



Talking about history in eleventh-century England: the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* and the court of Harthacnut

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The Encomium Emmae Reginae was written in the early 1040s to support the interests of Queen Emma amidst the factionalism which marked the end of the period of Danish rule in England. This article argues that the Encomium was shaped by its production and reception in the distinctively multilingual environment of King Harthacnut's court. Attention to Emma's key role in negotiating the interaction of the English, Norse, French, Flemish and Latin literary and linguistic cultures which were present in the Anglo-Danish court reveals growing lay claims to Latin literary culture in eleventh-century England.

Recent scholarship has opened up to view the integral role which Queen Emma played in the production of the *Encomium Emmae Reginae* (1041–2). What has emerged is a text which was written to support her interests amidst the factionalism of the court of her son, King Harthacnut (1037–42).¹ As a result, the *Encomium* has become a prime

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¹ For the text: *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, ed. and trans. Alistair Campbell (London, 1949). Campbell's edition has recently been reprinted with a supplementary introduction by Simon Keynes (Cambridge, 1998). Text will be cited as *Encomium* followed by book and chapter numbers. Throughout, I have used Campbell's translation of the *Encomium*, with some emendation. References to Campbell's introduction and supplementary material will be as Campbell, *Encomium*, followed by the original page numbers; and references to Keynes's introduction will be Keynes, *Encomium*, followed by the page numbers. For the date, author and audience of the *Encomium* and Emma's role in its production: Campbell, *Encomium*, pp. xxi–xxiii; Pauline Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford, 1997), pp. 28–40; Keynes, *Encomium*, pp. xxxv–xxxvi, xxxix–xli, lix and lxix; and Andy Orchard, 'Literary Background to the *Encomium Emmae Reginae*', *Journal of Medieval Latin* 11 (2001), esp. pp. 158–9, 166 and 169.

example of a Latin text which was produced in order to have a particular impact on a lay audience. This article will focus accordingly on the social and linguistic contexts of the *Encomium* in order to consider what strategies were available for communicating a Latin text to lay audiences in the specific context of Anglo-Danish England.² In other words, I want to pose the questions of how and why Emma and the Encomiast could conceive of a Latin text as an effective way of protecting her vulnerable position. By exploring both the production and the reception of the *Encomium* within the distinctively multilingual context of Harthacnut's court (where English, Danish, French, Flemish and Latin all interacted with each other), my aim is to contribute to our general understanding of how lay people staked claims to Latin literary culture in the Middle Ages, especially in the period just prior to widespread vernacularization. My broader concern lies with the sociology of Latin in the Middle Ages; that is, with how Latin texts structured, and were structured by, the human relationships of those people who made and used them.³

I

In his account of the Anglo-Danish period, the Encomiast – probably a monk from the Flemish foundation of Saint-Bertin – smoothes over many problems in order to present a picture of a legitimate and sustainable Anglo-Danish dynasty that had not only an illustrious past but also a future. Emma's marriage to Cnut is celebrated, for example, while her

² On lay audiences and Latin historiography in the Carolingian period, see for important examples: Janet Nelson, 'Public Histories and Private History in the Work of Nithard', *Speculum* 60 (1985), pp. 251–93 and her 'History-Writing at the Courts of Louis the Pious and Charles the Bald', in Anton Scharer and Georg Scheibelreiter (eds), *Historiographie im frühen Mittelalter* (Vienna, 1994), pp. 435–42; Rosamond McKitterick, *The Carolingians and the Written Word* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 236–41; and M.J. Innes, 'Memory, Orality and Literacy in an Early Medieval Society', *Past and Present* 158 (1998), pp. 3–36. For historiography in the post-Carolingian world, see Lars Mortensen, 'Stylistic Choice in a Reborn Genre: The National Histories of Widukind of Corvey and Dudo of Saint-Quentin', in P. Gatti and A. Degl'Innocenti (eds), *Dudone di San Quintino* (Trent, 1995), pp. 77–102.

³ My emphasis on the *Encomium* as a social text is indebted to Gabrielle Spiegel's approach to vernacular historiography and Karl Hauck's work on the literature of the medieval nobility: Spiegel's *Romancing the Past: The Rise of Vernacular Prose Historiography in Thirteenth-Century France* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993), and 'History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text' in her *The Past as Text: The Theory and Practice of Medieval Historiography* (Baltimore, 1997), pp. 3–28; and Hauck, 'Haus- und sippengebundene Literatur mittelalterlicher Adelsgeschlechter von Adelssatiren des 11. und 12. Jahrhunderts her erläutert', in Walter Lammers (ed.), *Geschichtsdenken und Geschichtsbild im Mittelalter* (Darmstadt, 1961), pp. 169–99. Hauck's essay has been translated as 'The Literature of House and Kindred Associated with Medieval Noble Families, Illustrated from the Eleventh- and Twelfth-Century Satires on the Nobility', in Timothy Reuter (ed. and trans.), *The Medieval Nobility: Studies on the Ruling Classes of France and Germany from the Sixth to the Twelfth Centuries* (Amsterdam, 1979), pp. 61–85.

first marriage to the English king Æthelred II is suppressed. Edward the Confessor and Alfred – Emma's children by Æthelred II – are presented as Cnut's own, but Cnut's paternity of Harold Harefoot (his son by Ælfgifu of Northampton) is flatly denied. Emma is exonerated for any role in Alfred's murder which is instead blamed on Harold Harefoot.⁴ The text ends with an assertion of dynastic power rooted in familial harmony, as Harthacnut shares the kingdom with his half-brother Edward the Confessor and they are joined in rule by their mother, Emma. In sharp contrast to the final image of the text, both the Anglo-Danish dynasty and Emma's position were far from secure in the period 1041–2. Indeed, Harthacnut, although a young man, died soon after, and the text's ending had to be re-written to present Edward as *heres* . . . *legitimus*.⁵ Harthacnut's short rule was unpopular and his court riven by factionalism. The complex and shifting alliances which resulted both from the Danish conquest and the bitter succession disputes after Cnut's death left Harthacnut's court a potentially violent place, since it included men who had been supporters of Harold Harefoot, of Harthacnut and of Edward and Alfred. Harthacnut, branded a pledge-breaker for the murder of Earl Eadwulf and criticized for having Harold Harefoot's body thrown in the Thames, was himself implicated in this violence. His invitation to Edward the Confessor to reign jointly with him may have been an attempt to quell the disquiet stirred up by his rule. Discord also extended to relations between Emma and Edward which, despite what the *Encomiast* says, were uneasy. In 1043, after he gained sole rule, Edward stripped his mother of both land and treasure because, in the words of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, 'heo wæs æror þam cyngre hire suna swiðe heard. Pæt heo him læsse dyde þonne he wolde ær þam þe he cyng wære. 7 eac syððan' ('she was earlier too harsh with the king, her son, in that she did less for him than he wanted, before he was king, and also afterwards').⁶

The tensions of Harthacnut's court are very carefully negotiated by the *Encomiast*, whose expertly delicate treatment of potential sources of division amongst those now loyal to Harthacnut is central to the important arguments put forward by Simon Keynes and developed by Andy Orchard that the *Encomium* was written both *for* and from *within*

⁴ *Encomium*, II. 16–17, II. 18, and III. 1.

⁵ *Encomium*, III. 14.

⁶ Pauline Stafford, *Unification and Conquest: A Political and Social History of England in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London, 1989), pp. 77–82 and her *Queen Emma*, pp. 236–54; Keynes, *Encomium*, pp. xxix–xxxviii and lxix–lxxx; and J.R. Maddicott, 'Edward the Confessor's Return to England in 1041', *English Historical Review* 119 (2004), pp. 650–66. For quotation: *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle: A Collaborative Edition*, Vol. 6, *MS D*, ed. G.P. Cubbin (Cambridge, 1996), *sub anno* 1043.

Harthacnut's court.⁷ Moreover, both the Encomiast's prefatory letters and his text overtly express his anxiety that his version of events will not be accepted by those around Emma. He writes that either he will have 'scilicet aut uariis iudiciis hominum subiaceret, aut de his, quae mihi a te, domina regina, precepta sunt, precipientem negligendo conticessere' ('to submit to a variety of criticisms from men, or to be silent concerning the things enjoined upon me by you, Lady Queen, and to disregard you, who enjoin me').⁸ In vindicating Emma for Alfred's death, he imagines someone hostile to her objecting to his account: 'Sed fortassis hic mihi quilibet clamabit, quem liuor huiuscae dominae liuidum onerosumque reddit' ('But perchance at this point someone, whom ill-will towards this lady has rendered spiteful and odious, will protest to me').⁹ The mark which the tensions of Harthacnut's court left on the *Encomium* is a strong indication that the text was written as a means of intervening in debates within that court about Emma and, further, heavily underscores the fact that the *Encomium* was meaningless if it failed in this goal. This understanding of the intentions of Emma and the Encomiast brings us firmly back to the question of how Latin texts were communicated to lay audiences.

To begin, we need to establish what kind of a Latin text the *Encomium* is. The *Encomium* is a classicizing work whose pages reveal the influence of a range of Latin authors, including Sallust and Lucan, as well as Ovid, Horace, Juvenal, Lucretius and Vergil.¹⁰ But it is only Vergil whom the Encomiast explicitly acknowledges, both in his second prefatory letter and later, at an important turning point in the narrative (the launching of Svein's fleet which inaugurates the Danish conquest of England).¹¹ By being so explicit, he signals that it is important to the meaning of his text for his audience to recognize his debt to Vergil. Vergil's *Aeneid* shapes both the Encomiast's narrative and his intellectual conceptualization of the work. On the level of the text's story and the myth which the Encomiast creates around the beginnings of the Anglo-Danish dynasty, the Encomiast uses allusion to the *Aeneid* to represent Cnut (the dynasty's founder) as a second Aeneas, and Svein

⁷ Keynes, *Encomium*, pp. xxxix–xli, lix, and lxix; Orchard, 'Literary Background', esp. p. 158; and my 'Fictions of Family: The *Encomium Emmae Reginae* and Vergil's *Aeneid*', *Viator* (forthcoming). For other comments on the audience and reception see: Eric John, 'The *Encomium Emmae Reginae*: A Riddle and a Solution,' *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 63 (1980–1), pp. 58–94, at p. 63; Felice Lifshitz, 'The *Encomium Emmae Reginae*: A "Political Pamphlet" of the Eleventh Century?', *Haskins Society Journal* 1 (1989), pp. 39–50; Beryl Smalley, *Historians in the Middle Ages* (London, 1974), p. 75.

⁸ *Encomium*, Prologue.

⁹ *Encomium*, III. 7.

¹⁰ Campbell, *Encomium*, pp. xxix–xxxiv; and Orchard, 'Literary Background', pp. 159–60. On knowledge of Vergil in Anglo-Saxon England, see n. 20 below.

¹¹ *Encomium*, I. 4.

(the father whose conquest did not last beyond his death) as Anchises – that is, the father of Aeneas who died just before reaching Italy. This use of Vergil by the Encomiast is an essential aspect of the text's ideological meaning in that it asserts an imperial and civilized European identity for Cnut.¹² Importantly, this meaning could have been appreciated by a lay person who had some exposure to Latin literary culture but who could not read Latin him or herself.

In the two prefaces to his text, the Encomiast uses allusions to key passages in Vergil to put forward sophisticated, though incipient, ideas about the fictionality of his work. The terms in which he frames his enquiry into the nature of fiction and historical narrative illustrate that he wrote within an intellectual climate which, in the twelfth century, would subsequently produce powerful conceptual arguments for the truth of made-up fiction. The nature of historical truth and of fiction, and the Encomiast's engagement with these concepts, is a complex topic and I have set out elsewhere the way that the Encomiast turned to Vergil in order to explore the problematic relationship of his text to the writing of history.¹³ The Encomiast is deeply interested in the distinction between lies which are told to trick an audience and untruths which both author and audience recognize as such. In the context of the current discussion of the audience of the *Encomium*, what is most significant here is that, although the Encomiast's arguments about the nature of *historia* are highly learned, and would have required an educated reader to be apprehended, they are intimately connected to his concern to sway the opinions of the uneducated members of Harthacnut's court. That is, the Encomiast's intellectually sophisticated exploration of the boundary between historical narrative and fiction was a response to a social and political problem: the need to present a version of events which defended Emma to an audience which had participated in those events and which would have had definite views about her reputation. This audience would have recognized that parts of his text were untrue, and obviously so. It would have asked what that fiction was doing, what meaning it created. Thus the least intellectual members of Harthacnut's court would also have had to ask the same questions about the nature of fiction that the Encomiast posed in his prefaces (if not in the same terms) in order to make sense of the text rather than simply to dismiss it. The Encomiast's use of Vergil alerts us to the way his text might have appealed to people with different kinds

¹² Elizabeth Tyler, '“The Eyes of the Beholders were Dazzled”: Treasure and Artifice in *Encomium Emmae Reginae*', *EME* 8 (1999), pp. 247–70, at pp. 257–68; and 'Fictions of Family'.

¹³ See Tyler, 'Fictions of Family', where references to a full range of scholarship on history writing and fiction in the Middle Ages can be found.

of, and access to, Latinity and it invites us to look at the interaction of these different Latinities with each other.¹⁴

II

An assessment of the central role which talk played in both shaping and disseminating the substance of the *Encomium* can help us to see how a Latin text could have been envisaged as contributing to political debate in Harthacnut's court. The language of the two prefaces makes clear, not only that the Encomiast intended his written Latin text to intervene in spoken debate about Emma, but also that this text was given its form in an environment in which the oral and the written interacted. In the Prologue, addressed to Emma, the Encomiast conceives of history as written down in order to be heard:

Hoc enim in historia proprium exigitur, ut nullo erroris diuerticulo a recto ueritatis tramite declinetur, quoniam, cum quis alicuius gesta scribens ueritati falsa quaedam . . . interserit . . . auditor facta uelut infecta ducit.

This quality, indeed, is required in history, that one should not deviate from the straight path of truth by any divergent straying, for when in writing the deeds of any man one inserts false elements in the truth . . . the hearer assuredly regards events which happened as events which did not happen.¹⁵

In the Argument, the Encomiast addresses himself not to the listener, *auditor*, but to the reader, *lector*. Back in the Prologue, he associates his much-criticized loquacity with both the written and the spoken word, and the term he uses for the bitterness with which his enemies assail him, *mordaciter*, neatly brings to mind the real mouths which argued about Emma in Harthacnut's court. The Encomiast's repeated allusions to Vergil's figure of Fama – who spread rumours, both true and false, about Dido – also indicates his concern for how conversation, counsel, debate and gossip make and break reputations. Alongside various oral and written traditions, these highly social activities were influential factors in shaping the *Encomium*.¹⁶

¹⁴ On different levels of Latinity, see: Michel Banniard, 'Language and Communication in Carolingian Europe', in R. McKitterick (ed.), *The New Cambridge Medieval History II: c.700–c.900* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 695–708; and Rosamond McKitterick, 'Latin and Romance: An Historian's Perspective', in R. Wright, (ed.), *Latin and the Romance Languages in the Early Middle Ages* (London, 1991), pp. 135–7.

¹⁵ *Encomium*, Prologue.

¹⁶ For Encomiast's interest in Vergil's *Fama*, see Tyler, 'Fictions of Family'. On gossip and orality see the articles in the collection edited by Thelma Fenster and Daniel Lord Smail, *Fama: The Politics of Talk and Reputation in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, 2003); Chris Wickham, 'Gossip and Resistance among the Medieval Peasantry', *Past and Present* 160 (1998), pp. 3–24; and Innes, 'Memory, Orality and Literacy', esp. p. 19.

In looking at the impact of literacy in the Middle Ages, scholars, and most especially Michael Clanchy, Franz Bäumel and Brian Stock, have emphasized that the function of literacy within a society is of greater importance than the ability of the individual to read: thus a few literate people, be they members of the clergy or of the laity, can have a disproportionately significant impact on lay access to written texts, by discussing and explaining the content of those texts to others.¹⁷ Precisely because it is rooted in social relationships, Brian Stock's influential notion of the 'textual community' has been immensely productive in opening up the subject of the ability of the non-learned secular aristocrat to access and make use of Latin literary culture.¹⁸ But, at the same time, Stock's view of literacy as widening the gap between the literate culture of the learned (who came to see literacy as 'identical with rationality') and popular culture (which remained primarily oral and thus of lesser value in the eyes of the learned) entails a situation of 'cultural diglossia' (the term is Walter J. Ong's), which poses problems for understanding the *Encomium* within Harthacnut's court.¹⁹ The focus on how texts are mediated to the illiterate leads to a view of literacy in which authority accrues to literate writers and interpreters of texts (who are, of course, generally male clerics), and consequently hides from view the ways in which the spoken words of lay people could shape the conception, production, and reception of written Latin texts. In a court context, in which clerical and lay elites, both male and female, mixed, and in which learning conferred authority but in which there were other kinds of power as well, the issue of who had control over the written word is potentially a very complex process with communication and the dissemination of knowledge taking place in many different directions.

Functional models of literacy provide a useful starting point for seeing how stories from the *Aeneid* might have been available to lay aristocrats: an important element for understanding the *Encomium* in Harthacnut's court. If a medieval reader's Latinity extended beyond rudimentary knowledge of the Psalms, he or she is likely to have

¹⁷ Michael Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record: England 1066–1307*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1993); Franz Bäumel, 'Varieties and Consequences of Medieval Literacy and Illiteracy', *Speculum* 55 (1980), pp. 237–65, esp. pp. 237–49; Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, 1983) and *Listening for the Text: On the Uses of the Past* (Baltimore, 1990).

¹⁸ Stock, *Implications of Literacy*, p. 522.

¹⁹ Stock, *Implications of Literacy*, p. 31. For 'cultural diglossia' see: Walter J. Ong, 'Orality, Literacy, and Medieval Textualization', *New Literary History* 16 (1984), pp. 1–12; and Jan Ziolkowski, 'Cultural Diglossia and the Nature of Medieval Latin Literature', in Joseph Harris (ed.), *The Ballad and Oral Literature*, Harvard Studies in English 17 (Cambridge, MA, 1991), pp. 193–213.

been exposed to the *Aeneid*.²⁰ The basic nature of glosses in many manuscripts suggests that, even within the schoolroom, the *Aeneid* was surrounded by a developed culture of explanation.²¹ This tradition of teaching the *Aeneid* to the young, would, I think, have made it natural for a figure such as the Encomiast to tell stories from the *Aeneid* in a court context and to explain the use of a Vergilian framework for the *Encomium*. Many portions of the *Aeneid* are, after all, simply good stories whose potential value could be apprehended without 'direct access' to the text.²² Moreover, classical and classicizing Latin poetry played a fundamental role, not only in the education of clerics, but also in the way clerics taught and guided secular aristocrats in the eleventh century.²³ However, looking at, for example, the desire of many European ruling dynasties for Trojan origins makes the point that, even if the initial impulse may have been clerical, the laity would come to have their own, very secular, stake in the *Aeneid* and in accounts of Troy and Rome.²⁴ The early leap of the *Aeneid* from Latin into the vernacular, when it was rendered into Old French as the *Roman d'Eneas* in the mid 1150s, further illustrates the draw of the *Aeneid* for lay audiences.²⁵

²⁰ On the importance of Vergil throughout the Middle Ages and in Anglo-Saxon England, see Domenico Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, trans. E.F.M. Benecke, with an introduction by Jan M. Ziolkowski (Princeton, 1997 [first published 1885]). For more recent discussion see, among others: Birger Munk Olsen, 'Virgile et la renaissance du XII^e siècle', in Jean-Yves Tilliette (ed.), *Lectures médiévales de Virgile: actes du colloque organisé par l'école française de Rome* (Rome, 1985), pp. 31–48, esp. pp. 31–8; Martin Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture: 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory, 350–1100* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 118–61; and Christopher Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England: Figuring the Aeneid from the Twelfth Century to Chaucer* (Cambridge, 1995). Despite the scarcity of surviving manuscripts of the *Aeneid* from this period, texts reveal an intensive knowledge of the poem in late Anglo-Saxon England, see: Helmut Gneuss, *Handlist of Anglo-Saxon Manuscripts: A List of Manuscripts and Manuscript Fragments Written or Owned in England up to 1100* (Tempe, 2001); Michael Lapidge, 'The Study of Latin Texts in Anglo-Saxon England [1] The Evidence of the Glosses', in N.P. Brooks (ed.), *Latin and the Vernacular Languages in Early Medieval Britain* (Leicester, 1984), p. 101; and Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England*, pp. 36–40.

²¹ Suzanne Reynolds, *Medieval Reading: Grammar, Rhetoric and the Classical Text* (Cambridge, 1996), pp. 11 and 28–33; Lapidge, 'Study of Latin Texts', pp. 99–140; and Gernot F. Wieland, 'The Glossed Manuscript: Classbook or Library Book?', *Anglo-Saxon England* 14 (1985), pp. 153–73.

²² Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England*, pp. 30–40.

²³ C. Stephen Jaeger, *The Envy of Angels: Cathedral Schools and Social Ideals in Medieval Europe, 950–1200* (Philadelphia, 1994), pp. 139–64.

²⁴ Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England*, pp. 2, 7, 10–14, and 40; Richard Southern, 'Aspects of the European Tradition of Historical Writing. 1. The Classical Tradition from Einhard to Geoffrey of Monmouth', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. 20 (1970), pp. 170 and 189–95; Bernard Guenée, *Histoire et culture historique dans l'occident médiévale* (Paris, 1991), pp. 275–9; Francis Ingledew, 'The Book of Troy and the Genealogical Construction of History: The Case of Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia regum Britanniae*', *Speculum* 69 (1994), pp. 665–704; and Matthew Innes, 'Teutons or Trojans? The Carolingians and the Germanic Past', in Yitzhak Hen and Matthew Innes (eds), *The Uses of the Past in the Early Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 248–9.

²⁵ *Eneas: Roman du XIII^e siècle*, ed. J.-J. Salverda de Grave, 2 vols (Paris, 1925–29); English translation: *Eneas: A Twelfth-Century French Romance*, trans. John Yunck (New York, 1974).

Looking specifically at England in the decades before the Danish conquest, we have, in the figure of Æthelweard, evidence for direct lay knowledge of the *Aeneid* and, importantly, interest in Trojan legend. Using Vergilian echoes, Æthelweard recalls Aeneas's momentous arrival in Italy when he recounts the arrival of Hengest and Horsa in England.²⁶ Literate aristocrats such as Æthelweard were the exception rather than the rule; there is no reason to assume, however, that these exceptions were isolated and that they did not *speak* with other noblemen and women about what they had learned in Latin books.²⁷ Christopher Baswell's characterization of the move of the *Aeneid* into the vernacular as 'explosive' alerts us to see, in the *Encomium*, not just the run-up to that vernacularization, but signs of growing lay claims to the content of the *Aeneid* in eleventh-century England.²⁸

III

In thinking about how the *Encomium* and the *Aeneid* might have been known at Harthacnut's court, we need to remember that the talk which surrounded the *Encomium*, the *Aeneid* and other Latin texts in the Anglo-Danish court was not just in *the* vernacular, or *a* vernacular, but in *several* vernaculars: English, Danish, French and Flemish. Looking forward to the complex linguistic situation of post-Conquest England suggests ways of approaching the linguistic consequences of the earlier Danish conquest of England and how this may have shaped the *Encomium*. The centrality of trilingualism to the vibrancy of the literary culture of Norman England has been highlighted by recent work, especially by Ian Short and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne. The long-established use of English as a written language encouraged the flourishing of

²⁶ *The Chronicle of Æthelweard*, ed. Alistair Campbell (London, 1962); Michael Winterbottom, 'The Style of Æthelweard', *Medium Ævum* 36 (1967), pp. 109–18; and James Campbell, 'England, c.991', in Janet Cooper (ed.), *The Battle of Maldon: Fact and Fiction* (London, 1993), p. 7.

²⁷ Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England is a large topic, some important discussions of relevance here include: C.P. Wormald, 'The Uses of Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England and its Neighbours', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 5th ser. 27 (1977), pp. 95–111; Simon Keynes, 'Royal Government and the Written Word in Late Anglo-Saxon England', in Rosamond McKitterick (ed.), *The Uses of Literacy in Early Medieval Europe* (Cambridge, 1990), pp. 226–57; Campbell, 'England, c.991', pp. 6–11 and 15–16; Nicholas Howe, 'The Cultural Construction of Reading in Anglo-Saxon England', in J. Boyarin (ed.), *The Ethnography of Reading* (Berkeley, 1993), pp. 58–79; G.H. Brown, 'The Dynamics of Literacy in Anglo-Saxon England', repr. in D.G. Scragg (ed.), *Textual and Material Culture in Anglo-Saxon England: Thomas Northcote Toller and Toller Memorial Lectures* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 183–212; Joyce Hill, 'Learning Latin in Anglo-Saxon England: Traditions, Texts and Techniques', in *Learning and Literacy in Medieval England and Abroad* (Turnhout: 2003), pp. 7–29. Many of these essays give particular attention to the distinctive interaction of vernacular and Latin literacy in Anglo-Saxon England.

²⁸ Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England*, pp. 2, 10–16, 62 and esp. pp. 168–219.

French as a written language. As a consequence, the first written French historiography and proto-romance were the products of a distinctly insular, Anglo-Norman, literary culture.²⁹ Scholars have also noted how the growing confidence of written vernaculars in the twelfth century changed the environment of Latin texts. Moreover, in this environment, the interplay of oral and written, Latin and vernacular, played an influential role in the emergence of fiction, as the authority and truthfulness of written narratives was seen to be undermined by their move into the vernacular.³⁰ Ian Short's insistence that the 'vernacularisation of culture' was 'one of the most important, and one of the least widely recognised, aspects of the new intellectual vitality of the twelfth century', prompts me to ask if some of the sophistication of the *Encomium's* interaction with its audience results from its production in a polyglot context.³¹

The linguistic and cultural complexity of the Anglo-Danish court, especially in the reign of Harthacnut, far outstrips that of post-Conquest England. This point is strikingly made if we simply consider the languages spoken by those figures who are pictured in the *Encomium's* frontispiece (Fig. 1): Emma, Harthacnut, Edward and the Encomiast. Norman Emma, raised in Rouen and married to Æthelred II, certainly spoke French and English; the daughter of the Danish Gunnor and the wife of Cnut, she may also have spoken Norse.³² Emma may further have acquired Flemish while in exile in Bruges. Her son Harthacnut, who was raised in England and Denmark, would most likely have spoken both English and Norse. Her son, Edward the Confessor, raised in England and Normandy, would have spoken both English and French. Finally the suppliant Encomiast, obviously literate in Latin, may, even before he came to England, have been familiar with contexts in which two vernacular languages were in contact. The closeness of Saint-Bertin, located in Saint-Omer, to the permeable linguistic frontier between French and Flemish increases the likelihood that he spoke both languages and was aware of the social and political issues involved in negotiating language contact.³³ The Anglo-Danish court must have been characterized by much explaining across linguistic boundaries, and

²⁹ Ian Short, 'Patrons and Polyglots: French Literature in Twelfth-Century England', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 14 (1991), pp. 229–49 and Jocelyn Wogan-Browne, *Saints Lives and Women's Literary Culture: Virginity and its Authorizations* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 1–18. See also Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, pp. 197–223.

³⁰ Bäuml, 'Varieties and Consequences', pp. 249–65 and D.H. Green, *Medieval Listening and Reading: The Primary Reception of German Literature, 800–1300* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 237–69.

³¹ Short, 'Patrons and Polyglots', p. 231.

³² Stafford, *Queen Emma*, p. 214.

³³ On Encomiast as a Flemish speaker, see Campbell, *Encomium*, pp. xxxv–xxxvi.



Fig. 1 *Encomium Emmae Reginae*, frontispiece. London, British Library, Ms. Additional 33241, fol. iv (by permission of the British Library).

the *Encomium* reflects this. In such a multilingual, and also multicultural, context, Latin – associated neither with Anglo-Saxon nor Danish parties nor with the French of Emma and Edward – would have had a political as well as linguistic utility as a suitable medium for a text

which sought to transcend factionalism. Precisely because Latin was nobody's mother tongue, it could circumvent entrenched divisions in Harthacnut's court which stemmed from the Danish conquest of England over a generation earlier. Such a perspective encourages us to think about the Latin of the *Encomium* as facilitating rather than hindering communication, and the symbolic value of Latin then becomes part of the text's social meaning.

Each of the vernaculars present in Harthacnut's court would have interacted differently with Latin literary culture. Both Emma and Edward were francophone and it is likely that the *Encomiast* was as well – that is, the text's patron, a key member of its audience, and its author all spoke French.³⁴ Sandwiched between the Carolingian era, when spoken Latin could be understood by the West Franks, and the emergence of historical writing in French in the twelfth century, the eleventh century would seem to be a low point for lay engagement with historical narrative. But it is likely that facets of the role which Janet Nelson ascribes to historiography in the ninth century were retained. Drawing attention to the social role of history writing and the centrality of the *spoken* word to that role, she writes: 'History writing was the special mode in which the learned participated in counsel: it was associated with, not alternative to, speaking, and speaking out.'³⁵ Furthermore, the self-presentation, as 'translators', of the first generation of historians to write in French suggests that there was a continuity between the Latin historiography of the Carolingian empire and the production of French texts in the twelfth century. We may need to envisage an intervening stage during which history writing aimed at the laity was written in Latin with the understanding that it would be read aloud or explicated in the vernacular, a process made easier by the linguistic proximity of Latin and French. In observing Emma's choice to commission a Latin text, we need to be aware that the ways in which Latin texts functioned in French-speaking environments may have influenced her expectations.³⁶

³⁴ On French speakers in late Anglo-Saxon England, see C.P. Lewis, 'The French in England before the Norman Conquest', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 17 (1995), pp. 123–44. David Porter discusses the interaction of Old French, Old English and Latin at Abingdon in the context of the Anglo-French monastic exchanges which marked the Benedictine Reformed monasticism of the generation before the Danish conquest: D.W. Porter, 'The Earliest Texts with English and French', *Anglo-Saxon England* 28 (1999), pp. 87–110.

³⁵ Nelson, 'History-Writing', at p. 438. See also her 'Public History and Private History'.

³⁶ On the relationship between Latin and French up to the tenth century: Banniard, 'Language and Communication' and his important monograph *Viva Voce: Communication écrite et communication orale du iv^e au ix^e siècle en Occident latin* (Paris, 1992). See also the work of Roger Wright: *A Sociophilological Study of Late Latin* (Turnhout, 2002); *Late Latin and Early Romance* (Liverpool, 1982); and 'Translation between Latin and Romance in the Early Middle Ages', in Jeanette Beer (ed.), *Translation Theory and Practice in the Middle Ages* (Kalamazoo, 1997), pp. 1–32. On twelfth-century French historians as translators, see Peter Damian-Grint, *The New Historians of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance: Inventing Vernacular Authority* (Woodbridge, 1999),

In contrast to French-speaking areas of the Continent, when we turn to look at England, there is no difficulty identifying a thriving vernacular historiographical culture in the eleventh century – part of the widespread use of the written vernacular in Anglo-Saxon England. From the time of Alfred the Great onwards, Old English was an important vehicle for history writing, to the extent that William of Malmesbury, writing in the 1120s, complained that there had been no history writing in Latin in England since Bede, other than Æthelweard's translation of the Chronicle from English into Latin.³⁷ William's exaggeration draws attention to the unusual role the English vernacular played in preserving a record of the past. Both Bede and Orosius were translated into English during the reign of Alfred, and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles were first compiled under Alfred and continued to be maintained in the Anglo-Danish period. At least some members of the original audience of the *Encomium* were accustomed to getting their history, be it about England or the Roman world, in the form of written English texts which could have been easily read aloud.

Other aspects of English in the eleventh century also inform the linguistic and social contexts of the *Encomium*. To begin with, although written English facilitated lay access to texts, there was no direct correspondence between written and spoken forms of English. This is, of course, generally true of languages and is not a specifically English phenomenon. However, the gap between written and spoken English was made greater and more apparent by the development over the course of the tenth and eleventh centuries of a standardized form of written English, based on the norms of late West Saxon. This standardized form of English, which was used regardless of the local variety of English spoken, was a consequence of the alliance of clerical efforts

pp. 17–18. Roger Wright's argument that literary translations between Latin and French did not occur before the twelfth-century Renaissance, because they were not needed owing to 'linguistic versatility and sophistication' of users of texts, is important in considering the relationship of written Latin historiography to spoken vernacular language; see Wright, 'Translation between Latin and Romance', esp. p. 27. Even if we shy away from accepting his very late date for final division between Latin and Romance, his argument does alert us to the strategies which facilitated extemporaneous translation from Latin into the linguistically proximate French spoken vernacular. See also Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, pp. 215–20. The views I have presented of the consequences of the linguistic proximity of Latin and French differ from Shopkow's emphasis on Latin and the vernacular as 'linguistically separate' and in many ways isolated from each other. This view of the relationship of Latin and vernacular is consonant with her view of Norman lay patrons having little influence over the Latin texts which they commissioned. She views the move into the written vernacular as essential for lay control of historiography; see Leah Shopkow, *History and Community: Norman Historical Writing in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Washington, DC, 1997), pp. 25–9 and 246–75.

³⁷ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, ed. and trans. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson and M. Winterbottom (Oxford, 1998), I, 14.

to reform written English with the expansion of West Saxon political power throughout England. Thus, like Latin, written English also had a symbolic value, and was not a neutral means of communication.³⁸

Moreover, we must also be aware of the symbolic meaning of English to Norse speakers and the practical issues involved in their participation in English written culture. English continued to be a language of governance, the church and literary culture: for example, law codes, charters, homilies, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles and poetry all continued to be produced and copied in English. The use of written English during the period of Danish rule would have required strategies for explaining the contents of English texts to Danish speakers and for Danish speakers to influence the content of English texts; law codes provide a particularly good example of the outcome of this sort of dynamic process. After the Danish conquest, Wulfstan produced written English law codes for Cnut just as he had done for Æthelred II, codes which presumably required discussion in Danish as well as English in order to gain a witan's approval.³⁹ Emma, whose marriage to Æthelred II brought her to his court for over a decade and who played a substantial role alongside Wulfstan in introducing Cnut to the norms of English kingship, may also have contributed to sustaining written English culture during the reigns of her second husband and their son.⁴⁰ In Harthacnut's court, information contained in written English as well as in Latin texts would have *had* to make the move from the written to the oral realm.

Finally, the Danish conquest brought not only Scandinavian language, but also Scandinavian literary culture to the royal court of England. Two aspects of that literary culture are relevant here: first, the place of skaldic verse in Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Scandinavian courts and the issue of its intelligibility; second, the direct influence of Old Norse literary tradition, in the form of oral prose narrative and eddic verse, on

³⁸ Michael Clanchy discusses the association of standardized English with clerical and royal authority in the England of 1066, but this was also the case for the period following the Danish conquest; see *From Memory to Written Record*, p. 211. On the development of standard Old English, see: Helmut Gneuss, 'The Origin of Standard Old English and Æthelwold's School at Winchester', *Anglo-Saxon England* 1 (1972), pp. 63–83; and Walter Hofstetter, 'Winchester and the Standardization of Old English Vocabulary', *Anglo-Saxon England* 17 (1998), pp. 139–61. On use of written English and the political unity of late Anglo-Saxon England, see Sarah Foot, 'The Making of *Anglecynn*: English Identity Before the Norman Conquest', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th ser. 6 (1996), pp. 25–49.

³⁹ On the interaction of Danish and English at Cnut's court and more broadly, see Matthew Townend, 'Contextualizing the *Knútsdrápur*': Skaldic Praise-Poetry at the Court of Cnut', *Anglo-Saxon England* 30 (2001), esp. pp. 174–5; and *idem*, *Language and History in Viking Age England: Linguistic Relations between Speakers of Old Norse and Old English* (Turnhout, 2002).

⁴⁰ On Emma in the reign of Cnut, see Stafford, *Queen Emma*, pp. 229–33. On Wulfstan, see Patrick Wormald, 'Archbishop Wulfstan and the Holiness of Society', in *idem*, *Legal Culture in the Early Medieval West: Law and Text, Image and Experience* (London, 1999), pp. 225–51, esp. p. 245.

the *Encomium* itself. Skaldic verse, an oral genre, was obscure, with even native speakers of Norse requiring it to be interpreted, and yet it clearly flourished in Cnut's court and other contexts associated with him.⁴¹ The poem *Liðsmannaflökr*, a text linked to Cnut's garrison in London in the early years of his reign, appears to include a representation of Emma.⁴² Not only do we need to wonder whether the English in the Anglo-Danish court could have understood skaldic verse but, as Matthew Townend has recently discussed, skaldic verse may also have remained largely incomprehensible to the Danes themselves. The Danes, who spoke East Norse, were notoriously poor audiences for skaldic verse which, besides being highly technical, was a predominately West Norse tradition. Furthermore, it appears that skaldic verse was accompanied by a culture of talking about the text, even in West Norse contexts.⁴³ It seems only reasonable to suggest, then, that strategies for explaining skaldic verse to East Norse and English speakers existed alongside strategies for explaining Latin texts such as the *Aeneid* and the *Encomium*. At the very least, we should not imagine that the Latin literary tradition, in its need for explication by a learned professional – in this case a cleric – was in a unique situation in the Anglo-Scandinavian court culture of eleventh-century England.

Eddic verse and oral prose narrative, much less difficult genres than skaldic verse, may also have directly influenced the *Encomiast*. His depictions of the magic raven banner under which the Danes march into battle and of the fabulous animals of Svein's and Cnut's ships, both find their analogues in Old Norse literature, as well as drawing on Vergilian models. As such, the account of these ships represents a seamless fusing of Vergil and Old Norse literary tradition which could not have happened without vernacular talk. Indeed, without such vernacular talk, the *Encomium* is inconceivable. We need to account not only for lay knowledge of the *Aeneid* but also for a Flemish cleric's knowledge of the Old Norse literary tradition. Emma, whom we know was among the *Encomiast*'s informants, appears as a likely source of his knowledge of Old Norse.⁴⁴ The influence of oral Old Norse traditions on the *Encomium* is direct evidence of the fluid relationship between Latin and

⁴¹ Townend, 'Contextualizing the *Knútsdrápur*', pp. 145–79.

⁴² On the representation of Emma in skaldic verse see Stafford, *Queen Emma*, pp. 22–3. On the *Liðsmannaflökr*, see Townend, 'Contextualizing the *Knútsdrápur*', pp. 151, 162–4 and 166–7; and Russell Poole, 'Skaldic Verse and Anglo-Saxon History: Some Aspects of the Period 1009–1016', *Speculum* 62 (1987), pp. 265–98, at p. 286 and *Viking Poems on War and Peace: A Study in Skaldic Verse* (Toronto, 1991), pp. 86–115.

⁴³ Matthew Townend, 'Norse Poets and English Kings: Skaldic Performance in Anglo-Saxon England', *Offa* 58 (2001), pp. 269–75. I am grateful to Matthew Townend for allowing me to see this article in typescript and for discussing skaldic verse in England with me.

⁴⁴ Campbell, *Encomium*, p. xxxvii and pp. 94–7; Tyler, 'The Eyes of the Beholders were Dazzled', pp. 263–5; and Orchard, 'Literary Background', pp. 164–6 and 173.

the vernaculars and between the written and the oral at Harthacnut's court. It is important to emphasize that this fluidity undermines ascribing the power of learning and knowledge solely to a Latinate cleric.

IV

The importance of a multilingual environment to the production and reception of the *Encomium* brings us back, time and time again, to Emma. She takes centre stage, which is just where the Encomiast insisted she belongs, when he wrote:

laus reginae claret (in primis), in mediis uiget, in ultimis inuenitur, omnemque prorsus codicis summam complectitur.

praise of the Queen is evident at the beginning, thrives in the middle, is present at the end, and embraces absolutely all of what the book amounts to.⁴⁵

Polyglot Emma, the Encomiast's patron, informer and audience, emerges as a pivotal figure in understanding the merging of traditions in this text. Emma's probable knowledge of French, English, Danish and even Flemish, suggests that she may have been a key channel for, and mediator of, the vernacular talk which surrounded and shaped the *Encomium*. However, what about her experience of Latin literary culture? Looking at Emma in the context of her Norman background suggests that she was a non-literate lay person with an interest in Latin literature and thus she herself becomes an example of how such people were not just the audiences for, but also active participants in, a Latin literary culture. We cannot see Emma, a Norman princess, in the tradition of educated Anglo-Saxon royal women and lay aristocrats, and there are no references to her as either learned or Latinate – this is in contrast, for example, to her successor, Edith, as queen of England.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, if Emma had been raised in the Norman court, she would certainly have been exposed to the Latin literary culture which flourished during the rule of her brother, Richard II (996–1026).⁴⁷ Emma returned to his court during the period when Svein ruled in England and both she and Æthelred II went into exile. It was during Richard's

⁴⁵ *Encomium*, Argument.

⁴⁶ On the upbringing of both women, see Stafford, *Queen Emma*, pp. 211–12 and 255–9. On the role of Anglo-Saxon royal nunneries in educating lay women in the tenth and eleventh centuries, see Barbara Yorke, *Nunneries and the Anglo-Saxon Royal Houses* (London, 2003), pp. 158–9.

⁴⁷ On the Latin literary culture of Normandy in the reign of Richard II, see Jan Ziolkowski, *Jezebel: A Norman Latin Poem of the Early Eleventh Century* (New York, 1989), pp. 37–47.

reign that Dudo of Saint-Quentin completed his *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum* which portrays Rollo, founder of the ducal dynasty, as a second Aeneas and attributes Trojan ancestry to the Normans.⁴⁸ Not only Richard's patronage and influence but also that of his uncle Rolf, his brother Robert (archbishop of Rouen) and that of his mother Gunnor, are all acknowledged by Dudo. While it is generally agreed that the Norman court was not the audience for Dudo's text, the key role played by the ducal family as sources suggests that they had an investment in its representation of the Normans as civilized and Christian leaders.⁴⁹ Dudo's text, moreover, like that of the *Encomium*, also appears to have been influenced by Old Norse oral literature. Like the *Encomiast*, Dudo was a foreigner at the court from which he wrote; he is thus unlikely to have been himself directly familiar with Old Norse literary tradition or to have had the linguistic skills to access it, but would rather have had to rely on his patrons.

As well as sponsoring history writing, the Norman ducal and episcopal court appears to have taken an interest in Latin verse.⁵⁰ Of particular interest here are three enigmatic poems, *Moriuh*, *Jezebel* and *Semiramis* which are found together in Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat. 8121A, all of which show linguistic affinities with Anglo-Latin hermeneutic poetry.⁵¹ *Moriuh* begins and ends with dedications to Archbishop Robert and Gunnor. The other two poems appear to concern Emma directly. *Jezebel*, a dialogue between a man and a prostitute, is dedicated

⁴⁸ For Dudo's text: *De moribus et actis primorum Normanniae ducum* (Caen, 1865–72); English translation: *History of the Normans*, trans. Eric Christiansen (Woodbridge, 1998). On Dudo's use of Vergil: Southern, 'Classical Tradition', pp. 186–7 and 192; Eleanor Searle, 'Fact and Pattern in Heroic History: Dudo of Saint-Quentin', *Viator* 15 (1984), pp. 125–9; Pierre Bouet, 'Dudon de Saint-Quentin et Virgile: L'Énéide au service de la cause normande', in *Recueil d'études en hommage à Lucien Musset*, Cahier des Annales de Normandie 23 (Caen, 1990), pp. 215–36; E.A. Hanawalt, 'Dudo of Saint-Quentin: The Heroic Past Imagined', *Haskins Society Journal* 6 (1994), pp. 111–18; Shopkow, *History and Community*, p. 150; and Emily Albu, *The Normans in their Histories* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 12–20.

⁴⁹ On Dudo's audience: Searle, 'Fact and Pattern'; Mortensen, 'Stylistic Choice', pp. 88–92 and 100–1; Shopkow, *History*, pp. 181–9 and 216–22; Christiansen's introduction to his translation, pp. xxiii–xxix; and Albu, *Normans in their Histories*, pp. 7–46, esp. p. 40.

⁵⁰ Peter Dronke, *Poetic Individuality in the Middle Ages: New Departures in Poetry, 1000–1150* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 76–87; Ziolkowski, *Jezebel*, p. 38; and Elisabeth van Houts, 'A Note on *Jezebel* and *Semiramis*, Two Latin Norman Poems from the Early Eleventh Century', *Journal of Medieval Latin* 2 (1992), pp. 18–24.

⁵¹ For *Moriuh*: Warner of Rouen, *Moriuh: A Norman Latin poem from the Early Eleventh Century*, ed. and trans. Christopher McDonough (Toronto, 1995). *Jezebel* is edited and translated in Ziolkowski, *Jezebel*, and *Semiramis* in Dronke, *Poetic Individuality*, pp. 66–76. Each edition includes discussion of the style, classical and biblical learning and literary traditions (including Old Norse) of these poems. For discussion of the hermeneutic qualities see Lucien Musset, 'Rouen et Angleterre vers l'an mil: du nouveau sur le satiriste Garnier et l'école littéraire de Rouen au temps de Richard II', *Annales de Normandie* 24 (1974), pp. 287–90; and Andrew Galloway, 'Word-Play and Political Satire: Solving the Riddle of the Text of *Jezebel*', *Medium Aevum* 68 (1999), p. 197.

to Robert. Andrew Galloway reads the poem as a political satire, identifying the prostitute as Ælfgifu, Cnut's first 'wife'.⁵² Meanwhile, Elisabeth van Houts's interpretation of *Semiramis* as a searing commentary on the marriage of Emma to Cnut, presents the poem as engaged with the affairs of the ducal family and as such a contribution to a debate about Emma's second marriage within the Norman court which may, at this point, have included her sons Alfred and Edward.⁵³ Like the *Encomium*, all of these poems combine impressive classical and biblical learning with the influence of the Old Norse literary tradition. Their style is marked by obscurity. Consequently, for these poems to have had an audience among the members of the ducal family, they would have had to have been explained through vernacular talk. The figure of the archbishop of Rouen – dedicatee of Dudo's work and also of both *Moriucht* and *Jezebel* – may be a key to understanding the particular contexts and processes for this culture of explanation in the Norman court. Robert's position as both archbishop and married count reminds us that the lack of a sharp distinction between lay and ecclesiastical elites could encourage dissemination of Latin texts to those who could not read for themselves.⁵⁴

Gunnor's role as patron and informant for Dudo, as well as her support for other Latin poets, may also have provided a powerful model for her daughter's own patronage of, and engagement with, the *Encomiast*. Although we do not know anything about Emma's relationship with her mother or what she learned from her, consideration of the connection between Gunnor and Emma draws important attention to the role of gender in Emma's decision to commission the *Encomiast*.⁵⁵ In particular, studies of women's literary patronage, which have identified matrilinear networks and the role of women who married abroad as cultural ambassadors, allow us to see Emma's decision to commission the *Encomium* within larger social paradigms.⁵⁶ As the first foreign bride of an English king since Æthelwulf married Charles

⁵² Galloway, 'Word-Play and Political Satire', pp. 202–3.

⁵³ Van Houts, 'Note on *Jezebel* and *Semiramis*'; Stafford, *Queen Emma*, pp. 12 and 34, and Simon Keynes, 'The Æthelings in Normandy', *Anglo-Norman Studies* 13 (1991), pp. 185–6.

⁵⁴ Ziolkowski, *Jezebel*, p. 41.

⁵⁵ Stafford, *Queen Emma*, pp. 3 and 209–13; van Houts, 'Note on *Jezebel* and *Semiramis*', p. 20 and *eadem*, 'Countess Gunnor of Normandy, c.950–1031', *Collegium Medievale* 12 (1999), pp. 18–21; and Ziolkowski, *Jezebel*, p. 42.

⁵⁶ Susan Groag Bell, 'Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture', in Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski (eds), *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1988), pp. 149–87, esp. pp. 173 and 179; June Hall McCash, 'The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women: An Overview', pp. 1–49, esp. pp. 14–16 and John Carmi Parsons, 'Of Queens, Courts, and Books: Reflections on Literary Patronage of Thirteenth-Century Plantagenet Queens', pp. 175–201, esp. p. 175; both in McCash's edited collection, *The Cultural Production of Medieval Women* (Athens, GA, 1996).

the Bald's daughter, Judith, in 856, Emma may have played a distinctive and the unprecedented role as a conduit between the literary traditions of the Norman and English courts, thus fostering new literary developments.⁵⁷ Both her Norman background and her gender had the potential to prepare Emma to take an active part in the production of the *Encomium*. Looking forward to the generation after Emma, moreover, suggests that she may have established a pattern of literary patronage which her daughter-in-law found useful to follow. Edith, the wife of Emma's son, Edward the Confessor, commissioned a monk of Saint-Bertin to write a life of her husband which would support her interests in the uncertain political situation which ran from the end of Edward's reign through to the aftermath of the Conquest. Like Emma, Edith was closely involved in the production of her text and she too acted as an informant. The text of the *Encomium* was known to the anonymous author of the *Vita Ædwardi*. It may be, of course, that his use of the *Encomium* is attributable to his Saint-Bertin connection. However, the possibility remains that the *Encomium* was known to Emma's learned daughter-in-law Edith, and that she was following Emma's example when she sought to protect her own position by commissioning a life of her husband.⁵⁸ The links between the texts written for Gunnor, Emma and Edith underscore the agency of those women who chose to use written texts to protect and extend their influence – and reinforces the important role women played as the instigators of the writing of history in Latin throughout the Middle Ages.⁵⁹

Turning away from the context of the *Encomium* to look at the text itself suggests that Emma was not only the text's patron and informant, but that she influenced its use of Latin literary culture. The text does

⁵⁷ Stafford, *Queen Emma*, p. 209.

⁵⁸ On Edith and the *Vita Ædwardi*, see the introduction to *The Life of King Edward who Rests at Westminster*, ed. and trans. Frank Barlow, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1992), and Stafford, *Queen Emma*, esp. pp. 40–8. I am currently preparing an article on Edith and the *Vita Ædwardi*. For the relationship of the *Encomium* and the *Vita*, see my '“When Wings Incarnadine with Gold are Spread”: The *Vita Ædwardi Regis* and the Display of Treasure at the Court of Edward the Confessor', pp. 83–107, in my edited collection *Treasure in the Medieval West* (Woodbridge, 2000).

⁵⁹ On women's literacy: H. Grundmann, 'Die Frauen und die Literatur im Mittelalter. Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung des Schrifttums in der Volkssprache', *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 26 (1936), pp. 129–61; Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, pp. 189–96 and 251–2; and Rosamond McKitterick, 'Frauen und Schriftlichkeit im Frühmittelalter', in Hans-Werner Goetz (ed.), *Weibliche Lebensgestaltung im frühen Mittelalter* (Cologne, 1991), pp. 65–118. There is also an extensive bibliography on manuscripts associated with nuns and nunneries as well as on the literacy of nuns. On women and historical writing: Patrick Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 48–80; Janet Nelson, 'Gender and Genre in Women Historians of the Early Middle Ages', repr. in *eadem*, *The Frankish World: 750–900* (London, 1996), pp. 183–97; and Elisabeth van Houts, 'Women and the Writing of History in the Early Middle Ages: The Case of Abbess Matilda of Essen and Æthelweard', *EME* 1 (1992), pp. 53–68 and *eadem*, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe: 900–1200* (London, 1999).

not assign Trojan origins to Cnut's dynasty, an absence made all the more conspicuous because Dudo had already supplied the Normans with these illustrious ancestors. Although Cnut, like Rollo, is figured as a second Aeneas, unlike Rollo, he is not portrayed as a descendant of the Trojans.⁶⁰ Unusually among west European dynasties in this period, the English shunned such origins in favour of biblical and native genealogies.⁶¹ A text which sought to present Cnut and his descendants to a mixed English and Danish court audience as the legitimate rulers of England might well have avoided representing Danish origins as distinct from English origins. Indeed, during the reign of Cnut, the Danish dynasty continued to mark their descent from Scyld, who first appeared in West Saxon genealogies during the reign of Æthelwulf (839–58) when he sought to emphasize the shared origins of the incoming Danes and the English.⁶² Emma's period as Æthelred II's queen would have exposed her to the West Saxon dynasty's views of its origins. The careful representation of Cnut as a second Aeneas, but not as a descendant of Aeneas, suggests that polyglot Emma was a sophisticated mediator between Norman, Danish and English expectations and concerns. More importantly, if Emma was not just a general informant but the source of the *Encomiast's* sensitivity to English qualms about Trojan origins, then the *Encomium* shows, not just a cleric mediating Latin culture to the secular aristocracy, but also a two-way negotiation rooted in face-to-face communication: in other words, vernacular talking. Here we see the importance of identifying a range of Latinities: Emma, who appears not to have had the linguistic skills which would have allowed her direct access to the Latin of the *Encomium* or the *Aeneid*, nonetheless exerts some control over the *Encomiast's* deployment of Latin culture.

V

Emma's centrality to her text's negotiation of the multilingual culture of the Anglo-Danish court placed her in an influential position vis-à-vis the *Encomiast*. In this final section, I want to explore the power of that position by examining, in a literary fashion, the *Encomiast's*

⁶⁰ Ingledew, 'Book of Troy', pp. 682–4 and Francine Mora-Lebrun, *L'Énéide médiévale and la naissance du roman* (Paris, 1994), pp. 25–40.

⁶¹ David Dumville, 'Kingship, Genealogies and Regnal Lists', in P.H. Sawyer and I.N. Woods (eds), *Early Medieval Kingship* (Leeds, 1977), pp. 72–104, esp. pp. 77–96; and Ingledew, 'Book of Troy', p. 685.

⁶² Dumville, 'Kingship Genealogies and Regnal Lists', p. 95; Alexander Callander Murray, 'Beowulf, the Danish Invasions, and Royal Genealogy', pp. 101–11 and Roberta Frank, 'Skaldic Verse and the Date of *Beowulf*', pp. 123–39; both in Colin Chase (ed.), *The Dating of Beowulf* (Toronto, 1981); and John Niles, 'Locating *Beowulf* in Literary History', *Exemplaria* 5 (1993), pp. 79–109, at p. 95.

representation of his patron as Octavian. I will do this through a comparison of the place of women in the *Aeneid*, the *Encomium* and the twelfth-century vernacular *Roman d'Eneas*. From such a literary contextualization, which attends to style, characterization, allusion, and their impact on the meaning and reception of the text, we can see more clearly just why the commissioning of a Latin text was itself an assertion of authority on the part of Emma, a laywoman.

The *Aeneid*, in its story of Aeneas's flight from the ruins of Troy and his foundation of Rome, offers a vision of the past which included, and legitimized, secular concern for genealogy and erotic passion, in contrast to clerical preoccupations with salvation history.⁶³ Many of the stories of the *Aeneid* are attractive for women, particularly when the limited place assigned to females in Old English and Old Norse texts from the tenth and eleventh centuries is considered. Old English secular poetry from late Anglo-Saxon England (such as the *Battle of Brunanburh* and the *Battle of Maldon*) and Old Norse skaldic verse are both preoccupied with martial activity and afford little space to women.⁶⁴ Women in the *Aeneid* can be strong; they take on active, varied and central roles. Not only does Aeneas's marriage to Lavinia bring him Latium; there are also Dido, the warrior Camilla, and the goddesses Venus and Juno. In the context of Emma's experience, moreover, the *Aeneid* offers a productive model for complicated step-families. The political world which was created, not just by the Danish conquest of England but also by the multiple marriages of both Emma and Cnut – and their evident fertility – was nothing if not messy. Aeneas, too, had children by more than one wife, although, unlike Cnut, he remarried only after the first wife had died. Vergil finesses it so that Rome is founded by descendants of both Ascanius (Aeneas's son by Creusa) and Silvius (his son by Lavinia). The *Encomium*'s use of a Vergilian paradigm for the *Encomium* suggests that he and Emma may have found in this particular classical text a way to understand and shape an uncertain present.

However, despite its potential attractiveness for women, the *Aeneid* remains, par excellence, a tale of patriarchy.⁶⁵ Women are repeatedly cast aside as Aeneas pursues his imperial destiny: Creusa is lost; Dido is famously abandoned; and, although Aeneas's marriage to Lavinia unites the Trojan and Latin peoples, her characterization is minimal. The most active women of the text, Dido and Camilla, both behave

⁶³ Ingledew, 'Book of Troy', esp. pp. 670–81.

⁶⁴ Women are conspicuously absent from Old English verse which commemorates events of the tenth and eleventh centuries, in contrast to poetry which recounts events from the fourth to the sixth centuries such as *Beowulf* and *Waldere*. For women in skaldic verse, see Judith Jesch, *Women in the Viking Age* (Woodbridge, 1991), pp. 148–68.

⁶⁵ Marilyn Desmond, *Reading Dido: Gender, Textuality, and the Medieval Aeneid* (Minneapolis, 1994), pp. 1–22.

as men – Dido in her governance of Carthage, Camilla on the battlefield – and end up dead. The women of the *Aeneid* are double-edged: female agency is presented but it is also conspicuously constrained. The representation of women in the *Aeneid* is thus potentially problematic for a medieval woman reader whether she identifies with these female figures or alternatively takes the position of the male reader.⁶⁶ The growth of vernacular literature, and especially the flourishing of romance, has been associated with female patronage and empowerment. Broadly speaking, romance does give a place to the interests of women – love, marriage, female interiority – which is not seen in either epic or historical writing. The *Eneas*, which is amongst the earliest vernacular romances, attests to the greater provision made for women in romance. However, as is evident in the *Eneas*, as the women of the *Aeneid* moved out of Latin and into the vernacular, and as their lives began to command greater attention in romance, their representation had greater potential to be used to control the behaviour of aristocratic women. Although vernacularization was fostered by women, courtly romance was ultimately a genre devised by clerics in order to regulate aristocratic society, both male and female.⁶⁷

Emma's place within the Vergilian framework of the *Encomium* provides a marked contrast to the situation of the women in both the *Aeneid* and the *Eneas*. In reading the Encomiast's account of the marriage of Cnut and Emma as an imperial union, which brings together the Danish and the English people, the reader cannot help but recall Aeneas's marriage to Lavinia. However, this parallel only lurks; it is invoked neither explicitly nor through allusion. In comparison, Lavinia and Aeneas are much more obviously recalled when Dudo recounts the marriage of Rollo to the Frankish princess Gisla.⁶⁸ The *Eneas* brings Lavinia forward only to place her more firmly within the confines of patriarchy.⁶⁹ The Encomiast does not leave Emma in such a passive position. Rather, in his second preface, he figures her prominently as Octavian, that is, as Caesar Augustus, first of the Roman emperors. Worried that he will be accused of neglecting Emma because he recounts the deeds of Svein, Cnut and Harthacnut, he insists at the

⁶⁶ Desmond, *Reading Dido*, esp. pp. 7–12 and her 'Dominus/Ancilla: Rhetorical Subjectivity and Sexual Violence in the Letters of Heloise', in David Townsend and Andrew Taylor (eds), *The Tongue of the Fathers: Gender and Ideology in Twelfth-Century Latin* (Philadelphia, 1998), pp. 35–54.

⁶⁷ Krueger, trenchantly exposing the aim of romance to control women's behaviour, discusses the association of vernacular romance with women's empowerment and the highly problematic position of women readers of romance: Roberta Krueger, *Women Readers and the Ideology of Gender in Old French Verse Romance* (Cambridge, 1993), esp. Chapter 1.

⁶⁸ Hanawalt, 'Dudo of Saint-Quentin', p. 117; and Shopkow, *History and Community*, p. 150.

⁶⁹ Baswell, *Virgil in Medieval England*, pp. 168–219; and Desmond, *Reading Dido*, pp. 107–19.

beginning of his letter that praise of Emma is his theme. He reinforces this by reminding his audience that it was Vergil's intention to praise Octavian by praising his ancestors:

Aeneida conscriptam a Uirgilio quis poterit infitiri ubique **laudibus respondere** Octouiani, cum pene nihil aut plane parum eius mentio uideatur nominatim interseri? **Animaduerte** igitur laudem suo generi asscriptam ipsius decori claritudinis claritatisque in omnibus nobilitare gloriam. Quis autem hoc neget, **laudibus reginae** hunc **per omnia respondere** codicem, cum non modo ad eius gloriam scribatur, uerum etiam eius maximam uideatur optinere partem?

Who can deny that the Aeneid, written by Virgil, is everywhere devoted to the praises of Octavian, although practically no mention of him by name, or clearly very little, is seen to be introduced? Note, therefore, that the praise accorded to his family everywhere celebrates the glory of their fame and renown to his own honour. Who can deny that this book is entirely devoted to the praise of the Queen, since it is not only written to her glory, but since that subject occupies the greatest part of it?⁷⁰

The Encomiast weaves these lines tightly into the fabric of his preface by returning to them in his closing sentence: 'His enim **animaduersis**, o lector . . . intellige, huius libelli seriem **per omnia reginae** Emmae **laudibus respondere**.' ('Noticing these matters, O Reader . . . understand that the course of this book is devoted entirely to the praise of Queen Emma.') Lexical repetition emphasizes the importance of the association of queen and emperor.

By presenting Emma as Octavian, the Encomiast brings her into the present and portrays her as a powerful force in the contemporary Anglo-Danish political scene. The problematic nature of romance for the woman reader allows us to see just how strong a gesture the allusion to Octavian was. Emma is compared to a Latinate man whose authoritative rule of the Roman Empire was legendary. It is striking as well that it is Emma, rather than Harthacnut, the current ruler of the Anglo-Danish empire, that is figured as Octavian. In contrast, Harthacnut is left out of a Vergilian framework which encompasses his mother, father and grandfather; he is not even likened to Silvius, son of Aeneas and Lavinia.⁷¹ In the present, all the authority of the Vergilian framework belongs to Emma. In romance, as Roberta Krueger shows, references to

⁷⁰ *Encomium*, Argument.

⁷¹ Tyler, 'Fictions of Family'.

women as patrons are often undercut by the misogyny of the text itself; this pattern finds no place in the *Encomium*. Although, within the text, Emma is reliant, first, on Cnut and then, after his death, seeks to wield power through her sons, she is not shown as contained by male dynastic concerns. For example, she is not handed over, Lavinia-like, to Cnut but rather she shrewdly negotiates her marriage so that only his sons by her will be considered eligible for the English throne.⁷² The *Encomium* ends with a compelling depiction of Emma's authority in which Emma is portrayed as central to the peaceful and strong rule of the kingdom:

His ita peractis et omnibus suis in pacis tranquillitate compositis, fraterno correptus amore nuntios mittit ad Eduardum, rogans ut ueniens secum optineret regnum. Qui fratris iussioni obaudiens Anglicas partes aduehitur, et mater amboque filii regni paratis commodis nulla lite intercedente utuntur. Hic fides habetur regni sotiis, hic inuiolabile uiget faedus materni fraternique amoris.

After the events described, he arranged all his affairs in the calm of peace, and being gripped by brotherly love, sent messengers to Eadweard and asked him to come and hold the kingdom together with himself. Obeying his brother's command, he was conveyed to England, and the mother and both sons, having no disagreement between them, enjoy the ready amenities of the kingdom. Here there *is* loyalty among sharers of rule, here the bond of motherly and brotherly love is of strength indestructible.⁷³

Here, at the end of the text, Emma cannot be consigned to the power behind the throne as she slips out of the bounds that usually circumscribed female agency. These final lines, and the text more generally, are consonant with the paralleling of Emma and Octavian which implies that support for Emma will further the peace and prosperity of the kingdom in troubled times. In this context, the Latin of the text not only projects an image of Cnut, a second Aeneas, as a civilized ruler of an empire rather than as a conquering Dane, it is also part of the social meaning of the text, with the symbolic value of the Latin working with the image of Emma as Octavian-like.

Placing the *Encomium* at the meeting point of Norman, English, Norse and Latin literary cultures underscores Emma's central and distinctive role in the production of this text. In this environment, Latinity could act, as it did after the Norman Conquest, as a 'life-line of

⁷² *Encomium*, II. 16.

⁷³ *Encomium*, III. 13–14.

communication' across a 'fractured society' (to use Baswell's formulation) and as a medium which could address the competing ambitions of communities who lived in a complex political and linguistic situation.⁷⁴ Latin is not a barrier, but instead ensures the efficacy of the *Encomium*. The use of this language contributes to, rather than detracts from, Emma's authority. Polyglot Emma, with her Latinate, but subordinate, cleric, was in a position to play a determining role in the oral culture of explanation which, I have argued, must have surrounded the *Encomium*. The strategies which were developed for communicating across linguistic and cultural boundaries not only allowed lay access to Latin texts but also allowed lay participation in Latin literary culture. Seen in this light, the idea of a Latin text, which makes sophisticated use of the *Aeneid*, contributing to political debate ceases to seem absurd. Instead, the *Encomium* comes to exemplify the vitality of the multilingual court of Harthacnut where Latin literature was only one of many literary traditions talked about across linguistic borders.

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⁷⁴ Baswell, 'Latinitas', in David Wallace (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Medieval English Literature* (Cambridge, 1999), pp. 122–51.

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