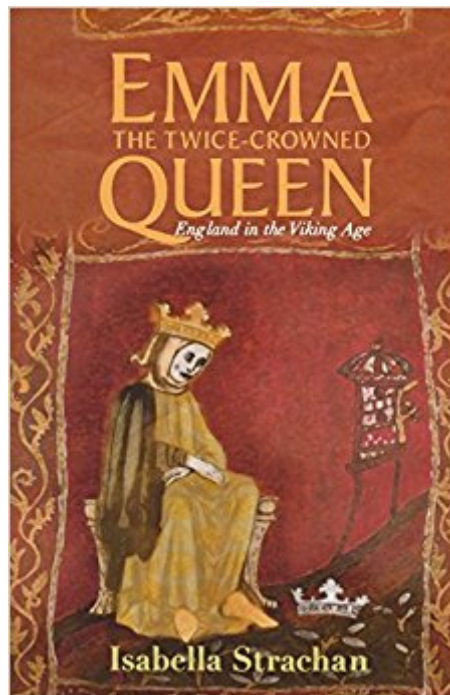




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Emma: The Twice-Crowned Queen: England In The Viking Age



Synopsis

An engaging biography of the 11th-century English queen who married two English kings and gave birth to two more. In 1002, a beautiful 18-year-old named Emma, the half-Danish sister of the Duke of Normandy and a descendant of Vikings, sailed to England to be the queen of Ethelred the Unready, who needed a Norman alliance against Viking raiders. The political and marital career on which Emma embarked was to be unique for an English queen. Before it was over she would have married two kings, Ethelred and the Danish Canute, and would have given birth to two more, Edward the Confessor and Hardecanute. From her home in Winchester, the Saxon capital, Emma operated as a significant political figure in her own right. Her writings suggest that she was a Danish nationalist who wished to see England joined with Viking Denmark. But, ultimately, it was her great-nephew, William the Conqueror, who would decide the destiny of England in 1066. Emma's queenship stood at the meeting point of three cultures of the early Middle Ages in England: Saxon, Viking and Norman. This study of her reign, based on contemporary writings and the work of modern scholars, provides a picture of a brutal yet pious era.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Queen Emma, the only woman to have been married to two kings of England and to have borne two more, stood at the crossroads of history, caught between the triad of cultures that defined England in the eleventh century. Danish by descent and sister of the duke of Normandy, she initially married Saxon king Ethelred, momentarily uniting the Viking, Norman, and Saxon factions that vied for

power in early medieval England. After the death of Ethelred the Unready in 1016, Emma married Canute, the newly crowned king of England. Hardened by two unhappy marriages, an increasingly political Emma made her influence felt in domestic, religious, and political spheres. As a wife, mother, and queen, Emma subtly exerted her authority according to the societal norms of her day. This solidly researched biography provides a window on the often-neglected Viking era in England. Margaret Flanagan Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved

Isabella Strachan is a former staff writer and subeditor on the Encyclopaedia Britannica. She is the author of *Bees in My Bonnet*.

Emma The Twice-Crowned Queen: England In The Viking Age is the first full biography of Queen Emma, mother of Edward the Confessor and Hardecanute. The half-Danish sister of the Duke of Normandy and a descendant of Vikings, she would be Queen to two kings, Ethelred the Unready (who needed to ally with the Normans against Viking raiders) and later, the Danish Canute. She was a noteworthy political figure of her day, and her writings indicate she was a Danish nationalist who wished to see England join with Viking Denmark. Yet her great-nephew William the Conqueror would be the one to drastically alter the future of England. Drawing from primary sources, the work of scholars, contemporary writings and more, *Emma The Twice-Crowned Queen* is at once both scholarly and readily accessible. A must-have for British history and biography reference shelves.

I never really got a good idea of what Emma was like or what she thought. That may be because of the lack of documentation to be had for her. Her character was flat and never came alive as I expected. Seems like the story was more about the men in her lives than her life.

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