Male-Order Brides: Marriage, Patriarchy, and Monarchy in the *Roman de Silence*

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Continuing her previous work on the *Roman de Silence*'s conservative politics, the author analyzes two specific mechanisms through which King Ebain enhances monarchical power: exchanging an adulterous, exogamous wife for a chaste, endogamous one; and dispossessing the earl of Chester, a great baron of the realm.(SK)

In my 1995 article on the *Roman de Silence*, I suggested that we cannot assess the sexual politics behind the text without considering its feudal politics of lineage. However subversive the successes of the cross-dressed *vallés mescine* might seem, I argued, the text was ultimately conservative, conscripting two successive heiresses of Cornwall to the dynastic and territorial advantage of the king. I now turn to two different aspects of the text's feudal politics: Ebain's serial polygamy in exchanging an adulterous, exogamous wife for a chaste and endogamous one, and his relationship to the great barons of his realm. By sketching the historical context in which *Silence* was composed, I conjecture what this narrative might have signified in the thirteenth-century feudal imaginary. This is not meant to suggest that *Silence* can be read as a simple *roman à clé*: if anything, the difficulties of dating Heldris's text or specifying the milieu in which it was originated relieve us of that temptation.[1] Rather, I am guided by the conviction that from its inception in the mid-twelfth century, the genre of romance provided the French and Anglo–Norman nobility with, as Geraldine Heng puts it, 'a ready and—equally important—a *safe* language of cultural discussion, and cultural transformation, in the service of crisis and urgent contingency' (Heng 99)—in this case, the monarchical exploitation of the feudal politics of lineage.

I

At the beginning of the romance, Eufeme, daughter of the king of Norway, is married to King Ebain of England as part of the peace settlement between their two countries—a classic example of the homosocial traffic in women

that guarantees relationships between men. When she first arrives in her adoptive land, Eufeme is beautiful and unthreatening. But in the course of the romance she is transformed, developing a raging passion for her husband's great-'nephew,' the cross-dressed *vallés mescine*. When her love is scorned, the queen vengefully accuses 'him' of attempted rape and procures his exile to France.[2] What accounts for Eufeme's transformation from a silent, acquiescent pawn in the political game to a lust-driven adulteress? Her marriage is part of the peace settlement of a senseless war that had begun 'over something trivial' ('par petite oquoison,' 149); however, once narrative focus shifts to internal English politics in the form of the king's dealings with the counts of Cornwall and Chester, she loses whatever symbolic advantage she enjoyed as a high-ranking foreign bride. The move from the 'international' to the 'domestic' sphere dictates a shift in conjugal politics: endogamic marriage is privileged while the foreign queen is recoded as a troublesome adulteress.

In the second quarter of the thirteenth century, foreign queens became lightning rods for political discontent. During her long regency for her son, Louis IX of France, Blanche of Castile was the target of baronial rebellions and accusations of sexual transgression—political and symbolic manifestations of resistance to the monarchy's centralization of power (McCracken, *Romance* 169–70). In England, the relatives of two successive queens, Henry III's mother Isabelle of Angoulême and his wife Eleanor of Provence, aroused resentment for the favors shown them by the king.[3] The hostility directed against foreign queens was a predictable result of the feudal politics of lineage:

> The official policy of the Church, which encouraged exogamy, and the political prudence of avoiding polarizing alliances with the native aristocracy combined to lead many dynasties to seek wives from outside. If the new bride, with her ladies-in-waiting, chaplains, servants and, possibly, brothers, nephews, cousins or even parents, were from a different language group, the result was an immediate and highly visible cultural reorientation of the court....The foreign queen thus brought the danger of cultural alienation, of a fissure between the young half-blood princes and the indigenous aristocracy. This was a perennial feature of dynastic politics. (Bartlett, 230–31)

In literary terms, foreign wives are nothing but trouble: the exemplary figure is Iseut, the Irish princess who so disrupts the court of King Mark of Cornwall.[4] Unlike their historical counterparts, fictional queens cause problems not through their ambitious relatives or even their cultural difference, but through excess sexuality. Significantly, however, their affairs never contaminate the king's lineage with an heir not of his blood: literary

adulteresses remain barren. Instead, the sexuality of queens like Iseut and Guenevere jeopardizes their husbands' rule by troubling the king's relations with his vassals.[5]

Like Chrétien de Troyes's Fénice, Eufeme is explicitly cast as a second Iseut (3700–04). According to the *Tristan* paradigm, the object of her passion should be her husband's nephew, Cador. This possibility, however, is structurally foreclosed: Cador is already married to Eufeme's onomastic double Eufemie, whom he loves with Tristan-like devotion.[6] By the text's tortured logic of reduplication and displacement, the queen forms an attachment instead to Cador's 'son' Silence, whom she pursues with an intense but unreciprocated passion.

Eufeme's desire is the site where the protagonist's secret runs up against the limits of biological difference. Transvestism, as has frequently been noted, is a common hagiographic motif: female saints dressed as men 'in order to escape a marriage or join a religious community.'[7] But Silence, motivated by Ebain's prohibition on female inheritance, reverses generic expectations: she crossdresses not to escape her family's dynastic politics but to further them. The intimations of homoeroticism that other readers have found in the scenes where Eufeme tries to seduce Silence are ultimately blocked, less by a compulsory heteronormativity *per se* than by the strength of the genealogical imperative. Without the *deus ex machina* dénouement in which the crossdressed woman is transformed into a man—as in the 'Ovidian' romance *Yde et Olive* (see Durling)—Silence cannot play Tristan, her aptitude for minstrelsy notwithstanding. The most salient effect of the queen's failed seduction is to undermine Ebain's rectitude as both lord and vassal. Duped by Eufeme's false accusation, he acts unworthily in exiling Silence to the court of the king of France, his own overlord.[8] And when Eufeme forges a letter in Ebain's name demanding Silence's execution, she likewise compromises her husband's honor in the eyes of his lord: 'The king said, "I am greatly troubled...It is contemptible of him"' ('Cho dist li rois: "J'ai grant anguissce...Forfais li est,"' 4459–63). Originally the 'beautiful gem' 'biele gemme' (166) crowning Ebain's peace with Norway, the foreign bride has become a malicious queen, a liability to her husband both at home and abroad.

II

The one other character who, like Eufeme, initially appears in a positive light but takes on a more sinister aspect as the tale progresses is the count of Chester. He first surfaces during the courtship of Cador and Eufemie, acting as the king's agent (1321–26) to speed the two along towards what Ebain has

already decided would be an advantageous marriage. Seeing how much in love the two are, he assures them of the king's approval, demonstrated in his decision to invest Cador with Cornwall. The king's apparently generous endorsement of young love, as I have argued (*Silence* 400–401), in fact works to his own double advantage: in promising the couple a feudal honor that would have been Eufemie's (1453) but for his own ban on female inheritance, Ebain asserts royal control over the transmission of fiefs while settling the important earldom of Cornwall on his own nephew.[9] The count of Chester plays his role to the hilt, complicitously offering his support to Cador and Eufemie since he himself, he tells them, is no stranger to love (1445–46), then opportunistically boasting to Ebain how he has convinced the two to marry. At this stage of the game, the count is portrayed as a canny vassal who jumps at the chance to curry favor with the king by helping to advance Ebain's feudal politics of lineage.

During Silence's French exile, however, the count of Chester reappears in a different light, as a rebel vassal. Banished because of Queen Eufeme's false charge of sexual aggression, Silence is recalled when Ebain finds himself facing a baronial revolt.[10] She finds the king at Chester, 'the estates of the count who had so dishonored him' ('la contree al conte.../ Ki li a cele honte faite,' 5310–11).[11] By the time Silence arrives, Ebain has already taken the town and is now laying siege to the fortress to which the renegade count has retreated:

> Jo le vos di, bien le sachiés,
> Que li cuens ot esté cachiés
> De Cestre, car n'ert pas garnis,
> Et uns siens fils bien enbarnies
> I fu ochis. Cho poise lui,
> Et moult li torne a grant anui. (5393–98)
>
> [I say to you, as you well know, that the count had been driven from Chester, because it wasn't fortified; also, one of his sons, a seasoned warrior, was killed there. It pained him, and became a great trouble to him.]

The rebels, the narrator emphasizes, are the ones in the wrong:

> Mais jo vos di li tors fu lor.
> Car li .iii. et li cuens de Cestre
> Volrent par force segnor estre
> Desor le roi, qui nen ot cure
> De perdre vilment sa droiture. (5406–10)

> [But I tell you that they were in the wrong, for the three counts and the count of Chester wanted by force to wield power over the king, who didn't care to lose his rights in a base fashion.]

The narrator's interventions, a touch over-emphatic, alert us to something suspicious in Ebain's war against his renegade vassal. In the furious battle that follows, right apparently does not make might: though 'in the wrong,' the rebels hold their own against the royalist troops, and in single combat with the count, Ebain soon has the worst of it: 'If the king didn't get help soon, the hated people would capture him right there' ('Se li rois n'a proçaine aïe/ La le prendront la gent haïe,' 5519–20). Only Silence's intervention turns the tide. Hailed as 'the youth of Cornwall' ('li vallés de Cornuälle,' 5556, 5572) and seconded by her French companions, she attacks the count, hacks off his right arm, takes him prisoner, and delivers him to the king, putting the other three rebel counts to flight. 'You can see that God held Silence dear, for he brought the war to an end' ('Savoir poés que Dex l'a cier,/ Silence, ki le guerre fine,' 5646–47), concludes the narrator. In the end, Ebain's victory is less a vindication of his 'right' ('droiture,' 5410) over the rebel count of Chester (named Conant in line 5618)[12] than a confirmation of the importance of keeping Silence at his side.

Chester was a powerful lordship at the northern end of the Welsh frontier. In the first half of the thirteenth century, the title 'count of Chester' would have evoked the remarkable Ranulf III (born c. 1170), earl from 1181 to his death in 1232. During Henry III's minority, Ranulf was 'the greatest baron of the realm,' a powerful magnate who held, in addition to Chester, parts of Richmond, Leicester, and the Norman honor of Avranches.[13] Despite the precocious centralization of power under the Norman and Angevin kings, Count Ranulf ruled Chester with virtual autonomy.[14] When he died childless in 1232, however, the fate of his holdings demonstrated the far-reaching effects of the feudal politics of lineage. Chester passed to his nephew John, earl of Huntingdon, but his other holdings were divided up among his remaining sisters and their children. When John in turn died childless in 1237, Henry III seized Cheshire and its castles (Eales 109) and took other measures that went 'far beyond what would have been necessary if only a temporary custody of the county palatine in the king's hand until the recognition of a new earl had been contemplated' (Stewart-Brown 49, cited in Eales 109). The victims of these preemptive acts (reminiscent of Cador's seizure of Cornwall upon the death of his father-in-law, Count Renald)[15] were John's two nieces, Christiana and Devorgild of Galloway. Christiana's husband, William de Forz, tried to claim the title of earl but in 1241 was forced to accept

compensation for his claim. 'With firmness and considerable political skill Henry III annexed Chester to the Crown' (Harding 255)—a territorial coup that amounted to 'a major event of Henry III's reign' (Eales 100). In 1254 the king's son, the future Edward I, was invested with Chester, along with Ireland, Gascony, and other lands; on that occasion, '[i]t was stipulated that none of these was ever to be separated from the Crown of England.'[16]

Within two decades, in other words, what had been one of the mightiest earldoms in England was incorporated into the royal domain. This major transfer of landed power was the result of two failures of the direct male line. For all Henry III's weaknesses as king, some of his most striking successes came from his canny manipulation of the feudal politics of lineage. By the time he died in 1272, 'the eighteen holders of non-royal earldoms at the start of Henry's reign had been reduced by forfeiture and the failure of direct heirs to twelve...When a magnate house failed in the direct line, there were always more distant heirs, but it was easy for the king to exclude them' (Harding 257). In his handling of the Cornish succession, Ebain shows a similar knack for profiting from the genealogical misfortunes of his vassals. So although Heldris does not specify Count Conant's fate, we may speculate that since he has lost his son (and, for good measure, a nephew [5547–9]) in his failed revolt against the king, it won't be long before the fictional county of Chester, like its historical counterpart, is annexed to the crown.

III

If the conventional literary triangle of one woman caught between two men produces tales of adulterous love, exemplified in the Tristan or Lancelot tales, the representation of one man caught between two women produces something quite different: tales of serial polygamy. In Marie de France's *Fresne*, Gurun exchanges one twin sister for another; in *Eliduc*, the titular protagonist's first wife enters a convent, leaving her husband free to marry his new love, the king of Exeter's daughter (Kinoshita, 'Serial Polygamy'). Though the queen's attempted seduction of the *vallés mescine* initially suggests the first of these plots, after Silence's triumphant return from France the romance decisively veers toward the second. By now, the political advantages originally motivating Ebain's marriage to Eufeme are long forgotten. The time has come for the king to make a new, more expedient match. Before this can occur, two things are required: Silence must be unmasked as a woman, and the king must rid himself of Eufeme.

The agent of these two dramatic transformations is Merlin, the notorious Arthurian trickster. Falsely accused a second time of propositioning the queen, Silence is 'sentenced' to capturing Merlin—the catch being that, according

to his own prophecy, he can be taken only by a woman. Finally, Silence's biological sex works to her advantage: she brings Merlin to court, where he repeatedly bursts out laughing. Pressed by the king to explain himself, he reveals case after case of situations that are not what they seem. Silence fidgets nervously, knowing that her true 'nature' is about to be exposed. But Merlin's truth is more than even Silence bargained for; he exposes not only her crossdressing but that of the queen's lover, disguised as a nun (6525–40). In outing the nun as a man and Eufeme's lover, Merlin gives a parodic twist both to the hagiographic convention of the girl who crossdresses as a boy in order to enter a monastery (Frantzen 464–4; Hotchkiss, ch. 2), and to Marie de France's expedient of having Eliduc's first wife take the veil so he can remarry.

The refeminization of Silence, I have argued, represents a recoding in the way feudal bodies matter: as kings like Henry III and Louis IX turned the genealogical misfortunes of their tenants-in-chief to their own political advantage, the preservation of lineage became more important than military strength in safeguarding the relative autonomy of great feudal holdings.[17] Immediately spotting the gains to be made from the double revelation of Silence's sex and Eufeme's adultery, Ebain lavishly praises Silence's loyalty (6631–32)—conspicuously signaling his lack of rancor at her lifelong deception—then lifts the ban on female inheritance as precipitously as he had imposed it:

> 'Ses que jo ferai por t'amor,
> Que jamais nen oras clamor?
> Femes raront lor iretage.'
> Silence respont come sage:
> 'Chi a gent don, Dex le vos mire,
> Et al fait pert quels est li sire.'
> Cil del palais en sont moult lié.
> Le roi enclinent trosqu'al pié.
> Prendent Silence a beneïr
> Et dient Dex le puist tehir. (6641–50)
>
> ['Do you know what I will do for love of you, so that you will never have cause for complaint—women will be allowed to inherit again.' Silence replied judiciously, 'This is a noble gift. May God reward you for it. It is by his acts that one knows who is truly king.' The courtiers were very happy. They bowed deeply to the king, and blessed Silence, asking God to exalt her.]

The courtiers who acclaim his decision are presumably the same ones who had been so upset at the injunction in the first place (322–26). Silence

is turned out as a woman ('Silence atorne come feme,' 6664), her new feminine garb accompanied by an excision of the masculine declensional ending, 'us'—'they removed the -us, added an -a' ('Ostés est -us, mis i est -a,' 6667)—corresponding to Ebain's lifting of the 'us' prohibiting female inheritance. Now an heiress, Silence is transformed into the most marriageable woman in the realm. Now all that remains is for the king to rid himself of Eufeme.

In the first feudal age, kings and nobles made and unmade marriages with relative ease, as in the case of the thrice-married Capetian king, Robert 'the Pious' (Duby 75–81). From the late-eleventh century, however, church reformers began insisting on the indissolubility of marriage. Faced with the loss of a major strategy in their dynastic politics, the feudal nobility could still appeal to consanguinity: since the church forbade marriage within seven degrees of kinship, a husband who 'discovered' he was related to a wife who had lost her political expediency might use this kinship as grounds for separation.[18] The *lais* of Marie de France, as I have shown, actively ignore contemporary pronouncements on the indissolubility of marriage: Eliduc and Gurun in fact *depend* on the church to facilitate their separation and remarriage ('Serial Polygamy'). In the *Roman de Silence*, Ebain seeks a different solution, ordering the queen and her lover executed without appeal (6654–7). In the mid- to late-thirteenth century when *Silence* was likely composed, the triple accusation of adultery against the daughters-in-law of Philip IV of France still lay in the future: the public execution of an unfaithful queen is determined by literary rather than historical precedent.[19] 'The discovery and punishment of the queen's transgression,' as McCracken notes, 'are part of a restoration of royal sovereignty that requires the constraint and condemnation of the queen's unruly desire.' For Ebain, it is also the opportunity to replace an adulterous queen with one who 'seems to subordinate erotic desire to a desire for property and proper succession' (*Romance* 148).

In defending herself against Eufeme's amorous advances, Silence had explicitly appealed to both her feudal and her blood relationships to Ebain: '"I am your lord's vassal, and his kinsman (I don't know to what degree)"' ('"jo sui hom vostre segnor,/ Et ses parens ne sai con priés,"' 3806–07).[20] Now, however, she utters not a word of protest as she is married to the king:

> Li rois le prist a feme puis—
> Cho dist l'estorie u jo le trus—
> Par loëment de ses princhiers,
> Qu'il plus ama et plus tint ciers.
> Et dont i vient li cuens ses pere,

Et Eufemie avoec, sa mere.
Grant joie en ont, cho est a droit. (6677–83)

[Then the king took her to wife—that's what it said in the history where I found this story—on the advice of the advisers he most loved and held most dear. And then the count, her father, came with Eufemie, her mother. They were overjoyed, as was only fitting.]

Her silence here is doubly significant: first, it violates the reformist requirement of the freely-given consent of both partners to contract a legitimate marriage (Duby 181–85); second, it covers up the incest of Ebain's union to his own great-niece. The scandal of this illegal, consanguineous marriage is audible, if at all, in the text's multiple displacements. The narrator distances himself from the event by attributing it to his source, and the king is represented as acceding to the demand of his vassals. Cador and Eufemie arrive to confer their parental blessing on the unorthodox match, in language strongly reminiscent of Renald's *ex post facto* approval of their own marriage so many years before (1577–9). Their union, however, had been ratified by religious as well as feudal authorities (1510–3). This time, churchmen are conspicuously absent.[21] Under the circumstances, even the narrator's misogynist intervention (6684–94) seems expressly to divert attention from this scandalous marriage.[22]

A number of twelfth- and thirteenth-century romances celebrate the marriage of kings or king's sons to wives of inferior station: Erec to Enide, Yvain to Laudine (in Chrétien de Troyes's *Le Chevalier au Lion*), Conrad to Lienor (in Jean Renart's *Le Roman de la Rose ou de Guillaume de Dole*). Conversely, brides of exalted lineage are viewed with suspicion: Iseut, daughter of the Irish king, Fénice, daughter of the German emperor (in Chrétien's *Cligés*). In exchanging Eufeme for Silence, Ebain would seem to move from the tale type of the adulterous queen to the conjugal romance of the happily-ever-after. But Lorraine Stock is right, I think, to insist that we should harbor doubts that Ebain's second marriage will be any more successful than his first: the union of an old man to a young wife suggests instead a typical fabliau plot—a generic coding enhanced by the fact that MS Mi.LM.6 also contains ten fabliaux (Stock 17–8). As king, Stock notes, Ebain is singularly unimpressive: he instigates a 'trivial' foreign war, unilaterally bans female inheritance, unjustly exiles Silence, and is nearly overthrown by a cohort of rebellious vassals.[23]

And yet, since genealogy was the discourse in which the medieval nobility articulated its political claims, Ebain's marriage to the heiress of Cornwall is its own victory. On first capturing Merlin, Silence had blamed him for the

death of her ancestor, Gorlois of Cornwall (6144–54), killed in the confusion following Uther Pendragon's seduction of the duke's wife Ygerne. Merlin dismisses her accusation on the grounds that Ygerne's unwitting adultery produced '"a greater good: Arthur was born of it, who was so worthy it was no disgrace to the duke"' ('"Cho fu graindres prels,/ Qu'Artus nasqui, qui fu si preus/ Qu'il fust damages del duc mie,"' 6155–57). The illicit conscription of the women of Cornwall to the king's pleasure has a long history. Throughout the romance, Silence remains silent about her biological sex in order to protect her inheritance. Ironically, it is once her inheritance is secured that she becomes most vulnerable to royal predation. For the valiant *vallés mescine* who has demonstrated exemplary loyalty to Ebain both at court and on the battlefield, the king's restoration of female succession spells her capitulation to his feudal politics of lineage.

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NOTES

1 Based on its handwriting, decoration, contents and language, Lewis Thorpe dates MS. Mi.LM.6, the so-called 'Laval–Middleton manuscript,' to between 1250 and 1300, 'probably nearer the end of the century than the beginning' (10); based on its dialect, he situates it in northwest Picardy, 'somewhere in or near the triangle Tournai–Douai–Mons' (16). Frederick Cowper conjectures the manuscript was compiled c. 1280 'to the east of Arras' (8), in or near Thorpe's triangle, and migrated to Laval when Béatrice of Gavre married Count Guy IX in 1286 (7), a hypothesis Thorpe considers 'at least arguable' (12n.43).

2 This is the 'Potiphar's wife' motif, which McCracken reanalyzes as the motif of the seductress queen. Besides *Silence*, she discusses Marie de France's *Lai de Lanval*, *Le Roman des Sept Sages de Rome* and *Le Roman de la dame a la lycorne* (*Romance* ch. 5).

3 On Eleanor of Provence's maternal uncles, see Howell 25, 30–2; on Isabelle of Angoulême's children by her second marriage to Hugh of Lusignan, see Howell 54–55. On competition between these two foreign factions, see Howell 68.

4 Compare Fénice in Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligés*, whose exploits are such that all future empresses of Constantinople are kept in purdah (6645–61). The significant

exception occurs in the epic motif of the Saracen princess: the pagan woman who converts to Christianity for the love of a Frankish hero. In that case, the symbolic victory attached to the seduction of the enemy outweighs the inconvenience of her foreign origins (Kinoshita, '*Prise*').

5 McCracken, *Romance* 85–6, 146–9. To Duby's assertion (222) that '[b]astardy was too serious a matter to be treated lightly, even in literature,' McCracken adds that, on the other hand, 'the absence of children in the royal family leaves succession unresolved and the need for dynastic continuity unacknowledged' (119).

6 On the Cador episode's resemblance to *Tristan*, see Kinoshita, 'Silence' 398–9, 407n.8.

7 McCracken. *Romance* 520. See also Hotchkiss, Frantzen.

8 "'I am his vassal; he is my lord"' ("'Jo sui ses hom, il est mes sire,"' 4255). A moment later, he specifies: "'he is my lord, from whom I hold England in fief"' ("'mes sire est, si teng en fief/ Engletiere,"' 4291–2). Though John had lost most of the Angevins' continental patrimony to Philip Augustus in 1204, the kings of England remained the French kings' vassals for Gascony.

9 In 1175 Henry II capitalized on Count Reginald's death without legitimate male heirs to give Cornwall to his son John (Salzman 152). In 1227 Henry III revived the earldom of Cornwall for his younger brother Richard, making it 'the core of the most formidable accumulation of landed wealth in thirteenth-century England' (Harding 254).

10 This episode closely resembles the episode of the traitor count Angrés in Chrétien de Troyes's *Cligés*, which cannily aligns King Arthur with the interests of the city of London, over and against the predations of the feudal nobility (Kinoshita, '*Translatio*' 338–41).

11 Chester is the site where Ebain issued his proclamation, following the deadly duel between the husbands of the twin heiresses (293). Twice (337–8; 537–8), Chester occurs as a rhyme word with Winchester, center of royal authority. Here and throughout, the translations are mine, based on Roche-Mahdi 1992.

12 Conan was a traditional name of the counts of Brittany, including Conan IV (deposed 1170), father of the Countess Constance, married first to Henry II's son Geoffrey (died 1186) and, from 1189 to 1199, to Ranulf of Chester.

13 The judgment is F. M. Powicke's (2), cited in Alexander (70). Originally also viscount of Avranchin, Ranulf lost his Norman holdings in 1204 and regained them in 1230. He ceded Leicester, which he claimed through his maternal connection to the house of Montford, to his cousin Simon in 1231.

14 Cheshire was 'absent from the pipe rolls except during unusual periods when its earl was a minor or in rebellion. Its sheriff was neither appointed by nor responsible to the monarch. Itinerant justices did not include the county on their eyres. The shire did not make returns to the various military inquests taken from time to time, and it had peculiar legal customs' (Alexander 61, summarizing Harris). Alexander attributes Ranulf's standing 'more to his own character and endowments, and to his widely distributed holdings, than to constitutional status' (62).

15 '[H]e stationed his guards in all the castles, the kind of men who are not cowards' ('En tols les castials mist ses gardes,/ Tels gens ki ne sunt pas coärdes,' 1649–50).
16 Howell 124. In 1243, before being made part of Edward's appanage, Chester had been assigned to Eleanor of Provence's dowry. 'This did not give the queen present control of Chester, but it brought it within her orbit and excluded it from that of Richard of Cornwall,' who also coveted it (Howell 37).
17 Kinoshita, '*Silence*' 406. In France, the monarchy absorbed both Toulouse (1271) and Champagne (1284) as the result of failures of the male comital lines. Edward I of England claimed Ponthieu by right of his wife Eleanor, daughter of Ferdinand III of Castile and Countess Joan of Ponthieu.
18 As Louis VII did to divorce Eleanor of Aquitaine in 1152. In 1215, the Fourth Lateran Council reduced the degrees defining consanguinity from seven to four, rendering such separations more difficult.
19 In 1314 the king's daughters-in-law Margaret of Burgundy, Blanche of Burgundy, and Joan of Franche-Comté were all accused of adultery. Margaret died in prison, Blanche was repudiated, and Joan was acquitted. On the literary representation of the punishment with which adulterous queens were threatened, see McCracken, *Romance* ch. 3.
20 Eufeme, whose true crime is her indifference to her feudal responsibilities, is unable to understand these as serious objections; in her mind, if Silence rejects her, it must mean 'he' is gay (3935–49).
21 For Ebain's first marriage, two archbishops and four bishops were included in the party that traveled to Norway to fetch the bride; however, their presence at the ceremony itself was not explictly signaled. Contrast *Fresne*, in which the acquiescent archbishop of Dol presides over Gurun's repudiation of Codre and remarriage to Fresne (Kinoshita 'Serial Polygamy').
22 On the significance of editorial attributions of the narrator's interventions, see Psaki 84–5.
23 Compare Henry III, who survived minority rule, Poitevin and Savoyard factionalism, and two important baronial revolts.