FEMALE AUTHORITY ON THE FRONTIER OF CHRISTENDOM: RULERSHIP, PATRONAGE,

DIPLOMACY, AND IDENTITY IN THE LATIN EAST, 1200-1310.

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Abstract

This thesis explores how elite women in the Latin East exerted authority. It contributes to the field of Crusader and Gender Studies as women in the thirteenth century Levant have not previously been researched in a single dedicated study and have received less scholarly attention than women in the previous century. This thesis asks four key research questions. First, how did women exert power? This is explored through a series of thematic chapters, about law, patronage, conflict, and identity, which have all been underrepresented in historiography. Second, was the thirteenth century a period of decline for female power in the Latin East? Third, were examples of powerful women in the Latin East 'exceptional' or part of a wider normalisation of female authority in the region? These questions are answered through the significant variety and number of sources available to evidence this thesis. Charter, narrative, artistic and architectural sources are utilised to demonstrate that female power was not in decline in the thirteenth century Latin East and that powerful women were not unique in this environment. Fourth, did the nature of the Levantine frontier shape the ways in which women could exert power? This thesis connects the evidenced frequency in which women held power to be connected to the nature of the frontier, in which stability was prioritised over the enforcement of gendered performances of authority and autonomy.

Contents

1. Introduction

In 1131, Baldwin II, ruler of the Twelfth Century Latin Kingdom Jerusalem died.[1] He was succeeded by a somewhat unusual coalition, especially by the normal standards of the medieval world. The eldest of his four daughters, Melisende, ascended to the throne alongside her new husband, who was her senior by several years. This man, Fulk of Anjou, had given up his responsibilities over his ancestral comital lands in Anjou, France in order to marry the heiress to Jerusalem.[2] The practicalities of how the couple were supposed to govern together were seemingly not clearly or completely codified when King Baldwin passed away. The joint succession of Melisende and Fulk challenges generally preconceived notions about medieval rulership, and is a starting point from which a number of questions might be asked. How did a Latin Christian, French-speaking couple end up ruling a kingdom in the Middle East? In a world which believed women to be the weaker sex, how did the succession of a female heiress to Jerusalem become an accepted practice, especially in a frontier environment as violent and unstable as the Latin East? To what extent did frontier environments offer opportunities, as well as barriers, to women exerting power?

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[1] Alan V. Murray, *Baldwin of Bourcq: Count of Edessa and King of Jerusalem (1100-1131)* (London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 203-204.

[2] Natasha R. Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), pp. 76-77.

Melisende is a famous and much cited example of medieval queenship, who has attracted considerable historical attention.[3] Her legacy, and that of her granddaughters is significant, but there are many other examples who have not yet been considered in detail. This thesis explores how elite women in the Latin East exerted authority in a later period, as women in the thirteenth century Levant have not previously been researched in a single dedicated study and have received less scholarly attention than women in the previous century. This thesis asks four key research questions. First, how did women exert power? This is explored through a series of thematic chapters, about law, patronage, conflict, and identity, which have all been underrepresented in historiography. Second, was the thirteenth century a period of decline for female power in the Latin East? Third, were examples of powerful women in the Latin East 'exceptional' or part of a wider normalisation of female authority in the region? These questions are answered through the significant variety and number of sources available to evidence this thesis. Charter, narrative, artistic and architectural sources are utilised to demonstrate that female power was not in decline in the thirteenth century Latin East and that powerful women were not unique in this environment. Fourth, did the nature of the Levantine frontier shape the ways in which women could exert power? This thesis aims to connect the evidenced frequency in which women held power to be connected to the nature of the frontier, in which stability was prioritised over the enforcement of gendered performances of authority and autonomy. In order

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[3] Hans Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol 26 (1972), pp.93-182; Jaroslav Folda, 'Melisende of Jerusalem: Queen and Patron of Art and Architecture in the Crusader Kingdom', in *Reassessing the Roles of Women as 'Makers' of Medieval Art and Architecture*, ed. Therese Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2012), pp.429-477; Helen A. Gaudette, 'The Spending Power of a Crusader Queen: Melisende of Jerusalem', in *Women and Wealth in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Theresa Earenfight (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.135-148.

to answer these questions, it is first necessary to understand how the kingdom of Jerusalem was created, and how it was shaped by conflicts and alliances in the first decades of its existence.

Returning to the example of Melisende, her father, Baldwin II, had arrived in the Levant through his participation in the First Crusade.[4] This campaign was launched at the Council of Clermont in November 1095. In issuing the call to support Christians in the East, Pope Urban II was responding to the request for aid made by the Byzantine Emperor, Alexios Komnenos.[5] The so-called 'First Crusade' was led by ambitious Latin Christian, western magnates and noblemen but also featured men women and children inspired by Urban's message to take the cross. Although the crusading army was significantly outnumbered by Turkish and Arab forces in the region, their campaign was surprisingly successful and ended with the siege of Jerusalem in 1099 after which the Holy Land and its surrounding regions entered Christian hands.[6]

The conquered land was parcelled up into separate 'Crusader States' (this is a common historiographical term for the region, rather than what contemporaries used to refer to their environment).[7] These stretched from Asia Minor in the north to the Sinai Peninsula, connecting

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[4] Murray, *Baldwin of Bourcq*, pp. 28-32.

[5] Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), p. 21.

[6] *Ibid.* pp. 64-66.

[7] For more background on 'Crusader States' as a historiographical term see Andrew D Buck, 'Settlement, Identity, and Memory in the Latin East: An Examination of the Term "Crusader States"', *The English Historical Review*, 135.573 (2020), 271-302; Christopher MacEvitt, 'What was Crusader about the Crusader States?', *Al-Masāq*, Vol.30 (2018), pp.317-330.

Asia to North Africa, in the south. The largest of these states was the Kingdom of Jerusalem

(created in 1099, collapsed in 1291). Centred on the Holy City as its capital, it bordered the

Fatimid Caliphate to its south. The kingdom also came to possess an impressive coastline

following further conquests in the twelfth century, including its secondary capitals of Acre and

Tyre. To the kingdom's north was another late addition to the crusaders' portfolio of territories;

the small County of Tripoli (1102-1289) had been conquered in the early twelfth century.[8] Two

Crusader States were established in Anatolia. The Principality of Antioch (1098-1287) was a

controversial creation, largely because it was established on land claimed by the Byzantine

Empire, the very state that the crusaders had set out to aid with its invasion of Asia Minor.[9] The

landlocked and isolated County of Edessa (1098-1150) was the most fragile Crusader State.[10] The

ruling families of these states were greatly interrelated, and the kings of Jerusalem acted as

suzerain lords to the other states during periods of instability or minority rule. The families who

ruled these largely originated from French-speaking regions of Western Europe, aside from

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[8] For more background see Andrew Jotischky, *Crusading and the Crusader States* (Harlow: Pearson/Longman,

2004); Malcolm Barber, *The Crusader States* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012); Nicholas Morton, *The

Crusader States and Their Neighbours: A Military History, 1099-1187* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[9] Thomas S. Asbridge, *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch 1098-1130* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2000),

pp.15-45.

[10] Murray, *Baldwin of Bourcq*, p.40.

Bohemond of Taranto who was a Southern Italian Norman.[11] This meant that not only were the

rulers of these lands a religious minority as Latin Christians, but they were also a linguistic

minority as French or Occitan speakers.

Women in the Latin East

In comparison to some other areas in western Europe the Crusader States seemingly saw a high

rate of female succession. The causes of this were as much by accident as anything else. Just as

the Capetians ruling France had the genetic 'fortune' of consistently producing male heirs from

987 until 1328, the rulers of the kingdom of Jerusalem had what might be interpreted by

contemporaries as the 'misfortune' of producing female heirs on five occasions, despite the

kingdom only existing between 1099 and 1291.[12] It is possible that, as a frontier society

surrounded by hostile polities, the rulers and their leading nobles in the Crusader States faced an

increased risk of death in battle, death from the diseases that ran rampant around military

camps, or even something as simple as a change in diet.[13] Although these destabilising factors

also existed in the West, they were of greater intensity in the Latin East due to the pressures of

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[11] *Ibid,* p.18; Laura K. Morreale and Nicholas L. Paul, 'Introduction', in *The French of Outremer: Communities and Communications in the Crusading Mediterranean* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2018), p.1; Georgios Theotokis, *The Norman Campaigns in the Balkans 1081-1108AD (Martlesham; Boydell & Brewer, 2014),* p.186.

[12] Robert Bartlett, *Blood Royal: Dynastic Politics in Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), p.3

[13] Piers D. Mitchell, *Medicine in the Crusades: Warfare, Wounds and the Medieval Surgeon* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp.1-2.

the frontier and the near-constant warfare that took place in the region. Crucially, the right of

women to inherit property and titles in the Crusader States was protected in the law, and women

ruled as queens regnant with little opposition from the baronial elite.[14]

Five women ruled as queens regnant of Jerusalem.[15] The first, Melisende (r.1131-1152), was the

eldest of the four daughters of Baldwin II. Although he only had daughters, Baldwin did not

remarry on the death of his wife and instead chose to recognise Melisende as his heir. He married

her to Fulk of Anjou with the approval of the barons of the kingdom, and they were crowned as

co-rulers on his death in 1131. Melisende initially struggled to exert power due to the refusal of

her husband to consult her when making decisions.[16] However, baronial opposition to his

behaviour led to their reconciliation and her receiving sovereignty over her kingdom.[17] On his

death in 1143 Melisende continued to rule in her own right, but struggled to retain this

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[14] Sylvia Schein, 'Women in Medieval Colonial Society: The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in the Twelfth Century', in

Gendering the Crusades, eds. Susan Edgington & Sarah Lambert (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp.

140-153.

[15] Sarah Lambert, 'Queen or Consort: Rulership and Politics in the Latin East, 1118-1228', in *Queens and Queenship*

in Medieval Europe: Proceedings of a Conference Held at King's College London April 1995, ed. Anne J. Duggan

(Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997), pp.153-172, at p.153.

[16] Erin Jordan, 'Corporate Monarchy in the Twelfth-Century Kingdom of Jerusalem', *Royal Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1

(2019)*, pp.1-13 at p.2 <ttps://rsj.winchester.ac.uk/articles/10.21039/rsj.171> [accessed 29/11/24].

[17] *Ibid*, pp.7-8.

sovereignty as her son and co-ruler Baldwin III entered adulthood.[18] He eventually forced her to relinquish power following his victory in a civil war in 1152.[19] Melisende's reign influenced how female rule in the Latin East would be perceived with later queens following her example. Her granddaughters, Sibylla (r. 1186-1190) and Isabella I (r. 1190-1205), would both rule as queens regnant following the death of their brother, Baldwin IV. These women are not as prominent in the primary sources from the period as their predecessor Melisende; however, their ability to transmit authority to their husbands was clear. Sibylla was able to elevate her unpopular husband Guy of Lusignan to be king of Jerusalem despite significant opposition from the barons of Jerusalem.[20] Isabella elevated three of her husbands to become rulers of Jerusalem: Conrad of Montferrat in 1190, Henry of Champagne in 1192, and Aimery of Lusignan in 1197.[21] The final two queens regnant of Jerusalem are obscure figures, due to a general lack of primary information that gives any significant details regarding their personality and agency. The mother and daughter, Maria (r. 1205-1212) and Isabella II (r. 1212-1228) transferred power to their husbands (John of Brienne and Frederick II respectively). This demonstrates how the rules around female regnal agency had been formalised by this point in the thirteenth century. The lack of dedicated scholarship concerning these two queens demonstrate how they have been generally regarded as having little power and agency. The fact that they both died as very young women

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[18] *Ibid*, p.10.

[19] Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land,* pp.186-187.

[20] Helen J. Nicholson, *Sybil, Queen of Jerusalem 1186-1190* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022), pp.117-123.

[21] Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land,* pp.80-83.

likely means that they had not yet matured to their full potential and could not have exerted influence on a similar level to their predecessors. The other Crusader States did not see the same frequency of female succession but were on occasion ruled by women. Constance ruled the principality of Antioch between 1130 and 1163.[22] Lucia of Tripoli did initially struggle to receive recognition by the nobility of Tripoli but did briefly rule as its countess before the city's fall to the Mamluks in 1289.[23]   At a baronial level, female succession was commonplace and heavily legislated as a result.[24]

The Latin East in the Thirteenth Century

At the beginning of the period covered in this thesis (1200-1310) the outlook for the Crusader States was mixed. 1187 had been a traumatic year for the Franks, having lost disastrously to Saladin at the battle of Hattin after which Jerusalem and almost the entire remainder of the kingdom fell to his forces. The Third Crusade (1189-1192) did not achieve its intended goal of recapturing the Holy City but made considerable territorial gains, especially along the coastline,

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[22] Alan V. Murray, 'Constance, Princess of Antioch (1130-1164): Ancestry, Marriages and Family', *Anglo-Norman Studies XXXVIII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 2015* (2016), pp.81-96, at pp.81-82.

[23] Jesse W. Izzo, 'The Templar of Tyre, the Angevin Regime at Acre (1277-86), and Anti-Foreign Sentiment in Frankish Syria', in *Crusades,* Vol.19, (2021), pp.127-141, at pp.140-141.

[24] Peter W. Edbury, 'Women and the Customs of the High Court of Jerusalem According to John of Ibelin', in *Chemins d'outre-mer: Études d'histoire sur la Méditerranée médiévale offertes à Michel Balard*, ed. Damien Coulon and others (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 2004), , pp. 285–92 <https://books.openedition.org/psorbonne/3943?lang=en> [accessed 11/11/24].

which made the preservation of some semblance of the kingdom, based about the port of Acre, viable.[25] The Fourth Crusade (1202-1204), intended for Jerusalem, was redirected to conquer Constantinople; this led to the creation of the short-lived Latin Empire of Constantinople (1204-1261) and earned the lasting enmity of the Byzantine Empire, one of the few Christian lands in proximity to the Crusader States.[26] The attempts of the Fifth Crusade (1217-1221) to capture the city of Jerusalem also failed, as crusading activity was increasingly focused on Egypt.[27] The Sixth Crusade (1227-1229) did result in the return of Jerusalem through the diplomacy of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II.[28] However, his rule exacerbated baronial attitudes towards the involvement of westerners in the affairs of Outremer began to grate on the Franks resident in the region as they felt their unique customs and traditions were being ignored. This led to a period of civil conflict with highly damaging consequences for the Latins in the East. The War of the Lombards was fought between 1228 and 1243 by Frederick II's representatives in the Latin East and anti-imperial forces. The result was the expulsion of the emperor's regents and a return to the rule of regents and kings resident in the Latin East.[29] Further internal conflicts destabilised the region further, with the War of St. Sabas between the Genoese and Venetians lasting from

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[25] Thomas Asbridge, *The Crusades: The War for the Holy Land* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2010), p.513.

[26] Peter Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean 1204-1500* (London: Longman, 1995), pp.3-5.

[27] Riley-Smith, *The* Crusades, pp.202-205.

[28] *Ibid,* pp.205-207.

[29] David Jacoby, 'The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Collapse of Hohenstaufen Power in the Levant', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* vol.40 (1986), pp.83-101, at pp.83-84.

1256 to 1270 and in Tripoli, wars between its ruling dynasty and the Embriaco family between 1258 and 1287. Amongst these internal divisions, the Crusader States faced increased pressures on their borders by the surrounding Mamluk and Mongol empires. In 1244 Jerusalem fell to the Khwarazmians and would never again return to Christian rule. The cities of Antioch and Tripoli fell to the Mamluks in 1268 and 1289 respectively. The second capital of the kingdom of Jerusalem, Acre, was conquered by the Mamluks in 1291 which ended Christian rule on the Levantine mainland.[30] The heir to the kingdom, Henry II continued to identify himself as the king of Jerusalem, but in reality, he ruled only the island-kingdom of Cyprus.[31] Maintaining his authority was difficult as Cyprus was squeezed between the competing influences of Angevin Naples, Aragonese Sicily, and the Italian merchant republics.[32] The dynastic conflict in Cyprus between 1306 and 1310, beginning with Henry's suspension from power and ending with his restoration, demonstrated the kingdom's vulnerability to its large nobility frustrated by an incompetent king, as well as the island's lack of abundant resources and the lack of aid from Western Christendom.[33]

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[30] Jean Richard, *The Crusades c.1071-c.1291,* trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.329.

[31] Peter W. Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p.108.

[32] *Ibid*, pp.102-107.

[33] *Ibid*, p.113.

Literature Review

Women in the Latin East

Historiography with a specific focus on women in the Latin East began in earnest in the 1970s, following contemporary trends in academic Women's History. Hans E. Mayer's 1978 benchmark study of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem provided immense detail on the political contexts for her reign, but he did not differentiate between Melisende's status as queen regnant to the usual power held by a queen consort. He described Melisende as the 'Queen Mother' following Fulk's death.[34] The chronicler William of Tyre, is more ambiguous regarding Melisende's status. On one hand, he does not mark the queen's death with an end to the book like he did for her father Baldwin I or sons Baldwin III and Amalric, suggesting that he did differentiate between Melisende and the men that ruled Jerusalem.[35] However he is also broadly sympathetic to her attempts to defend her sovereignty. The clergy are portrayed as supporting Melisende as her son Baldwin III attacked her citadel in Jerusalem, as the Patriarch Fulcher acted as a peacemaker and 'admonished him [Baldwin III] to desist from his wicked project, to abide by the terms of the agreement, and to suffer his mother to rest in peace.'[36] Baldwin III is portrayed by William as unwisely yielding to the poor influence of friends, in contrast to 'the patriarch and other wise men who desired peace for the kingdom' and encouraged him to listen to his mother.' William

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[34] Hans E. Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende', p.116; Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land*, pp.186-187; Lambert, 'Queen or Consort', pp.155-157.

[35] William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. by Emily Atwater Babcock and August Charles Krey, 2 vols (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), pp.45-47, 283, 291, 293-295, 395-396.

[36] *Ibid,* p.205-206.

of Tyre's portrayal of Melisende, and his general views towards political women, is further complicated by his antagonistic depiction of Melisende's sister Alice, who governed as regent of Antioch.[37] Alice was criticised as 'extremely malicious and wily', who with 'wicked intentions' schemed to rob her own daughter of the principality of Antioch so she could rule the land herself. This is particularly startling when compared to his glowing description of Melisende who arguably engaged in very similar behaviour.[38] Rather than malicious, wily', and wicked, Melisende was elulogised by William as a 'woman of unusual wisdom' who 'governed the kingdom with strength surpassing that of most women.' Although William likely felt pressure to write a positive assessment of Melisende as he was in the employ of her son King Amalric as chronicler and tutor to the future Baldwin IV, his admiration for the queen could easily have been genuine due to the extent to which the clergy in general held her in high regard.[39] He was not, therefore, universally approving of female rule, but held a positive view of Melisende's rule due to her personal qualities and capacity to unify the kingdom, even if this effort was ultimately unsuccessful.

In his 1978 work, Mayer does not reflect the complexity shown in William of Tyre's account of Melisende's status. Fundamentally he regarded Melisende's efforts to retain sovereignty of Jerusalem as illegitimate following her son's entry into his majority. Mayer's conception of Melisende's status therefore significantly shaped his approach to the 1152 civil war between Melisende and her son Baldwin III. Whereas William of Tyre praises Melisende for her wisdom and depicts Baldwin III as immature and insecure, Mayer depicted the queen's efforts to maintain

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[37] *Ibid*, p.53-54.
[38] *Ibid*, p.283.
[39] *Ibid,* pp.13-14.

her rule over Jerusalem very differently, writing that had Melisende 'been wise, she would have taken this opportunity to withdraw honourably and with dignity...[but] her thirst for power was greater than her wisdom.'[40] Mayer argued that 'under normal circumstances' her 'regency' would have ended when Baldwin III became fifteen in 1145.[41] Mayer's approach to Melisende's status suggests that he made little distinction between the powers and limitations of the medieval queen regnant and queen consort. This pattern can also be seen in Bernard Hamilton's 1978 article surveying the 'queens of Jerusalem', which includes both the queens regnant and the queen consorts. In this work, which provides an overview of the queens of Jerusalem between 1100 and 1190, Hamilton recognised that Melisende was queen regnant rather than regent following Fulk's death, and also disagreed with Mayer's criticism of Melisende for refusing to relinquish her control of the realm to her son.[42] However, in spite of this recognition of the distinct nature of Melisende's power, by discussing her and the queen regnant Sibylla of Jerusalem alongside the consorts of the male rulers of the kingdom, the work was not particularly focused in its attempts to codify female regnal power, or in its summary of the average power of a queen consort in the region.

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[40] Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', p. 109.

[41] *Ibid*, p. 114.

[42] Bernard Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States: The Queens of Jerusalem (1100-1190)', in *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek Baker and Rosalind M. Hill (Oxford: Ecclesiastical History Society, 1978) pp. 143-174, at p. 153.

For 'brevity', Hamilton only covered the queens of Jerusalem during the 'First Kingdom'. This period began with the conquest of Jerusalem in 1099 and continued until the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin in 1187.[43] Although this work by Hamilton had to be relatively brief as it was an article, many works that explore women in the Latin East have also confined themselves to the 'First Kingdom.' The majority of current scholarship is focused on Queen Melisende of Jerusalem who, along with her husband and son, reigned for a significant period in the Latin Kingdom during the mid-twelfth century. This is partly because of the abundance of primary evidence from the period prior to 1187, including the detailed chronicle of William of Tyre and the survival of charter and material evidence detailing acts of patronage conducted by Melisende. However, some works have ventured beyond this limitation. The first was Sarah Lambert's 1997 chapter on the queens regnant of Jerusalem. In this work, Lambert contrasted the evidence of Melisende and Sibylla acting with sovereign agency with the lack of sources recording independent regnal behaviour by their female successors, Isabella I, Maria, and Isabella II. Lambert connects this decrease in visible agency with the advent of written legal practices, abundant in the thirteenth century Latin East, that she believed restricted the power of the queen regnant, who merely legitimised rather than practically abetted the rule of their male consort. By including a wider pool of case studies of female rule across a longer period, Lambert was able to make a more extensive conclusion about the nature of female agency in the Latin East.[44] Alternatively, as shown in the 2007 work of Natasha Hodgson, broader conclusions can be drawn from the focused study of Latin Eastern

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[43] *Ibid,* p. 143.

[44] Lambert, 'Queen or Consort', pp. 153-169.

women in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in historical narratives, when compared to the wider context of women and crusading. This is achieved by Hodgson looking beyond the queens regnant of Jerusalem, and considering a wider pool of women involved in the politics and crusading landscape of western Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Hodgson utilised practices seen in the study of queenship to gather a comprehensive understanding of elite women within this context. The positionality of women in relation to men, the usual holders of power in the medieval world, is used as a means through which to explore female power. Understanding how the 'life-cycle' status of these women as daughters, mothers, and widows created a broader knowledge of how identity shaped power, and how this power would transform across a lifetime as the familial identity of women shifted and evolved. Hodgson's work examined both twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but was also constrained by focusing on women's crusading activities in the broader European context, and therefore there is still no detailed and dedicated work that broadly encapsulates how women exerted power in the Latin East for the thirteenth century.[45] There is, therefore, space in the field for a work that focuses on elite women resident in the Latin East during the thirteenth century, and one that focuses on realms of power outside a traditional crusading context. This thesis seeks to address this gap in the scholarship.

The Latin East also offers unique opportunities to explore intermarriage between different cultures. In his original study. Bernard Hamilton wrote that Morphia of Melitene, the Armenian

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[45] Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land,* pp.5-6.

consort of Baldwin II of Jerusalem 'took no part in the public life of the kingdom', 'perhaps as a result of the oriental environment in which she had grown up'.[46] It is interesting that he highlighted Morphia's 'oriental' origin as the reason for her lack of involvement in 'public life.' This seems to contradict how the majority of modern historians approach the power and influence of Eastern Christian women in the region subsequently. Byzantine women traditionally had a very visible, public role in court politics. This topic has been the subject of multiple works, but the first comprehensive study was not published until 1994.[47] Few works exist even today concerning medieval Armenian women examined within their own contexts, although they have been explored in relation to crusaders and settlement in the Latin East.[48] David Zakarian and Anthony Eastwood have published separate works about medieval Armenian women, but this is

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[46] Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States', p.148.

[47] Lynda Garland*, Women and Power in Byzantium AD 527-1204* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1999); Barbara Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium: 1025-1204; Power, Patronage and Ideology* (New York: Longman, 1999); Leonara Neville, *Byzantine Gender* (York: Arc Humanities Press, 2019); Donald M. Nicol, *The Byzantine Lady: Ten Portraits 1250-1500* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Kathryn M. Ringrose, 'Women and Power at the Byzantine Court', in *Servants of the Dynasty: Palace Women in World History*, ed. Anne Walthall (Oakland: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 81–95.

[48] Natasha Hodgson, 'Conflict and Cohabitation: Marriage and diplomacy between Latins and Cilician Armenians, c.1097-1253', in *The crusades and the Near East: cultural histories*, ed. Conor Kostick (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), pp.83-106.

a very recent development in the historiography of the medieval Levant.[49] This demonstrates that the wider field has moved on considerably from the 1970s when Hamilton first wrote his article, and our understanding of the power accessible to Eastern Christian women is now widely appreciated in Crusader Studies. This thesis will add to continuing work on Eastern Christian women within the broader Latin East, and will greatly improve the general quality of works on Frankish women in the region, as some of the women examined were often of mixed cultural and religious heritage. Furthermore, it is reasonable to presume that the interaction between Franks and Eastern Christians in the early years of the Crusader States influenced how female power developed within the region. Taef El-Azhari argued that the power held by women in the Islamic world was influenced by the examples of the queens regnant of Jerusalem. This potential transmission of legal and cultural acceptance of female power is not frequently discussed in scholarship of gender in the Latin East, and is a space that needs further investigation and development.[50]

There has been a lack of individual, dedicated studies to female rulers in the Latin East. In fairness, there has also been a lack of works regarding male rulers of Jerusalem until recently, with publications under Routledge's Rulers of the Latin East series (although Bernard Hamilton's

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[49] David Zakarian, *Women, Too, Were Blessed: The Portrayal of Women in Early Christian Armenian Texts* (Leiden: Brill, 2021); Antony Eastwood, *Tamta's World: The Life and Encounters of a Medieval Noblewoman from the Middle East to Mongolia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

[50] Taef El-Azhari, *Queens, Eunuchs and Concubines in Islamic History, 661-1257* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), pp. 297-98.

monograph on Baldwin IV of Jerusalem is an outlier here, having first been published in 2000).[51]

This lack of interest is likely due to a lack of a national narrative. For example, Edward I of England

is a figure that shaped modern Britain, whereas significant figures in the history of the Latin East,

such as King Amalric of Jerusalem, do not contribute to a similar national narrative. Where studies

regarding singular women do exist, they provide significant insight into the experiences of

women in the Latin East. Helen Nicholson's 2022 work on Sibylla of Jerusalem presents a

compelling insight into a female ruler that fits both the stereotypical archetype of a medieval

woman as a devoted mother and wife, but also subverts these expectations through several

occasional and significant instances of personal agency. Bernard Hamilton's works on Agnes of

Courtenay and Alice of Champagne show a similar state of affairs.[52] Women as archetypes, until

they subvert expectations and for a brief moment become extremely powerful. When explored

alone, these examples can seem to be extraordinary instances happening to rather ordinary

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[51] Susan B. Edgington, *Baldwin I of Jerusalem, 1100-1118* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019); Bernard Hamilton, *The Leper King and His Heirs: Baldwin IV and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Simon John, *Godfrey of Bouillon: Duke of Lower Lotharingia, Ruler of Latin Jerusalem* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019); Kevin James Lewis, *The Counts of Tripoli and Lebanon in the Twelfth Century: Sons of Saint-Gilles* (Abingdon; Routledge, 2017); Murray, *Baldwin of Bourcq*; Helen J. Nicholson, *Sybil, Queen of Jerusalem* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2023).

[52] Bernard Hamilton, 'The Titular Nobility of the Latin East: The Case of Agnes of Courtenay', in *Crusade and Settlement: Papers Read at the First Conference for the Society for the Study of Crusades and the Latin East and Presented to R.C*, ed. P. W. Edbury (Cardiff: University of Cardiff Press, 1985), pp.197-203; Bernard Hamilton, 'Queen Alice of Cyprus', in *The Crusader World*, ed. Adrian J. Boas (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), pp. 225–40

women amongst the Latin elite. When explored together, we see a much wider picture of female power in the region. We can also ask, how many times does the exceptional have to replace the ordinary, for the exceptional to become ordinary?

Queenship

While in wider medieval historiography queen consorts are the most prominent women studied, in the Latin East these women seem to have a quieter presence, which is unusual. Of all the queen consorts of Jerusalem, Morphia of Melitene, the wife of Baldwin II is among the most prominent in scholarship due to her time as regent of Jerusalem and her importance in the life of her more famous daughter Melisende.[53] However, queen consorts that held significant power in a more traditional sense, akin to their counterparts in mainland medieval Europe, have not received significant scholarly attention. This includes primarily Isabella of Ibelin, the queen of Hugh III of Cyprus and Jerusalem, and who exerted great authority as the mother to Henry II of Jerusalem and Cyprus during a period of political instability. There are several reasons for this lack of prominence in historiography. For most of medieval Europe, the rule of women who successfully inherited queenship was a relative rarity, though perhaps noble heiresses acted more regularly

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[53] See Natasha Hodgson and Amy Fuller 'Introduction' in *Religion and Conflict in Medieval and Early Modern Worlds: Identities, Communities and Authorities*, eds. Natasha Hodgson, Amy Fuller, John McCallum & Nicholas Morton (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), pp. 1-13.

as lords. For this reason, queen consorts were the most frequent example of female power to be studied by historians. In the Latin East the relative commonality of women governing in their own name through inheritance meant that these women have received the lion's share of historiographical attention. The regular succession of minors in the kingdom of Jerusalem also made the queen consort a relatively uncommon figure. With the roles played by queens within families being the primary concern of many works about medieval women, motherhood and the ways in which women-regents negotiated power often dominates discussion. As the rulers of the various Crusader States seem to have struggled to produce male heirs, finding comparable examples of queens-regent ruling as mothers with male sons is more difficult. That is not to say that scholarship on Western European 'queenship' is not relevant to the Latin East. Although broadly underdeveloped in the region's context, there are general themes within Queenship Studies which offer beneficial points of comparison when evaluating female power in the region. Many of the various roles carried out by queen consorts in the West are also seen in the Latin East where women acted as diplomats, patrons, intercessors, and advisors. Fruitful comparisons can be drawn to understand how these women matched and surpassed general expectations of their gender during their lifetime.

Gaps in the Historiography – The Frontier and Female 'Exceptionalism' in the Thirteenth Century

This chapter has already indicated that there is a significant gap in the historiography of the Latin East regarding the rule of women in the thirteenth century. Certain personalities have been investigated by historians with significant focus, and have been covered in broader works that

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address this period more generally in crusading history. However, compared to the abundant

work that has been published, and continues to be published, on the key female figures, mainly

queens, of the twelfth century there is very little written on aristocratic Latin women in the

thirteenth century. This thesis aims to offer a broadly scoped investigation into how elite women

at this time exerted agency and power. As the research chapters demonstrate, there are plenty

of case studies available that demonstrate the lives of elite women living in this region were

multifaceted, and often incorporated a surprising degree of agency. The reluctance of historians

to write about women in this period so far can be attributed in part to the comparative lack of

complete, characterful narratives that emerge in the narrative evidence for the twelfth century.

Instead, most historians thus far have collated brief details of biographies which are compiled

and normally used comparatively in order to create a wider, broader image of how the

experiences of elite women were shaped by the environment of the frontier.

As a result of this lack of detailed focus, in the broader historiography of medieval women, the

thirteenth century has often been interpreted as a period of decline for female power in Europe.

This idea originated with the influential McNamara-Wemple thesis, which argued that the

introduction of primogeniture and the increasing formalised bureaucracy of the thirteenth

century limited the significant power that women had held in the previous century through

inheritance of land and familial connections.[54] Historians of the Latin East have also regarded the

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[54] Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne Wemple, 'The Power of Women through the Family in Medieval Europe, 500-

1100', *Feminist Studies*, Vol.1.3, No.4 (1973), pp.26–41; Jo Ann McNamara and Suzanne F. Wemple, 'Women and

thirteenth century as a period of decline for the queens regnant of Jerusalem, as the later queens regnant of Jerusalem left little evidence recording their personal agency and political interventions.[55] This thesis contends that this theory of decline is not applicable in regards to the queens regnant of Jerusalem, nor is representative of the wider status of women in the Latin East during this same period. Studies of the thirteenth century queens of Jerusalem have not adequately considered the impact that their youth, frequent pregnancies, and early deaths had on their ability to exert power. They are not robust case studies on which to base sweeping assessments of the status of women within this context. This thesis will utilise an broader pool of elite women from the medieval Latin East in order to explore how they exerted authority, including female regents and vassals, queens consort, and women that held land and wealth. Rather than a period of decline, this thesis demonstrates powerful women were not exceptional in this region during the thirteenth century and as a result the model of decline is not applicable.

The McNamara-Wemple thesis has also been identified by historians of the 'Beyond Exceptionalism Movement' as an unhelpful lens through which to view the medieval period due to its reliance on the separation of public and private power.[56] The 'Beyond Exceptionalism'

Power through the Family Revisited', in *Gendering the Master Narrative*, ed. Mary C. Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski, 2003, pp. 17–30.

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[56] For an overview, see Heather J. Tanner, Laura L. Gathigan and Lois Huneycutt, 'Introduction', in *Medieval Elite Women and the Exercise of Power, 1100-1400: Moving Beyond the Exceptionalist Debate*, ed. Heather J. Tanner (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019) pp. 1-18.

argument contends that the 'division of activities into public and private spheres...belies medieval practices.' Family life was not a private space in which to yield influence in a monarchical system. Power, as Theresa Earenfight writes, regardless of its categorisation as 'hard', 'soft', 'charismatic', 'diplomatic', 'familial', is power. Earenfight argues that 'queens are only exceptions when the category of power is predicated on gender as the determinant.'[57] Although the subject of this thesis is an exploration of women in the thirteenth century through a gendered lens, this sentiment is a reminder of the importance of looking outside of gender as a considered factor. It is easy to consistently state upon reading the case studies of women in the Latin East that they were powerful considering they were female, even if the number of cases suggest that women did not have such a difficult time holding and maintaining power as we may presume. In her chapter in the same volume, Erin L. Jordan also stresses the importance of looking beyond gender when analysing the lives of medieval women. Writing of the experiences the mother and daughter Alice and Constance of Antioch had in ruling over the principality, Jordan argues that focusing 'myopically' on gender as an impact on women's power 'fails to appreciate the array of factors', such as diplomacy and religion, that also impacted the 'ability of individuals, men and women, to exercise authority.'[58]

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[57] Theresa Earenfight, 'Medieval Queenship', *History Compass*, Vol.15, No.3 (2017) <https://compass.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/hic3.12372> [accessed 11/11/24].

[58] Erin L. Jordan, 'Women of Antioch: Power, Authority, and Queenship in the Latin East', in *Medieval Elite Women and the Exercise of Power 1100-1400: Moving Beyond the Exceptionalist Debate*, ed. Heather J. Tanner (Columbus: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), pp.225-246.

The objective of the 'Beyond Exceptionalism Movement' is to demonstrate how the 'acceptance of female public agency, authority, and power' was a 'non-story' in medieval society.[59] Although patriarchy remained dominant within the society, the wielding of power by women was not an 'exceptional' circumstance. The movement originated with the frustration felt by the leaders of the project when references were continually made regarding powerful medieval women being 'exceptional', despite the abundance of works produced that surely suggest that powerful women were a relative commonality in the period. The key question asked by the work is a useful one for the subject of this thesis: 'How many "exceptional" women in positions of authority does it take before powerful elite women become the rule?'.[60] For the Latin East, the historiographical focus on Melisende of Jerusalem has contributed to this belief that only exceptional women wielded power. It is common to hear the refrain that these women at the top of the medieval social pyramid fought hard to maintain and exert their power, while their unassuming contemporaries passively received the scraps of power they left behind. While character and individual circumstance are important factors in shaping the political lives of medieval women, this thesis seeks to demonstrate that, to a certain extent, the entire fabric of Frankish society in the Latin East encouraged and maintained the agency and power of women, even going as far as enshrining it in law as a response to the uncertainty of the frontier environment.

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[59] Tanner, Gathigan, and Huneycutt, 'Introduction', p.15.

[60] *Ibid.*p.2.

The experience of women in the frontier environment is not a subject frequently discussed in medieval historiography. The medieval frontier has attracted considerable attention in various works in the last four decades or so, yet none of these volumes dedicate their attention to the responsibilities and experiences of the women who lived on the frontiers of Europe.[61] One of the few works to explicitly link the experiences of medieval women to their life in a frontier environment is an article by Emma Cavell.[62] This work explores the lives of aristocratic widows living on the medieval frontier between England and Wales. Cavell wrote of the Welsh frontier being 'traditionally...seen as a man's world – shaped by men, for men...' She argued that the importance of maintaining the integrity of the military frontier impacted the allotment of dower lands, as widows were not given their husband's most significant estates. Cavell also connected the widow's status as 'an agent of continuity...during a protracted minority' as being especially valuable in such a culturally complex region as the frontier was, being both Welsh and English. The frontier did, however, provide opportunities for women, as widows held 'prominent roles in the maintenance of frontier security.' Cavell ultimately concluded that the 'militarised zone cannot...be fully understood without the inclusion of the female members of aristocratic society.'[63] The connections made by Cavell concerning women and the frontier environment

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[61] See for example Robert I. Burns, 'The Significance of the Frontier in the Middle Ages', in *Medieval Frontier Societies*, ed. Robert Bartlett and Angus MacKay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 307–30.

[62] Emma Cavell, 'Aristocratic Widows and the Medieval Welsh Frontier: The Shropshire Evidence', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol.17 (2007), pp. 57-82.

[63] *Ibid,* pp.81-82.

bear significant commonality to the female experience described in the historiography of the Latin East, although these works have not utilised the same direct focus on how the frontier shaped the exertion of power and agency by women. This thesis seeks to explore this connection more closely, by explicitly linking the character of the Levantine frontier to the frequency with which powerful women emerged in the region.

Key Questions

Given the fractured political and military circumstances of Latin settlement in the East during the thirteenth century, this thesis has set out to address several key questions relating to women, power and authority in the region. First, was the thirteenth century a period of declining political prominence and personal authority for women in the Latin East? The study of elite women in the Frankish Levant has largely focused on the reigns of the queens regnant of Jerusalem. Primary sources depict the twelfth-century queens of Jerusalem like Melisende and Sibylla wielding considerable power and authority, but the queens regnant of the thirteenth century are so underrepresented in contemporary sources that it has been posited that this absence of evidence regarding their personal authority meant that this was a period of decline for female regnal power in the Latin East. Sarah Lambert argued that:

> '…the narrative accounts reveal a progressive diminution of the idea of queenship, from
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> Melisende's transcendence of the role expected of her, as constructed by William of Tyre,

through the by-passing of Sibylla in favour of her son, to the acceptance of Isabella as queen, and the repeated manipulation of the kingship through control by the choice of husband.'[64]

Furthermore, Lambert argued that as 'generations found it impossible to exclude women from the throne…they excluded women more and more from political activity, through control of their marriages.' Natasha Hodgson highlighted Maria and Isabella II as particularly clear examples of women having reduced personal authority and sovereignty in the politics of the thirteenth century kingdom of Jerusalem. However, Hodgson caveated this by suggesting that their youth was a bigger factor in their lack of power rather than wider structural changes in the kingdom of Jerusalem:

> 'they [Maria and Isabella II] did not live long enough to mature into the political life of the Latin East…[having] survived only scant years after their nominal transition into adulthood through marriage, and although they performed their dynastic duty by continuing the royal line, they scarcely drew the attention of historical narratives.'[65]

The five queens regnant of Jerusalem are significant figures, but they are a small group upon which to base the claim that the thirteenth century was a period of decline for women in the region. When the relatively abundant group of elite Latin noblewomen in the Crusader States are studied, the thirteenth century does not appear to be a century of decline, but rather a period of transformation for female power.

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[64] Lambert, 'Queen or Consort', pp.168-169.
[65] Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land,* p.83.

A second key question to be addressed by this thesis is whether the frontier environment of the Latin East significantly impacted on the ways in which women could wield power? In this thesis, the Latin East is designated as a frontier environment for two reasons. First, the region was situated on the boundaries of Christian and Islamic polities. The Iberian Peninsula in this same period can be seen as another frontier environment for similar reasons, although it too had its own legacies of religious and cultural interaction based on centuries of co-existence. Second, the region saw near-constant conflict because of the expansionist desires of the Latin rulers of the Crusader States and new crusading arrivals, juxtaposed against their vulnerability in being surrounded by mostly hostile neighbours. Even in periods of relative peace, psychologically, the Latin population of the Crusader States and commentators in the West continually feared their imminent destruction, emphasised in successive calls circulating in the West for aid to the Holy Land.[66] The eventual collapse of the states in the thirteenth century was a shocking, but long foreseen, consequence of their weakening power in the face of a strengthening threat from their Mamluk neighbours. It is true that many regions of medieval Europe saw frequent conflict and sat on the boundaries alongside cultures very different to their own. However, the significant varieties of cultures, languages, ethnicities, and diverse religious practices in an area venerated

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[66] See for example Jonathan Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land: Relations between the Latin East and the West, 1119-1187* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996); Thomas W. Smith, *Curia and Crusade: Pope Honorius III and the Recovery of the Holy Land 1216-1227* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2017).

by three different monotheistic religions shaped the Latin East into a fairly unique environment in the medieval period.

The fact that this was a frontier environment also impacted the lives of women in the Levant. There were significant personal risks and danger to women living in the region. Increased conflict meant that women were more likely to be captured or killed in sieges or by hostile armies when traveling. Even if they were not impacted directly by personal involvement in wars, it was common for women in the Latin East to marry several times in their lifetime as a result of the deaths of men in battle or of illness. The need for fighting men to provide feudal service to a lord for land also meant that female heiresses were obliged to marry. As a vassal, a woman still had to arrange the feudal service from the locality for which they had responsibility, and they sometimes had to provide military leadership even though society deemed them unfit to fight on a battlefield. The frontier environment also provided opportunities for women. Political stability and continuity in lordship within noble families was valued, as periods of instability left the region more vulnerable to attack from its neighbouring enemies. As a result, the feudal inheritance and regnal succession of women was tolerated and supported as a means of ensuring dynastic continuity and preferred to the upheavals of troubled interregnums. This desire for stability meant that posts that were usually elective, such as regent of Jerusalem or constable of Tripoli, became hereditary in the Latin East and this meant women had more opportunities to access these sources of authority.

The third key question considered in this thesis regards the agency of women in the case studies of female power selected for in-depth study. Frequently both primary and secondary sources draw readers' attention to remarkable or highly able women. This however raises the question: do these case studies show individual, 'exceptional' instances of women holding significant power, or do they suggest a wider pattern of female agency across the region? The drive to answer this question in part prompted the decision to cast the net wider than the queens regnant of Jerusalem in this thesis. These women were for the most part perceived to have held powers by right of their birth, and these powers were somewhat formulaic in nature. By the thirteenth century, these powers were largely understood to revolve around consenting to the decisions of their male co-rulers. However, by studying the lives of women in the elite groups of the Latin East more generally, we can see that there was significant variety in the ways they exerted authority and power. Ecclesiastical evidence, such as papal bulls, shows how disenfranchised and disadvantaged women could utilise the Church courts in property disputes in order to gain political support and sometimes win back what was rightfully theirs. This thesis will demonstrate that women held great economic influence, funding religious institutions and contributing to the financial health of the region. It will also explore how in the law women were treated akin to their male counterparts, with protected inheritance rights and the ability to access legal aid in the courts. Narrative chronicle evidence will be brought in to support charter evidence in showing how women governed as regents and vassals in their own right, with a relative degree of tolerance, acceptance, and even approval from their peers. Their activities testify to the impressive education of many Latin women as they were prepared to hold power during their lifetimes as governors and landowners. In summary, this thesis will argue that in the Latin East in

the thirteenth century, we see an environment structured around the empowerment of women which enabled them to engage in a wider range of roles to a much greater extent than seen elsewhere in medieval Europe.

Thesis Structure

In order to facilitate its exploration of these key questions, this thesis is structured into four thematic chapters. The first investigates what rights women held in the legal practices of the Latin East, with a particular focus on the kingdom of Jerusalem. It tracks the changes in the treatment of women from the twelfth to thirteenth century as legal practices became more codified through the production of legal treatises. The chapter seeks to assess if women held similar rights to men in the law, and how these customs in practice shaped their lives. In addition to the High Court of Jerusalem, two other fields of the law are investigated. The practice of hereditary regencies found across the Latin East is investigated as a source of female power, and its likely influence on the unusual appointment of a female constable in Tripoli. The contradictory influence of canon law and the ecclesiastical courts is also explored as a place that sought to protect women and their children, often against the interests of male lords.

The second chapter explores Eastern Frankish identity, a concept that has appeared in historiography fairly frequently.[67] It questions who is excluded from it, and from the case study of Lucia of Tripoli we see that for female heiresses, marriage to a male outsider could shift their own reception as an insider in the Latin East. The chapter further explores the idea that the receptiveness that the baronial elite of the region held towards male outsiders was complicated. On the one hand, the arms and resources of newcomers were appreciated and integral for the survival of the Crusader States. On the other hand, their activities in the region were often suspected as being motivated by their own personal desire for gain, or lack of appreciation for long term strategies which went against the interests of the local elite. Such men were generally unpopular for much of their reign if they became king, or when they were offered lordships that infringed on the rights of local barons. The response to them was often violent. Female outsiders who arrived in the East, as seen in the regencies of women in Tripoli and in the tribulations experienced by the Armenian lady of Tyre, Zabel, were often unpopular but they were largely protected from violence. In part this was because female outsiders were shielded by their gender, and therefore their power and influence was largely undervalued. In comparison, male counterparts posed more of a threat and their power and ambition could be overvalued and feared. 'Insider' status, held by individuals of eastern Frankish culture who were born within elite society in Outremer, could help women to gain power as they were trusted to represent the interests of the baronial elite and could draw from different patronage networks. This chapter

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[67] For an insight into Eastern Frankish identity in the twelfth century, see Christopher MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009).

explores how, for the majority of women, their legal and political identity could transform across a lifetime, in comparison to that of men in a similar position, whose identities seemed to be more fixed and reliant on traditional opportunities for advancement.

The third chapter explores the roles women played during periods of conflict in the Latin East. The main case study for the chapter is the dynastic conflict that engulfed the kingdom of Cyprus between 1306-1310, and its inclusion in the *Chronicle of Amadi*.[68] The crucial roles that women played as actors and negotiators in this conflict is explored through the experiences of Isabella of Ibelin as she tried to calm tensions between her sons. We also see how women could participate in political conflict, as Lady Zabel of Tyre played an instrumental role in bringing about the imprisonment of King Henry II of Cyprus. In addition to this main case study, the role of Alice of Champagne in legitimising the conquest of Tyre during her regency of Jerusalem will be assessed, as will the treaties of mutual defence signed by female vassals with their Muslim neighbours. This chapter seeks to centre women in the history of political and military conflict, which has previously been regarded as a predominantly masculine domain of power. In a region as fraught with violence as the Latin East, and in a period which, as previously mentioned, saw the ultimate destruction of the Crusader States, women could play central roles in generating, leading, negotiating and resolving these conflicts which were a regular feature of the frontier environment in which they resided.

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[68] *The Chronicle of Amadi*, trans. Nicholas Coureas and Peter W. Edbury (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2015). Henceforth *Chronicle of Amadi*.

The fourth chapter analyses charter evidence to show how women in the Latin East held and managed diverse portfolios of property. Through the purchase and sale of land, and donations to religious institutions, women contributed greatly to the finances and economic stability of the region. The legal principle which required relatives to grant their consent for sales and donations in the Latin East will be discussed in order to demonstrate how inheritance rights for women were protected in the law. This chapter also explores how the sale of substantial property by women could alter the balance of power in the kingdom of Jerusalem, as seen in the sale of Beatrix of Courtenay's estate on her marriage. Patronage as an expression of religious and cultural identity is also explored as the wealth of mixed-heritage women, such as Melisende of Jerusalem and Alice of Champagne, exercised in favour of both Latin Christian and Eastern Christian churches. The tolerance and support of diverse religious devotion, especially as demonstrated by elite female figures in the Latin East, has been little discussed in the existing historiography and this chapter will raise awareness about the ways in which complex religious identities were expressed in the Latin East.

Primary Sources

Due to my lack of linguistic ability, this thesis relies primarily on English translations and summaries of primary material. This has several pitfalls. The use of such material means that this research is influenced by the interpretations of historians that have undertaken this translation and editing work, and limits engagement with the primary material in favour of that which has received considerable attention from historians. In regards to this study of gender in the Crusader

States, it does mean that the thesis cannot fully engage with discussions of the significance of particular verbage used in these materials, which can be especially important when discussing the position of women in the law or their depictions in literary sources, as nuances may be missed.

Chronicles:

Compared with the relatively sparse number of narrative sources that record details about the reigns of queens regnant in the twelfth century (with William of Tyre's *Historia* acting as the main narrative source from the mid-twelfth century to his death in c. 1184), the thirteenth century Latin East is well-supplied with chronicle evidence. These narrative sources come from diverse cultural perspectives, with examples written in Old French, Arabic, Italian, and Armenian being used in the exploration of women's lives during this period. Four main narrative sources have been especially useful for this thesis. One of these is The *Chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Tresorier*.[69] The text is associated with the treasurer of Saint Peter of Corbie, 'Bernard', and a squire of Balian of Ibelin, 'Ernoul'. The Ibelin family were a particularly influential baronial family from the mid-twelfth to thirteenth centuries.[70] The chronicle is useful for this study as it covers the period from 1184 and 1231, recording the instances of female rule, by queens regnant and regent, in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem during this crucial period in which the Holy City was

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[69] *La chronique d'Ernoul et de Bernard le Trésorier*, ed. Louis de Mas Latrie (Paris: Société de l'histoire de France, 1871).

[70] Edbury, *John of Ibelin.*

lost, and the centre of royal power shifted to Acre. However, the pre-1187 section of the chronicle is a pro-Ibelin source, due to the close association between the family and the chronicler.[71] The *Gestes des Chiprois*, a compilation of earlier works from c.1325, contains surviving works of great significance in the study of the thirteenth century. Of these three, two are utilised in this study: the *Estoire de Philippe de Novarre* and the *Chronique du Templier du Tyr*.[72] Philip of Novara's original *Estoire* does not survive, but was restored by Charles Kohler utilising such works as the Gestes, the Eracles continuation of William of Tyre's chronicle, the *Chronique d'Amadi*, and the *Annales de Terre Sainte*.[73] Philip of Novara was born c.1195 in Lombardy, and was the first of his family to reside in the Latin East. Philip is a central figure of the thirteenth century. He was present at the most important political, military, and legal challenges of the century as a vassal and ally of the Ibelins. His history is especially useful for this thesis, as he worked closely alongside Alice of Champagne as her legal counsel during her successful attempt to become regent of Jerusalem during the minority of her cousin, King Conrad. Philip's chronicle is another pro-Ibelin source, as he was a vassal and advisor to John of Ibelin and

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[71] See *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, trans. by Peter W. Edbury, Sources in Translation (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), pp.1-8.

[72] *Les Gestes Des Chiprois: Recueil de Chroniques Françaises Écrites En Orient Au XIIIe & XVIe Siècles*, ed. Gaston Raynaud (Geneva: J. G. Fick, 1887); *The 'Templar of Tyre': Part III of the 'Deeds of the Cypriots'*, ed. Paul F. Crawford (Abingdon: Routledge, 2003); *Cronaca del Templare di Tiro (1243-1314)*, ed. L. Minervini (Napoli: Liguori, 2000)

[73] *Chronicle of Amadi;* Peter W. Edbury, 'A New Text of the Annales de Terre Sainte', in *laudem hierosolymitani: Studies in Crusades and Medieval Culture in Honour of Benjamin Z. Kedar*, eds. Iris Shagrir, Ronnie Ellenblum and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), pp.145-162.

Balian of Ibelin.[74] The *Chronique du Templier du Tyr* is another narrative source is significant

value for this thesis, due to its original and unique recording of the brief tenure of Lucia of Tripoli

as countess before the city's fall to the Mamluks in 1289. The name of the author of this chronicle

is unknown, but internal evidence provides information about his career. His career suggests he

was a member of the minor nobility, and likely Cypriot by birth. In 1269 he was valet to Margaret

of Antioch on her marriage to John of Montfort, lord of Tyre. He later became a knight and

although there is no evidence he was a member of the Order, he was associated with the Templar

Master William of Beajeau. The chronicler was an eyewitness to the fall of Acre to the Mamluks

in 1291, providing a lengthy and detailed description.[75]

The *Chronique d'Amadi* covers the period of 1095 to 1445. It is a compilation manuscript of

several texts translated into Italian. It survives in one manuscript which belonged to the Venetian

patrician, Francesco Amadi. This source is most notable for this thesis as the section for the period

between 1300 and 1324 does not survive in its original form, only in this later translation.

However, as the chronicle is so detailed, it is likely that the author was writing in the immediacy

of the restoration of King Henry II in 1310. Edbury describes the author as 'extremely well-

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[74] See La Monte, 'Introduction', in *The Wars of Frederick II Against the Ibelins In Syria and Cyprus* (New York:

Columbia University Press, 1936), pp.1-58.

[75] For more background, see Paul Crawford, *The 'Templar of Tyre': Part III of the 'Deeds of the Cypriots'* (Abingdon,

Oxon: Routledge, 2016), pp.1-14.

informed' due to his provision of detail. The chronicler was an advocate of King Henry II and his supporters. This sympathy is clear from his narrative framing of the deposition of Henry.[76]

One major strength of this group of primary source material is its secular nature driven by a literate noble culture, as these narrative histories were largely composed by men outside of the Church with secular motives for writing. This makes the authors generally more receptive towards, and potentially less inherently critical of the political activities of elite women. Their contributions to political life in the region are recorded from a perspective of greater familiarity with and acceptance of women's roles. The narrative sources are anonymously written (aside from the work of Philip of Novara). However, because we still know some biographical details about the authors which are outlined in the sources, this potential weakness can be overcome to an extent. This group of primary sources is relatively diverse as they offer unique details regarding key events of the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. The evidence found in these original accounts may not always be supported or corroborated by other narrative sources, however they are sometimes supported by charter evidence.

Charters:

In a study focused on assessing the power and agency of women, charter evidence is a source of invaluable information, although it comes with its own methodological challenges. The charters of the Latin East largely record matters relating to property and land. The majority of the charters

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[76] *Chronicle of Amadi*, pp. xiii-xxvi.

concern themselves with details of donations, sales, grants, and purchases of goods and property. This offers an insight into who held wealth in the region, and how they used it. This is especially useful when trying to understand elite patronage networks in the Latin East. Where evidence survives, we can see what institutions women chose to patronise, and what they chose to donate and works to fund, from building defences and economic infrastructure to religious institutions. Their spending patterns reflect what financial behaviour was viewed as respectable for women. The charters also reveal regular legal practices concerning the financial independence of women. This type of source material clearly shows that women could inherit and hold property, and also had to be consulted in the sale of land and property to which they had a claim. The consent of women in ruling families, whether ordinary wives, mothers, sisters, daughters, or the queens regnant that ruled Jerusalem, is seen regularly across the charter evidence, showing that women were instrumental in the financial life of the Latin East and had substantive legal rights over the disbursement of property. As charters cover a broad range of content, they can also provide information on more unexpected issues and personal details, such as loans for the payment of dowries. They are also handy for evidencing the lives of more obscure women in the Latin East, those who were not seen as sufficiently significant to appear in narrative histories, as they often provide additional details regarding names, family relations and the marital status of relevant actors. They also attest to the common occurrence of aristocratic impoverishment in the thirteenth century, and show how the decision of nobles to 'sell up' and move abroad, as in the case of Beatrix of Courtenay, could significantly shift the boundaries of the kingdom of Jerusalem. Despite their strength as an historical resource, charters do have some pitfalls. Their survival, especially for the thirteenth century Latin East, is spotty at best. For

example, the records of the county of Tripoli have mostly been lost, whereas records from the kingdom of Jerusalem generally survive in greater numbers. Charters from the Latin Church and the Hospital of St John survive in significant numbers, meaning that on balance they are overrepresented in the primary material from the thirteenth century, unlike the Templars for whom far fewer charter records survive. The charter evidence is also often too obscure to be corroborated by any other source, and precise meanings can be difficult to ascertain. Near anonymous villagers are frequently named, and objects are listed from which it is difficult to gauge what is described. Although charters do often provide our only record of some women from the Latin East, at the same time, the lack of further detail in these sources can be somewhat frustrating.

Genealogical Records:

The *Lignages d'Outremer* is a genealogical source that records some of the families present in the Latin East.[77] This genealogical record was composed in the period between 1268 and 1270. It was reorganised in 1305, and then revised further in 1369.[78] The source is valuable in the biographical details it can provide for historians trying to understand the complex kinship that existed between the major players in the region during the period of Latin rule. It was especially useful in the context of this thesis for its provision of further information concerning the family

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[77] Marie-Adelaide Nielen, *Lignages D'Outremer* (Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 2003).

[78] Peter Edbury, 'The Ibelin Counts of Jaffa: A Previously Unknown Passage from the "Lignages d'Outremer"', *The English Historical Review*, 89, (1974), pp.604-610, at pp.604-605.

of Eschiva of Le Puy, left unclear in the charter evidence. As a source it does have its limitations. The detail is quite sparse, with information centring on marriages and births. Furthermore, it has contradictions and inaccuracies, so where possible the source benefits from a comparison with contemporary sources to establish if the biographical details of more unknown figures are properly recorded.

Papal Letters:

Papal letters were issued in response to petitions or complaints, as well as recording general diplomatic correspondence. These communications include instructions directed towards papal judges, and evidence from the complainant and defence.[79] This source group is useful within the context of studying women in the Latin East as papal decretals did significantly shape the lives of elite Latin women in the Crusader States, especially in regard to the arrangement of elite marriages in the region and judgements on the legitimacy of such unions and the children produced from them. These documents are also very useful in confirming the existence and dates of marriages and providing further biographical detail about more obscure figures from the Levant. However, this information is not perfect. Like charters, the survival of these records is patchy, and papal assent is not recorded for all marriages amongst the elite in the Latin East during this period. The registers only record a fraction of the number of dispensations issued. Furthermore, the papacy could issue legates and clergymen with the right to issue dispensations,

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[79] Atria A. Larson, Kaith Sisson, 'Papal Decretals', in *A Companion to the Medieval Papacy: Growth of an Ideology and Institution,* Brill's Companions to the Christian Tradition, Vol. 70 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp.158-173, at p.158.

so these dispensations would not appear in the papal decretals. In the Latin East we see problematic marriages being conducted without papal dispensation, as was the case with Plaisance of Antioch and Balian of Ibelin.[80] Some investigations into marriages and legitimacy appear to have been abandoned without significant resolution, which is seen in the surviving papal decretals for the disagreement surrounding the marriages of Isabella I of Jerusalem and the female constable of Tripoli, although it is more likely that only some of the correspondence was entered into the registers and that there was little priority in recording unsuccessful petitions. The nature of the marriages detailed in the papal bulls is not always outlined clearly. Were these unfulfilled betrothals or ill-recorded and brief marriages? Furthermore, we very often have the papacy's reply to a request for judgment, but not the initial correspondence, which limits the extent to which we can understand the provided evidence and justification for their claim. The reasoning for the granting and refusal of marital dispensations are not always given. This can be confusing since some dispensations for marriage between relatives are permitted by the papacy, while others (such as the marriage of Alice of Champagne and Bohemond of Antioch) are rejected. When the dispensation does explicitly justify why the marriage can take place, this is incredibly valuable, as seen in the dispensations given to Cypriot and Armenian nobles to marry in the fourteenth century.[81]

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[80] David d'Avray, *Papacy, Monarchy and Marriage 860-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.109, p.182.

[81] For further details of these cases, see below Chapter 2.

Art and Architecture:

A significant and diverse corpus of artistic and architectural evidence survives from the medieval Levant.[82] The strength of these sources when considered as a group is their representation of the organic fluidity of ethnic identity and religious expression. As discussed later in this thesis, the Armenian and Greek Orthodox elements seen in the patronage of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem and Alice of Champagne suggest a flexibility of religious devotion, better expressed through these physical works than charter and chronicler evidence, confined as they are by the rigidity of their drier, written form. A valuable example of this artistic evidence is Melisende's Psalter, a richly decorated prayer book associated with Queen Melisende that survives from the twelfth century; this devotional artwork included both Latin and Greek Orthodox iconography, demonstrating how the queen likely followed the faiths of both her Armenian mother Morphia and her Latin father King Baldwin II of Jerusalem.[83] A few other devotional works also record the religious patronage of women, such as the female donors depicted on surviving icons of St Sergios and the Nativity of Christ, and in the Church of Saint Mary de la Cava in Famagusta on Cyprus.[84]

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[82] For an overview, see Jaroslav Folda, *Crusader Art: The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1099-1291* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2008); Jaroslav Folda, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land: From the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre, 1187-1291* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[83] For a discussion, see Bianca Kühnel, 'The Kingly Statement of the Bookcovers of Queen Melisende's Psalter.', in *Tesserae: Festschrift Für Josef Engemann* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1991), pp. 340–57.

[84] Geoffrey Meyer Fernandez, 'Arab Christian Refugees in Lusignan Cyprus during the Thirteenth Century: Pictorial Impact and Evidence', in *Settlement and Crusade in the Thirteenth Century: Multidisciplinary Studies of the Latin East*, eds. Gil Fishhof, Judith Bronstein, and Vardit R. Shotten-Hallel (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021), pp. 169–82, at

Generally, works associated with and depicting female donors survive in relative sparsity from the crusading period in the Latin East. It is likely that within the wider corpus of material evidence from the region women were far more involved than previously assumed as their participation has largely been noted in visibly gendered works. Most surviving artistic works from the Latin East attributed to women are from outside of the thirteenth century. Therefore, for the discussion of patronage in this thesis, charter evidence and papal letters have been utilised to demonstrate how women engaged in patronage in this period.

Architectural evidence is especially useful for researching elite Muslim women of the period, as they are not significantly represented in the written evidence that survives from the thirteenth century, such as charters and chronicles.[85] The Hunat Hatun Complex which survives in Kousen in modern Turkey, was established by Mahperi Hatun, the wife of Sultan Kayqubad I (1219-1237), and has been used by historians to evidence her dual Islamic and Christian religious identity. For the study of elite Latin women, the conjunction of this material and charter evidence grants a full picture of the extent to which women played a fundamental role in the building of Eastern

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pp.171-173; Tomasz Borowski, 'Placed in the Midst of Enemies? Material Evidence for the Existence of Maritime Cultural Networks Connecting Fourteenth-Century Famagusta with Overseas Regions in Europe, Africa and Asia', in *Famagusta Maritima: Mariners, Merchants, Pilgrims and Mercenaries*, ed. Michael J. K. Walsh (Leiden: Brill, 2019), pp. 72–112, at pp. 102-106.

[85] Suzan Yalman, 'The "Dual Identity" of "Mahperi Khatun": Piety, Patronage and Marriage across Frontiers in Seljuk Anatolia', in *Architecture and Landscape in Medieval Anatolia, 1100-1500*, eds. Patricia Blessing and Rachel Goshgarian (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017), pp. 224–52, at p. 224.

Frankish culture and society in the region. The survival of architectural sites from the Latin East has been inconsistent and heavily impacted by conflict, historic and modern, in the wider Levantine region. In the Cathedral Church of Saint Mary in Bethlehem there survives a mosaic from 1169 that records the joint patronage of King Amalric of Jerusalem and the Byzantine Emperor Manuel Komnenos.[86] Three sites restored in Melisende's reign survive: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Cathedral of Saint James in Jerusalem, and the Tomb of Mary in the Valley of Jehoshaphat.[87] The Convent of St Lazarus in Bethany, founded by Queen Melisende, did not survive Saladin's conquest of the city of Jerusalem in 1187, although the ruins do remain.[88]

Legal Treatises:

The legal treatises produced in the Latin East are a distinctive group of sources. They survive in significant numbers and record a wide-reaching interest in legislation and customs amongst the elite of the region.[89] The written history of the law in the Latin East does not survive in its entirety.

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[86] Lucy-Anne Hunt, 'Art and Colonialism: The Mosaics of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (1169) and the Problem of "Crusader" Art', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers,* 45 (1991), pp.69-85.

[87] Avital Heyman, 'Was the East Latin?', *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 36.1 (2021), 95–151 at p. 99.

[88] See Bernard Hamilton and Andrew Jotischky, *Latin and Greek Monasticism in the Crusader States* (Cambridge University Press, 2020); James Alexander Cameron, *Spacefleet Ecclesiastica Outremer: Latin Cathedrals of the Crusader States* (2022) <https://stainedglassattitudes.wordpress.com/2022/01/25/spacefleet-ecclesiastica-outremer-latin-cathedrals-of-the-crusader-states/> [Accessed 17 January 2024]

[89] Peter W. Edbury, *John of Ibelin and the Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1997), pp.105-108.

The original records of the laws of the twelfth century were seemingly destroyed, with later thirteenth century writers claiming that they sought to replicate these earlier practices in their own time. The writers of these treatises are known to us, and significant biographical detail regarding these authors survives. We understand their backgrounds, philosophies, and politics, and therefore their work is not so elusive to us. Further details about these authors are covered in detail in Chapter 2 within the thesis. These works also give plenty of detail due to their substantial length. The practice of the law is recorded in minute details. There is also some diversity within the surviving law codes, as canonical and secular law is recorded, as were also the laws of the baronial and burgher classes. The main problem with this source group is their lack of detail regarding the actual practical use of these treatises. Some recorded laws only appear in these treatises, and without supporting evidence from chronicles and charters it is difficult to see how certain theoretical practices were implemented practically. There is also little detail regarding how often such laws were applied. Did these sources record, as an academic exercise, unusual and notable instances, or common crimes and punishments? As treatises, these works reflect an imagined state of law as much as a real state of law. They offer law theory with some examples of its practical use, not books of law codes. Much of the law of the High Court of Jerusalem for example was decided on an ad hoc basis, founded on the debates of the jurist-barons. Therefore, we must rely on other types of source to show how conclusions were reached, especially when such conclusions seemed to frequently contravene legal practices outlined in the treatises of the thirteenth century and the customs established in the previous century.

2. Women and Legislative Development in the Thirteenth Century Latin East.

A papal letter, dated 11 April 1254, details a surprising evolution in the law of the county of Tripoli. The lord of Bishmizzine, Raymond of Gibelet, had complained to Pope Innocent IV that the role of constable in Tripoli had been illegally seized by another on the death of his uncle, Thomas of Ham. Although Raymond argued that by right of succession the title and presumably its responsibilities should have passed to him, the office was instead inherited by his aunt, and Thomas' half-sister, Eschiva of Le Puy.[90] It was not unheard of for medieval women to hold hereditary offices (such as constable, sheriff, and castellan), but it was uncommon. Following the death of Richard de la Haye, his daughter Nicholaa inherited his barony of Brattleby and his responsibilities as castellan of Lincoln. She shared this responsibility with her two husbands, William fitz-Erneis and Gerard de Camville.[91] Ela fitz-Patrick, countess of Sailsbury, also followed her father in being recognised as sheriff of Wiltshire at various points between 1227 and c.1237. What makes the example of Eschiva of Le Puy so intriguing is the lack of evidence found elsewhere in the Latin East for the development of a hereditary office of constable, suggesting this practice was unique to Tripoli. Secondly, for a woman to have been recognised as the constable by her suzerain lord, and to successfully defend her claim against a male rival, is quite

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[90] Thank you to Professor Edbury for giving me the opportunity to look at this unpublished material. 'Röhricht's *Regesta Revised*: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury *et al.* (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.2978.

[91] Louise Wilkinson, *Women in Thirteenth Century Lincolnshire* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), pp.112-113.

remarkable considering the militaristic nature of the role, and the restless frontier environment

in which Eschiva lived. Eschiva of Le Puy's role as a constable has not been discussed previously

in scholarly works, yet her experiences connect more widely to questions that are still largely

unexplored in the historiography of legal practices in the Latin East. Were men and women

treated equally in the region's legal customs and traditions? The acceptance of Eschiva as

constable by her suzerain, and the failure of her nephew to oppose her acquisition of this office

on the grounds of her gender suggests gender was not always the determining factor in legal

disputes. This case study also demonstrates the importance of the papacy and the wider Church

in acting as arbiters in legal disputes in the Latin East. The relationship between the Papacy and

female elites could be significant, as evidenced by a papal letter addressed to Alice of Champagne

in 1218:

> 'The pope is the vicar on earth of the One who consoles mourners, and it is his duty to
>
> care for widows, orphans, and oppressed children.'[92]

Prestigious widows and their children were frequently taken under the protection of the

Apostolic See, seen in the Latin East in the examples of Alice of Champagne in 1218 and Lady

Zabel of Tyre in 1310.[93] The special relationship between elite women and the church, and the

inability of men to access such privileges, has also not been discussed widely within the

historiography of the Latin East despite instances when the primary material demonstrates how

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[92] *Bullarium Cyprium: Papal letters concerning Cyprus 1196-1261,* Vols.3, ed. Christopher D. Schabel (Nicosia:

Cyprus Research Centre, 2010), pp.201-202.

[93] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol.1, pp.201-202; *Chronicle of* Amadi, p.318.

women could receive favourable treatment in legal disputes through this relationship. Overall, the case study of Eschiva of Le Puy, discussed in greater detail in this chapter, is somewhat representative of the nature of laws relating to female authority in the thirteenth century Latin East: dynamic, surprising, and consistently complicated.

The chapter will first explore the history of regnal succession in the kingdom of Jerusalem in order to show how succession customs developed from a legal perspective, and the codification of customary principles which facilitated female succession in the *Livre au Roi*. Second, the secular legal treatises of John of Ibelin and Philip of Novara will be assessed to understand how female inheritance was defined in the legislation from the thirteenth century in a militarily vulnerable society. Third, the chapter will address the development of regency from a nominative to a hereditary position and how it more widely shaped the acceptance of female authority in the period. Finally, canon law and the papacy's efforts to control the marriages of elite women will be considered. In doing so, this chapter argues that different forms of law and legal texts enabled different classes of women in the Latin East to exercise agency and indeed authority.

Regnal Inheritance

From 1099 to 1291, the kingdom of Jerusalem saw five women rule as queen regnant: Melisende (r.1131-1161), Sibylla (r.1186-1190), Isabella I (r.1190-1205), Maria (r.1205-1212), and Isabella II (r.1212-1228). The frequency of female succession was unusual in medieval Latin Christendom, but we have little evidence suggesting that the succession of women was criticised or opposed in the Latin East. The right of women to inherit the throne of Jerusalem was confirmed in writing

through the creation of the *Livre au Roi* during the reign of Isabella I and her co-ruler and husband, King Aimery (r.1197-1205).[94] This treatise followed precedents established in the previous century when the royal succession took place according to *ad hoc* principles, designed to preserve the stability of the realm. Female regnal succession was part of this effort to achieve stability because direct dynastic inheritance, regardless of the gender of the heir, was preferred. In the following paragraphs, the history of regnal succession in the kingdom of Jerusalem will be outlined in order to demonstrate the development of key principles that would direct the succession in the kingdom, and to demonstrate how this enabled women to successfully claim the throne.

Following the annulment of her marriage to Humphrey of Toron, Isabella I of Jerusalem, the surviving half-sibling of monarchs Baldwin IV and Sibylla of Jerusalem, was married a further three times between 1190 and 1198. Three men, therefore, governed Jerusalem by right of their marriage to Isabella within a decade. Her second husband Conrad of Montferrat was murdered on 28 April 1192 by an unknown assailant. Isabella was pregnant with his child, and the barons of the realm scrambled to select a new leader. They selected Henry II of Champagne and he married Isabella. The 'Lyon Eracles' and the *Itinerarium* present the circumstances leading to the

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[94] *Le Livre au Roi: Introduction, Notes et Édition Critique, e*d. Myriam Greilsammer (Paris: Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, 1995), pp.83-86; Myriam Greilsammer, 'Structure and Aims of the *Livre au Roi'*, *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem Presented to Joshua Prawer* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1982), pp.218-226, at pp.223-224.

marriage very differently. The chronicler 'Eracles' stated that the barons approached Henry, insisting that he would have to marry Isabella to become king. He was unenthused by the prospect.[95] He was worried that if Isabella's child by Conrad was a son, the child would be king and he would be trapped in a marriage to Isabella.[96] The presentation of Henry's concerns by 'Eracles' here is very informative in regards to the social concerns about remarriage to widows. His words show the presumption that the birth of a male heir would supersede the claim of that child's mother to the throne. According to 'Eracles', Henry was persuaded to marry Isabella and take the throne through a negotiation with the barons. They agreed that Henry's heirs would inherit the throne, thereby disinheriting Conrad's posthumous child.[97] Here, the desire of the barons to elect their own king superseded the principle of hereditary succession. The *Itinerarium* records that Henry was nominated as king by a jubilant population, 'as the people saw him among them, as if he had been sent by God, [and] they immediately elected him their prince and lord.'[98] The settlement, much like Conrad's elevation to the throne, appears to have been a short-sighted fix to the succession crisis that was intended to avoid an interregnum, but it was a settlement that fundamentally lacked conventional legal rigour.

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[95] Lambert, 'Queen or Consort', p.163.

[96] *Ibid,* p.164.

[97] *Ibid,* p.164.

[98] *The Chronicle of the Third Crusade: The Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi,* trans. Helen J. Nicholson (Farnham; Ashgate, 2010) pp.308-309.

From her marriages to Conrad and Henry, Isabella had only produced daughters. Isabella married

Aimery of Lusignan , who had been king of Cyprus since 1196; he was selected as her consort by

the barons due to his wealth and the resources of his kingdom. This marriage also resulted in

Isabella finally being crowned as queen regnant of Jerusalem.[99] This further complicates how we

perceive Isabella's sovereign status. Although marriage to her was viewed as essential to secure

Jerusalem, she would not be crowned until her third marriage. Sarah Lambert theorised that

Isabella's status was 'indissolubly connected to her marriage to an appropriate king .'[100] King

Aimery may have been more incentivised to organise a coronation for himself and his wife, due

to his longstanding residence in the region and commitment to remaining there in the future due

to his sovereign domain in Cyprus.

The influence of the baronial elite over the succession had roots in the history of electoral

kingship that had existed in the kingdom of Jerusalem from its creation. However, the power of

the female regnal heiress was further eroded by Isabella's inability to exert personal autonomy,

best evidenced by her failure to be crowned before 1198. The separation of Isabella and her first

husband, Humphrey of Toron, and her swift remarriage to Conrad of Montserrat, is also

presented as an event in which Isabella had little agency. The *Itinerarium* depicts Isabella being

under the complete sway of her mother, the Byzantine princess Maria Komnene, who is hostilly

described as 'steeped in Greek filth' , and her 'cruel' and 'faithless' step-father Balian of Ibelin.[101]

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[99] *Ibid,* p.165.

[100] Lambert, 'Queen or Consort', p.165.

[101] *Itinerarium,* pp.123-124.

Isabella was persuaded to leave her husband, the chronicle stated, due to the weakness of her sex and 'changeable' mind, and was 'soon...not ashamed to say that she was not carried off but went with the marquis [Conrad] of her own accord', as she rejoiced 'at each new embrace.' Isabella's youth is clear in that she remains girlish in her excitement towards her new husband and malleable to the desires of her parental figures. This is in spite of the fact that she is a married woman at this point, and therefore had entered a new stage of maturity for a medieval woman.

Isabella's further remarriages can be viewed as her giving in to this pressure again and again. However, Isabella was also demonstrating a desire to retain power by marrying the most popular candidates for her hand. Remarrying was of benefit to her, as although her status was due in part to her descent from King Amalric, her path to remain the preeminent woman in the kingdom was made easier by her marriages to popular and powerful men. The laws of the thirteenth century decreed that it was essential for an heiress to remarry an appropriate husband in order for her to retain control of her fiefs. The author of the *Itinerarium* was hostile to Isabella, but his critique of her is useful as it centred on her unblushing willingness to abandon one husband and swiftly enter a union with the next; there is no passivity here, but rather an enthusiasm for following the advice of her partisans without care for moralistic judgement. Lambert utilised this criticism of Isabella to propose that a distaste for political women in wider medieval society may have led to the 'marginalisation of the hereditary queen.'[102] Lambert saw the *Livre au Roi* as demonstrating this marginalisation, as she argued that the queen regnant merely legitimised the absolute rule

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[102] Lambert, 'Queen or Consort', p.166.

of her male consort.[103] However, this thesis argues that the *Livre au Roi's* codification of female

succession and its attempt to curb the baronial elite from redirecting the line of succession are

indicative of an effort to restore female succession to its former stability.

The *Livre au Roi* was an anonymously written legal treatise, composed during the reign of King

Aimery (r.1197-1205), to whom the work was named and dedicated. It is a legal treatise written

in the French vernacular, and it is the earliest example of such vernacular writing in the Latin

East.[104]   The treatise comprises fifty-two chapters, largely addressing the legal obligations of

vassals and their king. Myriam Greilsammer argued that the treatise was intended to strengthen

the monarchy through allusions to legal customs from the twelfth century. This reestablishment

of these 'archaic' customs and their codification in a written record, Greilsammer reasoned,

betrayed an intention to prevent the further evolution of royal prerogatives to the benefit of the

baronial elite. Rather than being a genuine record of the lost laws of the twelfth century, the *Livre

au Roi* instead sought to 'facilitate the restoration of a strong monarchy' , and as a result its

depiction of a 'quasi-omnipotent' monarchy was merely a representation of an 'obsolete'

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[103] *Ibid*, p.166.

[104] Greilsammer, 'Structure and Aims of the *Livre au Roi'*, in *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading

Kingdom of Jerusalem Presented to Joshua Prawer* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1982), pp.218-226, at p.226;

Peter W. Edbury, 'Fiefs and Vassals in the Kingdom of Jerusalem: from the Twelfth Century to the Thirteenth',

Crusades 1 (2002) <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/28327861.2002.12220532> [accessed

11/11/24].

reality.[105]   The legislative interests of King Aimery were more nuanced, however. He tried to

improve his relationship with the barons through legal reform. He sought to improve the financial

health of the baronage by providing fiefs and supporting knights. Stephen Donnachie argued that

Aimery sought to resurrect the 'money-fief' system by appointing knights to distribute rents

gathered from the city of Acre. Aimery did not transfer his Cypriot retinue to Jerusalem. Fulk of

Anjou had brought his own men over the kingdom of Jerusalem in the previous century, and had

thereby further stoked baronial discontentment towards his rule.[106]

On the other hand, there were clearly some legal customs that had developed in the twelfth

century that Aimery sought to reverse. At his coronation with Isabella, the cartulary of the Holy

Sepulchre recorded that he swore to uphold the laws of the kingdom as they had existed during

the reigns of Amalric and Baldwin IV (who ruled in the period between 1163 and 1185), perhaps

in an effort to demonstrate continuity with a period of strength in the kingdom of Jerusalem. This

act, therefore, championed the idea of strong, hereditary monarchy and was a rejection of

electoral kingship by the barons. He was naturally wary of the barons. As a close ally of his

brother, Guy of Lusignan, he had witnessed his brother's humiliating exile at the command of the

barons of Jerusalem in 1192. He was also aware of his vulnerability as an elected king, in power

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[105] Greilsammer, 'Structure and Aims of the Livre au Roi', p.226.

[106] Stephen Donnachie, 'The predicaments of Aimery de Lusignan: Baronial factionalism and the consolidation of

power in the Kingdoms of Jerusalem and Cyprus, 1197-1205', in *Settlement and Crusade in the Thirteenth Century:*

Multidisciplinary Studies of the Latin East, eds. G. Fishhof, J. Bronstein and V.R. Shotten-Hallel (Abingdon:

Routledge, 2021), pp.183-194.

on the basis of his marriage and the goodwill of the barony. In March 1198, there was an attempted assassination attempt on Aimery as he was out riding near Tyre. The lead suspect, Ralph of Tiberias, had previously hoped to marry Isabella and take the throne following the death of Henry of Champagne, but he was denied due to baronial dissatisfaction with his offered wealth and resources.[107] The precedent of the royal heiress elevating her husband to the throne could significantly destabilise the kingdom by making the king consort weak, especially when Isabella had still not produced a male heir.

The *Livre au Roi* introduced legislation intended to stabilise the succession in the event of Queen Isabella dying with a female heir. In the period the treatise was commissioned, the succession was particularly tenuous. By 1205, Isabella had produced seven children. By Conrad of Montferrat, she had Maria. By Henry of Champagne, she had Marguerite (who died in childhood), Alice, and Philippa. By Aimery of Lusignan she had Sibylla, Melisende, and Amalric.[108] As a result, securing a male succession rested on the probability of Amalric living to adulthood; otherwise, another female succession was likely, and the heiress would not be related by blood to the king of Jerusalem. Therefore, the legislation proposed by Aimery sought to secure his own position as well as to protect the inheritance rights of his stepdaughters. The *Livre au Roi* decreed that on the death of the queen regnant, her husband would act as regent for her heir if they were in their minority, even if he was not a blood relation. This would be the case whether the heir was female

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[107] Donnachie, 'The predicaments of Aimery de Lusignan', pp.183-194.

[108] *Lignages d'Outremer,* p.81.

or male. In ensuring that the king consort had a continued role in government, the heiress to the throne was protected from usurpation by her stepfather or his children from another marriage. The former had been a possibility when it had been proposed that Henry of Champagne's heirs would supersede Maria of Montferrat in the line of succession. The latter had been a possibility feared following the marriage of Fulk and Melisende in 1129, leading to Baldwin II's decision to crown their son. The treatise also maintained that the Haute Cour had the power to elect a husband for a female heiress.[109] This did grant significant power to the barons, but it was a small price to pay considering that it ensured that women could inherit the throne without significant gendered opposition. It was also in the barons' interest to support the queen regnant by selecting a competent and popular consort. The *Livre au Roi* confirmed that the king consort would provide administrative and military leadership, as long as the queen regnant gave her consent to his decisions. On this basis, Lambert argued that the treatise confirmed the 'marginalisation of the hereditary queen', a process that had already begun with the election of their consorts.[110] Lambert conceded that the treatise did ensure that women could inherit the throne, but argued that women were excluded from 'political activity.'[111] However, this is a misrepresentation of the legal value placed on consent in the Latin East.

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[109] Lambert, 'Queen or Consort', p.166.

[110] *Ibid*, p.166.

[111] *Ibid*, p.169.

We see women consenting in legal treatises to two different types of property alienation. The first, her consent to her husband's alienation of his inheritance, as a means to protect the recipient from later claims against the validity of the alienation.[112] The second, an heiress' consent to the alienation of her own inheritance, which would require the heiress to initiate the exchange.[113] Whether that be of her own free will, or coerced from her husband, is not clear from the surviving documents. Charters from the Latin East therefore demonstrate that during the process of selling and granting property, female family members had to provide their consent to this process as they had financial interests in the negotiation; if a female family member did not grant her consent for the selling of property, the transaction would be void and she would be paid recompense.

The queens regnant of Jerusalem similarly recorded their consent in the charters of their co-rulers. Due to the nature of the source material, this consent is only recorded regarding property matters. However, it is fair to presume that consent would be needed across all levels of decision making to maintain a peaceful working relationship between the queens regnant and their consorts. This granting of consent in charters could be seen to have reduced the queen regnant's role to a symbolic stamper of legal documents. However, as heirs to the throne these women did hold power and influence. If she withdrew her consent, the queen regnant could effectively

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[112] This can be seen when the daughter and step-daughter of Gerrard of Ham confirmed his donation, as discussed on p.115 of this thesis; RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no. 1539 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[113] This can be seen in the case of the dispute over the Capengre family wills, discussed in this thesis on p.111; 'Röhricht's *Regesta Revised*: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury *et al.* (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.3200.

prevent her husband from governing effectively. This can be seen in the marital tensions between

Fulk and Melisende in the 1130s, which were only resolved once Melisende was willing to consent

to her husband's actions. Unfortunately, there is no further evidence of a 'veto' being used by a

queen regnant outside of Melisende's defence of the Jacobite community against the crusader

Geoffrey, as previously discussed in this chapter.[114] The extent to which the queen regnant held

personal autonomy , as in the ability to act without control, is difficult to assert. Medieval women

were surely controlled by societal expectations surrounding their gender, but a queen regnant

held far greater independent authority than her female contemporaries more generally.

As a case study, Melisende is difficult. On one hand, she can be seen as an exemplary case. No

other woman in the Latin East was the subject of such extensive chronicle coverage, and

therefore Melisende appears to have exerted a unique level of sovereignty. Unlike her successor,

Isabella I, she did not remarry following the death of her husband. As the mother to two sons,

Melisende did not face to pressure to produce an heir that Isabella faced, as she did not have a

son until her third and final marriage. As the first queen regnant of Jerusalem, Melisende can be

reasonably presumed to have originated the specific and powerful role of the queen regnant that

we see in the thirteenth century. This is especially convincing in the Latin East where so much

legislative development was justified as following precedents. Therefore, it can be safely

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[114] This is discussed further in this thesis on p.127; RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no.358 [accessed 17 January 2024]; Andrew Palmer, 'The History of the Syrian Orthodox in Jerusalem Part Two: Queen Melisende and the Jacobite Estates', *Oriens Christianus,* vol.76 (1992), pp.74-94, p.79.

concluded that in legal terms the queens regnant of Jerusalem did have a 'veto ,' and political power, regardless of whether the later queens chose to access or utilise it. In codifying customary laws in writing, the *Livre au Roi* preserved female rule. While this codification may have made it harder for women to act beyond the limitations of the law, it also made the succession practices in the kingdom more consistent. Maria of Montferrat (r.1205-1212) and Isabella of Brienne (r.1212-1228) were able to inherit and consent to the legal acts of their husbands despite their tender age and limited political experience. These last queens regnant held little political power, not because of the impact of the *Livre au Roi*, but because they died at the early age of twenty-two and eighteen, respectively. It is fair to conclude that the *Livre au Roi's* codification of female authority was largely untested because of the deaths of these women. It is a misrepresentation of the strength of legal consent as a principle to argue that it did not at the very least attempt to preserve female authority in the region.

Baronial legislative development and the legal protections for women

From the thirteenth century, multiple additional legal treatises were written on the Levantine mainland and Cyprus. This body of evidence, known as the 'Assizes of Jerusalem,' was written in the French vernacular rather than Latin and was largely authored by members of the knightly class that contributed to a customary legal tradition. The most substantive work within the canon of the 'Assizes' was the *Le Livre des Assises*, authored by the count of Jaffa and Ascalon, John of Ibelin (1215-1266), in the 1260s. It describes the procedures and customary practices of the high courts in Jerusalem and Cyprus. The Italian Philip of Novara authored *Le Livre de forme de plait*

in the 1250s and, like John of Ibelin, Philip's work covers procedure and the baronial class'

attempts to preserve the laws and customs of the twelfth century. These texts, and the *Livre au*

Roi, outlined the workings of the Haute Cour, which dealt with the disputes of the secular ruling

class. The *Livre de la Cour des Bourgeois* described the procedures and laws of the Cour des

Bourgeois, a court for urban, Latin non-nobles in the Levant. The authorship of this work is

unknown, but Jonathan Rubin theorised that multiple writers were likely involved in the creation

of the source, and that the treatise's similarity to the Provençal *Lo Codi* suggests that the authors

had training in Roman law.[115] A relatively obscure legal author of the period was John of Ancona;

between 1265 and 1268 he wrote his summa for William, patriarch of Jerusalem, and the

archdeacon of Acre, William of Lautario. He also authored *the Summa super usibus feudorum*

between 1258 and 1266. In contrast to the knightly jurists of the thirteenth century, John of

Ancona was a 'learned' jurist active in Acre.[116] These jurists emerged from the university system

, and as a result John of Ancona is critical and somewhat snobbish towards the barons' reliance

on customary law and the oral legislative tradition. He was critical of their ignorance of canon

law, and their insistence on rigidly replicating the famed laws of the First Kingdom of Jerusalem.

In addition to the treatise evidence, charters survive from the thirteenth century that give a

greater sense of how law was applied in practice in the Latin East. This documentary evidence is

patchy, as the majority of surviving charters are from religious bodies (religious orders,

monasteries, church archives) and Italian merchant communities. Narrative sources also provide

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[115] Rubin, *Learning in a Crusader City*, p.92.

[116] *Ibid*, p.93.

some details about how the law was enforced.[117]   These sources have often been used in historiography to discuss the power dynamic between the monarchy and the nobility in the thirteenth century.[118]   There has been some work exploring the law of the Latin East through a gendered perspective, but this chapter intends to explore the secular law of this period with a specific focus on the importance of consent and the impact this had on the bodily autonomy of female fief-holders.[119]

To understand the treatment of women in the law of the kingdom of Jerusalem, the main social context for concerns about their political activities must be understood. First there was the general belief that women were unsuited to government. This attitude can be surmised through an extract from a letter sent by the churchmen Bernard of Clairvaux to Melisende on Jerusalem following the death of her husband in 1143:

> 'You must put your hand to strong things and show a man in a woman, doing what is to
> be done in the spirit of counsel and fortitude. You must dispose all things so prudently
> and moderately that all who see them will think you a king rather than a queen from your
> acts, lest perhaps the people might say, "where is the king of Jerusalem?" "But I am not,"

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[117] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, p.xii.

[118] See John L. La Monte, *Feudal Monarchy in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1100-1291,* pp.85-184; Joshua Prawer, *Crusader Institutions* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp.343-470; Steven Tibble, *Monarchy and Lordships in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem 1099-1291* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011), pp.1-4.

[119] Edbury, 'Women and the Customs of the High Court of Jerusalem According to John of Ibelin'; Lambert, 'Queen or Consort', pp.153-169; Schein, 'Women in Medieval Colonial Society', pp.140-153.

you say, "capable of this. These are great things, beyond my strength and my knowledge. These are the deeds of men, while I am a woman, weak of body, unstable of heart, not prudent of counsel, not accustomed to affairs.'[120]

At the time Bernard was writing, Melisende had already been ruling Jerusalem for many years alongside her husband. However, he believed that Melisende would have to significantly adjust her behaviour in order to rule as well as a male monarch. This encapsulates how we may expect powerful women in the medieval period to be perceived by their contemporaries. However, the experiences of women in the Latin East challenge this expectation due to the frequency in which they exerted power. Within two generations of Franks settling in the Levant, Jerusalem and Antioch had female rulers and women inherited fiefs throughout the region. The ability of women to exert authority in the Latin East can be explained in part due to the pragmatism among the ruling elite in the region. They were aware of their frailty on the frontier of Christendom and valued secure transitions of power and therefore viewed the succession of a legitimate heir, regardless of their gender, and may have been viewed as a means of stabilising the region, preferential to interregnum and civil war. Women were essential to the stability of the region and the continuation of the Frankish project in the Levant, and therefore there is plenty of evidence of legislation that intended to regulate their exertion of authority. The jurists of the Latin East therefore also sought to ensure that women could serve their suzerain in the same

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[120] Bernard of Clairvaux, 'A letter from Bernard of Clairvaux, abbot (1143-44)', trans. Joan Ferrante (2014) <https://epistolae.ctl.columbia.edu/letter/246.html> [accessed 11/11/24].

manner as a male lord. As a male would provide their suzerain with military service, women could provide this service through marriage as their husbands would fight for the king on their behalf.

The legal rights of women in the Haute Cour can be broken down into three categories: right of inheritance, right to marry, and right to litigate. In the kingdom of Jerusalem agnatic succession was preferred, but the right for women to inherit property was protected. A female direct descendant would always have priority over a distantly related male claimant.[121] Some women did struggle to successfully claim property, but there were usually aggravated circumstances to explain this difficulty. When neither of the two competing claimants were direct descendants of the deceased, and were in the same generation as each other, the female claimant could be disadvantaged. This can be seen in the failure of Eschiva of Ibelin to inherit the duchy of Athens in 1308. Although this case occurred outside the kingdom of Jerusalem, the *Assizes of Romania*, a treatise that applied to the Latin Empire of Constantinople and provides insight into the law of the Duchy of Athens, borrowed extensively from the *Assises of Jerusalem* and so is part of this wider Levantine legal tradition.[122] On the death of Duke Guy II of Athens , his two first-cousins claimed the duchy. These claimants were Eschiva, the daughter of the duke's elder aunt Alice de la Roche, and Walter of Brienne, the son of the duke's younger aunt Isabella de la Roche. The

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[121] Edbury, 'Women and the customs of the High Court of Jerusalem according to John of Ibelin'.

[122] Peter W. Topping, 'Introduction', in *Feudal Institutions as Revealed in the Assizes of Romania: The Law Code of Frankish Greece: Translation of the Text of the Assizes with a Commentary on Feudal Institutions in Greece and in Medieval Europe*, trans. Peter W. Topping (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1949), pp.1-14, at p.2; Peter Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean 1204-1500* (New York: Longman, 1995), pp.24-25.

High Court of Achaea decided that Walter should inherit Athens rather than Eschiva, as the law dictated that when two claimants had an equal relationship with the deceased lord, the male would inherit over the female, although Eschiva faced additional disadvantages aside her gender, such as her advanced age and the fact that Walter was well-known in the duchy of Athens.[123] Women were, therefore, disadvantaged by the region's lack of customary primogeniture as they could struggle against male claimants.   Women could also be disadvantaged if they had to travel to inherit their territory, as seen in the case study of Lucia of Tripoli in 1288. Lucia was undoubtedly the closest relation to the deceased lord, as she was his only sibling. However, she had to travel to Tripoli from Apulia and during this time Tripoli had time to form a commune which protested her succession. Distance was not the sole contributing cause in this difficult succession but appeared in conjunction with the female claimant being an unknown person to the local aristocracy. Lucia was not well-known in Tripoli, having lived in Italy since her marriage in the early 1170s. She may have acted with the knowledge that her predecessor Bohemond VII had been unpopular when she decided to leave her Angevin husband behind for fear of further aggravating the barons.[124]

However, for women inheriting Levantine territory while residing in the region, the process of inheritance was relatively straightforward. There was a significant development of inheritance practices in the thirteenth century. In his treatise, Philip of Novara recorded that in instances

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[123] *Ibid,* p.104; *Chronicle of Amadi*, pp.274-277.

[124] Izzo, 'Anti-Foreign Sentiment in Frankish Syria', pp.140-141.

where a baron had only daughters, the initial practice was for the eldest daughter to inherit the fief in its entirety. The process later evolved so that the fief would be divided between the daughters of the baron as partible inheritance. Philip of Novara stated that this had been changed following the death of Henry 'Le Buffle' Milly . On his death (which Edbury dates between 1165 and 1171), Stephen, count of Sancerre, who was in the Latin East, was approached for advice about the inheritance of the fief . He recommended that the fief of Henry Le Bufle be divided between his three daughters. As his fief had owed ten knights to the king, his sons-in-law were therefore each responsible for the provision of three and one third knights. Stephen of Sancerre had informed the jurists in the Latin East that this practise was widely observed in Western Europe. Edbury suggests that the fief of Henry 'Le Bufle ' was split between his heiresses due to the influence of the husbands of the younger sisters at the Haute Cour.[125] This is certainly plausible, as the *Lignages D'Outremer* records the marriages of Henry's daughters to powerful noblemen and details the inheritance they gained on the death of their father-in-law. The eldest Agnes had married Adam III of Bethsan, and inherited 'Saint Jorge de Labaene et les casaus que Thibaut tient ores' on her father's death. Adam of Bethsan would have gained the most under the old system of inheritance. Henry's middle daughter Stephanie had married William, lord of Boutron and inherited from her father 'Mergelcolon et Gedin et les autres casaus que Thomassin de Cesaire tient ores.' The youngest of Henry's daughters, Agnes, married Joscelin III of Courtenay and inherited 'Montfort et le Chastaiu dou roy et la terre que les Alemans tienent.'[126]

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[125] Edbury, 'Women and the customs of the High Court'.

[126] *Lignages D'Outremer,* pp.68-70.

The intervention of Western rulers, such as Stephen, count of Sancerre, was sought in deciding the regnal succession. In the thirteenth century a debate concerning the services owed by the kingdom of Cyprus was presented before Prince Edward of England for his adjudication.[127] A central component of the identity of the nobles in Outremer was their origin in Europe, so this may also explain why the barons and crown supported this development in its inheritance customs.

Edbury argued that the justification for inheritance customs in the Latin East depended on the suzerain lord's desire to preserve military services. If an individual held several fiefs for which several *servise de cors* were required, the suzerain would prefer for this service to be performed personally, rather than by proxy.[128] Men and women were treated differently in succession laws. An inheritance would be divided for male heirs as well. If the deceased had multiple male heirs in the same generation, then they were each to receive a fief; the left-over inheritance could then also be claimed by female heirs in the same generation. There was, therefore, a clear desire to have a single vassal hold a single fief. However, male heirs would always receive a fief in its entirety, younger brothers would stand to inherit nothing as their elder brother took everything. It was only through splitting land among heiresses that partial fiefs could be created, and men would only own such a fief if this had been inherited from an heiress.[129] This custom appears to

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[127] Rubin, *Learning in a Crusader City,* p.88.

[128] Edbury, 'Women and the customs of the High Court'.

[129] *Ibid.*

have developed due to the influence of western law, but it also gave an advantage to men in the Latin East as it created more heiresses. Marriage to these heiresses would enoble more men, and this was especially valuable in the thirteenth century as land was increasingly scarce due to Islamic conquests. Although these heiresses were marrying within their existing peer group, these men would not necessarily hold assets or titles without their wives bringing them to the marriage. Marriage was therefore an institution through which women were able to exert authority, but it also had a significant impact on their personal autonomy.

The marriage customs as outlined in the Assizes of Jerusalem demonstrate a balance between longstanding canonical legal principles, and the importance of military service by the baronial class. Twelve was an important age for a female vassal in the kingdom of Jerusalem. It was from this age that she could marry, which followed the minimum age for marriage in canonical law. It was also the age at which her suzerain began to demand military service.[130] Upon her marriage, this service would be performed by her husband. Until that point, the fief would be governed by whoever held her wardship. However, if this holder of the wardship was a woman, she would have to marry in order to provide the military service . The suzerain lord would usually call upon the heiress to marry once she had reached the age of consent, although the actual ceremony may have taken place later, as twelve was still deemed to be a young age for marriage . If this summons was ignored, or a husband not chosen, the heiress' fief would be confiscated for a year and a day. On its return, this process would begin again. A heiress who married without the

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[130] *Ibid.*

permission of her suzerain could have her fief confiscated for the duration of that marriage.[131]

Philip of Novara recorded that heiresses used to be able to select their own husbands . This

evolved into a system where the husbands. presented with a choice of three potential husbands.

This served as a compromise between the family of the bride and the suzerain lord, and it ensured

the husband was a man of quality while also allowing the bride to select her spouse. This meant

the custom could be defended from accusations that it was a forced marriage.[132] William of Tyre's

depiction of the arrangement of Constance of Antioch (1128-1163) second marriage does show

how this principle worked.[133] Constance had ruled Antioch in her own right from a young age

alongside her first husband, Raymond of Poitiers. Following Raymond's death at the Battle of

Inab in 1149, Constance was pressured by her maternal family, including her aunt Melisende and

cousin Baldwin III of Jerusalem, to remarry. William of Tyre stated that Constance was presented

with three suitors: Ralph of Merle, Walter of Saint-Omer, and Yves of Soissons. However,

Constance rejected them all.[134] Constance did remarry, but chose her own suitor, Raynald of

Châtillon.[135] Edbury suggested that the heiress' family may have influenced the selection of the

pool of suitors to ensure a gentleman was included that met their approval; the suzerain lord was

also likely to have used this system as an act of patronage for his own men, and may have

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[131] *Ibid.*

[132] *Ibid.*

[133] William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, Vol.2, p.213.

[134] Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land,* pp.221-222.

[135] *Ibid,* p.222.

profiteered through bribes from interested parties.[136]   Constance's example, however, is a

reminder that depending on the willpower and prestige of the individual heiress, these familial

and feudal interventions may have failed with some frequency as a widow, even one that needed

to provide military service, could not be compelled to remarry, as canon law required consent.

Controversially, this '*servise de mariage*' could also apply to widowed women in certain

circumstances. Women in the medieval period generally enjoyed significant personal and

financial freedom when widowed, and these advantages could be lost by remarrying. It was in

this stage of life that women commonly exerted religious and literary patronage.[137] In the Latin

East, the legal practices of the Haute Cour could be interpreted as forcing these women to

remarry, if they wished to carry out responsibilities that were rightfully theirs by inheritance on

the deaths of their husbands. Yet there was an uneasiness in the Christian world surrounding the

remarriage of widows. Although it was canonically permitted for a widow to remarry, there was

a belief (in France especially) that it was not morally desirable to remarry following the death of

the first spouse. There could even be local protests, in the form of *charivaris*, surrounding such

marriages.[138]

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[136] Edbury, 'Women in the High Court'.

[137] Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land,* pp.197-235.

[138] James Brundage, 'Marriage Law in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem', in *Outremer: Studies in the history of the
Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1982), pp.258-271*,* at p.269.

Widows of the knightly class in the kingdom of Jerusalem were able to purchase fiefs, but would still have to marry in order to provide military service.[139] A widowed woman would receive half of her husband's estate as her dowry, and could hold the wardship of his heir; in this instance she would have to marry to retain this authority, or would have to relinquish this power to her suzerain. The requirement for heiresses to marry ended at the age of sixty, as did the requirement for men to provide military service to their suzerain.[140] The necessity for heiresses and widows to enter marriages in order to hold personal authority over their fiefs was unique to the Latin East. This legislation may explain why there was little evidence of opposition to female inheritance in the Latin East, as by the thirteenth century it was so commonplace for women to inherit that significant legislation had been put in place to ensure that the military demands of the suzerain were met. It appears that the baronial class gave a lot of power to the suzerain, but it is also worth noting that these barons benefitted from the enforced marriage of heiresses and widows on a smaller scale.

The extent to which women could act as litigants in the Haute Cour is complex, largely because there is a lack of information in the *Assise* about how the law was carried out in practice. John of Ibelin outlined two categories of litigation that women could initiate: disputes over land and property, and capital offences (such as rape and assault).[141] There was, generally, a lack of

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[139] Edbury, 'Women in the High Court'.

[140] *Ibid.*

[141] *Ibid.*

consideration for the personal impact of sexual violence on women as opposed to concerns regarding the implication such a crime had on her husband and male relatives. For example, the forceful abduction or consensual seduction by a vassal of his suzerain's female relative was treasonous.[142] It was the sexual act and the woman's familial connection that made the action insulting rather than the violence. A married woman would need the permission of her husband before initiating litigation and would need a champion to duel on her behalf. This complicated a woman's route to justice. Trials by combat, although legislated in the *Assise,* were presumably rare as there is almost no record of them taking place. The *Chronicle of Amadi* does describe a trial by dual. In May 1314 James Artude was accused of killing his wife by his mother-in-law. He jousted against the mother-in-law's champion, and as he was defeated he was executed for the murder.[143] Peter Edbury and Nicholas Coureas argue that the inclusion of this event in the chronicle suggests that such trials by combat were rare.[144] The potential outcome of judicial duels, despite their rarity, meant that women were restricted in their ability to act as witnesses. Women could not serve as witnesses aside from disputes where the age and parentage of a person had to be confirmed. Women could act as witnesses for this information, usually used in property disputes, as it was not open to a challenge that could lead to a judicial duel.[145]

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[142] *Ibid.*

[143] *Chronicle of Amadi*, p.361.

[144] *Ibid*, p.361 n.2.

[145] *Ibid.*

The Haute Cour was a masculine place, dominated by male jurists. Women were restricted in their access to the court but were able to engage on a similar level to men in property disputes.[146] Legal experts would represent them in the same way they would male appellants, as both a woman and man would approach the court to appoint an advocate. John of Ibelin, and the other legal writers of the kingdom of Jerusalem, do not confirm if a female lord would be able to preside over her own seigneurial court if she was unmarried or unwilling to appoint a man to act on her behalf, but is is likely that a woman would be able to carry out this role as it was a key element of sovereign power.

It is also worth noting that there appears to have been some education of women in legalistic affairs. The Latin East had an oral legal tradition, which meant that knowledge was passed generationally. Although there is little direct evidence of women receiving this knowledge, it seems likely that they would have absorbed understanding of the legislative system through witnessing the education of their male relatives and learning their family's history. It is interesting that women were able to provide testimony in cases involving genealogy, as knowledge of their family's history in the region could be a powerful tool. The successes that we see women enjoying in the High Court of the Kingdom of Jerusalem also suggest that women had the same access to highly skilled and influential jurists, so they may have been a limited gendered disadvantage in this regard.

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[146] *Ibid*.

Hereditary Regency as a Precedent for a Female Constable?

Jonathan Riley-Smith categorised six types of regents, which were distinguished on the grounds of the circumstances that led to their regency and the powers available to them.

1.   A vassal appointed as regent by the Haute Cour.

2.   A parent appointed as regent for their child-monarch.

3.   A relative appointed as regent for the child-monarch.

4.   A relative appointed as regent for monarch uncrowned and not resident in Latin East, but who was otherwise in their majority.

5.   A parent acting as lieutenant on behalf of child-regent.

6.   A relative acting as lieutenant on behalf of child-regent.[147]

Aside from the first type of regent, the others were based on the principle of *plus dreit heir aparant* (regency given to the person nearest in relation to the heir/monarch). The establishment of a regency that was essentially hereditary meant that women could act as regent over the kingdom of Jerusalem. Although women did commonly serve as regents in Christian Europe, they were usually the mothers of child rulers.[148] It was therefore unusual that the female regent of

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[147] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility,* p.185.

[148] For more on mothers as regents and powerful female regents see Janna Bianchini, *The Queen's Hand: Power and Authority in the Reign of Berenguela of Castile* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Lindy Grant, *Blanche of Castile: Queen of France* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2016); Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land,* pp.175-190; Miriam Shadis, *Berenguela of Castile (1180-1246) and Political Women in the High Middle Ages* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

Jerusalem between 1243 and 1246, Alice of Champagne, was not the mother of King Conrad but rather his great-aunt and had claim on the responsibility as his heir . The appointed regent did not have to be an adult. This can be seen in the fact that the child-king Hugh II of Cyprus was technically regent of Jerusalem between 1253 to 1267 as he was the closest male in relation to the absent kings Conrad and Conradin, and heir to the previous regent, King Henry I. As a result of his tender age, a further bizarre custom developed in which the regent's regent would rule Jerusalem on their behalf. For Hugh II, two women served in this role: his mother Plaisance of Antioch was regent between 1253 and 1261, and his aunt Isabella of Lusignan was his regent from 1261 to 1264.[149]

There is evidence, not discussed elsewhere in scholarship, that alongside the development of rules concerning the inheritance of fiefs, the hereditary regency in the kingdom of Jerusalem may have influenced the creation of a hereditary role of constable in the county of Tripoli. Developments in Jerusalemite law had wider implications for the rest of the Latin East. Antioch and Cyprus utilised the legal system of the High Court of Jerusalem, although little evidence survives of the feudal customs of Tripoli. Customs that differed from the kingdom of Jerusalem, such as a hereditary constable, could have developed very organically. The law was largely customary, and precedent was influential on future interpretations of the law, regardless of whether the originators of that custom intended this change to be permanent. After all, the implementation of written and oral customs was decided through debate in the High Court, and

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[149] Edbury, *Kingdom of Cyprus,* p.35, p.88.

therefore jurors had the power to develop law to creatively solve issues that had emerged. The constable was a military figure who was responsible for organising and leading the army, and was a role found throughout the Crusader States. The role was usually given to skilled and well-connected men and was one of the most powerful offices in the kingdom of Jerusalem. Despite the masculine nature of this responsibility, multiple records survive that detail a legal dispute over the office of constable of Tripoli in the mid-thirteenth century. This is interesting as the position of constable was not usually hereditary, and because one of the claimants in this dispute was a woman. Eschiva of Le Puy appears to have successfully defended her possession of the office of constable on the basis of her relationship to the previous constable, her half-brother Thomas of Ham. Her nephew's criticism of her claim is not that she is a woman and unsuited to hold this role, but that she was illegitimate and that he was in fact the closest relative to Thomas of Ham.[150] It is extraordinary that a woman was able to claim this office due to its militaristic function. It was clearly understood by Bohemond VI, the claimants, and their lawyers that this was a hereditary office. This can be seen from the fact that the papacy was consulted. The remit of the papal court was limited to cases involving disputed legitimacy; Raymond claimed that he was the rightful holder of the office as his aunt Eschiva was illegitimate. He did not protest her claim to the office on account of her sex, suggesting that her sex was not viewed as a barrier to her serving as constable. It is possible, however, that she transferred the office of constable to a male relative.

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[150] 'Röhricht's *Regesta Revised*: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury *et al.* (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.2978.

The claim Eschiva's family held the role of constable began in the twelfth century with the career of a man recorded only as Renier de Baruth.[151] He served as constable of Tripoli between 1140 and 1143.[152] He had a daughter called Marie.[153] Renier's wife was likely the widow of Guy II of Beirut, Isabella de Mimars, as his daughter Marie is identified as the sister of the sons of Guy.[154] Like many women in the Latin East, the *Lignages D'Outremer* records Marie marrying several times. She first married Baldwin of Ibelin, lord of Ramla, and had no children by him. She then married William, the son of Eschiva de Bures, lady of Tiberias, and Gauthier de Fauquemberghes. With William, Marie had Eschiva.[155] Marie married for the third time to Gerard de Ham, constable of Tripoli between 1198 and 1217. Marie and Gerard had two children: Thomas, constable of Tripoli between 1227 and 1255, and Agnes.[156] In 1204 Eschiva appears in a charter that records her step-father's donation to the Hospital of Saint John.[157] Her sister Agnes is also included in this record, but Thomas is not, suggesting he was not born at this point. In this charter, Eschiva and her sister gave their consent to the donation of their parents' property, presenting an integrated

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[151] *Lignages D'Outremer,* p.113.

[152] La Monte, *Feudal monarchy*, p.259.

[153] *Lignages D'Outremer,* p.113.

[154] *Ibid,* p.113.

[155] *Ibid*, p.78.

[156] *Ibid,* p.61.

[157] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no. 1539 [accessed 17 January 2024].

unit despite the later legal wrestling that emerged in the 1250s. The evidence does not clarify how Marie's first two marriages ended, although the deaths of both husbands shortly after their marriage is likely due to the dates they last appear in the RRH.[158] The marriage of Eschiva's parents could have been argued to be illegitimate if her father had an earlier betrothal to another woman. This could have been the foundation of Raymond of Gibelet's claim that his aunt was illegitimate, although it is just as likely this was a ploy used to argue that the case should be reopened, considering that Eschiva won her case. All three of Marie's children married. Her son Thomas of Ham married Beatrix de Ravendel, but died without children.[159] The eldest daughter Eschiva married Hugh lord of Puy and they had a daughter: Marie of Le Puy.[160] The younger daughter Agnes of Ham married Hugh Gibelet lord of Bishmizzine, and their eldest son was Raymond, who contested his aunt's claim to the office of constable.[161] In his argument to be the rightful constable of Tripoli, Raymond referred to the 'tradition' of hereditary succession to the office. It seems likely that this practice had a longer history in the region but was unrecorded in surviving source material. The fact that Marie was the daughter, wife, and mother of a constable may suggest that it was an inherited position that was transferred through her bloodline, although Marie does not appear to have held the office personally so this seems unlikely. Other,

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[158] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no. 1539 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[159] *Lignageas D'Outremer,* p.113; RRR - *Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database*, http://crusades-regesta.com , no.2085 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[160] *Lignages D'Outremer*, p.101.

[161] *Ibid,* p.113, p.116.

seemingly unrelated, men served as constable during this period of domination over the office

by the Ham family, which makes the later insistence by Marie's descendants that the office was

hereditary even more bizarre.[162] Marie's father Renier did not appear to hold the role of

constable for his whole life. He ceased being constable by 1151, but for Marie to have been young

enough to have born her son Thomas of Ham after 1204, he must have fathered her decades

after this point, showing he was still alive. Therefore Marie did not inherit the office personally,

but an unrecorded relative may have served as constable during this period that initiated

hereditary inheritance for the office.

Pope Innocent IV (r.1243-1254) ordered for the dispute between Eschiva and Raymond to be

investigated and gave his deputies the power to call witnesses and enforce their eventual

ruling.[163] However, a later letter from 1 March 1255 recorded that the papal investigation had

been halted on the death of the patriarch of Jerusalem. Pope Alexander IV (r.1254-1261) ordered

for the instructions of the previous pope to be followed, with a key difference. Pope Innocent

had originally appointed powerful men to investigate the legitimacy of Eschiva. Considering he

was Genoese, he may have sought to make it harder for Bohemond VI to get his desired outcome

by appointing men beyond his influence and control, in order to benefit a member of the

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[162] La Monte, *Feudal monarchy in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem*, p.259.

[163] 'Röhricht's *Regesta Revised*: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury *et al.* (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.2978.

Genoese Gibelet family.[164] Pope Alexander decided to send less senior figures. The patriarch and archdeacon of Acre were more likely to be influenced by Bohemond VI. Pope Alexander was a member of the Segni family, as was the mother of Bohemond VI, so likely sought to advantage his kinsman through his adjudication of this dispute.[165]

It seems that Raymond's appeal was either rejected or abandoned.[166] The *Lignages D'Outremer* states that, descended from Eschiva of Le Puy, were further constables of Tripoli.[167] Eschiva's daughter Marie married John of Farabel. The office of constable and the title of lord of Puy was inherited by their eldest son William Farabel in 1277, either on his father or mother's death.[168] There were, therefore, five generations of the same family that held the office of constable, and by the middle of the thirteenth century that had become a hereditary role. We do not have the surviving material to confirm how this developed. Considering the extent to which legislative development was conducted through precedents, it seems likely that the development of the Jerusalemite regency into a hereditary office may have inspired this precedent in the county of Tripoli. As shown in the Haute Cour of Jerusalem, the outcomes of legal disputes were decided

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[164] Kathleen G. Cushing, 'Sinibaldo Fieschi (Pope Innocent IV) (1180/90-1254), in *Law and the Christian Tradition in Italy: The Legacy of the Great Jurists*, eds. Orazio Condorelli and Rafael Domingo (London: Routledge, 2020)*,* pp.70-81, at pp.70-71.

[165] Izzo, 'Anti'Foreign Sentiment', p.131.

[166] 'Röhricht's *Regesta Revised*: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury *et al.* (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.3047.

[167] *Lignages D'Outremer*, p.75-76; *Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani,* pp.375-377.

[168] *Lignanes D'Outremer,* p.102.

through debate rather than static legislation. The regency of Jerusalem may have been used in a legal dispute in Tripoli which led to the creation of a hereditary office of constable. The hereditary regency in Jerusalem could be seen as early as 1174, when Raymond III of Tripoli acted as regent for King Baldwin IV. He had claimed the regency on the basis that he was the king's closest male kin.[169] However, a precedent seems to have been established when Alice of Champagne successfully claimed the regency in 1243, so it is likely this development occurred in the county of Tripoli around this time also.

The extent to which Eschiva could have practically carried out her role as constable is unknown, but can be surmised due to her age and gender. As her parents' marriage appears to have been short, it can be safely estimated that Eschiva was born c.1190. This would have made her quite elderly by the contemporary standards of her time when she became constable in the 1250s. Therefore either the role of constable of Tripoli by this point was ceremonial and honorary to the extent that an elderly woman could carry out the role with the support of her suzerain lord, or it was an important role practically carried out by a kinsman of Eschiva. If this latter scenario was the reality, Eschiva transmitted power to her male kin, in a similar fashion to how the queens regnant and female regents of Jerusalem transmitted power to their husbands and male kin. Eschiva's son-in-law John Farabel and grandson William Farabel became constable in turn, suggesting that they likely represented Eschiva's authority during her lifetime. Eschiva's husband was likely deceased by the 1250s due to his lack of mention in the RRH and papal

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[169] William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea,* Vol. 2, p.400.

correspondence.[170] The successful candidacy of Eschiva of Le Puy also potentially reveals how impactful tensions were between the Gibelet and Antioch dynasties at this point in the county of Tripoli's history. As discussed later in this thesis, these families feuded further in the thirteenth century. Therefore, the fact that Eschiva had the support of Bohemond VI, as seen in that Raymond had to reach out to the papacy rather than his overlord, demonstrates that he preferred an imperfect candidate as constable rather than see a rival empowered and enriched. Fundamentally, regardless of how symbolic her role was as constable, it is significant that Eschiva was recognised by her contemporaries in this position. It suggests that the gendered limitations on female power were not as restrictive as previously assumed, and that women had considerable legal rights of inheritance.

Canon Law, Consanguinity, and Papal Dispensation

Canon law is the body of regulations that govern the Catholic Christian church and the lives of its congregation. In the medieval world it was utilised alongside secular legislation, and enforced through ecclesiastical courts. In the Latin East these courts held nominal jurisdiction in matters of marriage over the *Cour des Bourgeouis*. During the period of 'papal supremacy', the papacy doggedly investigated royal marriages it deemed uncanonical[171]. Although matters of matrimony had always been under the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, the change in what was

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[170] *Lignages D'Outremer*, p.101.
[171] Bartlett, *Blood Royal,* pp.45-48.

regarded as an incestous marriage meant that this jurisdiction became harder to enforce. The historically lax attitudes towards canon law found amongst the elite of the Latin East therefore caught the attention of a series of ambitious popes, as their belief in the Papal Supremacy led to them to increasingly involve themselves in the lives of temporal rulers. Pope Innocent III (r.1198-1216) was particularly energetic in his efforts to separate royal couples that had entered incestuous marriages. Innocent's successors were also keen to prevent the wealthy and powerful from entering marriages now considered illicit, that would have been perfectly valid before 1215, at which point the Fourth Lateran Council established new rules regarding cousin marriages. Enforcing these rules were difficult, due to the interrelated dynasties ruling across Europe, and so the papacy had to issue dispensations for a fee. The papal bulls of the thirteenth century reveal two key areas of dispute regarding the authority of women in the Latin East. First is the papacy's attempt to control the marriages of elites in the region and the impact this had on politically active women. Second is the evident tension between the monarchy and the ecclesiastical courts that sought to challenge their legislative primacy, especially in relation to the mistreatment of widows and orphans in the secular court system.

Aside from the secular courts in the kingdom of Jerusalem, there existed an ecclesiastical court in each diocese. They functioned as a legal system separate to the secular courts, but their remit did overlap somewhat with the rival legislative . The ecclesiastical courts had a level of jurisdiction over the secular courts in matters such as marriage, but these systems did occasionally clash due to the tendency of the Church to encroach on secular matters, and the secular politicisation of

marriage by the ruling elite.[172] The uneasy relationship between ecclesiastical and secular legislatures can be seen in the laws developed during the thirteenth century that directly contradicted long standing canonical views on marriage. The Assisses de la Cour des Bourgeouis introduced legislation that forbade marriages between the daughters of freed men and the sons of slave owners. James Brundage argued that, as the enslaved in the Latin East were those of the conquered population, this was likely an attempt to forbid 'intercultural unions' between Latin and non-Latin populations. This was a shift away from the earlier commonality of these marriages (as recorded in the chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres), in which settled crusaders married both Eastern Christian and 'Saracen' women, provided that they had first converted to Catholicism .[173] It was also in direct contradiction to canon law, as the Constantinian ban on marriage between free and unfree individuals had been disregarded by the church before the mid-thirteenth century.[174] Canon law did prohibit marriages on the grounds of *disparitas cultus* (disparity of worship). However, in the Latin East there was a legislative tendency to endeavour to preserve the legitimacy of children born from illicit marriages; this includes those from marriages between Latins and non-Latin Christians , which were considered by the bourgeois court as illicit but not necessarily invalid.[175] The *Haute Cour* utilised a Roman legal custom that

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[172] Adam M. Bishop, 'As it is Said in Scripture and in Law': The Bible in the Crusader Legal System', in *The uses of the Bible in crusader sources,* eds. Elizabeth Lapina et al (Leiden: Brill, 2017), pp.440-454, at p.441.

[173] James Brundage, 'Marriage Law', p.263.

[174] *Ibid,* pp.262-263.

[175] *Ibid*, p.263.

forbade widows from remarrying before a mandatory waiting period. This had been absent from canon law since the ninth century, and was directly criticised by Pope Alexander III (r.1159-1181) in the twelfth century.[176] This contradicted another marriage law found in the Assises in which heiresses had a feudal obligation to remarry in order to provide her suzerain lord with military service. Although a widow would be permitted a period to remain unmarried, this legislation convened canon law.[177] Canon law forbade restricting the right of women to marry, and restricted forced marriage. Although the Assises state that an heiress had to choose her husband, the fact that she was obliged to marry meant that she could not offer the consent required for a truly canonically licit marriage. These examples demonstrate how legislation in the Latin East deviated from canonical standards to suit the region's demographic and geographic anxieties.

Generally, the secular Assises produced in the thirteenth century did follow canon law when outlining potential impediments to a marriage. Consent of both parties was essential for a legal union. The marriage partners had to be of a minimum age. This was canonically accepted to be twelve for girls and fourteen for boys. The existence of a betrothal to another party before a marriage could also be an impediment, due to the legal significance of this agreement. Marital unions conducted during periods of fasting (such as Lent) were also illicit. Marriages could be illicit due to the relationship between bride and broom being incestuous, consanguineous (meaning they shared a common ancestor), or within the bonds of affinity (meaning they shared

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[176] *Ibid*, p.270.

[177] Philip of Novara, *Livre de forme de plait*, ed. Peter W. Edbury (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2009), p.161; John of Ibelin, *John of Ibelin: le livre des assises*, ed. Peter W. Edbury (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p.802.

a relation by marriage).[178]   The consummation of a marriage was also essential for it to be

considered legally binding. Divorce, as a civil separation of a married couple, was not permitted

in canon law . A marriage could be annulled, which decreed that it had never legally existed. The

children of annulled unions, as the product of illicit marriages in hindsight, were technically

illegitimate but this was enforced inconsistently; both Baldwin IV and Sibylla had been able to

inherit the throne of Jerusalem following the annulment of their parents' marriage on the

grounds of consanguinity.[179] Such restrictions were an issue in the small, interrelated baronial

class of the Latin East. The papacy could, therefore, grant a dispensation to allow such marriages.

The ruling elite of the Latin East, historically, had a lax attitude towards the importance of

canonically secure marriages. However, the papacy and patriarchs of Jerusalem generally allowed

this behaviour without significant punishment. Baldwin I of Jerusalem annulled his second

marriage to 'Arda' of Marash in 1105. Guibert of Nogent recorded that this was due to the fact

that she had been raped as she travelled from Edessa to Jerusalem. It is more likely, however,

that the marriage was annulled because her father Thoros could not afford her dowry.[180]

Baldwin's third marriage to Adelaide del Vasto was also annulled in 1117. The patriarch of

Jerusalem was deposed by Pope Paschal II for supporting this bigamous marriage but, after a

period of ill health, Baldwin recanted for this sin by abandoning his subsequent wife.[181] Pressure

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[178] Brundage, 'Marriage Law', p.261.

[179] William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea,* Vol.2, pp.300-301.

[180] Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States', p.144-143.

[181] *Ibid,* pp.145-147.

from the Haute Cour led Amalric to annul his marriage to Agnes of Courtenay in 1162, as she held very little political significance (especially compared to the Byzantine princess Amalric would later marry). There was also a possibility that the marriage was bigamous, as Agnes had been previously contracted to marry Hugh of Ibelin. Their marriage, with the support of the church in Jerusalem, was annulled on the grounds of consanguinity.[182] The separation of Isabella of Jerusalem and Humphrey of Toron in 1190 was very controversial due to the apparent pressure placed on the young Isabella to concede to the annulment and would later be subject to a papal investigation.[183] The political intensity of the kingdom of Jerusalem appeared to have lacked patience for the spiritual complexity of canon law, despite the religiosity of the polity in its establishment. The convention that marriages should not be performed during Lent was ignored when Baldwin IV married his sister Sibylla to Guy of Lusignan (this would later be a proposed justification for their political convenience separation); there was also a belief that the marriage had been conducted too prematurely, as the banns had not been announced for the appropriate period.[184]

The same urgency can be seen in the marriages of Isabella I of Jerusalem. The young Isabella was seemingly dragged from the side of Humphrey of Toron to marry Conrad of Montferrat. The immorality and licentiousness of the situation seems to have been largely blamed on Isabella.

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[182] Hamilton, *The Leper King*, pp.25-26.

[183] Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land,* pp.145-146.

[184] Nicholson, *Sybil, Queen of* Jerusalem, p.86.

The author of the *Itinerarium*, otherwise kind to Henry of Champagne, described his wife as 'easily schooled in wickedness.'[185] From a secular, Latin Eastern perspective, these marriages (however cynical and abrupt) prevented interregnums which could destabilise the vulnerable kingdom. From an ecclesiastical perspective however, these marriages were possibly non-consensual; this broke one of the fundamental requirements of a canonically legitimate union. Could a bride consent meaningfully with the level of pressure, familial and political, that surrounded Isabella? Were these repeated marriages a cycle of abuse towards a vulnerable woman who had lost several husbands in highly distressing circumstances? In writing about women in the medieval period, there is a focus on agency and therefore the discussion of how elite women could be victimised is often limited.

Whereas, as argued previously in this chapter, it is possible to view these marriages as decisions taken by Isabella to secure her own position as queen regnant of Jerusalem, the point still stands that, canonically, marrying to secure authority that you possess by dynastic right is hardly enthusiastic consent within a medieval or modern conception of the term . There is, of course, a wider question to be asked of whether consent could exist in the hierarchical system that functioned in the Latin East; men similarly faced such familial and political pressures, but unlike the female heiress did not have to provide military service by remarrying which had troubling

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[185] Helen Nicholson, 'The true gentleman? Correct behaviour towards women according to Christian and Muslim writers: From the Third Crusade to Sultan Baybars', in *Crusading and* Masculinities, eds. Natasha R. Hodgson, Katherine J. Lewis, Matthew M. Mesley (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp.103-104.

ramifications for the erosion of bodily consent. Canonical restrictions on marriage did not benefit the highly practical political culture that had developed in the Latin East, which can be seen in areas where the law deviated from the canonical standard. Feudal laws regarding the *servise de mariage* of heiresses and their frequent remarriages had wider ramifications for consent and also hurt some religious sensibilities as it was generally uncommon for widowed women to remarry in the medieval period. The desire for ease of separation can be seen in the Assises des Bourgeois which ruled that a marriage could be ended if the wife was quarrelsome and difficult to live with. Brundage noted that such an allowance is not found in canonical or Romanist legal traditions and is a very early example of such a practice.[186]

The papacy did make it more difficult for women to enter marriages it deemed immoral . The papacy had the power to issue dispensations that allowed related couples to marry. This can be seen in 1255, when Pope Alexander IV (r.1254-1261) gave permission for Hugh of Antioch-Lusignan (king of Cyprus 1267-1284 and king of Jerusalem 1268-1284) to marry Isabella of Ibelin, despite their relation within four degrees of consanguinity on both the maternal and paternal lines.[187] However, the papacy would sometimes refuse to issue these dispensations. The relationship between Alice of Champagne and the papacy shifted from one of mutual respect to one of mutual frustration due to the institution's continued interference in her marital life. The relationship was largely positive during the period in which she governed as regent for her young

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[186] Brundage, 'Marriage Law', p.266.

[187] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol. 1*,* p.458.

son, Henry I of Cyprus, between 1218 and 1223. However, it became more fraught due to the

succession dispute over the county of Champagne. On taking the cross, Henry II of Champagne,

had named his brother Theobald as his heir if he should die without children. On his death in

1197, Philip II of France invested Theobald III as count of Champagne without considering the

competing claims of Alice and Philippa, Henry's daughters in the Latin East.[188] The sisters later

contested this succession, and ended up in a longstanding dispute with Theobald's widow,

Blanche of Navarre, and her son Theobald IV. A legal dispute stretching across such a wide

geographic expanse led to the involvement of the papacy. Among Blanche's arguments in favour

of her son's claim to Champagne was her contention that Henry II of Champagne's marriage to

Queen Isabella I of Jerusalem had been illegitimate on the grounds of bigamy.[189] Pope Innocent

III appointed Cardinal Robert of Saint Stefano to investigate the marriage, which was judged to

have been annulled without the consent of the married couple. Pope Innocent's concern

regarding the violent deaths of Isabella's second and third spouses led him to order a tribunal of

the Roman Curia to investigate the series of marriages further.[190] This papal meddling potentially

had serious consequences for the political stability of the kingdom of Jerusalem. Bernard

Hamilton argued that this may have been the reason why the papal investigation into Isabella's

marriages did not finalise its conclusions. If the descendants of Conrad of Montferrat and Henry

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[188] Theodore Evergates, *The Aristocracy in the County of Champagne, 1100-1300* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), p.37.

[189] *Ibid*, p.39.

[190] Hamilton, 'Queen Alice of Cyprus', p.228.

of Champagne had been barred from the succession on account of their illegitimacy, the throne would have passed to the eldest daughter of Isabella and Aimery of Lusignan; this daughter, Sibylla, had been married to Leo I of Armenia, and Hamilton is doubtful that the barons of Jerusalem would have accepted the rule of an Armenian.[191] The papacy had too much vested interest in the stability of the kingdom of Jerusalem to risk investigating the succession further.

The interference of the papacy in the Champagne dispute was only one element of its behaviour that must have frustrated Alice. It also interfered in her efforts to remarry. In August 1223, Pope Honorius III ordered that a proposed engagement between Alice and William II of Dampierre, the constable of Champagne, be nullified due to their kinship.[192] Hamilton argued that it was likely Theobald IV who notified the papacy of this negotiation between Alice and William, who had been supportive of her claim to Champagne.[193] Alice did enter a second marriage when she wed Bohemond of Antioch-Tripoli in the winter of 1224-1225, without having secured a papal dispensation.[194] This reflects a general attitude towards the papacy found in the Latin East: act first, ask permission later. Honorius III ordered an inquiry into whether the couple were too closely related in August 1225.[195] However, the marriage between Alice and Bohemond was

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[191] *Lignages d'Outremer,* p.88.

[192] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol. 1*,* pp.250-251.

[193] Hamilton, 'Queen Alice of Cyprus', p.230.

[194] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol 1*.,* pp.278-279.

[195] Edbury, *Kingdom of Cyprus*, p.50.

dissolved before July 1229.[196] We know this as by this date, rumours outlined in papal correspondence state that Alice had sought to marry the Duke Peter of Brittany. This union was sought to add weight to Alice's claim to Champagne.[197] The reason for Alice and Bohemond's separation may have been the continuing reluctance of the papacy to grant them a retrospective dispensation, but it is as likely that Alice and Bohemond could no longer serve each other's political interests. Alice had ambitions for the throne of Jerusalem and Bohemond may not have appealed to the barons behind such a judgement. Bohemond was a young man in need of an heir, and he had not had any children with his older wife. The aforementioned plan to marry the duke of Brittany also failed, as Pope Gregory IX condemned the proposed engagement in 1229 as they were related within the fourth degree of consanguinity.

Alice was eventually able to marry for a third time. She married Ralph of Nesle in the 1240s.[198] Their marriage seems not to have been considered uncanonical, but if she had sought to appease canon law Alice had certainly sacrificed her earlier desire for a husband of impressive pedigree and power. This demonstrates why the elite of the Latin East was so dismissive of canonical restrictions. Alice was a woman with political aspirations, and marriage was a tool through which she hoped to realise her ambitions. She wished to marry a man who was powerful and had relevant influence over the disputes she fought in the Latin East and in Champagne; these men would, inevitably, be related to her. The papacy could have granted an exception, but it refused.

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[196] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol. 1*,* pp.288-289.

[197] *Ibid,* pp.288-289.
[198] Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land*, p.147.

This appears to have been a reaction to her behaviour as a political woman. It is also worth considering how willing the papacy was to grant dispensations to women who had already been married and had produced children. To what extent did the papacy support marriage as a vessel of intimacy and support for the later years of a woman's life? The papacy may have had cause to believe that a second marriage negatively impacted the fortunes of 'orphans' (usually understood to be children following the death of their father) over which the church held protection. This can be seen in how Alice of Champagne's marriage to Bohemond of Antioch-Tripoli was presented as an abandonment of her young son King Henry I of Cyprus in a papal record from 16 February 1226, as she had apparently undertaken this marriage without the knowledge or content of the Cypriot barons.[199] They opposed the match for fear that 'if the prince [Bohemond] was bailli of Cyprus…it would be the death and destruction of their little lord [King Henry I].' This concern can also be seen in the case study of the queen dowager of Cyprus, Plaisance of Antioch and her appeal for aid from the papacy following her second marriage.

The church believed it had a duty in protecting widows and orphans. This was expressed by Pope Honorius III in a papal bull from July 1218. Alice of Champagne had expressed fears that the kingdom of Cyprus would be disrupted by internal factors within following the death of her husband Hugh I. The pope reassured her, referring to the Church's duty of care towards 'widows, orphans, and oppressed children.'[200] Alice and her children were therefore placed under the

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[199] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vo.l 1*,* pp.278-279; Philip of Novara, *Wars of Frederick II,* p.67.

[200] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol. 1*,* pp.199-200, 201-202.

protection of the Apostolic See. The papacy could make the argument that it was unnecessary for a widow to remarry as she could rely on the pope to provide the protection, guidance and affection of a husband. The positive relationship that could exist between women and the papacy can be seen in the events surrounding Plaisance of Antioch's marriage to Balian of Ibelin. Fundamentally, a powerful woman in the medieval period could find that her husband was more of a rival than an ally. On 28 August 1255, Pope Alexander IV wrote to Archbishop Hugo of Nicosia and Bishop Stephen of Famagusta regarding the behaviour of Plaisance.[201] She was the daughter of Bohemond V of Antioch, and had married Henry I of Cyprus in 1250.[202] She was widowed in 1253 and served as regent for her son Hugh II.[203] In the correspondence, Alexander recounted that he had learnt in 1255 from Plaisance's envoys that she was living as the wife of Balian of Ibelin in an illicit union that resembled concubinage (this being the first marriage between a member of the princely house of Antioch and a member of the Ibelin family, although not the last). This dramatic denouncement of her conduct was likely an exaggeration designed to create an avenue through which the pope could grant a dispensation with few foibles. She was not the first woman in the region to enter a marriage that appeared respectable on the surface, only for it to be later decreed as incestuous, as discussed previously concerning Agnes of Courtenay and Alice of Champagne. This presentation of her behaviour was also potentially personally damning and shameful, if Plaisance was not so certain that she would be readily rehabilitated in the end.

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[201] *Ibid,* p.468-472.

[202] *Chronicle of Amadi,* p.196; *Lignages D'Outremer,* p.95.

[203] Edbury, *Kingdom of Cyprus,* p.35.

This relationship, the pope argued, placed her in a scandalous and spiritually dangerous position as Balian of Ibelin was related to her late husband, placing them within a relationship of affinity. The relationship between Plaisance and Balian broke down however, leading the queen dowager of Cyprus to appeal to Pope Alexander for an annulment. The pope recalled that Plaisance had separated from Balian as she had become remorseful.[204] It is certainly plausible to believe that Plaisance was genuinely remorseful following her marriage to Balian and sought to leave him for this reason. However, it is also reasonable to assume that Plaisance and Balian had been arguing over the degree to which he would hold power during the regency, and that the marriage broke down for political reasons. It was essential, however, for the pope to express his conviction in Plaisance's remorse, as this was a reasonable justification for his permital of an annulment rather than the bride merely getting cold feet due to a fundamental personal or political incompatibility between the couple. Balian of Ibelin then vengefully attempted to seize the regency of the young Hugh II of Cyprus for himself, justifying his claim through his marriage to the boy's mother.[205] As it was the duty of the pope to protect widows and orphans, Pope Alexander asked the addressed clergymen to rule the marriage between Plaisance and Balian as unlawful, and use ecclesiastical censure against those that continued to fight this ruling. Alexander also gave these men the power to 'summon the secular arm' against those that refused to obey Plaisance as regent for

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[204] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol. 1*,* p.468.

[205] This accusation against Balian appears in two similar papal records. *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol. 1*,* pp.199-200, 201-202.

the king. Plaisance and Balian's marriage was given a further hearing, recorded as taking place 27 February 1258.[206]

Before the pope and auditor of the trial, Cardinal-bishop Istvan Bansca of Palestrina, the litigants of the relevant parties argued their case. Balian defended the legitimacy of his marriage on the grounds that he and Plaisance had taken an oath to marry each other if a dispensation from the papacy was received within a year of their betrothal. He conceded that the marriage took place before the receipt of the dispensation, but a dispensation had been received from Pope Innocent IV after the marriage which therefore removed the affinity impediment. Plaisance's argument for the annulment rested on the importance of consent. She stated that she had already stopped residing with Balian by the time that the dispensation had arrived from Rome. Regardless of the former contract, she no longer consented to the marriage. David d'Avray argues that Plaisance's position had a strong grounding in canon law, as after the retroactive granting of a dispensation, consent had to be secured from both parties within the marriage to confirm its legality.[207] Plaisance and Balian may have lived as husband and wife, but she had the power to withdraw from the arrangement by utilising the canon law they had originally flouted when they embarked on their ill-fated marriage. Furthermore, Plaisance argued that the oath sworn had been on

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[206] *Ibid,* pp. 493-496.

[207] David d'Avray, *Papacy, Monarchy and Marriage 860-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p.183.

condition of her brother, Bohemond VI of Antioch's, support for the marriage.[208] Her brother

maintained his opposition to the marriage.[209] The consent of Bohemond was not needed for the

marriage to take place. Plaisance was a widow, and so her relatives had less influence over her

marital ventures. However, his opposition fed into the narrative Plaisance sought to present to

the pope, that in behaving unwise and hasty she had entered into an unacceptable union.

In his final judgement, Pope Alexander granted Plaisance the annulment. However, he did offer

Balian a further hearing if he wished to debate the oath taken and effectively 'force' Plaisance to

marry him.[210] It seems unlikely that this would have resulted in a victory for Balian, due to the

importance in canonical law of consent and the pope's apparent partiality towards Plaisance due

to her status as a vulnerable widow. d'Avray highlights how unusual a situation it was for a

woman to publicly demand an annulment in the medieval world.[211] Plaisance may have been

motivated to request this annulment due to her desire to marry a more prestigious suitor. A papal

letter from 1256 reveals that there were negotiations for her to marry a son of King Henry III of

England.[212]

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[208] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol. 1*,* pp. 493-496.

[209] Edbury, *Kingdom of Cyprus*, p.85.

[210] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol. 1*,* pp. 493-496.

[211] d'Avray, *Papacy, Monarchy and Marriage,* p.182.

[212] Röhricht's *Regesta Revised*: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury *et al.* (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.3163.

The church's protection of widows and orphans did prove on occasion to be frustrating for secular rulers. On one hand, women faced greater scrutiny of their sexuality and were patronised frequently to a humiliating extent. On the other hand, their presumed weakness meant that women were advantaged in acrimonious political environments due to ecclesiastical concern towards their fortune and safety. This can be seen in the example of Zabel of Armenia. Despite supporting her husband Amalric of Tyre when he usurped his brother King Henry II of Cyprus and Jerusalem in 1310, she was offered protection by the papal legate due to threats to her and her children's safety following the lord of Tyre's murder. From the house of the papal legate, she continued to threaten her political enemies in Cyprus and plotted her escape from the island with her brother King Oshin of Armenia. Her somewhat reprehensible behaviour was shielded from punishment, not only due to her brother in Armenia, but also her protection under the sanctuary of the church.[213] To a certain extent, Plaisance of Antioch was able to utilise the papacy's natural sympathy for a widowed mother to leave an unhappy marriage and secure greater power as regent. Pope Alexander may have also considered the destabilising effect Balian was having over the Latin East. Furthermore, as a member of the Segni family, he was a kinsman of Plaisance's mother, Lucia of Segni, so was likely influenced to respond to her request for an annulment positively.[214]

There is evidence which suggests women made use of the ecclesiastical courts to receive more favourable legislative treatment. In a papal bull from 26 July 1252, Pope Innocent IV relayed a

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[213] *Chronicle of Amadi*, pp.317-318.

[214] Izzo, 'Anti'Foreign Sentiment', p.131.

complaint to Robert de Nantes, the patriarch of Jerusalem, made by Henry I of Cyprus.[215] Henry

stated that legal disputes between widows and orphans against other lay people were supposed

to be settled in the secular courts, by the customs of the kingdom. However, he complained that

the prelates of his kingdom were bringing lay people before the ecclesiastical court at the request

of widows and orphans. The prelates are alleged, through the threat of excommunication, to

have forced these lay people before the court. In this they were circumventing the king's justice.

Pope Innocent was sympathetic to Henry's complaint, and ordered the patriarch to warn the

accused prelates that they should not interfere in cases outside of their jurisdiction. He asserted

that if this warning was ignored, an inquiry would be necessary which would lead to ecclesiastical

censure. The papacy may have taken a hard-line against this behaviour, but this may have more

to do with longstanding frustration with overeager prelates than with their opinion on the

jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical court. John of Ancona outlined the complexities of the debate in

his *Summae*.[216] There was no higher judge in the kingdom than the king. However, there would

be legal cases in which his judgement could not be impartial.[217] John therefore criticised the rigid

interpretations of advocates in the Latin East that the secular court should judge secular affairs,

and the ecclesiastical should judge ecclesiastical affairs. Rather, the ecclesiastical court should

have provided a service for the kingdom by judging cases involving the king's vassals so the

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[215] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol. 1*, pp.409-410*

[216] Rubin, *Learning in a Crusader City,* pp.100-104.

[217] *Ibid*, p.100.

legislative system was fairer.[218] Where these ill-informed knights were made vulnerable by this

system, it is interesting that the evidence from the papal bull suggests that some women were

either informed by their ecclesiastical connections or knew well enough themselves that these

alternative courts could provide a more appropriate arena for their legal disputes. The fact that

King Henry's complaint explicitly mentions widows and orphans as the main benefactors of these

legal practices demonstrates the ecclesiastical commitment towards the protection of these

groups, but also the ability of women to utilise this connection to their own benefit.

It is clear by the late thirteenth century that the papacy had reversed it earlier policy of trying to

prevent illicit unions. The papal bulls of Cyprus include dispensations for consanguineous

marriages, and direct references for the reasons for the necessity of these unions. The

dispensations that survive only concern the elite of Cypriot society. Dispensations would be

offered by the local church for those of lower social classes, whereas the papal court would

oversee marriages of great prestige. The political ramifications of an indissoluble, recognised

union were far more significant for the political elite of the kingdom. Furthermore, the decision

of the papacy was important to note, for it was almost certain that a marriage amongst the Latin

elite of this period would consist of a consanguineous union, due to the generations of

intermarriage between the great families of the Crusader States. In 1295, Pope Boniface VIII

(r.1294-1303) gave permission for Elisia le Tor, the daughter of the lord of Pera, to marry Peter

Chappe lord of Marchia; this dispensation was given due to her difficulty in finding an unrelated

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[218] *Ibid*, p.101.

spouse to marry.[219] In 1303, Alice, widow of this same Peter Chappe of Marchia, was given permission to marry her relative, Hugh of Ibelin; this was justified as the small size of Cyprus and the hostility of its neighbours made it difficult to find nobles of equal standing to marry on the island.[220] In 1312 this same justification was given when Pope Clement V gave permission for Maria d'Aguilier to marry her relative Henry de Novaria.[221] Pope Clement also in that year issued a dispensation for Stephanie d'Aguilier to marry William of Farabel, who were related by affinity as he had been married to her kinswoman Isabel.[222] The situation in Cyprus is given as the sole justification for these marriages . Papal support for consanguineous marriages were neither consistent or logical, but it appears by the late thirteenth and early fourteenth century there was an acceptance by the papacy that these dispensations had to be awarded to maintain the demographic stability of the island kingdom of Cyprus, following the loss of its mainland territories by 1291.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of legal treatises, charters, and papal documents, more can be understood about the position of women in the Latin East. Men and women were treated fairly equally in theory. Women held rights of succession to regnal and baronial titles, and could hold property in

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[219] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol. 2*, pp.204-205.

[220] *Ibid,* pp.284-285.

[221] *Ibid,* pp.421-422.

[222] *Ibid,* pp.422.

their own name. The importance placed on the principle of proximity of blood-line meant that women often had greater precedence in this system than in usual systems of medieval primogeniture . Women did have less visible personal agency than men in the High Court. The names of numerous male jurist-barons are known, but evidence for female education at the same level is not as apparent, although women would have the. Women could not speak before the High Court in the majority of circumstances, unless they oversaw a seigneurial court in their own right. However, this had a limited impact on their exertion of political power, as they could still utilise the talent and expertise of the great jurists of their age, just as Alice of Champagne worked alongside Philip of Novara to gain the regency of Jerusalem. Although the legal customs that forced women to remarry in order to retain power over their fiefs stripped women of a level of personal agency, there were still provisions which required her family or lord to secure an appropriate, and desired, spouse. This system did at least provide women with a choice of routes through which to negotiate their access to power. There were times in which the accession of women with hereditary rights was rejected, such as in the cases of Lucia of Tripoli and Maria of Antioch. However, in these instances it was often factors other than gender, such as advanced age and distance from the region, that contributed to this resistance. It is arguable, therefore, that men and women were treated reasonably equally in the High Court, and women were even treated advantageously in the ecclesiastical courts, as the Church had a duty to protect women and their children.

The collation of case studies in this chapter challenges the prevailing dismissal in the historiography of women exerting only 'symbolic' power. The power of the female regent and

queen regnant has been presumed to be weak as they governed alongside men. Their inclusion

in charter evidence has been treated as an example of their representational, rather than real,

political power. However, this chapter contends that power is power. It was these women who

held these titles in the law, not their male co-rulers, and their consent was essential. The consent

offered by the female regent and queen regnant has been much undervalued by historians

despite its clear importance in legal treatises and charters from the period. Within the utilisation

of charter evidence in this chapter, new ground has been broken in its discussion of Eschiva of Le

Puy. Her case study not only provides insight into a new avenue through which women could

hold power in the Latin East, it also supports the view that Levantine law was responsive to

evolving customs and that the introduction of hereditary offices in the thirteenth century may

have had an impact beyond that of the hereditary regent, seen in the kingdom of Jerusalem. New

contributions have also been made through this chapter's consideration of the experiences of

women in both secular and ecclesiastical courts. Generally, in the historiography of law in the

Latin East feudal and canonical law has been addressed separately. However, the lives of women

in the Latin East were shaped by both types of law, and as the charter evidence testifies, smart

and well-connected women were able to use this competing court system to strengthen their

chances against their male counterparts among the Latin elite

3. The Female Elite and Their Patronage: financial independence, expression of identity, and the archaeological legacy of women in the Latin East.

The commissioning of artistic works, the founding and renovation of buildings, the giving of gifts and donations, the granting of appointments, and the protection of non-Latin Christian groups are all examples of patronage performed in the Latin East. Our understanding of patronage is muddied due to lack of information regarding the motivations for these transactions. For example, in June 1255 John L'Aleman and his wife Marguerite, lord and lady of Caesarea,

promised the master of the Hospitallers preference in the sale of their property of '*le moulin Rout*' in the advent that the couple or their heirs wished to sell the estate.[223] Could the offer of preferential treatment in future land sales be viewed as an act of patronage towards a military order, or was it a self-interested securement of a buyer that could afford to pay a substantial sum for the proffered lands? The first suggests patronage was offered as an act of piety, whereas the latter may lead the modern interpreter to believe that religious devotion played a less prominent role in the financial agreement. As Therese Martin argues, 'patronage was always multi-faceted, even when done out of piety' due to the 'indebtedness' that was associated with gift-giving in the medieval world.[224] It is essential to embrace these complexities, as the medieval period saw multi-faceted definitions of 'patronage' and 'commerce.' The motivations for patronage are difficult to gauge as both personal and pragmatic justifications were often given. The level of personal involvement by the individual patron can also be difficult to measure. Therese Martin writes that in the 'medieval view' both artist and patron were seen as 'makers' of a work, as the latter ordered its creation and directed its process towards completion.[225] Commerce was the spending of actual monies, as well as the utilisation of spiritual, political, and familial 'wealth'.[226]

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[223] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.3082.

[224] Therese Martin, 'Exceptions and Assumptions: Women in Medieval Art History', in *Reassessing the Roles of Women as 'Makers' of Medieval Art and Architecture*, pp.1-36, p.10.

[225] *Ibid*. p.4.

[226] *Ibid,* pp.4-10.

Patronage and financial transactions therefore demonstrate a variety of 'wealths' for elite women, which was purposeful as it served as a celebration of the diversity of surplus in their lives. The available evidence offers insight into the types of patronage offered by women and the possible motivations for the significant building projects undertaken by women.

This chapter has two main aims. First, to demonstrate the ways in which women held property and utilised their wealth in this period. Second, to reveal how patronage can unveil some of the complexity of religious faith amongst the Latin elite of the Levant. This chapter will argue that rather than this patronage being a 'cultural performance' used to further a relationship with Eastern Christians it was part of a wider, genuine demonstration of a duality of religious faiths.

The main source group consulted in this chapter are the surviving charters from the Latin East. However, due to irregular source survival, there is a predominant Hospitaller presence amongst the corpus of sources. As an incredibly wealthy organisation during a period of aristocratic land and asset poverty in the Latin East, it is likely that they dominated the fiscal landscape of the region. However, their presence in the sources is likely over inflated due to poor record survival from other religious institutions and feudal courts. The second source corpus is the artistic and architectural evidence that survives from the period of Latin rule in the Levant.

Patronage has been a consistent interest of Crusades scholars, yet the actual number of works on the subject is limited. Jaroslav Folda's work on crusader art has been especially vast and

influential, as he has catalogued surviving artwork from the Latin East from 1098 to 1291.[227] The

majority of works on patronage, however, have focused on the reign of Queen Melisende

(r.1131-1153). It is from this period that the majority of major crusader architectural sites

originate, and her patronage is recorded by William of Tyre and is further evidenced by the

survival of the Melisende Psalter.[228] These works explore the artistic composition of the

Melisende Psalter, the financial spending of Queen Melisende, and the implication these

recorded acts of patronage have on our understanding of Melisende's cultural identity. The

continuing academic interest in crusader patronage is evidenced by the advertisement of two

research projects addressing this topic at the universities of Haifa and Fribourg.[229] The thirteenth

century is a period which is in particular need of exploration due to a lack of works specifically

addressing patronage in this era. This chapter will address the legacy of Melisende due to her

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[227] Jaroslav Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land: 1098-1187* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press,

1995); Folda, *Crusader Art in the Holy Land: from the Third Crusade to the Fall of Acre, 1187-1291* (Cambridge:

Cambridge University Press, 2005).

[228] Jaroslav Folda, 'Melisende of Jerusalem: Queen and Patron of Art and Architecture', pp.429-477; Helen A.

Gaudette, 'The Spending Power of a Crusader Queen: Melisende of Jerusalem', in *Women and Wealth in Late

Medieval Europe*, ed. Theresa Earenfight (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp.135-148; Avital Heyman, 'Was

the East Latin?', *Mediterranean Historical Review*, 36:1 (2021), pp.95-151.

[229] 'Crusader Art and Architecture in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099-1187): A Reevaluation of Patronage-

Patterns and Audiences' is a project led by Gil Fishhof at the University of Haifa. 'Portraying Medieval Women: The

Materiality of Female Images and Art Patronage in the Latin East (12th-15th centuries)' is a project led by Rafca Nasr

at the University of Fribourg.

importance as a precedent for the patronage delivered by her successors in the thirteenth century, but will expand the discussion of wealth and patronage in the Latin East by examining the activities of other elite women through physical and charter evidence.

Evidence of Female Property Ownership in the *Regni Regesta Hiersolymitani*

Frequency of Women Holding Property

The frequency with which the *Regesta Regni Hiersolymitani* records the ownership of lands and properties by women demonstrates that this is not a case of 'exceptionalism' but rather a case of the Latin East being an environment in which women enjoyed a relatively high level of financial independence. A lengthy account of property owned by the Teutonic Order shows property passing through female hands. In a charter, from c.1243-1250, land and buildings owned by the Hospital in Acre are listed.[230] Of the thirty-seven references to purchases, twelve involve women holding a type of property. The extent to which these women are identified is inconsistent. A vineyard was brought for a hundred besants from the daughter of 'Hugh Merlin'. Another vineyard, owned by the wife of a lord 'Martinus', is referenced in another land sale. From the lady 'Guncelina' a garden was purchased for eleven besants. A house was purchased from a lady 'Iuliana' for eight besants. From a lady 'Margarita' pieces of land, a garden, and three houses were purchased for eighty-five besants. A piece of land was also purchased from an unnamed

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[230] *Tabulae Ordinis Theutonici: Ex Tabularii Regii Berolinensis Codice Potissimum*, ed. E. Strehlke (Berlin, 1869; repr.: Toronto: University of Toronto, 1975), no. 128.

lady in Jaffa for thirty besants. The Hospital purchased the inheritance of 'Bonicasus' from his family, which included his wife and his daughter-in-law who were named as heirs. A house outside Acre belonging to a family, including the wife of 'Rudulfus', was brought for two-hundred-and-fifty besants. Other more substantial properties owned by the Hospital included a house called *Corsue* within the lordship of Tiberias, which had been donated by the lord 'Philippus de Malgastel' and his wife, Marguerite de Diaspre. Philip was a pro-Hohenstaufen knight that was proposed as an imperial baili in 1232. He was widely disliked for loyalty to Frederick II, and attacked by Philip of Novara in his chronicle for his reported effeminacy and homosexuality.[231] A lady 'Hensalme', the sister of the lord 'Monebof', sold to the Hospital a '*wolta'* and five *'carrucate'* of land at Saphet in Upper Galilee.[232] The '*wolta'* refers to an arched structure of an unspecified function. A *carucate* was an area of land, measured as the land farmed by a team of eight oxen during a year. The Hospital also had financial dealings with nuns in the city of Tyre. It brought from them '*curia'* beside its infirmary for a thousand besants. This document offers a quantitative understanding of how frequently assets passed through the female line, but also evidence the diversity of the types of property owned by women. Recorded assets were as substantial as grand houses and arable land, to small gardens. While we see the frequent transmission of authority over a property from husband to wife on their marriage, the holding of property was a family affair. Female heiresses had agency to sell and purchase at will, and women in the familial unit would have to grant permission for the sale of property.

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[231] Philip of Novara, *Wars of Frederick II,* pp.162-163.
[232] *Tabulae Ordinis Theutonici,* no. 128.

Female Consent for Financial Transactions

The charters do not always clearly detail the extent to which a woman was involved in the act of patronage or financial transaction. For example, women are commonly described as giving their consent to their husband's sale or donation. Other charters however do not specify that the woman in question are offering their consent, and rather give the impression that they were directing important financial decisions. However, as outlined previously in the thesis, a woman's consent was important. In cases where the sale or grant regarded property she had brought to the marriage, her consent was essential in order for the agreement to be legitimate. However, even in sales or grants concerning her husband's disposal of his inheritance, a wife's consent could be valuable to prevent future attempts to invalidate the transfer. This importance can be seen in a charter from 1257 in which Florentius, the bishop of Acre, records his dispute with the Hospital of Saint Mary concerning the house of the Capenegre family.[233] A married couple, Guillelmus and Philippa Capenegre, left the house to different religious organisations in their respective wills. The military order claimed that they owned the house due to a sale or grant by Guillelmus, whereas the bishop of Acre claimed that the house belonged to the church as it had been offered as a grant by Philippa. An agreement was reached that effectively recognised that the bishop did have possession of the house; Gillelmus' decision had been voided by the absent of his wife's consent for the transaction. The bishop would therefore receive an annual rent of forty Saracen besants paid on the kalends of January and July. If the Hospitallers occupied the

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[233] 'Röhricht's *Regesta Revised*: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury *et al.* (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.3200.

house for their own use, they would then owe the bishop a rent of ten Saracen besants. This case highlights the importance of a wife's consent in financial transactions, and the extent to which an agreement was voided if such an agreement was not properly recorded.

A similar disagreement was had on a much grander scale when Beatrix of Courtenay decided to sell her inheritance in 1220.[234] Beatrix was the elder daughter and heiress of Joscelin of Courtenay. She married the German crusader Count Otto of Henneberg between 1198 and 1205. Jonathan Riley-Smith highlighted that Beatrix married Otto without the consent of King Aimery of Jerusalem and Cyprus, and was in 'breach of her *service de marriage*.'[235] This concept, discussed in greater detail later in the thesis, was essentially a practice where female vassals provided military service by marrying a husband approved of by her suzerain to contribute to the military health of the kingdom on her behalf.[236] Initially the couple were content to remain in the Latin East, however by 1220 they had decided to sell their domains in the Latin East and reside in Otto's homeland. Their desire to sell their substantial holdings after years of residence in the Latin East may have reflected Otto's homesickness, the practicality of raising his heir in a land distant from his homeland, and the general pessimism in the region that the loss of further Christian lands was likely. The Courtney domains, worthless if conquered, would sell for a great

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[234] RRR - *Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database*, http://crusades-regesta.com, no. 1845 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[235] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility,* p.147.

[236] *Ibid*, pp.8-9.

fortune if sold to a military order. The fact that charters of the thirteenth century include provisions in the event of the territory being in 'Saracen' control demonstrates that this was a constant concern for landowners in the region.[237] A charter from May 1220 records that King John of Jerusalem oversaw the sale of the Courtenay estate, being paid five hundred 'marchae argenti' for his agreement; although the payment of the overseeing monarch was commonplace, it may have assuaged a little of the frustration the crown must have inevitably felt to witness such a substantial property entering the hands of the Hospital of St Mary.[238] Whereas Beatrix and Otto had owed homage to the king of Jerusalem, the new owners of their property would not owe the crown services.[239] With the consent of their son and heir (Otto), Beatrix and Otto sold to the Hospital 'Castellum Regis' and its dependencies (aside from a singular *casale* called Ihazon) for seven thousand *marcae argenti* and two thousand Saracen besants.[240] Additionally, the Hospital would also pay 3250 besants to Beatrix's brother-in-law William of Amigdala; although listed as an unspecified 'debt,' this likely refers to the fact that Beatrix and Otto sold property

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[237] *RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hiersolymitani Database,* http://crusades-regesta.com, no. 1845, 2025 [accessed 17 January 2024]; 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.3200.

[238] RRR - *Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database*, http://crusades-regesta.com, no. 1845 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[239] Rubin, *Learning in a Crusader City*, p.111.

[240] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no. 1845 [accessed 17 January 2024].

that appears to have belonged to her sister Agnes.[241] A charter from July 1244 shows that the

Hospital were forced to negotiate terms with 'Iacobus de Amigdala', the nephew of Beatrix, as

their purchase of the Courtenay inheritance had apparently not been done with the consent of

the younger heiress Agnes of Courtenay, the wife of William of Amigdala.[242] In recognition of his

legal rights, the Hospital agreed to return half of the land of Maron to their son James, along with

half of its rents (3500 besants). In return, Jacob of Amigdala relinquished his rights to the rest of

the Courtenay inheritance. The charter also refers to Jacob's previous sale of half of 'Castrum

Regis' to the Hospital for 6400 besants, suggesting that due to their failure to account for Agnes'

lack of consent the order may have paid for the land twice at astronomical cost. Furthermore,

Jacob also received 2500 besants annually for leasing to the Hospital half of Maron. The failure

to receive the consent for sales and donations could therefore create years of expensive legal

arbitration.

Consent to financial transactions was given by wives across the elite of the Latin East, including

the monarchy. Isabella I of Jerusalem is recorded as having given her consent to two financial

transactions between her husband Aimery and the Hospital of St Mary of the Germans in 1198

and 1200. Maria of Jerusalem gave her agreement for her husband John's sale to the Hospital of

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[241]   RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no. 1845 [accessed 17

January 2024].

[242]   'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-

regesta.com/), no.2461.

Saint John in Jerusalem in 1212. Isabella II of Jerusalem is recorded as confirming her husband Emperor Frederick's sale of property to the Hospital of St Mary of the Germans in Jerusalem in 1226. The emphasis on the consent of the queen regnant in the financial affairs of the kingdom was a key element of their continued importance into the thirteenth century, even if the majority of the day-to-day running of the kingdom was in the hands of their husband or male regent. That this consent is also found in charters recording the financial dealings of the baronial and bourgeois class suggests that this principle gave women considerable legal powers across the Latin East. In 1250 lady Helvis of Cayphas gave consent for her husband 'Garssie Alvarez' to grant land in perpetual alms to the abbot 'Gauvain' and his church of Monte Thabour.[243] However, the importance of consent by all with vested interests in the property meant that other women in the family are also shown to have granted their consent for transactions.

In 1204 Gerrard of Ham sold to the Hospital of Saint John of Jerusalem his 'honour of Tuban' for 2100 Saracen besants.[244] Included in this transaction was a cloth of samite, an expensive fabric used to adorn the clergy and ecclesiastical spaces.[245] This cloth is specified in the charter to have

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[243] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.2768.

[244] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no. 1539 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[245] Anna Muthesius, 'Silk in the Medieval World', in *The Cambridge History of Western Textiles,* ed. David Jenkins (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp.325-354, at p.343.

been from Gerard's wife Maria, suggesting that she possessed considerable wealth independent of her husband and may have donated this to the Hospital rather than sold it.[246] This transaction received the consent of Maria, as well as the consent of her daughters, Eschiva and Agnes. In 1249 Jean Alaman, the lord of Caesarea, sold his lands near Acre to the Hospital of St Mary of the Germans with the consent of his wife Marguerite, and his sister Helvis.[247] A charter from 1217 records that 'Ranaldus' made a charitable grant to the Hospital of St John in Jerusalem of a rent of two hundred Saracen besants a year.[248] This would be taken from the annual rent of two-thousand-two-hundred besants paid by the Hospital to his family for the '*Margatum'*. This charter details that Ranaldus' grant received the consent of his father, brother-in-law, and his sister Agnes.[249] In a charter from 1255, Agnes de Ronay, confirmed that her sons, Guido and Nicholaus, had made a gift to the Hospital of Saint John. With this consent, she renounced her claim to the dower, gift, and *'Auxilium Velleianum.'*[250] These examples demonstrate the claims that women held on property, and the importance given to their consent in financial transactions.

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[246] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no. 1539 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[247] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.2735.

[248] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no. 1746 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[249] *Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani*, charter 1746.

[250] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no. 3070.

It also demonstrates a level of equality between men and women in financial matters. Their claims to property were treated very evenly, as evidenced by both female and male relatives having to grant their consent for sales and donations.

Donations and Sales

The RRRH includes several charters recording donations by women. In 1207 'Aalys, the daughter of Turginus' gifted four '*carrucate terre'* and the '*casale'* of Geschale to the Hospital of Saint John. This was a substantive gift, as Aalys' father had brought this land and property for a thousand besants from King Guy and Queen Sibylla of Jerusalem.In addition to this donation, she also gifted an annual rent of a hundred besants paid to her for houses held by Thomas Pisancus in Acre; the patriarch Albert of Jerusalem confirmed that the Hospitallers would continue to receive these rents even in the event of their patron dying without a legal will.[251] In 1259, the widowed lady Isabelle of Adelon gifted to the Hospitallers six hundred besants that had been assigned as her dower on her marriage to Hughes Alaman.[252] This dowry had been from houses in Acre that Isabelle's brother-in-law Jean Alaman, the lord of Caesarea, had sold to the Hospitallers for

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[251] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no. 1596 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[252] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.3285.

fifteen-thousand Saracen besants in 1255.[253] The will of lady Marguerite of Sidon, recorded in 1254, detailed that a chaplaincy in the church of St John would be founded, and maintained by her son lord Julian of Sidon.[254] The RRRH also records a donation made from outside the Latin East. In 1245, Mathilde of Courtenay, the countess of Nevers, donated forty 'libre tutornesium' annually to the bishop of Bethlehem and his successors. In return for this donation, the chapter at Bethlehem would pray for Mathilde and her family.[255] Alongside these examples are other charters that contain a husband and wife donating alongside each other. These do not contain specific mention of the wife offering her consent for the sale, which suggests that she may have wished to be publicly shown as an equal participant in the act of patronage. In 1260, before the burgess court at Acre, the knight John Grifus and his wife Agatha donated to the Hospitallers their entire heritage and its appurtenances which they held in Monte Musardo.[256] They granted an annual rent of sixteen Saracen besants to be paid by their tenant, a widow called 'Ysabella Montifredi', to the Hospitallers also. Although it appears that Agatha had made the decision

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[253] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no. 3082, 3285.

[254] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.2990.

[255] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.2498.

[256] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.3290.

jointly with her husband, the legal importance of the wife's consent meant that she did detail in the charter her renouncement of her rights over the property.

There is an overlap between patronage and sales of property, as people selected the organisations they wished to receive their property, even if there was monetary compensation. This overlap can be seen in the relationship between the Hospitallers and Jean and Marguerite, the lord and lady of Caesarea. In 1249 Jean, with the permission of his wife and his sister Helvis, leased his lands near Acre to the Hospitallers.[257] The charter does not reveal the amount paid by the Hospital, but does detail the value of the '*casalia*' by their annual return of Saracen besants: Mergecolon (2000), Seisor (700), Nef (600), Beitegen (400), Gelon (200), and la Haseinie (100). However, this decision to lease this land to the Hospitallers was not only an act of self-interest, as several charters from 1255 show that Jean and Marguerite patronised their organisation. In May 1255 Jean granted 'Rabattum' as alms to the Hospitallers. This site included houses, an oven, a mill, and various unspecified lands and buildings, the revenue from which the Hospitallers were also granted.[258] For this grant Jean requested that the Hospitallers should continue his payment to Isabelle de Terremonde, lady of Adelone of 600 Saracen besants for the remainder of her life.

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[257] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.2735.

[258] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.3072.

Isabelle was Jean's widowed sister-in-law.[259] This charter is quite unusual as Marguerite does not give her consent to this donation. The property discussed in the charter likely did not concern her inheritance but John L'Aleman's own domains, and therefore her consent was not required. As Jean and Marguerite were having frequent financial transactions with the Hospitallers at this time, it is likely that some charters may not have survived from this period of increased patronage. This is an instance in which patronage and business directly intersected. If an individual were to give an organisation preference in a future sale, this would also be an act of patronage as it advantages an organisation against their competition. Jean and Marguerite's devotion to the order resulted in them becoming *confreres* of the Hospitallers in June 1255.[260]

Selling land and property to the Hospitallers could be part of a wider patronage of the organisation. The order is recorded as partaking in a high frequency of financial transactions in the thirteenth century, and while this is partially due to the survival of their records, these charters also demonstrate how they were one of the few organisations able to afford to purchase land and properties in the Latin East during this period.[261] The wealth of the order can be seen in the fact that they financed the marriages of royal Armenian princesses. A charter from 1214

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[259] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.3285.

[260] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.3082.

[261] Rubin, *Learning in a Crusader City,* pp.107-112.

records that, in return for a loan of twenty-thousand Saracen besants, King Leon I of Cilician

Armenia (r.1198-1219) pledged significant equities to the Hospital of St John to guarantee his

repayment.[262] This loan was to serve as his daughter Stephanie's dowry for her marriage to John

of Brienne, the father of Isabella II of Jerusalem.[263] In reflection of the expensive loan, Leon

offered 'Giguerii' as guarantee; this included the holdings of 'Abbaessa, Agnyas, Nigrinum, Lacrat,

Iugmarzeban, Gardessiam, Iucuteman, Iugmelic, Keniz' and the port of 'Calamella,' as well as

commercial rights and '*tablagium*,' the levy on money-changing.[264] If Leon failed to repay the

loan by the agreed date, the Hospitallers would occupy these territories until it was settled. The

Hospitallers appear to have funded another Armenian marriage in 1252. A charter records an

agreement between King Hetoum I of Cilician Armenia (r.1226-1270) and the dowager lady

Marguerite of Sidon to marry their children. The dower of the Armenian princess Euphemie

would be twenty-five-thousand Saracen besants. Eight-thousand would be paid immediately,

followed by a further seventeen-thousand when the marriage of Euphemie and lord Julian of

Sidon was finalised. The charter stated that these payments would be made so long as Julian and

Marguerite abided by their agreement with the Hospitaller master William de Chastel and the

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[262] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no. 1697 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[263] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no.1697 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[264] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no.1697 [accessed 17 January 2024].

count of Jaffa, John of Ibelin. This suggests that these men may have provided the bride's dower. This was a substantial sum of money, which can also be seen by the provision in the agreement that Euphemie would have the service of three knights.

Charter evidence can be utilised therefore to demonstrate the significant level of wealth held by women in the Latin East during the thirteenth century. Although much of the physical sites mentioned in these documents are lost to time, some material evidence does survive and demonstrates more visibly how women would spend their money in the Latin East, and how they intended to present themselves through this expenditure on acts of patronage.

Cultural performance or religious expression? The patronage of royal women 1136-1237

Theories of patronage and identity

Although she has already been the subject of significant works, it is important for this chapter to discuss Melisende's patronage due to her position as the precedent for female power in the Latin East. Melisende (1105-1161) was the daughter of the Frankish, Latin Christian Baldwin II of Jerusalem (c.1075-1131) and his Armenian, Greek Orthodox wife Morphia of Melitene.[265] It is Melisende's relationship with her mother Morphia that is central to investigations of the queen's religious patronage of Eastern Christians. In the period from the outset of Melisende's reign in

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[265] William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea,* Vol. 1, p. 450; Palmer, 'Queen Melisende and the Jacobite Estates', at p.79 n.15.

1131 to the death of her son King Amalric in 1174, the kingdom of Jerusalem saw the construction

and restoration of multiple sites; this frequency in building work was likely conducted due to the

relative political harmony of the kingdom, when compared to that which had preceded and

would follow. Scholarship addressing the patronage of Melisende has focused on six works:

Bethgibelin Castle, the Convent of Bethany, *Malquisinat* Street, the Holy Sepulchre, St. James

Cathedral, and Melisende's Psalter. This overview of Melisende's patronage will exclude the

foundation of Bethgibelin Castle by Melisende and Fulk in 1136, as it is an outlier among works

of a religious nature. In addition to these sites of patronage, this overview will also consider the

protection offered by Melisende to the Syriac Christian community of Jerusalem against the

veteran crusader Geoffrey of the Tower of Saint David and sites of patronage by Melisende

associated with Eastern Christianity. Although this thesis surveys women in the thirteenth

century, this overview of Melisende's pagtronage is included in this thesis as it acts as a useful

point of comparison to Melisende's great-granddaughter, Alice of Chamapagne.

Historians have largely accepted that patronage served a political and strategic purpose, but have

also given some credence to the idea that those who patronised Eastern Christians in the Latin

East may have held some religious sympathies outside of the Latin Church. In his seminal work

Christopher MacEvitt introduced his theory of 'rough tolerance.' This theory, that Latin and non-

Latin Christians interacted substantially in the Latin East, challenged previous segregationist

models that had long been applied to the region. MacEvitt argued that tolerance and violence

were 'strategies' used simultaneously by the Frankish elite, in an environment in which there was

flexibility in social and religious identities.[266] In his discussion of Queen Melisende's support for

the Syrian Christian community of Jerusalem, MacEvitt suggested that this patronage may have

reflected her 'private piety.' However, he also argued that Melisende's support was pragmatic

and political, and intended to strengthen support for the monarchy.[267] Avital Heyman also

stresses the importance of Melisende's mixed heritage, but describes her patronage as a 'cultural

performance,' suggesting that it was not a genuine expression of faith. She also identifies

Melisende as a 'cultural agent,' a sympathetic but fundamentally Latin Christian 'agent' that

improved the relationship between the Frankish monarchy and non-Latin Christian groups.[268]

These views, that focus on the political expediency of Melisende's sympathy for non-Latin groups,

are countered by Rastam Shukurov's theory of 'dual identity' which has not previously been

applied to Franks in the Latin East. Shukurov explored the complex expressions of faith by women

in the Islamic harem tradition. The Seljuks of Anatolia expressed interest in both Islam and

Christianity due to their own mixed heritage through inter-religious marriages. Shukurov

contended that this had little to do with 'tolerance.' Tolerance is to 'tolerate others', whereas

the Seljuk sultans 'bore both religions and both cultures' within themselves simultaneously. He

also argued that the Seljuks do not provide an example of 'syncretism', which means that the

elements of different cultures and religions are combined. Rather, 'present unmixed in the

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[266] Christopher MacEvitt, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East: Rough Tolerance* (Philadelphia:

University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), p.14.

[267] *Ibid*, p.122.

[268] Heyman, 'Was the East Latin?', p.99.

mentality' of ruling Seljuks, were 'differing beliefs, languages and modes of life...'[269] Due to her mixed religious parentage and her acts of patronage towards both Eastern and Latin Christians, it is possible that Melisende held two differing faiths, unmixed, within her person. This theory by Shukurov has not been utilised in the historiography of the crusades, but is worth considering in this chapter's exploration of whether patronage by elite women was 'cultural performance' or a genuine expression of religious faith.

Patronage of Melisende

The founding of the convent of St. Lazarus in Bethany by Melisende in 1138 was a personal project, conducted without her husband King Fulk. Melisende's sister, Iveta, had chosen a religious life, and so the queen decided to establish a convent so that her sister would not have to serve a mother superior, as befitting her royal status. Melisende was also motivated by a desire to promote her own sovereignty by constructing a place that would be associated with her dynasty, and would demonstrate her wealth and piety.[270] That Melisende founded the convent without the involvement of her husband contextualises this act of patronage as a personal

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[269] Rustam Shukurov, 'Harem Christianity: The Byzantine Identity of Seljuk Princes', in *The Seljuks of Anatolia: Court and Society in the Medieval Middle East*, ed. A.C.S. Peacock and S.N. Yildiz (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), p.134.

[270] William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea,* Vol.2, p.132.

expression of sovereignty that likely attempted to further carve out Melisende's importance

within her co-ruling arrangement with Fulk. Gaudette also highlights the number of witnesses

included in the charters relating to the purchase of land for the convent as a demonstration of

how this act of patronage functioned as a public display of sovereignty.[271] The convent at Bethany

is the first of many examples from Melisende's reign that demonstrate how patronage often

blended religious and political motivations in their creation.

Patronage that was pious was also politically expedient. The foundation of Jerusalem's

Malcuisinat Street in 1152 also demonstrates the duality of patronage, as both a pious and

political act. *Malcuisinat* Street or 'The Street of Bad Cooking' may have been built by Melisende

alongside the parallel 'Street of Herbs' and 'Covered Street'. These streets provided food and

shelter for pilgrims in Jerusalem which by the 1150s were visiting the city in great numbers.[272]

The founding of *Malcuisinat* Street took place after Melisende had been forced to secede half of

her kingdom to Baldwin to appease him.[273] This act of patronage, during this period of political

and personal crisis for Melisende, demonstrated her piety and potential to improve the kingdom

further.

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[271] Gaudette, 'The Spending Power of a Crusader Queen', pp.140-142.

[272] Gaudette, 'The Spending Power of a Crusader Queen', pp.143.

[273] Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', p.167.

The charter evidence reveals that Melisende performed acts of patronage frequently towards Latin ecclesiastical institutions. Some of these charters were produced by Fulk with Melisende's consent, but in her widowhood the queen appeared in many charters alone. The Templum Domini, the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem which following the First Crusade was consecrated as a catholic church, received the *gastinae* of 'Heteyre' and 'Beitdecoc' in 1159.[274] In 1162 the church received tithes from Melisende's territory of Nablus.[275] The Abbey of Saint Samuel in Montjoie received the *casale* of 'Bethela' and multiple *gastinae* from Melisende in 1152.[276] In 1159 she gave them the *casale* of Torasdis, and the church of St John the Evangelist in Nablus.[277] The charter evidence also demonstrates that Melisende patronised Greek and Syrian Christian institutions. In 1159 Melisende gifted three *vastinae*, 'Kafamis', 'Vetus Betor', and 'Deirfres' to the Greek Orthodox Great Laura of Saint Sabas.[278] There is also record of Melisende patronising the Syrian-Orthodox Jacobite community, which appear to have been linked to the Church of

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[274] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no.631 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[275] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no.686 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[276] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no.527 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[277] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no.629 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[278] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no.632 [accessed 17 January 2024].

Saint Mary Magdalene and Saint Simon of the Pharisees. A charter from 1138 records that, at the request of Melisende, King Fulk summoned the Jacobites and Geoffrey of the Tower of David to a court at Bait Jibrin.[279] The Jacobites were contesting Geoffrey's right to hold the *casale* of Khirbat 'Abasa. The community had settled in the village during the period in which Geoffrey was imprisoned in Egypt, and on his return were threatened with expulsion. The chronicle of Michael the Syrian states that Fulk was initially favourable towards Geoffrey, but Melisende intervened and persuaded him to instead recognise the Jacobite claim to Khirbat 'Abasa.[280] Andrew Palmer concludes that Melisende was raised in the faith of her anti-Chalcedonian mother. These beliefs originate from the chronicle, which describes how Melisende was taught to fear God from her mother, suggesting that Morphia was the preeminent influence in her daughter's religious development. This evidence from the chronicle and the charter suggests that Shukurov's theory of 'dual identity' can be utilised in our exploration of Melisende's patronage. She appears to have practiced her faith using both Latin and Eastern rites, in a manner not necessarily blended but rather separate. This ensured she was believed to be a pious woman by three separate religious communities: Latin, Orthodox, and Armenian.

The work of Avital Hayman has contributed greatly to the historiography of Melisende's reign, by introducing further evidence that attests to the queen's apparent devotion to the Orthodox faith.

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[279] RRR - Revised Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani Database, http://crusades-regesta.com, no.358 [accessed 17 January 2024].

[280] Palmer, 'Queen Melisende and the Jacobite Estates', p.79, n.15.

Through an analysis of archaeological evidence, Hayman research challenges the longstanding perception that Melisende was sympathetic to Eastern Christians but was singularly Latin Christian in faith. Hayman does not reach a concrete conclusion on this matter, but the additional evidence from her recent publication together with Shukurov's interpretation of 'dual identity' provides a framework in which Melisende, and her successors, genuinely expressed a devotion to Eastern Orthodoxy when patronising sites and protecting non-Latin groups. Hayman has identified the goudron frieze as a potential mark of Melisende's involvement in building projects.[281] A frieze is an architectural decoration, a horizontal belt with decorative motifs found on the façade and interior of buildings. The goudron frieze is a striped framing that likely had an Armenian origin.[282] It is a motif found in northern Syria and Egypt and was found around the kingdom of Jerusalem in Latin churches (the Holy Sepulchre, the church of Saint Anne) and Armenian churches (the cathedral of Saint James, the church of the Holy Archangels).[283] The Armenian cathedral of Saint James contains a *Deësis* icon, which Melisende's psalter has already confirmed was a favourite devotional image of the queen, further suggesting her personal involvement in the restoration of the site.

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[281] Hayman, 'Was the East Latin?', p.106.

[282] See Nurith Kenaan, 'Local Christian Art in Twelfth Century Jerusalem', *Israel Exploration Journal*, vol.23, no.4 (1973), pp.221-229;

[283] Hayman, 'Was the East Latin?', p.105-106.

The legacy of Melisende's patronage is difficult to gage, because there is little surviving evidence of the patronage conducted by her successors. However, the evidence that does exist does follow the pattern of generosity towards Eastern Christians as demonstrated in her reign. Melisende's sons, Baldwin III (1130-1163) and Amalric (1136-1174), both married Byzantine princesses and formed something akin to friendship with the Emperor Manuel Komnenos (1118-1180). Amalric particularly demonstrated an enthusiasm for Byzantine culture, shown in William of Tyre's evocative and detailed description of the king's visit to Constantinople in 1171, during which his time sightseeing is recounted in length.[284] Amalric's patronage can be seen in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, a monument founded by Constantine and rebuilt by Justinian.[285] The church contains an inscription, in Latin and Greek, that confirms that the mosaic programme completed in 1169 was sponsored by both King Amalric and Emperor Manuel. Although she concedes that the refurbishment of the church was 'heavily Byzantine,' Lisa Mahoney argues that the presence of typically Latin religious imagery suggests that King Amalric was more directly involved in the design of the church than recognised in previous scholarship. In the apse, the Virgin and Child were depicted enthroned, which was a typically Byzantine imagery; more unusually, these figures were joined by Abraham and David. The life of Christ included in the church was also longer and more detailed than most Byzantine examples, and more like

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[284] See Steven Runciman, 'The visit of King Amalric I to Constantinople in 1171', in *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem, Presented to Joshua Prawer*, eds. B.Z. Kedar, H.E. Mayer, R.C. Smail (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1982), pp. 153-158.

[285] Lisa Mahoney, 'The Church of the Nativity and "Crusader" Kingship', in *Crusading in Art, Thought and Will*, eds. M.E. Parker, B. Halliburton, A. Romie (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 7-36, at p.16.

European examples. The Tree of Jesse included on the interior of the western wall of the church is of a western tradition. The mosaic program was therefore, Hunt argues, less Byzantine than previous works have conceded. The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem was a site of the utmost reverence and importance in the kingdom of Jerusalem, being the site of the kingdom's early regnal coronations. The church is, therefore, not only an example of a continuation in appreciation for Byzantine art from the reign of Melisende to Amalric, but also an example of shared cultic space between Christian denominations. Shared cultic space was commonplace in the Levant due to the number of religious groups present in the region. The shared spaces in the kingdom of Jerusalem means that even where there is only evidence of sponsorship of 'Latin' sites, realistically these sites would have had a wider importance. In fact, these sites with wider importance may have been deliberately targeted for restoration and preservation. For example, Helen Nicholson suggests that Queen Sibylla of Jerusalem (1186-1190) may have been involved in the renovation of the *Coenaculum*, the upper room in the Holy Sepulchre where it was believed the Last Supper was held. Nicholson links Sibylla's interest in religious patronage with the example set by her grandmother Melisende, but the similarity goes further as in this instance the queen may have restored a site of great importance to multiple Christian denominations in the kingdom.[286]

Alice of Champagne and the Greeks of Cyprus

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[286] Nicholson, *Sybil,* p.125.

From the late twelfth and thirteenth century there is limited evidence of the patronage conducted by the queens regnant of Jerusalem. The best source of evidence for regnal female patronage is found instead in sources relating to Alice of Champagne (1243-1246), the great-granddaughter of Melisende. Alice's patronage is not just important for the study of female patronage in the period, but also for understanding the relationship between the Latin nobility of Cyprus, the Latin Church of Cyprus, and the papacy. Alice was the daughter of Isabella I of Jerusalem (1172-1205) by her third husband Henry II of Champagne (1166-1197); she married Hugh I of Cyprus in 1210, and later held the regency on behalf of their son Henry I. In similarity to Melisende's experiences, Alice was raised in a religiously mixed home, as her grandmother Maria Komnene acted as her guardian.[287] Maria, the second wife of King Amalric, later married Balian of Ibelin and remained an influential figure in the lives of her daughter Isabella and granddaughter Alice. It was Maria that negotiated Alice's betrothal to Hugh of Cyprus in 1197.[288] Again, in similarity with Melisende and her relationship with Morphia, historians are undecided on how far Alice followed the example of Maria. Bernard Hamilton argued that Alice's interest in her Greek Orthodox subjects may have been influenced by her Byzantine grandmother.[289] However, he also conceded that her treatment of the Greeks was politically sound as they formed the majority of the population of Cyprus.

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[287] Hamilton, 'Queen Alice of Cyprus', p.230.

[288] *Ibid*, p. 266.

[289] *Ibid,* p.230.

During the period in which Alice acted as regent in Cyprus (1218-1232), the crown and the Latin Church had a close relationship. There were, as Nicholas Coureas writes, longstanding and unresolved disagreements over the payment of tithes by the Cypriot barons to the Latin Church. However, the fact that the Latins of Cyprus were significantly outnumbered by the Orthodox Greek population, and were surrounded by Muslim powers, meant that the Latin elite and church depended on each other as a 'matter of survival.'[290] In 1220, this state of affairs shifted, as the papal legal Pelagius tried to forcibly subordinate the Greek church to the Latin church. As tolerance towards the Greek Orthodox on Cyprus lessened, Alice was sympathetic to their cause. However, her connection to the Greek church was exploited by the papacy as a means to coerce compliance from the Greek community.

Disputes over the nobility's refusal to pay tithes was the predominant issue raised in Alice's correspondence with the papacy in this period. On 17th December 1221, Pope Honorius III (c.1150-1227) issued bull in which he described the lawsuit that had arisen between Alice, the child-king Henry and his knights, barons, and men, and the Archbishop of Nicosia and bishops of Paphos, Limassol, and Famagusta.[291] The disagreement concerned 'tithes, the obedience of the Greeks, possessions, and lands or places that the churches, abbeys, and monasteries of the Greeks had' when Cyprus was under Greek rule. Although this bull records that a compromise had been negotiated between crown and church by the papal legate Pelagius, this disagreement

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[290] Nicholas Coureas, *The Latin Church in Cyprus, 1313-1378* (Nicosia: Cyprus Research Centre, 2010), p.58.

[291] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol. 1*,* pp.220-221.

would continue through the reign of Henry I. Alice's sympathy for the Greek Orthodox in Cyprus is clearly expressed in a papal letter, again issued by Pope Honorius III, on 30th December 1221.[292] It records that Alice was 'restoring to the churches the tithes, the tributes of needy souls, and…is taking steps to lead stray sheep to the Lord's fold.' The pope commended Alice for this work, and complimented her 'manly strength…[and demonstration of] her love for God in devout works.' The identity of the 'stray sheep' under Alice's influence is unclear, as elsewhere in the bull it records the queen's desire that the Greek bishops be allowed to 'remain as they are,' outside of the Roman Church; rather, the 'stray sheep' may be the Frankish nobility of Cyprus whom Alice may have persuaded to finally paid their tithes. Pope Honorius expressed his concern that clumsy treatment of the Greeks would cause them to rebel. However, he was unwilling to compromise. Strategic approaches to the Greek population are discussed by the papacy, but there is no evidence of this approach coming from Alice. The first settlement between the queen, nobility, and Latin Church was drafted in October 1220, Alice insisted that the Orthodox clergy should be freed from the payment of taxes and to be free to pursue ordination.[293] Hamilton argued that as the Orthodox hierarchy were not present at the debate, Alice acted as their representative. On 17th November 1237, a papal letter concerning the disagreement was addressed to both Henry I and Alice, showing her continuing importance in this long standing religious dispute, even after her formal tenure as regent ended.[294]

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[292] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol. 1*, pp. 221-222..

[293] Hamilton, 'Queen Alice of Cyprus', p.230.

[294] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol. 1*, pp.320-322.

As regent and queen dowager of Cyprus, Alice used her wealth to patronise churches. In 1220, she granted milling rights for the household of Eustorge, bishop of Nicosia at the royal flour mills at Kythrea; this was granted in redemption of the souls of her late husband and ancestors.[295] A papal bull issued by Pope Gregory IX on 30th December 1237 records the donation by Alice of a 'plot of land…in the city of Paphos with a cistern, a garden…and all its appurtenances' to St Mary and All Saints of Acre.[296] On this land, they had 'begun to construct a church in honour of St Mary the Egyptian…' To the new church, Alice also gifted:

> '…an annual rent of 42 modia of wheat, 266 gallons of wine, 266 rota of cheese, 76 modia of beans, 19 modia of rice, 95 rota of oil, 38 rota of sugar, 12 rota of candles, 52 rota of soup, 208 seams of wood, and 1092 white bezants, to be received in rents in the city and territory of Paphos…'

These donations suggest that Alice had founded the church of St Mary the Egyptian and provided for its economic future. Building a church had a colossal cost. Vardit Shotten-Hallel and Robert Kool calculated how much it had likely cost to build the Resurrection Church in Abu Gosh, which was founded in 1141. Shotten-Hallel and Kool suggest that the stonework alone would have cost 2,663 bezants with an additional cost of 1.049 bezants for portal windows. With a team of around twenty-four builders, it would have taken 8,472 workdays to complete the church and the labour would have amounted to 29,915 bezants. These calculations do not include the potential costs

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[295] Coureas, *Latin Church in Cyprus,* p.49.

[296] *Bullarium Cyprium, Vol. 1,* pp.325-328.

of furnishing the church, feeding workers, and transporting people and resources.[297] Although

Alice's church was not of the same scale as this significant foundation at Abu Gosh, this does

indicate the vast costs of building churches in the Latin East. The fact that Alice founded a church

is first and foremost a testament to her significant wealth, likely gained from her dower lands in

Cyprus.

The choice of Mary of Egypt as a subject of dedication reveals some potential avenues of Alice's

self-expression. Cristina Politani describes Mary of Egypt and Mary Magdalene as:

> 'sister legends…[as] the sinner-saint who has known carnal pleasure and fallen from a
>
> state of grace, only to repent and reach a state of perfection; a conflation between the
>
> biblical Magdalene and the legendary Mary the Egyptian…[rendered] their cults and
>
> iconography interchangeable.'[298]

Both Mary of Egypt and Mary Magdelene were therefore associated with penitence and chastity.

St Mary and All Saints of Acre, to which Alice had donated in 1137 was a house for penitent

women, meaning former prostitutes or other women who had committed carnal sins.[299] In winter

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[297] Vardit Shotten-Hallel and Robert Kool, 'Building a Church in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem', in *Crusader Landscapes in the Medieval Levant: The Archaeology and History of the Latin East,* eds. Keven J. Lewis et al (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2016)*,* pp.297-298.

[298] Christina Politano, 'The Saints of the Crusader States: Legends of the Eastern Mediterranean in Anglo-French Vernacular Culture, 1135-1220' unpublished [doctoral thesis] University of California, 2018), pp.115-116.

[299] Hamilton, Jotischy, *Latin and Greek Monastictism,* pp.147-8; Denys Pringle, The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, Vol. 4, p.130.

1224-1225 Alice had married Bohemond of Antioch without papal dispensation.[300] This marriage was annulled by 1229, so it is possible that Alice founded a church dedicated to St Mary to amend for her uncanonical and sinful marriage.[301] St Mary the Egyptian was a figure especially venerated in Eastern Christian denominations, and this may reflect Alice's personal faith. The story of Mary had reached Frankish audiences, being the subject of the anonymous *La vie de sainte Marie l'egyptienne*, authored in the late twelfth century, becoming popular at royal courts in Francophobic western Europe.[302]

Alice's church was Latin, but the decision taken to dedicate it to St Mary the Egyptian, a saint popular across the Western and Eastern churches suggests that her religious patronage was taken with a mindfulness towards Orthodoxy. Her faith, in a similar vein to that of her great-grandmother Melisende of Jerusalem, may have been more complex than previously understood. The popularity of shared cultic sites could explain why Mary of Egypt was selected as the dedication for Alice's church; the Latin populace could imagine their preferred sinner-saint in her place, while the Greek majority were appeased and flattered at the inclusion of a much venerated desert mother. However, the church of St Mary the Egyptian in Paphos does possibly mark a site where Alice, always regarded as 'Latin' by historians, donated a significant sum of money to St Mary and All Saints of Acre, to build a church dedicated to a saint that was a personal favourite; a saint which, although present in Latin Christendom, was far more commonly revered

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[300] *Bullarium Cyprium,* Vol 1*.,* pp.278-279.

[301] *Bullarium Cyprium, Vol. 1,* pp.288-289.
[302] Christina Politano, 'The Saints of the Crusader States', p.1.

in the Orthodox Christianity that Alice had acted as a figurehead for during the negotiations with the papal legate after 1220. Alice was part of the hierarchy that ultimately ended the tolerance towards the Greek church in Cyprus by allowing it to be subordinated to the Latin church, her sympathies were evidently complex and likely influenced by her mixed heritage.

Melisende and Alice shared many commonalities: a probable introduction into Eastern Christianity led by a female family member; a crucial role in defending Eastern Christians from the encroachment of the Latin Church; a reputation in both Latin and Eastern Christianity for piety; and the patronage of sites that reveal a personal devotion beyond what would normally be expected for Latin Christians. It is certainly possible that these acts of patronage by these queens demonstrated the political strategy and cynicism outlined in the theory of 'rough tolerance.' It is also possible that, while both figures may have appreciated some elements of Eastern Christian faith, that the women embarked on a life of 'cultural performance.' However, an underdeveloped theory in the historiography of queenly patronage in the Crusader States is that these queens had a 'dual identity.' They were Latin in faith and culture, revered by churchmen as pious and regarded by chroniclers as little different to their crusading peers. They were, however, also Eastern, more enthusiastic than merely tolerant of non-Latin Christianity and not in favour of the Latin Church having total religious authority and precedence in their realms. These women were a project of early tolerance in the Crusader States, which by the thirteenth century appears to have evolved into a genuine 'dual identity' religious practice in the monarchy of Jerusalem and Cyprus.

Conclusion

Patronage serves as an important point of exploration when analysing the extent to which women held personal agency and political authority in the Latin East, as it demonstrates the resources available to them and how they spent it. This offers insight into their personal identity and how they chose to use their agency, but it also reflects how they wished to be perceived which inevitably had an impact on their political influence as well.

The exploration of female wealth and patronage through charter and physical sources contribute to answering the main research questions of this thesis. First, the amount of evidence available that records the ownership of property and wealth by women suggests that powerful and influential women were not unusual in the context of the Latin East. Second, the evidence of sales in the Latin East shows how the environment was shaped by the nature of the frontier. For example, the ascent of female heiresses, such as Beatrix of Courtenay, shows how their marriages to foreigners could lead them to sell land and change the boundaries of the kingdom of Jerusalem. Third, the demonstration in the charter evidence of how women granted their consent to the sales and donations of their relatives shows that female power did not decline in the thirteenth century, as they still had the ability to prevent unwelcome financial actions. This is especially useful in countering the idea that the queens regnant of the thirteenth century were essentially powerless, as they still retained this power of veto.

4 - Women and Diplomacy in Conflict

Warfare has been regarded as an arena of political influence largely incompatible with female

engagement in the medieval period. Gendered limitations on how female agency could be

expressed meant that women were unable to lead troops into battle. However, in widening our understanding of 'conflict' and how medieval warfare significantly impacted the female experience, we can see how women could play a role in the diplomacy surrounding conflict. Conflict has been understood to mark periods of violence as well as periods of protracted tension, and in these environments medieval women could play a key role as both promoters of conflict and peace. The latter role is generally better evidenced as the medieval feminine was associated with peace, just as the medieval masculine was associated with defence and the violent forms that it could take.[303] However, women can also be seen to have acted as leaders during periods of conflict, as well as instigators of political conflicts for the advancement of their marital and natal families. Women were therefore part of the well-trodden pattern of medieval conflict. This pattern of female engagement with wartime diplomacy can be seen throughout medieval Europe, however the Latin East as a region is of particular relevance to this exploration of women in conflict. This is firstly because of its position on the frontier between the Christian and Islamic worlds; the region saw frequent conflict, and was therefore an environment defined by tension with its neighbours. Secondly, the Latin East saw the frequent accession of women to lordships, largely because of the early deaths of men in battle. The prominence of women in the politics of the Latin East therefore saw them engaging in diplomacy during periods of conflict, offering legitimation for military action, negotiating between warring groups, supporting male kin, signing

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[303] For more on medieval women in war and as intercessors: Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land,* pp.46-50, 123; Lois L. Huneycutt, 'Intercession and the High Medieval Queen: The Esther Topos', in *Power of the weak: studies on medieval women* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1995), pp.126-146.

treaties, and promoting conflict to the benefit of their family. This chapter seeks to explore several key questions concerning women in conflict during the thirteenth and early fourteenth century Latin East. How can we best define the role played by women in conflict? How 'exceptional' to the normal experience of an elite woman was this participation in conflict? Furthermore, how does the structure of the politicised family define gendered roles during periods of conflict?

In defining medieval women as 'non-combatants', scholars have depended on terminology and concepts centred on the male experience of combat. As a group vulnerable to enslavement and sexual exploitation, women are generally categorised as non-combatant, but nonetheless would have participated in battle as women have throughout history in dire situations. The thirteenth-century Levant saw the fall of Jerusalem, Tyre, Acre, and Tripoli and therefore women aided in defending the city as they had few other options. Similar acts of desperate violence were recorded about women during the fall of citadels during the Albigensian Crusade, in which women were killed as combatants. Women therefore could play an auxiliary role in warfare, that if performed by a male would be regarded as military action and more readily included in how conflict is defined in medieval academia.[304] Women have however been largely excluded from the masculine sphere of medieval conflict. This evidence of ordinary women facing the consequences of war and therefore engaging with it, is reflected in the experiences of elite

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[304] Nicholson, *Women and the Crusades,* p.3.

women. As discussed in this chapter, women in politics were impacted by the spectre of violence and therefore served roles within conflict.

Women and Conflict

Generally, women did not fight in battle, despite some record of female combatants appearing in the surviving sources. The existence of Florina, a daughter of Duke Odo I of Burgundy, who supposedly died in battle alongside Svend of Denmark during the First Crusade has been doubted by historians.[305] Her existence is not recorded in any source other than that of Albert of Aachen, and Hillary Rhodes believes that she was likely a fabricated figure named after the Macedonian city of Florina.[306] Helen Nicholson agrees that Florina was a fabrication, likely intended to dissuade women from following crusading armies.[307] It seems likely that Ida, the widow of Margrave Leopold II of Austria, met an unhappy end in battle during the Crusade of 1101.[308] Nicholson contends that it was possible for women to disguise themselves as men in order to fight alongside crusade armies. Such behaviour is described in Muslim accounts, but Nicholson

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[305] See accounts by Albert of Aachen, the Anonymous of Mainz, and Solomon ben Simson in *The First Crusade: The Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials*, ed. Edward Peters, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), pp.111, 118-19, 130.

[306] Hilary Rhodes, *The Crown and the Cross: Burgundy, France, and the Crusades, 1095-1223* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2020), pp.80-87.

[307] Nicholson, *Women and the Crusades*, p.15.

[308] Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land* pp. 211-12.

argues that these works intended to use such stories to criticise the 'barbarity' of the Franks.[309]

Furthermore, if these disguises were successful, these female warriors would leave no record.[310]

There are limited records of women fighting in the Latin East during the thirteenth century. There is a precedent for female involvement in conflict seen in the crusading activities of the late twelfth century. Ibn al-Athir reported that during Saladin's siege of Barziyya in 1188 there were women operating a siege machine to defend the castle. The accounts of 'Imad al-Din al-Isfahani and Baha al-Din Ibn Shaddad record Christian women fighting, including a female archer.[311] The inclusion of these anecdotes, unsupported in Christian accounts, likely served to draw attention to the immorality of the enemy army and the utilisation of female soldiers also emphasised the desperation and weakness of the crusader army.[312] When women are depicted in sources as warriors therefore, this was not intended to be a comment on their agency and power, but rather their presence was utilised to attack the morality and strength of crusading in the Latin East.

However supportive actions performed by women during battle, including organising equipment and livestock, loading crossbows, and preparing boiling water, were 'essential' argues Nicholson,

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[309] Nicholson, *Women and the Crusades*, p.17.

[310] *Ibid*, p.17.

[311] Helen Nicholson, 'Women on the Third Crusade', *Journal of Medieval History,* vol.23, no.4 (1997), pp.335-349, at pp.337-339.

[312] Nicholson, *Women and the Crusades*, p.81.

and the fact that they were done by women 'did not make them any less militarily valuable.'[313] Women were valued for their contributions, and rewarded for undertaking work that was so dangerous. For example, women and children were paid for their service following the capture of Damietta in 1219, even if they received much less than the knights they supported.[314] The *Song of the Cathar Wars* records the role of women in the siege of Toulouse. They built defences and collected stones to be used as missiles.[315] During the siege of Acre between 1189-1191, a woman was killed while assisting in digging trench defences; her dying wish was to be thrown in the ditch to aid in the defence of the city beyond her death.[316] Although they were noncombatants, it is logical that women would aid in the defence of their cities as they had much to lose if the city fell. Not only would their homeland be lost, but they also were at risk of capture. The account of Imad al-Din makes clear that women were at risk from sexual violence and forced labour; Frankish armies also subjected Muslim women in the region to the same fate.[317]

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[313] *Ibid*, p.3.

[314] *Ibid*, p.4.

[315] William of Tudela and Anonymous Successor, *The Song of the Cathar Wars: A History of the Albigensian Crusade*, trans. Janet Shirley (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), pp.124, 167, 174, 191.

[316] *Itinerarium*, pp.101-106.

[317] Nicholson, *Women and the Crusades*, p.91.

The dangers of the frontier were ever present in this region during the thirteenth century, and women of the elite could find themselves caught in military zones as noncombatants. For example, Margaret of Provenance had been residing in the Damietta camp of her husband King Louis IX of France in 1249 when the frontier shifted and she found herself on the front line.[318] Lucia, countess of Tripoli, and her female relatives were besieged in the city when it fell in 1289.[319] For women of the political elite, their involvement in conflict largely centred on organisation and diplomacy. This chapter will explore their role in the diplomacy surrounding conflict. It will first assess the agency of baronial women through their treaties with Muslim rulers, and will secondly assess the agency of royal women through an analysis of the Cypriot dynastic conflict that took place between 1306 and 1310.

Isabella of Beirut and the Sultan Baybars: diplomacy between female lords and Muslim rulers.

Jonathan Riley-Smith has argued that the lords of the kingdom of Jerusalem were effectively able to conduct 'their own foreign policy, making peace treaties or war with neighbouring Islamic states with little or no reference to centralised government' during periods of Muslim expansion.[320] Treaties with Muslim rulers by individual Frankish lords were not beneficial to the wider survival of Christian rule in the region; Yvonne Friedman contends that these treaties

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[318] John of Joinville, 'The Life of Saint Louis', in *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades,* trans. Caroline Smith (London: Penguin Classics, 2008), pp.137-336, p.243.

[319] *The Templar of Tyre: Part III of the 'Deeds of the Cypriots,'* trans. Paul Crawford (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p.98-99, n.6-8.

[320] Riley-Smith, *The Feudal Nobility*, p.28.

demonstrate the 'disintegration of the kingdom into petty political and geographical entities.'[321]

This created an environment in which the Mamluks of Egypt could 'dictate even more humiliating terms' due to a lack of cohesive policy across the Crusader States towards the end of the thirteenth century.[322] Diplomatic relationships between Christian and Muslim rulers could be illegal under crusader law, not that this had a great impact on the regularity of its occurrence. The *Livre au Roi* stipulated that the seizure of lands undertaken against the will of the king, and carried out in cooperation with 'Saracen' allies was a treasonous act.[323] The king of Jerusalem, and generally the independent leaders of Antioch and Tripoli, could conduct such alliances whenever they wished, for it was their 'prerogative' as independent powers. Despite attempts to control these alliances, barons embarked on peace and conflict with their Muslim neighbours throughout the history of the Crusader States, with little regard for the authority of central government. Alice (c.1110-1150), the regent of Antioch, was accused by William of Tyre of approaching Zengi for aid during her dispute with her father Baldwin II of Jerusalem. During his rebellion against King Fulk of Jerusalem, Hugh of Jaffa (c.1106-1134) was controversially in communication with the Fatimids. Raymond III of Tripoli initially allied himself with Saladin rather than Sibylla of Jerusalem and Guy of Lusignan.

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[321] Yvonne Friedman, 'Peacemaking in an age of war: when were cross-religious alliances in the Latin East considered treason?', in *The Crusader World*, ed. Adrian Boas (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p.104.

[322] *Ibid,* p.104.

[323] *Ibid,* p.99-101.

Female lords were able to arrange these alliances in the same manner as their male counterparts, effectively offering military service to foreign rulers in periods of conflict. This can be seen with Isabella of Ibelin (1252-1282) who was the elder daughter of Lord John II of Beirut.[324] On the death of her father in 1264, Isabella inherited his fief. The following year she married the young King Hugh II of Cyprus (c.1252-1267). Following King Hugh's death, Isabella returned to Beirut and on 9 May 1269 negotiated a treaty with the Mamluk Sultan Baybars (1223-1277).[325] This was in part a continuation of a policy towards the sultan that had been pursued by Isabella's father; John of Beirut signed a treaty with Baybars in 1261.[326] The treaty between Baybars and Isabella confirmed the safety of traders between their lands, and offered a mutual assurance of military assistance if the other was attacked.[327]

The treaty does deviate from those usually offered by Baybars. P.M. Holt highlights his generosity towards Isabella in the agreement. Unlike other treaties he had signed with Christian rulers, Isabella was not forced to relinquish control of Beirut to the sultan. Baybars acknowledged her rights as 'exalted, virtuous and glorious Lady...of Beirut and all its mountains and lowlands,' and

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[324] *Lignages D'Outremer,* p.98.

[325] Nicholson, 'The true gentleman?',p.106.

[326] P.M. Holt, 'The Treaties of the Early Mamluk Sultans with the Frankish States', *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, Vol.43, No.1 (1980), pp.67-76, p.68.

[327] P.M. Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy, 1260-1290: Treaties of Baybars and Qalawun with Christian Rulers* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), p.44.

even went so far as to establish a protectorate over her fief. The benefit of this agreement became clear in 1273 when Isabella of Beirut's second husband Hamo l'Estrange died.[328] Baybars was concerned upon hearing that the recently widowed lady of Beirut had travelled to Cyprus without sending ambassadors to his court to report her movement.[329] The sultan wrote to King Hugh III and demanded that his ambassadors 'have sight' of Isabella, otherwise he would take control of her domains.[330] Baybars wished for his ambassadors to be able to visibly confirm that the lady of Beirut was not being held against her will in Cyprus.Isabella, as a powerful heiress, had been taken to Cyprus so that King Hugh could arrange her third marriage. This practice (the *servise de mariage*) was justified by contemporary standards as a means for the king to receive military service from female vassals.[331] However, just as previous Muslim rulers had criticised the somewhat forceful nature of Outremer marriage practices, Baybars intervened. Hugh III argued that he had signed a truce with Baybars in 1272 that included Beirut in its remit, but he backed down and Isabella was free to return, unmarried, to Beirut.[332] Helen Nicholson argues that Baybars was motivated beyond expanding his authority over Beirut; he was also 'intervening to protect the lady from an over-zealous lord...fulfilling the role of a good lord' by protecting women

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[328] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility,* p.28.

[329] Nicholson, 'The true gentleman?', p.106.

[330] *Ibid,* p.106.

[331] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility,* pp. 8-9.

[332] Holt, *Early Mamluk Diplomacy*', pp.43-44.

regardless of their religion.[333] In his treatment of the lady of Beirut, it is plausible that, alongside his primary motivation of extending his power into Beirut, the sultan may have viewed this as an opportunity to demonstrate his masculine power against the king of Cyprus.

At a base level, male and female Frankish lords would be treated the same diplomatically by their Muslim neighbours as both were able to provide and receive military protection. However, female lords could actually receive more favourable treatment on occasion as some Muslim rulers felt compelled to come to their aid. As discussed previously in this chapter, women and their treatment was a means for Muslim and Christian rulers to prove the opposing society was more brutal and morally corrupt. For example, in 1187 Saladin behaved gentlemanly towards Lady Stephanie of Milly when she appeared before him to beg for the release of her son, Humphrey IV of Toron, even if he was not so gentlemanly as to release his prisoner. Stephanie appeared alongside Queen Sibylla of Jerusalem and her sister Isabella (wife of Humphrey). All three women engaged in 'formalised weeping', showing 'extravagant grief' on their unveiled faces.[334] Imad al-Din's comment on Isabella's great, heavenly beauty also demonstrates a persuasive power that female lords may have held over their male counterparts when negotiating with mostly male rulers. Saladin would not accept a ransom for Humphrey and actually gifted the women with presents; he agreed to return Humphrey if Stephanie gave him her castles of Kerak and Montreal. Even though these castles refused to surrender, Saladin did

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[333] Nicholson, 'The true gentleman?', p.107.

[334] *Ibid*, p.102-103.

release Humphrey. Nicholson argues that the Saladin's message behind this behaviour was that he 'kept his faith with women, even when their own subjects defied them.'

It is well known that queens regnant and female regents would engage in conflict as they held sovereign power, but these case studies demonstrate that female lords were also able to conduct their own foreign policy. In many ways, this ability to conduct military alliances outside of the kingdom had a greater impact for women, as they were more vulnerable than their male counterparts due to the threat of forced marriage that, although outlawed in canon and secular law, was a threat keenly felt by Isabella of Beirut. The example of Saladin demonstrates that elite Frankish women were unlikely to be treated as poorly as Muslim armies treated ordinary women captured in sieges as a code of universal, cross-cultural chivalry meant that they would have protection. It was, therefore, within the familial unit and in the privacy of the family home that Christian elite women in the Latin East could be at the most danger. This is shown clearly during the Cypriot dynastic conflict that took place in the early fourteenth century.

Royal women and familial conflict in the Chronicle of Amadi: historical writing and gender topos.

The reign of Henry II of Cyprus (r. 1285-1324) was a chaotic period in the history of the kingdom of Cyprus. As Peter Edbury summarises, 'Henry's government was discredited by inconsequential military activities and an inability to deal effectively with friend and foe alike.'[335] A crusading fleet

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[335] Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus,* p.115.

would therefore not necessarily restore Henry to the kingship. As well as the threat from his

Angevin rivals, Henry's reign was also destabilised by his numerous clashes with the Commune

of Genoa, the fallout of which was typically an economic boycott.[336] The constant threat of

invasion from the Mamluks received attention from Europe, yet Henry's concern was also shared

by the potential collapse of the Christian kingdom of Cilician Armenia, which also faced

Mamluk.[337] The kingdom of Cyprus also faced domestic problems in this period, as the military

Orders sought to extend their privileges by refusing to adhere to the king's taxation of their serfs

and servants.[338]

The king's deposition in 1306 by his brother Amaury was a dramatic but not an unsurprising

development as Henry had lost the support of the majority of the Cypriot nobility. Henry and

Amaury's mother, Isabella of Ibelin, attempted to negotiate peace between the brothers, and

the women of the royal household were determined to prevent the seizure of the king by his

enemies. The deposition of King Henry therefore provides an insightful point of investigation for

further understanding how women engaged politically during periods of conflict. For the period

between 1306 and 1310, historians are dependent on the *Chronicle of Amadi*, a 16th-century

Italian translation of a near-contemporary narrative that no longer exists. The source is clearly

composed by a partisan of King Henry II, but is valuable to those investigating female authority

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[336] *Ibid,* pp.109-111.

[337] *Ibid,* p.102.

[338] *Ibid,* p.111-113.

in this period for several reasons. Firstly, the chronicle describes in great detail the deposition of

the king, to the extent that Edbury believes that the writer or his informants kept a journal and

that the chronicle was likely composed following Henry's restoration in 1310.[339] Secondly, the

chronicle provides significant insight into the fraught personal relationships between the male

and female relatives of King Henry during his deposition. *The Chronicle of Amadi* is a source that

pays close attention to the role women played in the kingdom of Cyprus, without casting harsh

judgement on those that were politically active. Generally in scholarship the chronicle's

presentation of women has not been explored, and the authority seemingly held by women such

as Isabella of Ibelin and Zabel of Armenia has not been included in the general histories of the

kingdom of Cyprus, nor in assessments of medieval female power.

The level of detail of the narrative on the women in the royal household during the king's

deposition provides valuable evidence for exploring wider questions concerning how we define

female authority in the privacy of the household. Heather J. Tanner has highlighted 'the need to

consciously abandon' the usage of the 'public-private dichotomy of governance.'[340] The 'family,

as a key institution of the medieval period' has been regarded as 'private' due to modern

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[339] *Ibid*, p.125.

[340] Heather J. Tanner, Laura L. Gathagan, Lois L. Huneycutt, 'Introduction', in *Medieval Elite Women and the Exercise of Power, 1100-1400: Moving Beyond the Exceptionalist Debate,* ed. Heather J. Tanner (New York: Springer, 2019), pp.1-18, at p.6.

perceptions.[341] However the 'private' environment of the royal household provides a significant

display of female influence in the *Chronicle of Amadi*. As Kimberly LoPrete has discussed:

> 'the political powers of aristocratic women' (in this case the ability of women to negotiate
>
> peace) could be seen in the privacy of the household and family, as '"domestic" household
>
> management included that which we might consider public political duties.'[342]

It is certainly correct that within the 'public-private dichotomy', the private influence of women

should not be undervalued and was in many ways a part of their 'public political duties', as it can

be argued that nothing is private in systems of familial governance. However, this approach does

not account for how behaviour could be radically different in 'public' (at court) and in 'private'

(the household). A good demonstration of this is the fact that royal women were rarely assaulted,

threatened, or murdered in public, but this certainly happened behind the closed doors of the

royal household, even if privacy was somewhat elusive to the elite.

The sisters and mother of King Henry are presented as being very influential by the *Chronicle of*

Amadi, exerting personal control over the king in a manner far beyond the usual confines of most

women in narrative sources of this type. Isabella of Ibelin was queen of Cyprus as the wife of

Hugh III (1267-1284), and their children are the primary political protagonists in the chronicle.[343]

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[341] *Ibid,* pp. 4-6.

[342] Kimberly A. LoPrete, 'Gendering Viragos: Medieval Perceptions of Powerful Women', in *Victims or Viragos?* eds.

Christine Meek, Catherine Lawless (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2005), p.37.

[343] *Chronicle of Amadi,* p.177.

Their sons Amaury (also known as Amalric), lord of Tyre (d.1310), and Aimery, constable of Jerusalem (d.1316), both served as governor of Cyprus in opposition to their brother Henry II, king of Cyprus from 1285 to 1324.[344] The king's unmarried sisters, Maria and Helvis were his most impassioned supporters; the king also had another sister, Alice. Her husband, the prince of Galilee, Balian of Ibelin, was a leading supporter of Amaury. The seneschal of Cyprus, Philip of Ibelin, was King Henry's maternal uncle and another supporter.In the *Chronicle of Amadi*, the women of the royal household demonstrate three key roles and behaviours: supporters of the legal rights of Henry as crowned sovereign; defenders of the king's body from seizure and molestation; and negotiators between the king and his brothers.

The *Chronicle of Amadi* states that in 1306, upon hearing that his brother Amaury sought to depose him, the king was disbelieving. His uncle Philip of Ibelin however 'took leave of the king and went to the house of his sister the queen, to whom he reported everything.'[345] Isabella and Philip went to the house of Amaury, where his mother 'reproved' the prince of Tyre for his actions against the king. In response, Amaury claimed that he was acting as a 'result of the actions of...Philip of Ibelin', and Isabella, in fear that 'they would come to blows, made her brother Philip leave.' While Isabella remained with Amaury, trying to persuade him to abandon his plans, Philip returned to the king's house, 'sat down by him and would not tell him anything.' The dynamic between Henry, Isabella, and Philip at this point of crisis in the dynasty is representative of their

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[344] *Ibid,* p.177.

[345] *Ibid,* pp.177, 235, 236.

general behaviour in this period, as supported by later communication in 1316 between James I of Aragon and his ambassador Francis des Forn, in which Henry was depicted as a sickly man with a court dominated by his mother and uncle.[346] This understanding that the Ibelin siblings dominated affairs during Henry's reign is evidenced in the chronicle, as they acted unilaterally in negotiating with Amaury to ensure the physical safety of the king. Furthermore, they acted in secret from the king. As Henry's judgement is often criticised, even by his sympathetic chronicler, it appears that Isabella and Philip frequently intervened in making important decisions. The protection Isabella and Philip offered Henry over his own poor grasp of the political situation can also be seen in their decision to dissuade the king from leaving his residence, 'because they realised that they were far too few as against those who were outside…'[347] They had heard that Amaury, with the support of the Templars, planned to accost Henry as soon as he left the security of his home. Isabella continued to negotiate with Amaury on the king's behalf as the dispute continued. Amaury 'made it known to the queen that he wished to talk, and she, as his mother, agreed.' The chronicle highlights Isabella's valuable position in this period as the link that joined the two factions together, and she managed to secure an agreement in which Henry would confirm that Amaury would hold governance of Cyprus for life. However, her advantageous position and work at promoting peace was undermined by her son the king, as he 'stood by his word that he did not want the lord of Tyre to exercise his rule…'[348] Although seemingly an

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[346] Edbury, *Kingdom of Cyprus,* p.139.

[347] *Chronicle of Amadi,* p.249.

[348] *Ibid,* p.290.

effective diplomat, Isabella's efforts were nonetheless frustrated by the refusal of the king to negotiate. King Henry was sickly and somewhat infantilised, remaining unmarried until 1317.[349] He entered a depression as events unfolded around him. The chronicle records that Henry refused requests to meet Amaury's envoy, Brother John of St Quentin, as he 'was a man imprisoned and had no wish to speak to anyone.' He 'would remain alone in his room, and would neither go out riding...nor enter nor leave except to go from his room to the chapel and to the queen's room...'[350] The king's last two comforts were his faith, and his mother.

The section of the chronicle that details the role of women to the greatest extent is the series of events that occurred once Amaury, prince of Tyre, and his men 'entered the king's chamber unexpectedly', with the intent of securing his government by essentially kidnapping the king in 1310.[351] Isabella 'placed herself between them', shielding the body of the king as he argued with his brother. Henry defended his rule and expressed his personal horror at the fate that befell him, stating that it had 'never been done in any other Christian land, that a king would be disinherited, imprisoned and deprived of his treasure by his own brothers and his own vassals.' Isabella defended the king from Amaury's accusation that he wished to have him murdered, firmly reconfirming her steadfast support for her elder son.[352] Henry attempted to defend himself,

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[349] Edbury, *Kingdom of Cyprus,* p.138-139.

[350] *Chronicle of Amadi*, p.290.

[351] *Chronicle of Amadi*, pp.293-294.

[352] *Ibid,* pp.296-297.

halfheartedly, 'picking up a stick…[saying] that anyone who came up to him would receive a blow to the head from it.' Despite the continued presence of his brothers, the king felt relatively secure. He prayed and then retired to bed, 'as one who felt sure that no one would have the audacity to touch his person.' This confidence was likely bolstered by the delusion present throughout his life, but also by the presence of his female relatives to whom the king was very close. In contrast, his mother and sisters 'remained there because they feared the malice of the lord of Tyre and his council, and dared not sleep nor leave the king by himself.'

The women in the *Chronicle of Amadi* are given prominence as those that mostly defend the legal rights of Henry as crowned sovereign. An unspecified sister of Henry calls the treacherous brothers 'assassins' and accuses them of betraying their sovereign lord 'like Judas.'[353] Later, when the king was seized by his enemies, his sister Maria is recorded by the chronicler as delivering a lengthy denunciation of the illegality of his deposition:

> 'Vengeance O Lord against the prince and his sons! Bring misery down on this person, his life and his children, just as he has made the queen miserable over her good and honoured son!...Traitor, you are a wretch, for you have committed treason against your rightful lord to whom you are bound in faith and oath, and now, as a breaker of faith, you have come to seize him.'[354]

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[353] *Ibid,* p.296.

[354] *Ibid,* p.298.

She is criticised by Amaury, as he exclaims that he had never 'seen a woman as brash or bold as to shout out like you.'[355] This gendered criticism is roundly rejected by Maria as she denounces him with the formal language that would have been utilised in the High Court when accusing someone of treason. This demonstrates how women were seen to have had a place within the legal landscape of the Latin East, as witnesses to and resistors to injustice.[356]

Isabella and her daughters were eventually forced to use their bodies in defence of the king as well as their rhetoric. Once Helvis had raised the alarm that the brothers had entered to seize the king, Isabella 'seized the lord of Tyre and held him', presuming the men would not entreat 'where her daughter the maiden was', presumably sitting with the king.[357] By emphasising the unmarried status of Helvis, the chronicler is alluding to the certain deference of protection granted to virgins. However, Philip count of Jaffa and Philip of Ibelin 'the Younger', kinsmen to Isabella, 'seized the queen shamefully and vilely and pinned her arms down, holding her pressed against the wall crosswire in such a way that she could not move.' This action was held to be disgraceful by the chronicler, as he has Isabella ask her cousins why they are 'committing such an outrage' against her. In an attempt to evoke empathy to prevent the seizure of her elder son, Isabella then 'let herself fall in such a manner that people passing by jostled her, and she was unable to move any more…' Although the chronicler writes that this did evoke compassion, it did

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[355] *Ibid,* p.296.

[356] *Ibid*, p.298, n.1.

[357] *Ibid,* p.297.

nothing to prevent the king's deposition. Amaury and his men shut the doors behind them, ensuring that Isabella and her daughters could not accompany the king in his imprisonment. As a consequence, there was 'great sobbing and lamentations, that all who heard it were moved to great pity.'[358] Unable to be with her beloved son, Isabella 'shouted, swore and cursed the lord of Tyre and his sons in French, Arabic, and Greek.'[359] Amaury sent a knight named Gerard Mainboeuf to guard the palace. The 'extremely wicked and inhumane man...treated the great ladies and the men of religion extremely badly.' As a consequence, Isabella 'lived for a long time thus isolated.'[360]

The women in this section of the chronicle act as a chorus expressing both the chronicler's interpretation of the wrongfulness of Amaury's actions, but also the expected reaction of the reader to such a treacherous act. Women as both peace makers and truth tellers, betrayed by masculine greed and desire for power, is a trope seen in Old French literature from the period, and therefore the chronicler likely utilised familial tropes to suggest how the reader should approach the unfolding political events. Sophie Harwood has explored how French literature of the period represented the roles women played in society as politicians and diplomats. The dynamic between Isabella of Ibelin and her sons is similar to that between Jocasta and her warring sons in the *Romance of Thebes* (composed in the mid-twelfth century), a *roman*

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[358] *Ibid*, p.298.

[359] *Ibid*, p.297-298.

[360] *Ibid*, pp.301-302.

d'antique. As a peace-maker, Jocasta tried to persuade her son Eteocles to make peace with his brother but she was met with a tantrum in response and a rejection of her good advice. In the *Romance of Troy* (composed in the mid-twelfth century) the good advice of multiple women was ignored by their menfolk. Although in mythology Cassandra is fated not to be believed, in the *Romance of Troy* the author presents her as being ignored instead.[361] Hector is also depicted as unwisely ignoring his wife Andromache's attempts to persuade him to not go to battle. In a manner similar to Isabella, she is even depicted as falling to the floor in an effort to persuade her husband of the validity of her prediction of his death.[362] The actions and behaviour performed by the royal women in the *Chronicle of Amadi* are possibly inspired by Old French literature, although it is also likely that the depictions of female behaviour found in these sources mirror the reality of female agency and power within the medieval political family. Female relatives were often within the monarch's inner circle, but were likely to be ignored.

The conflict between Henry II of Jerusalem and Amaury of Tyre also facilitated an opportunity for Amaury's wife, the Armenian princess Zabel, to play a significant role. Zabel played a key role in the negotiations surrounding the imprisonment of King Henry II. In contrast to her peace-keeping mother-in-law Isabella of Ibelin, Zabel took actions to extend the conflict. Zabel was the daughter of Leo II, king of Cilicia, and, due to an especially chaotic period in Armenian history, sister to five

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[361] Sophie Harwood, *Medieval Women and War: Female Roles in the Old French Tradition* (London: Bloomsbury, 2020), p.122.

[362] *Ibid,* p.126.

kings of Armenia. In the early 1290s Zabel married Amaury, lord of Tyre. The *Chronicle of Amadi* depicts Zabel as a loyal wife to Amaury, even during his campaign against his brother Henry II. Peter Edbury has highlighted the impact Zabel had in shaping the crisis of 1306-1310.[363] Generally however, the personal experiences Zabel endured during this conflict have not been discussed in great detail in the historiography of the kingdom of Cyprus. The importance of Zabel can be seen two-fold during the conflict. Firstly, she appears to have facilitated a close diplomatic relationship between her brother King Oshin and husband, as among Amaury's justifications of Henry's deposition was his failure to assist the kingdom of Cilicia in its conflict against the Mamluks. Secondly, Zabel secured her brother's agreement to imprison King Henry in Armenia, an act that extended and further inflamed the dynastic conflict.

This came about as follows: by 1309 Henry had reportedly recovered from his illness, and his supporters had grown in number. Furthermore, the papacy had not acquiesced to Amaury's request that it support the legitimacy of his regime. In an attempt to curtail the threat of Henry's presence in Cyprus, Amaury sent his wife Zabel to ask her brother King Oshin if he would be willing to host an imprisoned Henry in his kingdom. The *Chronicle of Amadi* records that Zabel 'entreated the king her brother most intensely as well as her cousin, Hetum, lord of Gorgios...that he should get King Oshin to agree to accept...'[364] It appears that Zabel was aware of the importance of her role in maintaining this conflict as the chronicle records that once she returned

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[363] Edbury, *Kingdom of Cyprus,* pp.127-128.

[364] *Chronicle of Amadi,* p.292.

to Cyprus she would not return to Nicosia 'until she had first learnt that the king had left the land to go to Armenia...'[365] Zabel seemed to be aware of the anger that would be aroused in the king and his supporters if her crucial role in negotiating his imprisonment was to be known. The fact that Zabel faced the consequences of her engagement with the conflict alongside her husband Amaury suggests that she was regarded as a crucial player.

On 5 June 1310, Amaury was murdered in mysterious circumstances at his palace in Nicosia. The *Chronicle of Amadi* recorded that, following an argument with the obscure Cypriot knight Simon of Montolif, Amaury was stabbed to death.[366] His body was hidden under a stairway, undiscovered for a considerable time. Tragically, when unable to find her husband in the house, Zabel presumed that the paranoid Amaury had fled Cyprus before the arrival of a crusader fleet, certain that they sought to depose him. Zabel and Amaury, who had enjoyed such a close and productive personal and political partnership during this period of dynastic conflict, had ultimately failed to understand each other in the lord of Tyre's final days. Similarly to how the concerns of Isabella of Ibelin were ultimately dismissed and ignored by her son Henry, Zabel's warning to Amaury that 'he should have been on his guard against Simon of Montolif' was fatefully forgotten, as the chronicler writes that Amaury's 'sin against his brother, the good king, had blinded him.'[367]

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[365] *Ibid*, p.290.

[366] *Ibid,* pp.306-307.

[367] *Ibid*, p.306.

The experiences of Zabel following the murder of her husband represent two key *topos* of women in conflict: that of the vengeful woman, and that of the vulnerable victim of conflict. However, a thread that continued throughout Zabel's presentation in the *Chronicle of Amadi* was her continued efforts to promote her natal family and husband's legacy during this dynastic conflict. The chronicle reported that as the partisans of the lord of Tyre were unable to find his assassin, they 'set about committing outrages and indignities against his blameless relatives, both male and female.'[368] This is expanded upon later in the chronicle, and the role Zabel played in this persecution is highlighted:

> '...certain malicious and evil-speaking rumourmongers and fraudsters convinced the lady of Tyre [Zabel], the constable and the prince that Simon of Montolif, who had killed the lord of Tyre, had been seen going through the city at night...and was in the house of his aunt, Lady Sibylla of Montolif. Accordingly, some friends and servants of the lady of Tyre...armed themselves and went to search and pillage Lady Sibylla['s]...house...but were unable to find anything.'[369]

In another incident, Zabel's thugs targeted the nuns of the abbey of Notre Dame de Tyre in Nicosia. The abbess, Margaret, was the daughter of John of Ibelin, the count of Jaffa, and therefore a kinswoman of both the lord of Tyre and his wife. The *Chronicle of Amadi* reports that

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[368] *Ibid,* p.308.

[369] *Ibid*, pp.321-322.

'as the conflicts and changes brought about by the king's brothers and others did not please her',

Margaret 'had her nuns...pray to God that he would establish peace...and restore the king to his

kingdom…' The chronicle states that Amaury upon hearing that Margaret was allegedly

sympathetic to the king's cause, 'sought an opportunity to harm her…' The belief that the abbey

was a hotbed of support for the king continued after Amaury's murder, as Zabel, her son, and

brother-in-law Aimery the constable heard that the 'abbess and her whole convent were greatly

cheered by his [Amaury's] passing…' Furthermore, wives of some of the knights who supported

Henry II gathered at the convent as they were 'fearful of the disorder that could occur...so that

they would not be robbed by anyone…' as a consequence of the political instability in the

kingdom.

The *Chronicle of Amadi* does not state this outright, but it seems likely that Zabel and her allies

utilised the search for Simon of Montolif to indirectly satisfy their desire for vengeance against

Margaret and the abbey. At the very least, the chronicle claims that the violence was done 'out

of spite for the abbess.'[370] A cleric, Simon Maché, claimed to have seen the assassin in the abbey.

Following this:

> '...the great and the small immediately took up arms and broke into the monastery…they
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> seized the nuns with their swords and daggers drawn and made as if to cut their throats;
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> they manhandled them hither and thither, threatening to cut off their heads and their
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> ears and split their bellies open, uttering insults as though they had spent their lives in a

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[370] *Ibid,* pp.322-323.

brothel with no consideration for any lineage they might have, for they were all

noblewomen and the daughters of knights or of other good burgesses.'

On the death of her husband and the defeat of his supporters, Zabel and her children were left

in an incredibly vulnerable position. Zabel was fearful that the knights of Famagusta, the

supporters of King Henry, would take vengeance upon her. This subverts the usual expectation

that women were treated as non-combatants during conflict, as the *Chronicle of Amadi* stated

that the knights 'who had suffered prison and exile...thanks to the lord of Tyre and herself [the

lady Zabel], had it in their hearts to do her harm because of all she was doing to make her children

heirs to the kingdom.'[371] Zabel was personally held responsible because of the ambition she

demonstrated, and crucially because of the role she played in securing the king's imprisonment

in Armenia. It was generally unusual for elite women to face violent recriminations in continental

Europe and the Latin East during this period, although both Alice of Antioch and Melisende of

Jerusalem were forcefully overthrown as regent of Antioch and queen regnant of Jerusalem

respectively.[372] In Byzantium and Armenia however, women appeared to face the threat of

political execution more frequently. This can be seen in the execution of the Byzantine Empress

Maria of Antioch in 1182 and the murders of two Armenian queen consorts by their husbands:

Isabella (the wife of Leon I) was murdered in 1206, and Alix of Korikos (the wife of Leon IV) in

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[371] *Ibid*, pp.317-318.

[372] Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land,* p.185, 187.

1329.[373] Zabel herself would be murdered in Armenia in the early 1320s, demonstrating that while the Latin East was generally safe for political women, Christian Anatolia had more instances of the political assassination of women.[374]

Zabel therefore took refuge with the papal legate in Cyprus, with whom she had established a positive relationship during her marriage with the granting of gifts. She went to the archbishopric 'on foot, and the legate willingly took her, her children and her possessions under his protection.'[375] Her decision to submit herself, humbly and pitifully, to Church protection proved to be fortuitous, as the *Chronicle of Amadi* recorded that Aygue of Bethsan, a knight of Famagusta and partisan of the king, addressed the papal legate with the following:

> 'We have heard that you have received the lady of Tyre and her children into your residence and under your protection. Therefore we beg and request you...to have her take action to have our lord king brought back to Cyprus...as soon as possible. Should any mishap befall the king in Armenia, despite her being in the legate's protection – even if she and her children were in the belly of the pope and he were in Cyprus – we shall break in, drag them out, take them to Armenia and kill them all.'[376]

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[373] Garland, *Byzantine Empresses*, p.209; T.S.R Boase, *The Cilician Kingdom of Armenia* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1978), pp.20-21.

[374] Edbury, *Kingdom of Cyprus,* p.143.

[375] *Chronicle of Amadi,* pp.317-318.

[376] *Ibid* p318.

Zabel of Armenia provides insight into how vulnerability during periods of conflict could be utilised by an elite woman to ensure her survival, even when her agency and independence was threatened. The *Chronicle of Amadi* recorded an incident in which King Oshin was apparently certain that his sister had been killed by the partisans of the king. The king stated that 'he had heard that the lord of Tyre, his sister and their children had been killed', and he would only return King Henry to Cyprus if the safety of his sister could be verified through a letter.[377] This expressed uncertainty regarding Zabel and her children's safety gave Oshin a major bargaining chip. Oshin also suggested that his sister was only alive because he 'would start such a vendetta that would be extremely brutal…'[378] This helps to explain two key behaviours demonstrated by Zabel in the chronicle. Firstly, the vengeance that she was determined to express following the murder of her husband was likely rooted in her family's experiences with fratricide, and was clearly associated with strength. Secondly, Oshin's machinations provided Zabel with the opportunity to exploit her status as his beloved sister to further the ambitions of her natal family, and the legacy of her late husband.

Zabel 'prevaricated' every way she could to prevent her return to Armenia on the command of the king's partisans.[379] The desire to keep Zabel in Cyprus on their own terms can be seen when

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[377] *Ibid*, p.312.

[378] *Ibid*, p.328.

[379] *Ibid*, p.329.

the chronicle states that Isabella of Ibelin refused to allow Zabel to return to Armenia with her children as she wished, until she had asked her brother to return King Henry to the island. However, when asked to fix her seal to a letter to King Oshin, Zabel claimed 'that she did not have a seal…[and refused] to send any authentication other than a letter with a companion of hers called Gilles Mainboeuf…'[380] Threats were attempted, as Louis of Norés said that 'all the harm and the ignominy will fall to…[Zabel and her children]...' if the verification to Oshin was not sent. However, the chronicle recorded that Zabel, 'acting wholly out of malice and...in collusion with her brother…' planned to flee Cyprus with Oshin's aid 'thereby hindering and afflicting the king of Cyprus' as a prisoner exchange would then be impossible. Zabel did eventually board a ship bound to Armenia with her family, albeit slowly with further frustration from her mother-in-law, following threats of force. She still 'prevaricated from day to day…[inventing] excuses, reasons, and ways of saying that it was not possible to do this…'[381] Finally, Zabel's lack of cooperation led to Isabella of Ibelin taking '500 fully armed horsemen and a further 500 infantry' to force her daughter-in-law to take ship for Armenia; Zabel did finally leave, but not before further claiming illness.[382]

Zabel, despite her contemporary reputation as the king's enemy, did seek to restore her relationship with her brother-in-law following his restoration in 1310. In doing this, she utilised

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[380] *Ibid,* pp.324-325.

[381] *Ibid,* p.329.

[382] *Ibid*, pp.343-344.

expectations of her as a noncombatant, thereby rewriting her actions throughout the dynastic conflict:

> 'All the same, the lady of Tyre arranged to go on board the galley where the king was and, falling at his feet and asking him for forgiveness, declared that she was not as culpable as was being claimed, something that would be verified in due course, and she offered him her oath. She then opened a box and gave the king his crown, his sceptre by force from the convent of the Franciscans, where the king had had them sent for safeguarding. In exchange, she demanded from the king retribution on those who had killed her husband…he accepted her excuses.'[383]

Conclusion

To judge women to be non-combatants in the medieval world is to rely on terminology and definitions that are centred on the male experience of combat. Women played an auxiliary role in conflict, and this should be included within our understanding of medieval conflict and challenges our conception of women as non-combatants. A second point of investigation is what this event can tell us about the concept of public and private space in the medieval world. There was a difference in public and private behaviour by women, especially as the performance of femininity was more unlikely to be done in the home as it was where a woman was surrounded by her closest confidants. The women of the royal dynasty were as courageous and intelligent as their male relatives, and so the *Chronicle of Amadi* encourages us to be wary of the stereotypical

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[383] *Ibid*, p.346.

portrayal of feminine gentleness that exist in most other chronicles. Finally, the case studies presented in this chapter demonstrate how the threat of the family could at time be greater than the threat of strangers. Zabel of Armenia was ultimately murdered by her own family alongside her children on her return to her homeland, after being caught up in another succession crisis. The domestic space was a place in which women held significant authority and more freedom of expression, but were also extremely vulnerable.

5. 'Outsider' Identity and its Shaping of Female Authority in the Thirteenth Century.

Fulcher of Chartres accompanied the First Crusade to the Levant, and following its victory,

decided to settle in the region. Fascinated by how the crusade had brought such a broad range

of people from across Western Christendom together for a single cause, Fulcher espoused the

ideal of a unified 'Frankish identity,' apparently formed on the establishment of the Crusader

States. He wrote that the 'Occidental' had become the 'Oriental,' that 'Franks' had become

'Galileans,' and those 'alien' had become 'native.'[384] The homeland of the Latin settlers was a

distant memory and the Levant itself had rapidly become a home and an identity. In his writing,

Fulcher was likely simplifying a far more complex and fractious population, taking an optimistic

view in light of his own preoccupation with describing the newly established Crusader States as

a utopia ripe for further settlement. Historians have both supported and challenged Fulcher of

Chartres' depiction of cultural hegemony in the Latin East, and studies continue to be published

on this subject.[385]

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[384] Fulcher of Chartres, *The First Crusade: The Accounts of Eyewitnesses and Participants*, ed. August C. Kray

(Princeton, 1921), pp.280-81.

[385] Buck, 'Settlement, Identity, and Memory), pp.271-302; MacEvitt, 'What was Crusader about the Crusader

States?', pp.317-330; Alan V. Murray, 'Ethnic Identity in the Crusader States: The Frankish Race and the Settlement

of Outremer', in *The Expansion of Latin Europe, 1000-1500: The Eastern Mediterranean Frontier of Latin

Christendom*, ed. Jace Stuckey (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 339-350; Alan V. Murray, 'National Identity,

Language and Conflict in the Crusades to the Holy Land, 1096–1192', in *The Crusades and the Near East: Cultural

Histories*, ed. Conor Kostick (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), pp.107-130.

It seems fair to conclude that the elite of the Crusader States were less 'Oriental' than we may presume after reading Fulcher's account. Linguistically, they were Francophonic (although some of the nobility were fluent in other languages, such as Arabic, Italian and Greek.[386] They remained Latin Christian and in constant communication with Rome.However, this connection with Rome, evidenced by the frequency of communications made with the papacy, was matched with expressions of Eastern Christian identity amongst the Eastern Frankish population. As discussed in more detail in the patronage chapter of this thesis, artistic and architectural evidence from the Latin East demonstrates that people had sympathy for other churches in the region due to interfaith marriages amongst the Christian elites.[387] Their law, although inventive in many ways, did heavily borrow from Western European legal customs.[388]

The belief that the Crusader States should be fundamentally Latin and 'Frankish' in culture can be seen to have motivated the selection of male consorts brought from Western Europe to marry the kingdom of Jerusalem's queens regnant. These male consorts were usually French. The only outliers were two Italians. These included Conrad of Montferrat who was, however, a first-cousin of both Louis VII of France and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, and so was well-connected in his cultural origins to many settler families in the Latin East.[389] Emperor Frederick II

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[386] Rubin, *Learning in a Crusader City*, p.83.

[387] Natasha Hodgson, 'Conflict and Cohabitation', pp.83-106.

[388] Rubin, *Learning in a Crusader City,* pp.88-89.

[389] Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A History,* p.178.

was not French in origin, but he was the most high profile of the consorts of Jerusalem, and was geographically close to the Eastern Mediterranean due to his kingdom in Sicily.[390] The queens regnant of Jerusalem more frequently married strangers to their realm than the men. The reasons for this avoidance of marrying into the nobility of Jerusalem can be hypothesised. The elite of the Latin East was very interrelated, especially by the thirteenth century, as seen in the issuing of papal dispensations for marriages from the papacy.[391] Marrying distantly may have added some security to the royal line rather than risking the future invalidation of the marriage on the grounds of consanguinity? For an example of this danger: King Alfonso IX of Leon (1171-1230) had two marriages annulled on the grounds of consanguinity: his first, to Theresa of Portugal, and his second, to Berengaria of Castile. Both annulments were resisted by Alfonso, and led to a disputed succession on his death.[392] It is also likely that husbands were sought across the sea as a means of bringing reinforcements to the Latin East. 'Foreign' consorts, male and female, would bring men, money, and European connections that could be more valuable than an alliance with a local noble family.

This arrangement could, however, introduce issues with the baronial class due to the influence of newcomers to the region. The second and third husbands of Isabella I of Jerusalem, Conrad of

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[390] See David Abulafia, *Frederick II: a medieval emperor* (London: Pimlico, 2002).

[391] *Bullarium Cyprium,* 2, pp.204-205. 284-285, 421--422.

[392] Bartlett, *Blood Royal,* p.46; Bianchini, 'The Leonese Succession', in *The Queen's Hand: Power and Authority in the Reign of Berenguela of Castile,* pp.180-207;

Montferrat and Henry of Champagne, did not encounter substantive resistance from the local nobility; this was likely due to gratitude for their leadership during the Third Crusade and the fact that they did not last very long as consorts due to their sudden and violent deaths in 1192 and 1197 respectively. Aimery of Lusignan and John of Brienne, two kings with longer reigns in Jerusalem, both struggled with opposition from the nobility. Aimery, king of Cyprus since 1196, married Isabella I in 1198. He was less of an interloper than previous consorts, as he had been resident in the Latin East since the 1160s but he faced opposition and an assassination attempt regardless.[393] John of Brienne also encountered disputes with the baronial elite, particularly with Walter of Caesarea and John of Ibelin, the previous regent of John's wife Queen Maria. It was his unprecedented status within the kingdom as a crowned king consort with a living child as his heir that explains why he did not lose his throne on the death of his wife. It was not due to his popularity.[394] Baronial opposition to Frederick II was severe enough to warrant civil war. The Lombard War (1228-1243), fought between imperial forces and the kingdom of Cyprus (along with some anti-imperial allies in the kingdom of Jerusalem), centred on three key points of opposition: the overreach of Frederick's appointed bailies, the emperor's attempts to destroy the Ibelin family, and the emperor's attempts to make the kingdoms of Cyprus and Jerusalem follow Germanic legal customs (as shown in the disagreements over the age of majority, the organisation of regencies, and the rights of the suzerain emperor over kings). Dislike of Frederick

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[393] Donnachie, 'Predicaments of Aimery de Lusignan'.

[394] Guy Perry, *John of Brienne: King of Jerusalem, Emperor of Constantinople, c.1175-1237* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp.67-69.

was not necessarily widespread, as many Jerusalemite nobles were willing to recognise him as their suzerain.[395] Rather, it was a belief that imperial rule was diluting and eroding the precious independence of the High Court that led to more Jerusalemite involvement in the civil war during the 1240s. These examples of tension between the barons and foreign male consorts had precedents in the twelfth century. Fulk of Anjou was selected as the husband of the heiress Melisende in 1129 due to various impressive qualities. He was already an experienced ruler, having governed Anjou since 1109. He had been on pilgrimage multiple times, and had impressed the local nobility with his wealth, military prowess, and charitable generosity.[396] However, his early reign over Jerusalem was troubled due to his poor relationship with the nobility. He was undiplomatic, with a poor memory for faces.[397] He did not involve his wife Melisende in his decision-making at this stage, and he replaced the favourites of his father-in-law Baldwin I, with Angevin 'outsiders' from his own retinue.[398] This tension culminated in the rebellion of Count

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[395] See La Monte, 'Introduction', in *The Wars of Frederick II Against the Ibelins in Syria and Cyprus,* pp.40-55.

[396] William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p.47-51.

[397] *Ibid,* II p.47.

[398] Hayley Bassett, 'Regnant Queenship and Royal Marriage Between the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Nobility of Western Europe', in *A Companion to Global Queenship*, ed. Elena Woodacre (York: Arc Humanities Press, 2018), pp.39-52; Stephen Donnachie, 'Male consorts and royal authority in the Crusader states', in *The Routledge History of Monarchy*, eds. Elena Woodacre, Lucinda H.S. Dean, Chris Jones, Russell E. Martin, Zita Eva Rohr (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), pp.607-621; Bernard Hamilton, 'King Consorts of Jerusalem and their Entourages from the West from 1186 to 1250,' in *Die Kreuzfahrerstaaten als multikulturelle Gesellschaft*, ed. H.E. Mayer (Munich: Oldenbourg, 1997), pp.13–24; Hans Mayer, 'Angevins versus Normans: The New Men of King Fulk

Hugh of Jaffa which, although quashed, forced King Fulk to include Queen Melisende in future decision making.[399] Guy of Lusignan, the husband of Queen Sibylla, was no stranger to the region. He had left Poitou in 1168, and he likely had been residing in Tripoli until he was recorded in Jerusalem in 1180.[400] However, he was also deeply unpopular, to the extent that members of the nobility lobbied for his wife to abandon him upon her succession to the throne of Jerusalem in 1186.[401] There were, therefore, two key strains to the opposition shown to 'outsider' or 'foreign' male consorts: the influence and wealth granted by the king to their retinue and the unwelcome introduction of foreign customs.

It is worth noting that 'outsider' or 'foreign' female consorts across the medieval world could face similar concerns. This can be seen in examples from outside the Latin East. High profile women from the south of France, such as Constance of Arles, wife of Robert II of France, and Agnes of Aquitaine, wife of Henry III of Germany, were criticised by contemporary writers for the

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of Jerusalem,' *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society 133* (1989), pp.1–25; Hans Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, vol 26 (1972), pp.93-182; Elena Woodacre, 'Questionable Authority: Female Sovereigns and their Consorts in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles,' in *Authority and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles*, eds. Juliana Dresvina and Nichola Sparks (Newcastle-Upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), pp.367–406.

[399] William of Tyre, *History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea,* Vol. 2, pp.71-76; Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land,* pp.134-135; Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Melisende of Jerusalem', 2, pp.102-104.

[400] Nicholson, *Sybil, Queen of Jerusalem,* p.84.
[401] *Ibid,* pp.120-122.

scandalous customs, manners, and dress that they introduced to their husbands' courts.[402] In

England the wife of Edward I, Eleanor of Castile, was noted to have exotic tastes; her supposed

preference for Castilian merchants was also suspected and criticised.[403] The wife of Henry III,

Eleanor of Provence, was infamous for bringing countless Provencal hangers-on to the English

court; they were near universally reviled and distrusted for receiving favouritism and riches from

the king.[404] This reaction bears similarity to the anger the barons of Tripoli felt towards their

foreign countess, Lucia of Segni, and her favoured Roman relatives that were awarded

considerable prestige and power under her governance, as discussed later in this chapter. A

foreign queen could also be mistrusted due to her visual difference from her surroundings. The

German Bertha of Sulzbach (also known as Irene) was out-of-place at the Byzantine court as a

culturally austere empress who refused to use makeup.[405] Criticism of the cultural influence of

foreign queen consorts did not necessarily prevent cultural transference from taking place.

Cultural transference is also clearly seen in the development of culture in the kingdom of

Jerusalem. Of the six queen consorts of Jerusalem, five were foreign to the kingdom. Excluded

from these six are women who were nominally queen of Jerusalem following the conquest of the

kingdom by 1291. It also excludes the wife of King Conrad (Elisabeth of Bavaria) as she never

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[402] Bartlett, *Blood Royal,* pp.30-31.

[403] *Ibid,* p.29; Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013)*,* p.145.

[404] Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe,* pp.143-144.

[405] Garland, *Byzantine Empresses,* p.199-200.

resided in the kingdom of Jerusalem. Isabella of Ibelin, wife of Hugh III, was the only queen consort of Jerusalem who was born in the kingdom of Cyprus.[406] Two were Armenian: 'Arda' (wife of Baldwin I) and Morphia (wife of Baldwin II).[407] Two were Byzantine: Theodora (wife of Baldwin III) and Maria (wife of Amalric).[408] One was Sicilian: Adelaide del Vastro (wife of Baldwin I).[409] These women were not criticised in the contemporary sources for their foreign customs, and instead these marriages were generally portrayed positively, or received very little comment at all. William of Tyre especially highlighted the wealth, resources, and prestige granted to the kingdom through the Greek and Italian marriages.[410] The Armenian and Greek influence on the culture of the kingdom of Jerusalem can be seen in its architectural and artistic works.[411]

The eager reception of Greek and Armenian cultural transference begs the question: why was the influence of these foreign queens encouraged? Why did European courts generally accept the cultural input of their foreign queens, despite the criticism found in some sources? The answer is likely that a male consort or co-ruler would have more power due to his gender. This

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[406] *Lignages D'Outremer*, p.143.

[407] Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States', p.144, 147.

[408] *Ibid,* p.157, 161.

[409] *Ibid,* p.145.

[410] William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea,* Vol.1, p.497, II pp.344-345.

[411] Kenaan, 'Local Christian Art in Twelfth Century Jerusalem', *Israel Exploration Journal*, vol.23, no.4 (1973), pp.221-229.

can explain why a male foreign consort, seeking to introduce new customs, may have met with a more violent response than a female foreign consort. An example of this can be seen in the case study of Philip of Antioch, ruler of Cilician Armenia between 1222 and 1225.[412] Philip was a younger son of Prince Bohemond IV of Antioch-Tripoli and Plaisance of Gibelet. On his marriage to Zabel in 1222, he became king of Armenia, and promised to follow the rites of the Armenian Apostolic Church and respect local customs but he failed to do this. He instead tried to force his own faith on his subjects and showed favouritism to Latins .[413] Furthermore, he allegedly sent treasures, including King Leo I of Armenia's throne and crown, to his father in Antioch.[414] He demonstrated a loathing for Armenians and as a result he was seized by the knights of Armenia and imprisoned and later murdered.[415] Samuel Wilson argued that Philip's deposition was unlikely to have been motivated by concern surrounding the 'ethnic background of the men he appointed to key positions' during his reign and he emphasises that it was the decision of the Armenian barons to support his marriage to Zabel in the first place.[416] Wilson is correct in emphasising the fact that Franks and Armenians often intermarried in the Latin East, and also in

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[412] Samuel Wilson, 'The Latin principality of Antioch and its relationship with the Armenian kingdom of Cilicia, 1188-1268' [doctoral thesis], Nottingham Trent University, pp.30-31.

[413] Sirarpie Der Nersessian, 'The Kingdom of Cilician Armenia', in *A History of the Crusades Vol. 2: The Later Crusades, 1189*-1311, ed. Robert Lee Wolff, Harry W. Hazzard (Philadelphia: University of Pennslyvania Press, 1963), pp.630-660, at p.631.

[414] Wilson, 'Latin Principality of Antioch', p.56.

[415] *Ibid,* p.31.

[416] *bid*, p.159-160.

his suggestion that these groups seemed not to be concerned about the differences between them.[417] It is important to note, however, that most of these marriages involved women entering a foreign court rather than men. It seems unlikely that Philip of Antioch had the influence to convert his barons and Latinize the Armenian court, but crucially his gender meant that the nobility did not want to risk it and eliminated him once his behaviour became too dangerous. This decision conviently and greatly benefitted the family of the future King Hetum I who would go on to marry Isabella, demonstrating that self-interest and political ambition were also significanct factors in Philip's deposition, regardless if his behaviour strengthened the cause against him.

Female foreign consorts may in theory have been less likely to transform a royal court due to their lack of official power, but in practice they could still have great impact. A significant example of this is the career of Elizabeth the Cuman. She was the wife of Stephen V of Hungary, and the daughter of a Cuman khan. She became regent of Hungary on King Stephen's death in 1272, but her greatest demonstration of influence was the cultural alignment of her son King Ladislaus IV (1262-1290).[418] He favoured Cumans over Hungarians and wore traditional Cuman costume. In order to live openly with his Cuman mistress, he imprisoned his wife Elizabeth of Sicily on Margaret Island. Upon his assassination, his Christian faith was so widely doubted that Pope

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[417] *bid*, p.161.

[418] Nora Berend, *At the Gate of Christendom: Jews, Muslims and 'Pagans' in Medieval Hungary, c.1000-c.*1300 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p.174-177.

Nicholas IV launched a papal inquiry to discover if he had died a pagan. This is an extreme

example due to the significant differences between the Hungarians and Cumans in their faiths

and cultures, but the influence of foreign consorts over their children was fairly universal across

medieval Europe.[419]

Reception to Female and Foreign Rule in the County of Tripoli

The thirteenth century county of Tripoli saw three periods of conflict between the baronial

Embriaco family and the rulers of Tripoli: the first led by Bertrand Embriaco between 1258-1259,

the second led by Guy II of Embriaco from 1277 to 1283, and the third led by Bartholomew

Embriaco from 1287 to 1289.[420] These conflicts, Jesse W. Izzo argues, arose from a 'resentment

to clerical intrusion on secular governance,' 'female overlordship,' and 'foreign (even if Frankish)

intrusion into the county's affairs and feudal relations.'[421] There is, however, far greater

intersectionality between opposition to clerical, female, and foreign rule than is given credence

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[419] For more on the influence of medieval mothers over their children, see *Medieval mothering,* eds. John Carmi

Parsons, Bonnie Wheeler (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996); *Virtuous or Villainess? The Image of the Royal*

Mother from the Early Medieval to the Early Modern Era, eds. Carey Fleiner, Elena Woodacre (New York: Palgrave

Macmillan, 2016).

[420] Jesse W. Izzo, 'The Revolts of the Embriaco and the Fall of the County of Tripoli', *The Haskins Society Journal*,

27: 2015), pp.149-160, at p.150

[421] *Ibid,* p.160.

by Izzo. A female regent was often an isolated figure. She would likely be foreign (as the spouse of a deceased ruler) and to relieve her political isolation she would depend on the advice of men. Although these advisors were sometimes selected from the baronial elite, very often female regents sought advice from their fellow countrymen or clerics; this was the case in the county of Tripoli during the thirteenth century. A female regent therefore needed to balance her reliance on favourites against her efforts to appeal to the interests of the local elite. The county of Tripoli saw three periods of female rule during the thirteenth century. Lucia of Segni, ruled as regent for her son Bohemond VI from January to December of 1252.[422] Sibylla of Armenia ruled as regent for her son Bohemond VII from 1275 to 1277.[423] Lucia of Antioch claimed the county of Tripoli following the death of her brother in 1287, but in practice ruled very briefly before the county was conquered by the Mamluks in 1289.[424] All of these women were viewed as 'outsiders' to Tripoli, Lucia of Conti and Sibylla of Armenia because of their foreign birth, and Lucia of Tripoli due to her marriage to an Angevin nobleman in the 1270s and lengthy residence in the kingdom of Naples.[425] The ability of these women to exert power centred on their positioning of themselves as 'insiders', able to foresee and appease local baronial interests.

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[422] *Ibid,* p.154,

[423] *Ibid,* pp.155-156.

[424] Izzo, 'Anti-Foreign Sentiment', pp.140-141.

[425] *The Templar of Tyre: Part III of the 'Deeds of the Cypriots,'* trans. Paul Crawford (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p.70, n.2.

The key narrative source that records the rule of these women is the *Chronicle of the Templar of Tyre*, which records the history of the Latin East from the 1240s to 1309. This chronicle is the third source to appear in the compilation manuscript, the *Gestes des Chiprois*. The 'Templar of Tyre' was likely a member of the lesser nobility, as he served Margaret of Lusignan, the sister of King Hugh III, in Tyre during his youth which led to his association with the city.[426] Later in life he worked as a secretary to William of Beaujeu, the last Templar grandmaster resident in the Latin East. The chronicler lived in Tyre from 1269 and 1283, and then resided in Acre; he was an eye-witness to the city's fall in 1291 and left an invaluable and lengthy account of the siege. Then, like many people displaced by the Mamluk conquests, he moved to Cyprus where his chronicle was completed.[427] The chronicler is generally unpartisan; although he was closely associated with William of Beaujeu, he does not show favouritism towards the Templars in his account of their conflicts with the Hospitallers. The reliability of his account is further strengthened by corroboration from Arabic and Latin narrative sources, as well as by surviving documentary evidence.[428] The chronicle of the Templar of Tyre is valuable as the author does not condemn female rule on principle. Rather, he records popular opposition to female rule as an impartial observer.

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[426] *Ibid,* p.130.

[427] *Ibid*, pp.2-4.

[428] *Ibid*, p.11.

Lucia of Conti was a Roman noblewoman, and a kinswoman of Pope Innocent III.[429] In 1235 Lucia

married Bohemond V, prince of Antioch and count of Tripoli (1199-1252).[430] Bohemond and Lucia

had two children: Plaisance, the mother and regent of Hugh II of Cyprus, and Bohemond VI.

Bohemond V died in January 1252. As Bohemond VI was fifteen at this time his mother Lucia

acted as his regent between the January and December of 1252. Steven Runciman described

Lucia as a 'feckless woman' who refused to leave Tripoli and left governing the principality to

relatives that she had invited from Rome.[431] The criticism of her refusal to leave Tripoli is a little

unfair since Runciman also mentions that her husband Bohemond V also rarely left the city due

to the governing commune in Antioch which, being dominated by Greeks, was hostile to his close

alliance with Rome. Furthermore, as she ruled for under a year due to Bohemond VI being close

to reaching his age of majority, she had little time to travel outside of Tripoli (especially given

that the territory she governed was split in the middle by an enclave of Lattakieh, ruled by

Muslims).[432] However, the accusation that the Lucia of Conti's patronage of Romans in Tripoli

caused tensions is supported by the *Templar of Tyre,* which records that a disagreement took

place between Bohemond VI and his knights in Tripoli 'over an issue relating to the Romans.'[433]

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[429] Izzo, 'Anti'Foreign Sentiment', p.131.

[430] Izzo, 'The Revolts of the Embriaco', p.154.

[431] Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades 3: The Kingdom of Acre and the Later Crusades* (London: Penguin, 1965), p.278.

[432] *Ibid*, p.207.

[433] *Templar of Tyre,* p.31.

Izzo's claim that Lucia was 'resented' due to this promotion of Romans in Tripoli can be seen in

her deposition as regent.[434] Lucia's regency ended a few months early due to the intervention of

Pope Innocent IV (r.1243-1254) and King Louis IX of France (1214-1270). A letter, dated 7

November 1252 from Pope Innocent to the Patriarch Opizo Fieschi of Antioch and the Bishop

Opizo of Tripoli records the papal order for Bohemond to end his minority early, against the usual

custom of waiting until he was fifteen. The justification given for this is his mother's inability to

govern due to the military pressures on the frontiers of Antioch and Tripoli.[435] John of Joinville

also records this event, writing in his *Vie de Saint Louis* that the young Bohemond VI, with his

mother Lucia, travelled to King Louis' camp at Jaffa where he was knighted. He asked the king for

an audience and in front of his mother asked Louis to permit him to take control of his lands

early, as it was 'not right that she [Lucia] should allow my land to be run down or

abandoned...because in her hands the city of Antioch is being lost.' Bohemond asked the king to

persuade his mother to provide him with money and men with which he could travel to Antioch,

stating that a 'great expense would be incurred' if he were to remain in Tripoli with his mother

which would 'achieve nothing.' King Louis used his 'powers of persuasion' on Princess Lucia, and

her son did receive the funds to go to Antioch and bring the principality back under his control.[436]

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[434] Izzo, 'The Revolts of the Embriaco,' p.154.

[435] 'Röhricht's Regesta Revised: 1245 to 1260', ed. P. Edbury et al. (unpublished supplement to http://crusades-regesta.com/), no.2885.

[436] John of Joinville, 'The Life of Saint Louis', pp.275-276.

Lucia does not appear in records following the end of her regency in 1252. Considering how powerful her brother Paul of Segni continued to be during the reign of her son, it would be strange for Lucia to be excluded from the source evidence unless she had passed away or returned to Italy following her tenure as regent.

It was during Bohemond VI's majority that tensions erupted between his family and the Embriaco. The Embriaco family originated in Genoa but had been leading magnates in the county of Tripoli since the city's conquest in 1109. Ruling over Gibelet, the family rivalled the power of the ruling Antioch-Tripoli dynasty and had intermarried with them at various points.[437] The War of St Sabas amplified this conflict. The war itself was fought between 1256 and 1261 by the republics of Genoa and Venice over their conflicting interests in the Mediterranean. This increased tensions between the Embriaco and Bohemond VI as they supported different sides in the conflict; the Embriaco were loyal to the Genoese, and Bohemond supported the Venetians.[438] Following the refusal of Betrand II Embriaco to follow the command of Prince Bohemond to attack a Genoese force raiding Acre in 1258, there was conflict between Bohemond and the rebelling forces led by Bertrand and his cousin William lord of Botron.[439] The prince was wounded

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[437] Izzo, 'Revolts of the Embriaco', pp.151-152

[438] *Ibid,* p.153.

[439] *Ibid,* p.154; *Templar of Tyre*, pp.25–26

during a clash outside of Tripoli in 1258, and ordered the murder of Betrand who was ambushed and beheaded.[440]

In 1254 Bohemond married Sibylla, the daughter of Queen Zabel and King Hetoum of Armenia. They had a son, Bohemond VII, and three daughters. Isabella died young, as did a second daughter, Marie, wife of the lord of Thebes, Nicholas of Saint-Omer.[441] Lucia married Narjot of Toucy and lived in Apulia with her husband who served as its admiral.[442] On the death of Bohemond VI in 1275, his widow became regent for their underage son. The *Templar of Tyre* does not explicitly call Sibylla the regent, but presents a situation similar to the customs of the kingdoms of Jerusalem and Cyprus; Sibylla asked the prelate Bishop Bartholomew of Tortosa to govern on her behalf, akin to the usual practice of female regents governing alongside a male bailli. The chronicler recorded that the knights of the land were 'disgusted at being governed by a cleric, but...endured it and did not show their distain.'[443] Sibylla's selection of Bartholomew may shed some light on why her political influence was seemingly well-received by the local elite, despite the poor precedent established by the last female regent of Tripoli. King Hugh III of Cyprus (the first cousin of Bohemond VI) had attempted to take control of the regency of Bohemond VII, but the regency of a woman and a cleric was apparently more popular amongst the barons of

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[440] Izzo, 'Revolts of the Embriaco', p.155.

[441] *Lignages D'Outremer*, pp. 95-96.

[442] Izzo, 'Revolts of the Embriaco', p.156.

[443] *Templar of* Tyre, p.70.

Tripoli than the regency of an outsider.[444] This insistence that those within the city should continue to govern their own affairs appears to have been a priority shared by the bishop, Sibylla, and the native baronial elite. Furthermore, as vicar to the patriarch of Antioch, Bartholomew of Tortosa was a senior cleric.[445] Izzo reasons that Sibylla selected the bishop as her co-ruler to 'counter [the] growing Angevin influence in the county.' This contradicts an earlier policy of goodwill towards the Angevins. Bohemond VI had been friendly towards the Angevins, supporting the claims of Charles of Anjou following his purchase of the crown of Jerusalem from Maria of Antioch in 1277. His children had both married Angevin spouses. There is no significant evidence that this anti-Angevin sentiment originated from Sibylla, but it is likely that she was politically savvy enough to base her political beliefs on the desires of the local baronial elite, as without their support her regency would have been as short as Lucia of Segni's. The barons seem to have disliked the influence the Angevins had over Tripoli in the 1270s, and so, despite the barons' misgivings about being governed by a clergyman, they tolerated his rule because of his opposition to both Romans and Angevins in the county. By taking measures to curtail the power of foreigners in the county, despite her own status as an outsider, Sibylla successfully co-opted an identity as an insider with shared interests with the baronial elite.

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[444] Izzo, 'Revolts of the Embriaco', p.155.

[445] Bernard Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States: The Secular Church,* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1980)*,* p.237.

The reign of Bohemond VII of Tripoli was turbulent. The efforts of Bishop Bartholomew and Sibylla to reduce the influence of foreigners was undermined by the young count's favour towards them. Bohemond married Margaret of Beaumont, a kinswoman of Charles of Anjou; Margaret's dowry did not even originate from Charles but was provided from the rents of Tripoli, amounting to an annual stipend of ten thousand bezants. His reign also saw conflict with the Embriaco. Bohemond had once given his permission for the brother of the lord of Jubail, Guy II Embriaco, to marry an heiress, the daughter of Hugh Aleman; however, he then changed his mind and arranged instead for the heiress to marry a nephew of Bishop Bartholomew. Guy Embiaco ordered for his brother to marry the heiress anyway, depriving Bohemond of his legal right as suzerain to select the husband of his female vassal. Guy ordered the marriage to go ahead and then took refuge with the Templars as he knew Bohemond would be furious; this brought him together with his onetime enemy Bishop Paul of Segni, as they were mutual friends of the Templar master William of Beaujeu. The count attacked the Templar house where Paul of Segni sought refuge and following his occupation of it was excommunicated.[446] Guy II was eventually captured by Bohemond when the count betrayed a brokered peace, ordering his men to blind both the Genoese and the foreigners.[447] The execution of Guy ended this conflict, but this period of violence irreconcilably damaged the relationship between the Antioch-Tripoli dynasty and the baronial elite. The popularity of the ruling dynasty was low when Bohemond VII died in 1287, and this inevitably made circumstances very difficult for his sister and heir, Lucia.

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[446] Izzo, 'Revolts of the Embriaco', pp.155-157.

[447] *Templar of Tyre,* p.79.

When Bohemond VII died in 1287, his heir was his sister Lucia.[448] She was married to the Angevin Narjot of Toucy, and she had to travel from Apulia in order to claim her inheritance.[449] There were three major issues surrounding Lucia's succession. Firstly, the ruling dynasty of Tripoli had suffered a reputational loss during the reign of her brother Bohemond; Lucia's succession would have to be approved by the Franco-Genoese community violently targeted by her predecessor. Secondly, Lucia had to cover a vast distance to claim her territory; in the law of the Latin East claimants did not have many rights until they had physically appeared before the High Court to claim their inheritance. The time taken to travel to Tripoli could leave a power vacuum in which another claimant could challenge the succession of an outsider. Thirdly, Lucia was married to a foreigner. Izzo argues that the men of Tripoli were against Lucia's succession as they viewed 'her and her husband as yet more foreign interlopers.'[450]

The continuing popularity of the Princess Dowager Sibylla was apparent as she was approached by the men of Tripoli and asked to appoint a regent. She was not asked to rule personally 'because she was not able to manage it herself due to the bereavement she had suffered' at the death of her son. due to her grief at the loss of her son.[451] Sibylla, possibly underestimating the baronial resentment towards Bishop Bartholomew that had worsened during the conflicts of Bohemond

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[448] Izzo, 'Revolts of the Embriaco', p.158.

[449] *Ibid*, p.140.

[450] Izzo, 'Anti-Foreign Sentiment in Frankish Syria', p.158.

[451] *Templar of Tyre,* p.96.

VII's reign, nominated him once again to serve as regent. The barons were frustrated with this selection, as 'they had had conflict and contention and great disagreement' with the bishop. They confronted Sibylla with evidence that she had requested the bishop to act as regent, and expressed that he was 'their enemy, and that they would not have him...rule over them at this time.' So strong was their opposition that they 'founded a commune in honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary....[and] ran their own affairs.' They were led by Bartholomew Embriaco, demonstrating how once again the ruling dynasty of Antioch-Tripoli and the Embriaco were on opposite sides of a conflict.

The initial reception of the native barony to the accession of Lucia of Tripoli is difficult to gauge. Her reign was met by opposition due to her family's legacy:

> 'The men of Tripol...informed her [Lucia] that it was not hidden from her, and that she
> must know perfectly well, that her brother the prince had committed outrages against
> them, and they also made clear to her how her father the prince and his grandfather were
> always treating them badly, both by outrageous conduct and by doing violence to knights
> and burgesses and other people.'[452]

The barons also expressed that, to a certain extent, their opposition to her was not personal. Unwilling to 'suffer' under the rule of the Antioch-Tripoli dynasty further, they formed their commune, not in order to 'disinherit a soul...but rather to maintain everyone in his proper rights and privileges.' Although they offered to accept Lucia's rule if she permitted the commune to

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[452] *Templar of Tyre,* p.97.

continue, this would have undermined her authority so highly that this negotiation could not continue at this time. However, the barons had initially approached her mother Sibylla, seemingly in good faith, in an effort to enter a regency. They may have felt that if the mistakes of the old regime were recognised and amended, the rule of Lucia could be endured. Alternatively, their approach could suggest their strong anxiety when faced with the succession of a woman. The failure of Sibylla to select a suitable regent may have broken what little confidence they had in the rule of a family that had reached heights of unrestrained violence during the reign of Bohemond VII.

If the nobility justified their rejection of Lucia on the grounds of her perceived 'foreign' identity, this has several implications. It appears that either the Antioch-Tripoli dynasty had, by this point, become associated more with foreign influences (such as the Angevins or Romans) than with the nobility of Tripoli, or that Lucia in particular was viewed as vulnerable to foreign influences because of her marriage. While Sibylla, a woman of foreign birth, could seemingly adapt to meet the interests of the native elite, Lucia of Tripoli is an example of how married women could be denaturalised and disenfranchised by the unpopularity of their foreign husbands. The presumption was that married women would share the political aspirations and interests of their husband and his family. The personal agency of a married woman was therefore always suspect, and this meant that the succession of a woman, especially when the claimant was married and situated abroad, was often met by resistance. In the Latin Levant, legal customs gave protections to female claimants at a level unmatched in Western Christendom. The palatability of female succession was however aided by the fact that most heiresses, both noble and regnal, inherited

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their territory while resident in the region. Lucia therefore, despite having a protected legal claim to the county of Tripoli, was uniquely disadvantaged amongst her peers because she was resident in the West on her succession. For the native nobility of Tripoli their decision to radically transform the city from a county seat to a commune was likely motivated by years of misrule by both male and female rulers, but their patience towards the Tripoli-Antioch dynasty was finally broken by the misstep of Sibylla of Armenia and the accession of Lucia.

The kingdom of Jerusalem and the principality of Antioch-Tripoli both saw the accession of female rulers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, but these women were not met with the radical opposition experienced by Lucia in Tripoli. Culturally and legally, Tripoli did not differ so much from the other Crusader States, so Izzo's assertion that the county's barony was adverse to female governance is too simplistic. As discussed earlier in this thesis, we had a woman, Eschiva of Le Puy, inherit the position of constable of Tripoli. While they did experience the poor governance of Lucia of Segni, the nobility of Tripoli had clearly not been opposed to Sibylla of Armenia holding political power as they had approached her twice to nominate a regent. The difference in this instance is that Narjot of Toucy was a foreigner unknown to the nobility who had lived with Lucia for a significant time in Western Europe; the other women to have ruled, both as queens regnant and regents, were well known to the local nobility as they lived in the region. Their husbands often had crusading pedigree, so were also known to the local elite.

The commune of Tripoli turned to Genoa for aid, receiving with 'great honour and great joy' Sir

Benedetto Zaccaria and five galleys.[453] The Templar of Tyre recorded, however, that some of the

nobility, Bartholomew Embriaco lord of Jubail among them, feared that the Genoese had been

granted too much influence in the city and so reached out to Lucia.[454] If she would grant the

Genoese no more advantage, they would receive her as their overlord.[455] The fear that the rule

of Lucia would bring about the rule of her foreign husband was unfounded. Lucia appeared

before Tripoli in the company of the Hospitallers, but not her husband, and was amenable to

negotiation; her husband appears to have had the good sense to stay away from the city.

Benedetto Zaccaria, the Genoese representative in the commune, negotiated terms that resulted

in Lucia taking possession of the city. Lucia's reign was brief due to the Mamluk conquest of

Tripoli in 1289, which the Templar of Tyre claims, was prompted by the activities of the Genoese

in the city. The chronicler reported that traitors from Tripoli had informed the sultan in Alexandria

that the city could arm thirty '*leins'* with Genoese support, and that the city state would 'rule the

waves' and threaten those travelling into Alexandria. The sultan was alarmed, and so organised

an attack on Tripoli. The Templar of Tyre names three women as sheltering in the citadel when

the city was attacked: 'the wife of the prince' (who Crawford believes is more likely to be Sibylla

of Armenia than the surviving wife of Bohemond VII), the 'sister of the prince' who was Lucia,

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[453] *Templar of Tyre,* p.96.
[454] Izzo, 'Revolts of the Embriaco', p.159.

[455] *Templar of Tyre,* pp.97-98.

and the 'lady of Tyre', and cousin to Bohemond VI, Margaret of Lusignan.[456] All three women

escaped the city.

In her tenure as countess of Tripoli, Lucia demonstrates that the native nobility's opposition to

female rule was complex. It was likely Lucia's overtures of friendship and conciliation with the

barony of Tripoli that secured her accession. However, like her mother Sibylla of Armenia, there

seems to have been an understanding between her and the nobility that she would act to curtail

foreign influences, leading to an about-face turn in the native nobility's reception of her rule. The

difficulties encountered by ruling women in Tripoli were intersectional. Women were viewed as

particularly vulnerable to foreign influences. However, the native nobility of Tripoli did view two

women, Sibylla of Armenia and Lucia of Tripoli, as being sympathetic to their interests resulting

in the rule of these women being accepted by the baronial elite. The county of Tripoli's anxieties

surrounding the accession of female governors, both regent and regnant, was not a rejection of

women. The eventual succession of Lucia and the appeals to Sibylla of Armenia have not been

given enough consideration in the historiography. Rather, the native nobility's anxiety concerning

foreign influence in the region peaked during the governance of women, leading to peaks and

troughs in the baronial reception of female rule during these periods.

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[456] *Ibid,* 98-99, n.6-8.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has explored the ways in which elite women exerted authority in the Latin East. It is clear from the numerous examples drawn from chronicles and charters that there is substantial evidence of women holding power and influence. Politically active women were not exceptional amongst the Latin population of the medieval Levant. The normalisation of female authority emerged due to several factors, some unique to the Latin East, but others were also apparent elsewhere in Europe where dynastic monarchies ruled. The near-constant state of conflict in the Latin East not only provided women with frequent and substantive opportunities to hold authority, it required them to do so as necessity demanded. The frequent deaths of military-aged male vassals resulted in their female kin inheriting fiefs, and acting as regents for heirs in their minority. In the face of conflict, chaos, and insecurity, women could provide stability as diplomats, governors, and figureheads. A dynastic quirk of fate led to the accession of five queens regnant in the kingdom of Jerusalem. Although the fates of these five women were driven by chance, the receptiveness of the region's baronial class to the rule of women can be explained largely by environmental factors. Isolated and vulnerable on the frontiers of Christendom, people in the region were accepting of female rule as the alternative to political stasis and civil war. Female authority, in conflict, diplomacy, and government was permitted in these circumstances, as the Latin Christians faced the near-constant threat of complete defeat and exile from the lands they had settled in the aftermath of the crusades. The way in which the frontier environment shaped the roles and responsibilities of women has been extensively studied in other periods of history, but in its medieval context this issue remains underdeveloped in the historiography. This

is despite the fact that examples can be seen prominently in both the Latin East and the Iberian Peninsula in this period. This thesis challenges the failure of historians thus far to contemplate how the experiences of women were shaped by medieval frontiers, and contributes to ongoing academic interest in the frontier as a distinct topic of study.

Whereas the experiences of the queens regnant in the thirteenth century were too narrow to form much of an argument regarding the wider state of female authority in the region, fruitful and original material for this thesis was found in the records of women of the Latin elite more broadly: well-connected and property-holding women active in the political sphere were aplenty in the Crusader States. This wider pool of case studies provided a much more nuanced and detailed overview of women's power and agency and the variety of ways in which it could be expressed. This thesis was broken down into four thematic chapters, but overarching arguments have been made across the work. The women that held significant power and influence in the Latin East were not exceptional. Bernard of Clairvaux and William of Tyre may have both remarked that Queen Melisende of Jerusalem had risen far beyond the status achieved by most women of her time, but crucially she was just the first in that kingdom; she was followed as queen regnant by four female successors, as the hostile frontier environment that aided her rise to power remained until the collapse of the Crusader States in the late thirteenth century. Although a few women appear often in the historiography of the Latin East (Alice of Champagne, Stephanie of Milly, and Agnes of Courtenay are examples), their experiences of power and the historical record they left behind do not greatly differ to an abundance of other women, largely ignored in the historiography but included in this study. Women held personal agency and power

frequently, and over time this became less commented on by their contemporaries, as this state of affairs became rather ordinary.

The treatment of elite women in the Levantine law demonstrates that female authority was neither extraordinary in the Latin East nor radically distinct from the power available to men. The main differences appear firstly in that the inheritance rules meant that a man would always inherit in preference of his sister. Secondly, the female vassal had the responsibility to marry in order to provide male leadership in military affairs. Thirdly, there was the potential for women to receive preferential treatment in the law as they could also appear before a more sympathetic church court. The move across the Levant towards hereditary offices, such as the regency of Jerusalem and the constabulary of Tripoli, provided women with further opportunities to gain political authority. While the legal difficulties of Maria of Antioch and Eschiva of Ibelin, lady of Beirut, show that women were disadvantaged occasionally in disputes due to their gender, in most instances women were offered significant legal protections not matched in the majority of the medieval Christian world. This engages with the longstanding and ongoing debate regarding baronial power and the monarchy of the kingdom of Jerusalem, in which women's history should have more prominent attention, and furthers our understanding of this relationship by looking at how it shaped the experiences of women within the law.

The exploration of the patronage undertaken by women in the Latin East also evidences the similarity between the ways in which men and women could hold wealth in the region. The charter evidence is especially useful in showing how often land and property passed through the

hands of women. The large amount of ecclesiastical charter evidence shows how women spent

significant sums on the church, but also benefitted from selling land and property to institutions

such as the Hospital of St John. This again contributes to the exceptionalism debate. Such is the

scope of this charter evidence that we can clearly see how common it was for women in the Latin

East to hold and utilise wealth. The study of these documents also highlights why the crown of

Jerusalem sought to control the marriages of heiresses so closely. As well as wanting to ensure

that they contributed to the military health of the kingdom by marrying well, they also likely

wanted them to marry within the region. In controlling the marriages of heiresses, kings and lords

could exercise patronage by advancing favoured men in their service or reward loyal families.

Furthermore, as shown by the marriage of Beatrix of Courtenay to Count Otto of Henneberg, the

union of an heiress to a foreigner lord could prompt her relocation to Europe and the sale of her

Levantine property to the eager and wealthy Hospitallers, meaning her king would lose valuable

revenue and vassals. Although this is an isolated case of a Levantine heiress venturing to Europe,

it does demonstrate the disruption that could be brought when an heiress did not marry a suitor

under the influence of her king. This thesis contributes two new points of discussion within our

consideration of women and wealth in the Latin East. Firstly, this thesis demonstrates that female

inheritance had the potential to change the boundaries of the Crusader States, increasing

pressure on an already impoverished and land-poor region. The region's continued acceptance

of the practice of female succession in spite of this consequence reveals the entrenchment of

such a legal custom by the thirteenth century. Secondly, the concept of 'dual-identity' as outlined

by Shukov is introduced to the established field of crusader art. Artistic and architectural

patronage of women in the Latin East testifies to the existence of dual identities in the region,

with Melisende of Jerusalem and Alice of Champagne showing both a Latin and Orthodox religious sensibility in their support of eastern church institutions and devotion to eastern iconography and saints. The sheer volume of mixed Latin and eastern Christian marriages suggests that many women were likely inspired to patronise religious works of a blended nature, even if the majority of these patrons are unidentifiable and often presumed to be male. The significant wealth clearly held by women in the Latin East was likely directed towards such works.

Military conflict has generally been regarded as a realm in which women had no input or influence. This thesis sought to demonstrate that managing conflict was a significant aspect female rule and could impact and significantly shape the lives of women more broadly. It provided both peril and opportunity. Women were impoverished, widowed, and exiled through conflict. However, conflict also enabled women to exercise agency by taking decisions, listening to vassals and advisors, advising their own male kin. Women's involvement in conflicts led them to both pacify and enflame tensions, depending on the circumstances. Further, the commonality of conflict in the daily life of all on the frontier may have removed some of the gendered restrictions on women's involvement in conflict. Legislative development meant that a woman could even serve as constable of Tripoli, a role traditionally gendered as very masculine. They could also serve as leaders during periods of conflict, using their status as regent to legitimise war. In particular this thesis has offered a new analysis of the Cypriot political crisis between 1306 and 1310, as depicted in the *Chronicle of Amadi*, which has not previously been assessed through a gendered lens. The events it describes have been significantly underutilised in discussions of gender in the Latin East, and this discussion contributes to the ongoing debate surrounding

female exceptionalism and challenges the perception that women had a weakened status in the thirteenth century Latin Levant.

The creation of a distinct culture in Outremer has been discussed quite extensively by historians of the Crusader States. However, this is often explored in general terms, sometimes specifically in relation to elite and baronial culture. Little attention as yet has been paid to how women utilised this cultural identity. This thesis contributed to this gap in the historiography by investigating how women could utilise identity in order to exert power. Through a particular focus on female regents in both the kingdom of Jerusalem and the county of Tripoli, this thesis has demonstrated how 'insider' identity could be used by women to claim personal authority. The female 'outsider' was generally given more political leeway. They appeared more commonly and were expected to represent the interests of both their natal and marital families. Although these foreign women were often unpopular, gendered expectations meant that they were nonetheless treated more gently by the baronial elite than the male 'outsider.' Scholarship has long considered the fluidity of the queen consort's familial identity, but shifting cultural identity in medieval women is a further point of study to develop further.

The conflict between Henry II of Cyprus and his brothers was in part driven by the colossal losses experienced in the Latin East at the turn of the fourteenth century.[457] With the fall of Acre in 1291, the kingdom of Jerusalem collapsed; the final Crusader outpost, the Isle of Ruad, fell in

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[457] Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus*, pp.101-140.

1302.[458] The death of the Crusader States, although long foreseen, was a painful and humiliating end. The semblance of confraternity and cooperation that had existed during its height collapsed on its end, as seen in the bitter recriminations between brothers that erupted in 1306 on the island of Cyprus. The 'kingdom of Jerusalem' survived in name only, with the kings of Cyprus continuing to use the title in competition with the Angevins of southern Italy.[459] In 1365 Peter I of Cyprus' Crusade managed to sack Alexandria but ended with no lasting gains, and it arguably marked the end point for crusading in the Levantine region.[460]

A natural point of continuation for this thesis, therefore, would be an exploration of elite women in the kingdom of Cyprus. A study of Cypriot women between the period of 1300 to 1500 would be a valuable and complimentary new contribution to the field, as there is limited existing

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[458] Malcom Barber, *The Trial of the Templars* (Cambridge: University Press, 2012), p.22.

[459] Michalis Olympios, 'Angevin and Lusignan Visual Claims to the Crown of Jerusalem: Parallel Lives?', in *Crusading, Society, and Politics in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of King Peter I of Cyprus*, eds. Alexander D. Beihammer, Angel Nicolaou-Konnari (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), pp.157-176.

[460] Peter Edbury and Chris Schabel, 'The Papacy and King Peter I of Cyprus' in *Crusading, Society, and Politics in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of King Peter I of Cyprus*, eds. Alexander D. Beihammer, Angel Nicolaou-Konnari (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), pp.177-240; John France, '"The Military Revolution"' and the Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of Peter I (1359-69)', in *Crusading, Society, and Politics in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of King Peter I of Cyprus*, eds. Alexander D. Beihammer, Angel Nicolaou-Konnari (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), pp.241-250; Clement Onimus, 'Peter I of Lusignan's Crusade and the Reaction of the Mamluk Sultanate', in *Crusading, Society, and Politics in the Eastern Mediterranean in the Age of King Peter I of Cyprus*, eds. Alexander D. Beihammer, Angel Nicolaou-Konnari (Turnhout: Brepols, 2023), pp.251-272.

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scholarship on this group, despite their considerable power. Eleanor of Aragon (1333-1417), Valentina Visconti (c.1357-1393), and Helena Palaiologina (1428-1458) were three powerful and influential queens of Cyprus during this period, ruling as regents and dominating religious and factional politics on the island.[461] Cyprus also had two queens regnant in this period. Although both Charlotte (1444-1487) and Caterina Corner (1454-1510) struggled to exert personal authority due to the strength of the Republic of Venice at this time, their dynamic political activities are a testament to the changing power balance in the Mediterranean, especially in the later fifteenth century with the rise of the Ottoman Empire, and more locally the decline of female power in the kingdom of Cyprus.[462] This decline could be seen as early as the reign of Henry II of Cyprus when his throne passed on his death to his nephew Hugh IV rather than his surviving sisters; under the traditional legal practices of the Crusader States as the senior generation these sisters should have had first right to the crown, although it is likely that they may have waived their claim due to practical considerations due to their being unmarried and beyond childbearing age.[463] The succession of the teen-aged Charlotte of Cyprus in 1458 was

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[461] Ioanna Christoforaki, '"Sainted Ladies and Wicked Harlots": Perceptions of Gender in Medieval Cyprus', in *Engendering Aphrodite: Women and Society in Ancient Cypru*s, eds. Diane Bolger and Nancy Serwint (Alexandria, Virginia: American Schools of Oriental Research, 2002), pp.157-168.

[462] Holly S. Hurlbert, *Daughter of Venice: Caterina Corner, Queen of Cyprus and Woman of the Renaissance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015); Liana De Girolami Cheney, 'Caterina Cornaro, Queen of Cyprus', in *The Emblematic Queen: Extra-Literary Representations of Early Modern Queenship* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), pp.11-33.

[463] Peter Edbury, *The Kingdom of Cyprus*, pp.141-142.

long anticipated as she was the only heir of her father, John II. However, the existence of an

alternative male heir, albeit an illegitimate one, in her half-brother James II weakened her

position. The support given to his claim by the Republic of Venice and Mamluks of Egypt meant

that she was unable to retain her throne.[464] This was a sign both of the reduced political status

afforded to Cypriot women in this period, and the collapse of a wider Christian endeavour in the

region previously apparent during its crusading period.

There are connections between the Frankish states in the Latin Levant and Latin Greece that

makes the latter topic another natural point of expansion for this thesis. The Frankish territories

in Latin Greece were, like the Levantine settlements 'Crusader States', established following the

Fourth Crusade. The ruling elite in the Greece and Levantine Crusader States were also both

largely French in origin, with French acting as a universal language of law and diplomacy. They

were also interrelated because of the prominence of crusading families, such as the Briennes, in

both the kingdom of Jerusalem and the Latin Empire of Constantinople.[465] The Frankish elite in

Greece ruled over a largely Greek Orthodox population, in a manner that bore great similarity to

the demographics of the kingdom of Cyprus. The *Assises de Romania*, the law code utilised by

the Principality of the Morea was adapted from the Assises of Jerusalem and Cyprus. Latin

Greece was also a frontier society, albeit in a very different way from the Latin Levant. The region

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[464] See Hurlburt, *Daughter of Venice.*

[465] Perry, *John of Brienne,* pp.157-188; Guy Perry, *The Briennes: The Rise and Fall of a Champenois Dynasty in the*

Age of the Crusades, c.950-1356 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp.103-140.

bordered the Byzantine Empire, but actually had greater conflict with their fellow Latin Christians. This was a frontier between the feudal, monarchical system of government and the expansionist Italian merchant republics and Catalan mercenary forces. A further significant similarity between Latin Greece and the Latin Levant was the high frequency in which women ruled in their own right, and as regents. There are, currently some works that explore the lives of elite Frankish women in Latin Greece.[466] The major works on Latin Greece undertaken by William Miller in 1908 and Peter Lock in 1995 did frequently discuss significant women in the region, but very few works have employed a precise and gendered lens through which to explore this element of the history of Latin Greece.[467] There is, perhaps, something of an artificially imposed separation between 'Crusader Studies' (largely centred on the Levantine mainland and Cyprus) and 'Byzantine/Greek Studies' (largely focused on Greece) possibly because of languages training, which presents disciplinary challenges that need to be overcome. We therefore see little scholarship in 'Crusader Studies' addressing how the history of the Levantine Crusader States shaped those settled in Greece, besides David Jacobly but he did not consider elite women in his analysis.[468] Despite considerable historical attention being given to ruling women in the Crusader

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[466] Dimitri Stathakopoulos, 'Sister, widow, consort, bride: Four Latin ladies in Greece (1330-1430)', in *Cross Cultural Interaction Between Byzantium and the West 1204-1669 – Whose Mediterranean is it Anyway?*, ed. A. Lymberopoulou (Abingdon & New York: Routledge, 2018), pp.236-257.

[467] William Miller, *The Latins in the Levant, a history of Frankish Greece (1204-1566)* (Cambridge: Speculum Historiale, 1964); Peter Lock, *The Franks in the Aegean 1204-1500* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1995).

[468] See David Jacoby, *Latins, Greeks and Muslims: Encounters in the Eastern Mediterranean, 10th-15th centuries* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019).

States, as yet few connections or wider comparisons have been made between these two

locations which may yield further supporting evidence of women's agency in frontier societies.

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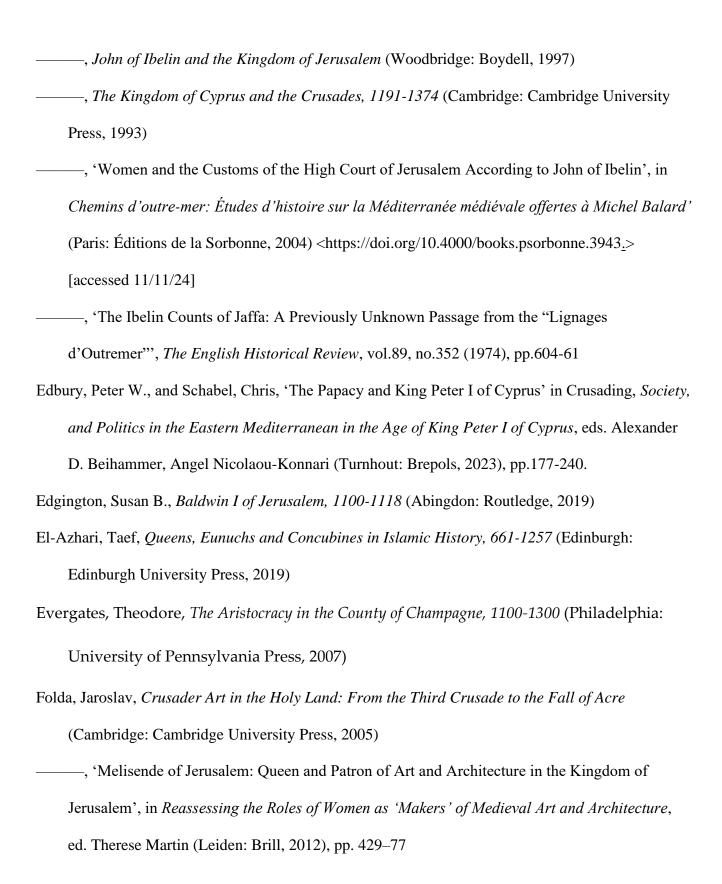
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