹⁰ Fleck, “The Crusader Loss of Jerusalem,” 134.

⁹¹ The manuscript measures 220mm x 165mm.

⁹² Kathryn M. Rudy, *Virtual Pilgrimages in the Convent: Imagining Jerusalem in the Late Middle Ages* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2011).

sometimes of royal standing. As such, these books were also made in a deluxe fashion. For example, a Psalter was produced for Ingeborg of Denmark (d. 1238), the sequestered wife of King Phillip II of France.⁹³ Known as the “Ingeborg Psalter” (c. 1195), the manuscript contains a large amount of gold leaf and numerous illustrations, with inscriptions in “Parisian French added to some of the scenes.”⁹⁴ Although the manuscript is rather large to be held in the hands of a reader, it can be imagined to have been Ingeborg’s personal devotional book during her twenty years of living at the abbey of Cysoing near Tournai, estranged from the royal courts of her husband and family.⁹⁵ No patron for the commission has been identified with certainty, but speculation leans toward the possibility of Ingeborg’s friend during her imprisonment, the Countess Eleanor of Vermandois (d. 1213).⁹⁶ As Stirnemann indicates, Eleanor commissioned manuscripts for her own use, including two additional psalters, one being a copy of the “Laurette Psalter” with commentary, discussed below.⁹⁷

In Germany during the second half of the twelfth century, the “Helmarshausen Psalter” was made for the use of a noblewoman, indicated by a full-page image of a woman at prayer.⁹⁸ Her depiction is prominently placed opposite the opening of Psalm 1 (fol. 6v), signaling her role as the pious reader. (Fig. 9) The identity of this noblewoman has been attributed

to a member of the court of Henry the Lion, variously suggested as Henry’s daughter, Gertrude, or perhaps his first wife, Clementia von Zahringen, or even his second wife, Matilda, duchess of Saxony.⁹⁹ Although it is unclear who the initial intended reader was, or if it was a commission by a noblewoman or made as gift to a noble female reader, it is probable that the book was shared and read by a number of women from Henry’s family, at various times throughout the twelfth century, since the book remained within this court milieu. Each woman might see herself in the image of the praying noblewoman, or the commemoration of one of her female family members.



Figure 9: Helmarshausen Psalter, Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, W.10, fol. 6v (c. 1160).¹⁰⁰

Originating in the German region of Thuringia during the first decade of the thirteenth century, two Psalters have been argued as belonging to Sophia of Wittelsbach (d. 1238).¹⁰¹ Wolter-von dem

⁹³ *Ingeborg Psalter*, Chantilly, Musée Condé, Ms. 9 /olim 1695 (1193–1213). Kathleen S. Schowalter, “The Ingeborg Psalter: Queenship, Legitimacy, and the Appropriation of Byzantine Art in the West,” in *Capetian Women*, ed. Kathleen Nolan (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2003), 99–135. Schowalter argues that this “Psalter models itself on the one belonging to Queen Melisende.” *Feminae: Medieval Women and Gender Index*, https://inpress.lib.uiowa.edu/feminae/DetailsPage.aspx?Feminae_ID=3724 (accessed 11 November 2017).

⁹⁴ Caviness, “Anchoress, Abbess, and Queens,” 133. Caviness discusses the pictorial program of the psalter; Twenty-seven fully illuminated folios that display fifty scenes. See also Marina Vidas, *The Christina Psalter: A Study of the Images and Texts in a French Early Thirteenth Century Manuscript* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006), 31.

⁹⁵ The manuscript measures 304mm x 204mm. George Conklin, “Ingeborg of Denmark, Queen of France, 1193–1223,” in *Queens an Queenship in Medieval Europe: Proceedings of a Conference Held at King’s College London April 1995*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995), 39. Scholarship varies on the time spent and the locations of her imprisonment. This Psalter was passed to Louis IX, possibly from Ingeborg to Blanche of Castile, and later was in the possession of Blanche of Navarre.

⁹⁶ Eleanor’s connections to the Ingeborg Psalter Master have been suggested by scholars. See Charles J. Liebman, “Remarks on the Manuscript Tradition of the French Psalter Commentary,” *Scriptorium* 13, no. 1 (1959): 61–69, at 61.

⁹⁷ Patricia Stirnemann, “Women and Books in France: 1170–1220” in *Representations of the Feminine*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler (Dallas: Academia Press, 1993), 248, n. 4.

⁹⁸ *Helmarshausen Psalter*, Baltimore, Walters Art Gallery, W. 10 (1160). This manuscript was produced by the same scribe of the Gospels of Henry the Lion. See Digitized Walters Manuscripts, <http://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/html/W10/description.html>. (accessed 11 November 2017) for the catalog description.

⁹⁹ Thompson, *Literacy of the Laily*, 99.

¹⁰⁰ Digitized Walters Manuscripts, “Helmarshausen Psalter,” <http://www.thedigitalwalters.org/Data/WaltersManuscripts/html/W10/> (accessed 11 November 2017).

¹⁰¹ *Landgrafen Psalter*, Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, HB II 24 (1211–1213); *Elisabeth Psalter*, Cividale del Friuli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Cod. CXXXVII (1200–1208).

Knesebeck comments on the deluxe nature of these two manuscripts, the first known as the “Elisabeth Psalter” produced between 1201–1208, possibly at the scriptorium of Reinhardsbrunn in northern Germany, and second, the “Landgrafen Psalter” made between 1211–1213.¹⁰² Both Psalters include images of a noblewoman, identified as Sophia in the titles placed near her portrayal.¹⁰³ In each instance she is holding a book. The Landgrafen Psalter has an image of Sophia within an arch holding an open book, found in the section of litanies. (Fig. 10) While in the Elisabeth Psalter, the donor-portrait with both Sophia and Hermann, also placed in the litany, depicts only Sophia holding an open book, as if reading from it. (Fig. 11).



Figure 10: *Landgrafen Psalter*, Stuttgart, Württembergische Landesbibliothek, HB II 24 (1211–1213), fol. 174v.



Figure 11: *Elisabeth Psalter*, Cividale del Friuli, Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Cod. CXXXVIII, (pg. 177) detail.¹⁰⁴

Wolter-von dem Knesebeck contends that the Landgrafen Psalter was commissioned as a gift to commemorate the betrothal of Herman and Sophia’s son to Elisabeth of Hungary in 1211.¹⁰⁵ However, Nigel Palmer suggests that “Elisabeth was at this time too young for it to be plausible that she was the recipient of the book, and it is generally held that the psalter was made for the use of Hermann’s wife Sophia who is depicted in her portrait holding a book.”¹⁰⁶ It is likely that both Psalters originally belonged to Sophia, and that Elisabeth subsequently received the Psalter, now at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale of Cividale del Friuli, as a gift from Sophia and Hermann I on the occasion of Elisabeth’s marriage in 1221.

As previously discussed, manuscripts which included images of a woman emphasized her social status as an elite patron. Depictions of a woman at prayer heightened the spiritual connection a female reader held toward the book itself; not just the text was valuable, but seeing a representation of “herself” in the book would connect the reader in

¹⁰⁴ Pagination according to the digital facsimile at I Libri Dei Patriarchi, Paths in the Written Culture of the Medieval Friuli, <http://www.librideipatriarchi.it/en/st-elizabeths-psalter-2/> (accessed 11 November 2017).

¹⁰⁵ Harald Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, *Der Elisabethpsalter in Cividale del Friuli, Buchmalerei für den Thüringer Landgrafenhof zu Beginn des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2001).

¹⁰⁶ Nigel F. Palmer, “Review of *Der Landgrafenpsalter: Vollständige Faksimile-Ausgabe im Originalformat der Handschrift HB II 24 der Württembergischen Landesbibliothek Stuttgart. Kommentarband. Codices selecti phototypice impressi 93* by Felix Heinzer, Renate Kroos, Klaus Schreiner, Fred Schwind, Herrad Spilling, Vera Trost,” *Medium Aevum* 64, no. 2 (1995): 305–307.

¹⁰² Harald Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, *Der Elisabeth Psalter in Cividale del Friuli. Buchmalerei für den Thüringer Landgrafenhof zu Beginn des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2001). Also, Nigel Palmer, review of *Der Elisabethpsalter in Cividale del Friuli. Buchmalerei für den Thüringer Landgrafenhof zu Beginn des 13. Jahrhunderts* by Harald Wolter-von dem Knesebeck, *Medium Aevum* 71 (2002): 132–133.

¹⁰³ Nigel Palmer, “The High and Later Middle Ages, (1100–1450),” in *The Cambridge History of German Literature*, ed. Helen Watanabe-O’Kelly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 42.

a personal way to the material object.¹⁰⁷ As Wogan-Browne states, “it creates a somatically enforced reading space and time so that a woman who has necessarily lived much in the world...can inhabit a time and space for meditative reading.”¹⁰⁸ Representations of the noble female patron and reader in a gesture of prayer would emulate not only the monastic ideal of piety, but offer a connection to the ideal pious woman, the Virgin Mary. For example, Guibert of Nogent (c. 1064–1125) describes a vision experienced by his mother where she “saw herself imitating Mary. ...going to the altar of the abbey church, kneeling down in prayer, and herself following exactly the Holy Mother’s example.”¹⁰⁹

This type of imagery is found in a richly illuminated twelfth-century manuscript from England, known as the “Shaftesbury Psalter,” which portrays a woman in the posture of prayer on two separate folia, one found on fol. 14v, and the other on fol. 165v. The female figure has been variously argued by scholars as Adeliza of Leuven (Louvaine), or an Abbess of Shaftesbury.¹¹⁰ (Fig. 12) Whether these images represent a queen or abbess is debated based upon entries in the calendar, as well as the two donor-portraits, each depicting a woman in differing dress. The calendar refers to both St Edward the Confessor, important to the community at Shaftesbury, and St Lambert of Maastricht, who would have been an important saint to Adeliza, who was from Leuven. Owing to this ambiguity, it has been posited that there were two Psalters, one now lost, and the Lansdowne manuscript was a copy given to Adeliza.¹¹¹ This uneasy identification with a specific female reader or patron illustrates the complications of understanding book ownership by medieval women. Whether this manuscript was originally owned by an abbess of Shaftesbury and then gifted to Adeliza, or Adeliza herself requested a copy of the abbess’ Psalter for her personal use, each imagined instance exemplifies how noblewomen acquired the books they preferred to read. Across milieu, from court to convent, women shared in a textual culture which influenced the production of manuscripts during the twelfth century.



Figure 12: *Shaftesbury Psalter*, London, British Library, Lansdowne 383 (c. 1150), left: fol. 14v, right: fol. 165v.¹¹²

As the above examples show, attribution to a specific female reader is often tenuous, and the identification of twelfth-century manuscripts owned by noblewomen merits continued research. For example, the “Fécamp Psalter” (c. 1180), made in northeast of France in the late twelfth century, has remained vaguely connected to an unnamed noblewoman by scholars.¹¹³ A richly decorated manuscript with a number of full-page miniatures and historiated initials, the Psalter also includes a full-page

¹⁰⁷ Alexa Sand, *Vision, Devotion, and Self-Representation in Late Medieval Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 149–210.

¹⁰⁸ Wogan-Browne, “Women and Reading c. 1230–c. 1430,” 245.

¹⁰⁹ Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker, “The Metamorphosis of Woman: Transmission of Knowledge and the Problems of Gender,” in *Gendering the Middle Ages*, eds. Pauline Stafford and Anneke B. Mulder-Bakker (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 112–134, at 113.

¹¹⁰ *Shaftesbury Psalter*, London, British Library, Lansdowne 383 (c. 1150).

¹¹¹ See C. M. Kauffmann, “British Library, Lansdowne Ms. 383: the Shaftesbury Psalter,” in *New Offerings, Ancient Treasures, Studies in Medieval Art for George Henderson*, eds. Paul Binski and William Noel (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishers, 2001), 264–265.

¹¹² Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts, “Detailed record for Lansdowne 383,” www.bl.uk/catalogues/illuminatedmanuscripts/record.asp?MSID=8825&CollID=15&NStart=3 (accessed 11 November 2017), and British Library Medieval Manuscripts Blog, <http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/digitisedmanuscripts/2011/10/the-shaftesbury-psalter.html> (accessed 11 November 2017).

¹¹³ *Fécamp Psalter*, The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, ms. 76 F 13 (c. 1180); this manuscript measures 232mm x 169mm.

image of a noblewoman placed opposite the decorated initial opening of Psalm 1 (fol. 28v).¹¹⁴ Only recently, scholarship has attributed this manuscript as belonging to Eleanor of Aquitaine.¹¹⁵ (Fig. 13)



Figure 13: *Fécamp Psalter*, The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, ms. 76 F 13 (c. 1180), fol. 28v.

By the turn of the century, among the number of books attributed to the support of Blanche of Castile, discussed above for her role in the making of the *Bibles Moralisées*, are two psalter books made in a deluxe manner, one which indicates it was made for her personal use.¹¹⁶ The psalter manuscript likely used by Blanche, made in 1200–1220, includes

an image of a noblewoman at prayer (fol. 122v) with a book laid in front of the altar, emulating the ideal piety of the Virgin Mary.¹¹⁷ (Fig. 14) When reading this psalter, Blanche would have seen the image as a representation of how she was to pray in real life, while further serving as a physical commemoration of her piety to future readers.



Figure 14: *Psalter of Blanche of Castile*, Paris, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, MS. fr. 1186 (1200–1220), fol. 122v.

The second psalter manuscript possibly belonging to Blanche was later owned by Christina of Norway (d. 1262).¹¹⁸ Deluxe in production, the manuscript is filled with full-page images in the prefatory cycle, a number of miniatures and historiated initials, and decorative line-fillers with birds and dragons. Marina Vidas posits that this psalter was originally made for an elite reader in the French court, and may have been commissioned by Queen Ingeborg, exhibiting her social and financial currency upon her return to court.¹¹⁹ Yet, as Vidas also contends, it is more plausible that the psalter was made for Blanche of Castile, and was later given as a wedding gift to Christina, who lived in

¹¹⁴ Adelaide Bennett, "The Transformation of the Gothic Psalter in Thirteenth-Century France," in *The Illuminated Psalter: Studies in the Content, Purpose and Placement of its Images*, ed. Frank O. Büttner (Turnhout: Brepols, 2004), 212.

¹¹⁵ Jesús Rodríguez Viejo, "Royal Manuscript Patronage in Late Ducal Normandy? A Context for the Female Patron Portrait of the 'Fécamp Psalter' (c. 1180)," in *Cerae: An Australasian Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 3, (2016): <http://openjournals.arts.uwa.edu.au/index.php/cerae/article/view/85/120> (accessed 11 November 2017).

¹¹⁶ *Blanche Psalter*, Paris, Bibl. Arsenal, MS. fr. 1186 (1200–1220). De Hamel also postulates that the *Hunterian Psalter*, Glasgow, University Library, MS Hunter 229 (c. 1170), may have been meant for the use of Sophia of Minsk (c. 1140–1198); see Christopher De Hamel, *Meetings with Remarkable Manuscripts, Twelve Journeys into the Medieval World* (New York: Penguin Press, 2017), 312 and 591.

¹¹⁷ Marina Vidas, *The Christina Psalter: A Study of the Images and Texts in a French Early Thirteenth Century Manuscript* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2006) 32–33. Vidas also includes Paris, BnF, Lat. 10434 (1200–1300) as another psalter that may have been made for Blanche or a member of her family.

¹¹⁸ Christina Psalter, Copenhagen, Det Kongelige Bibliotek, GKS 1606 4* (c. 1230). Vidas, *The Christina Psalter*, 52.

¹¹⁹ Vidas, *The Christina Psalter*, 49. Ingeborg was recognized as queen by Louis VIII. She died in 1237–38.

Castile for a period and was related to Blanche by marriage.¹²⁰ Sharing of textual culture through the exchange of books amongst female readers at court proves to be a common aspect throughout the twelfth century.

As the above examples show, it was common for twelfth-century noblewomen to receive a psalter book which included a significant number of illustrations, some with images of the patroness/female reader at prayer, and a few supplemented by treasure bindings. This suggests that women held a preference toward manuscripts with decoration. However, caution must be used when making such a statement, as the surviving evidence may be skewed toward the preservation of manuscripts of outstanding production, and thus there is a lack of evidence of plain, unadorned psalter books that noblewomen may have used. Yet, it is possible to infer from the examples that an elaborately decorated book was an established signifier of a reader with high social or political status. Whether a book was acquired through direct commission or presented as a gift, the physical elements of the manuscript point to the status of the female reader. Many of the psalters use ivory and jewels, illuminations, gold lettering, and full-page miniatures which included images of women, features which show noblewomen were aware that ownership of a book could be used as physical statement of her social position (wealth), level of education, and to commemorate her piety.

1.3 VERSE-EPISTLES IN LATIN

A long tradition existed of medieval women writing in Latin correspondence with both political and religious personages, including learned monks, bishops, popes and kings. Jerome (c. 340–420), a respected Patristic author throughout the Middle Ages, was known for his extensive correspondence with a number of women, especially the “ladies of Aventine,” encouraging them to read scripture. Jerome’s letters were still influential in the twelfth century, when in 1157 several women in Modena, Italy, made a request for a manuscript copy of his letters.¹²¹ Continuing this tradition, a particular reading interest of noblewomen during the twelfth century involved correspondence with respected monastic learned men, often composed in Latin verse; a form

of reading and writing that reveals women’s high level of education and an impressive example of literary skill.¹²² As Gerald Bond has argued, women’s interest in supporting the genre of poetic verse is evident from the early years of the “long twelfth century,” when noblewomen began to recognize that the patronage of poetry could be used to enhance their political status.¹²³ For example, Adela of Blois received a lengthy verse-epistle from Baudri of Bourgueil, which she requested sometime between 1099–1102. Baudri writes in his prologue attesting to Adela’s “appreciation for poetry and knowledge of books.”¹²⁴ The poem includes a description of the various works of art which adorned Adela’s room, including a reference to a large and beautiful tapestry, debated by scholars as possibly the Bayeux Tapestry.¹²⁵ Beyond a recounting of the treasures a noblewoman may have owned, the poem addresses political and historical concerns that would have been of specific interest to Adela, the daughter of William the Conqueror. Thus, as Debiais argues, the poem was meant to fulfill a commemorative function.¹²⁶

These works of poetry would also have been valued for entertainment at court, likely read aloud to an audience. June Hall McCash states, “as a rule, a poet composed at the request of a patron, who in turn provided him with a reward that could take the form of gifts, monetary payment, a position within the court (e.g., clerk, scribe), or the lending of the patron’s influence to his work. Although in some instances poets dedicated works to a lord or lady merely in hope of a reward.”¹²⁷ For example, in a second letter Baudri sent to Adela, he specifically asks for a cope as “reward” for his work, writing; “make sure the cope is not

¹²² *Dear Sister: Medieval Women and the Epistolary Genre*, eds. Karen Cherewatuk and Ulrike Wiethaus (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993). Katherine Kong, *Lettering the Self in Medieval and Early Modern France* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2010), 193.

¹²³ Gerald A. Bond, *The Loving Subject: Desire, Eloquence, and Power in Romanesque France* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 156. Bond writes, “this innovation was actually initiated by Edith when she commissioned the classicizing poetry of the *Vita of St Edward* as a way to explain herself amid the cataclysmic events of 1065–67.” Also see Elizabeth M. Tyler, “From Old English to Old French,” in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England, c. 1100–c. 1500*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (York: York Medieval Press, 2009), 176.

¹²⁴ *Epistolae*, “A Letter from Baudri, abbot of Bourgueil and archbishop of Dol (c. 1107) to Adela, countess of Blois, Chartres, and Meaux,” <https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/94.html> (accessed 11 November 2017). Vincent Debiais, “The Poem of Baudri for Countess Adele: A Starting Point for a Reading of Medieval Latin Ekphrasis,” *Viator* 44 no.1 (2013): 95–106.

¹²⁵ Debiais, “The Poem of Baudri,” 96.

¹²⁶ Debiais, “The Poem of Baudri,” 97.

¹²⁷ June Hall McCash, “Chretien’s Patrons,” in *A Companion to Chretien de Troyes*, eds. Norris J. Lacy and Joan Tasker Grimbert (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008), 15.

¹²⁰ Vidas, *The Christina Psalter*, 52. Vidas notes another manuscript, an *English Psalter and Book of Hours*, Berlin, Kupferstichsammlung, MS 78. A.8, from the early thirteenth century, was possibly made for Isabelle of Angouleme (d. 1246), Queen of England (1200–1216), and later owned by Margrete Skulsdatter, mother of Christina of Norway.

¹²¹ James Westfall Thompson, *The Literacy of the Laity in the Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1939), 71 and n. 90. Thompson does not provide a shelfmark for this manuscript.

missing its fringe.”¹²⁸ The financial support, as well as the status a noble patron could confer, helped to spread the genre of Latin verse.

1.4 CONCLUSION

The literary culture of noblewomen in the twelfth century is a complex engagement of reading for piety and for pleasure, characterized by a strong presence by noblewomen actively acquiring the books they wanted to read. The genres discussed in this section have highlighted examples of manuscripts written in Latin made for noblewomen during this period, many displaying a high level of decoration both within the manuscript and the outer binding. Each example demonstrates a quality of production, where use, form, and content was guided by the noble status of the female reader. Noblewomen’s reading interests in Latin reflect a range in genre, supported by personal commissions of works that spoke to their dynastic heritage, spiritual edification, and high-level of education. While the above discussion has shown that noblewomen during the twelfth century were reading in Latin, the following section will introduce the books made for them written in vernacular.

2. NOBLEWOMEN’S BOOKS IN THE VERNACULAR

Commenting on the interest in vernacular texts during the twelfth century, R. N. Swanson points out, perhaps inadvertently, that it was predominately, although by no means exclusively, women who requested books copied or produced in vernacular. He states, “however read (and whoever did the reading which is a real issue, since at the time reading was often associated with women and clerics), vernacular literary traditions were established, and spread.”¹²⁹ This is important to consider when trying to establish connections between the trends in reading and the physical object of the book itself. Joni M. Hand writes that the desire for vernacular texts and their patronage by women acted as a catalyst, where “demand was integral to the change in book production from an emphasis on liturgical books to the proliferation of devotional manuscripts.”¹³⁰

¹²⁸ *Epistolae*, “Letter from Baudri, abbot of Bourgueil and archbishop of Dol (before 1107) to Adela of England, Countess of Blois,” <https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/95.html> (accessed 11 November 2017).

¹²⁹ R. N. Swanson, *The Twelfth-Century Renaissance*, 178. Parentheses are part of the original quote.

¹³⁰ Joni M. Hand, *Women, Manuscripts and Identity in Northern Europe, 1350–1550* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 6.

This section introduces books written for noblewomen in vernacular languages, such as French or German, during the twelfth century organized by genre as in the previous part of this chapter. The translation of Latin sources into vernacular becomes a guiding trend significantly connected to the literary patronage of aristocratic women throughout Western Europe during the Middle Ages. In fact, developed under the influence of Anglo-Norman noblewomen during the twelfth century, evidence exists that among the books made for them is one of the oldest surviving historiographies written in Anglo-Norman French, the *Estoire des Engleis*, as well as the first French vernacular bestiary, and the earliest French biblical translation of the book of Genesis.¹³¹ In addition, the first adventure epic in Anglo-Norman vernacular verse, the *Voyage of St. Brendan*, and the first Arthurian romance, *Lancelot*, were produced at the commission of noblewomen during this century.¹³² Thus, the books read in the vernacular by women in the twelfth-century court context supported a new atmosphere of reading accessible beyond the clergy. Ian Short argues that the origins of French literature are to be found in twelfth-century England.¹³³ From the examples highlighted below, it is evident that noblewomen participated in that foundation.

2.1 RELIGIOUS WORKS

Medieval noblewomen were expected to embrace a pious life in addition to their duties of running large estates, counties, and sometimes even kingdoms.¹³⁴ Religious texts, such as psalters and prayerbooks, were deemed by medieval aristocratic society as ideal books for women to read. As such, noblewomen were given religious books through an act of dedication; often as a gift, and often in Latin, as discussed in the previous section. However, this did not preclude noblewomen’s initiative to have religious texts composed or copied for their reading in vernacular

¹³¹ Paul Dalton, “The Date of Geoffrey Gaimar’s *Estoire des Engleis*, the Connections of His Patrons, and the Politics of Stephen’s Reign,” *Chaucer Review* 42 (2007): 23–47. The *Estoire des Engleis* was possibly composed at Lincolnshire, c. 1136–37.

¹³² Benedeit, *The Anglo-Norman Voyage of St. Brendan*, trans. Ian Short and Brian Merrilees (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979). Beate Schmolke-Hasselmann, *The Evolution of Arthurian Romance: The Verse Tradition from Chretien to Froissart* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

¹³³ Short, “Patrons and Polyglots,” 229.

¹³⁴ Noblewomen often acted as regent for their husbands who were away on crusade, or for their sons who were too young, such as Blanche of Castile, who was regent of France during the youth of Louis IX; also Blanche of Navarre was regent of the County of Champagne for twenty years until her son took over in c. 1222. These two women were in correspondence with each other in c. 1212. See *Epistolae*, “A Letter from Blanche of Castile, queen of France (1212),” <https://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/705.html> (accessed 11 November 2017). Wendy Slatkin, *Women as Artists* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1985).

languages. As we will see, there are a number of examples of translations and bi-lingual religious books owned by twelfth-century noblewomen.

BIBLICAL WORKS

In England toward the middle of the century, the poet Sanson de Nanteuil translated the book of Proverbs into French verse for “a lady,” presumably his patron Alice de Condet (c. 1150s), creating the “first moral text-book in the French language.”¹³⁵ This book was used for the education of her children, and would have been valuable for the spiritual care of a pious noblewoman, accessible in a language familiar to her. From France, the commissions made by Marie of Champagne seem to favor the genre of romance, yet she also requested translations of religious texts such as the Psalms, the book of Genesis, and “possibly a collection of sermons by Bernard of Clairvaux.”¹³⁶ Benton argues that the work of French verse with gloss of Psalm 44, known as *Eruclavit cor meum*, translated for a “noble lady” should be attributed to Marie’s literary patronage.¹³⁷ The work represents a continued reading interest in scriptural translations, and the considerable commentary by the (unknown) translator tells us the book was used in a didactic manner.¹³⁸ Next, Marie’s verse translation in French of the book of Genesis (c. 1192–1198) was made for her by the clerk-poet Evrat.¹³⁹ He writes that “the countess of Champagne, who knows well how to understand and read, chose it from her library, to be composed well and well glossed, because the words in it are so praiseworthy for the two laws that it contains.”¹⁴⁰ This brief description reveals a number of things

about Marie’s interest in books. Foremost, it indicates the active choices made by Marie in shaping the types of books she wanted to read. It also suggests a collection of books belonging to Marie, from which she could select a Latin copy of Genesis. Further, the addition of a gloss shows Marie’s interest in learning, specifically in her native language. Patricia Stirnemann notes that this book was decorated with historiated and illuminated initials copied in a “large formal bookhand” representing a deluxe production.¹⁴¹ It is possible that this book may have been used by Marie for her private reading, or as Benton argues, the audience Evrat envisioned for his translation would have been the countess and her court, with the intention of the poem to be read aloud.¹⁴² I believe there is room to accept both of these possibilities as a “scene of reading” for this vernacular book.

PSALTERS

The translation of psalters into vernacular languages often resulted in books produced in a dual-language format, where the Latin and vernacular were presented together to explicate the text.¹⁴³ Psalter books belonging to noblewomen display a use of vernacular commentary, which went beyond mere word-for-word translation, and could be valued as reading on its own. For example, as Stewart Gregory has explained, a Latin Psalter with French commentary was made for Laurette, countess of Alsace (d. 1170), when she retired to the convent Forest-les-Bruxelles in 1164.¹⁴⁴ In his research, Gregory points out that the extensive interlinear commentary, written in Laurette’s vernacular language of French, proved popular reading on its own.¹⁴⁵ This Psalter commentary was further copied for Eleanor of Vermandois (d. 1213), Laurette’s daughter-in-law, and Blanche de Navarre, who supported the production of two further copies of this Psalter commentary in French.¹⁴⁶

¹³⁵ Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power*, 42.

¹³⁶ Theodore Evergates, “Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne,” in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011), 79.

¹³⁷ *Eruclavit cor meum* (Psalm 44), **Paris, BnF, Ms 902 (1195–1205)**. John F. Benton, *Culture, Power and Personality in Medieval France*, intro. Thomas N. Bisson (London: The Hambledon Press, 1991), 18.

¹³⁸ Margaret C. Schaus, ed. *Women and Gender in Medieval Europe: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 797. Also, Epistolae, “Marie of France, Countess of Champagne and Troyes,” epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/woman/25.html (accessed 11 November 2017).

¹³⁹ Evrat, *Genesis*, **Paris, BnF, MS Fr. 900 (c. 1200)**. Unfinished and heavily glossed. See Patricia Stirnemann, “Women and Books in France: 1170–1220,” in *Representations of the Feminine in the Middle Ages*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler (Dallas: Academia Press, 1993), 248. Brian Murdoch, *The Medieval Popular Bible, Expansions of Genesis in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), 12–14. Benton, *Culture, Power and Personality*, 16. Many of these works commissioned by or dedicated to twelfth-century women remain unedited and unpublished.

¹⁴⁰ Quote cited from *Epistolae*, “A letter from Evrat to Marie of France, countess of Champagne and Troyes,” <http://epistolae.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/letter/162.html> (accessed 11 November 2017). See Benton’s translation, “the countess, who would know how to understand and read his work, could read it in her library,” in Benton, *Culture, Power and Personality*, 16.

¹⁴¹ Stirnemann, “Women and Books,” 248.

¹⁴² Benton, *Culture, Power and Personality*, 16. See also D. H. Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading*, 215.

¹⁴³ Latin and vernacular, presented in parallel columns or interlinear.

¹⁴⁴ **Durham, Cathedral Chapter Library, MSS A. II. 11–13 (1150–1200)** and **New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, MS M. 338 (1200)**. Stewart Gregory, *The Twelfth-Century Psalter Commentary in French for Laurette d’Alsace: An Edition of Psalms I–L* (London: The Modern Humanities Research Association, 1990). Also, Alexa Sand, “Vision, Devotion, and Difficulty in the Psalter Hours of Yolande of Soissons,” *The Art Bulletin* 87, no. 1 (2005): 6–23. Sand dates it to the “third quarter of the century,” 12.

¹⁴⁵ Stewart Gregory, *The Twelfth-Century Psalter*, 23–24. Gregory notes the commentary is falsely attributed to Simon of Tournai.

¹⁴⁶ *Old French Commentary on the Psalms*, **Paris, BnF, Fr. 22892 (1195–1205)**; *Old French Commentary on the Psalms*, **Paris, BnF, Fr. 963 (1205–1220)**. See Patricia Stirnemann, “Women and Books in France,” 248.

Stirnemann's scholarship adds to the books produced under the patronage of Blanche de Navarre as the "long twelfth century" drew to a close. For example, Blanche commissioned a psalter "with a vernacular liturgical piece that was set to music," known as the *Épître farcie de Saint Etienne* (c. 1210).¹⁴⁷ Stirnemann comments that this psalter was later given to Blanche's niece, Jeanne of Flandres, as a wedding gift.¹⁴⁸

These examples show how women used books to guide the spirituality of those over whom they had influence, their children, members of their court, or women in their familial network, through sharing their books, gifting them, or bequeathing them to other women. An interest in commentary written in the native language they were comfortable reading suggests laywomen were looking for deeper understandings of the psalter, a book integral to the practice of piety by the noble class.

2.2 HISTORY CHRONICLES

The writing of chronicles in languages other than Latin was at the heart of the shift of reading toward vernacular books. From the early decades of the twelfth century, historical writing took the form of rhyming verse, most commonly in French. Adeliza of Leuven (d. 1151), discussed above, joined a court culture in England that was beginning to request works in Anglo-Norman French. Growing up in the region of Brabant, Adeliza would have been familiar with French, and as Jude Mackley further notes, "Adeliza would have learned poetry in Afflighem near Alost, where the monastery had an extensive library and was a 'veritable center for verse chronicles and other texts.'" Thus, it is easy to understand Adeliza's continued reading interest in historical works written in Anglo-Norman verse, which likely inspired her commission of the *Life of Henry I*, now lost, which may even have been set to music.¹⁵⁰ Adeliza's preference to read works in French verse is further evidenced by a vernacular translation of the Latin *Navigatio*

sancti Brendani composed in Anglo-Norman.¹⁵¹ It has been suggested by scholars that this translation, which presents a work of "secular hagiography containing romance elements," was made at the behest of "Queen Aaliz," named as patron of the work in three of the four extant manuscript copies.¹⁵² These two historical chronicles represent Adeliza's reading preference for books that would entertain, educate, as well as commemorate her entry into this dynastic heritage, written in a language familiar to her upbringing.

Connected to Adeliza's interest and support of historical works, a noblewoman from her court, Constance FitzGilbert, went to great lengths to borrow a copy of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britanniae* (c. 1136) to base her commission of the *Estoire des Engleis* (c. 1136–1137).¹⁵³ Constance requested from the poet Gaimar an Anglo-Norman verse translation; a rhyming chronicle focused on secular history and political interest. Constance also owned a copy of the above-mentioned *Life of Henry I*, "which Constance bought for 'one silver mark burnt and weighed,' and frequently read 'in her chamber'."¹⁵⁵ These books made for Constance demonstrate a shared reading interest by noblewomen in historical works and further show a developing vernacular literary culture between women in the English court. This brief glimpse into the reading habits of noblewomen gives a clearer picture of the private manner in which they read, as well as the genres they found interesting. In their role as patron of writers, coupled with their requests for manuscripts with specific content, these noblewomen in England used their financial and social status to obtain books that addressed their reading interest in historical genres.

¹⁵¹ The Anglo-Norman Voyage of St Brendan dates from the first quarter of the twelfth century. It survives in six manuscript copies, two of which are fragments. The fragment, **Oxford, Bodleian Library, Rawl D 913 (c. 1200) fol. 85**, is the closest to the original poem's date of production.

¹⁵² Mackley, *The Legend of St Brendan*, 31.

¹⁵³ Geffrei Gaimar, *Estoire des Engleis* (c. 1136–1137). Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power*, 38. Johns recounts the network of book lending as told by Gaimar in the prologue to his manuscript.

¹⁵⁴ See also, Henry Bainton, "Translating the 'English' Past: Cultural Identity in the *Estoire des Engleis*," in *Language and Culture in Medieval Britain: The French of England, c. 1100–c. 1500*, ed. Jocelyn Wogan-Browne (Woodbridge: York Medieval Press, 2009), 179. Peter-Damian Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Inventing Vernacular Authority* (Rochester: Boydell Press, 1999), 14 and 50. Also, Fiona Tolhurst, *Geoffrey of Monmouth and the Feminist Origins of the Arthurian Legend* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

¹⁵⁵ **LOST Manuscript**. Helen M. Jewell, *Women in Medieval England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 17. Also Ian Short, "Gaimar's Epilogue and Geoffrey of Monmouth's Liber vetustissimus," *Speculum* 69 (1994): 323–343, at 323. Gaimar was familiar with the contemporary author David, who wrote the *Life of Henry I* for Adeliza.

¹⁴⁷ *Psalter and Épître farcie*, **Paris, BnF, latin 238 (c. 1210)**. Patricia Stirnemann, "Some Champenois Vernacular Manuscripts and the Manerius Style of Illumination," in *Les Manuscrits de Chretien de Troyes*, Vol. 1, ed. Keith Busby, et. al., (Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1993), 211.

¹⁴⁸ Stirnemann, "Women and Books," 250.

¹⁴⁹ Jude S. Mackley, *The Legend of St Brendan: A Comparative Study of the Latin and Anglo-Norman Versions* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 33–34. Also called Aliz of Louvaine, Aeliz of Louvain, or Aaliz of Louvain.

¹⁵⁰ **LOST Manuscript**. Mackley, *The Legend of St Brendan*, 34. The "Voyage" was written by David "the Scot," bishop of Bangor.

In a marked contrast, scholarship has demonstrated that books of “history” in vernacular did not begin to flourish outside of England and northern France until the end of the century.¹⁵⁶ Margaret of Cleves (d. 1190) showed an interest in the work of the writer Hendrik van Veldeke, especially the epic of *Eneide* (1174–1184). His work was a Middle High German translation of the French *Roman d’Eneas*, a popular epic that spoke of politics, genealogies, and introduced a new literary aspect to Germany, that of “courtly love”. Although Veldeke’s manuscript was unfinished, he gave it to Margaret “to read and look at” on the occasion of her marriage in 1174. This exchange shows Margaret’s literacy in reading French verse, her desire to read this historical genre of court epics, as well as Veldeke’s respect for Margaret’s noble status demonstrated by giving her his work in progress.¹⁵⁷ When the book was completed years later, while at the Thüringian court Margaret was now a part of as landgravine, Veldeke named Margaret as a patron in the epilogue.¹⁵⁸

Another prominent example of female literary support of this genre comes from Matilda, duchess of Saxony (d. 1189). Matilda and Henry the Lion’s court in Braunschweig (Brunswick) was known for patronage of manuscripts of both religious and secular natures.¹⁵⁹ Like Margaret, Matilda supported the first courtly epics introduced to the German regions, specifically the work known as *Rolandslied* (c. 1170) by Konrad Pfaffe.¹⁶⁰ Scholars debate whether Matilda herself actually commissioned the *Rolandslied*, arguing that Matilda’s role may only have been the acquisition of a French exemplar of the *Chanson de Roland* for Konrad to translate.¹⁶¹ On the other hand, the prologue to the manuscript

mentions “the noble duchess desired this,” indicating Matilda’s preference for, and contribution to, the reading of vernacular works of a historical nature in the Saxon court.¹⁶² In either case, Matilda played a role in the manuscript production, which indicates her awareness of the popularity of translations, as well as her access to a French version of this text. Whether she brought the book with her upon marriage, or acquired it later in some manner, suggests that Matilda may have read the French epic or was at least familiar with the work from her family court in England.¹⁶³

At the end of the century, the literary patronage of Yolande, countess of Saint-Pol, reflects a similar interest in the reading of Latin chronicles translated into vernacular French, yet in this case it differs in that her reading interest was French prose and not verse. Born into Flemish aristocracy, Yolande commissioned the cleric Nicolas de Senlis, sometime between 1195–1205, to make a French prose translation of the Latin *Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle*, which recounted a legend of Charlemagne and his experience at Roncevaux (*Historia Karoli Magni*).¹⁶⁴ Translated from a Latin copy Yolande already owned, the manuscript she requested is the earliest known French vernacular version of the *Pseudo-Turpin*.¹⁶⁵ Yolande received the Latin manuscript through inheritance from her brother, Count Baldwin V of Hainault.¹⁶⁶ Her commission for a French prose version shows Yolande’s recognition of the value of a book

¹⁶² Jeffrey Ashcroft, “‘Si waren aines muotes’: Unanimity in Konrad’s *Rolandslied* and Otto’s and Rahewin’s *Gesta Frederici*,” in *Medieval Knighthood IV: Papers from the Fifth Strawberry Hill Conference 1990*, eds. Christopher Harper-Bill and Ruth Harvey (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1992), 23–51. Ashcroft suggests that Matilda brought a copy of the *Chanson de Roland* with her when she married Henry the Lion, thus Henry commissioned the translation, not Matilda. However, Ashcroft does mention that Matilda’s name is included in the epilogue as a patron of the book; Ashcroft, “Si waren aines muotes,” 24.

¹⁶³ Additionally, from the Germanic area, the building of a new noble court may have sparked the request by Theodora Comnena, Duchess of Austria (d. 1184), to commission a translation of the *Chanson de Roland* in c. 1170 for her court in Vienna, possibly to help her learn the German language. See Rima Devereaux, *Constantinople and the West in Medieval French Literature: Renewal and Utopia* (Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 2012), 198. R. N. Swanson writes that “the epic *Rolandslied* and *König Rother* probably derive from the court of Henry Jasomirgott,” in *The Twelfth Century Renaissance*, 178. Theodora, niece of Manuel and Anna Comnena, married Henry Jasomirgott, duke of Austria and nephew of Conrad III in 1148.

¹⁶⁴ Ronald N. Walpole, *The Old French Johannes Translation of the Pseudo-Turpin Chronicle, A Critical Edition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 10.

¹⁶⁵ June Hall McCash, “Cultural Patronage: An Overview,” in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, ed. June Hall McCash (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 26. Pseudo-Turpin, *The Chronicle of Pseudo-Turpin: Book IV of the Liber Sancti Jacobi (Codex Calixtinus)*, trans. and ed. Kevin R. Poole (New York: Italica Press, 2014).

¹⁶⁶ Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 70–71. Also, Charles W. Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf: A Literary-Historical Study of Guillaume de Palerne* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1960), 36.

¹⁵⁶ Gabrielle M. Spiegel, *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁵⁷ Margaret’s father-in-law, Hermann I of Thüringia, was patron to Veldeke. This copy was stolen from Margaret’s lady-in-waiting, who was given the book to keep safe. It was eventually returned and completed nine years later. Joachim Bumke, *Courtly Culture: Literature and Society in the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 471 and 476.

¹⁵⁸ Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 482.

¹⁵⁹ D. H. Green, *Women Readers in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 217. Matilda was the daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II of England. She was married in 1168 to Henry, duke of Saxony and Bavaria, known as Henry the Lion.

¹⁶⁰ *Rolandsleid*, Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. Pal. Germ. 112 (1170). Matilda may also be involved in the support of the romance work by Eilhart von Oberg, *Tristrant and Isalde* (c. 1170). The attribution of Matilda’s possible role as patron is suggested by Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 42. Also, Evelyn Mullally, *The Artist at Work: Narrative Technique in Chretien de Troyes* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1988), 62. D. H. Green distinguishes the “names of the lovers...according to the different versions,” this spelling accords with the work of Eilhart. See D. H. Green, *Women and Marriage in German Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 128.

¹⁶¹ Bumke, *Courtly Culture*, 482. Bumke supports the idea that it was translated at the request of Henry, yet may have been procured through Matilda’s matrilineal network.

written in the vernacular of a popular epic; in this case, for educational, entertainment, and memorial purposes. In addition, about a decade later Yolande commissioned the clerk Peter of Beauvais to produce a French vernacular prose translation of Books II and III, *Miracula* and *Translatio* (c. 1212), also taken from Yolande's copy of the *Pseudo-Turpin*.¹⁶⁷ Her second commission highlights the trend toward vernacular reading practice among women at court. Yolande had built a small collection of French books, translated into two separate manuscripts from the Latin exemplar. Her support as patron of vernacular chronicles on separate occasions points to a continued interest in reading material that connected her with her ancestry all the way to Charlemagne.

As a final example of noblewomen's interest in reading vernacular works of history, the textual patronage of Blanche de Navarre (d. 1229) stands out as a significant contribution.¹⁶⁸ Stirnemann argues that Blanche's political role as regent likely influenced her support for works in the genre of history, which extended to an interest in reading in French verse known as *chansons de geste*.¹⁶⁹ For example, Blanche was likely the patron of two "histories": the *Roman de Troie* by Benoît de Sainte-Maure, and the *Foulque de Candie* by Herbert le Duc de Damartin.¹⁷⁰ Stirnemann attributes these manuscripts to a "Manerius Style" of decoration produced in the Champagne region at the turn of the century, indicating that Blanche commissioned the production of these books to be made by scribes within her court influence.¹⁷¹

Based on the commissions of historical works by noblewomen such as Adeliza, Matilda, Yolande, and Blanche, the manuscript evidence indicates a strong reading preference for this genre held by women in the court milieu throughout the twelfth century. An interest in chronicles was likely sparked by their desire to secure their dynastic heritage. However, their commissions also demonstrate noblewomen's ability to read in the vernacular, and their contribution to textual culture in acquiring manuscripts that addressed their reading needs.

¹⁶⁷ Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf*, 37. Also, Spiegel, *Romancing the Past*, 344, n. 63.

¹⁶⁸ Blanche de Navarre, countess of Champagne, c. 1181–1229.

¹⁶⁹ Patricia Stirnemann, "Women and Books in France: 1170–1220," in *Representations of the Feminine*, ed. Bonnie Wheeler (Dallas: Academia Press, 1993).

¹⁷⁰ *Roman de Troie*, **London, BL, Additional 30863 (1195–1205)**; *Foulque de Candie*, **Paris, BnF, fr. 25518 (1200–1210)**. Stirnemann, "Women and Books in France," 248. Penny Eley "Author and Audience in the *Roman de Troie*," in *Courtly Literature: Culture and Context. Selected Papers from the 5th Triennial Congress of the International Courtly Literature Society, Dalfsen, The Netherlands, 9–16 Aug. 1986*, eds. Keith Busby and Erik Kooper (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1990), 181. Also, *The Chanson d'Antioche: An Old French Account of the First Crusade*, trans. Susan B. Edgington, ed. Carol Sweetenham (Farnham: Ashgate, 2011), 82.

¹⁷¹ Stirnemann, "Women and Books," 249.

SAINTS' LIVES

Noblewomen requested manuscripts on saints' lives written in vernacular languages for the same reasons they commissioned them in Latin: for spiritual edification, education, and connection to the past. Yet, these manuscripts offered the added benefit of a text written in their primary language.¹⁷² For instance, in the Meuse-Rhine region, Hendrik van Veldeke, discussed above, was both author and translator working under the patronage of various noblewomen. Continuing his work within the literary genre of "history", Veldeke was commissioned by Duchess Agnes of Laon/Loon (d. 1191) to compose a translation of the Latin *Vita et Miracula* of St Servatius, the patron saint of Maastricht, into the Limburg dialect, *Het Leven van Sint Servaes* (c. 1170).¹⁷³ Agnes may have commissioned this translation as a way to help "propagate the veneration" of this local saint, recognizing the value a manuscript can impart as a holy object, and securing her pious role as patron.¹⁷⁴

A further example indicates the literary patronage of Blanche de Navarre. She commissioned a translation of the Latin text *Vitae Patrum*, made by an unknown author consisting of seventy-four lives of the Latin fathers, into French prose known as the *Vie des Peres* sometime between c. 1199 and 1229.¹⁷⁵ The verse prologue to the prose manuscript suggests that Blanche "put aside Cliges et Perceval," secular works she must have been familiar with, in exchange for compositions of moralizing works in vernacular prose.¹⁷⁶ This "warning" against reading books of romance points to the widespread trend occurring during the twelfth century for works written outside of the dominant Latin textual culture, supported by the commissions for vernacular manuscripts by high-status noblewomen in a court context.

¹⁷² Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power*, 37.

¹⁷³ Heinrich von Veldeke, *The Life of Saint Servatius: A Dual-Language Edition of the Middle Dutch Legend of Saint Servatius by Heinrich von Veldeke and the Anonymous Upper German Life of Saint Servatius*, eds. Kim Vivian, Ludo Jongen, and Richard H. Lawson (New York: E. Mellen Press, 2006). Also, Frits van Oostrom, "The Middle Ages until circa 1400," in *A Literary History of the Low Countries*, ed. Theo Hermans (Rochester: Camden House, 2009), 8–10. Agnes, written as Agnes of Loon (or Looz), was duchess of Bavaria. Her daughter was Sophia of Wittelsbach, who owned two Latin psalters with her donor-portraits discussed above.

¹⁷⁴ Frits van Oostrom, "The Middle Ages until circa 1400," 10.

¹⁷⁵ *La Vie des (anciens) peres*, **Paris, BnF, Fr. 1038 (1200–1225)** and **Lyon, Bibliotheque Municipale, ms. 868 (1200–1225)**, fols. 1v–115r. See David Bell, *What Nuns Read: Books and Libraries in Medieval English Nunneries* (Kalamazoo: Cistercian Publications, 1995), 115; "Barking #15: This is the prose translation of the *Vitas patrum* (BHL 6524) prepared for Blanche de Navarre, Countess of Champagne, sometime between 1199 and 1229." Also, Anne Clark Bartlett, *Male Authors, Female Readers: Representation and Subjectivity in Middle English Devotional Literature* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995), 6 and 7.

¹⁷⁶ McCash, *Cultural Patronage*, 25.

2.3 ROMANCE

As Albrecht Classen notes, the “Old French grapheme, ‘romanz’...meant at first any work translated from Latin into a Romance vernacular, and came only later to denote a work of narrative literature, including not only the romance, but several other genres.”¹⁷⁷ Similar to vernacular histories, the chronicles, epics, and legends composed in (French) rhyming verse, noblewomen throughout Europe embraced a trend toward books produced in *romanz*.¹⁷⁸ This shift in language of the written word became specifically connected to a developing genre which focused mainly on secular concerns of portraying a “romantic ideal” of court culture. The reading interest of noblewomen regarding works of romance was a significant addition to textual culture specific to the twelfth century.

Toward the middle of the century, this genre became a reading interest of Marie de Champagne (d. 1198). Through her role as patron of this developing literary trend, Marie helped to establish the court of Champagne as a center for textual and artistic advancement.¹⁷⁹ Marie was the eldest daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Louis VII, and was educated in Latin, as well as French, during her youth at St Pierre in Avenay learning under the abbess Alice of Mareuil.¹⁸⁰ It is possible Marie even built a personal library while growing up at the convent in Avenay.¹⁸¹ As Countess of Champagne, she extended her social and financial support to textual culture as a patron to authors of romance. Marie’s role in the production of the Arthurian-based work by Chrétien de Troyes, *Le Chevalier de la Charrette* (1181–1187), holds an enigmatic dedication to Marie in the prologue.¹⁸² It states, “The subject matter and

meaning are furnished and given him by the Countess.”¹⁸³ The wording suggests that Marie was responsible not only for the commission, but possibly providing a narrative for Chrétien to follow. Marie’s support of a number of other romance authors such as Gautier d’Arras and lyric-poets Conon de Bethune and Huon d’Oisy shows her continued interest in this developing genre, read for entertainment purposes.¹⁸⁴ For example, Huon d’Oisy wrote a poem for Marie in 1189 called the *Tournoiment des Dames*, a story where the noblewomen were competing in the tournament rather than men.¹⁸⁵

At about the same time, also in the northern region of France, the verse romance *Partonopeu(s) de Blois* (c. 1171) was dedicated to the patronage of Alix, countess of Blois.¹⁸⁶ This is closely followed by a commission from Yolande of Saint-Pol, discussed above, for the French verse romance *Guillaume de Palerme* (c. 1200).¹⁸⁷ The work is a translation of an unidentified Latin text, which Yolande must have known about, and perhaps secured an exemplar to have copied. Her commission also tells us that Yolande’s reading interest in vernacular books extended from moralizing texts written in prose, to narratives of entertainment written in verse. Blanche de Navarre lent her patronage and influence to the production of romance books, which included an anthology of

de Troyes,” in *Les Manuscrits de Chrétien de Troyes, Vol. 1*, eds. Keith Busby, Terry Nixon, Alison Stones, and Laurie Walters (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), 22. Also, Stirnemann, “Women and Books,” 247. *Guiot manuscript*, (Paris, BnF, Fr. 794 (early 13th c). An image thought to represent Marie de Champagne is found in the initial P (fol. 27) depicting her as patron of the text. Stirnemann, “Some Champenois Vernacular Manuscripts and the Manerius Style of Illumination,” in *Les Manuscrits de Chrétien de Troyes, Vol. 1*, eds. Keith Busby, Terry Nixon, Alison Stones, and Lori Walters (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), 204.

¹⁸³ Douglas Kelly, “Narrative Poetics: Rhetoric, Orality and Performance,” in *A Companion to Chrétien de Troyes*, eds. Norris J. Lacy and Joan Tasker Grimbert (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), 56.

¹⁸⁴ Michelle Reichert, *Between Courtly Literature and Al-Andalus: Matière D’Orient and the Importance of Spain in the Romances of the Twelfth-Century Writer Chrétien de Troyes: Oriental Symbolism and Influences in the Romances of Chrétien de Troyes* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 8–11. Also, Kristen Lee Over, *Kingship, Conquest, and Patria: Literary and Cultural Identities in Medieval French and Welsh Arthurian Romance* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 79.

¹⁸⁵ Benton, *Culture, Power and Personality*, 29.

¹⁸⁶ Penny Eley, *Partonopeus de Blois: Romance in the Making* (Cambridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2011), 179–206. *Partonopeus de Blois* was composed in c. 1171, but the earliest version is from Paris, *Bibl. de l’Arsenal, ms. 2986*, dated to the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. Alix of France/Blois is the youngest daughter of Eleanor of Aquitaine and King Louis VII.

¹⁸⁷ *Guillaume de Palerme* (c. 1200). This romance survives in a single manuscript from the thirteenth century (Paris, *Bibl. de l’Arsenal ms. 6565*). Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werewolf*, 25–38. Dunn translates the quote differently: “Cest livre fist diter et faire/ Et de latin en roumans traire (9658–9)/She caused this book to be recited and composed, and translated from Latin into French”, at 25. Also, Alexandre Micha, *Guillaume de Palerme, Roman du XII siècle* (Geneve: Librairie Droz, 1990), 6–7.

¹⁷⁷ Albrecht Classen, ed., *Handbook of Medieval Studies: Terms, Methods, and Trends, vol. 2* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2010), 1831–2.

¹⁷⁸ Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, “The Shape of Romance in Medieval France,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta Krueger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 13. Bruckner comments that “romance is an art of reshaping through rewriting.”

¹⁷⁹ John F. Benton, “The Court of Champagne as Literary Center,” in *Culture, Power and Personality in Medieval France*, ed. Thomas N. Bisson (London: The Hambeldon Press, 1991), 3–39.

¹⁸⁰ Evergates, “Aristocratic Women,” 77. Both June Hall McCash and John F. Benton comment that Marie could not read Latin well, this does not indicate Marie was not taught Latin, or that she could not read Latin at all. See June Hall McCash, “Chrétien’s Patrons,” in *A Companion to Chrétien de Troyes*, eds. Norris J. Lacy and Joan Tasker Grimbert (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 2008), 16.

¹⁸¹ Evergates, “Aristocratic Women,” 77–79. The contents of Marie de Champagne’s library are unknown.

¹⁸² *Le Chevalier de la Charrette/Lancelot*; no manuscripts survive from the period of production. See Benton, “The Court of Champagne as Literary Center,” in *Culture, Power and Personality*, 12–14. Terry Nixon, “Romance Collections and the Manuscripts of Chrétien

the works of Chrétien de Troyes.¹⁸⁸ Additionally, Stirnemann argues that the *Perceval le vieil* by Manessier, a continuation of Chrétien's *Perceval*, was written for Blanche's niece, Countess Jeanne de Flandres (1200–1244), as stated in the epilogue of the work.¹⁸⁹

The examples discussed above are books with a known attribution to the commission and support of a specific noblewoman. However, it has been argued that works in this genre were created for the larger female court audience. Bumke notes how “courtly epic poets repeatedly declared that their works were intended to win them the favor of noble ladies.”¹⁹⁰ These examples show how noblewomen guided the reading material presented to their court, and as June McCash has argued, their “social responsibility to provide entertainment for the court must not be excluded as a major motive for female patronage, particularly for the support and encouragement of writers, jongleurs, dancers, and singers.”¹⁹¹ Despite the popularity of this genre in French-speaking courts, the lack of romance narratives in twelfth-century England or the Germanic regions suggests the genre of courtly romance was not favored by noblewomen there.¹⁹²

2.4 POETRY AND LETTERS

It is possible to categorize most of the above vernacular literature as poetry, since it was primarily composed in a verse style. Further, evidence of verse-epistles written in vernacular does not become a common practice until the fourteenth century, as witnessed in the works by Christine de Pisan.¹⁹³ However, the poem *Bien cuidai toute ma vie* was written for a noblewoman, likely Marie de Champagne, a twelfth-century patroness with a wide range of reading interests. The work was

composed by the French lyric-poet Gace Brulé, who mentions that the poem was requested by the “comtesse de Brie”; scholars have suggested that this is Blanche de Navarre and not Marie de Champagne.¹⁹⁴ In either case, Marie was known as a patron to many other twelfth-century poets, such as Conon de Bethune and Aubouin de Sezanne.¹⁹⁵

2.5 VARIOUS BOOKS IN VERNACULAR

There are a few instances that escape the conventional genre categories I have suggested so far which can be highlighted as examples of books used for educational purposes. For instance, at the beginning of the century in England, the *Bestiary* by Philippe de Thaon was made for Adeliza of Leuven, likely intended for her education.¹⁹⁶ Willene Clark suggests that an interpretation of the opening stanza can infer that it was in fact considered a “teacher’s book.”¹⁹⁷

Philippe de Taun en franceise raisun
Ad estrait Bestiaire, un livre de gramaire,
Pur l'onur d'une gemme, ki mult est bele femme,
Aliz est numée, reine est coronée,
Reine est de Engleterre, sa ame n'ait ja guere;¹⁹⁸

Philippe de Thaon (Taun) also dedicated a French translation of the Latin “Tiburtine Sibyl” to Empress Matilda, stepdaughter of Adeliza.¹⁹⁹ The *Livre de Sibille* is the oldest known translation of this prognostic

¹⁹⁴ Benton, *Culture, Power and Personality*, 19.

¹⁹⁵ Benton, *Culture, Power and Personality*, 39. Also, Dunn, *The Foundling and the Werwolf*, 35.

¹⁹⁶ Philippe Thaon, *Bestiary*, London, British Library, Cotton Nero A.V (1121–1135). (Later copies in Oxford, Merton College MS 249 and Copenhagen, Kongelige Bibliotek, Gl. kgl. S 3466 8^o). It is possible that Adeliza requested the *bestiary* to learn about the animals kept in her husband's menagerie.

¹⁹⁷ Willene B. Clark, *A Medieval Book of Beasts: Second Family Bestiary: Commentary, Art, Text and Translation* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006), 103 and 113. Also, Susan Crane, *Animal Encounters: Contacts and Concepts in Medieval Britain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 201, n. 12. According to Crane, Marie de France was not influenced by Philippe's bestiary for her work, *Bisclavret*.

¹⁹⁸ “Philippe de Thaun into the French language, has translated the Bestiary, a book of science, for the honour of a jewel, who is a very handsome woman, Aliz is she named, a queen she is crowned, queen she is of England, may her soul never have trouble.” Thomas Wright, ed., *The Bestiary of Philippe de Thaon* (London: The Historical Society, 1841); Digital text from David Badke, *The Medieval Bestiary, Animals in the Middle Ages* (2002–2008), <http://bestiary.ca/etexts/wright1841/wright1841.htm> (accessed 11 November 2017).

¹⁹⁹ *Epistolae* notes that this book was dedicated to her mother, Queen Matilda.

¹⁸⁸ *Annonay anthology* (1205–1220) is held in a private collection.

¹⁸⁹ *Conte del Graal or Perceval*, London, BL, Additional 36614 (1210–1220); See Stirnemann, “Women and Books in France,” 249; Stirnemann, “Some Champenois Vernacular Manuscripts,” 195–226, at 212. Also see ARLIMA, Archives de Littérature du Moyen Age, http://www.arlima.net/eh/herbert_le_duc_de_dammartin.html (accessed 11 November 2017).

¹⁹⁰ Bumke, *Courtly Culture: Literature and Society in the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 483.

¹⁹¹ McCash, *Cultural Patronage*, 23.

¹⁹² D. H. Green, *Women and Marriage in German Medieval Romance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). Ann Marie Rasmussen, “Medieval German Romance,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Romance*, ed. Roberta L. Krueger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 183.

¹⁹³ Nadia Margolis, “The Cry of the Chameleon: Evolving Voices in the Epistles of Christine de Pisan,” in *Disputatio, An International Transdisciplinary Journal of the Late Middle Ages. Vol 1: The Late Medieval Epistle*, eds. Carol Poster and Richard Utz (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 39.

text.²⁰⁰ Next, the *Eiseterioi/Epithalamion*, was made toward the end of the twelfth century as a gift for the betrothal of a French bride, Anna (Agnes), who was to marry Alexios Komnenos.²⁰¹ Composed in Greek as a poem “of greetings,” with grand illustrations, the book was intended to educate the young girl in her new language and culture.²⁰² Finally, Queen Teresa of Portugal (reigned 1112–1128) requested John of Seville to translate from Arabic to Latin a portion (health regime) of the *Secret of Secrets* attributed to Aristotle.²⁰³

3. CONCLUSION

What can be discerned from the varied evidence of books made for noblewomen? Most prominent is women’s active role in acquiring the books they found valuable to read, by commissioning manuscripts and supporting authors. The books they requested not only served their individual needs of devotional reading, or the larger needs of courtly entertainment, but also demonstrate instances of noblewomen’s influence over politics, education, and the spiritual guidance of others. Of the books made for noblewomen written in Latin, the psalter stands out owing to its use as the primary book for women’s education, private devotion, and display of wealth and piety.

Added to this, women at court began to build a vernacular literary culture which continued to gain momentum throughout the period into the following centuries. My research indicates over twenty books made in a vernacular language with attribution of ownership to a noblewoman from the twelfth century, produced in various levels of

collaboration between patroness and author.²⁰⁴ This shift in language of the written word was founded on the support of noblewomen during the twelfth century. The evidence presented indicates that the translation of Latin works into vernacular languages, including topics such as history, romance, and religious texts, was a frequent request by noble female patrons; read for entertainment, education, and commemoration.

Although many of the books belonging to noblewomen in the twelfth century no longer survive – only fifteen of the vernacular manuscripts discussed above are extant from the twelfth century – women’s participation is further evidenced by contemporary and later sources, indicating that noblewomen’s mark on textual culture could not be erased. Our knowledge of the books they read by way of commission, inheritance, dedication, or exchange give us a context for understanding twelfth-century noblewomen’s reading preference for genres both moralizing and entertaining. Moreover, their contribution to manuscript production as elite patrons influenced the physical elements of the book itself, such as illuminations, portraits, and treasure bindings, which exemplified the female readers’ noble status and piety.

The next chapter introduces books made for women in a convent context through various means of support, from commission to collection. I first discuss those books written in Latin, followed by the few examples of books made for nuns written in a vernacular language. I will again organize the highlighted examples by genre, thus demonstrating how the books were used, which gives us a better understanding of nuns’ contribution to written culture and manuscript production in the twelfth century.

²⁰⁰ Hugh Shields, ed., *Le livre de Sibille by Philippe de Thaon* (London: Anglo-Norman Text Soc., 1979). Elisabeth van Houts, ed., *Medieval Memories: Men, Women and the Past, 700–1300* (New York: Taylor and Francis, 2001), 11. Also, ARLIMA, Archives de Littérature du Moyen Age, http://www.arlima.net/mp/philippe_de_thaon.html (accessed 11 November 2017).

²⁰¹ Agnes of France is the same as Anna, Byzantine Empress.

²⁰² *Eiseterioi*, **Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, GR Ms. 1851 (1179)**. Cecily Hilsdale, “Constructing a Greek Book for French Bride,” *The Art Bulletin* 87, no. 3 (2005): 458–483. Also, Michael Jefferys, “The Vernacular Eiseterioi for Agnes of France,” in *Byzantine Papers: Proceedings of the First Australian Byzantine Studies Conference, Canberra, 17–19 May 1978*, eds. Elizabeth and Michael Jefferys and Ann Moffat (Canberra: Australian Association for Byzantine Studies, 1981), 101–115. This manuscript has dating and attribution that have been debated by scholars.

²⁰³ Charles Burnett, “Royal Patronage of the Translations from Arabic into Latin in the Iberian Peninsula,” in *Kulturtransfer und Hofgesellschaft im Mittelalter: Wissenskultur an sizilianischen und kastilischen Hof im 13. Jahrhundert*, eds. Johannes Fried and Gundula Grebner (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2009), 323–330; Burnett, “Al-Qabisi’s Introduction to Astrology: From Courtly Entertainment to University Textbook,” in *Studies in the History of Culture and Science: A Tribute to Gad Freudenthal*, ed. Resianne Fontaine (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

²⁰⁴ See Appendix.