# MEDIEVAL CLOTHING AND TEXTILES

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Edited by Robin Netherton
and Gale R. Owen-Crocker

# Medieval Clothing and Textiles

Volume 12

# Medieval Clothing and Textiles

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# Medieval Clothing and Textiles

Volume 12

*edited by*

ROBIN NETHERTON

and

GALE R. OWEN-CROCKER

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# Contents


Illustrations *page* vii

Tables x

Contributors xi

Preface xiii

1 The Attire of the Virgin Mary and Female Rulers in Iconographical Sources of the Ninth to Eleventh Centuries: Analogues, Interpretations, Misinterpretations 1
*Grzegorz Pac*

2 Sails, Veils, and Tents: The *Segl* and Tabernacle of Old English *Christ III* and *Exodus* 27
*Megan Cavell*

3 *Linteamenta altaria:* The Care of Altar Linens in the Medieval Church 41
*Thomas M. Izbicki*

4 Coats, Collars, and Capes: Royal Fashions for Animals in the Early Modern Period 61
*John Block Friedman*

5 A Set of Late-Fifteenth-Century Orphreys Relating to Ludovico Buonvisi, a Lucchese Merchant, and Embroidered in a London Workshop 95
*Frances Pritchard*

6 Academical Dress in Late Medieval and Renaissance Scotland 109
*Jonathan C. Cooper*

7 Dressing the Bourgeoisie: Clothing in Probate Records of Danish Townswomen, ca. 1545–1610 131
*Camilla Luise Dahl*

Recent Books of Interest 195

Contents of Previous Volumes 203

# Illustrations

*The Virgin Mary and Female Rulers*


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Fig. 1.1 | Dedication page from the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura | 3 |
| Fig. 1.2 | Dedication page from the *Liber Vitae*, Winchester | 4 |
| Fig. 1.3 | Mary-Ecclesia in the Petershausen Sacramentary, Reichenau | 5 |
| Fig. 1.4 | Judgment of Solomon from the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura | 8 |
| Fig. 1.5 | St. Æthelthryth in the Benedictional of St. Æthelwold, Winchester | 12 |
| Fig. 1.6 | Empress Theodora from mosaic of San Vitale Church in Ravenna | 17 |
| Fig. 1.7 | Ivory plaque showing an empress | 18 |
| Fig. 1.8 | Ivory plaque showing Otto II and Theophanu crowned by Christ | 20 |


*Royal Fashions for Animals*


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Fig. 4.1 | Lapdog with belled collar from St. William window, York Cathedral | 65 |
| Fig. 4.2 | Leather dog collar with heraldic brass escutcheon, found in Leiden | 66 |
| Fig. 4.3 | Arms of Simon de Varie from his prayer book | 67 |
| Fig. 4.4 | Balthazar with greyhound from *Adoration of the Magi* by Joos van der Beke van Cleve | 69 |
| Fig. 4.5 | Monogram on dog collar from the Unicorn Hunt tapestry series | 76 |
| Fig. 4.6 | Talbot with fleur-de-lys collar from the Unicorn Hunt tapestry series | 77 |
| Fig. 4.7 | Hunting dogs in protective jackets from the Devonshire Hunting Tapestries | 82 |
| Fig. 4.8 | Duchy of Brabant and its enemies from the Charter of the Duchy of Brabant | 84 |
| Fig. 4.9 | Monkey in a tightly fitted jacket from the Luttrell Psalter | 86 |
| Fig. 4.10 | Monkey in a cowled garment from *De Natura Rerum* | 88 |
| Fig. 4.11 | Will Somer and a dressed monkey from family portrait of King Henry VIII | 89 |

Fig. 4.12 Dressed bear supporters from glass panel with arms of Brugg 91
Fig. 4.13 Heraldic bears on the tapestry of Guillaume Jouvenel des Ursins 93

*Late-Fifteenth-Century Orphreys*

Fig. 5.1 Front of chasuble with embroidered pillar orphrey 96
Fig. 5.2 Back of chasuble with embroidered cross orphrey 97
Fig. 5.3 Detail of pillar orphrey showing St. Sebastian 99
Fig. 5.4 Detail of cross orphrey showing the Rood of Lucca 102
Fig. 5.5 *Legend of the Holy Face of Lucca*, Paris 103

*Academical Dress in Scotland*

Fig. 6.1 Funeral effigy of Hugh Spens, provost of St. Salvator's College 115
Fig. 6.2 Funeral effigy of Alexander Young, principal of St. Leonard's College 118

*Clothing of Danish Townswomen*

Fig. 7.1 Map of the four main towns around the Sound in the sixteenth century 132
Fig. 7.2 Probate of Marine, midwife in Malmoe, 1573 135
Fig. 7.3 Probate of Else, wife of an alderman in Elsinore, 1591 136
Fig. 7.4 Epitaph of David Hansen and family, ca. 1599, Elsinore 141
Fig. 7.5 Epitaph showing typical church dress, ca. 1585, Køge 144
Fig. 7.6 Epitaph showing short shoulder capes, 1576, Odense 146
Fig. 7.7 Stone effigy showing doublet and skirt, early seventeenth century, Malmoe 148
Fig. 7.8 Tombstone showing an open gown, 1591, Zealand 150
Fig. 7.9 Carved stone epitaph showing layered outfits, Malmoe 152
Fig. 7.10 Epitaph showing kirtles with front lacing, 1591, Flensburg 154
Fig. 7.11 Epitaph showing doublets and skirts, early seventeenth century, Tønder 156
Fig. 7.12 Epitaph showing Scottish and Danish headwear, early seventeenth century, Elsinore 164
Fig. 7.13 Altar table painting showing partlet or upperpart with ruffled collar, ca. 1550, Zealand 166
Fig. 7.14 Wall painting showing ruffled collars, ca. 1560, Zealand 167
Fig. 7.15 Epitaph showing large collars, 1606, Elsinore 169
Fig. 7.16 Altar panel painting showing traditional church clothes trimmed with velvet borders, early seventeenth century, Malmoe 170
Fig. 7.17 Epitaph of Anne, wife of an alderman in Ronneby, Blekinge, 1587 172
Fig. 7.18 Naïve painting of a wealthy couple, 1583, Elsingburg 173

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# Tables

*Clothing of Danish Townswomen*


| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Table 7.1 | Outerwear | 179 |
| Table 7.2 | Details specified for short capes (*krave*) | 180 |
| Table 7.3 | Upperwear garments and related decorations | 181 |
| Table 7.4 | Headwear listed with outerwear/upperwear | 182 |
| Table 7.5 | Types of kirtles, skirts, and bodices | 183 |
| Table 7.6 | Details specified for kirtles, skirts, and bodices, period I | 184 |
| Table 7.7 | Details specified for kirtles, skirts, and bodices, period II | 185 |
| Table 7.8 | Details specified for kirtles, skirts, and bodices, period III | 186 |
| Table 7.9 | Underwear and linen clothing | 187 |
| Table 7.10 | Legwear and footwear | 190 |
| Table 7.11 | Belts/girdles and purses | 191 |

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# Preface

Volume 12 of *Medieval Clothing and Textiles* ranges through art, artifacts, documentary text, and poetry, with new research addressing both functional applications and symbolic representations of dress and textiles.

John Block Friedman breaks new ground for this journal with his article on real and imagined clothing for royal pets and other animals. Grzegorz Pac compares depictions of sacred and royal female dress in three significant manuscripts—Carolingian, Anglo-Saxon, and Ottonian—and evaluates attempts to link them together. Jonathan C. Cooper describes the clothing worn by scholars in Scotland's three pre-Reformation universities and the effects of the Reformation on academic dress. Camilla Luise Dahl, in a double-size article, analyzes descriptions and valuations of women's garments itemized in Danish probate inventories and explains what these references can tell us about changing fashions in the early modern period.

Turning to textiles, Frances Pritchard examines the iconography, heraldry, and inscriptions on a worn and repaired set of embroidered fifteenth-century orphreys to show that they must have been commissioned in London by an Italian merchant family. Megan Cavell focuses on the rhetorical treatment of textiles associated with the Holy of Holies in Old English biblical poetry. Thomas M. Izbicki's chapter summarizes documentary evidence for the choice of white linen for the altar and the responsibilities of a priest for keeping it clean and in good repair.

Frances Pritchard is stepping down from our editorial board after this volume. She has been with us since volume 1, and we thank her for her expertise, which has been applied to submissions to *Medieval Clothing and Textiles* on many occasions. Our thanks go to all our board members as well as the many other scholars who have generously agreed to review article submissions and consult with authors.

We continue to consider for publication in this journal both independent submissions and papers read at sessions sponsored by DISTAFF (Discussion, Interpretation, and Study of Textile Arts, Fabrics, and Fashion) at the international congresses held annually in Kalamazoo, Michigan, and Leeds, England. Proposals from potential conference speakers should be sent to robin@netherton.net (for Kalamazoo) or gale.owencrocker@ntlworld.com (for Leeds). Potential authors for *Medieval Clothing and Textiles* should read the guidelines at http://www.distaff.org/MCTguidelines.pdf, and send a 300-word synopsis to Professor Gale R. Owen-Crocker, 181 Chester Road, Hazel Grove, Stockport SK7 6EN, UK; email gale.owencrocker@ntlworld.com.

Authors of larger studies interested in submitting a monograph or collaborative book manuscript for our subsidia series, Medieval and Renaissance Clothing and

Textiles, should apply using the publication proposal form on the website of our publisher, Boydell & Brewer, at http://www.boydellandbrewer.com/authors_submit_proposal.asp. We encourage potential authors to discuss their ideas with the General Editors, Robin Netherton and Gale Owen-Crocker, before making a formal proposal.

# The Attire of the Virgin Mary and Female Rulers in Iconographical Sources of the Ninth to Eleventh Centuries: Analogues, Interpretations, Misinterpretations

*Grzegorz Pac*

In western Europe the formalization of the position of wife of the ruler started taking shape in the Carolingian period. She began to be crowned as empress alongside her husband, and the practice of anointing her as queen was adopted.[1] Simultaneously with the introduction of formal coronations of queens and empresses in the West, rulers' wives were gradually included into the world of Christian symbolism, and their special position, confirmed by religious rites, required a theological explanation and foundation.[2]

This research was covered by the grant "Images of the Virgin Mary and Ecclesia as Female Rulers in the Context of the Religious and Political Culture of the Early Middle Ages," funded by the Foundation for Polish Science, which also supported the publication. I would like to thank Gale R. Owen-Crocker and Valerie L. Garver for their comments and suggestions, as well as Dominik Purchała for his advice on using public domain resources and Creative Commons licenses.

1 See Gunther Wolf, "Königinnen-Krönungen des Frühen Mittelalters bis zum Beginn des Investiturstreits," *Zeitschrift der Savigny-Stiftung für Rechtsgeschichte* 107, Kanonistische Abteilung 76 (1990): 62–88, passim; Grzegorz Pac, "Koronacje Władczyń we Wcześniejszym Średniowieczu—Zarys Problematyki" [Coronations of Female Rulers in the Earlier Middle Ages: Outline of the Subject], in *Gnieźnieńskie Koronacje Królewskie i ich Środkowoeuropejskie Konteksty*, ed. Józef Dobosz et al. (Gniezno, Poland: Urząd Miejski w Gnieźnie, Instytut Kultury Europejskiej UAM w Gnieźnie, Instytut Historii UAM w Poznaniu, 2011), 43–57, passim, where further reading. In the context of the present article, queens and empresses will not be sharply distinct. A similar approach is to be found in other studies of the subject, for instance: Pauline Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (London: Leicester University Press, 1998); Franz-Reiner Erkens, "'Sicut Esther regina': Die Westfränkische Königin als *consors regni*," *Francia* 20 (1993): 15–38, passim; Simon MacLean, "Queenship, Nunneries and Royal Widowhood in Carolingian Europe," *Past and Present* 178 (2003): 3–38, esp. 7, note 9. The potential differences in the ideology related with royal and imperial have yet to be carefully researched but as a subject significantly exceed the framework of this article.

2 For the first queens' *ordines*, see Janet L. Nelson, "Early Medieval Rites of Queen-Making and the Shaping of Medieval Queenship," in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe*, ed. Anne J. Duggan (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 1997), 301–15, passim; Julie A. Smith, "The Earliest Queen-Making Rites," *Church History* 66, no. 1 (1997): 18–35, passim.

Research on queenship ideology is undoubtedly a vivid and important field of recent medieval studies. Focusing on the religious basis of the ruler's consort position and its biblical models, students of the subject have shown the role of the Queen of Heavens, the Virgin Mary, already for centuries titled *regina*,[3] as an important point of reference for the terrestrial queen.[4] The confident conviction that the role of the Mother of God in queenship ideology was so crucial from the very beginning can in fact be called into question, but this is not the place to undertake that subject. My goal in this article is much more limited: I would like to show how the assumption of an ideological bond between Mary and the ruler's consort, in some cases perhaps too easily accepted, may have led us to misinterpretations of particular sources. I would like to show that only analyzed in a wider context can they help us to better understand queenship ideology as well as the perception of the Virgin in the early Middle Ages.

As examples, I have taken three iconographical sources, that is, miniatures from three different codices. The first of these images is from the so-called Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura or the Bible of Charles the Bald (fig. 1.1),[5] produced under the patronage of the ruler between ca. 866 and ca. 875.[6] Another image is the famous dedication page of the *Liber Vitae* from New Minster, Winchester (fig. 1.2),[7] a confraternity book containing names of monks and benefactors of the abbey, which was produced and began to be filled about 1031. The final example is from the Petershausen Sacramentary (fig. 1.3),[8] the work of Anno, a scribe from the extraordinary centre of Ottonian art that is Reichenau Abbey, made between ca. 970 and ca. 980.

As we can see, each of these images comes from a different context, respectively Carolingian, Anglo-Saxon, and Ottonian. However, in all three cases dress has been supposed to play a key role in the confirming or undermining of the ideological bond between the terrestrial and heavenly queen. This assumption was made by outstanding historians and art historians; quotations from their works, representing that viewpoint, will be provided later, in the parts of this article discussing each case.

3 See Marie-Louise Thérel, *Le Triomphe de la Vierge-Eglise: A l'Origine du Décor du Portail Occidental de Notre-Dame de Senlis: Sources Historiques, Littéraires et Iconographiques* (Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1984), 224–30; Henri Barré, "La Royauté de Marie pendant les Neufs Premiers Siècles," *Recherches de Science Religieuse* 29 (1939): 129–62 and 303–34, esp. 137–39; Henri Barré, "Marie, Reine du Monde," *Études Mariales* 3 (1937): 19–91, passim; Georges Frénaud, "La Royauté de Marie dans la Liturgie," in *Maria et Ecclesia: Acta Congressus Mariologici-Mariani in Civitate Lourdes Anno 1958 Celebrati*, vol. 5, *Mariae Potestas Regalis in Ecclesiam* (Rome: Pontificia Academia Mariana Internationalis, 1959), 57–92, esp. 73–74; Manuel Garrido, "La Realeza de María en las Liturgias Occidentales," *Estudios Marianos* 17 (1956): 95–124, passim.

4 See for example Stafford, *Queens*, 27; Janet L. Nelson, "Medieval Queenship," in *Women in Medieval Western European Culture*, ed. Linda E. Mitchell (New York: Routledge, 1999), 179–207, at 186.

5 Rome, Abbazia di San Paolo fuori le Mura, 1r.

6 William J. Diebold, "The Ruler Portrait of Charles the Bald in the S. Paolo Bible," *Art Bulletin* 76, no. 1 (1994): 6–18, at 6.

7 London, British Library, MS Stowe 944, 6r.

8 Heidelberg, Germany, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Cod. Sal. IX b, 40v.

Figure 1.1: The dedication page from the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura, also known as the Bible of Charles the Bald, ca. 866–75 (Rome, Abbazia di San Paolo fuori le Mura, fol. 1r). Photo: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Figure 1.2: The dedication page from the *Liber Vitae*, Winchester, ca. 1031 (London, British Library, MS Stowe 944, fol. 6r). Photo: The British Library, public domain, Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal.

Figure 1.3: Mary-Ecclesia in the Petershausen Sacramentary, Reichenau, ca. 970–80 (Heidelberg, Universitätsbibliothek, MS Cod. Sal. IX b, fol. 40v). Photo: Universitätsbibliothek Heidelberg, Creative Commons license CC-BY-SA 3.0.

## VEIL OF VIRGINS?

The veil is an element of dress of particular interest. However, some of the existing research simplifies its meaning, which in fact, as we will see, may be very diverse, ranging from the symbol of holy virginity to a regular element of married women's attire.

French historian Dominique Iogna-Prat turns his attention to the image of Charles the Bald in the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura, where the emperor's wife, Richildis, is depicted along with him. She is also mentioned in the poem below the image: "On the

left the noble wife, beautiful as always."[9] Iogna-Prat suggests interpreting this source together with another depiction of a royal couple, more recent by around 150 years: the dedication page of the *Liber Vitae* from New Minster, Winchester, presenting Cnut and his wife Emma-Ælfgifu. The latter has a veil on her head and is receiving another from an angel. "That is the veil of virgins, as Mary is located above the queen," claims Iogna-Prat, and asks, "Why does the queen have a veil in both images? What is the sense, in these circumstances, of the symbol of virginity?" Looking for an answer, the historian indicates interestingly the importance in queenship ideology of the virtue of marital chastity, and the fertility connected with it,[10] suggesting also the bond of the veil with the Virgin.[11] Patrick Corbet, referring to Iogna-Prat's statement, states openly: "The bond between the Virgin and female ruler in these miniatures is manifested especially by the virginal veil put on the heads of Richildis and Emma."[12]

Why would a veil be a symbol of virginity? Neither author is clear in this point, but they may be referring to that worn by consecrated virgins—nuns or canonesses. If so, they would be overlooking one important fact—that the nun's veil, although undoubtedly in this case related to chastity, was not a sign of virginity in itself, but rather of the status of "bride of Christ" and was modeled on that of married women, just like the rite of its receiving imitated the rite of a regular wedding.[13] In fact, technically, nuns were married or at least engaged women, only to the Celestial Bridegroom.

9 "Nobilis ad laevam coniux de more venustat," Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura, 1r, *La Bibbia Carolingia dell' Abbazia di San Paolo Fuori le Mura,* ed. Marco Cardinali (Vatican City: Edizioni Abbazia San Paolo, 2009), 19. See also Ernst H. Kantorowicz, "The Carolingian King in the Bible of San Paolo Fuori le Mura," in *Late Classical and Mediaeval Studies in Honor of Albert Mathias Friend, Jr.*, ed. Kurt Weitzmann et al. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955), 287–300, at 288, 291–97; Valerie L. Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture in the Carolingian World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 32–33; Diebold, "Ruler Portrait," 8–9. As Garver (32–33) rightly notes, writing about the two women to the ruler's left on this image, although it could be argued that they are the personifications of provinces paying homage to the emperor, the poem under the illustration mentioning the ruler's wife on his left identifies the figure we are interested in as Richildis.

10 On the meaning of chastity in queenship ideology, see Grzegorz Pac, "Biblical Judith in the Ideology of Queenship of the Early Middle Ages," in "*Et credidit populus*: The Role and Function of Beliefs in Early Societies," ed. J. Szacillo, J. Eaton, and S. McDaid, special issue, *Quest* 8 (2009): 75–89, at 78–80, http://www.qub.ac.uk/sites/QUEST/JournalIssues/Issue8ProceedingsoftheMARSConference (accessed Feb. 25, 2014), where further reading.

11 Dominique Iogna-Prat, "La Vierge et les Ordines de Couronnement des Reines au IXe Siècle," in *Marie: Le Culte de la Vierge dans la Société Médiévale*, ed. Dominique Iogna-Prat, Éric Palazzo, and Daniel Russo (Paris: Beauchesne, 1996), 100–7, at 103; Dominique Iogna-Prat, "Le Culte de la Vierge sous le Règne de Charles le Chauve," *Les Cahiers de Saint-Michel de Cuxa* 23 (1992): 97–116, at 114.

12 Patrick Corbet, "Les Impératrices Ottoniennes et le Modèle Marial: Autour de l'Ivoire du Château Sforza de Milan," in Iogna-Prat, Palazzo, and Russo, *Marie: Le Culte*, 109–135, at 123–24.

13 Philip L. Reynolds, "Marrying and Its Documentation in Pre-Modern Europe: Consent, Celebration, and Property," in *To Have and to Hold: Marrying and Its Documentation in Western Christendom, 400–1600*, ed. P. L. Reynolds and John Witte, Jr. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1–42, at 18, where further reading; Réginald Grégoire, "Il Matrimonio Mistico," in *Il Matrimonio nella Società Altomedievale*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo 24 (Spoleto: Presso la sede del Centro, 1977), 2:701–94, at 720–41.

However, interestingly, although the veil as a symbol of consecrated virginity had a long tradition in Christianity, it gained importance, as noticed by Valerie L. Garver, only in the ninth century, the period which gave us the first miniature discussed here. In the Merovingian period of the sixth and seventh centuries, not all consecrated women wore veils, and the ritual of nuns entering a convent was not yet fully developed.[14] This may also have been the case in Anglo-Saxon England, as two surviving seals of nuns from the second half of the tenth and the first half of the eleventh century may suggest: while one of the nuns wears a veil, another is presented bareheaded.[15]

Talking about the "virginal veil" the authors may also be thinking of the virginal state as such, and referring rather to maidens than nuns. But, as noted above, married women wore veils as well. Furthermore, later sources suggest that in the High Middle Ages they differed from maidens precisely by having their heads covered, while the latter had theirs bare.[16] It appears, however, that, at least in the period we are dealing with, the veil did not play such a role as a sign of the marital state of a lay woman. Commenting on the scene of the Annunciation in an eleventh-century German gospel book, in which the Virgin is wearing a white veil,[17] Margaret Scott notes that it suggests both married and unmarried women wore their hair covered in this time;[18] or, to put it more carefully, at least that is how they were depicted by artists, who "certainly did not distinguish between maiden and matron," as Gale R. Owen-Crocker remarks about Anglo-Saxon art.[19]

Also for us, how women of various states were depicted in the early Middle Ages is of more interest than how they actually dressed. And it seems that in the iconography of that period it is simply not possible to distinguish their marital state based on dress, because in fact all women, regardless of being maidens, wives, or widows, lay or religious, were presented in veils. From this point of view the statement that the veil has to be "the symbol of virginity" is very doubtful, as it could be in fact be related with every woman's state. Based on iconography, we cannot simply say whether in each particular case a veil is virginal or marital, but considering that in the case of

14 Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture*, 90. See also Gisela Muschiol, *Famula Dei: Zur Liturgie in Merowingischen Frauenklöstern* (Münster, Germany: Aschendorff, 1994), 49–50.

15 The veiled one is Edith of Wilton, a daughter of Edgar I; see Catherine E. Karkov, *The Ruler Portraits of Anglo-Saxon England* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2004), 114–16. The one with an uncovered head is Godgytha; see Gale R. Owen-Crocker, *Dress in Anglo-Saxon England: Revised and Enlarged Edition* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2004), 219–20, where it is also suggested that Godgytha's hair could possibly be a copy of that from a man's image on the other side of the seal die—this could be a reason that her head is uncovered. For both seals, see also Patricia Halpin, "Women Religious in Late Anglo-Saxon England," *Haskins Society Journal* 6 (1994): 97–110, at 106–7.

16 See for example Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell, 2012) 84; Chiara Frugoni, "The Imagined Woman," in *Silences of the Middle Ages*, ed. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, A History of Women in the West 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 336–422, at 385; Paul B. Newman, *Daily Life in the Middle Ages* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co, 2001), 119. See also Frugoni, "L'Iconografia del Matrimonio e della Coppia nel Medioevo," in *Il Matrimonio nella Società Altomedievale*, 2:901–64, at 922, note 76.

17 London, British Library, MS Harley 2821, 22r.

18 Margaret Scott, *Medieval Dress and Fashion* (London: British Library, 2007), 27, caption to fig. 11.

19 Owen-Crocker, *Dress*, 219.

Figure 1.4: The Judgment of Solomon, detail of the frontispiece to the Book of Proverbs from the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura (Rome, Abbazia di San Paolo fuori le Mura, fol. 188v). Photo: Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Richildis we are dealing with a married woman, we can assume that the one on her head is more probably the latter.

## WOMEN IN THE BIBLE OF SAN PAOLO FUORI LE MURA

In the direct context of that image, the above-mentioned difficulties in telling apart maidens, married women, and widows in the art of the period based on their attire are confirmed. In fact, as we will see, it is enough to take a look at other images in the Bible of San Paolo fuori le Mura to notice that the headdress of the empress is rather typical for almost all women presented in the codex. However, contradicting the proposition of Iogna-Prat and Corbet, a comparison with the other illustrations of the codex not only does not suggest any reference to virginity, but rather implies through some details that Richildis is a married woman.

Let us start with the miniature depicting the emperor and his wife, in which veils, although simpler than that of the empress, are worn also by the personifications of the four cardinal virtues and by the woman standing beside the empress, probably her attendant (fig. 1.1).[20] While the personifications of virtues may be virginal, in the case of the attendant, the decorative dress and gold earrings show clearly that she is not a nun. However, to understand fully the veil's meaning—or lack thereof—it is necessary to look past this most commonly reproduced and discussed of the Bible's miniatures. It will then become clear that although, for example, the virgin from the prophecy of Isaiah, who shall "conceive and bear a son" (Isa. 7:14; fol. 117v), wears a veil, it is not in any way a feature distinctive of her state. In a scene from the First Book of Kings (1 Kings 3:16–27), King Solomon judges two women arguing over which is the mother

20 Kantorowicz, "Carolingian King," 288; Garver, *Women and Aristocratic Culture*, 32; Diebold, "Ruler Portrait," 9.