

regarding religion in the Italian communes.

The Pennsylvania State University Press should be congratulated for its willingness to publish a 500-page monograph, with notes, moreover, conveniently placed at the foot of each page and hardly a single typographical error in the entire book. Sixty-one photographs significantly enhance the volume; a map would have been welcome.

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Pauline Stafford. *Gender, Family and the Legitimation of Power: England from the Ninth to Early Twelfth Century*. (Variorum Collected Studies; 850). Ashgate, 2006. Pp. xii +340.

Pauline Stafford, a prolific scholar on English monarchy, is well known to political historians interested in either, or both, kings and queens because of her influential work on the political interplay of masculinity, femininity, and gender relations before the Norman conquest. Much of her work is available to American and

European scholars, most notably two groundbreaking studies of English queens—*Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (1983) and *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (1997). *Gendering the Middle Ages*, a valuable collection of essays from the issue of *Gender and History* (2001) that she edited with Anneke Mulder-Bakker, is ample evidence of her impact on a new generation of scholars in the field of gender studies. Her essays in the 2003 edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* are elegant summations of much of her work that are readily available online. So why should we care about a Variorum edition?

We should care because this volume is much more than a simple gathering of a prodigious body of work by an influential scholar. What makes this volume worth reading, beyond the fact that it includes several essays published in journals with limited circulation in the United States and one published here for the first time, is that it traces the trajectory of the development of women's history since the 1970s as practiced in England. In this, it serves as a survey of the diverse methods that transformed the discipline—sociology,

anthropology, law, administrative, and institutional history. Since her 1973 dissertation at Oxford on royal government in the reign of Aethelred II, Stafford's field has been political history, but she has always been interested in more than just the king and his barons. From very early on, she situated her analysis of the royal family with the intersection of social history, emphasizing kin and family relationships as sources of political power and authority. Unlike her male colleagues and ahead of many of her female ones, Stafford recognized immediately the importance of women in the family, and her groundbreaking research on queens and the practice of queenship makes this important reading for all political historians. Although the volume is organized thematically, reordering the essays chronologically is a telling exercise in feminist historiography.

The earliest essays are concerned with kingship with an emphasis on land and lordship as the sources of power: "The Reign of Aethelred II, A Study in the Limitations on Royal Policy and Action" (1978), "The 'Farm of One Night' and the Organization of King Edward's Estates in Domesday" (1980), and "The Laws of Cnut and the History of Anglo-Saxon Royal Promises" (1982). Meanwhile, around 1980,

Stafford began to include women in her analysis of royal dynasties. For scholars of queenship, her foundational research begins with two essays in this volume that always appear on my syllabi when I teach on monarchy: "The King's Wife in Wessex 800-1066" (1981) and "Charles the Bald, Judith and England" (1981). They are supported by conventional political theory that presumed men to be the main actors in the public sphere. Her prose style in these early works is dry and technical, typical of a young scholar demonstrating scrupulous archival research and rigorous textual analysis.

In the late 1980s, Stafford remained interested in kings and noblemen ("King and Kin," 1993), but her principal focus had shifted to women: "Women in Domesday" (1989), "Kinship and Women in the World of Maldon" (1993), "Women and the Norman Conquest" (1994), "Emma: The Powers of the Queen in the Eleventh Century" (1997), "*Cherchez la femme*: Queens, Queens' Lands and Nunneries: Missing Links in the Foundation of Reading Abbey" (2000), and "Political Women in Mercia, Eighth to Early Tenth Centuries" (2001). This shift in subject was accompanied by a definite shift in theory in the 1990s. Breaking out of conventional medieval political

theory, she turned to gender as a means to explain the striking use of political power by the women she studied. This move was clearly signaled in an essay not included here, "More than a Man, or Less than a Woman? Women Rulers in Early Modern Europe," published in *Gender and History* in 1995. After this, her discussion of politics is grounded in the actions of men and women, but politics is still not broadly conceived as relational or a form of discourse as articulated by Foucault and Habermas. Nevertheless, her research is impeccable, and the essays are important: "Queens, Nunneries, and Reforming Churchmen: Gender, Religious Status and Reform in Tenth- and Eleventh-century England" (1999), "Succession and Inheritance: A Gendered Perspective on Alfred's Family History" (2003), "King and Kin, Lord and Community: England in the Tenth- and Eleventh-centuries" (1993), and "Political Ideas in Late Tenth-century England: Charters as Evidence" (2001).

Like all the Variorum editions, this is a work that will appeal primarily to specialists familiar with late Anglo-Saxon history, who are keenly attentive to the fine points of landholding and legal matters, and who will gleefully wade through complex genealogies studded with

names like Aelfgifu, Byrthnoth, Cynethryth, and Aelfthryth. But it is time well spent. Stafford's work, like that of her colleagues Janet Nelson, John Carmi Parsons, Margaret Howell, W. M. Ormrod, Paul Strohm, Katherine Lewis, and Helen Maurer, has transformed our understanding of monarchy. Her most recent publications show that she may soon be retiring from teaching, but her research remains vigorous and provocative, notably "The Meanings of Hair in the Anglo-Norman World: Masculinity, Reform, and National Identity" (2005) and "Chronicle D, 1067 and Women: Gendering Conquest in Eleventh-century England," in *Anglo-Saxons: Studies Presented to Cyril Roy Hart* (2006). These works, especially "The Meanings of Hair," are written in a vivid, lively style, with a confidence born of a long, fruitful career. They continue to challenge us to not only include women in medieval English history, but also to reconsider, re-theorize, and ultimately to rewrite the history of English monarchy.

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