The lives of Agnes, Eufemia, and Margareta offer a rare glimpse into the discursive poetics of queenship along the northern reach of medieval Europe. In this investigation of specific periods of crisis in the monarchies of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, we retraced the steps taken to voice the queens’ political objectives in an innovative way: through the “broadcast” of poems by Rumelant von Sachsen, through the translation of courtly romances “in our tongue” for Eufemia’s daughter, or through the echoing of Birgittine locutions in the Old Swedish poem *King Albrecht*. Through their patronage and influence, the cultural authority that rests inherent in medieval queenship was transformed into an acoustic reality, and as a result of this incarnation their voices were able to reach new listening communities. Medieval authorities asserted that the voice is suffused with a distinct presence—an ensoulment—that distinguishes the voice from every other type of audible sound, and I have argued that these sensibilities survive the transference into different vernaculars, different literary genres and media, and different modalities of speaking. The queens’ voices were heard.

It is notable, however, that in each case these voices sounded forth in a political landscape that was defined by a crisis of male lordship. For Denmark, the crisis was sparked by the murder of Erik V and the disputed succession that followed. In Norway, the crisis was less urgent—it played out over a series of years rather than months—but the challenge was likewise defined by problems in the dynastic succession that Hákon V, despite repeated negotiations with Erik Magnusson, could not resolve. The situation at the Norwegian court was exacerbated by the realities of childbirth, that he and Eufemia had only one daughter and no sons. In Sweden, the crisis of male lordship was of a different type. Here, it was caused not by an interruption of legitimate royal power or a challenge to its continuity (as in Denmark or Norway) but by a
surfeit of bad lordship and the abuses and injustices that resulted from it.

If we conceptualize these periods of political crisis in acoustic terms, drawing an association between political power and the expression of voice, we realize that the articulation and broadcast of the queen's royal voice coincides neatly with those moments or circumstances in which the voice of the king was silent or otherwise rendered impotent—that is, in the months following the assassination of Erik V in 1286, during the complicated engagement of Ingeborg to Erik Magnusson, and throughout the final stages of Albrecht's misrule in Sweden. This conjunction is hardly coincidental, of course; political realities, then as now, demand flexibility and fortitude of their rulers, and it is no wonder that a weakness in one area will be compensated by strength in another. The loss of equilibrium at the medieval courts of Scandinavia is interesting in its own right, but we understand a great deal more about the discursive poetics of medieval queenship when we realize that Agnes, Eufemia, and Margareta attempted to regain the equilibrium in rulership not by the exercise of power but through the marshaling of authority—authority, in large measure, that was conveyed through the skillful utilization of the cultural significances of voice. These challenges and interruptions in male lordship in medieval Denmark, Norway, and Sweden call the sovereignty of the queen's political voice into question. Was it always "speaking," as it were, or did it only become audible once the lordship of the king had been compromised? A related question would address the singularity of the queen's voice in this context: whether it was stable and unchanging, or, in contrast, whether it was variable, rising and falling according to the demands of rulership.

The point of departure for this final section acknowledges a debt to Ernst Kantorowicz's work in *The King's Two Bodies*, where he explores the limits of medieval kingship as they are defined by and through the body of the sovereign. The tensions between the royal and the personal self raise intriguing questions about embodiment as a guarantor of lordship; if, in other words, royal authority is conveyed because of the flesh or in spite of it. In applying these concepts to the lives of the Nordic queens, I take Kantorowicz' proposals across the gender line, out of the purview of political theory and jurisprudence and into the realm of cultural self-fashioning. As a consequence I will attempt to expand