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**THE PIETY, POWER, AND PATRONAGE OF THE LATIN
KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM'S QUEEN MELISENDE**

by

Helen A. Gaudette

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in History in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

2005

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Abstract**The Piety, Power, and Patronage of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem's Queen Melisende**

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This dissertation is an examination of Queen Melisende's piety, power, and patronage in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem of the twelfth century. The principal sources used to assess her reign are William of Tyre's *A History of the Deeds Done Beyond the Sea* and the royal charters issued in her name, or with her consent, as well as the witness lists that accompany them. The first chapter consists of an "Introduction" to Melisende's life and circumstances as well as the sources for her reign. The second chapter, "Melisende's Inheritance," describes the foundation of her kingdom by the First Crusade's princes and soldiers as well as the monarchy and church institutions that were established and modeled after those they knew back home in Western Europe. The third chapter, "Melisende's Reign," pieces together the evidence to create a narrative of her life and actions. It demonstrates that her political position in the kingdom was much more significant than the queens who preceded her, and describes her success in wielding power and keeping her position during her marriage to Fulk of Anjou despite his attempt to take it away from her. The third chapter ends by relating the successes and failures in her reign after Fulk's death in the years leading up to the revolt of her son Baldwin III and her activities during retirement until her death in 1161. The fourth chapter, "Melisende's Patronage," examines the power of gift-giving in the twelfth century and all of the surviving evidence that indicates the extent of Melisende's patronage and the

significant ways that she accessed political power through donations and support for the kingdom's churchmen and religious institutions. The fifth chapter, "Melisende's Contemporaries," examines the reigns of other ruling women in the twelfth century in the West as well as in the East to put Melisende's accomplishments into perspective and provide a context for her circumstances and actions. It concludes that Melisende and some of her contemporaries were successful because they skillfully manipulated the power structures of the twelfth century that allowed for the possibility of female inheritance and independent rule under certain conditions.

Acknowledgements:

Not one single moment, over the past three years spent conducting historical research and writing, did I ever regret the choice of Queen Melisende's reign and patronage as the subject for my dissertation. To me, at least, she emerged from the evidence in the sources as an admirable woman of strength and intelligence who ruled her kingdom in the Holy Land and safeguarded its religious institutions to the best of her ability. It was a pleasure to write the history of her accomplishments in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem for this project and I have many people to thank, for without their support, I would never have been able to complete it. These include, first and foremost, my father, Edward J. Gaudette, who never doubted my efforts and always offered his love and encouragement whenever I needed it, and my dissertation advisor, Dr. Pamela Sheingorn, whose constructive criticism, encouragement, and wisdom have been invaluable to me. My thanks also to the other professors at the Graduate Center who assisted me in this endeavor, especially Drs. Thomas Head, Margaret King, Eric Ivison, David Berger, and Catherine McKenna, as well as Drs. Frank Warren and Marvin Leiner for their encouragement at Queens College where I've taught for the past eight years as an adjunct professor in the History Department and College Preparatory Programs. Lastly, I wish to thank two Palestinian brothers who I met in Jerusalem during my trip to visit the sites in Israel associated with Melisende's patronage, Khalil and Amin Shreim. With Khalil, I visited the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the remains of Melisende's convent in Bethany in the West Bank. With Amin, I visited the Abbey and Shrine Church of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat and many of the other crusader sites in Israel

and the West Bank, including those in the cities of Akko, Tiberias, Caesarea, and Tel Aviv/Jaffa. My thanks again to all of the above; I am in your debt.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Respectfully honoring Queen Melisende in his description of the last moments of her life, William of Tyre, the great historian of the crusader Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in the Holy Land, wrote “[f]or thirty years and more, during the lifetime of her husband as well as afterwards in the reign of her son, Melisende had governed the kingdoms with strength surpassing that of most women. Her rule had been wise and judicious.”¹ As “a queen beloved of God,”² she was widely renowned in the twelfth century for her intelligence, piety, and generosity to the Church. These virtues served her well for she was one of the very few women in medieval Europe to wield power in her own right as a queen regnant even though her circumstances and problems were strikingly similar to many ruling women at that time. From 1131 to 1152, she triumphed over her challengers and overcame the commonly perceived limitations of her sex in order to rule her father King Baldwin II’s kingdom effectively and defend its holy pilgrimage sites. The history of Queen Melisende’s life and reign is a fascinating account of a woman who inherited a throne and manipulated the power structures of her day by winning political support through generous patronage in order to exercise the royal authority she had been born to wield.

King Baldwin II of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and his Armenian Queen Morphia had four daughters and no sons. Melisende, his eldest daughter, was married to

¹ William of Tyre, *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*, in *Recueil des historiens des Croisades, Historiens Occidentaux*, I,1 and I,2 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1844), XVIII, 27. The English translation is *A History of the Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, Vol. 2, trans. E. A. Babcock and A. C. Krey (New York: Columbia University Press, 1943), 283. Quoted throughout as WT followed by the book, chapter, and page in Babcock and Krey.

² WT XV, 27, 134.

Fulk of Anjou in 1129 and in the next year they gave the king a grandson named Baldwin after his grandfather. In August of 1131, when the old king was dying, he summoned Melisende, Fulk, and Baldwin to his bed, along with the great nobles of the realm. There he gave his daughter and her family his blessing and entreated the nobles to accept all of them as their sovereigns. He was buried in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the resting place of Jerusalem's European Frankish kings. On September 14, 1131, Melisende and Fulk were crowned and anointed co-rulers of the kingdom. Fulk was crowned king as Melisende's husband and her rights as heiress were fully recognized by the nobles and churchmen of the kingdom (See Appendix II for a map of Jerusalem in the twelfth century).

The couple had another son, Amalric, and they ruled together until Fulk died in 1143 when he was thrown from his horse during a hunting accident outside the city of Acre. On Christmas day a few weeks later, Baldwin was solemnly anointed King Baldwin III, but crowned at Melisende's side to rule jointly with her. She, however, took over the governing of the kingdom because he was only thirteen. Her action was regarded as perfectly legitimate and was most likely endorsed by a royal meeting with the kingdom's chief vassals, the *Haute Cour* (High Court).³ By 1144, she had appointed her loyal cousin Manasses of Hierges as constable to take over military affairs; subsequently he became her chief advisor. According to William of Tyre:

Melisende, the king's mother, was a woman of great wisdom who had had much experience in all kinds of secular matters. She had risen so far above the normal status of women that she dared to undertake important measures. It was her ambition to emulate the magnificence of the greatest

³Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, vol. II, *The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Frankish East, 1100-1187* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 233-4; John La Monte, *Feudal Monarchy in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1100-1291* (Cambridge, MA: The Medieval Academy of America, 1932), 14-18.

and noblest princes and to show herself in no wise inferior to them. Since her son was as yet under age, she ruled the kingdom and administered the government with such skilful care that she may be said truly to have equalled her ancestors in that respect. As long as her son was willing to be governed by her counsel, the people enjoyed a highly desirable state of tranquillity, and the affairs of the realm moved on prosperously.⁴

Melisende ruled the kingdom effectively for a total of twenty-one years, from her father's death in 1131 until 1152. This dissertation will examine her kingdom, reign, and patronage activities as well as the problems she faced in wielding her authority. Her life was unique and extraordinary. Twelfth-century men and women were unaccustomed to seeing a woman successfully perform so many roles: heir to the throne, queen, wife, mother, manager of the royal household, head of state at ceremonial occasions, patron of the Church and the arts, controller of crown offices and fiefs, administrator, and defender of the Holy Land.

During her reign, Melisende faced many difficulties and the history of the kingdom was anything but tranquil. Zengi, the Muslim *atabeg* or *atabak* (meaning "father-prince") of Aleppo, became the kingdom's greatest foe and in 1144, the county of Edessa fell to his forces. The fall of Edessa inspired the Second Crusade, which was called by Pope Eugenius III and led by the French King Louis VII and the Holy Roman Emperor Conrad of Hohenstaufen. The forces of the Second Crusade failed in their effort to restore Edessa but succeeded in embroiling the kingdom in a war with Damascus that indirectly handed that city to Zengi's son, Nur ed-Din, who took over his father's war against the crusaders in the Holy Land also known as the Franks. Then in 1152, Baldwin III, upon the advice of some of the nobles, revolted against his mother and had himself crowned again, but alone, so that he could assume the governing of the kingdom himself.

⁴ WT XVI, 3, 139-40.

“It was unseemly, they said, that a king who ought to rule all others should constantly be tied to the apron strings of his mother like the son of a private person.”⁵ Melisende had continued to deny Baldwin’s right to rule alone despite his coming of age in 1145 when he had turned fifteen. By 1150, this had become a source of strong frustration for him and his supporters.⁶

In April of 1152, Baldwin’s revolt against Melisende divided the kingdom. Mother and son agreed to a partition of territories in which Baldwin took Acre, Tyre, and the north, while Melisende remained to govern Jerusalem, Nablus (Neapolis or Naples) and the south. Baldwin then deposed Manasses and made Humphrey of Toron constable. This angered Melisende, but when he began to attack her lands, open war erupted between them. When Baldwin beset Nablus, Melisende was forced to flee to Jerusalem. He followed her there and besieged her in the citadel Tower of David. Many of her vassals and supporters abandoned her at this point, with the exception of her son Amalric, who had been made Count of Jaffa, Philip of Nablus, Rohard, viscount of Jerusalem, and of course Manasses. Many of the churchmen supporting Melisende also switched their allegiances to Baldwin at this time. Fulcher, Patriarch of Jerusalem, remained loyal to her however, and tried to intervene to stop the civil war but his efforts were thwarted and Baldwin took the citadel after a costly fight. Melisende was overthrown and Baldwin took his revenge on many of her backers. She was forced to give up Jerusalem and retire to Nablus. Although she was removed from power, her son continued to issue some charters with his mother’s consent. In September 1161, after a long illness, Melisende

⁵ WT, XVI, 3, 140.

⁶ Hans Eberhard Mayer, “Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 26 (1972): 115.

died and was buried near her mother in the shrine of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat in Jerusalem.

Throughout her reign, Melisende could always count on the ecclesiastics of the Church, especially the patriarchs of Jerusalem, to reinforce her authority and the charters demonstrate that she was one of their greatest benefactors. The charters reveal that she demonstrated her religious devotion by bestowing costly gifts and extensive lands to the Church's organizations. She also played a predominant role in appointing high ecclesiastical offices, a role enjoyed by the monarchy in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem even as it was increasingly denied to the monarchs of Western Europe. Through this patronage, she won the political support of the kingdom's churchmen and became renowned for her piety and generosity. She was also a major patron of building and the arts in the kingdom.⁷

In the twelfth century, generous cultural and religious patronage was an important aspect of life for the upper classes of medieval society because it was an excellent way to acquire allies and political support. As Lester Little observed, "Largess...remained as a hallmark of the life led by the European aristocracy, and as a model for the life of successful merchants and professionals. It was to be seen not only in their clothes, their homes, their gifts, and their entertainments, but in their works of charity and support of religious institutions."⁸ It was moreover, one of the few acceptable domains open to the participation of medieval noble women, and queens used it to their advantage whenever

⁷ See Jaroslav Folda's "A Twelfth-Century Prayer Book for the Queen of Jerusalem." *Medieval Perspectives* 7 (1993): 1-14; and especially his *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1995); H. Buchthal, *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1957); Henry W. Hazard, ed., *A History of the Crusades: the Art and Architecture of the Crusader States* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1977).

⁸ Lester K. Little, *Religious Poverty and the Profit Economy in Medieval Europe* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1978), 8.

possible.⁹ As June Hall McCash writes, “Although overt efforts to assert political authority were more often than not met with staunch resistance from men, cultural authority remained a realm open to women, a socially sanctioned way for them to activate their quest for power. On the surface it seemed harmless enough, yet hidden behind the innocuous façade of a promotion of the arts were often serious and determined political goals.”¹⁰ Through the strategy of patronage, queens extended their influence. They often had access to the formidable resources of their kingdoms, and through religious patronage they could pursue a variety of political, religious, and social agendas. Thus, queens provided support or backing for artists, building projects, scribes, and Church institutions in the form of gifts, money, positions, lands, political influence, and personal encouragement and assistance.¹¹ Patronage created a link between a queen and a particular person or institution that could become a mutually beneficial relationship and often also became the basis for friendship and political alliance.

The anthropological model of gift exchange is the theoretical foundation upon which these alliances made through patronage rest. In a gift economy, prestige, power, honor, and wealth are all attained, expressed, and maintained by the giving of gifts. While the value, of the gifts is important, the act of giving them is much more so. Moreover, there are no free gifts. Having received a gift, the recipient is always obliged

⁹ Recent studies of women’s role in gift exchange in western society have shown unequivocally that women not only give more gifts than men but are also the greatest recipients. See David Cheal, *The Gift Economy* (London and New York: Routledge, 1988); and Aafke E. Komter, “Women, Gifts, and Power,” in *The Gift: an Interdisciplinary Perspective*, Aafke E. Komter, ed. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), 129, who writes that the “fact that women in western society are the greatest gift givers, then, cannot be disentangled from, on the one hand, their more vulnerable societal and economic position compared with men and, on the other, from the power they are invested with by being society’s prime intermediaries in creating and recreating social relationships by means of gift giving.”

¹⁰ June Hall McCash, ed., *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 17.

¹¹ McCash, 4.

to make a counter-gift and a social contract is entered into.¹² According to Mary Douglas in her foreword to Marcel Mauss's *The Gift*, "[a] gift that does nothing to enhance solidarity is a contradiction."¹³ Thus, this dissertation will examine the evidence for Queen Melisende's power and religious patronage because the gifts she gave throughout her reign were reciprocated with gifts that helped support her rule. It will encompass the sources, texts, and even the material culture connected with her gift-giving activities. An analysis of the extent and nature of this activity, especially in the kingdom's religious spheres, should reveal important features of her exercise of power. Certainly in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, the sacred authority of the Christian churches and sites in the Holy Land over which she ruled contributed crucially to her political power.¹⁴ Each of the Church institutions that Melisende supported played an important role in the kingdom: they participated in rituals or spiritual observances, charity, the extending of hospitality to the waves of Christian pilgrims visiting the Holy Land, and the defense of the kingdom, and each had political and economic significance and depended in part on royal favor.¹⁵

My analysis of the evidence for Melisende's religious patronage should offer some important clues to understanding the particular circumstances of her reign. I will try to embed her patronage in the overall context of patronage in the Latin Kingdom of

¹² Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: the Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, W. D. Halls, trans., Mary Douglas, foreword (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), 1-18.

¹³ Mauss, vii.

¹⁴ See Georges Balandier, *Political Anthropology*, trans. A.M. Sheridan (New York: Pantheon Books, 1970); Yvonne Friedman "The City of the King of Kings: Jerusalem in the Crusader Period," in *The Centrality of Jerusalem*, eds. Marcel Porthuis and Chana Safrai (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1996), 190-216; Bernard Hamilton, "Rebuilding Zion: the Holy Places of Jerusalem in the Twelfth Century," *Studies in Church History* 14 (1977), pp.105-116; Steven Tibble, *Monarchy and Lordship in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1099-1291* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989).

¹⁵ Bernard Hamilton, *The Latin Church in the Crusader States: the Secular Church* (London: Variorum Publications, 1980).

Jerusalem until 1187. A contextual approach should provide me with evidence for explaining her methods and what she gained from extensively supporting these various ecclesiastical organizations. I will begin with the foundation of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem through an examination of the first crusaders and the political and Church institutions they established there. I will then examine the charter evidence for examples of patronage set by her predecessors, Godfrey of Bouillon, King Baldwin I, and his queens Arda and Adelaide¹⁶, and Melisende's father and mother, King Baldwin II and Morphia.¹⁷ This will enable me to assess Melisende's patronage activities within the larger context of her family's activities and to determine whether religious patronage can be described as a particularly feminine exercise of royal influence.¹⁸ I will also try to assess the impact of her gender on her authority and the special circumstances of her queenship. I will thoroughly examine the sources for her religious patronage and clerical supporters and compare the results with her secular patronage and lay supporters. Her preferences for particular saints will be investigated, along with the reasons for her choices. I will aim to determine how she strengthened her power and influence in important ways through her patronage activities, especially in the years leading up to the breach in her relationship with her son in 1152.¹⁹ Important questions that also must be addressed are whether Baldwin III offered competition through his own extensive patronage activities and how extensive the projects were that Melisende and he supported

¹⁶ For Adelaide, see also Marie-Adelaide Nielen, "Adelaide, comtesse de Sicile et reine de Jerusalem," in *Stranieri in Piemonte e Piemontesi all'estero nel Medioevo*, Atti del Convegno di Nizza-Monferrato, 24-27 Ottobre 1997 (1999): 115-124.

¹⁷ See Bernard Hamilton, "Women in the Crusader States: the Queens of Jerusalem (1100-1190)," in *Medieval Women*, Derek Baker, ed., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), 143-174.

¹⁸ L.O. Fradenburg, ed., *Women and Sovereignty* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992); Madeline H. Caviness, "Anchoress, Abbess, and Queen: Donors and Patrons or Intercessors and Matrons?" in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, June Hall McCash, ed., (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996).

¹⁹ Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 98, 108, 131.

together. After 1152, when her influence waned, the fate of her supporters and the effect of the new political circumstances must be assessed in regard to her patronage. Finally, I will examine the patronage of her successors, her sons Kings Baldwin III and Amalric, and her grandson King Baldwin IV, through the charters and other evidence.²⁰ I will also compare her activities with those of some of her contemporaries, powerful women in twelfth-century Western Europe and Byzantium in order to assess and contextualize Melisende's position and ability to exercise power and patronage in comparison to them.²¹

As very little evidence regarding Melisende's life and reign have survived, the principal sources that will be used to assess Melisende's manner of ruling, in addition to William of Tyre's *A History of the Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, are the royal charters issued in her name or with her consent and the witness lists that accompany them. There are no extant sources written by Melisende or anyone who knew her personally. We thus

²⁰ Bernard Hamilton, *The Leper King and His Heirs: Baldwin IV and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

²¹ Selected recent works include, for England's Queen Matilda II, wife of Henry I, Lois Huneycutt, "Female Succession and the Language of Power in the Writings of the Twelfth-Century Churchmen," in *Medieval Queenship*, John Carmi Parsons, ed., (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), 189-201, and *eadem*, "Public Lives, Private Ties: Royal Mothers in England and Scotland, 1070-1204," in *Medieval Mothering*, John Carmi Parsons and Bonnie Wheeler, eds. (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 295-311, *Matilda of Scotland: A Study in Medieval Queenship* (New York: Boydell and Brewer, 2003); for Empress Matilda, Marjorie Chibnall, *Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother, and Lady of the English* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), and *eadem*, "The Empress Matilda and her Sons," in *Medieval Mothering*, 279-294; for Adela of Blois, Kimberly A. LoPrete, *Adela of Blois, Countess and Lord* (Dublin: Four Courts, 2001), and *eadem*, "Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship," in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, Theodore Evergates, ed., (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 7-43, and "Adela of Blois as Mother and Countess," in *Medieval Mothering*, 313-333; for Urraca of León-Castilla, Bernard F. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla Under Queen Urraca, 1109-1126* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982); for Eleanor of Aquitaine, Bonnie Wheeler and John Carmi Parsons, eds. *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), and William W. Kibler, ed., *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Patron and Politician* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1976); for Matilda of Tuscany, Valerie Eads, "Mighty in War: The Role of Matilda of Tuscany in the War Between King Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII," PhD, Graduate Center, City University of New York, 2000; and for Ermengard of Narbonne, Fredric L. Cheyette, *Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001) and Constance Berman, "Women as Donors and Patrons to Southern French Monasteries in the Twelfth and Thirteenth Centuries," in *The Worlds of Medieval Women: Creativity, Influence, and Imagination*, Constance H. Berman, Charles W. Connell, and Judith Rice Rothschild, eds. (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 1985).

do not have her voice to guide us. William of Tyre's history, which he began writing in 1169, is the principal source for the history of the kingdom but as in all medieval texts, it is "written within a literary tradition which tended deliberately to universalize the male experience- to masculinize the historical world."²² Sarah Lambert, describing the current thinking on this issue, writes "...when medieval writers referred to gender, or included references to women, they were making a conscious choice to do so, born out of a desire to reflect the structures of their society... authors chose what to write, and what to include, with great care. Each writer created a literary work, choosing elements out of a literal or figurative library of verbal accounts, written models and traditions, in an ordered way. Their omissions and inclusions can be used to discover patterns of thought in these writers."²³ William of Tyre's twenty-three books, written between 1169 and 1184, make up the most extensive crusading history written and one of the chief works of the twelfth century. It is full of information concerning the Latin Kingdom, especially for the time in which he lived. Born in the East yet well educated in the West, he was perfectly positioned as Chancellor of the Latin Kingdom and later Archbishop of Tyre to present the point of view of the resident Christians in the Holy Land. He was the court historian of King Amalric, who succeeded his brother Baldwin III. Although Melisende appears infrequently in his book, there is a dearth of sources for her reign and much of what is known about her has come from him. He was a formidable historian and scholars consider him to be basically trustworthy because the charter and material evidence

²² Sarah B. Edgington and Sarah Lambert, eds. *Gendering the Crusades* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 2.

²³ Edgington and Lambert, 2.

supports his account.²⁴ His chronology, however, is often seriously wrong and his inclination to protect the members of the royal family, especially Melisende, must be taken into consideration.²⁵

In addition to William of Tyre's chronicle, many royal charters have survived, although no royal or princely archive from any of the four crusader states has. They have been calendared and edited by Reinhold Röhrich in his *Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani*.²⁶ The most important group of non-royal documents produced in the crusader states from the twelfth century come from the Order of St. John or the Hospitallers, which has the best-preserved archive. The archive is now in the Library of Valetta, but Delaville Le Roulx has published most of the twelfth-century material. The cartulary of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher contains almost 200 documents dating from the twelfth century. It is now in the Vatican Library but has been edited by Eugène de Rozière in 1849. A large number of charters have survived that relate to the Abbey of Jehoshaphat outside Jerusalem too, as well as a substantial amount regarding the Order of the Knights of St. Lazarus. The greatest loss was the archive of the Knights Templar, as only a few stray charters relating to the Latin East are known.²⁷

There are thirty-one royal charters that are connected to Melisende. They are quite revealing. For instance, of the twelve royal charters that survive from the years

²⁴ See P. Edbury and J. Rowe, *William of Tyre, Historian of the Latin East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); for a good analysis of how the work was composed see A. C. Krey, "William of Tyre, the Making of an Historian in the Middle Ages," *Speculum* 16 (1941): 149-66.

²⁵ My dates for the events of Melisende's reign, especially regarding the civil war of 1152, will be based on the chronological arguments found in Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 95-182, with which I agree, for they are soundly based on William of Tyre's account as well as on the charter evidence.

²⁶ Reinhold Röhrich, ed., *Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani 1097-1291*, 2 vols., (New York: Burt Franklin, 1960). All royal and other charters from the holy land will be quoted throughout as RRH plus the charter no.

²⁷ Hamilton, *Leper King*, 13-15.

1144 to 1152, four were issued by Baldwin and Melisende together, two by Melisende with Baldwin's consent, and two by Baldwin on his own. Melisende, however, issued four charters alone during the years 1150-2. Her acting alone in these cases points to the estrangement between her and her son at that time and her efforts to exclude him from power. The witness lists indicate her alliance networks, the personnel in her retinue, and clues to the way she integrated herself in the power relations among the barons. The rest show the kinds of disputes that arose and how the crown settled them. They clearly show the distribution of land grants and royal support of Church institutions. These charters and many others involving Melisende are listed in the *Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani*. The charters reveal that Melisende's generosity extended to many of the great churches, monasteries, and orders of the Holy Land: the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem, which served as the state church, housed the relic of the True Cross, and was the pilgrimage center of Jerusalem,²⁸ the Order of the Knights of St. Lazarus,²⁹ the convent at Bethany which she founded and supported,³⁰ the Abbey and Shrine Church of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat where she would be buried,³¹ *Templum Domini* or Temple of the Lord,³² the Order of the Hospitallers of St. John,³³ and the orthodox monastery of Saint Sabas.³⁴

²⁸ RRH 121, 137, 174, 179, 181, 192, 200, 268, 278, 313, 353, 356; charters published with complete texts in E. de Rozière, ed., *Cartulaire de l'Église du Saint-Sépulcher de Jérusalem*, Collection des documents inédits sur l'histoire de France, I ser., 5 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1849); and in C. Kohler, ed., "Un Rituel et un bréviaire du Saint-Sépulcher de Jérusalem (XII-XIII Siècle)" *Mélanges pour servir à l'histoire de l'Orient et des Croisades*, fasc. 2 (Paris: Ernest LeRoux, 1906), 286-404.

²⁹ RRH 210, 227, 259, 269, 338; charters published with complete texts in A. de Marsy, ed., *Fragment d'un cartulaire de l'Ordre de St. Lazare en Terre Sainte*, Archives de l'Orient Latin 2 (1884).

³⁰ WT, XV, 26, 132-134.

³¹ RRH 240, 336, 359, 555; charters published with complete texts in Henri Francois Delaborde, ed., *Chartes de la Terre Sainte provenant de l'abbaye de Notre-Dame de Jehoshaphat*, Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome, 19, (Paris: Ernest Thorin, 1880).

³² F. Chalandon, "Un diplôme inédit d'Amaury I roi de Jérusalem en faveur de l'Abbaye du Temple-Notre Seigneur," *Revue de l'Orient Latin* 8 (1900-1): 311-17.

The recent scholarly works concerning Melisende are somewhat limited. Most historians have neglected her importance in their works on the crusader kingdom. Usually relegated to a page or two, she is briefly mentioned and given no particular acknowledgment. Often, she is mentioned only to blame her for the failure of the Second Crusade or the outbreak of civil war in 1152. However recently, more has been written that centers on her and focuses on aspects of her political activity, the sources that describe it, and the artistic achievements connected to her reign. Benefiting from this work, this dissertation will strive to break new ground by examining the evidence to determine the methods of and motivations behind her patronage in order to assess the consequences of this activity and the power she might have derived from it.

In 1972, Hans E. Mayer, one of the most influential crusade historians, published “Studies in the History of the Queen Melisende of Jerusalem.”³⁵ This dissertation owes its genesis to the reading of this article. He has examined the royal charters and the chronicle of William of Tyre and assessed the events that led up to the civil war of 1152. He reaches some very important conclusions about Melisende’s political career between the years 1131-61, and offers a story of her struggle for power, and suggests the causes of that struggle. He also recounts how she eventually lost it all. He revises several points about her reign from the traditional interpretations. For example, he suggests that King Baldwin II altered the agreement he made with Fulk of Anjou in 1128 during the marriage negotiations for Melisende promising him sole rule of the kingdom. Baldwin’s deathbed will was of major importance in determining Melisende’s and her son

³³ RRH 244, 257, 293; charters published with complete texts in J. Delaville le Roulx, *Cartulaire Générale de l’Ordre des Hospitaliers de St-Jean de Jérusalem (1100-1310)* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1884).

³⁴ RRH 409; charter published with complete text in de Rozière, 140.

³⁵ Mayer, “Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem,” 95-182.

Baldwin's rightful claim to co-rule.³⁶ Mayer concludes that Fulk probably tried to brush Melisende aside at the beginning of their reign, and that this was the reason behind a revolt reported by William of Tyre led by Hugh of Jaffa and Romanus of Puy in 1134, who upheld Baldwin's will in favor of the queen. She, of course, remained in power after Fulk's death and kept her son Baldwin III from governing. As he got older, their relationship deteriorated to the extent that in 1149, Melisende had created her own scriptorium to which Baldwin had no access and, by the next year her own barons, which she withheld from his expedition against Syria. Mayer believes the civil war lasted briefly, from March 30 to April 22, in 1152, and that afterward Baldwin excluded most of his mother's supporters from influence for the rest of his reign.

In 1978, another prominent historian, Bernard Hamilton, published "Women in the Crusader States: the Queens of Jerusalem (1100-1190)."³⁷ He compares the careers of all of the queens of the kingdom until the fall of Jerusalem to the forces of Salah al-Din in 1187. He discusses Melisende's political career but, unlike Mayer, he believes that she wielded considerable influence from her retirement in Nablus after 1152 and still enjoyed the support of the Church, especially the Patriarch of Jerusalem. He asserts that Baldwin outwardly treated his mother with respect to avoid tension with the northern states because at that time her sister Hodierna had become regent in Tripoli and her niece Constance, regent of Antioch.

Lois Huneycutt has written two articles on queenship that discuss Melisende. In 1989, she argued that historians have consistently underestimated the queen's role in

³⁶ Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem, 100-2, 112.

³⁷ Hamilton, "Women in the Crusader States," 143-174.

medieval governing as peacemaker, benefactress, and intercessor.³⁸ She argues that contemporary sources show that bishops and other churchmen recognized the importance of the queen and played a didactic role in shaping lasting images of the ideal queen. She traces the emergence of this new ideal by looking at the lives of the Capetian queen Adelaide of Maurienne, Matilda II, queen of England and wife of Henry I, Margaret of Scotland, and Melisende among others; she also draws evidence from the churchmen who recorded the accomplishments of their reigns. In 1993, she examined the writings of twelfth-century churchmen regarding Empress Matilda, designated heir of Henry I of England, and Melisende, both of whom claimed to rule in their own right through inheritance. She believes that “a careful study of the language and the omissions of the thinkers in question shows that, while they were comfortable with the idea of females as regents or transmitters of power, their tolerance did not often extend to acceptance of a female exercising authority in her own name.”³⁹ For Melisende, she discusses the attitudes of Orderic Vitalis, Bernard of Clairvaux, and William of Tyre.

Jaroslav Folda’s *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187* examines the accomplishments in art and architecture of the Latin Kingdom.⁴⁰ It is a comprehensive study that considers the styles, iconography, and historical contexts of the art produced at this time. Part II, consisting of three chapters, is dedicated to the achievements of the era of Melisende, 1131-1163, and it is an exhaustive examination of the projects that could have benefited from her patronage. The photographs, floor plans, and maps that complement the text trace the main phases of these projects and depict Melisende’s reign as particularly devoted to the flourishing arts. Every project produced

³⁸ Lois Huneycutt, “Medieval Queenship,” *History Today* 39 (June 1989): 16-22.

³⁹ Huneycutt, “Female Succession and the Language of Power,” 191.

⁴⁰ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*.

at this time is rendered here: the convent Melisende founded at Bethany and its Church of St. Lazarus and Church of Sts. Mary and Martha, the Church of St. Anne in Jerusalem, *Templum Domini*, the *Melisende Psalter*, the rebuilding and dedication of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and the tomb of the Virgin in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. These chapters are a product of years of research and they assemble all of the available evidence for Melisende's artistic patronage.

In 1997, a collection of essays was published from the proceedings of a conference on medieval queenship held in April 1995, in London. The essay by Sarah Lambert entitled "Queen or Consort: Rulership and Politics in the Latin East, 1118-1228" examines the positions of the various ruling women in the crusader kingdom.⁴¹ It depicts the portrayal of queenship in the various sources and finds a lack of consensus and an "inability fully to resolve the tensions between dynasty, gender, and the demands of politics."⁴² Although William of Tyre described Melisende as transcending the limits of her gender, Lambert concludes that her successors were marginalized and their positions politically manipulated. She determines that "hereditary queenship" was accepted out of political necessity but that the queens were excluded more and more from political activity through control of their marriages by the barons of the *Haute Cour*.⁴³

In the same year, Deborah Gerish published out of her doctoral research on constructions of royal power in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, "Ancestors and Predecessors: Royal Continuity and Identity in the First Kingdom of Jerusalem" which describes the construction of kingship in the Latin Kingdom through the charters issued

⁴¹ 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*, Anne Duggan, ed., (New York: The Boydell Press, 1997), 153-169.

⁴² Lambert, 168.

⁴³ Lambert, 169.

by its kings and queens.⁴⁴ Gerish writes that the royal charters focused on “institutional memory and continuity” through references to past rulers, “memories of a deceased monarch or monarchs could enhance the living ruler’s power; whether the issuer of the charter described their connection in dynastic or institutional terms.”⁴⁵ The royal charters show the importance of institutional as well as dynastic continuity in the construction of kingship. Melisende’s charters are the earliest examples of what Gerish calls “footsteps confirmations,” by which she means that Melisende was conforming to the practice of her predecessors and adhering to their memory. She suggests that the language in Melisende’s charters invokes the institutional continuity of her queenship and her familial ties to buttress her controversial position.⁴⁶

The scope and limits of this examination of Melisende’s piety, power, and patronage are indicated by the names of the chapters and the subheadings within each of them. The first chapter is an “Introduction” to Melisende’s life and circumstances as well as the sources for her reign. It establishes the lack of scholarly attention to Melisende thus far and the hope that this dissertation will rectify that neglect. The second chapter “Melisende’s Inheritance,” describes the foundation of her Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem by the First Crusade’s princes and soldiers as well as the monarchy and church institutions that were established and modeled after those they knew back home in Western Europe. It examines the new and unique characteristics of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem that distinguished it from the kingdoms in the West in terms of location, vulnerability, spiritual significance, and eastern influence. The third chapter

⁴⁴ Deborah Gerish, “Ancestors and Predecessors: Royal Continuity and Identity in the First Kingdom of Jerusalem,” *Anglo-Norman Studies* 20 (1997): 127-150.

⁴⁵ Gerish, 128.

⁴⁶ Gerish, 132.

“Melisende’s Reign,” makes use of all known chronicle, charter, and material evidence regarding Melisende’s reign and pieces it together by creating an “empathetic reconstruction” of her life and actions. It demonstrates that her political position in the kingdom as her father’s designated heir was much more significant than the queens who preceded her, and describes her success in wielding power and keeping her position during her marriage to Fulk of Anjou despite his attempt to take it away from her. It ends by relating the successes and failures in her reign after his death in the years leading up to the revolt of her son Baldwin III and her activities during retirement until her death in 1161. The fourth chapter “Melisende’s Patronage,” examines the power of gift giving in the twelfth century and all of the surviving evidence from the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem that indicates the extent of Melisende’s patronage and the significant ways that she accessed political power through gifts and support for the kingdom’s churchmen and religious institutions. It concludes with a revealing comparison of the evidence for her patronage activities with those of her sons Baldwin III and Amalric and her grandson Baldwin IV who succeeded her to the kingdom’s throne. The fifth chapter “Melisende’s Contemporaries,” examines the reigns of other ruling women in the twelfth century in the West as well as in the East to put Melisende’s into perspective and provide a context for her circumstances and actions. It concludes that Melisende and some of her contemporaries were successful because they skillfully manipulated the power structures of the twelfth century that allowed for the possibility of female inheritance and independent rule under certain conditions.

Melisende was an extremely important figure in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, but because she has been neglected by historians up to now, she is not very well known.

A study of her life and the historical circumstances of her reign, as well as her power and patronage, will reveal much for the history of crusading to the Holy Land and add to the growing body of scholarship on medieval queenship that has begun exploring queens as wives, mothers, saints, patrons, intercessors, benefactors, and lords.⁴⁷ An analysis of her patronage career will contribute to the larger field of medieval women's studies and the sub-field of laywomen's political and religious activities in the medieval world. This study of Melisende's position in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and connection to the Latin and even Orthodox churches should be an important contribution to the present understanding of medieval patronage, women, and the Church and the interaction between the East and West in the twelfth century.

⁴⁷ Selected additional recent works on medieval queenship are: Marion F. Facinger, "A Study of Medieval Queenship: Capetian France 987-1237," *Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History* 5 (1968): 1-48; Pauline Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: the King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (London: Leicester University Press, 1983), and *eadem Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in Eleventh-Century England* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1997); John Carmi Parsons, ed., *Medieval Queenship* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993); Theresa M. Vann, ed., *Queens, Regents, and Potentates* (Kalamazoo, MI: Academia Press, 1993); Anne Duggan, ed., *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe: Proceedings of a Conference Held at King's College London, April 1995* (New York: The Boydell Press, 1997), 153-169; Jo Ann McNamara, "Imitatio Helenae: Sainthood as an Attribute of Queenship," in *Saints: Studies in Hagiography*, Sandro Sticca, ed., (Binghamton, NY: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1996), 51-80; Janet L. Nelson, "Medieval Queenship," in *Women in Medieval Western European Culture*, Linda E. Mitchell, ed., (New York: Garland Publishing, 1999), 179-207.

Chapter Two: Melisende's Inheritance: the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem

Foundation of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem

Melisende inherited a kingdom defined by its location in the Holy Land and brief history. Her kingdom cherished its sacred towns, hills, and waters, many of which were the actual locations of events portrayed in the Old and New Testaments. Since the leaders of the First Crusade founded it, the reason for her kingdom's existence was to protect these holy places from its enemy neighbors and stake Latin Christendom's claims in Syria. The crusader leaders were knights and noble statesmen who began to set up a western-style monarchy as the government to take charge of their defense as well as a Latin clerical hierarchy to serve their spiritual needs and conduct services at the great shrine churches. To appreciate Melisende's reign and the kingdom she ruled, one must start with the events of the First Crusade and the first three decades in the history of the Christian states; they are briefly outlined below because they formed and defined the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and its circumstances.

When Pope Urban II launched the First Crusade at the Council of Clermont in 1095, he began a movement far greater than the enthusiasm of that moment could possibly have led him to expect. The success of his crusading movement which was part military expedition and part holy pilgrimage, led to the foundation of a European kingdom in the Holy Land that was at its height of influence and power during Melisende's reign fifty years later. When Urban addressed the multitudes of churchmen and laity that had gathered in the open air to see him and his entourage on November 27, in the heart of France, he proclaimed the great need for armed pilgrims, the knights of

Christian Europe, to begin preparing to march to the East. According to many of the chroniclers who recorded the speech, he promised that with Christ as their leader they should stop fighting amongst themselves and unite for an effort to push back the borders of the Muslim advance, aid the Emperor Alexius Comnenus and the Eastern Christians of the Byzantine Empire, and free Jerusalem from the Muslims. This campaign would be a holy war and all those who died in it were promised a reward in heaven. His message was spread far and wide by him and other preachers and the response was overwhelming. Fulcher of Chartres included a description of the Council of Clermont, at which he might have been present, in his account of the First Crusade as a whole. According to him, Urban said:

Hastening to the way, you must help your brothers living in the Orient, who need your aid for which they have already called out many times. For, as most of you have been told, the Turks, a race of Persians, who have penetrated within the boundaries of Romania even to the Mediterranean to that point which they call the Arm of St. George, in occupying more and more of the lands of the Christians, have overcome them, already victim of seven battles, and have killed and captured them, have overthrown churches, and have laid waste God's kingdom.⁴⁸

Another chronicler, Robert the Monk, added that Urban also implored the knights to save the city of Jerusalem:

Jerusalem is the navel of the world; the land is fruitful above others, like another paradise of delights. This the Redeemer of the human race has made illustrious by His advent, has beautified by residence, has consecrated by suffering, has redeemed by death, has glorified by burial. This royal city, therefore, situated at the center of the world, is now held

⁴⁸ Fulcher was born in Chartres in 1059, trained for the service of the Church, and was a priest at either Chartres or Orleans in 1095 at the time of the Council of Clermont. The passion for the Crusade swept him into the company of Stephen-Henry of Blois in late 1096. He was with Stephen-Henry's army until October 1097, when he became chaplain to Baldwin of Flanders, who became lord of Edessa from 1098 to 1100 and the first crusader king of Jerusalem from 1100 to 1118. He continued his account of the foundation of the kingdom from Jerusalem regarding King Baldwin II's reign until his death in 1127 or 1128. For quote, see Fulcher of Chartres, *A History of the Expedition to Jerusalem, 1095-1127*, Frances Rita Ryan, trans., Harold S. Fink, ed., (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc, 1969), I, 3, 65.

captive by His enemies, and is in subjection to those who do not know God, to the worship of the heathens. She seeks therefore and desires to be liberated, and does not cease to implore you to come to her aid. From you especially she asks succor, because, as we have already said, God has conferred upon you above all nations great glory in arms. Accordingly, undertake this journey for the remission of your sins, with the assurance of the imperishable glory of the kingdom of heaven.

When Pope Urban had said these and very many similar things in his urbane discourse, he so influenced to one purpose the desires of all who were present, that they cried out, "It is the will of God! It is the will of God!"⁴⁹

Urban's First Crusade became an armed pilgrimage of Christian knights, whose mission was to conquer the Holy Land and liberate Jerusalem under his leadership for the glory of the Latin Church and the western faithful.

Urban II intended to inspire the heavily armed knights of Western Europe to direct their formidable warring talents against the enemies of Christ instead of each other. Fully realizing that no one baron or nobleman would obey another, he placed Adhemar of Monteuil, the bishop of Le Puy, in charge of the army as his representative. The baron leaders of the hosts were very influential men: Robert, duke of Normandy and brother of the king of England, Hugh, Count of Vermandois and brother of the king of France, Count Baldwin of Flanders and his brother Godfrey of Bouillon, duke of lower Lorraine (Melisende's father's cousins), Count Stephen-Henry of Blois, Raymond of St. Gilles, count of Toulouse, and Bohemund, son of Robert Guiscard, duke of Apulia and Calabria, and his nephew Tancred. Marching overland on foot or horseback, these barons and their ready knights and peasant followers reached Constantinople early in 1097. Many women

⁴⁹ Not much is known about Robert the Monk but he may also have been present at Clermont. See Edward Peters, ed., *The First Crusade: the Chronicle of Fulcher of Chartres and Other Source Materials* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1971), 2-4; and the forthcoming translation by Carol Sweetenham, ed and trans., *Robert the Monk's History of the First Crusade: The Historia Iherosolimitana* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2005).

were part of this company too.⁵⁰ The Emperor Alexius was not expecting Western armies, but rather companies of knights that would serve in his forces for wages. Nevertheless, he agreed to supply the crusaders with food, supplies, and transportation across the straits to Asia Minor in return for oaths of allegiance from the barons, which they reluctantly gave. In May 1097, the crusader army laid siege to Nicea, which fell a month later and was occupied by the Emperor's troops. As Alexius began to clear the Turks from the countryside in the area, the crusaders began their long march to the Holy Land.

The crusaders had unwittingly chosen a fortuitous time to attack the western borders of the Abbasid Empire. The Muslim lords of the region had broken away from the control of the caliph in Baghdad and were clashing fiercely with each other. Most of Asia Minor belonged to the sultan of Rum, and smaller lords ruled in Aleppo, Antioch, and Damascus. Nicea was captured before the sultan of Rum could muster his troops. The Shi'a Muslims led by the Fatimid Caliph of Egypt hated the Sunni Turks and the Caliph in Baghdad as much as they hated the Christians. These conflicts greatly worked to the Crusade's advantage. During the march, for example, the barons split their army into two columns, the northern one commanded by Robert of Normandy and Bohemund, while the southern one was led by Godfrey of Bouillon and Raymond of Toulouse. Out of touch most of the time, these two columns made their way through hostile territory. On July 1, Bohemund learned from his scouts about an approaching Turkish army and immediately placed his baggage train and non-combatants by a swamp, guarded by his infantry. After dispatching a message to the other barons, he lined up his knights for the

⁵⁰ Keren Caspi-Reisfeld, "Women Warriors during the Crusades, 1095-1254," in *Gendering the Crusades*, Susan B. Edgington and Sarah Lambert, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 94.

coming battle. The Turkish force, composed mostly of mounted archers, attacked the knights and killed many of their horses, leaving their heavily armored riders helpless. Suddenly Godfrey of Bouillon and his knights appeared on a nearby ridge, and caught between these two groups, many of the Turks fell to their powerful swords and lances, and the rest fled. Known as the battle of Dorylaeum, it was a great if rather lucky victory for the crusaders, because afterward the Turks left them unmolested during their long march to Antioch.

After the battle of Dorylaeum, the crusaders began to face acute shortages of food and water on their trek. Many in the infantry died and the army also lost a large percentage of their horses. Finally reaching the friendly Christian Armenian territories, they were able to re-supply and recover from their hardships but this experience toughened their resolve. At this point, Count Baldwin left the army with a small host to establish a fief for himself around Edessa, founding the future county there. The rest of the army marched south to Antioch, which fell to it after a siege of several months. Bohemund claimed the city for himself as its prince because his bribing of a Turkish commander had led to the victory. However, a few days later a new Turkish host arrived led by Kerbogha, the atabeg of Mosul, and besieged them in the city. Again, their survival seemed unlikely due to a complete lack of food and water but at this critical moment they were encouraged by the timely and miraculous discovery of an extremely holy relic, the lance that had pierced the side of Christ during his crucifixion. According to the anonymous author of the *Gesta francorum et aliorum Hierosolymitanorum* who followed Bohemund and later went to Jerusalem, "there was a certain pilgrim of our army, whose name was Peter, to whom before we entered the city of St. Andrew, the

apostle, appeared and said ... 'Know, my son, that when thou shalt enter the town, go to the church of St. Peter. There thou wilt find the Lance of St. Peter. There thou wilt find the Lance of Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, with which He was wounded as He hung on the arm of the cross'"⁵¹ Rallying to the Holy Lance, on June 28, 1098, they burst out of the city, succeeded in forcing the Turks to fight in close quarters, and won the day. But Antioch had taken a terrible toll: Adhemar of Le Puy was dead, and "then Stephen, Count of Blois, left the siege and went home to France by sea. We all grieved on this account because he was a very noble man and mighty in arms. On the day following his departure the city of Antioch was surrendered to the Franks. If he had persevered he would have greatly rejoiced with the rest, for what he did was a disgrace to him. For a good beginning does not profit one if one does not end well."⁵² Bohemund remained in Antioch to carve out a fief for himself there in northern Syria, while the rest set out in November 1098, down the coast, ignoring the Turkish garrisons in the coastal cities. On June 7, 1099, they stopped on a hill overlooking Jerusalem that was the traditional burial place of the prophet Samuel. It was their first view of the holy city and they named the place "Mount Joie," or the hill of joy. As soon as the army reached Jerusalem, it began the siege. According to the author of the *Gesta*,

At length, our leaders decided to beleaguer the city with siege machines, so that we might enter and worship the Savior at the Holy Sepulcher. They constructed wooden towers and many other siege machines... while all this was going on, our water supply was so limited that no one could buy enough water... both day and night, on the fourth and fifth days of the week, we made a determined attack on the city from all sides... early on

⁵¹ English translation from A.C. Krey, *The First Crusade: the Accounts of Eye-Witnesses and Participants*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1921), 174-176.

⁵² Fulcher of Chartres I, 16, 97; see James A. Brundage, "An Errant Crusader: Stephen of Blois," *Traditio* 16 (1960): 380-395. He believes that Stephen had been resolved for two months to leave and did so as soon as Antioch's capture by the Franks was imminent although he had left his more than capable wife Adela of Blois in charge of his lands while on crusade.

the sixth day of the week we again attacked the city on all sides, but as the assault was unsuccessful, we were all astounded and fearful. However, when the hour approached on which our Lord Jesus Christ deigned to suffer on the cross for us, our knights began to fight bravely in one of the towers—namely, the party with Duke Godfrey and his brother, Count Eustace. One of our knights, named Lethold, clambered up the wall of the city, and no sooner had he ascended than the defenders fled from the walls and through the city. Our men followed, killing and slaying even to the Temple of Solomon, where the slaughter was so great that our men waded in blood up to their ankles.... Afterward, the army scattered throughout the city and took possession of the gold and silver, the horses and mules, and the houses filled with goods of all kinds.⁵³

On July 13, they succeeded in entering the city and began avenge their losses and bitter hardships by slaughtering its inhabitants, although the chronicle accounts may be somewhat exaggerated.⁵⁴ Taking what they would, they captured the holy city on July 15 and began to establish a Frankish presence there. The European conquest of the city marked the foundation of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem that Melisende would inherit one day.

To ensure their control over the holy places, the crusaders began to found a western style kingdom and choose their secular and religious leaders. They quickly picked Godfrey of Bouillon to rule the city as prince of the kingdom and Arnulf as the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem to be the chief ecclesiastical officer of the new state. The *Gesta* reports, “Then our leaders in council decided that each one should offer alms with prayers, that the Lord might choose for Himself whom He wanted to reign over the others and rule the city...they chose Godfrey as head of the city to fight the pagans and guard the Christians. On the day of St. Peter ad Vincula they likewise chose as Patriarch a

⁵³ Krey, *The First Crusade*, 256-257.

⁵⁴ See David Hay, “Gender Bias and Religious Intolerance in Accounts of the ‘Massacres’ of the First Crusade,” in *Tolerance and Intolerance: Social Conflict in the Age of the Crusade*, M. Gervers and James M. Powell, eds. (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2001).

certain very wise and honorable man, Arnulf by name.”⁵⁵ According to William of Tyre, the princes that day meeting in council were joined by representatives of the clergy who wanted to ensure that a “man pleasing to God”⁵⁶ was chosen. This was the first meeting of the kingdom’s High Court that would always be made up of the lay and clerical leaders of the kingdom. William reports that Godfrey was unanimously chosen because his daily habits demonstrated his piety: he let his meals grow cold in order to spend more time in church, and he would stay long after the ceremonies were over to listen to the clerics give accounts of each statue and picture. Godfrey refused to be crowned king but rather took the title of Baron and Defender of the Holy Sepulcher, because in “humility of spirit, he refused to be invested with a crown of gold in the Holy City, as is the fashion of kings. For he was content with, and showed a reverence toward, that crown of thorns which, in that same city, the Savior of the human race, for our salvation, wore even to the passion of the cross.”⁵⁷ Shortly thereafter, a piece of the True Cross was found in the city, on which Christ was crucified. The finding of this holiest of relics marked the real foundation of the kingdom and proved to them that God was pleased by their devotion, success, and efforts to establish a Christian presence. They preserved the relic and “fashioned in the form of a cross, partly covered by gold and silver work, they all carried [it] aloft to the Lord’s Sepulcher and thence to the Temple, singing triumphantly and giving thanks to God, who through all this time had preserved for Himself and us this, His treasure and ours.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Krey, *The First Crusade*, 257.

⁵⁶ WT IX, 2, 381-383.

⁵⁷ WT IX, 9, 392.

⁵⁸ Fulcher of Chartres I, 30, 125; see also A. Frolov, *La Rélique de la Vraie Croix*, Archives de l’Orient Chrétien 7 (Paris: Institut français d’études byzantines, 1961).

The piece of the True Cross and the Holy Lance found in Antioch would become the chief relics of the crusaders. The True Cross relic was housed in the Holy Sepulcher and brought out during important ceremonies. Just as the Holy Lance had led the knights into battle at Antioch, so the True Cross accompanied the kingdom's army into many future battles to protect it whenever requested by the kings. Godfrey and Arnulf, only a few days after they were elected, led the crusader army with the "wood of the life-bearing Cross"⁵⁹ on its last expedition in a surprise attack on the Egyptian forces hastily summoned by the Grand Vizier of Egypt to drive back the Franks. Their attack near Ascalon at sunrise on August 12, 1099, was a complete success, for the Egyptians were routed and the crusaders returned home with glory and loot. The new state was safe for the time being, but by the end of August 1099, many crusaders were beginning the long journey home. A small minority, of course, had decided to settle permanently in the Holy Land.

The First Crusaders and their Institutions

The crusader settlers in the Holy Land, male and female, made the most of the new opportunities that became available to them in their new lands. As they took city after city, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem joined the states of Antioch and Edessa. These three became four when Raymond of St. Gilles and his successors took Tripoli and established a Latin county there in 1108 (See Appendix I). As they began to settle in, they began to adapt to their surroundings, living more and more similarly to the people in the lands they had conquered. Fulcher of Chartres described the cultural encounters and the forging of new identities by the crusaders that were a result,

⁵⁹ Fulcher of Chartres I, 31, 125.

Consider, I pray, and reflect how in our time God has transformed the Occident into the Orient. For we who were Occidentals have now become Orientals. He who was a Roman or a Frank has in this land been made into a Galilean or a Palestinian. He who was of Rheims or Chartres has now become a citizen of Tyre or Antioch. We have already forgotten the places of our birth; already these are unknown to many of us or not mentioned any more. Some already possess homes or households by inheritance. Some have taken wives not only of their own people but Syrians or Armenians or even Saracens who have obtained the grace of baptism....Some tend vineyards, others till fields. People use the eloquence and idioms of diverse languages in conversing back and forth. Words of different languages have become common property known to each nationality, and mutual faith unites those who are ignorant of their descent....He who was born a stranger is now as one born here; he who was born an alien has become as a native....Those who were poor in the Occident, God makes rich in this land. Those who had little money there have countless bezants here, and those who did not have a villa possess here by the gift of God a city. Therefore, why should one return to the Occident who has found the Orient like this?⁶⁰

This rather well-known passage from Fulcher's chronicle described four of the main areas of acculturation by the crusaders as they settled in: they began to form new identities as citizens and/or landed families of cities or locations in the crusader states that replaced identities connected to the places of their birth, they married local women and had children of mixed ethnicities, they began to speak with common vocabularies made up of words borrowed from the foreign languages they were encountering and learning, and many found wealth and higher social status which would have been denied to them in Europe. As these changes in identity occurred, new self-definitions replaced old ones. The result of the transformations through new cultural encounters was the creation of a new and unique crusader society in the Holy Land with new customs and ways of living.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Fulcher of Chartres III, 37, 271-272.

⁶¹ Later in the history of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, the emir of Shayzar, Usamah ibn Munqidh, who visited during the reign of Fulk and Melisende during a period of truce with the city of Damascus, would

Godfrey ruled the newly formed Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem from July 22, 1099 to July 18, 1100. He was buried in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and succeeded by his brother Baldwin I, who handed Edessa over to his cousin Baldwin of Le Bourg, Melisende's father, after being elected and called to Jerusalem. Baldwin desired to be and was crowned first king of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in 1100 at the Basilica of the Blessed Mary in Bethlehem on Christmas day (See Appendix III for Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem Family Tree). According to Fulcher of Chartres, "this had not been done for his brother and predecessor because Godfrey had not wished it."⁶² He did no homage to the church for his lands and later received confirmation for his title from Pope Paschal II himself.

William of Tyre relates that Baldwin I was educated in his youth in liberal studies and became a cleric. His illustrious lineage led him to hold benefices or prebends in the churches of Rheims, Cambrai, and Liège. Later on however, he cast off his clerical robes to become a soldier. He married the daughter of a powerful Anglo-Norman family named Godehilde of Tosny who later accompanied him and his brothers Godfrey and Eustace on the crusade. "Worn out by long suffering," she died before the crusading army reached Antioch.⁶³ William also gives a detailed description of Baldwin's physical appearance and moral qualities. Baldwin was said to have been tall and to have had a medium build with light skin and brown hair. Although his nose was aquiline and his upper lip prominent, his lower jaw receded slightly. He was dignified and well spoken. William faults him for his lusty affairs but "so circumspectly did he conduct himself in

write about a Frank he had heard about who had hired Egyptian female cooks and ate eastern dishes and abstained from eating pork. See Usamah ibn Munqidh, *An Arab-Syrian Gentleman and Warrior in the Period of the Crusades*, P. K. Hitti, trans., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1929), 169-70.

⁶² Fulcher of Chartres II, 6, 148.

⁶³ WT X, 1, 415.

the indulgences of these vices that he was a stumbling block to no one.”⁶⁴ Generous and courageous, King Baldwin I “was active and diligent whenever the affairs of the realm called him.”⁶⁵

King Baldwin I began the real process of state making with the help of the other barons and clerics of the land as the kingdom expanded. He faced a difficult task. The defense of the kingdom and the protection of Western pilgrims who began to come to worship at the Holy Places were his first priority. But to govern, he needed men and money. Stephen Runciman wrote, “He could not hope to build up his kingdom if he were not rich and powerful enough to control his vassals.”⁶⁶ Baldwin I welcomed immigration from the West for added manpower and persuaded the native Christians to cooperate with the new citizens. For revenue, he encouraged trade with the neighboring countries and appealed to the faithful in Europe who began subsidizing and endowing establishments in the Holy Land. Because such endowments would go to the Church organizations, Baldwin would gain influence over the clergy to make sure that the funds were used to promote the interests of the kingdom. As soon as he was assured of its support, Baldwin I began to extend generous patronage to the Church by endowing it with lands conquered from the Muslims. Pisa, Genoa, and Venice all sent fleets to help in subduing the shoreline in return for establishments and quarters in any city they helped conquer. They were welcomed for their sea power, without which the Crusaders could not expect to defeat the Muslim coastal cities. Their ships also offered faster transportation and

⁶⁴ WT X, 2, 416.

⁶⁵ WT X, 2, 417.

⁶⁶ Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, 7.

communication with the West than the long overland routes. Unfortunately for Baldwin I, the concessions they obtained cut into his potential revenues.⁶⁷

Baldwin I and his Patriarch of Jerusalem, Arnulf, established good relations between the Latin hierarchy of priests and the native Greek Orthodox, Georgian, Armenian, Jacobite, and Nestorian Christians after 1112. However, during his first tenure as Patriarch in 1099, Arnulf had expelled the Eastern Christians from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and taken their wealth and possessions. His successor Daimbert went further and expelled them from all of their monasteries and establishments in Jerusalem. It was widely believed that because of these insults, the lamps in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher went out on the eve of Easter in 1101 and were not miraculously relit by the Sacred Fire that usually descended from heaven each year. This caused great dismay in the city, as a result of which Baldwin I was quick to restore the Greek canons to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and to allow the other sects to worship freely in their own churches. The miraculous fire returned to the Easter celebrations, even though the Latin clerics remained at the head of the church hierarchy throughout the kingdom. These good relations remained intact during the reigns of Baldwin's successors, including Melisende.

The crusaders established their state according to feudal traditions they brought over from Europe, especially France. King Baldwin I governed his rich and vast lands in the Latin Kingdom by appointing viscounts as his deputies. The royal domain was much larger than the largest fief. He also governed through his household, which developed

⁶⁷ Baldwin I received help from Scandinavia as well in conquering the coast. In 1111, a band of Norwegian crusaders led by Sigurd, king of Norway from 1103-1130, arrived and landed at Jaffa for their pilgrimage. Expecting nothing in return, they agreed to help him subdue Sidon with their fleet. He gave the conquered city to Eustace Grenier, one of his nobles, but gave the Norwegians many gifts. They sailed home triumphantly; see WT XI, 14, 486-8.

and grew throughout his reign. Almost all of Judea between Hebron in the south and ancient Samaria around Nablus in the north was part of the royal domain as were the cities of Jaffa, Acre, Tyre, and Jerusalem. His vassals governed their great fiefs with their own households from the main cities in the fiefs. The cities became the financial, administrative, and judicial centers of the Latin Kingdom, and the lords of the cities had to provide given numbers of armed knights and foot soldiers to the royal army. Guarding castles and maintaining fortifications in the fiefs were also the duties of the kingdom's vassals. In the rural areas, which were significantly Muslim, the crusaders governed over their communities. Joshua Prawer wrote that the "crusaders recognized the traditional authority of the elders, and the *raïis* (the patriarchal head of the community) was vested with some kind of authority and represented the village in its dealings with the crusader lord. If there was no steward, to supervise the seigniorial revenues, the *raïis* confirmed by the Franks bore this responsibility as well."⁶⁸

Baldwin I governed the Latin Kingdom through a strong central administration, which his successors would inherit. The men serving in the royal household as seneschal, constable, chamberlain, butler, and chancellor, were also officers of the state. None of these posts were hereditary and so the appointments were an important part of crown patronage. At the center of his administration was the High Court, where he met with his highest vassals, the most powerful nobles and clerics in the kingdom. The High Court operated similarly to the royal courts of the West at this time. It was a court of law that dispensed justice to the crown's vassals and dealt with problems regarding fiefs and tenures granted by the crown. It served as the highest advisory council of the realm as well and was called by the king, who chose the matters to be discussed. Since its

⁶⁸ Joshua Prawer, *The World of the Crusaders* (New York: Quadrangle Books, 1972), 54.

discussions or deliberations focused on foreign policy, declarations of war and peace, the defense of the kingdom, orders for mobilization of troops, extraordinary taxation, and questions of royal succession, “its competences and its composition (the court included everybody who was anybody in the kingdom) entirely overshadowed the executive branch of the government.”⁶⁹ In all matters of policy, the king was bound by the decisions of the High Court and was subject to the laws of the kingdom.⁷⁰ The contemporary ideal view of the king’s role in twelfth-century Europe was that “[a] king is not made a king against the mandate of God, for when he is chosen rightly and according to God’s will he is sanctified and consecrated with a lawful blessing. Anyone who receives that kingly power together with a golden crown takes upon himself at the same time the honorable duty of rendering justice. To him certainly as to the bishop in regard to the episcopate can this be fitly applied: ‘He desires to do good work who desires to rule, but if he does not rule justly, he is not a true king.’”⁷¹ The kings and queens of the crusader state would be held to the same standards as those in Europe.

The lordships of the great vassals and their fiefs were organized as smaller replicas of the kingdom. The lord’s court was a court of law and an advisory council. Each lordship also usually had household officers for the chancery and financial matters. These lordships had varying demographic compositions. The crusader nobles governed a wide variety of peoples with varying positions, nationalities, and religions: the Franks as a general category consisting of the European knights, freemen or burgesses, and Italians, as well as the various eastern Christians as well as Jews and Muslims. The lords socially associated with other Franks and mainly left the native governing structures alone. In the

⁶⁹ Praver, *World of the Crusaders*, 77.

⁷⁰ La Monte, xxiii.

⁷¹ Fulcher of Chartres II, 6, 148-149.

villages, members of the different communities received justice from their own traditional governing or religious authorities. This principle of “non-intervention” led also to a missed opportunity for wide scale missionary or conversion efforts.⁷² In the cities of Jerusalem and Acre mainly, the crusader burgesses slowly began to form an urban patriciate of prominent families that rose in influence through acquiring administrative positions of authority in the entourage of a bishop or lord, even in that of the king or patriarch. The Italians dominated international trade, however. “The Court of Burgesses, an office of record, became a branch of the judiciary as the exclusive court for burgesses and their urban properties. All manner of burgher real-estate transaction, like sales, rents, mortgages on houses, city plots, gardens, wells and so on, were recorded; and cases involving litigations were brought before the jurors of the court. From sunrise to sunset, three days a week, the jurors sat surrounded by notaries, scribes, and beadles, while the entire citizenry of a crusader city paraded before them with its problems, from real-estate litigation through tax evasions, customs evasions, theft and felony.”⁷³ In addition to the lord’s court and the Court of Burgesses, were the Court of the Market that dealt with market quarrels and the Court of the Chain that specialized in maritime cases.

To ensure his dynastic legacy, Baldwin I may have tried to make the throne hereditary, although he was ultimately unsuccessful.⁷⁴ He repudiated his second wife Arda, an Armenian princess who he had married in Edessa in 1098, and sent her to the convent of St. Anne in Jerusalem, in 1104. In 1113, he married Countess Adelaide, the widow of Roger of Sicily, who brought with her a desperately needed and large dowry. To marry her, he agreed to the terms she demanded:

⁷² Praver, *World of the Crusaders*, 79.

⁷³ Praver, *World of the Crusaders*, 80.

⁷⁴ La Monte, 7.

The stipulation was as follows: that if the king should have offspring by the countess, the realm should descend to that child on the king's death, without contradiction or trouble; but if he should die without an heir by that union, Count Roger, her son, should be the heir and should succeed him in the realm as king, without trouble or gainsaying.... So the countess prepared for the journey, the son providing everything that was necessary. The ships were loaded with grain, wine, oil, and salt meat, and equipped with armed men and splendidly mounted knights. The countess carried with her an immense sum of money and, followed by all her belongings, arrived in our land, as has been related.... it is impossible to deny that she was misled, since, in the simplicity of her character, she supposed that the king was in a position to marry her legally. But this was far from the fact, for the wife whom he had legitimately married at Edessa was still living. After the countess had landed, the promises and oaths were renewed, in the same form as had previously been employed in Sicily, in the presence of the king, the patriarch, and the principal men of the realm.⁷⁵

The king's vassals of the High Court were unhappy with this arrangement and the possible succession of Roger because they preferred and probably thought they deserved to elect a candidate from among their own ranks. When Baldwin was sick in March 1117, they persuaded him to send Adelaide, who had not provided an heir, back to Sicily and restore Arda to the throne, even though this seemed very unlikely because she had been living in Constantinople for some time. Suffering from sudden and serious illness and full of remorse and penitence, Baldwin agreed and bound himself with a vow to do this if he survived. Adelaide was "highly indignant that she should have been called from her country to no purpose, after being deceived by the trickery of the lords of the realm who had been sent to summon her. Sad and sorrowing over the insult offered her as well as over the futile waste of her wealth, she prepared to return to her own land in the third year after her arrival in Syria."⁷⁶ She died a year after her return to Sicily. Baldwin's attempt to make the throne hereditary was futile without Arda and a proper heir. The

⁷⁵ WT XI, 21, 496-7.

⁷⁶ WT XI, 29, 513-4.

opportunity to create the precedent for hereditary succession in the kingdom would come about for his successor.

Baldwin I died in April 1118 and was buried with honor next to his brother in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The High Court elected his cousin Baldwin of Le Bourg, the Count of Edessa to be the Kingdom's second king, Baldwin II. He was present in Jerusalem for a timely pilgrimage to the Holy Places, and the kingdom could not risk being leaderless while the king's brother and heir Eustace returned from home back in Boulogne. The Kingdom's churchmen had also thrown their support behind Baldwin's election. William of Tyre described Baldwin II as tall and ruddy-faced with blond hair streaked with white. His long beard touched his chest. He had much experience as a warrior and was loved by his men. He tirelessly conducted military campaigns in defense of the kingdom and the Holy Places. "He was kind and merciful, given to benevolent works—a religious and God-fearing man, so constant in prayer that he had callouses on his hands and knees from frequent religious exercise and constant kneeling."⁷⁷ As his cousin had, Baldwin II also married an Armenian princess sometime before 1103. Her name was Morphia, and they were known to have had a happy marriage. She was the daughter of the wealthy duke of Malatia, Gabriel, and had come to the marriage with a rich dowry. She and her father were "Armenian by birth, language, and habit, but Greek in faith."⁷⁸ Morphia and their three young daughters Melisende, Alice, and Hodierna joined Baldwin in Jerusalem in December 1119, where she was crowned queen; their fourth daughter Ivette was born after he became king. Baldwin II's reign witnessed the foundation of the military orders of the Knights Hospitallers and Templar to which he gave his full support.

⁷⁷ WT XII, 4, 522.

⁷⁸ WT X, 24, 450.

In 1120, he held a council of barons and the highest-ranking clerics at Nablus that decreed twenty-five articles to “raise the standard of morals and maintain discipline.”⁷⁹

Baldwin II and Morphia had four daughters but no sons, and although the succession had been elective until this point, the king began to arrange for his daughter Melisende, whom he probably named after his mother,⁸⁰ to succeed him in conjunction with an appropriate husband. After consulting with his council, Baldwin sent William of Bures, together with Guy Brisebarre, the lord of Beirut to France to ask the king of France Louis VI to select a suitable noble candidate. Louis recommended Count Fulk V of Anjou.

The Latin Church in the Holy Land:

Patriarchate and Dioceses:

Pope Urban II intended for the knights he sent to the Holy Land to free the already existing Byzantine Greek churches from the Muslims, to help Emperor Alexius, and to secure his good will. Bishop Adhemar of Le Puy, his representative on the First Crusade, worked toward this goal by fostering good relations with the Orthodox patriarch of Jerusalem Symeon II and the patriarch of Antioch John IV. He affirmed their authority over all the clergy, Latin and Greek, in their patriarchates during the siege of Antioch in 1097, before his death there.⁸¹ However, it appears that by the late summer of 1098, the crusade leaders had abandoned Urban and Adhemar’s conciliatory policy with

⁷⁹ WT XII 13, 536. See also Benjamin Z. Kedar, “On the Origins of the Earliest Laws of Frankish Jerusalem: the Canons of the Council of Nablus, 1120,” *Speculum* 74 (1999): 310-335; and Hans Eberhard Mayer, “The Concordat of Nablus,” *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 33 (1982): 531-543.

⁸⁰ WT XII, 1, 517.

⁸¹ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 1-7.

the Byzantines. Adhemar died that August, and at the same time the crusade's leaders learned that Emperor Alexius had abandoned them at Antioch. When they immediately cut off political and military ties with Byzantium, the religious agreements made by Adhemar fell apart as well. In the letter the crusaders sent to inform Urban of Adhemar's death, they invited him to come to Syria to help them negotiate with the Orthodox and various other Christian churches of the East, including those of Armenia, Georgia, Egypt, and Ethiopia. However, even before they received his answer and the newly appointed legate Daimbert of Pisa was on his way, they had begun appointing Latin bishops in Syria to replace the Byzantine clergy. In September 1098, Raymond of Toulouse captured the city of Albara near Antioch and appointed Peter of Narbonne as the first Latin bishop of the crusader Holy Land.

The crusaders began to create a new Latin church to take the place of the Orthodox one. Just as Latin Christendom had expanded in Eastern Europe, Scandinavia, and Spain in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the first steps taken were the foundations of bishoprics in the Holy Land. According to Robert Bartlett, the best way to measure expansion is to chart these foundations. He writes that, "Gradually a complete network of patriarchates, archbishoprics and bishoprics filled the Crusader States. The earlier Greek territorial organization was taken as the natural starting point, but it was soon substantially modified by the creation and transfer of sees."⁸² Bernard Hamilton asserts that Peter's appointment was for political and social rather than ecclesiastical reasons: "In the late eleventh century the rulers of western Europe depended on the services of the clergy to carry out the work of secular government and customarily delegated extensive

⁸² Robert Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization, and Cultural Change, 950-1350* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 5, 13-14.

secular powers to bishops. But Orthodox bishops could not assume secular responsibilities of that kind because they had not been trained to do so. It is therefore arguable that the crusaders, as soon as they began to conquer territory in Syria and to set up a form of administration there modeled on that of the west, would have been obliged to appoint some Latin bishops to help in the work of government.”⁸³ The bishoprics they created reflected the patterns of crusader governing.⁸⁴ This is certainly part of the reason behind the appointment of Arnulf, as well as his selection by all of the available clergy as patriarch of Jerusalem as soon as the city was conquered and Godfrey had been elected. Joshua Prawer believes that the crusaders “could not visualize a situation in which they would be ruled by the sees of the Greek clergy; neither was it possible, on theological grounds, to accept a double–Greek and Latin–hierarchy. Consequently, the Greek patriarch of Antioch was replaced by a Latin one, and the same happened in Jerusalem almost immediately after the conquest.”⁸⁵ The church in the Holy Land was thereafter divided between the Latin patriarchates of Jerusalem and Antioch.

The men chosen to fill the bishoprics were from the limited numbers of clergy that had come on the crusade. Few of these men had adequate training to fill the higher positions that they had been called upon to fill, and they had no experienced administrators to guide them or to take on routine obligations or business. Most of them seem to have risen to the occasion, however. Peter of Narbonne, the first Latin bishop appointed in the East, ruled the archdiocese of Apamea well for over twenty years, and was remembered by William of Tyre later as venerable.⁸⁶ As the church became more

⁸³ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 10-11.

⁸⁴ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 86.

⁸⁵ Prawer, *World of the Crusaders*, 58.

⁸⁶ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 113-4; WT XII, 10, 532.

established, the cathedral churches trained canons in their chapters for administrative duties. Archdeacons who took on judicial responsibilities in the see and spent most of their time doing legal and administrative work aided the bishops.

From the beginning, the Latin bishops in the East demanded acknowledgement and submission from the Greek clergy and took over and even plundered many Greek churches. Thus, relations between the Greek and Latin churches were strained, although the Greek clergy maintained a presence and conducted separate services in the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Relations improved as time went on, especially because many of the kingdom's queens, such as Morphia, were Orthodox in faith. The Orthodox also retained most of their monastic possessions in the desert and on the banks of the Jordan River.⁸⁷ In the Orthodox Church, monasteries occupied an even more important place than in the medieval West. The majority of the Orthodox bishops had been trained in monasteries, and they were the primary centers of theological scholarship, prayer, and worship by the faithful.

One of the most well known of these was the monastery of St. Sabas, founded in 483, at a site nine miles southeast of Jerusalem in the dry Kidron River valley.⁸⁸ The Orthodox native Christians seemed to accept the Latin reorganization of the Church and the Holy Land because their higher ecclesiastics had left the country before the Crusade. The Latin bishops and patriarchs were disliked, but as long as their canonical authority was acknowledged, they left the monasteries alone, treated the abbots as equals, and protected the Orthodox pilgrims as well. The monarchy also protected the Orthodox

⁸⁷ Praver, *World of the Crusaders*, 58.

⁸⁸ John Thomas, and Angela Constantinides Hero with Giles Constable, eds. "Sabas: Founder's Typikon of the Sabas Monastery near Jerusalem," Gianfranco Fiaccadori, trans., in *Byzantine Monastic Foundation Documents: A Complete Translation of the Surviving Founder's Typika and Testaments* (Washington DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2000).

abbots and pilgrims. The Russian Abbot Daniel, writing about his pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1106-8, described the considerate and respectful relationship King Baldwin I had with the Abbot of St. Sabas during the Easter rituals observed at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher:

And on that Saturday at the seventh hour of the day, Baldwin went with his retinue from his house to the tomb of the Lord, and all were on foot [barefoot]. And he sent to the hospice of Saint Saba and summoned the abbot and his monks. And the abbot went with his brethren to the tomb of the Lord, and I, wretch that I am, went with the abbot and the brethren. And we came to the Prince and all bowed to him, and then he bowed to the abbot and the brethren and commanded the abbot and wretched me to walk by him, while the other abbots and monks he ordered to walk in front of him and his retinue he ordered to follow behind.⁸⁹

Like her predecessor, Melisende fostered this good relationship with the monastery of St. Sabas too; she gave property to the monastery when she died.

As animosity and competition as well as respect and toleration had developed between the Latins and the Greeks in the Holy Land, they were united by the belief that many other Christians who lived there were heretical for their monophysite beliefs.⁹⁰ These included the national churches of Armenia, Georgia, Egypt, and Ethiopia, as well as those of the Jacobite church, named after its founder Jacob Baradaeus who in the reign of Emperor Justinian, had organized the Monophysites of Syria as a separate church from that of the Orthodox. Each of these churches had its own patriarch and bishops, but the crusaders and the Greeks left them undisturbed and autonomous and made no attempt to convert them or force them into union with Rome or Constantinople. The most renowned

⁸⁹ John Wilkinson and Joyce Hill and W. F. Ryan, ed. and trans., *Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 1099-1185* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1988), 168.

⁹⁰ Since the Council of Chalcedon in 451, the Monophysites were considered heretical for believing in the one divine nature alone of Christ and denying his human nature. This view was especially popular in Egypt at that time and the parts of the Eastern Church that did not speak Greek.

Armenian shrine in the Holy Land was the cathedral of St. James, and an attached hospice in the Armenian quarter of Jerusalem that served the community, housed the golden Chair of St. James and protected the relic of the head of the saint. It was rebuilt in the middle of the twelfth century during Melisende's reign. The Georgians were mostly centered at the Monastery of the Cross built in a valley leading to Jerusalem. The Jacobites maintained a presence in all of the major cities of the Latin Kingdom, but most often assembled at the cathedral of St. Mary Magdalene in Jerusalem, which had been built in the eleventh century by the Egyptian Copts.⁹¹

There is evidence that the Jacobite Church was respected by the first rulers of the Latin Kingdom, especially Melisende, because of its links to the Coptic Church in Egypt, where the Fatimids were the most powerful enemies of the crusader states. When the knights of the First Crusade were approaching Jerusalem, the Jacobites under the leadership of their archbishop Cyril, withdrew or perhaps were expelled and went to Egypt. When the crusaders took the city, they gave the Jacobite possessions to a knight named Geoffrey, but he was subsequently captured in battle by the Fatimids and imprisoned in Cairo, where he languished for over thirty years. After Cyril died, the new Jacobite archbishop Ignatius I protested to King Baldwin I, and he returned the confiscated lands back to the re-established Jacobite community in Jerusalem and fortified their estates that were vulnerable to attacks by raiding parties riding out from Ascalon. Then during the joint reign of Fulk and Melisende in 1137, Geoffrey was released from prison and returned to Jerusalem, where he was given a hero's welcome as one of the few surviving knights of the First Crusade long assumed dead. He petitioned for his lands to be returned to him but Melisende intervened on behalf of the Jacobite

⁹¹ Prawer, *World of the Crusaders*, 59-63.

Church. She arranged a compromise in which the Jacobites kept their lands and possessions but paid three hundred bezants in compensation for them to Geoffrey. The entire account was recorded in the colophons of Jacobite breviaries written in 1138.⁹²

Since the papal legate Daimbert, Archbishop of Pisa, refused to confirm Arnulf's patriarchate once he arrived in the Holy Land because of vague complaints made against him by the crusaders, he himself was then elected. Daimbert proceeded to consecrate four Latin bishops in the patriarchate of Antioch. By the summer of 1100, the Greek patriarch of Antioch had retired or been expelled and Bernard, the recently consecrated bishop of Artah, took his place. However, it would be Patriarch Gibelin of Arles, undisputed, confirmed by the papacy, and elected in 1108 that would begin the real work of setting up the Latin Church in the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Working closely with King Baldwin I, he consecrated the first Latin bishop of Bethlehem to make the shrine church there a cathedral and made the city of Ascalon subject to it (even though the city was not conquered until 1153). In 1109, he gave the church of Nazareth a bishop and created a Latin diocese there. He marched into battle bearing the relic of the True Cross with the kingdom's army, an action that the patriarchs of Jerusalem would be called to perform for most major military campaigns. Upon his death in 1112, Arnulf was finally elected and confirmed as patriarch. Despite the controversy regarding his support for the bigamous marriage of Baldwin I to Adelaide, Arnulf was very pious. "On the day of his election, he freed the Hospital of St. John from the payment of tithe in his diocese; he had a devotion to the Blessed Virgin and gave benefactions to the community of Jehoshaphat to enable them to rebuild their church which was the chief Marian shrine in the patriarchate; and he made the secular canons of the Holy Sepulcher accept the rule of the Augustinian

⁹² Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 194-5; Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, 322.

canons in accordance with Gibelin's dying wishes and made financial arrangements for their support which were honored throughout the years of the first kingdom."⁹³ The Latin Church was effectively established by the end of Arnulf's patriarchate and as a result, it began to play a more active political role in the kingdom.

Patriarch Warmund of Picquigny, patriarch from 1118-28, in fact seemed to be more interested in secular and military affairs than ecclesiastical ones. Nominated by the new King Baldwin II, he took action in 1123 when the enemy Nur-ad-Daulah Balik held the king as a prisoner. In the king's name, he negotiated a treaty with the Venetians granting them extensive privileges in the city of Tyre if they would help capture it. They did and the king was ransomed. He also accompanied the king into battle and upon many occasions and protected the Order of the Knights Templar, which was founded in 1119 by Hugh of Payens to guard pilgrim routes to the kingdom. Nevertheless, Patriarch Warmund did summon the Council of Nablus in 1120 with the King to discuss public morality in the kingdom, and in 1127 he consecrated William, the prior of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, as archbishop of the newly conquered Tyre. William, however, without precedent went to Rome to receive his pallium directly from Pope Honorius II, who "while recognizing the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Jerusalem over the province of Tyre, ordered all the suffragens of Tyre, even those in the patriarchate of Antioch, to give canonical obedience to their new metropolitan."⁹⁴ Warmund also raised Nazareth to an archbishopric and made it metropolitan over Galilee.

The next patriarch was Stephen of Chartres, who just happened to be visiting the Holy Land as a pilgrim and was waiting for a boat to take him home when Warmund died

⁹³ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 62.

⁹⁴ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 66.

in 1128. He was well educated and an experienced administrator. He had also trained as a knight before entering into service for the church and was a pious kinsman of the king. He was thus considered perfect for the job. He set up a new diocese at Sebaste, considered sacred as the burial place of John the Baptist, to be a suffragan of the see of Caesarea to govern Samaria. He also won the recognition of Pope Honorius II for the Knights Templar as an official religious order of the church in 1128. Stephen's relationship with Baldwin II deteriorated when he told the king to surrender the city of Jaffa to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and Jerusalem too when Ascalon was finally captured.⁹⁵ He died in 1130, still at odds with the king. Baldwin II's last nomination to the patriarchate of Jerusalem was William of Flanders, who had been a canon of the Holy Sepulcher since 1117 and prior since some time in 1128.

A career in church administration qualified candidates for bishoprics once the Latin Kingdom's church had been established. Most of the bishops whose careers we know had held important administrative offices as priors or deans of cathedral chapters, archdeacons or chancellors of the patriarch of Jerusalem.⁹⁶ Another way to qualify for a bishopric was to gain administrative experience as chancellor in the royal administration of the kingdom. This was the case with Ralph, the English chancellor of Queen Melisende and Baldwin III, who was unsuccessfully nominated to the see of Tyre in 1146 but became bishop of Bethlehem in 1156. It was also the case with Ralph's successor as the chronicler and chancellor, William of Tyre, who became archbishop of Tyre in 1175.⁹⁷ Very few bishops came from religious or monastic communities. A high

⁹⁵ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 67-68.

⁹⁶ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 116-117.

⁹⁷ William was appointed archdeacon of Tyre in 1167 when the holder of that office, archdeacon William, was appointed bishop of Acre. Then in 1170 he became tutor to King Amalric's son and heir Baldwin IV.

proportion of them came from the West overseas. This was also true of all of the thirteen patriarchs of Jerusalem and Antioch who held office before 1187. The bishops of the Holy Land came from most of the ethnic areas in the West except for Germany, which was very underrepresented there. Most of them were French, but William I of Tyre and Ralph of Bethlehem were English, Peter of Tyre was Aragonese, Aimery of Caesarea was Italian, Frederick of Tyre was from Lorraine, and Patriarch William was from Flanders.⁹⁸

The clerical hierarchy of the Latin Church created by the crusaders was unique in many ways. Although the new bishops and archbishops were overwhelmed at first, they defined their roles and responsibilities by looking to their counterparts in the West and overcame their lack of experience, in order to take on the legal and administrative work in their dioceses effectively until they could train canons to help them. Their superiors, however, the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Antioch, had no model to refer to in defining their new roles. Naturally, they could refer to the Greek patriarchs in the Orthodox Church but would have disliked following their example, especially since the breach in 1054 between the papacy in Rome and the patriarchate of Constantinople and the betrayal of Emperor Alexius. Nevertheless, the Latin patriarchs shaped positions defined by their unique circumstances as religious leaders of the crusaders' states. Always subservient to the popes in Rome but nominated by the monarchs of Jerusalem and the princes of Antioch, their political duties demanded that they help the kings and princes govern their states through extending their laws or interests in their wide patriarchates, serve as advisors for their states as trusted councilors in their courts, and witness important

In 1174, he succeeded Ralph as chancellor in the kingdom and continued to be an archdeacon. When the archdiocese of Tyre fell vacant, he was consecrated archbishop in 1175 but continued to act as chancellor until 1183.

⁹⁸ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 122-123.

charters and agreements. As the highest churchmen in the Holy Land, they consecrated Latin bishops, set up dioceses, led devotions, built churches and shrines, and protected Christian pilgrims. In times of crisis or threat of war, however, the patriarchs combined their political and spiritual roles by leading the crusader armies into battle bearing the True Cross or Holy Lance, defending vulnerable cities, and by representing the kingdom's interests as chief representatives of the kings or princes.

Shrine Churches and Monasteries:

The men and women who served in the shrine churches of the Holy Land sang the day and night offices of the church and celebrated the Eucharist with great solemnity and joy for that was the reason they were all there and had traveled so far. They built or rebuilt richly decorated churches and shrines on the places that were sacred because they were special in some way to Christ, according to the narratives of his life as depicted in the gospels. Summed up by Andrew Jotischky in his analysis of the Holy Land's "geography of holiness," he writes that the "land had been made holy by Christ's being born, living and dying there, and as a result it had the power to confer holiness on those who chose to live there."⁹⁹ They felt a great responsibility to make sure Christ was adored properly and publicly in their sacred liturgies and holy festivities. They also felt responsible for ensuring access to Christian pilgrims of all denominations and building up these sites as great pilgrimage centers. The largest and most important shrine church for the crusaders was the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, which was governed by a cathedral chapter of Augustinian canons after 1114. Through ecclesiastical patronage, its

⁹⁹ Andrew Jotischky, *The Perfection of Solitude: Hermits and Monks in the Crusader States* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 157.

possessions included the city of Jaffa given by the Patriarch Arnulf, the shrine of St. Lazarus at Bethany, and the shrine of Quarantana, the traditional site of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness, which was given by Patriarch William. The canons collected tithes in the Frankish villages they established and had a wide influence in the diocese of Jerusalem but not beyond in the other dioceses. Back in Western Europe at the same time however, sixty-one churches and monasteries in Italy, France, and Spain are listed as belonging to them in a very detailed confirmation of their property issued by Pope Eugenius III in 1146.¹⁰⁰ Bernard Hamilton believes that the ecclesiastical patronage in other dioceses was purposely restricted because obedience would be hard to enforce.¹⁰¹ Two other great shrine churches of the Holy Land joined the Church of the Holy Sepulcher: the cathedral churches of Nazareth and Bethlehem. They were also headed by Augustinian canons and had similar situations. According to Hamilton's assessment, "although the early charters of Bethlehem relating to property in Syria have not been preserved, there is a very full record of the community's property in Gregory IX's bull of confirmation issued in 1227. Bethlehem owned much land in the Frankish east, but only had four churches there: St. Mary's on Mount Pilgrim, St. Mary's at Gibelet, St. Martin's at Tyre and an unnamed church in Jaffa. In Western Europe, by contrast, the canons of Bethlehem owned sixty-six churches. The archives of the church of Nazareth have not been preserved so there is no complete list of its property, but it is known that it possessed sixteen churches in southern Italy in 1172, whereas it is not known to have

¹⁰⁰ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 94-95; de Rozière, no 23, 36-41.

¹⁰¹ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 94-95.

owned any churches in Syria outside the diocese of Nazareth itself, except for one church in Acre which is first recorded as its property in 1256.”¹⁰²

Many communities of monks, nuns, and canons served the other shrine churches of Jerusalem. The oldest of these was the Benedictine abbey of St. Mary of the Latins founded in the mid-eleventh century. It served as a center for Latin pilgrims visiting the holy places in the city. Next to it was a hospital, which evolved into the order of the Hospitallers, or Knights of St. John, during King Baldwin I’s reign as well as a small convent that would become well known as St. Marie la Grande. The other two great convents were St. Anne in Jerusalem and the fortified convent at Bethany, which Melisende founded and richly endowed and will be discussed later. The Benedictines also oversaw the shrine of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat, which was founded soon after 1099. The shrine stood on the place believed to be the site of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It was a very popular shrine in the twelfth century due to the growth in devotion to her at this time in the West. The Benedictines also had the monastery of Mount Tabor that mostly owned some churches in the diocese of Nazareth.

The church of Mount Sion, location of the Last Supper and the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Church of the Ascension on the Mount of Olives, and *Templum Domini*, the mosque known as the Dome of the Rock, which the crusaders converted into a church, were all served by communities of Augustinian canons. Each of these places had liturgical importance because the patriarch would celebrate the sacraments in them, especially the Mass on proper feasts: Candlemas at *Templum Domini*, Ascension Day at the Mount of Olives, Pentecost at Mount Sion, and the Assumption at Jehoshaphat.¹⁰³

¹⁰² Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 95.

¹⁰³ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 96.

The laity, especially pilgrims, attended these masses in great numbers and supported these communities with offerings and donations. On the great feast days, the kings and queens, along with the great barons, would join the pilgrims and citizens of the Latin Kingdom in the celebrations and demonstrations of piety and generosity. The canons also received privileges and immunities from the papacy that made them largely independent of and competitive with the diocesan bishops and the parish churches.

The Latin East was affected by the development of the new monastic orders in Western Europe in the twelfth century. A group of Premonstratensian canons were commissioned by Innocent II at the Council of Reims in 1131 to preach to the pagans of the Holy Land. They founded three monasteries: St. Joseph's and St. Habacuc's near Ramla and St. Samuel at Mount Joie, on the outskirts of Jerusalem. The canons of St. Habacuc built one chapel at Bethel, which they gave to the Holy Sepulcher in 1160. The very detailed confirmation of the property of St. Samuel's issued to King Baldwin V in 1185 shows two churches in its possession: St. John the Evangelist at Nablus, a gift from Melisende and St. Longinus at Jerusalem, given by her son King Amalric.¹⁰⁴ St. Bernard of Clairvaux was extremely interested in the Latin Kingdom and of course campaigned in Europe for the Second Crusade, which responded to the fall of Edessa in 1144. He was extremely outspoken, however, about monks leaving their cloisters to set off for Jerusalem. For them, pilgrimages were unnecessary.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, his order, the Cistercians, came to the East in 1157 and founded the monastery of Belmont in the

¹⁰⁴ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 101-2; Hans Eberhard Mayer, "Sankt Samuel auf dem Freudenberge und sein Besitz nach einem unbekanntem Diplom Königs Balduins V." *Quellen und Forschungen aus italienischen Archiven und Bibliotheken* 44 (1964): 35-71.

¹⁰⁵ For further analysis on St. Bernard and his efforts to stop monks of his order from making pilgrimages, see Jotischky, 1-11.

mountains to the southeast of Tripoli. They later went on to found its daughter house, a shrine to St. John the Baptist near Jerusalem.

The Italian communities on the coastlines of Antioch, Tripoli, and the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem had a few Latin rite churches in their city quarters. The Genoese were granted a quarter in Antioch by Prince Bohemund I, which included the Church of St. John in 1098. Members of their commune of Antioch worshiped there and appointed the clergy but the priests answered to the patriarch of Antioch. Prince Tancred granted them the Church of St. Nicholas in Latakia in 1108, but the Genoese are not known to have had any other church in Antioch or in the neighboring Tripoli. Much later in 1168, King Amalric granted them a quarter in Acre in return for their help against Egyptian forces, and there they built the Church of St. Peter and later, before 1187, a hospital and chapel of the Holy Spirit. The Republic of Venice was granted a church in 1111 at Acre and in return for their help in conquering Tyre. Patriarch Warmund, in the name of King Baldwin II, granted them extensive privileges in the Latin Kingdom, which included a church, street, square, bath, and oven in any city they wanted, held forever by hereditary right and free from taxation.¹⁰⁶ They only took advantage of this generous offer in Acre and Tyre, in which they dedicated churches to St. Mark.¹⁰⁷ The Italian commercial privileges far outweighed their ecclesiastical powers in the Holy Land. All of these churches existed to serve the spiritual needs of the Italian communities and pilgrims without interference or dues owed to the local parish churches. This arrangement worked well for them in the twelfth century.

¹⁰⁶ WT XII, 25, 553.

¹⁰⁷ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 103-4.

Military Orders:

The Knights of St. John, also known as the Hospitallers, evolved out of the hospital located next to St. Mary of the Latins, but this military order of monks did not begin in the church. Joshua Prawer wrote that at this time they were “one of the earliest creative efforts of the noble class in the realm of ethics and ideology.”¹⁰⁸ A small company of knights led by a Provençal knight named Gerald immediately began to care for the sick and wounded after Jerusalem was captured. Generously, they put down their weapons and began the charitable work usually reserved for monks and nuns. Perhaps the inspiration came from their surroundings. They had come a long way and suffered themselves before finally arriving in the land where Christ had walked, taught, cared for the poor, cured the sick, and died. They established themselves just across from the southern entrance to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in a two-storied Byzantine church and replaced the patron saint of the church there, St. John the Almsgiver of Alexandria, with St. John the Baptist, who was more familiar and popular to them. Through donations and gifts from pilgrims and eventually the wealthy noble and even royal houses in the West as well as in the East, their resources grew, and the hospital expanded rapidly into a complex that could feed and house hundreds. They adopted the rules of monks and took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to the Master of the Order. In 1113, Pope Paschal II issued the papal bull *Pie postulatio voluntatis*, which made the new order independent of the abbot of St. Mary of the Latins, and its Master became the head of an independent, eventually international, order directly subject to the papacy itself and governed from Jerusalem. In this bull, the pope took the new order under his protection and confirmed everything it had acquired or would acquire from the faithful. He

¹⁰⁸ Prawer, *World of the Crusaders*, 114.

sanctioned its collection of tithes due from its lands or taken from the produce that it used. He also confirmed the subordination of its European estates to its Master and freed the election of the Master from outside interference.¹⁰⁹

The Hospitallers also enjoyed ecclesiastical patronage from within the Latin Kingdom. In 1112, the Patriarch of Jerusalem Arnulf and Archbishop Evremar of Caesarea exempted the Hospitallers from the payment of tithes to them in their dioceses.¹¹⁰ The confirmation, issued by Pope Calixtus II in 1119, of gifts made to it by bishops of Tripoli, comprised of the church of St. John on Mount Pilgrim, the churches in the fief of William Rostagne, and the church of Arqah.¹¹¹

The Hospitallers ran a charitable hospital and ministered to pilgrims and the Kingdom's sick until 1136. In that year, the character of the organization changed when Melisende and her husband King Fulk granted the Hospitallers the castle of Bethgibelin, which guarded the approach road from Hebron to Ascalon.¹¹² As the twelfth century progressed and the dangers intensified, the Hospitallers were given more extensive rights and possessions of lordships in the frontier regions, which included ecclesiastical authority, in order to assure their vital help in the defense of the Kingdom. In 1144, Raymond II of Tripoli gave the first of such grants to them: the fief of Crac des Chevaliers and the city of Rafaniyah and the castle of Montferrand if they could be recaptured from the Muslims.¹¹³ Later, in 1157, Humphrey II of Toron granted the order the castle of Chastelneuf and half the city of Banyas in northern Galilee for aid in

¹⁰⁹ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus, c. 1050-1310* (London: MacMillan & Company, Ltd., 1967) 43.

¹¹⁰ Riley-Smith, *Knights of St. John*, 39; Delaville le Roulx, nos. 25, 29.

¹¹¹ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 105.

¹¹² RRH 164; WT XIV, 22, 82.

¹¹³ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 106.

confronting the threat posed by Nur-ad-Din. The Hospitallers enjoyed ecclesiastical authority in every area in which they operated and had the manpower to defend their castles as well as perform their spiritual duties in their chapels. In his bull *Christiane fidei religio* of 1154, Pope Anastasius IV officially recognized the clerical powers of the Hospitallers, but this, as Jonathan Riley-Smith maintains, was probably endorsing powers long established. The bull virtually exempted the Hospital's chaplains from the authority of the diocesan bishops and made them responsible to the chapter of the order and the pope alone.¹¹⁴ In Banyas, therefore, the authority of the bishop was greatly reduced. In fact, as the order's property increased, disputes between the Knights of St. John and the bishops and even the patriarchs became more common. The bishops sought to restrict the growth and influence of the order, especially in their cities.

The threat to episcopal authority in the Holy Land only increased with the emergence of another military order of monks around 1118: the Order of the Templars, so-called because its earliest home base was in the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, the Mosque of al-Aqsa, which King Baldwin II granted them as a temporary dwelling place in his own palace on the north side of the Temple. Established by Hugh of Payens and Godfrey of St. Omer, the Knights Templar first gathered as a group of knights in voluntary association to serve as armed convoys for pilgrims on their way from Jerusalem to Jericho and from there to the place celebrated for Christ's baptism in the Jordan River. The pilgrims on these routes, especially during the first few decades after the Kingdom was established, faced dangers from the enemy as well as the foreign conditions of the terrain and hot temperatures. This new order was very successful and backed by the likes of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who was by this time the most famous

¹¹⁴ Riley-Smith, *Knights of St. John*, 233-4, 377.

spiritual leader in Western Europe. According to St. Bernard, in chapter four of his pamphlet titled *On the Praise of the New Knighthood*, in contrast to ordinary knights, the Knights Templar were hyper-masculine, disciplined, and obedient to their commanders, clothed in strict uniform, ate sparsely, lived soberly in chaste communities, and owned nothing personally. Always well behaved, they never spoke impudently, laughed immoderately, whispered, or giggled. Neither did they enjoy traditional noble pursuits like playing chess and dice, hunting, or falconry. They despised mimes, jugglers, storytellers, dirty songs, and performances of buffoons. Modestly, they kept their hair short, but never overdressed, and rarely bathed.¹¹⁵ Identified by their white mantles and red crosses, the Knights Templar were favored by the princes and the monarchy. They soon became the most feared and deadly force in the crusader army.

In the West, branches of the order were established in almost every country. Fusing monasticism and chivalry, they were widely admired, and although each individual knight could own nothing, the order itself began to become very wealthy through donations and grants. By the thirteenth century, the Knights Templar had even become one of Europe's largest banking houses. However, their financial concerns and growing wealth would eventually lead to heavy criticism of them. As the military order began to prosper in the twelfth century, it greatly increased its holdings and possessions. Extremely independent, the Knights Templar ignored local ecclesiastical and secular authorities. By the 1170's, William of Tyre related that, "they withdrew from the patriarch of Jerusalem, from whom they had received the establishment of their order and their first privileges, and refused him the obedience which their predecessors had shown

¹¹⁵ Praver, *World of the Crusaders*, 116; see Bernard of Clairvaux, *In Praise of the New Knighthood*, trans. Conrad Greenia, in The Cistercian Fathers Series: Number Nineteen, *The Works of Bernard of Clairvaux: Volume Seven, Treatises III* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1977).

him. To the churches of God they became very troublesome, for they drew away from their tithes and first fruits and unjustly disturbed their possessions.”¹¹⁶ Nonetheless, they and the Hospitallers were praised for their bravery, battlefield skills, and devotion to Christendom.

In response to the Knights Templar, the Hospitallers competed by taking on more military responsibilities and wearing black mantles with eight-pointed crosses. Together, the two orders became the Kingdom’s standing army—ready in peacetime as well as in war. The complete army formed when the king called on the feudal hosts to join the assembled military orders: the army was mustered in response to every new major threat. From the mid-1130s on, the military orders assumed the defense of key military positions especially on the northern and eastern Muslim borders of Antioch and Tripoli. They fortified strategic posts, towers, castles and road networks. Their patrols maintained communications. As time went on, they all but created independent states out of their northern positions that even controlled their own foreign policies and peace treaties.

Pope Innocent II gave the Knights Templar the full privileges of an exempt order in the bull *Omne datum optimum* in 1139. At the Temple of Solomon, their headquarters included the chapel there. The Knights also enjoyed some ecclesiastical patronage: for defending Tortosa against the forces of Nur-ad-Din in 1152, the bishop gave the Knights all of the castle chapels in the city not already being held by the Hospitallers. They also served as chaplains in the castle chapel at Gaza and must have served in the other castles they held: Baghras and other fortresses in the Amanus march on the north-western frontier of the principality of Antioch, the castles of Chastel Blanc and Arima in the

¹¹⁶ WT XII, 7, 526-7.

county of Tripoli, and those of Safad in Galilee and Ahamant in Oultrejourdain in the kingdom of Jerusalem.¹¹⁷

The Hospitallers and Templars were joined by another military order in the Holy Land probably during the reign of Fulk and Melisende. The Order of St. Lazarus remained small and never attained the status or wealth of the others because its influence remained local and its members were sick and even dying of leprosy. Leprosy was common in the Holy Land and many able-bodied crusaders contracted it. It was widely feared and regarded as highly contagious. In the East, as well as in the West, lepers were shut away from the world to live outside city gates and walls. In the Holy Land, however, every man and woman was needed in the defense of the kingdom, even lepers. Outside the city of Jerusalem against the outer wall, a leper hospital became a colony, and its knights and commoners alike associated themselves into an order. Sometime after 1130, Patriarch William of Jerusalem announced that an Armenian monk named Abraham was giving the lepers of the Order a cistern that he held from Patriarch Warmund, for the use of the poor. The donation was made under the condition that Abraham would retain the use of the cistern during his lifetime but upon his death the Order would receive it and hold it in perpetuity.¹¹⁸ They had their own chaplains and eventually owned two churches: one in the Jerusalem colony and a hospital and chapel at Tiberias. On the battlefields, the enemy withdrew from the weapons, bravery, and contagion wielded by this order of leper knights. Like the other military orders, the

¹¹⁷ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 108.

¹¹⁸ de Marsy, no. 1, 123.

Order of St. Lazarus founded establishments across Europe to provide support for its military and hospitaller vocations.¹¹⁹

The Latin Church in the crusader's Holy Land was what Bernard Hamilton called an "unusual institution."¹²⁰ Its bishops had a few subordinate clergy who served mainly the towns and cities, although there were some in outlying parishes. Chaplains appointed by monasteries or the military orders often had relationships with the bishops that were contentious in some of these parishes and cities. But as he observed, "though the cure of souls may technically have been in the hands of the diocesan clergy, in practice it was frequently exercised by the chaplains of the religious houses and the military orders. One consequence of this was that bishops had few subordinate clergy and less scope for pastoral work than their colleagues in the west."¹²¹ Thus, the Latin Church and its institutions were unique in the Holy Land because of the extraordinary environment and conditions within which it worked. Since its numbers were limited in this Christian frontier, the Latin diocesan clergy were uncomfortably forced to share influence with men and women of the religious houses and the knights of the military orders.

The Monarchy and its Patronage of the Church before 1131:

The early kings of Jerusalem possessed the cities of Jerusalem, Acre, Nablus, and Tyre. Their personal estates, the royal domain, lay around Jerusalem, from Hebron to Bethsan. Their castellans administered Darum and Blanchegarde. They never had enough funds, but they were richer than their vassals. Although the administrative

¹¹⁹ For the Order of St. Lazarus' English foundations, see David Marcombe, *The Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem in England, c. 1150-1544* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2003).

¹²⁰ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 111.

¹²¹ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 112.

structure was never highly developed, the monarchy was strong and mostly uncontested. Under King Baldwin I, lands held by right of conquest were extended to vassals, however until 1130, when chronic war and waves of immigration created turnover in lordships, there was a deliberate extension of royal power. The first signs of opposition to the crown appeared only after 1130, as the barons achieved stability, conquest of new areas slowed, and new lordships were created at the expense of the royal domain.¹²² The Church in the Holy Land was a part of the feudal order created by the crusaders. Certain bishops had the right to hold their own courts as barons, and they used their own seals and profited from the fees for providing justice. Bishops also owed military service to the crown.¹²³ The bishops were often chosen by the kings, but they usually took the advice of other bishops in nearby dioceses about the choices for candidates. Although the cathedral chapters held the elections, the kings may have been allowed to be present. If the canons disagreed with a royal nominee, they could appeal to the pope, and the bishop-elect could not be consecrated without his approval. He could however, be invested with the temporalities of the see. The deposition of a bishop who had been consecrated, on the other hand, had to be confirmed by the pope. The appointments of the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Antioch were confirmed by the papacy and they were given the *pallia* to indicate their communion with Rome. No pope ever visited the Holy Land, but legates, who were sent at irregular intervals, represented the popes there.¹²⁴

The Latin bishops in the Holy Land, therefore, were chosen by the kings of Jerusalem, as well as by the princes of Antioch, and the Counts of Tripoli and Edessa. They were mostly chosen for their abilities to help the kings and other leaders govern the

¹²² Riley-Smith, *Knights of St. John*, 23.

¹²³ Riley-Smith, *Knights of St. John*, 21.

¹²⁴ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 126-7.

Holy Land. In the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the bishops were part of the king's council of advisors and attended meetings of the High Court. The patriarch and some of the bishops were usually present when the High Court was meeting to make decisions regarding peace and war, royal marriages, alliances with the Italian cities, or matters regarding the royal succession. The bishops also served the kings as ambassadors: in 1128, Baldwin II sent Archbishop William I of Tyre and Bishop Robert of Lydda to Rome to consult with Pope Honorius II about the affairs of the Holy Land and to obtain his blessing and consent for Fulk of Anjou to be Melisende's husband.¹²⁵ Some of the bishops were accomplished statesmen, but most had an average level of education. The Holy Land could not lure talented philosophers, theologians, and lawyers away from the schools and intellectual communities in the West. It did not attract the pious, contemplative, reformers from the West either. Rather the bishops and the other clerics in the East demonstrated their piety through practical and loyal service to the crown, charity toward the pilgrims who visited their dioceses, and devotion to the holy relics, shrines and churches they guarded and protected.

The monarchy was the great defender and patron of the Latin Church and holy places in the new and struggling kingdom. The first kings helped to support their new ecclesiastical establishments but the Latin churches were economically supported by several means. They received fees customarily charged for parish services such as baptisms and burials. They relied on pious offerings from their congregations, especially at the great shrine churches. They could also collect usage fees on the ovens they owned in the larger cities. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher, for instance, had a monopoly on the ovens of Jerusalem. Because of the dry climate, wood was expensive to obtain.

¹²⁵ RRH 122.

Many people had difficulty obtaining wood for their private kitchens, so the communal ovens offered a solution.¹²⁶ The Church of the Holy Sepulcher owned all but two of the twenty-seven ovens in the city that must have provided a regular source of income because bread was the major part of the ordinary person's diet.¹²⁷ Most importantly, they collected the tithe from the Latin Christians, a church tax payable on all sources of income, mainly agricultural produce, but it could be collected from trade and goods produced too. Landlords were responsible for tithe payments. Another method of financing churches was wherever there had been those of the Orthodox, the Latin bishops and canons replacing them would take over the endowments or lands they had held, especially in the coastal cities. On the frequent occasion when there had been no prior Orthodox Church, new dioceses had to be endowed with lands and villages by the princes and kings.

The patriarchs, bishops, and abbots had many financial obligations to meet in fulfilling their spiritual duties and responsibilities, and they were never wealthy. The patriarchs and bishops had to maintain themselves and their households. These men were great lords and had large households that needed room and board. Their canons had to be assigned prebends, which could be very expensive. Moreover, in many cases in the Holy Land, patriarchs and bishops were building and decorating new cathedrals and parish churches or enlarging older ones. The abbots and abbesses had to maintain their monasteries, and they all extended great charity and provided alms for the pilgrims who arrived from the West each spring.

¹²⁶ Adrian J. Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades: Society, Landscape, and Art in the Holy City under Frankish Rule* (London and New York: Routledge, 200), 149.

¹²⁷ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 150-1.

In addition to their religious duties, the patriarchs and bishops had secular obligations to meet. Because they had owned large fiefs outright since the earliest days of the kingdom, the bishops of Lydda and the archbishops of Nazareth in the patriarchate of Jerusalem owed knight-service to the crown. All of the bishops of the kingdom of Jerusalem, with the exception of the archbishop of Petra and the bishops of Beirut and Banyas, were required to supply sergeants to the royal armies. "The patriarch of Jerusalem and the canons of the Holy Sepulcher each had to furnish the crown with 500 sergeants, while the other bishops between them had to contribute a further thousand sergeants: the quota varied from 200 in the case of Bethlehem to fifty in that of Hebron. Together the bishops provided two-fifths of the total force of sergeants in the kingdom and this must have placed a heavy charge on the financial resources of the Latin Church."¹²⁸

Godfrey of Bouillon was remembered by William of Tyre as a devout and generous patron of the churches of Jerusalem, especially the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, *Templum Domini*, and the Abbey of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat. He maintains that this patronage was Godfrey's responsibility as head of the kingdom.

Godfrey was a devout man whose heart was filled with pious care for all that pertained to the honor of the house of God. A few days after he was elected head of the kingdom, he began to offer the first fruits of his responsibility to the Lord. He established canons in the Church of the Lord's Sepulcher and in the Temple of the Lord; and upon them he bestowed ample benefices known as prebends. At the same time also he gave them noble houses in the vicinity of these same churches beloved of God. He preserved the rule and regulations observed by the great and wealthy churches founded by pious princes beyond the mountains, and he would have conferred still greater gifts, had not death prevented.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 152-3.

¹²⁹ WT IX, 9, 392.

Godfrey was very generous to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. In a charter issued in 1114, Baldwin I confirmed a long list of twenty-one *casalia* or villages that Godfrey had given to the Holy Sepulcher all around Jerusalem.¹³⁰ Unfortunately, the land around Jerusalem was not rich land, but rather dry and not very productive. These *casalia*, however, may have been part of the lands the church had always owned although this is not mentioned in the confirmation charter.¹³¹ The *casale* or villa was the basic rural administrative unit and it can be defined as a village surrounded by its lands, which varied in size and were worked by Arab or Syrian peasants. They were headed by a dragoman, who was usually Latin, or by the *raïs*, and these were responsible for order and justice in the community. The peasants were taxed for a rent on harvests and animals three times a year, and the Latin Christians paid tithes to the head church in their diocese.¹³² The *casalia* could be prosperous and immediately good sources of income if they had existing work forces. Otherwise, they would be only potential assets. The charters reveal that they were the fundamental basis of royal patronage of the churches and religious orders in the crusader Holy Land.

Godfrey had taken with him on the Crusade “monks from well-regulated cloisters, religious men notable for their holy lives. During the entire pilgrimage, at the regular hours, night and day, these monks celebrated the divine offices for him after the custom of the church. After he acquired royal power, he located them at their request in the valley of Jehoshaphat and conferred upon them there, as a reward for their services, lands of wide extent.”¹³³ By 1115, these monks of the Abbey of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat and

¹³⁰ RRH 74.

¹³¹ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 138.

¹³² Riley-Smith, *Knights of St. John*, 19.

¹³³ WT IX, 9, 392.

the shrine to Mary were well endowed with villages, lands, and vineyards. Baldwin I issued two charters confirming all of their possessions in that year that included donations made by the baron William de Bures and his wife Agnes and a long list of villages and lands held all over the kingdom, including some near Jerusalem, Jaffa, Acre, Nablus, Sidon, and many other places.¹³⁴

Godfrey also gave some property to the Knights of St. John. During his brief reign, the work of Gerald and his knights in the hospital must have made an impression.¹³⁵ In September 1110, Baldwin I confirmed everything that his brother gave to the Hospitallers including the village of Hessilia and two ovens in Jerusalem.¹³⁶

The first great fief Godfrey granted in the Latin Kingdom went to Tancred, Bohemund's nephew, who had shown great bravery during the crusade: the city of Tiberias together with the entire principality of Galilee. Godfrey may have known that Tancred would continue the work of establishing and supporting the church in these lands that housed many important holy sites. According to William of Tyre, Tancred too became a great prince and patron of the Church.

In the management of this principality, Tancred conducted himself so quietly and acceptably to God that even to this day his memory is held in benediction by the people of that land. He also devoted much attention to establishing churches in that diocese, namely, at Nazareth, Tiberias, and on Mt. Tabor. These he endowed with ample patrimonies and to them also he gave ecclesiastical furnishings and decorations. A large part of these gifts was unfortunately lost to the venerable places later through the frauds and intrigues of the princes who succeeded Tancred. Yet from what was left to them, the churches are still able to supply themselves with what is needful. Never do they forget to offer prayers for the soul of him who displayed toward the churches of God such pious liberality and deep affection.¹³⁷

¹³⁴ RRH 79; RRH 80.

¹³⁵ Riley-Smith, *Knights of St. John*, 39.

¹³⁶ RRH 57.

¹³⁷ WT IX, 13, 399.

Later in his brief reign, Godfrey gave Jerusalem and the Tower of David and the city of Jaffa to Patriarch Daimbert and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

The patriarch demanded that the duke give over to him the Holy City of God with its citadel and likewise the city of Jaffa with its appurtenances. For some time the question was under vigorous discussion. Finally, on the day of the purification of the blessed Mary [February 2, 1100], in the presence of the clergy and all the people, the duke...resigned the fourth part of the city of Jaffa to the Church of the Holy Resurrection...Later, on the holy day of the following Easter, again in the presence of the clergy and people who had assembled for the feast day, he gave into the hand of the patriarch the city of Jerusalem with the tower of David and all that pertained to it. The following condition was attached to the gift, however—that he himself should enjoy and have use of the aforesaid city, with its territories, until the Lord should permit him to take one or two other cities and thus enlarge the kingdom. But if, he should die without legitimate heir, all the aforesaid possessions should pass without difficulty or contradiction into the jurisdiction of the patriarch.¹³⁸

Godfrey, however, gave these gifts to the patriarch very reluctantly. Mayer writes that it was generally once accepted by historians that Daimbert's demands were an expression of the theocratic nature of the Church's claims in the East. There is, however, very little evidence to support this view. It is more likely that Daimbert sought jurisdiction in Jerusalem and Jaffa in order to extend his authority and limit Godfrey's because, as Mayer believes, he, "who had originally obtained the archbishopric of Pisa as an Imperial appointee but was now a Gregorian reformer, displayed the excess of doctrinaire zeal so typical of the recent reformer."¹³⁹

King Baldwin I continued Godfrey's policy of favoring the Hospitallers. In fact, Jonathan Riley-Smith has asserted that Baldwin has never been given the credit he

¹³⁸ WT IX, 16, 403-4.

¹³⁹ Hans Eberhard Mayer, *The Crusades*, second edition, John Gillingham trans., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 61.

deserves in the history of the Order. After his victory over the Egyptians in 1101, he presented a tenth of the spoils to the Knights of St. John. In 1110, he ratified the gifts made to it in the kingdom, and two years later confirmed all of its possessions. Upon his death in 1118, his body may have been laid out in the hospital before its burial in the church of the Holy Sepulcher.¹⁴⁰

According to William of Tyre, King Baldwin I also richly endowed St. Anne's for receiving his cast-off first wife Arda. The convent was situated in the eastern part of Jerusalem, near the gate of Jehoshaphat and close to a pond that was known as the sheep pool. A grotto there was believed to be adjacent to where Joachim and Anna lived and where Mary was born. In that convent, "three or four poor women had professed the religious life, and the king, for the sake of placing his wife with them, enlarged their possessions and extended their patrimony."¹⁴¹ Arda seemed content in the monastery until she found an opportunity to beg her former husband to allow her to visit her family in Constantinople. Baldwin's gifts must not have been enough to sustain the nuns in the convent. William of Tyre maintains that she "claimed that she wished to obtain means to relieve the poverty of her community, and under this pretext, left the realm."¹⁴² She didn't return to the king that had mistreated her or send gifts to the impoverished St. Anne's and thus was maligned in the Latin Kingdom. William reports that as soon as she returned home to her family in Constantinople, "she at once laid aside the habit of religion and began to abandon herself to a sordid and immoral life. Without regard for

¹⁴⁰ Riley-Smith, *Knights of St. John*, 39; RRH 57; RRH 68a.

¹⁴¹ WT XI, 1, 461.

¹⁴² WT XI, 1, 462.

her reputation and the queenly dignity of her former estate, she prostituted herself to all who came.”¹⁴³

Baldwin I raised the parish church of Bethlehem to a cathedral church and bishopric; it had been a shrine church under the Orthodox and it is not known whether it owned any lands of its own then.¹⁴⁴ In an edict recorded by William of Tyre dated between September 1, 1109 and March 24, 1111, Baldwin gave his reasons behind this act: the excellence of the church, because it was the birthplace of Christ, and because it was the place he received his crown. “To invest it with full Episcopal dignity,” he gave the Church of Bethlehem and the bishop the villages of Bedar near Acre, Seylon near Nablus, Bethbezan near Bethlehem, and Zeophir and Caicapha near Ascalon.¹⁴⁵ A few years earlier in 1107, he had also given the Benedictine brothers of Mt. Tabor a long list of *casalia* for their benefit and income.¹⁴⁶

Later, in a major move to support the patriarch of Jerusalem and ensure the proper administration of his kingdom by establishing a division of jurisdiction between the patriarchates of Jerusalem and Antioch, Baldwin determined that all the cities that he had conquered, such as Sidon and Beirut, be subject to the church in Jerusalem and the patriarch, who was Gibelin at that time. These cities had historically belonged to the patriarchate of Antioch and Bernard, the patriarch of Antioch felt upset and cheated and appealed to Pope Paschal II. The pope responded that because of the changed circumstances of the present situation, the historical position could be ignored. William

¹⁴³ WT XI, 1, 462.

¹⁴⁴ Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 140.

¹⁴⁵ WT XI, 12, 481-2; RRH 59.

¹⁴⁶ RRH 51.

of Tyre included the letter from the pope that explained the situation and the reasons for his decision. In the letter dated June 8, 1111, Paschal wrote,

The infidel's long period of possession and tyrannical rule has brought about confusion in regard to the boundaries of the holdings of churches which have been and still are in your parts. Since, after due deliberation, we are unable to assign definite limits thereto, we have deemed it not unjust to agree to your petition. And since on behalf of the exaltation of the church at Jerusalem, you have devotedly exposed your own life to extreme dangers, I grant that whatever cities of the infidel you have taken or shall take hereafter shall be under the rule and authority of that church.¹⁴⁷

However, by 1112, the pope changed his mind and his ruling to support the historical claims of the Patriarch of Antioch. In another letter dated March 1113, Paschal wrote to Baldwin that the "patriarchate of Antioch shall be preserved intact in the future just as it was determined in early times and as it has been maintained heretofore. Accordingly we admonish you earnestly— and not only admonish— but command that invasions of this kind (where the truth is evident) be not committed by you, but that each church enjoy the full use of the territories belonging to it by right. For we cannot go contrary to the manifestly sacred constitutions of your fathers; nor do we desire in the least either to lessen the dignity of the churches in order to increase the power of princes, or to injure the power of the princes for the sake of exalting ecclesiastical dignity, lest, in either case the peace of the church in your midst be disturbed, which God grant be far from us."¹⁴⁸ Baldwin ignored this command and despite other complaints by the Pope, the bishoprics remained under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Continuing the work of his predecessors, Melisende's father King Baldwin II was also a very generous patron to the Church in the Kingdom of Jerusalem but his attention,

¹⁴⁷ WT XI, 28, 508-9; RRH 60.

¹⁴⁸ WT XI, 28, 512-3; RRH 73.

early on in his reign, was diverted by a military disaster in Antioch. In June 1119, he was called north by Roger of Antioch to help him face a major attack by Il-Ghazi ibn Artuk of Mardin and Aleppo. Before he and Count Pons of Tripoli could relieve Roger and his city from the threat, Roger and his entire army of knights and foot soldiers went out to meet the enemy alone and were slaughtered in what came to be known as the *Ager Sanguinis* or the Field of Blood. Baldwin II and Pons arrived too late with the kingdom's army accompanied by the True Cross but were happily received in Antioch by Roger's widow Cecelia and Patriarch Bernard. Since the lawful prince of Antioch Bohemund II was only ten and there was no other Norman alive left in the East, it was decided that Baldwin, as King of Jerusalem and overlord of Antioch and the other provinces, would take over the government of the city until Bohemund should come of age, and that Bohemund should be married to his daughter Alice. He then redistributed the fiefs left open by the disaster on the Field of Blood and married the widows of the fallen knights to ones from his army or others newly arrived from the West.¹⁴⁹ Baldwin was ensuring political stability by managing or exercising control over inheritances and marriages. The king was here demonstrating that the powers of royal patronage could be substantial as they included the right to dispose of heirs, heiresses, and widows as well as secular and ecclesiastical patronage.

After chasing Il-Ghazi's army to the village of Hab and coming to the aid of Roger the Leper of the crusader fortress of Zerdana, Baldwin met Il-Ghazi in a confused battle, which had no clear victory although both sides claimed one. Revealing the widely held belief in the power of their holy relic, Fulcher of Chartres attributed their victory to

¹⁴⁹ Fulcher of Chartres III, 7, 231.

the presence of the True Cross, which they had brought with them.¹⁵⁰ Baldwin retired to Antioch for the autumn and after collecting Morphia and their daughters from Edessa, spent Christmas back in his kingdom at Bethlehem with his family and court. Morphia was crowned queen at this time alongside him.¹⁵¹ Once back home in Jerusalem, he turned his attention to governing and the church, so on January 16, 1120, he and Patriarch Warmund called the Council of Nablus.

The Council of Nablus was attended by most of the important ecclesiastical and secular office holders in the Latin Kingdom.¹⁵² The Council was really a general assembly with religious and lay participants that would have been typically held in all medieval kingdoms to decide matters of general interest.¹⁵³ The first three of the twenty-five canons granted the patriarch control over ecclesiastical tithes which had been withheld by Baldwin I and his barons up until this time in Jerusalem, Nablus, and Acre. However, they established that the patriarch and bishops would have to spend this income in the diocese or area in which it had been collected and that landlords not tenants would pay them. The rest of the decrees declared penalties for homosexual behavior, bigamy, adultery, sexual relations with male or female Muslims, theft, and other criminal acts. Mayer believes that the penalties must have functioned as severe deterrents but their origins stemmed from Byzantine law codes dating as far back as the eighth century, which suggests that the Latin ecclesiastics were familiar with and consulted the legal manuscripts that would have been in the possession of the Greeks in Antioch and

¹⁵⁰ Fulcher of Chartres III, 5, 229.

¹⁵¹ Fulcher of Chartres III, 6, 232.

¹⁵² WT XII, 13, 535-6.

¹⁵³ See Mayer, "The Concordat of Nablus," 531-2, which examines the Latin Kingdom's involvement with the issues that were raised by the Investiture Contest including royal or baronial control over tithes.

Jerusalem.¹⁵⁴ The Nablus list of laws reveals the uncertainty about these issues and an absence of any uniform standard, which was then rectified.¹⁵⁵

For Baldwin II, taking care of the kingdom's affairs included extending support and patronage to some of the important institutions of the Church because of the vital role they played in helping him govern the kingdom. His motives were both religious and political. He may also have felt that he should be generous to the church because during his accession to the throne, Patriarch Arnulf had given him strong support. In 1120, he turned his attention to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Abbey of Jehoshaphat, and the military orders and they all benefited from his support. Due to four years of bad harvests and famine, he exempted the Patriarch, the Holy Sepulcher's canons, and the citizens of Jerusalem from paying the customary sales and purchase taxes on fruits, vegetables and other produce coming in through the city's gates.¹⁵⁶ He confirmed the Abbey's possessions under Abbot Gelduin confirmed by his predecessor Baldwin I with the consent of the Patriarch Warmund and his barons assembled for the Council of Nablus.¹⁵⁷ He confirmed the possessions of the Knights of St. John too. In December 1120, he reconfirmed the donation confirmation given by his predecessor Baldwin I to the Hospitallers in June 1112.¹⁵⁸

Toward the end of his reign, Baldwin II reconfirmed all of the Hospital's possessions again from Jerusalem in 1129.¹⁵⁹ He was also a very generous patron to the Knights Templar. William of Tyre relates that "the king and his nobles, as well as the

¹⁵⁴ Mayer, *Crusades*, 74; and for an excellent edition of and examination on the origins of the Nablus canons in Byzantine law see Kedar, "On the Origins of the Earliest Laws of Frankish Jerusalem," 310-335.

¹⁵⁵ Mayer, *Crusades*, 74-75.

¹⁵⁶ RRH 91; Mayer, *Crusades*, 74.

¹⁵⁷ RRH 90.

¹⁵⁸ RRH 90a.

¹⁵⁹ RRH 130.

patriarch and the prelates of the churches, also provided from their own holdings certain benefices, the income of which was to provide these knights with food and clothing. Some of these gifts were for a limited time, others in perpetuity.”¹⁶⁰ These grants were given to the knights with their main duty to protect the pilgrims and the roads. The patriarch and the bishops guaranteed the remission of their sins.

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher benefited from his gifts and attentions later in his reign too, although for a few years Baldwin II’s relationship with the patriarchate was bitter. Baldwin II battled with Patriarch Stephen who succeeded Warmund in 1128. Stephen had at once revived the question of the agreement that Godfrey had made with Patriarch Daimbert granting Jerusalem and Jaffa to his Church. Stephen claimed Jaffa as the autonomous possession of the patriarchate. Baldwin refused to listen to these demands and their relationship deteriorated until Stephen’s sudden death in 1130. Earlier in 1125, he had given the Holy Sepulcher the village of Derina, near Tyre, over the site of a great spring. The village collected the water and had a garden between its walls.¹⁶¹

Later and toward the end of his reign in March 1129, he gave the Church of the Holy Sepulcher the village of Cafermelich, except for the villagers Romanus of Puy had earlier transferred to another village in the area near Nablus called Betheflori. This donation charter is very important because Baldwin gave Melisende a prominent place in it, *Milisenda, filia Regis, hoc laudat et consentit*. Mayer proposes that this indicates that Baldwin considered Melisende his heir well before Fulk arrived to be her husband.¹⁶² He declares his intentions by having her appear at the top of the witness list before all of the

¹⁶⁰ WT XII, 7, 525.

¹⁶¹ RRH 109.

¹⁶² Mayer, “Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem,” 99.

other ecclesiastical and secular dignitaries.¹⁶³ Baldwin gave the village to the Holy Sepulcher to compensate for and end a payment of 1000 measures of wheat a year from the royal estates of Nablus that had been granted to the canons by his predecessor. Later in that same year, seeing that onerous customs at the port of Acre had grown up which placed heavy burdens on the pilgrims there, Baldwin at the request and admonition of Patriarch Stephen, relieved the pilgrims of paying taxes at all the gates. He gave the Church of the Holy Sepulcher some of these tax revenues in memory of and for the souls of his predecessor Baldwin I and for his own wife Morphia.¹⁶⁴ Morphia's consent was never required or mentioned in her husband's charters and there are no surviving charters issued by her. Sometime between 1130 and August 1131 when he died, Baldwin confirmed the above grant in a charter witnessed in the presence of Melisende and her new husband Fulk.¹⁶⁵ Melisende's presence would seem to indicate that Baldwin intended his daughter to rule jointly with her husband as reigning queen. If he had expected her to be restricted to her mother's role as queen consort, her presence would not have been required (only Fulk's) and there would have been no reason to establish a precedent.

Baldwin II's charters of a confirmation and a grant to the Abbey of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat uphold the above ideas about his intentions regarding Melisende. In 1129, he gave the Abbey and Abbot Gelduin and his successors a village named Bestella, near Tyre, with all its appurtenances in the same manner as another village named Sardanas, situated near the same city, with the exception of a small piece of land that kept for himself, which was situated between the mountain and his orchard. He made this

¹⁶³ RRH 121.

¹⁶⁴ RRH 125.

¹⁶⁵ RRH 137.

donation too for the souls and memories of Baldwin I and his wife Morphia. Morphia had been buried there at the shrine church when she died. Baldwin must have thought it appropriate for his wife and queen to be buried at the place that celebrated Mary, the most holy woman in Christendom and queen in heaven. Melisende witnessed this charter as well, and her name appears at the top of the witness list as Baldwin's designated heir, *filia Regis et regni Jerosolimitani haeres*.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ RRH 137a, C. Kohler, ed., "Chartes de L'Abbaye de Notre-Dame de la Vallee de Josaphat en Terre-Sainte (1108-1291)," *Revue de l'Orient Latin*, 1900, 7: 108-122.

Chapter Three: Melisende's Reign

In order to try to understand Melisende's accomplishments during her reign, the activities of the queens who preceded her must be examined and evaluated. These women would have had a direct influence on Melisende's actions and how her subjects would have received them. Her female predecessors, Arda¹⁶⁷, Adelaide, and Morphia, the first queens of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, however, are very mysterious. In fact, the chronicles and sources only offer brief and tantalizing glimpses about all of the kingdom's queens, including Melisende. None of their own words have been recorded or preserved so we know very little about them or their relationships. They lived in Jerusalem and from there managed the royal affairs and household when the kings were called away for military campaigns. Because hardly a year passed by in the history of the kingdom without some major campaign or battle, the chroniclers mostly focused on the men who fought them and not on the actions of the women who worked with and for them behind the scenes. As a result, historians do not know much about the lives of any of the women living in the Holy Land during the twelfth century, although the queens are the best documented of them all.

Judith Herrin has recently tackled this issue in her well-received biographies of the eighth and ninth-century Byzantine Empresses Irene, Euphrosyne, and Theodora.¹⁶⁸ Nothing recorded by them in their own words has been preserved either. She writes that their "characters have to be built up from what is recorded *about* them, yet all the

¹⁶⁷ Arda is the name used for Baldwin I's second wife and queen of Jerusalem by Bernard Hamilton. I am using it too because others have used it and because it is convenient, however, it is not found in any source known to him or me. See Hamilton, "Women in the Crusader States," 144.

¹⁶⁸ Judith Herrin, *Women in Purple: Rulers in Medieval Byzantium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002).

information is filtered through male eyes and preconceived ideas about women.”¹⁶⁹ In her biographies, she admits that she has had to “speculate and make certain assumptions.” But in all cases, she interpreted what was recorded about them “through the context of the female lifecycle of medieval women.”¹⁷⁰ She goes further, by writing unapologetically that,

On this basis I have sometimes stated a case more assertively than the sources may warrant. Where the conditional tense should be repeatedly used, I have often employed the present. While citing the sources and my interpretation of them, I have not stressed the element of guesswork involved in the historical reconstruction. I have used whatever bits of information seemed applicable to bridge the gaps. I am all too aware that my biographies are uneven and patchy, given that so much remains unknown. If this is considered a reason for abandoning the effort to write about Irene, Euphrosyne, and Theodora, then I am guilty of finding them too interesting. I am convinced that such imaginative reconstruction can produce valuable insights into the lives of all medieval women.¹⁷¹

When Dion C. Smythe reviewed Herrin’s book, she described this central concern of the book as the question of “empathy in historical writing.”¹⁷² She positively assessed Herrin’s historical reconstruction and empathetic accounts in her attempts to describe the empresses’ daily lives and feelings, especially during the most tumultuous times in their careers. She believes that Herrin is correct in predicting these women’s emotional responses because denying them would be “pointless” as that would reject aspects of common humanity that we all share, past and present. She admits that according to a “strict construction of historical method,” and due to the dearth of sources, the entire histories of these women could not be written. However, they should be done with

¹⁶⁹ Herrin, 259.

¹⁷⁰ Herrin, 261.

¹⁷¹ Herrin, 262.

¹⁷² Book review by Dion C. Smythe of Judith Herrin, *Women in Purple: Rulers in Medieval Byzantium* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), *The Medieval Review*, 03.12.13, <<http://www.hti.umich.edu/t/tmr/>>.

Herrin's "imaginative reconstruction" because "the feminist tradition, drawing and modifying the *Annales* tradition, shows that it is possible and indeed necessary to write such historical analysis if our histories are to be in any way complete." Herrin's book demonstrates the advantages in broadening our strict constructions of method. With the use of empathy, we can more closely evaluate medieval women's lives and assess gender-based allocations of power as well as the cultural depreciation of women and their activities.

The use of "empathy" will be of some value in this attempt to understand the lives of the crusader queens in the Holy Land, especially Melisende's. Understanding her reign is absolutely necessary if the history of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem is to be complete in any way. Unlike the others, as queen regnant of the kingdom from 1131 to 1152, she had real power, formal and informal, and authority or the "socially sanctioned right to make decisions binding on others."¹⁷³ Yet there have been very few attempts made by historians to understand how she ruled and why she did the things she did because the evidence is so scarce. Traces of Melisende's life and reign have survived up to today and therefore historians are obligated to try to understand them. As Rachel Fulton has recently written in her important book *From Judgment to Passion, Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200*, "...to refuse the interpretive leap into the past (as Freud and many others after him have repeatedly insisted we should) is not only hermeneutically but also historiographically presumptive, not to say naïve. It is to presume that we as historians have no access whatsoever to the emotions of love, fear, pity, compassion, pride, and remorse that motivated the productions of these traces; it to

¹⁷³ Mary Erler and Maryanne Kowaleski, eds. "Introduction," in *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1988), 2.

presume that human beings of the historical past are (were) so irredeemably “Other” that there is no possibility of empathy in our encounter with them other than of the most reductive kind (for example, through their social, political, and legal forms, or through their money).”¹⁷⁴ Unfortunately, there are no other women who ruled as she did during her time and therefore, no medieval women’s lives with real experience from which to draw parallels from, although comparisons between Melisende and the other women of her day that ruled and wielded power as consorts and regents will be valuable, especially those in the West. But this examination of her reign and patronage will make use of a modified theory of “empathetic reconstruction,” one that will put forth ideas and suppositions based on the evidence regarding her reign in conditional language. One can never be absolutely certain about another’s feelings because feelings as well as emotions are naturally unpredictable. However, by filling in some of the blanks with aspects of empathy through shared human experience, one can be fairly sure that one is close to her motives and intentions and therefore trying to understand them and the circumstances of her reign from the surviving evidence is not a futile exercise.¹⁷⁵ The evidence, from the chronicles and royal charters, will be evaluated for all that they suggest as well as what they say.

Melisende’s Predecessors: the Early Queens

Since Duke Godfrey never married, the kingdom’s first queen was Arda, Baldwin I’s second wife. His first wife Godehilde, who was from England, had accompanied her

¹⁷⁴ Rachel Fulton, *From Judgment to Passion: Devotion to Christ and the Virgin Mary, 800-1200* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 2-3.

¹⁷⁵ These comments reflect observations regarding empathy, feelings, and intentionality made by Dr. Timmie Vitz from New York University during a private discussion we held on the occasion of a lecture given by Jaroslav Folda entitled “Multiculturalism in Crusader Art,” on November 4, 2004.

husband on the First Crusade but died along the way at Marasch, in October 1097, before the army reached Antioch.¹⁷⁶ Arda was the daughter of the Armenian prince Thoros, the brother of Constantine the Roupenian. The Armenians were the only native Christians in the Holy Land that had a noble class with daughters who would make suitable wives for the crusade's princes and barons. The marriage probably took place after Baldwin came to Edessa. Arda was an only child and may have been a potentially wealthy heiress; she was promised a dowry of 60,000 bezants, which would have made her a very attractive marriage candidate. Baldwin would have desperately needed the money to defend his new county of Edessa, and Arda's father would have been a valuable ally. William of Tyre wrote that Thoros "had impregnable fortresses in the vicinity of Mt. Taurus and large forces of brave men. Because of their wealth and immense power, these lords were regarded as the kings of this people."¹⁷⁷

When Baldwin was summoned in 1100 to Jerusalem to become king after the death of his brother, he traveled south from Edessa overland on hazardous roads. Arda and the women of her entourage, who had accompanied him to Antioch, waited there, probably as Tancred's guests, for a ship to take them south to Jaffa. The chroniclers don't mention her as present at the church in Bethlehem when Baldwin was crowned there on Christmas day. By 1101, she had arrived in Jaffa and was still staying there in September while her husband and the crusader army fought the fierce Battle of Ramla. According to Fulcher of Chartres and William of Tyre, she was in Jaffa when she heard the false rumor that Baldwin had been killed in the fighting. At that point, she took

¹⁷⁶ WT X, 1, 415; Hamilton, "Women in the Crusader States," 144.

¹⁷⁷ WT X, 1, 416; Hamilton, "Women in the Crusader States," 144.

charge and sent a message to Antioch, asking Tancred for help.¹⁷⁸ Not long after she eventually arrived in Jerusalem, however, Baldwin repudiated her and sent her to the convent of St. Anne. In an imaginative story, Guibert of Nogent wrote that the queen was kidnapped and raped by pirates on her voyage south and gave that as the reason for Baldwin's actions:

But since the charge has been spread about that the king repudiated his wife, here is what is said about it. His wife was descended from the finest pagans in the land, and in obedience to him, she followed her husband to Jerusalem, arriving by ship at the port of Saint-Simeon. There she was transferred to a faster ship, in an attempt to make the trip more quickly, but she was brought by unfavorable winds to a certain island inhabited by Barbarians. The islanders seized her, killed a bishop of her retinue, together with some other officials, and, after holding her captive for some time, finally released her. When she reached her husband, the king, suspicious, and not unreasonably, of the Barbarians' sexual incontinence, banished her from his bed, changed her mode of dress, and sent her to live with other nuns in the monastery of Anne, the blessed mother of the virgin mother of God.¹⁷⁹

Although some people spoke of her infidelity, William of Tyre related that Baldwin took this action to make a more advantageous marriage.¹⁸⁰ Fulcher of Chartres, who was Baldwin's chaplain and would have offered the closest perspective and the most reliable opinion, unfortunately remained silent about the reasons for Arda's dismissal in his chronicle. Bernard Hamilton believes that Fulcher's silence "implies that the king's action was criticized, and circumstantial evidence suggests that Baldwin's motives were political rather than moral: the marriage to a Roupenian princess which had been politically advantageous to him as count of Edessa was valueless to him as king of Jerusalem; the bride's father had only paid a fraction of the dowry; and the queen was

¹⁷⁸ Fulcher of Chartres II, 14, 161; WT X, 18, 441.

¹⁷⁹ Guibert de Nogent, *Gesta Dei per Francos*, bk 7, ch 48, in *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Historiens Occidentaux IV* (Paris, 1844), p. 259; Robert Levine, trans., *The Deeds of God through the Franks: a Translation of Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos* (Woodbridge, UK: The Boydell Press, 1997), 164.

¹⁸⁰ WT IX, 1, 462.

still childless after several years of marriage.”¹⁸¹ Whatever his reasons might have been, the evidence indicates that Baldwin preferred to be single despite the pressures on him to provide an heir for the kingdom.¹⁸²

Baldwin’s marriage to Arda was not annulled, but her status as queen was denied after she was forced into the convent. As mentioned above, she soon left for Constantinople and did not return. After spending at least seven or eight years separated from his wife and living on his own, by 1112, Baldwin was ready to be persuaded to propose to Adelaide, the wealthy countess of Sicily and mother of Roger II, even though the marriage would clearly be bigamous. The Patriarch Arnulf and barons of the High Court must have been convinced that Baldwin’s former marriage could be overlooked due to the pressing financial needs of the kingdom, which would be alleviated by Adelaide’s rich dowry.

Adelaide was Italian, the daughter of the Marquis Manfred, who was the brother of Boniface del Vasto of Savona. Upon her husband Roger I’s death in 1101, she ruled as regent of Sicily for about eleven years until her son came of age in 1112. She apparently ruled well, relying mostly on ministers chosen from the native Arab or Greek Sicilians instead of the unruly and untrustworthy Norman barons. She also moved the government and court to Palermo, which was a very cosmopolitan, Muslim city, signifying her trust in and dependence on her Arab subjects.¹⁸³ Recently freed of her duties as regent in 1112, she could consider Baldwin’s proposal. She, of course, as mentioned above, made conditions that Baldwin was forced to accept, which included

¹⁸¹ Hamilton, “Women in the Crusader States,” 145.

¹⁸² See also Hans E. Mayer, “Études sur l’histoire de Baudouin Ier roi de Jérusalem,” in *Mélanges sur l’histoire du royaume latin de Jérusalem* (Paris: 1983), 73-91, for Baldwin’s marital problems and possible homosexuality.

¹⁸³ John Julius Norwich, *The Normans in the South, 1016-1130* (London: Solitaire Books, 1967), 280-284.

assurances that their future child would succeed to the throne of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and that if they produced no children, her son Roger II would become the next king. The king's negotiators agreed, and Adelaide set sail for the East, outfitted by her son. William of Tyre wrote,

The ships were loaded with grain, wine, oil, and salt meat, and equipped with armed men and splendidly mounted knights. The countess carried with her an immense sum of money and, followed by all her belongings, arrived in our land, as has been related.... [I]t is impossible to deny that she was misled, since, in the simplicity of her character, she supposed that the king was in a position to marry her legally. But this was far from the fact, for the wife whom he had legitimately married at Edessa was still living. After the countess had landed, the promises and oaths were renewed, in the same form as had previously been employed in Sicily, in the presence of the king, the patriarch, and the principal men of the realm.¹⁸⁴

Baldwin welcomed her with great ceremony at Acre: "The king, informed of his illustrious lady's arrival, went down to the port with all the princes of his kingdom and the members of his court, magnificently and variously clothed; he was surrounded by all his royal pomp, followed by his horses and his mules covered with purple and gold, and accompanied by his musicians sounding trumpets and playing on all kinds of instruments to delight the ear. So the king received the Princess as she descended from the vessel. The open spaces were strewn with beautiful carpets of many colors, and the streets were swathed with purple in honor of the great lady, herself mistress of such abundance."¹⁸⁵ As time passed, however, and Adelaide didn't conceive, it became more and more likely that Roger would inherit the kingdom and join it to Sicily. This situation was dreaded by many of the kingdom's barons, who backed out of their previous course of action to

¹⁸⁴ WT XI, 21, 496-7.

¹⁸⁵ Albert of Aix, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, Recueil des Historiens des Croisades, Historiens Occidentaux 4 (Paris, 1879), bk. XII. Translation found in Norwich, *Normans in the South*, 288.

attack the marriage-settlement by leveling accusations at Patriarch Arnulf for simony, concubinage, and blessing Baldwin's second marriage while his first wife was still alive and well and with her family in Constantinople after having left Jerusalem to visit them.¹⁸⁶ In Rome, Pope Paschal II intervened and Arnulf managed to clear himself of all the charges but the last. In July 1116, the pope reinstated Arnulf to the patriarchate on the condition that he separate Baldwin and Adelaide.¹⁸⁷

Baldwin was convinced to end his relationship with Adelaide during a serious illness that winter that produced in him a mood of repentance and fear of damnation. Adelaide must have felt angry and humiliated when her marriage to Baldwin was annulled by a church synod held in Acre in 1117. Robbed of her dignity and the dowry she had brought, she sailed back to Sicily. Apparently she vowed to build churches to St. Anne and to the Blessed Virgin Mary if she returned safely, and she fulfilled this vow before she died on April 16, 1118.¹⁸⁸ Her son Roger never forgave his mother's humiliation and the denial of his rights to the Kingdom of Jerusalem's throne. Some fifty years later, William of Tyre regretted that:

Her son was angered beyond measure, because she had been sent back. He conceived a mortal hatred against the kingdom and its people. Other Christian princes in various parts of the world, either by coming in person or by giving liberal gifts, have amplified and promoted our infant realm. But he and his heirs to the present time have never become reconciled to us to the extent of a single friendly word. Although they could have relieved our necessities by counsel and aid far more easily than any other prince, yet they have always remembered their wrongs and have unjustly avenged upon the whole people the fault of a single individual.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁶ Hamilton, "Women in the Crusader States," 146.

¹⁸⁷ de Rozière 11, pp. 11-13.

¹⁸⁸ Hamilton, "Women in the Crusader States," 147; Delaborde 20, pp. 38-40.

¹⁸⁹ WT XI, 29, 514. In their translation (footnote 99), Babcock and Krey note that William must have written this passage before 1174; later he wrote in Book XIX about the naval expedition sent by Sicily to aid in the conquest of Egypt.

Melisende's mother Morphia was the Latin Kingdom's next queen. She had married Baldwin of Le Bourg before 1103, just after he succeeded his cousin as Count of Edessa. He would have benefited from this marriage just as his predecessor had through his marriage to Arda. Morphia's wealthy father Gabriel gave her a dowry of fifty thousand bezants and aided Baldwin with more money on at least one other occasion. Once, when Baldwin couldn't afford to pay his men for their service and duties he staged an encounter with some of them in his father-in-law's presence. Gabriel felt compelled to step in and pay the debt of thirty thousand gold bezants.¹⁹⁰ Gabriel was the Duke of Malatia or Melitene and he had the kind of power and connections that would have been invaluable to the new count Baldwin in a foreign land. The marriage appeared to be happy because it endured long after Morphia failed to accomplish two of the most important requirements of a medieval prince's wife. As Bernard Hamilton observes, "her father's principality was conquered by the Turks soon after her marriage, so that no long-term political advantage accrued to her husband from the match; and she failed to produce a male heir."¹⁹¹ At the time Baldwin became king of Jerusalem, Morphia had given birth to their three daughters Melisende, Alice, and Hodierna and was pregnant again. To her husband's disappointment, she gave birth to their fourth daughter Ivette soon after.

Morphia apparently did not play an obvious role in the political or religious affairs in the kingdom because her name is never associated with or her consent requested in her husband's charters that have survived. We know something of her capabilities in taking charge of the kingdom on only one occasion. When Nur-ad Daulah Balik took

¹⁹⁰ WT X, 24, 450 (footnote 47); WT XI, 11, 478-481.

¹⁹¹ Hamilton, "Women in the Crusader States," 147.

Baldwin II prisoner in 1123, Matthew of Edessa reported that the emir died soon after. Morphia and Count Joscelin of Edessa made a pact with his successor the prince Timurtash, the son of Il-Ghazi, to ransom the king in 1124. "They agreed to hand over as hostages the king's daughter [Ivette] and Joscelin's son, together with fifteen other persons. The ransom itself was set at one hundred thousand *dahekans*. So in the month of September, King Baldwin was delivered from captivity at the hands of the Turks. He arrived in Antioch, and on that day there was much rejoicing among the Christian faithful."¹⁹²

Although the exact year of Morphia's death is unknown, the day October 1 is known and recorded in the *Melisende Psalter* as a day of remembrance.¹⁹³ She died sometime in 1128 or before, because in his charter to give tax relief to the pilgrims of Acre, Baldwin II gave the village of Cafermelich to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher for her soul and that of his predecessor Baldwin I in March 1129 and made gifts of tax revenues also in that year to the Holy Sepulcher for the same purpose.¹⁹⁴ Morphia was buried in the shrine church of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat, which marks the site of the Virgin Mary's empty tomb outside Jerusalem. For her soul and memory, Baldwin II gave the Abbey of Jehoshaphat and its Abbot Gelduin and his successors a village named Bestella near Tyre also in 1129.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² Matthew of Edessa, *Armenia and the Crusades, Tenth to Twelfth Centuries: The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, Ara Edmond Dostourian, trans., (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1993), 232-3.

¹⁹³ *Melisende Psalter*, London, British Library, Egerton MS 1139; Buchthal, *Miniature Painting*, 125-6.

¹⁹⁴ RRH 121, 125.

¹⁹⁵ RRH 137a.

Melisende and Fulk: Queen and King

The evidence for the lives of the Latin Kingdom's early queens reveals very little about their roles and the examples they may have set for Melisende. As her father's heir and reigning queen, however, her role would be very different from the women who ruled before her as royal consorts. Baldwin II's intention for his daughter to rule the kingdom's affairs with her husband as an equal is made obvious by the end of his reign when she began to be associated with him in the official charters. In 1118, when he became king and his fourth daughter Ivette was born, Baldwin must have faced the distinct possibilities that Morphia would give him no sons and that his eldest daughter would be his hereditary heir. In the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, women generally enjoyed equal rights of inheritance to men. In the absence of male heirs, the eldest daughter had the same rights as the eldest son to inherit fiefs. In the Holy Land, the female right to inherit included the crown, which was rare in Europe.¹⁹⁶ The only precedents for female succession to the throne in the West were two of Melisende's near contemporaries, Urraca, the daughter of King Alphonso of the kingdom of León-Castilla, whose turbulent reign lasted from 1109-1126, and Empress Matilda, daughter and intended heir of Henry I of England in 1128, although she lost the crown to Stephen of Blois in 1135, and was never able to take it away from him during the war of the Norman succession. As Marjorie Chibnall, Empress Matilda's biographer, has observed, "the early twelfth century was a time when rules of succession in most Western kingdoms

¹⁹⁶ Sylvia Schein, "Women in Medieval Colonial Society: The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem in the Twelfth Century" in *Gendering the Crusades*, Susan B. Edgington and Sarah Lambert, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 144.

were still sufficiently fluid for the possibility of female succession to be a live issue if direct male heirs failed.”¹⁹⁷

Melisende’s life can be divided easily into four periods. The first, from her birth to 1131, encompassed her childhood, adolescence, first two years of marriage to Fulk of Anjou, and the birth of her first son, the future Baldwin III. The second period, which began in 1131 when Melisende and Fulk are crowned co-rulers of the kingdom, included the birth of her second son Amalric, and lasted until 1143, the year of Fulk’s death. The third period was defined by her widowhood and co-rule with her son, however, she ruled mostly without allowing for his real involvement until she was overthrown by him in 1152. During the fourth and last period of her life, she was retired from governing the kingdom but remained politically active until her death in 1161.

During the first period of her life, Melisende was raised and educated to rule the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Although there is no evidence of her early life, she was most likely raised in her parent’s household, and her mother would have overseen her early care, protection, and learning. It is to be expected that, as Baldwin II’s heir, she would have received a unique education at the Frankish courts of Edessa and Jerusalem. The courts were a reflection of European royal courts (mostly French) with many Eastern influences from the environment of the Holy Land. The crusaders would have enjoyed Oriental spices in their European recipes and bathed much more often than their relatives back in the West. The Frankish women wore eastern fabrics like silk, taffeta, brocade, cotton, wool, and gossamer muslins, but the cut and style of the dresses remained European.¹⁹⁸ Melisende was most likely fluent in French and Greek and probably learned

¹⁹⁷ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 1.

¹⁹⁸ Praver, *World of the Crusaders*, 87.

Armenian from her mother. She would have been taught to read and write in Latin and perhaps Greek as well. She was raised as a Catholic with allegiance to Rome but had a warm regard for the Greek Orthodox faith of her mother. She would have been expected to attend and participate in the masses and spiritual observances during the religious holidays and other holy festivities in the kingdom. The *Melisende Psalter* reveals some of the saints she might have favored in her private prayers of veneration, which include St. John the Baptist, St. Michael, St. Peter, the Virgin Mary, St. Mary Magdalene, and St. Agnes, and others.¹⁹⁹ As a young girl, she would have learned about the history and circumstances of her kingdom and her future responsibilities. She would have also learned how to prepare for a married life with a husband selected by her parents and her vassals, the most influential men of the kingdom, to be their future king. She would have spent her days sewing, weaving, and spinning because working with textiles was an important aspect of female elite education in the twelfth century.²⁰⁰ Her parent's household would have been waited on by male and female servants from the East, both Muslim and Christian, so she would have had intimate contact with members of the native population.

In the spring of 1129, Count Fulk V of Anjou landed at Acre. William of Tyre wrote, "By the unanimous advice of all the princes, both ecclesiastical and secular, the king had invited him hither to wed the lady Melisende, his eldest daughter. He came attended by an honorable retinue of nobles and with a magnificence and pomp which

¹⁹⁹ *Melisende Psalter*; and Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 147-151.

²⁰⁰ For a discussion of the importance of marriage in the early lives of women in France and England in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, see Fiona Harris Stoertz, "Young Women in France and England, 1050-1300," *Journal of Women's History* 12, 4 (Winter 2001): 28.

surpassed that of kings.”²⁰¹ Barely forty and arriving in the Holy Land to succeed Baldwin II, he was extremely well qualified for the job, and he brought prestige to the Jerusalem dynasty. He had been the powerful count of Anjou, Tourraine, and Maine at home in Europe and was an experienced political and military leader.²⁰² As a young man, he had married Eremberge, the daughter of Hélié, Count of Maine, who had given him two sons and two daughters. Before leaving for the Holy Land, he had left his lands to his eldest son Geoffrey and his new wife Matilda, the daughter of King Henry I of England and former wife and Empress of the Holy Roman Emperor Henry V. This was not his first trip to the Kingdom of Jerusalem. In 1120, he had made a pilgrimage to the holy city and maintained one hundred knights for a year at his own expense to serve in the Latin Kingdom before returning home. He had thus been widely admired by the barons there and was an excellent choice by the High Court to be Melisende’s husband. Regarding the timing and evidence, it is possible to speculate that Fulk and Melisende may even have met at that time. His half-sister Cecelia was also living in the Holy Land. Fulk’s mother Bertrada had had a famous affair with King Philip I of France and bore him two sons and a daughter. Cecelia had been married to Tancred, prince of Antioch, and after his death to Pons, count of Tripoli.

Melisende and Fulk’s marriage was celebrated in early June 1129, and at that time her father the king endowed them with the cities of Acre and Tyre to be held during his lifetime.²⁰³ Through Melisende, the status of heir to the throne was transmitted to Fulk.

²⁰¹ WT XIII, 24, 38.

²⁰² Fulk also had been a patron of Abbey of la Trinité-de-Vendôme, which carried on the tradition of Angevin support for the abbey. See Penelope D. Johnson, *Prayer, Patronage, and Power: the Abbey of la Trinité, Vendôme, 1032-1187* (New York: New York University Press, 1981), 73.

²⁰³ Melisende’s parents were married sometime between the years 1101 and 1103. At the time of her wedding, she could not have been older than twenty-six or twenty-seven.

Their marriage must have been a grand occasion of celebration in the kingdom, and all of the important barons and churchmen would have been present. Melisende's mother was dead by this time, but her sisters and the other ladies of the court would have helped her dress and prepare. Within a few months of the wedding, Melisende became pregnant with the couple's first child and heir, the future Baldwin III, who was born in 1130.

Early in 1130, Melisende's sister Alice was widowed when her husband, Bohemund II, the young prince of Antioch, was killed defending his lands against Zengi, the atabeg of Aleppo, whose forces had invaded near Cilicia. Alice and Bohemund's daughter Constance was still very young. Vulnerable to further attack and now without their lord, the barons of Antioch sent an appeal to Jerusalem, and Baldwin abruptly left the affairs of the kingdom, presumably in the hands of Melisende and Fulk, and proceeded to Antioch. Alice was frustrated by these developments. Unwilling to give up her power or role in governing Antioch's affairs and perhaps envious of her elder sister's position in Jerusalem, she treacherously appealed to Zengi, the same man whose forces had killed her husband, for a separate peace and his support. According to William of Tyre, "[b]y his aid she hoped to acquire Antioch for herself in perpetuity, despite the opposition of her chief men and the entire people. For Bohemund of happy memory had left an only daughter, who apparently did not stand high in the favor of her mother. Whether she remained a widow or remarried, Alice was determined to disinherit her daughter and keep the principality for herself in perpetuity."²⁰⁴ Her messenger, riding a "snow-white palfrey shot with silver" was intercepted by chance by the royal forces traveling northward and he later confessed the entire plot to her father the king before he was tortured and killed. When the king finally reached the gates of Antioch, Alice

²⁰⁴ WT XIII, 27, 44.

ordered them locked against him and his knights. Alice's plans were thwarted, however, by some of the citizens in Antioch who sent secret messages to Baldwin and arranged for the gates to be unbarred. Defeated, Alice was coaxed out of the citadel to which she had retreated and was persuaded to present herself before her father. Although very angry, Baldwin accepted her surrender and took the city, dismissed her claims as illegitimate, and then banished her to her dower cities Laodicea and Jabala on the coast. According to William of Tyre, Alice's actions and desperate dealings with the enemy had disqualified her from the possibility of serving as regent for her daughter. Leaving Antioch in the hands of the leading barons, Baldwin made them swear an oath to hold the city and its dependencies for his granddaughter Constance and to defend it against another bid from her mother to disinherit her.²⁰⁵

Unfortunately, Baldwin II became very ill upon his return to Jerusalem. Dying, he took off his royal robes and had himself carried to the palace of Patriarch William near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. According to William of Tyre, he then called Melisende, Fulk, and their baby son Baldwin to his bedside in a crowded chamber to comfort him. Making his intentions clear, he indicated his wish for the three to rule jointly, although obviously the baby Baldwin would not become king until he came of age. "To them, in the presence of the patriarch and the prelates of the church and some of the nobles who happened to be present, he committed the care of the kingdom with full

²⁰⁵ WT XIII, 27, 44-45; Thomas Asbridge believes that Alice may have had a realistic claim to power in 1130 as the "question of female power in Antioch was untested." He also thinks that for her to "take power in Antioch and be capable, at least initially, of closing the city to her father, she must have enjoyed quite a high level of support in the immediate aftermath of Bohemund's death." See Thomas Asbridge, "Alice of Antioch: A Case Study of Female Power in the Twelfth Century," in *The Experience of Crusading, Volume Two: Defining the Crusader Kingdom*, Peter Edbury and Jonathan Phillips, eds. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 33.

power. Then, as a devout prince, he bestowed upon them his fatherly benediction.”²⁰⁶ He died on August 21, 1131, and he was mourned with “great pomp and ceremony.” He was buried in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, next to his predecessors at the foot of Mt. Calvary known as Golgatha. On September 14, Holy Cross Day (an important feast day in the crusader kingdom), Fulk and Melisende were “solemnly crowned and consecrated, according to custom, in the Church of the Sepulcher of the Lord, by William, patriarch of Jerusalem, of happy memory.”²⁰⁷ According to William’s description of the coronation of Fulk and Melisende, therefore, both were crowned and anointed as was the kingdom’s custom, conferring a sacred status on them both. In an earlier book of his chronicle, William had used the same words to describe Baldwin II’s coronation ceremony and explained what that meant very clearly: “... he was solemnly anointed and consecrated according to custom. The royal insignia of the diadem was then bestowed upon him....[and] led by the grace of God, Baldwin showed himself a just man, pious and God-fearing. In everything that he undertook he was successful.”²⁰⁸ Since the crowning and anointing of kings and queens was common practice in the West by this time, especially in France, England, and the Holy Roman Empire, it is logical to assume that the crusaders would also expect their monarchs to be crowned and anointed with unction by the patriarchs of Jerusalem.²⁰⁹ Later after Fulk’s death, William reported that the customs of crowning and consecrating continued when Baldwin III “was

²⁰⁶ WT XIII, 28, 46.

²⁰⁷ WT XIV, 2, 51.

²⁰⁸ WT XII, 3, 520.

²⁰⁹ See Marc Bloch, *The Royal Touch: Sacred Monarchy and Scrofula in England and France*, F.E. Anderson, trans., (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973); and also Heather J. Tanner, “Queenship: Office, Custom, or ad hoc? The Case of Queen Matilda III of England (1135-52),” in *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady*, Bonnie Wheeler and John Carmi Parsons, eds. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 133-158, which examines the careers of Matilda and her successor Eleanor of Aquitaine for a discussion of coronation and anointing of 12th-century Western queens.

solemnly anointed, consecrated, and crowned, together with his mother, in the church of the Sepulcher of the Lord.”²¹⁰

Shortly afterwards in Damascus, Baldwin II’s death and Fulk’s succession was recorded by the chronicler Ibn al-Qalanisi: “Baldwin was an old man polished by time and misfortune. He had fallen into the hands of the Muslims but escaped by dint of his celebrated ruses. With his death, the Franj lost their most perceptive politician and their most competent administrator. Royal power fell to the count of Anjou, recently arrived by sea from their country. But his judgment was unsound and his administration ineffective, so the loss of Baldwin plunged the Franj into turmoil and disorder.”²¹¹ That Melisende’s accession is ignored by Ibn al-Qalanisi was expected, as he would not have predicted her role to be very influential in governing the kingdom, but what is striking about his comments is that he had a pretty clear view of the internal strife caused by Fulk’s accession during the first few years of their reign.

During the first year, the barons of Antioch renewed their desire for aid and called on Fulk to act as overlord of the principality. However, upon the death of her father, Alice had hoped the time had become fortuitous to act upon her claims again and frustrate her barons. She found some powerful supporters, perhaps because they feared the ambitions of their new king Fulk in Antioch: William de Sehunna, brother of Guarenton, Pons, Count of Tripoli, and Joscelin the Younger, Count of Edessa.²¹² Pons attacked Fulk and his forces from his fortresses in the vicinity of Antioch (which he received through his marriage to Fulk’s sister Cecelia, who possessed them through her

²¹⁰ WT XVI, 3, 139.

²¹¹ Amin Maalouf, *The Crusades Through Arab Eyes*, Jon Rothschild, trans., (New York: Schocken Books, 1984), 116.

²¹² WT XIV, 4, 54.

dower from Tancred), Arcicanum, and Rugia. In the battle that took place outside Rugia, the King defeated Pons. Although they were eventually reconciled and Pons returned to Tripoli, Fulk remained in Antioch to settle its affairs and prevent any further revolts. William of Tyre neglected further mention of Alice at this point or Fulk's dealings with her but presumably she remained in her dower territories. He did, however, make a remarkable comment about the condition of Fulk's new kingdom at this time. William wrote that Fulk consented to a longer stay in Antioch because "he felt that through the mercy of God his own realm was rejoicing in a state of perfect security, while Antioch, where he was now sojourning, was in great need of a protector."²¹³ William here contrasts the situations in Antioch and the Latin Kingdom and the actions of Alice and Melisende; the illegitimate actions of the younger sister that had thrown Antioch into chaos and the legitimate actions of the elder sister who was ably preserving the security of the Latin Kingdom while her husband was away. William highlights this contrast in order to again demonstrate the sound judgment shown by Baldwin II regarding each of his daughters, especially in his designation of Melisende as co-ruler of the kingdom.

Sometime around 1134, the barons of Antioch asked Fulk to suggest a suitable candidate to marry the princess Constance. After lengthy consideration of many candidates, it was agreed by all to invite Raymond of Poitou to marry her; he was the second son of William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, who had led a small crusade to the Holy Land in 1101. They decided to secretly send a Hospitaller knight named Gerald on this mission to Raymond, who carried with him a letter from the patriarch of Antioch and all of the barons.²¹⁴ The mission was sent secretly to avoid interference by Alice or by

²¹³ WT XIV, 5, 55.

²¹⁴ WT XIV, 9, 59.

Roger II of Sicily, who might have made a claim to Antioch as a first cousin of Bohemund I, and then Fulk returned to Jerusalem.²¹⁵

In 1134, Melisende faced her first political crisis and attack on her authority. As William of Tyre reported it, a “very dangerous disturbance arose. For certain reasons some of the highest nobles of the realm: namely, Hugh, count of Jaffa and Melisende’s cousin, and Roman de Puy, lord of the region of Jordan, are said to have conspired against the lord king.... There arose from causes unknown a serious enmity between the king and Count Hugh. Some said that the king cherished a deep distrust of the count, who it was rumored to be on too familiar terms with the queen, and of this there seemed to be many proofs.”²¹⁶ Although an adulterous affair is improbable, Melisende appeared to be involved as a cause of the dispute. At the court in the presence of the king and an assembly of the nobles, Hugh’s own stepson, Walter of Caesarea, accused him of high treason and conspiracy to kill the king. Declaring himself innocent, Hugh offered to submit to a judgment by the court and participate in a trial by combat. He was then allowed to return to Jaffa with his vassals and supporters. When he failed to appear on the day planned for the ordeal, the court and the assembly of nobles condemned him in his absence as guilty of the charge of treason. Hugh then made a fateful mistake. Appealing for support from outside the kingdom against Fulk, he traveled south to the city of Ascalon, which was still in the hands of the enemy Fatimid Egyptians. After Hugh signed a treaty with them, the Ascalonites raided as far as Arsuf. King Fulk called up the crusader army and laid siege to Jaffa. At this point, Hugh’s supporters deserted

²¹⁵ WT XIV, 9, 59-60.

²¹⁶ WT XIV, 15, 70-1.

him, and his vassals "...abandoned the fiefs which they held from him and wisely betook themselves to the king."²¹⁷

Patriarch William, together with some of the nobles, then made an attempt to arbitrate the conflict between Fulk and Hugh. "After many disputes," these peacemakers determined a lenient punishment of three years' exile for Hugh. While he was away, his possessions would pay off his debts and the king would govern Jaffa. Before Hugh left Jerusalem, however, he was stabbed during a game of dice on the street of the Furriers. Although the assassination attempt was unsuccessful, William related that the people of the kingdom assumed that Fulk had ordered the murder and were outraged at him. Declaring the innocence of the king, the assailant, a Breton knight, swore he had acted on his own initiative in order to gain the king's favor, and he was punished severely.

Melisende evidently was infuriated by these events. William of Tyre maintained that those who had "informed against the count and thereby incited the king to wrath ...were forced to take diligent measures for their safety....Even the king found that no place was entirely safe among the kindred and partisans of the queen. At length, through the mediation of certain intimate friends, her wrath was appeased, and the king finally, after persistent efforts, succeeded in gaining a pardon for the other objects of her wrath."²¹⁸ As both Bernard Hamilton and Hans Eberhard Mayer have concluded, the probable cause for this quarrel between Hugh and Fulk was Fulk's anxiety about his wife's potential power and resentment at sharing power with her, the result of which was his attempt to reduce her status to that of consort and exclude her from authority in order

²¹⁷ WT XIV, 16, 73.

²¹⁸ WT XIV, 18, 76.

to rule without her “knowledge and assistance” during the early years of her reign.²¹⁹ It is highly likely that Fulk or his supporters, in order to justify putting her aside or to at least discredit her abilities and moral leadership, spread the rumors of her alleged adultery with Hugh. Since the early Middle Ages, adultery, usually with a close member of the court or royal household, was the most common accusation made against queens.²²⁰ At issue, was how much influence Melisende would have in governing the kingdom. In fact, during the first five years of their reign, Melisende was not associated with Fulk in any public act or charter. Hugh’s revolt reflected local noble resentment about this in the Latin Kingdom.²²¹ Hamilton maintains that, “Hugh of Le Puiset, who was Melisende’s second cousin, and the only great nobleman of the blood royal in the kingdom, was the natural leader of the queen’s party. There was evidently widespread resentment among some sections of the nobility and the church about the way in which the queen was being treated.... This was not simply a matter of protocol [or loyalty], but also one of patronage: unless the queen had some effective share in the affairs of state she could not reward her supporters with appointments and land.”²²²

Hamilton rightly observes that this was the first time Melisende showed her “considerable powers of initiative.”²²³ She calmly rallied her supporters against Fulk, especially the patriarch of Jerusalem, in order to obtain merciful terms for Hugh, even though his treasonous appeal to the enemy brought on a dangerous attack. When the

²¹⁹ Hamilton, “Women in the Crusader States,” 149-151; Mayer, “Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem,” 106-113.

²²⁰ Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowager*, 82; for an excellent examination of how literary romance representations of adulterous queens are part of the debate about queenship in medieval French culture, see Peggy McCracken, *The Romance of Adultery: Queenship and Sexual Transgression in Old French Literature* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998).

²²¹ Hamilton, “Women in the Crusader States,” 149-151; Mayer, “Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem,” 106-113.

²²² Hamilton, “Women in the Crusader States,” 150.

²²³ Hamilton, “Women in the Crusader States,” 151.

attempt on Hugh's life threatened to dismantle the settlement, she made her displeasure felt and afterward Fulk "became so uxorious that, whereas he had formerly aroused her wrath, he now calmed it, and not even in unimportant cases did he take any measures without her knowledge and assistance."²²⁴ Patriarch William's intervention to obtain lenient terms for Hugh and his supporters indicated the Church's support both for the rebellion and for Melisende.

Why did Patriarch William defend Melisende's hereditary claim to authority in the kingdom? Her father Baldwin II had been an important patron of the Church and had fostered cooperative relationships with most of the patriarchs during his reign. In 1130, Baldwin had nominated William, whom he had known well, for he had been prior of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. According to William of Tyre, Patriarch William was present as a witness a year later during Baldwin's deathbed declaration or will that Melisende would rule with Fulk "in full power," and he was the one who conducted their joint coronation in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Thus William loyally defended his lord the king's intentions and must have hoped that, as queen and heir, Melisende would continue her father's work of patronage and support for him and the Church; her removal from power at this time would have denied her status as her father's designated heir and deprived her of her means of patronage. Baldwin II's last two charters regarding a grant to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher mentioned above that were consented to and witnessed by Melisende were also witnessed by William, first in his capacity as prior of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and second as patriarch.²²⁵ They would have convinced him of Melisende's ability and intention to continue her father's patronage of

²²⁴ WT XIV, 18, 76.

²²⁵ RRH 121; RRH 137.

the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the rest of the Latin Church's organizations. He had good reasons to defend her power and position against Fulk's challenge four years later.

Melisende and Fulk were reconciled sometime before 1136, when their second son Amalric was born. From this time on, Fulk gave the impression that he had accepted the situation in which he shared the crown with Melisende, regularly acknowledging her consent in his official charters for the kingdom.²²⁶ Melisende's involvement in politics began at this time. By 1142, Fulk had also acknowledged their son Baldwin in some of his charters.²²⁷ As a reigning queen who governed with authority in her own right, Melisende had attained a status by this time that no woman in the Latin Kingdom had ever enjoyed and that few in medieval Europe ever had.

In the meantime, Raymond of Poitou had been approached at the court of King Henry I of England, where he had been serving as a knight, by the Hospitaller envoy Gerald from Antioch, who proposed the invitation to marry the princess Constance. Upon the advice of Henry, Raymond accepted the opportunity and after making preparations set out for the Holy Land in disguise to avoid Roger of Sicily's attempts to stop him. In 1136, shortly before Raymond's arrival in Antioch, Alice and her new supporters marched to Antioch for the third time to claim the city as hers to rule. William of Tyre mentioned that this time, however, she had the political support and sympathy of her sister Melisende. "Her sister had interceded with the king not to interfere with her actions, and she [Alice] had the support of certain nobles."²²⁸ It is apparent that Melisende's influence had increased and with it her desire and ambition to see her sister

²²⁶ RRH 164, 174, 179, 181, 210.

²²⁷ RRH 179, 181, 210.

²²⁸ WT XIV, 20, 78.

in power in Antioch as well as her ability to help attain this goal. Fulk deferred to his queen's wishes regarding her sister: perhaps this time he had decided not to get involved (however, he also probably knew that after Raymond was married to Constance, Alice's claim would be ignored). Ralph, the new patriarch of Antioch, however, did get involved. He convinced Alice that Raymond had arrived to marry her. Apparently, he lied to get her favor and influence in his struggle against the clergy of Antioch, who had recently claimed that he had not been canonically elected. Slyly, Ralph abandoned Alice after Raymond later agreed to swear an oath of fealty to him and in return welcomed him into the city and agreed to his marriage to Constance even though she was still well under ten years old. "While Alice still supposed that all the arrangements were being made for her nuptials, he [Raymond] was conducted to the basilica of the Prince of the Apostles and there married to the Lady Constance. The young princess was not yet of marriageable age, but the great nobles all demanded that the marriage take place, and the patriarch himself bestowed the bride upon her husband."²²⁹ Humiliated and finally defeated, Alice was forced to retreat once more to her domain on the coast.

Also in 1136, Fulk and Melisende turned their attention to the south of the kingdom and managed to disburse an enormous amount of money and effort to build a large fortress at the ancient city of Beersheba where there was a great well for water. Called Bethgibelin, it was located strategically at the foot of the mountains overlooking the plains near Ascalon in order to stop the disastrous incursions of the Ascalonites into the kingdom from the south. "All the people in the vicinity were called together; the patriarch William and the nobles also came. Thus the task, well-planned and begun under good auspices, was finished with the help of the Lord. For twelve miles from

²²⁹ WT XIV, 20, 79.

Ascalon they built a strong fortress surrounded by an impregnable wall with towers, ramparts, and a moat.”²³⁰ When it was finished, Fulk gave it to the Knights of St. John, with Melisende and Patriarch William’s consent. With this gift, Fulk and Melisende expected the order to take on important military responsibilities that would grow and become vital to the defense of the kingdom.²³¹

In 1137, Melisende and Fulk were forced to turn their attention to the affairs of Antioch again. In March, Count Pons of Tripoli, was killed in a battle against Baswaj and the army of Damascus that had invaded his lands. Raymond II of Tripoli, his son, succeeded him. In Antioch, rumors, which were in fact true, began to spread that Emperor John II, son of Alexius I, was preparing to invade the land. Based on the agreements the first crusaders had made with his father, William wrote that the Emperor was preparing to invade to assert his rights over Antioch. The barons and clerics in Antioch had not consulted him during the marriage negotiations for Constance and had handed the principality over to Raymond of Poitou without his consent. John II claimed that the first crusaders had sworn that, “whatever cities or fortresses the Christians might by any chance take on that entire campaign should be surrendered without contest to the empire. These, when captured, they had undertaken to guard faithfully to the best of their ability and strength until he should come with his army.”²³² They, in turn, had maintained that, “Alexius, as a vacillating and unstable man, had dealt fraudulently with them and had been the first to break his own pledges. According to the law of treaties, therefore, they rightly claimed that they were released from the pact, ‘For to keep faith

²³⁰ WT XIV, 22, 81.

²³¹ RRH 164.

²³² WT XIV, 24, 83-4.

with one who tries to act contrary to the tenor of a treaty is wrong.”²³³ John II and his imperial army invaded Cilicia, took the famous city of Tarsus, and expelled the loyal subjects to Antioch and replaced them with his own nobles. He then conquered the rest of Cilicia, which had been in crusader hands for forty years, and moved to the walls of Antioch itself on August 29, 1137, where he began to set up massive siege engines at strategic points.

At this critical moment, Zengi attacked and laid siege to the city of Montferrand in Tripoli because it was vulnerable after the death of Pons and many of the county’s soldiers. Count Raymond II sent messengers to ask Fulk for help and he called the Kingdom of Jerusalem’s army together and began to march swiftly to Tripoli’s aid. En route, he received messengers from Antioch and learned of its precarious position. Faced with this “double emergency, the king called a council to consider what course to adopt.”²³⁴ The king and his council of war decided it would be best to relieve Montferrand first so that Tripoli’s forces and his own could join and march together to Antioch. At this point, the situation began to deteriorate. Zengi and his army turned from the siege to face Fulk, Raymond, and the crusader forces, who had taken a path through a mountainous route that left them vulnerable to Zengi’s attack. Fulk and a few of his barons narrowly escaped to a half-ruined fortress nearby, but without much food or water. Raymond was captured. There Fulk, William of Bury, the kingdom’s constable, Renier of Brus, Guy of Brisbar, Baldwin of Ramla, and the young Humphrey of Toron decided to send messengers for aid to Antioch and Edessa, and to summon the patriarch of Jerusalem with all the people of the kingdom, to relieve them. Successfully, the

²³³ WT XIV, 24, 84.

²³⁴ WT XIV, 25, 85.

messengers relayed the king's dire circumstances and Raymond and his knights left Antioch with the emperor at his gates, Joscelin of Edessa and his army also began their march southward to relieve the king, and Patriarch William assembled all the troops left in the kingdom, and armed with the holy relic of the True Cross, left Jerusalem in Melisende's hands, and briefly stopped in the kingdom's main cities and towns collecting reinforcements along the way.²³⁵ By the summer of 1137, the Christian Holy Land was extremely vulnerable, and Baswaj of Damascus saw an incredible opportunity to invade the kingdom. Attacking Nablus, which was an unfortified city in the heart of the Latin Kingdom, he killed most of its citizens and burned the city to the ground after plundering its valuables and taking many slaves.

The situation at Montferrand had grown dire. The king's forces and refugees had eaten all of their supplies and even their horses. The wounded and ill were dying. Before the converging relief forces could arrive, however, Zengi made overtures to Fulk for peace. He offered to free all of the captives and let the king leave if they relinquished the fortress to him. Surprised and unaware that his rescue party was close by, Fulk eagerly agreed and was released. Meeting the army gathered for his relief, he conferred with the leaders before they parted and each returned to his own lands. Raymond of Antioch returned to the critical situation in Antioch and, although the fighting resumed, a settlement was finally arranged. Raymond agreed to swear allegiance and fealty to Emperor John and to swear that whenever John wanted to enter the city, whether in wartime or peace, he would be welcomed. John promised that if he should "peacefully restore Aleppo, Shayzar, Hama, and Hims to the prince, as had been stipulated in the treaty, Raymond was to rest content with these cities and others nearby, and without

²³⁵ WT XIV, 26, 87-88.

contest give back to the emperor the city of Antioch to be held by right of ownership....As soon as the treaty was concluded and peace fully reestablished, the imperial standard was raised over the principal tower of the citadel."²³⁶ John and the Imperial army lingered at Antioch for some time, although they made an unsuccessful attempt to take the city of Shayzar. Before he returned to his own lands, he promised to return with another army to fulfill his part of the agreement that he had made with Raymond.

One of the most interesting developments at this time during Fulk and Melisende's reign was an alliance between Jerusalem and Damascus. Zengi had entered the territory of Damascus with a hostile army and Mu'in ad-Din Unur, the Muslim ruler there, appealed to the crusaders for aid against this common enemy who threatened all of them. Not only did Unur agree to pay for the campaign, but he also promised to restore the city of Banyas, which had been conquered from the Christians some years before but had come to be held by Zengi. He also promised to ensure the treaty with noble hostages, relatives of his army commanders.²³⁷ Fulk and Melisende agreed to the treaty's terms, but not before lengthy deliberations with the barons and clerics in the High Court were held. After the hostages had arrived, Fulk's army marched out to join the Damascenes accompanied by Patriarch William and, although Zengi retreated, the two armies began a fierce siege of Banyas, where the prince of Antioch and the count of Tripoli and their forces joined them as well. The city surrendered in 1140 and keeping his word, Unur handed it over to the crusaders. Patriarch William and Fulcher, archbishop of Tyre, who

²³⁶ WT XIV, 30, 93.

²³⁷ WT XV, 7, 105-6; see also Ibn Al-Qalanisi's description of the alliance between Damascus and the Franks against Zengi in Francesco Gabrielli and E. J. Costello, trans., *Arab Historians of the Crusades* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), 44-48.

was also present chose Adam, the archdeacon of Tyre, to be the city's bishop, and then it was returned to its former Lord Renier de Brus, the constable of the kingdom.

Fulk's death in November of 1143 dramatically altered Melisende's political life and the future of the kingdom's monarchy. Her political power and authority as queen were to grow far beyond that which she had enjoyed after Amalric was born. William of Tyre recorded the circumstances of Fulk's tragic accident. Visiting Acre with Fulk, Melisende had proposed a trip outside the city to a place that had many springs. The king and queen had ridden together with the royal escort and a party of servants. Along the way, the group surprised a hare, which fled from its burrow and aroused shouts and attention. Fulk grabbed his lance, joined the other men in the hunt, and urged his horse on recklessly. Suddenly, his horse stumbled and fell, throwing him onto the ground where his heavy saddle struck his head and crushed his skull. The members of his escort who had joined him in the pursuit rushed to his aid but it was too late. Melisende and the rest of the train caught up quickly and were horrified by the sight. The queen "tore her garments and hair and by her loud shrieks and lamentations gave proof of her intense grief. Flinging herself upon the ground she embraced the lifeless body. Tears failed her through continual weeping; frequent sobs interrupted her voice as she tried to give expression to her grief; nor could she do justice to it, although she cared for naught save to satisfy her anguish. The people of the household also manifested their grief by tears, words, and aspect and gave plain proof of great sorrow."²³⁸ They bore Fulk to Acre, and still unconscious, he died three days later on November 10. He was buried in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher next to his predecessors at the foot of Mt. Calvary. Patriarch William conducted the services. As Fulk and Melisende's son Baldwin was only thirteen

²³⁸ WT XV, 27, 134.

years old at this time and Amalric only ten, “the royal power passed to the Lady Melisende, a queen beloved of God, to whom it belonged by hereditary right.”²³⁹ Thus, Melisende took over the government but, as William of Tyre emphasized, did not do so as regent for her eldest son. Future events would demonstrate that she took up her new role at the death of her husband because she knew it was her responsibility to do so as the kingdom’s reigning queen. Through her unexpected widowhood, she gained an extraordinary amount of independence. She would make the most of it and do whatever she would have to in order to protect it. It is no surprise, then, that she did not remarry, even though the pressure to do so must have been great.

Melisende and Baldwin III: Queen and Son

During the feast of the Nativity, 1143, “Baldwin was solemnly anointed, consecrated, and crowned, together with his mother, in the church of the Sepulcher of the Lord. The ceremony was conducted by William, patriarch of Jerusalem, before the customary assemblage of the princes and all the prelates of the church.”²⁴⁰ Crowned at his mother’s side, he was, however, under the legal age to rule. Melisende was required to rule alone until Baldwin came of age and could rule with her. William of Tyre described Melisende as uniquely qualified to assume this role, as she “was a woman of great wisdom who had had much experience in all kinds of secular matters. She had risen so far above the normal status of women that she dared to undertake important measures. It was her ambition to emulate the magnificence of the greatest and noblest princes and to show herself in no wise inferior to them. Since her son was as yet under

²³⁹ WT XV, 27, 135; William of Tyre, *Historia rerum in partibus transmarinis gestarum*, 702: “reseditque regni potestas penes dominam Melisendem, Deo amabilem reginam, cui jure hereditario competebat.”

²⁴⁰ WT XVI, 3, 139.

age, she ruled the kingdom and administered the government with such skillful care that she may be said truly to have equaled her ancestors in that respect.”²⁴¹ Nevertheless, despite her sacred status and abilities, because she was a woman, she was immediately forced to cope with the limitations of her gender. Alone for the first time, she had the added responsibilities of controlling and administering the crown’s offices and fiefs as well as defending the crusader states from the constant threats of invasion from Zengi and the other neighboring Muslim powers. But as a woman, she could not command the kingdom’s army herself, and so by 1144 she appointed and deputized her cousin Manasses of Hierges, who had recently arrived in the East, as constable of the kingdom. Owing his new prestigious position to her, Manasses would loyally lead the kingdom’s military affairs for her.

The news of Fulk’s death and Melisende’s additional responsibilities spread to the West and must have caused some concern. Writing to Melisende after Fulk’s death, Bernard of Clairvaux sent her his condolences, advice, and support in a letter:

The king, your husband, being dead, and the young king still unfit to discharge the affairs of a kingdom and fulfill the duty of a king, the eyes of all will be upon you, and on you alone the whole burden of the kingdom will rest. You must set your hand to great things and, although a woman, you must act as a man by doing all you have to do “in a spirit prudent and strong.” You must arrange all things prudently and discreetly, so that all may judge you from your actions to be a king rather than a queen and so that the Gentiles may have no occasion for saying: Where is the king of Jerusalem?²⁴²

Despite Melisende’s legitimate authority, Baldwin III was crowned at this time (at his mother’s side instead of alone two years later when he turned fifteen and came of age)

²⁴¹ WT XVI, 3, 139-140.

²⁴² Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Letters of St. Bernard of Clairvaux*, Bruno Scott James, trans., (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1953), 273; and *Epistolae*, in *Patrologia Cursus Completus*, J. P. Migne, ed., vol. 182 (Paris: 1862), no. 354.

because the Latin Kingdom's princes and clerics would have been uncomfortable with a woman on the throne alone no matter how able or qualified she was or even that she had inherited it from her father who had wished it. Women were, of course, considered naturally unfit to rule because the common view at this time was that women lacked the political, intellectual, moral, and virile qualities that men possessed.²⁴³ Even Bernard imagined that to the above question, "Where is the king of Jerusalem?" Melisende would answer with the words "Such things are beyond my power; they are great matters which far exceed my strength and knowledge; they are the duties of a man and I am only a woman, weak in body, changeable of heart, not-farseeing in counsel, nor accustomed to business."²⁴⁴ For Bernard and many other men of his time, clerical and lay, in order to face her responsibilities and overcome the limitations of her gender, Melisende would have to find the strength to act like a man and be both queen and king for her people,²⁴⁵ which included her supporters in the West as well as her subjects in the Holy Land.

St. Bernard wrote many letters of counsel, even reprimand, to the kings of Europe such as King Henry I of England, King Louis VI of France and his son Louis VII, Holy Roman Emperor Lothair, and King David of Scotland in order to win their support for the papacy as well as for the Cistercian brothers and monasteries in each of their kingdoms. He also wrote a short note to Queen Adelaide of France, the wife of Louis VI, in order to beseech her liberality and kindness toward one of her vassals named Wicard, who she

²⁴³ For an examination of twelfth-century attitudes toward powerful women, see Georges Duby, "Women and Power," in *Cultures of Power: Lordship, Status, and Process in Twelfth-Century Europe*, Thomas N. Bisson, ed., (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 70-74.

²⁴⁴ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 273.

²⁴⁵ "Opus est ut manum tuam mittas ad fortia, et in muliere exhibeas virum, agens ea quae agenda sunt in spiritu consilii et fortitudinis. Ita prudenter et moderate oportet te cuncta disponere, ut omnes, qui te viderint, ex operibus regem te potius, quam reginam existiment, ne forte dicant in gentibus: Ubi est rex Ierosolymorum?" Bernard of Clairvaux, *Epistolae*, no. 354.

had driven into exile and deprived of his goods.²⁴⁶ In comparison to these royal correspondences, however, his letters to Melisende, including the one above, were very different in tone and subject matter. In response to her new and daunting circumstances at this time, he showed a warm, sympathetic, and fatherly side of his personality. In 1143 he wrote, “Receive a brief but useful word of advice from a distant land, as a small seed which will bear a great harvest in time. Receive advice from a friend who is seeking your honor and not his own ends. No one can give you more loyal advice than one who loves you and not your possessions.”²⁴⁷ At Fulk’s death, Melisende must have been greatly consoled by her friend’s assurances that God would help her rule. Bernard wrote “I know, my daughter, I know that these are great matters, but I also know that although the raging of the sea is great, the Lord is great in heaven. These are great affairs, but great too is our Lord, and great his power.”²⁴⁸ Unfortunately, since the letters she wrote to him have not survived, it is unknown how she responded to his kindness and advice. His letters do reveal, however, that they had a correspondence that lasted many years and that a bond of friendship had developed between them. In an undated letter probably written before Fulk’s death, Bernard wrote “Men say that I have some influence with you, and many who are to set out for Jerusalem beg me to commend them to your excellency.”²⁴⁹ These words convey the value he placed on this friendship and the respect she paid to him and his associates. In a later letter of 1153, he refers to her well-known affection for him but chides her for neglecting him with the words “I am surprised that I have not had

²⁴⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 95, 141, 133, 143, 172, 210, 122. For a good examination of his letters to women, see chapter two of Jean Leclercq, *Women and Saint Bernard of Clairvaux*, Marie-Bernard Saïd OSB, trans., (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 198), 33-52.

²⁴⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 273.

²⁴⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 273.

²⁴⁹ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 272.

any letter from you or received any of your accustomed greetings for such a long time. I cannot forget your old affection for me which I have put to the proof in so many ways.”²⁵⁰ He ends that letter with another reference to their previous correspondence, “I have given you an opportunity and shall take no excuse of our friendship is not renewed in future by frequent and friendly letters and messages from you.”²⁵¹ His words seem to provide evidence for an affectionate bond of friendship between the two that seems to contradict the ideas long held that Bernard was a friend to men only, that women were not important to him, and that he was anti-women at best.²⁵²

After Fulk’s death, the princes and clerics in the Holy Land would also have favored Baldwin’s coronation at Melisende’s side because of the urgent need for a man on the throne, in order to persuade their enemies that the king’s death had not weakened their leadership or military strength. Melisende and the kingdom’s first challenge was at hand because the crusader lands were all facing a dangerous threat from the still undefeated Zengi, who had laid siege to the city of Edessa “during the interval between the death of King Fulk and the elevation of Baldwin to the throne.”²⁵³ It is very likely that Zengi and the rest of the Muslim world viewed Melisende’s throne in the Latin Kingdom as empty or as if the kingdom was in a period of interregnum. The timing was perfect for the prosecution of a jihad to restore the lands taken by the crusaders back to Islam, and Zengi would be the most successful Muslim warrior to present himself as a leader for such an endeavor.

²⁵⁰ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 274.

²⁵¹ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 274.

²⁵² Brian Patrick McGuire, *The Difficult Saint: Bernard of Clairvaux and his Tradition* (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 30-33.

²⁵³ WT XVI, 4, 140.

By the fall of 1144, Zengi and his forces had blocked Edessa's gates, isolating the city, and the citizens had begun to starve. William of Tyre laid the blame for this catastrophe at the feet of its Count Joscelin II the younger. Leaving the city completely undefended, Joscelin had decided to live in and enjoy the recreation of his fortress Turbessel on the Euphrates. At Turbessel, "he had time for luxurious pleasures of every kind, and he felt no responsibility, as he should have done, for the noble city."²⁵⁴ Joscelin had also allowed a feud between himself and Raymond of Poitou in Antioch that was based on rivalry to reach "the stage of open hatred."²⁵⁵ Unable to attack Zengi alone to save his city, Joscelin appealed to Raymond, but the latter offered only excuses and did not send help. When messengers from Joscelin arrived in Jerusalem with the calamitous news, Melisende immediately called a meeting with her nobles. After the conference, she ordered Manasses, her constable, Philip of Nablus, and Elinandus of Tiberias to march off with a strong army to help Joscelin and the citizens of Edessa.²⁵⁶ Despite Melisende's efforts, the plea for aid had come too late and her army was unable to stop Zengi's forces from capturing the city. On December 26, 1144, the walls fell and many of the citizens of Edessa were slain, and "neither age, condition, nor sex was spared."²⁵⁷

The fall of Edessa was a terrible defeat for the crusaders and their shock and fear were felt also in the West. The response was the proclamation of the Second Crusade on

²⁵⁴ WT XVI, 4, 141.

²⁵⁵ WT XVI, 4, 141.

²⁵⁶ Mayer believes that Melisende did not send Baldwin with them because she was actively discouraging his military ambitions at this time. He also believes that Manasses, Philip of Nablus, and Elinard of Tiberias were Melisende's top supporters and the basis of her power because they were the Latin Kingdom's most powerful crown fief holders. See Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 118-9. For more on the life of Philip of Nablus and his influence due to Melisende's patronage, see Malcolm Barber, "The Career of Philip of Nablus in the Kingdom of Jerusalem," in *The Experience of Crusading, Volume Two: Defining the Crusader Kingdom*, Peter Edbury and Jonathan Phillips, eds. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 60-75.

²⁵⁷ WT XVI, 5, 143.

December 1, 1145, by Pope Eugenius III, through the formal crusade encyclical *Quantum praedecessores*. Melisende's friend St. Bernard of Clairvaux campaigned and recruited for her and her kingdom through his preaching and letters. He called to the kings and nobles of the West to go on another crusade to support and defend Melisende, Count Joscelin, and the crusaders in the Holy Land who needed their help; the king of France and the Holy Roman Emperor took up the cross themselves. Bernard personally blessed the French King Louis VII and his queen Eleanor of Aquitaine at Vézelay on March 31, 1146, and the Emperor Conrad at Speyer on December 25. He "promised that aid from on high and eternal rewards with the elect awaited all who would undertake this pious work," and so, they made their preparations and embarked on what would turn out to be an extremely dangerous overland journey.²⁵⁸

Louis and Conrad each made thorough and collaborative preparations before leaving on their crusade in the spring of 1147. Both wrote to King Géza of Hungary, King Roger II of Sicily, and the Emperor Manuel I of Byzantium, John II's successor, to inform them of their plans and ask for provisions and safe passage. Louis raised a tax in order to finance his preparations, and Conrad fixed bridges and roads to the east in Germany. Both chose to march their large armies on the overland route that Godfrey of Bouillon had used on the First Crusade and agreed to meet in Constantinople before heading to the Holy Land to relieve Edessa. Jonathan Riley-Smith writes that despite these elaborate preparations, they made a "glaring omission. There was no consultation with the Latin rulers in the East: twelve years later Pope Adrian IV was to remind Louis forcefully of this, pointing out the harm that resulted. The only possible explanation is that, although of course they planned to end their crusade with a pilgrimage to Jerusalem,

²⁵⁸ WT XVI, 18, 164.

Louis and Conrad were intending to march directly across Anatolia to Edessa, bypassing even the principality of Antioch.”²⁵⁹ However, another interpretation for this omission must be considered here. The crusade led by the two kings was to recover Edessa if possible, but more importantly, its purpose was also to defend the remaining territories held by the crusaders in order to prevent them from falling to Zengi’s forces too. Their omission in consulting with Raymond of Poitou in Antioch and Queen Melisende in Jerusalem more likely indicates supercilious attitudes toward them.

Louis and Conrad could not have consulted Raymond without consulting Melisende, but perhaps the two kings were reluctant to contact either one of them. According to William of Tyre, Raymond was extremely ambitious and sought only to increase his own holdings in Antioch. He had hatched a plot to seek Louis’ help, especially, in order to enlarge the principality by attacking Aleppo, Shayzar, and other areas of northern Syria in Nur al-Din’s hands, as soon as he heard that he was coming on the crusade. With this in mind, Raymond had sent to Louis in France “a large store of noble gifts and treasures of great price in the hope of winning his favor”²⁶⁰ and planned on enlisting the aid of Louis’ queen Eleanor of Aquitaine, who was his niece and accompanying him on the crusade. It is likely that Louis mistrusted Raymond and as a result refused to promise risking his army or delaying his pilgrimage to Jerusalem solely to further Raymond’s ambitions. In fact, a year later, Louis refused to help him once he arrived in Antioch, and insisted on leaving as soon as possible for Jerusalem to “fulfill his

²⁵⁹ Jonathan Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1987), 98. Pope Adrian IV’s letter to Louis VII in 1159 cautions him against hastily undertaking a crusade in Spain and refers to his previous failure in preparing for the Second Crusade to consult the people in the East, “debet enim serenitatis tuae celsitudo recolere et ad memoriam revocare, qualiter alio tempore, cum tam Conradus bonae memoriae quondam rex Romanorum, quam tu ipse inconsulto populo terrae, Hierosolymitanum iter minus caute aggressi estis...”: See J. P. Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 188, col. 1615.

²⁶⁰ WT XVI, 27, 179.

vows.”²⁶¹ Melisende was probably automatically excluded from Louis and Conrad’s consideration or consultation in the military planning of the crusade because she was a woman, but at least Manasses should have been consulted. As Melisende was still excluding her son from power despite his coming of age, their failure to consult her or her constable in the Latin Kingdom before embarkation probably signals their disregard, and even disapproval, of her reign over the kingdom. It is probable that they viewed her reign as an over-ambitious regency, and may even have blamed her for the loss of Edessa. Although Bernard urged her to be strong and to act like a man in order to be both king and queen for her people, clearly the kings of the West did not see her in this light or as their equal.²⁶² This could have been a result of their likely comparison of her to England’s Matilda, the designated heir of King Henry I and former wife of the German Emperor Henry V, Conrad’s uncle. Both women had inherited the right to rule from their fathers and both had married Angevins, Melisende to Fulk and Matilda to his son Geoffrey. Matilda’s continuing struggle for succession with King Stephen had resulted in anarchy and warfare in England, which both Louis and Conrad had been closely observing for some time, and by 1147, her fortunes were declining.²⁶³ It is likely that Matilda’s war on Stephen affected their attitude toward Melisende, whose fortunes also seemed to be declining with the loss of Edessa as she continued to maintain her right to rule.

Melisende’s attention in the kingdom just before the advent of the Second Crusade was focused on filling the vacancy left by the death of her friend and longtime supporter William, the Patriarch of Jerusalem since 1130, who died on September 27,

²⁶¹ WT XVI, 27, 180.

²⁶² Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 273.

²⁶³ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 88-117.

1145. Consequently, on January 25, 1146, Fulcher, the Archbishop of Tyre, was chosen to take his place. The filling of the vacancy of the archbishopric of Tyre, however, caused a dispute that involved the one and only time Melisende opposed the intention of the patriarchate and risked alienating its support for her authority. Melisende had chosen Ralph, her English chancellor since 1144 for the position, but the bishops of Tyre and Patriarch Fulcher favored someone else.²⁶⁴ The monarchs usually chose and appointed the bishops and archbishops they preferred although it was regular practice for them to take the advice of other bishops regarding the choice of candidates. The elections were formally in the hands of cathedral chapters, however. This was arguably, therefore, a serious challenge to Melisende's authority from her new patriarch. According to William of Tyre, Melisende and the royal court preferred Ralph because he was learned, handsome, and worldly. William reminds us here that Baldwin's role in the dispute was negligible as he refers to Melisende as "on whom the responsibility of the realm and the entire government rested."²⁶⁵ It is arguable that Melisende insisted on her chancellor's appointment in order to guarantee her influence in Tyre and the other bishoprics in the north in Beirut and Sidon. Patriarch Fulcher probably would have felt uneasy about establishing such a precedent so early in his own tenure as patriarch because certainly the combination of the offices of chancellor and archbishopric of Tyre would concentrate a larger amount of church influence in Ralph's and therefore the monarchy's hands. Despite the patriarch's opposition, Ralph took the archbishopric of Tyre by force, relying

²⁶⁴ The most likely candidate supported by the party at Tyre and the patriarch was Peter of Barcelona, the prior of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Peter later became the Archbishop of Tyre by unanimous consent when the dispute was ended. See WT XVI, 17, 163, and Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 126.

²⁶⁵ WT XVI, 17, 162.

on Melisende's political support, and held it until at least 1150.²⁶⁶ It seems clear, however, that Melisende eventually relented and dismissed him from the chancery after July 1147, because this is the last time he drew up a charter during her reign. It is likely that she dismissed him because he had become a political liability as the cause of division in her relationship with the patriarch and the church; she backed down and withdrew her support from Ralph in order to appease Fulcher and insure a good relationship with him for she likely knew that this policy had worked in her favor before and that her political future would depend on her friendship with the patriarch as Baldwin got older.²⁶⁷

Melisende didn't fill the position of chancellor, however. She kept it vacant and instead relied on a man from her scriptorium named Guido to draw up her charters. Mayer argues that this signified the beginning of her political maneuvering to exclude her son from governing, because through Guido, she could begin to issue charters in her name alone, which she began to do in 1149. Officially filling the position of chancellor would have required Baldwin's approval, and that would have acknowledged his right in governing the kingdom and raised the possibility or opportunity of his taking the reins of government away from her, for he had by this time come of age to be king.²⁶⁸ Melisende would rely on her own clerics and her own scriptorium to issue her charters. Ralph would eventually join Baldwin against Melisende because his political destiny now lay with him.

In the meantime, the fall of Edessa caused widespread rejoicing in the Muslim world, and Zengi was showered with honors by the caliph in Baghdad. His ambition and

²⁶⁶ In RRH 258, Ralph tops the witness list as archbishop-elect in Tyre.

²⁶⁷ Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 131-36.

²⁶⁸ See RRH 256 and Mayer's argument in "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 135-36.

1145. Consequently, on January 25, 1146, Fulcher, the Archbishop of Tyre, was chosen to take his place. The filling of the vacancy of the archbishopric of Tyre, however, caused a dispute that involved the one and only time Melisende opposed the intention of the patriarchate and risked alienating its support for her authority. Melisende had chosen Ralph, her English chancellor since 1144 for the position, but the bishops of Tyre and Patriarch Fulcher favored someone else.²⁶⁴ The monarchs usually chose and appointed the bishops and archbishops they preferred although it was regular practice for them to take the advice of other bishops regarding the choice of candidates. The elections were formally in the hands of cathedral chapters, however. This was arguably, therefore, a serious challenge to Melisende's authority from her new patriarch. According to William of Tyre, Melisende and the royal court preferred Ralph because he was learned, handsome, and worldly. William reminds us here that Baldwin's role in the dispute was negligible as he refers to Melisende as "on whom the responsibility of the realm and the entire government rested."²⁶⁵ It is arguable that Melisende insisted on her chancellor's appointment in order to guarantee her influence in Tyre and the other bishoprics in the north in Beirut and Sidon. Patriarch Fulcher probably would have felt uneasy about establishing such a precedent so early in his own tenure as patriarch because certainly the combination of the offices of chancellor and archbishopric of Tyre would concentrate a larger amount of church influence in Ralph's and therefore the monarchy's hands. Despite the patriarch's opposition, Ralph took the archbishopric of Tyre by force, relying

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²⁶⁵ WT XVI, 17, 162.

and clerics of the kingdom at this time, who should be mentioned here: Baldwin, archbishop of Caesaria; Robert, archbishop of Nazareth; Rorgo, bishop of Acre; Bernard, bishop of Sidon; William, bishop of Beirut; Adam, bishop of Banyas; Gerald, bishop of Bethlehem; Robert, master of the Knights Templar; and Raymond, master of the Hospitallers; Manasses, the royal constable; Philip of Nablus; Elinandus of Tiberius; Gerard of Sidon; Walter of Caesarea; Payens of Oultrejourdain; the elder Balian of Ibelin; Humphrey of Toron; Guy of Beirut; and many others. After deliberation, it was decided that the reinforced crusader army would launch an attack on the city of Damascus, despite the strategic alliance with it since Unur and Fulk's agreement. The decision to attack Damascus was made in order to block the growing closeness between the city and Nur ad-Din that could pose a serious threat to the crusader states.²⁷²

There is no way to appreciate what was discussed at the council, as there are no surviving accounts. Melisende's role in the meeting and her vote cannot be known, although she must have participated as much as she could even though she would have been forced to leave the military planning to the kings and barons, who were there and would again not have required her advice. Mayer is right to point out that Otto of Freising, the German chronicler, who was the half-brother of Emperor Conrad III, with him on the Second Crusade, and an important eyewitness with high-level access to all kinds of information, reported that prior to the great war council at Acre, a smaller and more restricted meeting had taken place without Melisende between Conrad, Baldwin, the Patriarch, and representatives of the Knights Templar. It seems that at this early meeting, the decision to attack Damascus was made by them, predetermining the results

²⁷² Jonathan Phillips and Martin Hoch, eds. *The Second Crusade: Scope and Consequences* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2001), 11.

of the debate at Acre.²⁷³ Manasses was not mentioned as attending the first war council, and therefore Melisende had no immediate control over the objective of the campaign, and whether she had agreed or disagreed might have been irrelevant to them because there was no place for a woman, even though she was queen, in these military debates and proceedings. The kings of Western Europe were probably signaling their preference and encouragement for Baldwin to take on the political and military responsibilities of his kingship.

The Second Crusade's attack on Damascus was a failure, thus paving the way for Nur ad-Din's victory over it in 1154. Suffering from strategic mistakes, thirst, attacks, and lack of cover, the crusader forces could not take the city's walls and were forced to retreat after taking heavy losses. The people of the Latin Kingdom and the Western European kingdoms were devastated and at a loss to explain such a terrible defeat. Conrad returned to Germany shortly after, but Louis remained in the Holy Land until the following spring, when he finally left to return to France after the Easter celebrations in Jerusalem. Nur ad-Din, in the meantime, began to devastate the countryside of Antioch, and succeeded in drawing Prince Raymond into the battle of Inab, in late June 1149, during which the latter was slain along with many of his men. Vulnerable and threatened, the city of Antioch was thrust into the hands of Princess Constance and Amalric, its patriarch, who generously hired troops to temporarily defend the city and lands. Still reeling from the defeat at Damascus, Baldwin responded by mustering troops and leading an army to Antioch's relief. William of Tyre records that Baldwin "assumed the responsibility of the distressed country and for that purpose remained at Antioch until

²⁷³ Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 127-8; and Otto of Freising, *The Deeds of Frederick Barbarossa*, Charles Christopher Mierow, trans., with collaboration by Richard Emery (New York: Columbia University Press, 1953), 102.

affairs were reduced to order as far as time and place permitted. Then, when some degree of tranquility had been established, he went back to his own land to attend to his private affairs.²⁷⁴ In the footsteps of his grandfather and father, Baldwin took on the political duty of acting as regent in Antioch upon the invitation of the surviving barons. However, Baldwin had to return to Jerusalem by the end of 1149, in order to refortify Gaza in 1150 and begin to gather the supporters he would need for the inevitable showdown with his mother Melisende. His relationship with his mother was becoming increasingly tense by this time. Old enough now to lead the army and take on the difficult responsibilities of king, he was frustrated with having to share political power with her; he would have to find a way to challenge her authority, in order to rule as king on his own. She, on the other hand, was prepared to fight her son in order to protect her position and right to rule. She did not want to relinquish her role in governing the kingdom.

Melisende appears to have taken political advantage of Baldwin's setback with the army at Damascus during the Second Crusade. If the campaign had been a success, she would not have had this opportunity, for Baldwin would have emerged as heroic and fit for his kingship. The charters involving gifts and exchanges with the Hospitallers, for instance, reveal that she began to exclude him more openly from governing the affairs of the kingdom at this time. In 1149, she began to issue charters in her name alone, with his consent only for example, in a charter that records a property exchange made with the Knights in Acre and a gift to them of the village of Assera near Caesaria.²⁷⁵ Prior to this, in 1147, Melisende had issued two charters jointly with Baldwin confirming gifts to the

²⁷⁴ WT XVII, 10, 200-1.

²⁷⁵ RRH 256.

military order.²⁷⁶ They had also jointly confirmed a gift to the Order of St. Lazarus in 1144.²⁷⁷ Mayer believes this charter in 1149 also reveals Melisende's growing influence in the north of the Latin Kingdom. She may also have been trying to shore up the Hospitallers' political support for her, through a demonstration of the important patronage she could offer them.²⁷⁸

The division and resentment between Melisende and Baldwin culminated as the security of the north deteriorated. After Raymond's death, Baldwin had responded by mustering troops and marching to Antioch to relieve the city. After unsuccessfully besieging the fortress of Harim, he stayed in the city until receiving a visit from Joscelyn II, who had recently survived a siege on Turbessel. After settling the affairs as best as he could in Antioch and Edessa, Baldwin had departed, and he and his men had gone to Gaza near Ascalon in order to repair its fortifications. Then on May 5, 1150, Joscelyn II was captured by some of Nur ad-Din's troops and imprisoned in Aleppo. William of Tyre wrote that Joscelyn's wife "with the assistance of the principal men still left in the kingdom... tried to govern the people to the best of her ability... and busied herself in strengthening the fortresses of the land and supplying them with arms, men, and food."²⁷⁹ Both Antioch and Edessa had lost their leaders, and their wives and vassals "were holding their own with difficulty."²⁸⁰

Upon hearing of the new loss in Edessa, Baldwin left the fortress at Gaza in the hands of the Knights Templar and headed north.

²⁷⁶ RRH 244; RRH 245.

²⁷⁷ RRH 227.

²⁷⁸ Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 129-30.

²⁷⁹ WT XVII, 11, 201-2.

²⁸⁰ WT XVII, 11, 202.

News of the deplorable disaster, which had resulted in the capture of the count of Edessa was brought to the king of Jerusalem, and from reliable sources he learned that Edessa, left entirely without a defender, was lying exposed to the wiles of the enemy. That entire province and the land of Antioch as well, abandoned to feminine rule, required the king's care. In response to this urgent need, Baldwin took with him Humphrey the constable and Guy of Beirut and repaired to the land of Tripoli. From the queen's domains he had been unable to obtain any response, although he had summoned each of her nobles by name.²⁸¹

He was accompanied only by his closest supporters, Humphrey of Toron, the future constable, and Guy of Beirut; Melisende's vassals in her domains had denied their military obligations to him and ignored his summons. This is evidence of the deep division that existed between mother and son that had divided the loyalties of the vassals of the kingdom. Melisende presumably tried to block Baldwin from going north again to act as regent over Antioch and Edessa, because doing so would further establish his political and governing role as king of Jerusalem, but of course he went anyway.²⁸² Still in Acre on June 22, 1150, Baldwin issued a charter for the military Order of St. Lazarus confirming the acquisition made by the brothers outside the walls of Jerusalem on thirteen *carrucae* of vineyards in the plain of Bethlehem from the Syrian village chief Meleganos for the price of 1,050 bezants and a horse.²⁸³ This charter is recorded by his own clerk named Daniel and witnessed by his chaplain Adam, his almoner William, Hugh of Bethsan, a brother of the Knights Templar, and Hugh of Aulans, a low-ranking vassal. The only high ranking churchman on this list is Ralph, still Archbishop-elect of

²⁸¹ WT XVII, 15, 207.

²⁸² Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 149.

²⁸³ RRH 258. Joshua Prawer has estimated from a glossa appended to a document of 1195 that the official *carruca* should be estimated at 35 hectares or approximately 85,500 acres, and that it was basically a unit of taxation. Every settler would receive a sizeable stretch of land of two *carrucae* for cultivation and to build a house upon and settle. In return, he was obliged to pay an annual tax or *terragium*, the tithe of his crops and fruits, except olives, and certain customary payments, besides what he collected from the Muslims who worked the land. See Joshua Prawer, *Crusader Institutions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 121-2, 158.

Tyre, who had switched to Baldwin's side after being abandoned by Melisende. The two high-ranking princes in his witness list are Simon of Tiberias and the Viscount Clarenbald of Acre. Mayer maintains that Simon was supporting the king because he was fighting for his principality and had less support from Melisende. It is unknown why Clarenbald sided with the king, but this indicates that Baldwin had Acre's full political support.²⁸⁴ He sums up Baldwin's weak position at this point: "The high clergy and the barons of the first and second magnitude are absent from the king's court. They either had abandoned his cause or had held aloof. We must concede that some of the nobility were perhaps still at Gaza, but the fact remains that the King, who was on the point of embarking on a major military expedition to Syria and should have been attended by a fair number of barons, stood more or less alone, surrounded by the dispossessed, the upstarts, the unimportant, and the faithful but powerless servants of his chapel."²⁸⁵

The deep political division between Melisende and Baldwin at this time was made extremely apparent by the charter issued by Melisende alone sometime later in 1150 that apparently recorded the same transaction for the lepers of the Order of St. Lazarus.²⁸⁶ Interestingly, Melisende's charter seems to correct the charter issued by Baldwin by amending the names and amounts involved in the transaction. In this charter recorded by her scribe Guido, Melisende approved the sale of four plots of vineyards in the plain of Bethlehem made by a Syrian called Mozageth for the price of 1,100 bezants and a horse. The charter does not mention Baldwin's consent but does maintain that she had the consent of her praiseworthy barons, which affirmed the existence of a group of vassals loyal to her alone. Her witness list is impressive and includes her other son Amalric,

²⁸⁴ Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 150-1.

²⁸⁵ Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 151.

²⁸⁶ RRH 259.

Rohard Bencellinus, the viscount of Jerusalem in 1150, Philip of Nablus, Manasses her constable, Nicholas, her personal chamberlain, John of Valenciennes, a knight, Peter of Perigord and Herbert the Lombard, who were influential men of Jerusalem. The highest-ranking churchman on her list is Erneis, the patriarch of Jerusalem's chancellor, who signaled the patriarch's support for Melisende too. The presence of Nicholas probably indicated that Melisende had also created her own household.²⁸⁷

In Antioch, Baldwin worked hard to strengthen the county, but Nur ad-Din was constantly attacking the region and so was the Sultan Ma'sūd of Iconium. The Byzantine Emperor Manuel also saw an opportunity to extend his influence in Northern Syria after the many defeats for the crusaders. He sent representatives with supplies and knights in order to buy the fortresses still in her possession from the Countess of Edessa. William of Tyre described Baldwin's reaction when he was informed of the offer. According to him, Baldwin shrewdly advised accepting it because "he felt but little confidence that the province could be maintained in good condition by the Greek forces, yet he preferred that disaster should overtake it while it was under their power rather than that the downfall of a people already in jeopardy and the ruin of their imperiled country should be laid to him."²⁸⁸ Baldwin protected the Countess and her small children and all of the other people of Edessa with their households and baggage on the long hot march to safety that August 1150.

During the years 1150 and 1151, Melisende continued to rule over the kingdom from Jerusalem and consolidate her power. She blessed the marriage in 1150 of Manasses to the recently widowed Helvis, who had been the wife of Balian of Ramla.

²⁸⁷ Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 147.

²⁸⁸ WT XVII, 16, 209.

This marriage made Manasses, her most loyal vassal, lord of Ramla and Mirabel, consolidating her influence in the south of the kingdom, even though this action probably lost her support from Balian's three sons Hugh, Baldwin, and Balian, whose inheritances were significantly decreased as a result. Melisende also made her faithful younger son Amalric the Count of Jaffa in 1151.²⁸⁹ In the meantime, Baldwin was continuously occupied defending the kingdom from further attacks by Nur ad-Din and the attacks in July 1151 by an Egyptian fleet against the coastal cities of Jaffa, Acre, Sidon, Beirut, and Tripoli. Despite his mother's maneuvers to further divide the kingdom and limit his political authority, in Antioch and throughout the northern regions of the kingdom, he continuously demonstrated his growing military and political competence to rule. Although Melisende's ultimate plan or strategy to eliminate Baldwin cannot be known, in 1152, Baldwin was ready to confront her and remove her from power in order to take over the governing of the kingdom alone.

William of Tyre blamed Manasses for the civil war that erupted between Melisende and Baldwin. Manasses, "taking advantage of the queen's favor, is said to have conducted himself very haughtily."²⁹⁰ William related that his attitude roused the hatred of the barons against him but the wealth and position he had acquired through his marriage to Helvis of Ramla would have increased their resentment.

The king was foremost, both in feeling and act, among those who hated Manasses and claimed that the man was alienating his mother's good will from him and thwarting her munificence. There were many who hated the power and evil domination of this man. They continually fanned the flame of the king's dislike toward him and constantly urged that he remove his mother from the control of the kingdom. Now that he had reached years of maturity, they said, it was not fitting that he should be

²⁸⁹ In the charters, RRH 268 in 1151, and RRH 278 in 1152, Amalric is newly designated with the title Count of Jaffa.

²⁹⁰ WT XVII, 13, 204.

ruled by the will of a woman. He ought to assume some of the responsibility of governing the realm himself.²⁹¹

Baldwin demanded to be crowned in Jerusalem at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on Easter Day alone despite the fact that Melisende would surely be present for the ceremonies on that holy feast day. Openly supporting Melisende, the patriarch of Jerusalem, who would perform the ceremony “who desired peace for the kingdom, begged him earnestly to allow his mother to participate in his glory.” He refused and the next day indicated his intentions to rule the kingdom by unexpectedly appearing in public “crowned with the laurel.”²⁹² Then calling an assembly of his nobles, the High Court, he went to Melisende to demand that she at once divide the kingdom with him. After much deliberation, the nobles compelled her to agree to their decision and so Baldwin took the lands of Tyre and Acre with their dependencies, leaving Jerusalem and Nablus to her.²⁹³ He appointed Humphrey of Toron as his constable, who helped him attack and besiege Manasses at Mirabel. When they took his castle, they exiled Manasses from Outremer “the kingdom and all the region on this side of the sea” but then decided to attack Nablus and pursue Melisende, who had fled to her citadel with some of her servants and supporters, at the Tower of David in Jerusalem. William offers an explanation for Baldwin’s decision to overthrow his mother and take Jerusalem away from her: “Certain nobles whose possession lay within the queen’s domains and who were attached to her by merely nominal loyalty disregarded their oaths of fealty and withdrew from her. The few who adhered to her cause, however, preserved a strict loyalty. Among these were her son

²⁹¹ WT XVII, 13, 205.

²⁹² WT XVII, 13, 205.

²⁹³ Mayer, “Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem,” 166: Mayer believes that this formal division only legalized a situation that had existed for some time.

Amalric, count of Jaffa, a very young man; Philip of Nablus; and Rohard the Elder, with a few others whose names are unknown.”²⁹⁴ Losing the support of most of her loyal vassals, Melisende became vulnerable and Baldwin capitalized on the new opportunity.

William reported that at that moment Patriarch Fulcher tried to intervene as peacemaker in order to defend Melisende. Taking with him a company of clerics, he went to Baldwin’s camp outside the city walls. Representing the power of the Church, he went to beg him to “desist from his wicked project, to abide by the terms of the agreement, and to suffer his mother to rest in peace.”²⁹⁵ Baldwin refused to listen to the patriarch, however, and after the citizens of Jerusalem opened the gates to him and his troops, he began to besiege the citadel with “ballistae, bows, and hurling machines.”²⁹⁶ Around 1106, the Russian abbot Daniel, a pilgrim in Jerusalem, had left a detailed description of the tower’s strong fortifications: “This tower is marvelous, made with great stones and very high, with four corners, and all is very strong and solid and it rises from the living rock. It contains much water and it has five iron doors and two hundred steps to climb up and a countless store of provisions. And it is very difficult to capture. And it is the chief place of all that city and it is strongly guarded and no one is allowed in.”²⁹⁷ It is no wonder that Melisende retreated there to escape her attackers.

Besieged and left with no alternative, Melisende surrendered after a few days and was forced to capitulate Jerusalem and retire to Nablus, which was unfortified and which she was not to govern. When Baldwin promised to protect her possession of Nablus as a

²⁹⁴ WT XVII, 14, 206; Amalric’s loyalty to his mother over his brother was to be expected. As Georges Duby noted, women “drew force from their sons, especially from their second sons, who were naturally jealous of the first-born,” in his article “Women and Power,” 82.

²⁹⁵ WT XVII, 14, 206.

²⁹⁶ WT XVII, 14, 206.

²⁹⁷ Daniel the Abbot, “The Life and Journey of Daniel, Abbot of the Russian Land,” in John Wilkinson and Joyce Hill and W. F. Ryan, ed. and trans., *Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 1099-1185*, (London: Hakluyt Society, 1988), 130-1.

dowry, “they were restored to the good graces of one another; and as the morning star which shines forth in the midst of darkness tranquility again returned to the kingdom and the church.”²⁹⁸ Baldwin did not force her to enter a convent, such as the one she had built in Bethany, after he defeated her, as his great-uncle Baldwin I had done to dispose of his queen Arda. While there is no evidence, it is possible to speculate that mother and son were restored to “good graces” by amicably negotiating a lesser but still influential role for Melisende as Baldwin’s advisor, because she retained some political influence despite her retirement.

In the summer of 1152, Baldwin traveled north to the County of Tripoli to help Count Raymond II stop an attack on Tortosa by Nur ad-Din and recapture the fortress. After the successful military campaign, Baldwin called a meeting of the High Court at Tripoli. The gathering included the nobility of Jerusalem, Antioch, and Tripoli, and Baldwin invited the Patriarch of Antioch as well as his cousin the Princess Constance in order to compel her to take a husband for she “dreaded the yoke of marriage and preferred a free and independent life. She paid little heed to the needs of her people and was far more interested in enjoying the pleasures of life.”²⁹⁹ William reports that Melisende was present at this meeting, “attended by the princes of the kingdom. After subjects of general interest had received careful attention, the matter of the marriage of the princess was given consideration. Neither the king nor the count, her kinsmen, neither the queen nor the countess of Tripoli, her two aunts, was able to induce her to yield and thus provide for herself and her land.”³⁰⁰ At the very same time, Melisende tried to intervene in what William of Tyre describes as a “jealous” argument between her

²⁹⁸ WT XVII, 14, 207.

²⁹⁹ WT XVII, 18, 213.

³⁰⁰ WT XVII, 18, 213.

sister Hodierna, the Countess of Tripoli, and her husband Count Raymond.³⁰¹ Although the circumstances of the argument are unknown, William of Tyre remarked that “it was in the hope of settling this unpleasantness and at the same time of visiting her niece, the princess of Antioch, that Queen Melisende had come thither.”³⁰² Powerless to settle this other family matter either, Melisende was unable to reconcile her sister and her husband so she decided to take her away from him back with her to Nablus to give them some time apart. At this time, the royal women left Tripoli: Melisende and Hodierna headed south together and Princess Constance headed north home to Antioch in the company of Count Raymond. After a short time, Raymond left her and returned to Tripoli, but an assassin stabbed him and two of his men as they were entering the city gate between the barbican and the wall. Baldwin was playing dice when he heard the news as the city panicked, “flew to arms and without discrimination put to the sword all those who were found to differ either in language or dress from the Latins.”³⁰³ The king immediately recalled his mother and the Countess Hodierna and after burying the Count, ordered all the nobles of the County of Tripoli to swear allegiance to the Countess as regent and her children, the twelve-year-old Raymond and a younger daughter called Melisende. Leaving Hodierna now in charge of Tripoli, Baldwin and Melisende returned together with their nobles to the kingdom of Jerusalem.

Melisende continued to have a role as advisor to her son during the remaining years of her life. Most of his charters recording sales and confirmations of land transactions note her advice and consent, especially those involving the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Hospitallers, both of which she had supported during her reign as

³⁰¹ WT XVII, 19, 214.

³⁰² WT XVII, 19, 214.

³⁰³ WT XVII, 19, 214.

well.³⁰⁴ William of Tyre confirms her advisory role in his account of Baldwin's capture of the city of Ascalon in 1153. He wrote that "By his mother's advice, the king distributed possessions and the lands dependent thereon both within and without the city to those who well deserved them; to some, also for a price."³⁰⁵ He goes on to note that Baldwin generously bestowed the city upon his younger brother Amalric, the Count of Jaffa. This gift was very magnanimous considering that Amalric had remained against him throughout the entire conflict between him and their mother. It indicated that Baldwin felt secure in his position and authority as king as well as an end to the bitterness and division within the royal family. Melisende must have been pleased as she would have surely favored the bestowing of Ascalon upon her loyal younger son.

Before he died in 1153, Bernard of Clairvaux wrote another letter to Melisende. The timing suggests that he wrote it after he heard of her battle with her son, defeat, and retirement as he states in his opening lines that he had heard "certain evil reports" about her and that her "good name" was being "tarnished by truth or falsehood."³⁰⁶ He assured her that he didn't believe the rumors, however, because his uncle Andrew had written him with a true report: "He tells me that you are behaving peacefully and kindly; that you are ruling yourself and your kingdom wisely with the advice of wise men; that you love the Brothers of the Temple and are on friendly terms with them; and that, according to the wisdom given you by God, you are providently and wisely meeting the dangers which threaten the Holy Land with sound counsels and help."³⁰⁷ Nevertheless, he wrote to

³⁰⁴ These charters will be analyzed in depth in the following chapter, but see RRH 293, 306, 321, 322, 325, 327, 338, 356. After her retirement in 1152, Melisende issued two charters in her own name, with Baldwin's consent in 1155, RRH 313, and in 1159, RRH 359.

³⁰⁵ WT XVII, 30, 233.

³⁰⁶ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 274.

³⁰⁷ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 274.

remind Melisende that her obligations to God and country as a retired queen must be tempered by her dignity as a widow. He urged her to remain a widow and not remarry. Although he did not mention it, he likely knew that if Melisende did remarry, she and her new husband could challenge Baldwin's kingship again by gathering support and offering patronage and rewards to men who would fight for them, and plunge the kingdom into another, and this time, more bitter and protracted civil war. He wrote "Blessed are you if, alone and a widow, you give yourself wholly to God to be ruled by him."³⁰⁸ Earlier in the letter, he wrote that the two roles of queen and widow are not incompatible and to define the characteristics of a good queen as those that a good widow possesses:

It is not beneath your dignity as a queen to be a widow, and you need not be one if you do not wish it. I believe it is much to your honor, especially among Christians, to live as a widow no less than a queen. You are a queen by succession, but a widow by virtue. You are the former by reason of your lineage, the latter by the grace of God. You have the former by the good fortune of your birth, the latter you have obtained by courage. A double honor is yours, the one according to God: but both are from God. Do not think the honor of widowhood is a small thing, for the Apostle says: "honor widows that are widows indeed".... You ask, how you can tell a good widow? From what the apostle says: "If she have brought up children, if she have given shelter, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have ministered to them that suffer tribulation, if she have diligently followed every good work."³⁰⁹

According to Bernard, therefore, her reputation at home and in the West as a good queen was now dependent on her surrender of power and by how well she embodied his requirements of widows. As she had been forced into her new role as advisor to her son, Bernard urged her to combine and live by the Christian qualities of widowhood: she must be strong, humble, and courageous; peaceful, kind, and generous; good to the men of the

³⁰⁸ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 274.

³⁰⁹ Bernard of Clairvaux, *Letters*, 274.

Church; wise by deferring to sound counsel; a defender of the poor and helpless; a performer of good works; and a devoted mother.

Also in 1153, the Princess Constance finally agreed to marry a newly arrived young noble named Renaud of Châtillon. William described an incident that happened shortly after that unfortunately depicted the brutality Renaud would soon become known for by Christians and Muslims alike. During an argument with the Patriarch Amalric of Antioch, Renaud seized Amalric and tied him up in the citadel, placing him out in the open with honey smeared over his head where he was tortured by the heat and flies until Baldwin's messengers forced him to release the poor man. Patriarch Amalric left Antioch "and repaired to the kingdom of Jerusalem. He was kindly received by the king and his wise mother, as indeed by the patriarch and all the bishops of the kingdom, and there he remained for several years."³¹⁰ Baldwin appears to have sincerely valued his mother's advice and presence at this time and in the following years. In 1156, Baldwin issued a charter with her advice and consent that gave the Pisans in Tyre a center in order to get them to stop selling the shipbuilding materials of iron, wood, and pitch to the Egyptians.³¹¹

In 1157, William reported that Melisende played a major role in taking back a castle on the far side of the Jordan River which had been lost sometime before. Baldwin had not left the kingdom in her hands during his absence on campaign in Antioch; however, she proved invaluable to Baldwin de Lille, to whom he had.

[T]he Christians regained a stronghold on the other side of the Jordan in the land of Gilead. This place, a well-fortified cave, through the carelessness of our forces had been taken a few years earlier by the trickery of the enemy. Its recovery was largely due to the zealous efforts

³¹⁰ WT XVIII, 1, 235-6.

³¹¹ RRH 322.

of Queen Melisende, aided by the vigorous work of those who were left in the kingdom; in particular, by the care and vigilance of Baldwin de Lille, to whom the king had entrusted the responsibility of the realm during his absence. News of this success was sent to the king; it brought great joy to the entire army and was a source of much happiness to all.³¹²

Just before this campaign, the High Court met to address the issue of finding a suitable bride for Baldwin, who was still unmarried. The secular and ecclesiastical princes with Baldwin decided after long deliberation to appeal to the Emperor Manuel Comnenus, who had succeeded John, because “in his palace there were many noble maidens closely related to him by ties of blood, and furthermore it would be possible for him, as the most powerful and wealthy prince of the world, to relieve from his abundance the distress under which our realm was suffering and to change our poverty into superabundance.”³¹³ Although there is no evidence, it is likely that Baldwin consulted Melisende too before making this choice, as he sought her advice on other important matters regarding the kingdom. She and the other princes of the realm of the High Court would have recognized the dire need at that time for an alliance with Byzantium in order to secure help in defending the crusader lands militarily against the threat posed by Nur ad-Din as well as an opportunity to secure the necessary funds. Byzantium had the most to offer the crusaders at this time. Melisende had also been on good terms with the Greek Orthodox bishops and people living in her kingdom during her reign.

Baldwin’s envoys Attard, the archbishop of Nazareth and Humphrey of Toron, were kept waiting for months in Constantinople, during which Attard died, but eventually Manuel chose his thirteen year old niece Theodora, the daughter of his elder brother

³¹² WT XVIII, 19, 269.

³¹³ WT XVIII, 16, 264-5.

Isaac, who was reported to be exceptionally beautiful.³¹⁴ He provided her with an exceptionally generous dowry, which included gold to pay for the wedding expenses, and brought his army to northern Syria to help the crusaders fight Nur ad-Din. In return, Theodora was given Acre to hold as her dowry for life if she were widowed. She was solemnly anointed and crowned queen of Jerusalem and then she and Baldwin were married in September 1158. According to William of Tyre, the two were happy, so much so that Baldwin reformed his rumored scandalous behavior and was “believed to have been faithful to her even to the end.”³¹⁵ Despite their devoted relationship, Theodora didn’t conceive before Baldwin’s death on February 10, 1163. This may have been because of her young age. For the same reason perhaps, she does not appear to have held any political power as she is associated with her husband’s actions only two times.³¹⁶ After she was widowed, she retired to Acre and became Jerusalem’s first dowager queen at the age of seventeen.

Melisende was gravely ill by 1161 “of an incurable disease for which there was no help except death.”³¹⁷ She was nursed by her two sisters Hodierna and Ivette and attended by the best physicians in the land. William of Tyre wrote, “For thirty years and more, during the lifetime of her husband as well as afterwards in the reign of her son,

³¹⁴ WT XVIII, 22, 274.

³¹⁵ WT XVIII, 22, 275.

³¹⁶ In 1160, the consent of Theodora and Amalric is mentioned in a confirmation made by Baldwin III involving some sugar cane plantations near Acre in RRH 334. Her consent was probably noted because Acre is her dower-fief. On July 31, 1161, Baldwin arranged with Philip of Nablus to exchange his lands at Nablus for the fief of Outre-Jordan in RRH 366. Theodora’s consent is also noted in this charter, however, everyone in the royal family is listed, reducing its significance. Bernard Hamilton believes that this exchange was made with Philip because at that moment Melisende was dying, and her lands at Nablus would soon revert back to the crown. He suggests that Baldwin wanted to have Philip’s lands so that all of the region would be part of the royal domain. Theodora issued only one charter alone, and although Hamilton suggests that it does show that she was free to dispose of her own possessions, it does not appear to have any political implications. In 1161, charter RRH 367, she gave a house in Acre to her usher, “hostiario suo,” Richard the Englishman. See Hamilton, “Women in the Crusader States,” 158-9.

³¹⁷ WT XVIII, 27, 283.

Melisende had governed the kingdoms with strength surpassing that of most women. Her rule had been wise and judicious. Now, wasted in body and somewhat impaired in memory, she had lain on her bed for a long time as if dead, and very few were allowed to see her.”³¹⁸ When she died on September 11, 1161, Baldwin grieved and “by the depth of his emotion clearly showed how sincerely he had loved her; in fact, for many days thereafter he was inconsolable.”³¹⁹ Melisende was buried near her mother Morphia in a stone crypt with iron gates at the shrine of Jehoshaphat on the right as one descends to the sepulcher of the Virgin Mary. Nearby was an altar where mass was said daily in her remembrance.³²⁰ It must have seemed fitting to the crusaders for Jerusalem’s queens to be buried at the sepulcher of the Queen of heaven just as Jerusalem’s kings were buried at the sepulcher of heaven’s King.

³¹⁸ WT XVIII, 27, 283.

³¹⁹ WT XVIII, 32, 291.

³²⁰ WT XVIII, 32, 291.

Chapter Four: Melisende's Patronage

Above all else, the evidence for Melisende's reign depicts her as a generous patron and therefore an effective ruler, despite the problem of her gender that she faced as queen regnant. Honor and authority in the twelfth century depended on personal generosity, patronage, and displays of wealth. At this time, the power of all western European monarchs, including those of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, was attained by birth right through primogeniture practices or election by their peers. Political power was kept and exercised, however, by creating loyal subjects or vassals through acts of generosity and patronage as well as by securing the peace and prosperity of their realms for their subjects. Every act of patronage, every gift of lands, titles, and appointments that was made by a ruler was charged with meaning or significance and was part of a strategy of resource investment in the kingdom to enhance its power, influence, and defense. Power was exercised primarily through gift giving, which usually created social bonds or contracts bound by oaths. Moreover, since there were and are no "free gifts," once having received a gift, the recipient was always obliged to make a counter-gift through which a social contract was entered into.³²¹ In the classic analysis on gift giving, *The Gift* by Marcel Mauss, "archaic societies" were studied, and Mauss found that exchange and contracts were carried on in the form of gifts. Gifts are "in theory voluntary, in reality given and returned obligatorily."³²² This model of vital gift exchange can be found in every human society at every time in some manner and variation. It is relevant to begin with Mauss because as Barbara Rosenwein has observed,

³²¹ Mauss, 1-18.

³²² Mauss, 3.

“however ‘embedded’ the gift economy may be in the whole social and political matrix, anthropologists can, nevertheless, dispute parts of it without destroying the whole. For this reason it has withstood both attacks and changes of emphasis.”³²³ Aafke E. Komter explains that power is involved in gift giving in several ways:

Gifts may enhance personal status or power. They create a relationship of debt and dependency between giver and recipient, in which the possibility of an abuse of power is always present. Gifts, and with them the identity of the giver, may be refused. Gift giving to some people excludes others from the material and immaterial benefits implied in this practice. In gift exchange, the structural inequality of resources may be involved; on the basis of this power inequality, some people feel obliged to give much while receiving little, whereas others, though poor givers themselves, are endowed with abundant gift giving.³²⁴

A gift calls honor into question. It issues a challenge to reciprocate and confers honor and recognition. In the twelfth century, the gift economy of exchanges and honors propagated by medieval rulers and their vassals through patronage created loyalties and political alliances; promises, lands, and duties were the essence of the feudal medieval society in the western monarchies as well as in the crusader states, which were founded by the nobles who knew it well.

The idea of power through patronage, therefore, rests theoretically on the anthropological model of gift exchange. The gift exchange, in any setting at any time, defines a society. According to Mary Douglas, who wrote the foreword to the translation of *The Gift* and further summarizes Mauss’ ideas,

[E]ach gift is part of a system of reciprocity in which the honor of giver and recipient are engaged. It is a total system in that every item of status or of spiritual or material possession is implicated for everyone in the whole community. The system of quite simple; just the rule that every gift

³²³ Barbara H. Rosenwein, *To be the Neighbor of Saint Peter: the Social Meaning of Chluny’s Property, 909-1049* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1989), 129.

³²⁴ Komter, “Women, Gifts, and Power,” 130.

has to be returned in some specified way sets up a perpetual cycle of exchanges within and between generations. In some cases the specified return is of equal value, producing a stable system of statuses; in others it must exceed the value of the earlier gift, producing an escalating contest for honor. The whole society can be described by the catalogue of transfers that map all the obligations between its members. The cycling gift system is the society.³²⁵

An effective ruler is motivated to participate in the gift exchange that glues his or her society together. He or she would hope that his or her gifts of lands and appointments would be reciprocated with loyal political support and promised obligations in return. The failure to reciprocate properly could lead to the rupturing of the social ties involved.

Throughout the history of western society, women are and have been the greatest givers compared to men. However, they face a certain amount of risk in their efforts to enhance their power through gift giving. According to Aafke E. Komter,

Women's gift giving seems to be caught in a fundamental paradox. On the one hand, their gift exchange may be considered a powerful means of reconstituting social identities and of keeping social relationships alive.... On the other hand, in giving much to others, women incur the risk of losing their own identities, given their unequal societal and economic power compared with men. In the act of giving, women are at the same time creating the opportunity to keep or gain power, and making themselves vulnerable to the loss of power.³²⁶

Komter continues by referring to Annette B. Weiner's ideas about "keeping-while-giving"³²⁷ or "exchanging things in order to keep them—are a perfect illustration of this paradoxical tension in women's gift giving: to overcome the threats of loss—of their own selves, of their power vis-à-vis men, and of important social bonds—they give away abundantly. And as a consequence of giving abundantly, they are facing the threat of

³²⁵ Mauss, viii-ix.

³²⁶ Komter, "Women, Gifts, and Power," 130-1.

³²⁷ Annette B. Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions: the Paradox of Keeping-While-Giving* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 7.

undermining their own autonomy. It seems as though, men's greater societal and economic power not only makes it less urgent for them to engage in active gift giving, but also protects them from losing their own autonomy through giving gifts to other people."³²⁸ Women must take this risk in order to combat the gendered power inequalities they face.

Melisende carefully participated in the gift exchange that defined and enhanced her position and power as queen in her society. Her gifts were motivated by altruism and self-interest. She must have taken the risk of losing her autonomy and made the most of the opportunities patronage offered because since she was a woman, other ways of accessing power and demonstrating strength that were open to kings, such as leading armies into battle and forming personal relationships of comradeship and shared male experiences through war with the barons, were denied to her. Although evidence for her secular patronage to her barons with appointments and land grants is scarce, she appointed her loyal cousin Manasses to the position of constable of the kingdom in 1144 and her son Amalric as Count of Jaffa in 1151, which won their undeniable loyalty. She must have also extended patronage to many of the kingdom's barons, who appear over and over in the witness lists of her charters, indicating unequivocal political support. The evidence for her religious patronage, however, is much more abundant due to the efforts of the kingdom's churches, shrines, and monastic and military orders to preserve their cartularies. According to the charters that have survived, that will be examined in depth here, Melisende's methods of gift giving can be divided into three categories: exchanges³²⁹, donations³³⁰, and confirmations.³³¹ While the first two categories are

³²⁸ Komter, "Women, Gifts, and Power," 131.

³²⁹ RRH 174, 256, 269, 278.

unambiguous, the third should perhaps be elaborated upon. The confirmation charters reveal her efforts to moderate, reiterate, approve, or preside over the gift exchange of her kingdom. They also emphasize her relationships as well as property, especially indicating her family or dynastic history of support or association with the individuals or institutions involved.

All of the charters can be viewed as windows, through which one can see glimpses of the way this gift economy worked for Melisende. They each indicate a set of conditions, participants, and goals at a given time. After they are placed within the context and timing of the events of her reign and the roles of the institutions are examined, they reveal some of her probable motives and at least, some of the circumstances she faced. Timing is a very important element of the gift exchange. Gifts can have completely different meanings at different times.³³² Also, inside the interval between gift and counter-gift contains the opportunity for strategy. This is important because of the lack of other kinds of evidence regarding her actions and patronage in the kingdom. We know little, for instance, about her personal wealth, jewels, relics, etc., or how she supported her personal household or noble supporters. Beyond the charters, William of Tyre described the convent at Bethany that she built, and some of the surviving material evidence helps us reconstruct some of her other activities. The charters indicate that she spent the royal income strategically. Her income came from the royal demesne of lands and possessions, through the royal monopoly over minting coins, customs and harbor dues paid by Muslim merchants, taxes paid by Bedouin tribesmen

³³⁰ RRH 179, 181, 227, 245, 262, 338, 359, 409, 422a.

³³¹ RRH 164, 210, 244, 259, 268, 313.

³³² Pierre Bourdieu, "The Work of Time," in *The Gift: an Interdisciplinary Perspective*, Aafke E. Komter, ed. (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996)141-3.

and religious taxes paid by the kingdom's non-Christian subjects, and plundering enemy possessions after battles.

Moreover, placing Melisende's charters of gifts and confirmations within the overall context of the royal tradition of participation in the kingdom's gift exchange is revealing. All of the monarchs before 1187 participated in it in some way. However, an examination of the gifts and confirmations made from the reigns of King Baldwin I to King Baldwin IV indicates that Melisende and Baldwin III equally made or consented to the most gifts and confirmations that were recorded in the charters. These will be examined in depth below. Baldwin I issued seven gift charters.³³³ Baldwin II issued nine.³³⁴ Fulk issued one gift charter alone,³³⁵ but issued five with Melisende jointly.³³⁶ After Fulk's death, Melisende issued four gift charters before 1152 with the consent of her son Baldwin III although he was not in power yet³³⁷ and five before 1152 alone.³³⁸ After 1152, Baldwin issued seventeen gift charters although fourteen of them were confirmations of gifts previously made; nine of those confirmations of previous gifts and transactions were issued on his own,³³⁹ but five of them were with Melisende's and/or Amalric's consent.³⁴⁰ Three of the eighteen charters recorded actual gifts he made, one on his own³⁴¹ and two of them with Melisende.³⁴² Amalric issued twelve gift charters.³⁴³

³³³ RRH 51, 52, 57, 68a, 74, 79, 80.

³³⁴ RRH 90, 90a, 91, 109, 121, 125, 130, 137 (which was witnessed by Fulk and Melisende), 137a (which was witnessed by Melisende before she married Fulk).

³³⁵ RRH 157.

³³⁶ RRH 164, 174, 179, 181, 210.

³³⁷ RRH 227, 244, 245, 268.

³³⁸ RRH 256, 259, 262, 269, 278.

³³⁹ RRH 226, 291, 258, 299, 307, 309, 344, 353, 354.

³⁴⁰ RRH 293, 306, 321, 325, 356.

³⁴¹ RRH 355.

³⁴² RRH 322, 327, 336.

³⁴³ RRH 397, 400, 413, 416, 450, 452, 466, 487, 488, 512, 514, 516.

Baldwin IV issued eight.³⁴⁴ Looking at the gift charters in this way shows that the monarchy's participation in patronage activity was at its height during Melisende and Baldwin III's reigns.

Melisende's gifts to the kingdom's religious institutions consisted mainly of towns, villages, and lands that were prosperous and often sustained olive groves or vineyards. These lands and all of their appurtenances were possessions of the crown, and therefore hers to give, on her own or with the consent of her husband or sons. They would have come with rights over mills, ovens, houses, animals, churches and their tithes, and the peasants or villagers that labored on them. She also confirmed land trades and settled disputes over lands between villagers and the churches and monasteries. On one occasion, she gave houses and money-changing tables within the city of Jerusalem, which could be very lucrative.³⁴⁵ On the site of the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus in Bethany, she built and fortified a convent and church, which she lavishly furnished with richly decorated liturgical treasures and manuscripts. These and the other instances of her patronage will be examined below. Her rights to alienate property and control its disposition are crucial to understanding the structure and extent of her power.³⁴⁶ As would be expected, the charters that record her gifts are written in Latin by the assigned scribes of the royal chanceries, are often described as being confirmed with the protection of her seal, and are sprinkled with verbs that characterize her participation in the gift exchange such as *donare* (to give or grant), *concedere* (to concede), *tradere* (to hand over

³⁴⁴ RRH 518, 537, 538, 562, 562b, 582, 593, 603.

³⁴⁵ RRH 181.

³⁴⁶ In her examination of women's control over property in charters from twelfth-century Anjou, Penny Schine Gold found that the typical female participants in property transfers (married women) used those transfers as vehicles for the exercise of their influence in personal and family affairs. See Penny Schine Gold, *The Lady and the Virgin: Image, Attitude, and Experience in Twelfth-Century France* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 116, 147-8.

or give up), *debere reverti* (waive a claim), *confirmare* (to confirm), or *laudare* (to praise). The language in the charters that records this diverse gift exchange is best depicted by phrases such as, *[E]go Milisendis, Dei gratia Iherosolimorum regina, concedo, laudo, et approbo commutationem illam...*³⁴⁷ and *Ego itaque Milesendis, Dei gratia Jerusalem regina, predecessoribus me conformans, quecumque agree dispono scedulis commandari volo posteris nostris exemplum... laudavi et concessi et sigilli mei munimine confirmavi....*³⁴⁸

The following sections will examine each of the religious institutions Melisende supported throughout her reign, even from retirement after 1152, and all of the charters and other evidence for her gifts and support for them. Each section will also consider the potential for reciprocal political and religious backing that these institutions could offer her as counter-gifts for her support.

Church of the Holy Sepulcher:

Built directly above the site of Christ's tomb, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was the seat of the patriarchate of Jerusalem and the most important church in the Latin East. It was Jerusalem's cathedral church, but it was also the principal pilgrimage church in the Christian Holy Land, the site that every pilgrim had to visit as the culmination of his or her spiritual journey. After Fulk and Melisende were crowned there, it became the site for all of the royal coronations to follow in the kingdom. It was also, of course, the place in the kingdom where the Easter liturgy was celebrated most spectacularly.³⁴⁹

³⁴⁷ RRH 268.

³⁴⁸ RRH 259.

³⁴⁹ For a study of the manuscript sources of the liturgy of the Holy Sepulcher created by the Latin Crusaders see Cristina Dondi, *The Liturgy of the Canons Regular of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem: a*

Because it was Christendom's most important shrine church, it received gifts and donations in the twelfth century from patrons within the kingdom as well as beyond, especially in the West.³⁵⁰ In 1114, for instance, King Baldwin I confirmed a long list of twenty-one *casalia* or villages that the kingdom's first ruler Godfrey had given to the church all around Jerusalem.³⁵¹ Amongst the barons, Raymond II and his wife Hodierna, Melisende's sister, Raymond and Bohemund III of Antioch, William of Buris, and many others all gave generously to the Holy Sepulcher.³⁵² As a result, it was the wealthiest church in the Latin East, and it was an important property owner with holdings made up from gifts of lands, entire villages, homes and buildings in the major cities, vineyards, olive groves, mills, and ovens. It was also the burial site for most of the kings of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. It dominated the area in the northwest corner of the city, which became known as the Patriarch's Quarter. The patriarch's palace was just to the north of the church. The patriarch was responsible for the upkeep of the squares and streets in this quarter and issued permits for its buildings. Two streets that were well known in the twelfth century were the Street of the Patriarch and the Street of the Holy Sepulcher. The major source of water for the quarter was the Pool of the Patriarch (Hezekiah's pool).³⁵³

By the time Fulk and Melisende came to the throne, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was well endowed with lands and privileges. However, before Fulk died, he

Study and a Catalogue of the Manuscript Sources, Bibliotheca Victorina XVI (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2004).

³⁵⁰ Back in Western Europe, sixty-one churches and monasteries in Italy, France, and Spain are listed as belonging to them in a very detailed confirmation of their property issued by Pope Eugenius III in 1146: see Hamilton, *Latin Church*, 94-95; de Rozière, no 23, 36-41.

³⁵¹ RRH 74.

³⁵² RRH 193, 198, 218, 219, 194, 417, 425.

³⁵³ Adrian J. Boas, *Crusader Archaeology: the Material Culture of the Latin East* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 22.

issued three gift charters to the church in 1138 with Melisende's consent. Two years after the birth of Amalric, these charters give the impression that Fulk had accepted the situation in which he shared the crown with Melisende through their regular acknowledgement of her consent. It is striking that there is no evidence that he supported any other church at this time, which was a period of relative calm after the disasters of the previous year's siege by Zengi at Montferrand in Tripoli. The first charter, issued from Jerusalem, which will be examined in detail below, was issued at Melisende's request.³⁵⁴ It recorded a gift Fulk and Melisende made to the church of the town of Tekoah in exchange for the village of Bethany, where Melisende planned to build and lavishly endow a convent for her sister Ivette on the site of the house of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and one of Christ's most famous miracles in which he raised Lazarus from the dead. In the second charter that year, Fulk, with Melisende's consent, confirmed a gift of two *carruca*e of lands, previously made in their presence, to the church at the village of Mimas near Acre by Lambertus Alsus for the soul of his wife Agnes and her parents.³⁵⁵ It was issued while Fulk and Melisende were visiting Acre with Patriarch William, Melisende's chaplain Peter, and her sister Hodierna, the countess of Tripoli, who all appear on its witness list. Issued in Nablus, the third charter records a list of houses within the walls of Jerusalem and a shop and some money-changing tables owned by a man known as William the Bastard that Fulk gave to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher with Melisende's consent.³⁵⁶ It is possible that Fulk and Melisende's gifts to the church in this last charter were given in gratitude for the patriarch's aid to Fulk during the siege of Montferrand. According to William of Tyre, Patriarch William had assembled all the

³⁵⁴ RRH 174.

³⁵⁵ RRH 179.

³⁵⁶ RRH 181.

troops left in the kingdom and, armed with the holy relic of the True Cross, stopped in the kingdom's main cities and towns to collect reinforcements along the way to relieve the king and his knights.³⁵⁷ The suggestion that these gifts were made as a gesture of gratitude to the patriarch for his loyal actions, is based on the names in the witness list of the charter. Three of the knights who were starving and besieged with Fulk in Montferrand, William of Bury, Renier of Brus, and Baldwin of Ramla, as well as Patriarch William himself, appear as witnesses to this charter.

Throughout Fulk and Melisende's reign, and then after Fulk's death, the largest church building project carried out by the crusaders was at the site of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. By the twelfth century, the church already had a long history as the place that preserved the location of the tomb Christ had been laid in after his death on the cross. Originally built by Emperor Constantine in the fourth century, the church was damaged over the centuries by fires, earthquakes, and neglect during the Persian invasion in 614 and the Muslim conquest of 634. Later the church was completely destroyed in 1009 during the rule of the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim (996-1021). The Byzantine Emperor Constantine IX Monomachus partly rebuilt the church between the years 1042 and 1048, but the crusaders made restoring and enlarging it a major priority and spent a great amount of the church's resources and the kingdom's manpower in reconstructing and decorating it. Although Constantine's biographer Eusebius of Caesarea credited Constantine with the first construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, by the beginning of the fifth century, his mother the Empress Helena was credited by writers such as Rufinus of Aquileia, not only with the building of the first church, but also with the discovery of the True Cross on the site and the nails with which the body of Christ

³⁵⁷ WT XIV, 26, 87-88.

was fastened to it.³⁵⁸ Honoring this tradition, one of the first chapels in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher that the crusaders restored was the Chapel of St. Helena; in a corner of the chapel, they marked the place where the True Cross was discovered by a small altar on the floor.

Jaroslav Folda has determined that most of the work on the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was executed during the years 1140-1149, although some work was completed after its dedication.³⁵⁹ The plan for the church was borrowed from the pilgrimage churches of southern France that can be found along the roads that led to Santiago de Compostela. Adrian Boas describes this plan as “a large structure with a long nave and aisles, a broad transept and an ambulatory with radiating chapels around the apse. There are a number of such churches, including St. Martin at Tours, Sainte-Foi at Conques, Saint-Martial at Limoges, Saint-Sernin at Toulouse, and Santiago de Compostela.” However, in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, “in place of the long nave is the Byzantine rotunda around Christ’s tomb. The main entrance, instead of being from the west, is from the south into the transept. Otherwise the source of the design adopted by the Franks is, except for the use of ogival rib-vaulting, clearly southern France.”³⁶⁰ The new church enclosed within its walls and roofs not only Christ’s tomb but also the other holy sites connected to his passion and death, such as Golgotha and his prison. The crusaders added a Romanesque choir to the already existing rotunda, various chapels and a large cloister, and constructed a new façade, elaborately decorated with sculpture, with a five-story bell tower. The dormitories, refectory, scriptorium, and other buildings

³⁵⁸ Eusebius, *Life of Constantine*, Averil Cameron and Stuart G. Hall, trans. (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1999), 132-9; Rufinus of Aquileia, *The Church History of Rufinus of Aquileia*, Philip R. Amidon, S.J., trans. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 16-23.

³⁵⁹ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 178, 186.

³⁶⁰ Boas, *Crusader Archaeology*, 124-5.

connected to the lives and functions of the canons were also erected at this time.³⁶¹ When it was nearly finished, the church was consecrated during Melisende's reign on July 15, 1149, the fiftieth anniversary of the taking of Jerusalem.

Regarding the years 1140-1149 of concentrated effort in the rebuilding of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Jaroslav Folda asks, "[t]he question remains, however, what role did the king and queen play, and specifically, what role did Melisende play in this project?"³⁶² He answers his question by maintaining that,

Although on the face of it, a queen would not be expected to have a significant hand in these proceedings, in fact there is every reason to suspect that Melisende was heavily involved. On the death of Patriarch William, Melisende quite possibly nominated Fulcher of Angoulême as his successor. There is, furthermore, no doubt that she immediately attempted to influence him, for example in his choice of bishops, by advocating her chancellor as the new archbishop of Tyre. The strong-minded Fulcher refused to submit to her arbitrary choice in that case, but he proved to be a valuable ally later in her struggle with Baldwin III for royal control. In 1145, however, Baldwin III had only just reached his majority at fifteen, and Melisende held onto full power as long as she could. Setting the Holy Sepulcher project against these developments, we can reasonably expect that Melisende and the patriarch were jointly involved in the major decisions made about the final phases of the church from 1146 on. Melisende was at the height of her powers in the government in these years; the patriarch was firmly determined to run the church according to his own high-minded standards.³⁶³

Although there is no direct evidence or testimony that Melisende was involved in the funding or designs of the church, it is highly likely that she played a role in some capacity in its planning and organization and this must be regarded as one of the most important examples of the patronage she extended to it during her reign. It is important to note here that Melisende may have been consciously following the example set by St. Helena with

³⁶¹ Boas, *Crusader Archaeology*, 22.

³⁶² Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 202.

³⁶³ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 202-3.

her involvement in the renovations of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. St. Helena had long been one of the most important models of royal female piety in the West as well as in the East, and because of her example, church building and adorning churches had become prominently associated with queenship since the fourth century.³⁶⁴ The gift charters from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher record the other occasions that Melisende supported it.

Two charters Melisende issued for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher just before Baldwin's revolt in 1152 demonstrate that her support and patronage for the church continued up to her last days in power. These acts of patronage must be seen as political acts because she needed Patriarch Fulcher to back her political power during the coming showdown with her son. In the first charter in 1151 that was witnessed by many leading clerics and citizens of Jerusalem, she alone confirmed for the church an exchange of villages that had been made during her and Fulk's reign between a man named John Patricius and the Holy Sepulcher.³⁶⁵ John Patricius was to have given two villages called Megina and Mezera, in the vicinity of Jerusalem to the Holy Sepulcher, and to have received Cafermelich near Nablus and Aquina near Jerusalem, in exchange. For whatever reason, the exchange had never been completed, but according to the charter Melisende had been present when the exchange was first arranged. Upon reviewing the matter over again at this time, she had decided to uphold the exchange. Mayer believes that the timing of this charter suggests that Melisende chose this moment to uphold the previous exchange in order to "ingratiate herself with the Church."³⁶⁶ It was witnessed by a notable list that included many of her clerical and lay supporters, such as Giraud, the

³⁶⁴ McNamara, 62.

³⁶⁵ RRH 268.

³⁶⁶ Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 161.

Bishop of Bethlehem, Godfrey, the Abbot of the *Templum Domini*, her son Amalric, now Count of Jaffa, Manasses her constable, Philip of Nablus, Ralph Strabo, the Viscount of Jerusalem, Ulrich, the Viscount of Nablus and his son Baldwin, and many others.

In the second charter issued during April 1152, although the kingdom had been formally divided, Melisende remained in power still.³⁶⁷ The purpose of this confirmation and gift charter was what Mayer believes to be an attempt to “woo” the city³⁶⁸ as well as the patriarch. The charter does include Baldwin and Amalric’s consent, which indicates that outwardly she and Baldwin were reconciled. On this occasion, she waived a suit or challenge that she had brought against the Holy Sepulcher over some Christian Syrian inhabitants of the village of Bethsurie or Bait-Surik near Jerusalem. The Holy Sepulcher was to be allowed to hold these people in peace as they had held them since the days of Godfrey’s reign. To them, she even added some other Syrians of the village of Calandria also near Jerusalem, as well as some in Ramethes or Ar-Ram. She does all of this in return for the shop previously owned by William the Bastard and a share in his two money-changing tables that she and Fulk had given the church back in 1138. With the income from this shop and tables, she declared that she would provide the city of Jerusalem with a new street, *ad perficiendam ruam novuam in Iherusalem de suo concesserunt*.³⁶⁹ It became known as *Malquisinat* or the Street of Bad Cooking, because it was a place where vendors could sell cooked meals and bread to pilgrims, and it was covered by a stone vault ceiling. Parallel to it on each side, were two other streets that Melisende may have built at the same time, known as the Street of Herbs and the Covered Street. The three streets had passages that were six meters high and three meters

³⁶⁷ RRH 278.

³⁶⁸ Mayer, “Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem,” 167.

³⁶⁹ RRH 278.

wide. Their shops were no more than four meters square. There were square shaft openings above *Malquisinat* Street to let in light and air and let the smoke from the cooking fires out. Stone arches covered the openings to keep the rain from seeping in.³⁷⁰ There can still be seen today some inscriptions carved into *Malquisinat*'s arches that linked it to Jerusalem's Abbey of St. Anne, where Melisende's sister Ivette had lived as a nun before she moved to the convent of Bethany. The carved letters "SCA ANNA" might suggest that Melisende had arranged for the abbey to receive a share in the rents of the shops so inscribed and that she had not stopped patronizing St. Anne's after her sister had left.³⁷¹

Melisende built *Malquisinat* Street to solve an urgent problem for her city. By the middle of the twelfth century, there had been a rapid growth in the number of pilgrims visiting Jerusalem from the West to pray at its holy places and shrine churches. They congregated in throngs all over the city's streets and, even though the pungent smells of all of the dishes being prepared at once must have wafted far and wide giving the street its name, there was a desperate need for vendors that would sell them cooked food as they had no place to cook their own. Her construction of this street was a strategic move because it demonstrated her capacity to effectively govern the city, solve its problems, and make the lives of its inhabitants better.

Because of her interest in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Patriarch Fulcher might have appealed to her for aid in his clash with the Knights of St. John, who had begun building a new, enormous, and expensive hospital in the mid-1140's just to the south of his church. William of Tyre describes that the conflict arose because of tithing

³⁷⁰ Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades*, 147.

³⁷¹ Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades*, 147.

and parochial rights; the Hospitallers allowed excommunicated people to receive Holy Communion in their churches, collected donations and tithes that should have gone to other local churches, consecrated their own priests instead of allowing the local bishops to do it, and gave these priests permission to celebrate their offices in the dioceses of those local bishops. Moreover, he writes,

[t]he most intolerable wrong of all... was done to the patriarch and the holy church at Jerusalem. For, before the very doors of the church of the Holy Resurrection, to show their insolent contempt for the church itself, they began to erect an edifice far higher and more costly than that church which had been consecrated by the precious blood of our Savior... Moreover, whenever the lord patriarch went to speak to the people, according to custom, from the place where the Savior of mankind hung for our salvation and thus bought complete redemption for the whole world, they endeavored to hinder the celebration of the office entrusted to him. With intentional malice, they set their many great bells ringing so loudly and persistently that the voice of the patriarch could not rise above the din, nor could the people in spite of all his efforts, hear him. The patriarch often complained to the citizens of the outrageous conduct of the Hospitallers, which was perfectly obvious. Yet, though, many besought them to cease, they remained incorrigible.³⁷²

According to Jonathan Riley-Smith, “by 1154, the Hospital had gained from the papacy the privileges upon which could be built a whole system of ecclesiastical liberties.”³⁷³

The patriarch might have hoped that Melisende would help him and forbid their disruptive actions. Since she was also one of the Hospitallers’s most important patrons, she would have had some influence with them.

Patriarch Fulcher could not have wanted to see Melisende overthrown and must have hoped that she would acknowledge Baldwin’s right to rule with her jointly in order to remain in power. Her patronage for him and his church must have been the main reason for his support for her power and authority. He was her strongest ally in the civil

³⁷² WT XVIII, 3, 240-1.

³⁷³ Riley-Smith, *Knights of St. John*, 45, 375-89.

war and he was instrumental in winning generous terms for her after her defeat in the Tower of David. After the civil war, Fulcher seems to have given up on the idea of seeking support from the victorious Baldwin against the Knights of St. John. In 1154, he set out for Rome, with Peter, the Archbishop of Tyre, and many other important churchmen, to seek redress from Pope Adrian IV. Baldwin must have refused to exert his influence on the patriarch's behalf because of the latter's alliance with his mother against him and because he could not have risked losing the support of the Hospitallers, who by now played an important role in his kingdom's defense. Unfortunately for Fulcher, the pope ignored his pleas because, according to William of Tyre, the Hospitallers had already bribed him to find in their favor. Defeated, the patriarch returned back home to Jerusalem empty handed.³⁷⁴

The last charter Melisende issued for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher indicated that she still enjoyed some political power, despite the fact that by 1155, she had been removed from the throne and retired to Nablus.³⁷⁵ On this occasion, she confirmed a charter that her "beloved son" Baldwin, *Balduini dilecti filii mei*, had previously issued that recorded a sale by Hugh of Ibelin of three villages and all of their appurtenances, Vuetmoamel, Dersabeth, and Corteis, to the Holy Sepulcher for seven thousand bezants.³⁷⁶ It was written by her own cleric named Guido, who she must have taken with her to Nablus, and witnessed by Godfrey, Abbot of the *Templum Domini*, as well as three of Nablus's most influential barons, Philip of Nablus, her longtime supporter, his brother Henry, and Rohard of Nablus. Perhaps Baldwin asked her to issue this confirmation in

³⁷⁴ WT XVIII, 6-8, 245-251. Riley-Smith argues that in fact, "[t]he Military Orders were agents of the papacy in Latin Syria. It has been argued that Rome intended to use them as a means of centralizing the Church," in *Knights of St. John*, 390.

³⁷⁵ RRH 313.

³⁷⁶ RRH 299.

order to make sure that Philip of Nablus witnessed it because Baldwin's confirmation of the sale states that Philip was present when it was conducted. Whatever the circumstances, this charter indicates that the reconciliation between Melisende and Baldwin was real and that they had come to some sort of arrangement that allowed her to step in and carry out some of the business of governing the kingdom if he permitted it.

Throughout her reign, Melisende was extremely generous toward the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The charters reveal that she approved and confirmed its land transactions, gave it added sources of income in Jerusalem in order for it to continue to carry out its important religious and social functions in the kingdom, and oversaw, and perhaps helped fund and direct, the rebuilding of the church itself, conferring on it renewed glory and status. In return, aside from prayers and broad support for her authority, she also received the loyal political support of the patriarch during the final crisis of her reign, which should not be underestimated. He was the most powerful religious authority and leader of the church in the Holy Land. He administered the Latin Church, performed the kingdom's most important religious rituals, and even led the army into battle wielding the might of the relic of the True Cross. An influential ally, his friendship powerfully backed her authority in the kingdom until 1152.

The Order of the Knights of St. John, or the Hospitallers:

In the first few decades after it began, the main occupation of the Order of the Knights of St. John or the Hospitallers was to run a charitable hospital and hospice in order to minister to visiting pilgrims and the kingdom's sick. As previously mentioned, it is believed that the origins of the Hospitallers date to the mid-eleventh century. It was

then that merchants from Amalfi established or restored the monastery of St. Mary of the Latins in Jerusalem, just south of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. They staffed it with Italian Benedictine monks and they began to take care of pilgrims visiting from the West, whose numbers were increasing. To support these larger numbers of pilgrims, two dependent foundations were created, the convent of St. Mary Magdalen to shelter women, later known as St. Mary Major, and a hospice dedicated to either St. John the Almoner or St. John the Baptist, both of which were functioning by 1080. After the crusaders took Jerusalem, the Hospital was treated as a separate entity, and began to receive gifts in its own right.³⁷⁷ It was generously supported by Duke Godfrey during his reign, and also by King Baldwin I. In 1113, Pope Paschal II took the Hospital under his protection by issuing the bull *Pie postulation voluntatis*, which became the new order's foundation charter.

In 1136, however, Melisende and Fulk changed the character of the organization when they granted Master Raymond of Puy and the Hospitallers the recently built castle of Bethgibelin or Beit Jibrin, which had formerly been held by Hugh of St. Abraham or Hebron in order to guard the approach road from Hebron to Ascalon.³⁷⁸ Located twelve miles east of Ascalon, Bethgibelin was a fortress that William of Tyre described as, "surrounded by an impregnable wall with towers, ramparts, and a moat....When the fortress was finished and complete in every part, it was granted by common consent to the brothers of the house of the Hospital, which is at Jerusalem. They have guarded their charge with all due diligence, even to the present time; and from that day, the attacks of

³⁷⁷ Riley-Smith, *Knights of St. John*, 37-8.

³⁷⁸ RRH 164; WT XIV, 22, 82.

the enemy in that place have become less violent.”³⁷⁹ It is most likely that this gift militarized the order by adding military responsibilities to the already considerable burden of caring for the sick. The Hospitallers must have been willing to take on these responsibilities and may even have asked for them. Alan Forey maintains that, “[t]he Hospitallers were being assigned direct control over strongholds and were not just receiving rights of overlordship. To have entrusted frontier strongholds in these circumstances to an institution which contained no military element would have been foolhardy, and it is difficult to believe that Fulk would have asked Hugh of St. Abraham to surrender his rights, or that the grant of Beit-Jibrin would have been made to the Hospitallers... if the hospital had been still purely a charitable institution.”³⁸⁰ The charter, which was issued from Nablus and witnessed by a long list of the kingdom’s clerics and barons including Patriarch William, also included a gift made to the Hospitallers by Fulk and Melisende of four *casalia* called Fectata, Sahalin, Zeita, and Courcoza. It is likely that Fulk and Melisende gave the Hospitallers these four villages in order to provide them with added income to fulfill their new military duties. They knew how expensive the effort would be. William of Tyre mentions that a considerable amount of money and effort had already been expended during their reign before the castle was built to supply the area with enough manpower, provisions, and weapons to keep the Ascalonites at bay.³⁸¹ A few years later, the Hospitallers took on the extremely important military responsibility on the frontiers of the County of Tripoli in 1144 when Count Raymond

³⁷⁹ WT XIV, 22, 81-2.

³⁸⁰ Alan Forey, *The Military Orders from the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 19.

³⁸¹ WT XIV, 22, 80-1.

gave them the fortresses of Crac des Chevaliers, Castellum Bochee, Lacum, Felicium, and Mardabech and the rights over the towns of Barin and Rafaniyah.³⁸²

Before the western armies arrived in the Holy Land during the Second Crusade, Melisende issued two charters for the Knights of St. John, who would have been making their military preparations to participate in the upcoming battles. Raymond of Puy was of course present at the war council held in Acre at which the leaders of the Second Crusade decided to attack Damascus. The first is a gift confirmation, jointly conceded by Melisende and Baldwin III on February 1, 1147.³⁸³ It confirms a gift made in 1141 in the presence of Fulk and arranged by Patriarch William that is an example of early ecclesiastical patronage of the order.³⁸⁴ It was then that Robert of St. Gilles and his wife Odula, having received the approval of Rohard the elder, Viscount of Jerusalem, gave the town of Emmaus to the Hospitallers, with all of its lands, villages, and appurtenances. Emmaus was the place outside Jerusalem that the Gospel of Luke describes, where Cleopas and another disciple met the risen Christ and shared a meal with him, “[a]nd their eyes were opened, and they knew him, and he vanished out of their sight.”³⁸⁵ It was a holy pilgrimage site, therefore, and became an important center for them. The original charter of 1141 had specified that the Church of the Holy Sepulcher would receive half-tithes from this estate, but that “the brothers of the Hospital will retain everything else that they can raise for the administration of their chapels and churches in which they have the rights to take oblations and to hold marriages, purifications,

³⁸² Riley-Smith, *Knights of St. John*, 55.

³⁸³ RRH 244.

³⁸⁴ RRH 205.

³⁸⁵ Luke 24: 31.

confessions and visitations, and which have baptisteries and cemeteries.”³⁸⁶ By the time Melisende and Baldwin confirmed the gift of Emmaus in 1147, the Hospitallers had begun to build their great hospital and church next door to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and Patriarch Fulcher had been in office only one year. It is interesting to note that the confirmation charter does not reiterate those parochial rights, which were the source of the dispute between the patriarch and the Hospitallers that was beginning to grow by this time. Was Melisende trying to appease both sides through the content and the wording of the charter in order to keep the peace? She appears to be supporting the Hospitallers by making this confirmation in order to secure their rights over Emmaus. However, by omitting the original wording of the 1141 charter, perhaps she is also making an effort to assuage the concerns of the patriarch at this time.

A few months later on July 4, 1147, Melisende, Baldwin, and Amalric jointly issued another charter recording a gift exchange with the Hospitallers.³⁸⁷ From Nablus, they gave the Hospital the *Altum Casale* in Jerusalem in exchange for some villages in the *Vallis Suech*, an exposed area east of the Sea of Galilee. The wording reveals that the Hospital was taking on more military duties by accepting this gift and pledging to aid in the recovery effort for Edessa, *ad provectum et ad ampliacionem et liberationem regni Iherosolimitani*,³⁸⁸ and therefore it made sense to find Manasses, the kingdom’s constable, in the witness list. Melisende and her sons also confirmed all of the gifts made by their royal predecessors to the Hospital at this time. It is also interesting to note that this charter was the last to be drawn up by the chancellor Ralph until he was restored

³⁸⁶ RRH 205; translation by Riley-Smith, *Knights of St. John*, 393.

³⁸⁷ RRH 245; Mayer believes that it is possible that Melisende may have added Amalric’s name in this charter in order to reduce the presence of Baldwin’s, see Mayer, “Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem,” 124-5.

³⁸⁸ Mayer, “Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem,” 126.

under Baldwin III's reign. Some time after he drew it up, Melisende dismissed him, probably because he had become a political liability to her when he caused a division between her and Patriarch Fulcher, who would not accept his appointment to the archbishopric of Tyre, which she had demanded. She didn't fill his position with anyone else, but rather relied on a clerk named Guido from her chapel to draw up her future charters.

Melisende issued two more charters for the Knights of St. John before 1152, and as expected, they reflect the growing division between herself and her son. Mayer has suggested that in the first one, issued in 1149, she is attempting to widen her influence in the north of the kingdom near Acre and either win the political support of the Hospitallers or at least their neutrality in the upcoming conflict.³⁸⁹ Melisende issued it in her name, stamped it with her seal, and only mentioned Baldwin's consent, which reduced his legal position. From this point on, there would be no more joint issuance of charters leading up to the civil war. The charter records that the Knights were to relinquish the public baths in the street of St. Leonard in Acre and receive in return a loggia opposite their Church of St. John the Baptist, which had once belonged to Franco, the castellan of Acre, and which Melisende had previously filed a suit in order that they be returned *in potestatum et dispositionem regni*. At this time, however, she will waive her claim to it. In the charter, she also confirms the sale of a house with an adjacent tower, made by the former Viscount Robert of Acre to the Hospitallers and concludes by giving them the village of Assera near Caesarea.

³⁸⁹ RRH 256; Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 129-30.

In the second charter of early 1150, Melisende is again showing interest in Acre.³⁹⁰ Mentioning both Baldwin and Amalric's consent again this time, she gives the Hospitallers the village of Beroeth, which is very close to the city, with all of its farms and other appurtenances in order to ensure the continuance of peace in the rule that has been entrusted to her, *ad consequendam in commisso regimine pacis perseverenciam*. The charter also says that she made the grant after carefully pondering the advice given her by discerning men, especially by those who generally gave her the most correct advice, *consilio itaque discretorum et maxime rectora nobis consulentium studiosissime percunctato*, presumably her vassals. Mayer believes that this is the first indication that she is deliberately creating a vassalry of her own at this time that will be loyal to her foremost.³⁹¹ Some of her most loyal supporters from among the barons are listed as witnesses, including Balian of Ibelin and his son Hugh, Manasses, Rohard of Jerusalem, and Philip of Nablus and his son. Even Humphrey of Toron is on the list, which is surprising because he will prove to be one of Baldwin's most loyal supporters. Mayer believes that his presence indicates that he supported her up to this point and that he must have witnessed the charter before he went on Baldwin's military campaign in Syria in the summer of 1150, during which he changed his mind and decided to support him.³⁹² This charter reflects the highest point of her reign, a time when her authority was unchallenged and she wielded power through the support of an undivided barony and church.

Melisende contributed in many ways to the rapid formation of the Hospitallers into a great military order of the Church. Her gifts of villages and confirmations of their territories helped them finance their operations and extend their influence in the kingdom

³⁹⁰ RRH 262.

³⁹¹ Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 141.

³⁹² Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 141.

as they were establishing themselves under the pious and ambitious leadership of their second Master Raymond of Puy. Eventually, countless gifts and even recruits would begin to pour into the hands of the Hospitallers from all over the Christian world, laying the basis for its international power, but it owed a large debt to royal patronage for its remarkable start, especially during Melisende's reign. In return, the Hospitallers gave their military and social services to the kingdom, which were vital to its health and defense, as well as its ability to shelter the throngs of pilgrims that visited each year. However, aside from offering general political support through her reign, there is no evidence that Raymond or the Hospitallers ever backed Melisende specifically and he doesn't appear in any of the witness lists from any of the charters issued by her. Nor is there evidence in the charters that he backed Baldwin. The lack of evidence suggests that her patronage for the Knights of St. John won their neutrality throughout the political showdown with her son.

The Convent at Bethany:

One of the most important examples of Melisende's religious patronage was her founding of a convent for religious women at Bethany in 1138. Devoting an entire chapter in his chronicle to the description of her foundation and gifts, William of Tyre wrote that it was her idea to found the convent "in order to provide for the healing of her own soul and those of her parents as also for the salvation of her husband and children."³⁹³ Thus the convent was regarded as Melisende's personal project and a demonstration of her piety and religious patronage. It was understood that her motive in founding it was to honor her parents, husband, and sons as well as to sanctify the royal

³⁹³ WT XV, 26, 132.

dynasty. Through this building project, she strived to keep the memory of her dynasty intact for the future by acting through the traditional female role as “kinkeeper” for her family.³⁹⁴ She would eventually place her sister Ivette, who had entered the convent of St. Anne in Jerusalem probably as a young girl after having served as a hostage from 1124 to 1125 with Timurtash in exchange for her father, in charge of the convent as its abbess; in fact it “was consideration for this sister which led the queen to undertake this enterprise, for she felt that it was unfitting that a king’s daughter should be subject to the authority of a mother superior, like an ordinary person.”³⁹⁵

“After much deliberation,” Melisende chose Bethany as the place to found her convent. William wrote that she “mentally surveyed the whole country and made a careful investigation to find a suitable place... she finally decided upon Bethany, the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus their brother, whom Jesus loved—Bethany, the familiar abiding place and home of our Lord and Savior.”³⁹⁶ Less than two miles from Jerusalem on the road to Jericho, Bethany was a small village on the southeastern slope of the Mount of Olives. Daniel, the Russian pilgrim and abbot, described the town as well as the preexisting Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Lazarus, as it had looked when he visited there in 1106-8.

As you enter the gates of this little town, on your right hand is a cave in which is the tomb of holy Lazarus; in this cell Lazarus fell ill and died. And in the middle of the town is a great and high church richly decorated with paintings. And from this church to the tomb of Lazarus is twelve fathoms; the tomb of Lazarus is to the west of the church, and the church is to the east. In front of the town to the west is a very fine well deep in the ground and you must descend to it by steps. One verst distant from

³⁹⁴ Komter, “Women, Gifts, and Power,” 125.

³⁹⁵ WT XV, 26, 133.

³⁹⁶ WT XV, 26, 133.

Bethany in the direction of Jerusalem there is a pillar and in that place Martha met Jesus; here too Christ mounted an ass after raising Lazarus.³⁹⁷

It was a lonely place but its closeness to the city offered many advantages to the nuns, who could be more easily supported and protected. It was situated on the edge of the barren and wild hills that descended eastward to the Dead Sea, and its lands supported olive groves and sheep grazing.

Bethany belonged to the canons of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher but Melisende, as demonstrated by an 1138 charter granted with Fulk, had convinced Patriarch William and the other canons to exchange it for Tekoah, a town south of Bethlehem near Hebron.³⁹⁸ It was a widely supported initiative and may even have been signed during the occasion of a meeting of the High Court as the charter's witness list contains the names of most of the kingdom's clerics including the archbishop of Caesarea, the bishops of Bethlehem, Sebaste, Nazareth, and Sidon, the abbots of the Templum Domini and Mount Tabor, and many other deacons, priors, and canons, as well as its most powerful lords, including the lords of Tiberias, Caesarea, Ramla, and the viscounts of Jerusalem and Nablus. Since the area was exposed to the kingdom's many enemies, Melisende, "at great expense caused to be built a strongly fortified tower of hewn and polished stone. This was devoted to the necessary purpose of defense, that the maidens dedicated to God might have an impregnable fortress as a protection against the enemy."³⁹⁹ Through their exchange of lands, the canons of the Holy Sepulcher therefore welcomed Melisende's initiative to found and protect this sacred place outside Jerusalem at the crown's expense. The many prominent names on the charter's witness list

³⁹⁷ Daniel the Abbot, 133.

³⁹⁸ RRH 174.

³⁹⁹ WT XV, 26, 133.

signified that Melisende's patronage was considered an appropriate action by the barons and churchmen of the kingdom and the proper fulfillment of her role as queen with the power to spend royal funds to found a monastery. Besides its close proximity to Jerusalem, however, the basis for Melisende's choice of Bethany must also have been determined by its significance in the New Testament and its special inhabitants.

The gospels relate that Christ visited there many times to stay with his friend Lazarus, probably when visiting Jerusalem during feast days, and that each time he was there he was prominently served by women, his friend's sisters Mary and Martha. In the usual female role, Martha served Christ as a servant by waiting on him and presumably preparing meals to feed him and his disciples. On one occasion, Mary angered Martha by not helping her with the duties of hospitality and instead sitting at Christ's feet to listen to his teaching. Martha complained to him by saying, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her.'"⁴⁰⁰ To Martha's disappointment, Christ approved of Mary's contemplative role and preference to listening over housework and so he accepted her as one of his disciples. Mary became venerated as a model for Christian women, who should not be concerned with earthly worries or distractions.

On another occasion, six days before Christ's final Passover with his disciples, Lazarus gave him a banquet, which was served as always by Martha. Mary, however,

...brought a pound of costly perfume made from genuine aromatic nard, with which she anointed Jesus' feet. Then she dried his feet with her hair, and the house was filled with the ointment's fragrance. Judas Iscariot, one

⁴⁰⁰ Luke 10: 39-42.

of his disciples (the one about to hand him over), protested: 'Why was not this perfume sold? It could have brought three hundred silver pieces, and the money have been given to the poor.' (He did not say this out of concern for the poor, but because he was a thief. He held the purse, and used to help himself to what was deposited there.) To this Jesus replied: 'Leave her alone. Let her keep it against the day they prepare me for burial. The poor you always have with you, but me you will not always have.'⁴⁰¹

Mary's action was not extravagant but rather done in order to prepare Christ for his death and burial. He was not advising neglect for the poor with his words but rather underscoring the urgency of the moment for his disciples and the imminence of his arrest. Mary plays an important role in Christ's revelations through serving him, so it makes sense that Melisende would consider Mary's home of Bethany as a perfect place for a convent of women dedicated to serving Christ through humble devotion and prayer.

Bethany's real prominence, however, as related by John's gospel, was that it was the location for one of his most famous miracles, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Melisende would have been aware that a foundation and church dedicated to him and his sisters on this spot would attract many Christian pilgrims, who would spread its acclaim throughout Europe and Byzantium as well as help support her convent and its nuns financially with their donations. Lazarus was a very popular saint, who was venerated widely in the Latin and Greek Churches. In the Latin tradition of the eleventh and twelfth centuries, Lazarus, Mary, Martha, Mary Magdalen and other disciples, were believed to have been put out to sea by hostile Jews in a boat without sails or oars and after a miraculous voyage across the Mediterranean landed in Provence. They separated there and each went off to preach in different parts of southeast Gaul. Lazarus went to Marseilles, converted many there, and eventually became its earliest bishop in the first

⁴⁰¹ John 12:1-8.

century. During the Roman persecution under Domitian, he was cast into prison and beheaded in the place that is believed to be the cave under the prison of Saint-Lazare. His body was later translated to Autun and buried in its cathedral. The people of Marseilles claimed to have his head, which they venerated as an important relic. In the Orthodox tradition of this time, Lazarus was put into a leaking boat with his sisters and others by hostile Jews of Jaffa but landed miraculously in Cyprus, where he became the first bishop of Kition (Larnaka), ruled for thirty years, and died and was buried there. Emperor Leo VI built a domed cathedral with a high belfry over the site in the late ninth century.⁴⁰²

Melisende's convent of Bethany possessed two churches: to the west was the Church of St. Lazarus, which was reserved for the nuns of the convent, and to the east the Church of Sts. Mary and Martha for the use of the pilgrims to the tomb of Lazarus. The cloister was located on the expected south side of the western church and the convent's buildings were located east of the cloister and south of the eastern church. On the south side of the ruins, a tower remains, just as William had described.⁴⁰³ When the tower and church were finished, Melisende established her sister and the nuns in their new home and placed over them an elderly, experienced abbess to guide them, with the intention for her sister to succeed her when she died. The she generously

... endowed the church with rich estates, so that in temporal possessions it should not be inferior to any monastery, either of men or women; or rather, as it is said, that it might be richer than any other church. Among other possessions which she generously bestowed upon this venerable place was the famous city of Jericho with its dependencies, situated in the plain of Jordan and very rich in resources of every kind. She also presented to the convent a large number of sacred vessels of gold and silver adorned with gems. She likewise gave it silken stuffs for the

⁴⁰² John J. Delaney, *Dictionary of Saints* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 351.

⁴⁰³ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 131.

adornment of the house of God and vestments of every description, both priestly and levitical, as ecclesiastical rules required.

On the death of the venerable woman to whom she had entrusted the charge of convent, the queen put her original intention into effect. With the sanction of the patriarch and the willing assent of the holy nuns, she made her sister the superior of the convent. On that occasion, she made many additional gifts, such as chalices, books, and other ornaments pertaining to the service of the church. As long as she lived, she continued to enrich the place by her favor, in the interests of her own soul and that of the sister whom she so tenderly loved.⁴⁰⁴

Although the convent of Bethany is now in ruins and none of these richly adorned objects have survived, William's description of them indicates that Melisende spared no expense in order to lavishly furnish and equip her foundation and support her sister. These gifts were presumably either liturgical treasures that had been brought from Europe by the first crusaders or subsequent pilgrims, which had become possessions of the crown or had been commissioned for the convent's church by Melisende from the kingdom's own talented gold and silversmiths. It is also important to highlight William's record of her gift of books to the convent of Bethany. Here is evidence that she endowed the convent with manuscripts and was associated with the flourishing scriptoria in the kingdom such as the one in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher from which she could have commissioned these books. Although the provenance of her gifts will probably never be known, her generous patronage guaranteed the success of her convent as well as her reputation as a devout and dutiful queen and must have won her the admiration of the kingdom's churchmen and citizens alike.

⁴⁰⁴ WT XV, 26, 133-4.

The *Melisende Psalter*:

The most famous deluxe manuscript with which Melisende's name is attached is the *Melisende Psalter*, which is currently housed and on display at the British Library in London, with its exquisitely carved ivory covers and silk embroidered binding on its spine. As noted above, William of Tyre specifically identified Melisende as a patroness of books, and it is possible that she commissioned this manuscript for her own individual use. However, while most scholars agree that it was most likely commissioned for Melisende, consensus has been much more elusive as to who commissioned it.

It was produced sometime during the years 1131 and 1143, most probably in the scriptorium of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. The British Museum purchased it in 1845 and at that time it was said to have come from the famous library of Grand Chartreuse, the motherhouse of the Carthusian Order, in Grenoble, France. It was not made for any particular institution, but rather, as its size indicates (21.6 x 14 cm), for the private use of a person of noble rank.⁴⁰⁵ It is an extraordinarily beautiful deluxe codex that begins with twenty-four New Testament illuminations or miniature paintings by an artist who signed the Deësis portrait, incising in the gold of the footstool the Latin words *Basilus me fecit*. These are followed by a calendar with twelve roundels depicting the signs of the Zodiac, richly decorated full-page initials, the text, and finally nine painted portraits of saints accompanying the prayers at the end of the manuscript.⁴⁰⁶ The Latin word-endings in these prayers at the end reveal that the *Melisende Psalter* was for a laywoman's use, further supporting the belief that it was owned by Melisende.⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁵ Folda, "A Twelfth-Century Prayer Book for the Queen of Jerusalem," 1-14; and Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 137-163.

⁴⁰⁶ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 137.

⁴⁰⁷ See Appendix I written by Francis Wormald, in Buchthal, *Miniature Painting*, 132-134.

Jaroslav Folda also notes that, “Besides their focus on the Holy Cross, these prayers also include a particular veneration of the Virgin Mary and St. Mary Magdalene, and the suggestion has been made to link these with the Abbey of St. Mary Jehoshaphat in Jerusalem. Queen Melisende was a benefactor of this abbey and very likely a member of the noble confraternity associated with it. She was also ultimately buried there, at the entrance to the Tomb of the Virgin, after a special funerary chamber was prepared for her, presumably during her lifetime.”⁴⁰⁸

There is further evidence in the calendar of the *Melisende Psalter* that the manuscript was commissioned for Melisende. It has two entries that would have made it special and personal for her: on October 1, the death of her mother Morphia is commemorated and on August 21, the death of her father Baldwin II.⁴⁰⁹ Just as Melisende had commissioned, built, and endowed her convent at Bethany because “[s]he desired in this way to provide for the healing of her own soul and those of her parents as also for the salvation of her husband and children,”⁴¹⁰ so too, perhaps at the same time, and in the same spirit, did she commission her Psalter. The evidence in the Psalter does not discount this idea but rather supports it. The Psalter’s many details reflect the characteristics of her joint rule with Fulk after their reconciliation in 1135-6, which, from that time on, she would have wanted to portray as strong and united, especially because she had emerged from the struggle clearly having the support of most of her barons and

⁴⁰⁸ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 151; Buchthal, *Miniature Painting*, 127, 132.

⁴⁰⁹ As mention of Fulk’s death on November 10, 1143 does not appear, the Psalter must have been commissioned in the years between Baldwin II’s death and his.

⁴¹⁰ WT XV, 26, 132.

the men of the Church. The Psalter's themes put a reassuring emphasis on Fulk's strengths as king of Jerusalem but subtly combine them with hers as its queen.⁴¹¹

Because there are a surprising number of English saints, including St. Hedda, bishop of Winchester on July 7 and St. Eadburga, nun of St. Mary's in Winchester on July 18, that appear in the calendar, it is believed that the scribe chose to use an English calendar of the kind composed in Winchester. An example of this type produced at Winchester has been preserved in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid that compares very closely with the calendar in the *Melisende Psalter*. English manuscripts could easily have been available in the scriptorium of the Holy Sepulcher as some English clerics served there, especially William, who served as prior there until being appointed as archbishop of Tyre in 1127 until his death in 1132 or 1133.⁴¹² The choice to use one, however, is exceptional because the scriptorium usually used a standard "Jerusalem" calendar that was appropriate for its community of Augustinian canons in all of the other extant twelfth-century books it produced.⁴¹³ Three of England's sainted kings and martyrs also appear in the calendar, St. Edward on March 18, St. Oswald on August 5, and St. Edmund on November 20. The Winchester calendar may have been chosen for this feature because it clearly celebrates holy royal figures and their lives, an emphasis *Melisende* would have favored.

⁴¹¹ In the article by Bianca Kühnel, "The Kingly Statement of the Bookcovers of Queen Melisende's Psalter," in *Tesserae: Festschrift für Josef Engemann, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum, Ergänzungsband 18* (1991): 353, she writes, "The bookcovers with their complex iconographic program and fine workmanship are a real visual demonstration of the constitutional *Samtherrschaft* to which now, after many years of fighting and hostility, both the queen and the king were ready to agree; a bold re-affirmation of the strength and virtue of the kingly institution which had been weakened by the long struggle between its two partners."

⁴¹² Wormald, in Buchtal, *Miniature Painting*, 122-3. For the many connections between England, crusading, and the affairs of the Latin East see Christopher Tyerman, *England and the Crusades, 1095-1588* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

⁴¹³ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 151.

Jaroslav Folda believes, however, that the choice of an English calendar and the presence of the English saints indicate that the Psalter was commissioned by Fulk as a reconciliation gift for Melisende and therefore reflects his new family heritage through his English daughter-in-law.⁴¹⁴ This is possible but not completely convincing. Fulk's son Geoffrey Plantagenet had taken control of Anjou when Fulk left for the Holy Land and on June 17, 1128 had married Matilda, the daughter of England's king Henry I, who had been recently widowed at the age of 25 upon the death of the German Emperor Henry V. When Henry I died in 1135, Matilda became the lawful heir to the English throne. Her cousin Stephen of Blois was crowned instead of her, and as a result Matilda and Geoffrey began a war for the throne and her inheritance, which divided loyalties in England and Normandy. If Melisende had commissioned the use of the English calendar, however, the English elements could be explained in another way. Melisende would have watched this situation as carefully as Fulk would have because Matilda's plight would have been her own if her barons had not supported her father's deathbed wish. It is possible that the choice to use the English calendar was Melisende's and that not only did it reflect her husband's heritage but also her sympathy for Matilda and Geoffrey's struggle for their right to inherit the throne of England through Matilda's claim as her father's designated heir. Support for Matilda and Geoffrey's cause was something Melisende and Fulk would have had in common, and Melisende would have wanted to promote it in the Psalter to portray their joint rule as a united one.

Jaroslav Folda best describes the *Melisende Psalter's* remarkable ivory covers and embroidered spine:

⁴¹⁴ Folda, "A Twelfth-Century Prayer Book for the Queen of Jerusalem," 1-14; and Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 154.

The ivory covers are each designed as a framed panel with six paired and linked medallions. It becomes immediately apparent that the “textile pattern” of these covers, Islamic in their geometric design and Byzantine in their sumptuousness, harmonizes through their medallions with the five continuous lozenges of the silk spine. Furthermore, the coloristic effect of these ivories would have been striking in contrast to the predominantly silvery embroidered spine—tiny red, blue, and green crosses on resplendent silver embroidered off white silk. There is evidence of red, blue, and green painted backgrounds, with gilded frames, red inscriptions, and bright blue stones in the borders and eyes of some of the figures, a remarkably contrasting and unexpected Byzantine effect produced in the ivory covers. The colorism and precious materials of the treasure bindings would have provided, in other words, a sumptuous complement to the opulent painted decoration of the manuscript inside.⁴¹⁵

The front ivory cover depicts scenes from the life of King David in the Old Testament in the medallions and imagery from Prudentius’ *Psychomachia* in the form of the battle between virtues and vices in the interstices. The back cover’s medallions depict a Christian king carrying out the six corporal works of mercy found in the New Testament’s Gospel of Matthew 25: 35-36, with fighting animals and birds in the interstices. The program of the ivory covers portrays the theme of Christian kingship in King David’s Israel.

The six medallions on the front cover depict David, whom the kings of Jerusalem must all have regarded as their most esteemed ancestor. In the Old Testament, 2 Samuel 7: 16, God pledged enduring support for David’s kingdom, “And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure forever before me; your throne shall be established forever.” William of Tyre even compares Fulk to David by describing him as a “ruddy man, like David, whom the Lord found after His own heart.”⁴¹⁶ They feature important episodes of David’s career that were designed to display Fulk’s qualities as a medieval Christian

⁴¹⁵ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 157-8.

⁴¹⁶ WT XIV, 1, 47.

king: David killing lions and bears while defending his father's sheep as a youth,⁴¹⁷ David being anointed with oil by Samuel as God commanded in the city of Bethlehem,⁴¹⁸ David fighting Goliath,⁴¹⁹ David turning to the high priest Ahimelech, who gives him provisions and Goliath's sword, which he won in battle, as Doeg the Edomite watches,⁴²⁰ David making burnt offerings to God to avert plague on the altar he built,⁴²¹ and David playing the lyre as he was known to do each day.⁴²² Emphasizing the fact that Fulk was a sacral king, crowned and anointed by God, Fulk was also brave and skilled on the battlefield, devoted to God, a builder of churches and altars, wise enough to seek counsel and aid from priests, and a patron of music and the arts.

Intertwined between the medallions, however, are the female personifications of the virtues prevailing over the vices, a subject drawn from Prudentius's *Psychomachia*. Prudentius wrote this allegory c. 405, and it had a powerful influence on medieval art and culture. The poetic representation of the virtues and vices that fight over the mind and soul of the Christian everyman was a common motif in the decoration of medieval churches and other religious monuments.⁴²³ According to Macklin Smith, "[t]he action of the allegory is simple: despite near reversals, the Christian virtues led by Faith win a series of epic combats over the vices, after which the victorious army constructs a holy

⁴¹⁷ 1 Samuel 17: 31-37.

⁴¹⁸ 1 Samuel 16: 13.

⁴¹⁹ 1 Samuel 17: 19-54.

⁴²⁰ 1 Samuel 22: 9-10.

⁴²¹ 2 Samuel 24: 25.

⁴²² 1 Samuel 18: 10.

⁴²³ For a discussion of the representation of the virtues and vices in medieval art see Emile Mâle, *The Gothic Image: Religious Art in France of the Thirteenth Century*, Dora Nussey, trans. (New York: Harper & Rowe, Publishers, 1958), 98-130; and Colum Hourihane, ed., *Virtue and Vice: the Personifications in the Index of Christian Art* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). For an intriguing analysis of early medieval attitudes regarding avarice up to the tenth and eleventh centuries, see Richard Newhauser, *The Early History of Greed: the Sin of Avarice in Early Medieval Thought and Literature* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

city (in the mind) on whose citadel stands a glorious temple dedicated to Wisdom.”⁴²⁴

Placed on the front cover of the *Melisende Psalter*, however, the scenes from the poem take on a new “crusader” context. Like the personified virtues, the crusader knights led by their kings prevailed over their enemies, the Muslim knights, or the vices, after which the victorious army constructed the holy city of Jerusalem, on whose citadel stands the glorious Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

The two largest, central, and most prominently displayed battle scenes between the virtues and vices in the interstices also arguably emphasize feminine power, perhaps that of Melisende’s. The top scene depicts the crowned female figure of *Humilitas* or Humility, a sword in each of her hands, vanquishing two figures personifying *Superbia* or Pride. The crown worn by *Humilitas* is exceptional and suggests that this virtue is a queen, as the rest wear helmets or no headpiece at all. Could this figure depict a humble Melisende in the spirit of reconciliation with her husband? Directly below them, a female figure dressed in armor personifying *Fortitudo* or Strength stabs her sword into *Avaritia* or Avarice. Below Strength and Avarice stands the lone female virtue *Largitas* or Generosity, facing front with her arms outstretched and welcoming. This is an unusual depiction because in the *Psychomachia*, she helps *Ratio* fight *Avaritia*. In most instances where the virtues and vices are depicted in medieval art, the poem is their inspiration, and they are always portrayed as opposing pairs, locked in battle. An archway in the Romanesque Church of Aulnay in Saintonge, for instance, shows *Largitas* paired with *Avaritia* as well as the rest of the paired virtues and vices.⁴²⁵ So too does an arch over a

⁴²⁴ Macklin Smith, *Prudentius’ Psychomachia: A Reexamination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1976), 3–4.

⁴²⁵ Mâle, 102; for other examples of the virtues and vices in medieval sculpture, see Jacques Houlet, *Les combats des vertues et des vices: Les Psychomachies dans l’art* (Paris: Nouvelles Editions Latines, 1969).

door of the refectory in the tower of the church Saint-Aubin in Angers.⁴²⁶ It is unexpected on the cover of the *Melisende Psalter*, therefore, to find five of the virtues portrayed alone and unarmed. Moreover, *Largitas* is the only figure fully frontal and with her arms wide open, which gives added significance to the virtue of generosity. She engages the viewer in contrast to the rest of the virtues, whose faces are depicted in profile. As Meyer Schapiro has noted in his essay “Frontal and Profile as Symbolic Forms,” the profile face “is detached from the viewer and belongs with the body in action (or in an intransitive state) in a space shared with other profiles on the surface of the image. It is, broadly speaking, like the grammatical form of the third person, the impersonal ‘he’ or ‘she’ with its concordantly inflected verb; while the face turned outward is credited with intentness, a latent or potential glance directed to the observer, and corresponds to the role of ‘I’ in speech, with its complementary ‘you.’ It seems to exist both for us and for itself in a space virtually continuous with our own, and is therefore appropriate to the figure as symbol or as carrier of a message.”⁴²⁷ This may be, therefore, an intentionally designed figure to highlight the importance placed by Melisende on the virtue of generosity or patronage and could indicate that she is the patron of the codex. The three scenes convey a powerful image of a crowned queen vanquishing pride and avarice through humility, strength, and generosity. Side by side, David and the female virtues prevail in each scene. Combined, these elements on the front cover of the Psalter create a powerful impression of the successful joint reign of Fulk and Melisende and its most important moral and virtuous characteristics.

⁴²⁶ Pierre Herbécourt, *Anjou roman* (Paris: Zodiaque, 1959).

⁴²⁷ Meyer Schapiro, *Words, Script, and Pictures: Semiotics of Visual Language* (New York: George Braziller, 1996), 73.

The back ivory cover of the *Melisende Psalter* also arguably serves to describe the beneficial circumstances of the joint rule of Melisende and Fulk within the kingdom. They were personally responsible for protecting or defending their own subjects as well as taking care of the Christian pilgrims that traveled in large numbers to the Holy Land from Europe every Spring, who most often arrived hungry, homeless, and penniless. The Psalter's back cover medallions depict a crusader king, wearing Byzantine-looking regalia,⁴²⁸ performing the corporal works of mercy found in the New Testament: giving food to the hungry and drink to the thirsty, sheltering strangers, clothing the naked, ministering to the sick, and visiting prisoners. These also happen to be the works most often carried out by Christian queens at this time and associated with them, when their husbands were occupied by wars and governing. Therefore the medallions depict a monarchy, blessed by God that has the strength of a king combined with the charity of a queen.

The interstices on the back cover depict animals and birds. The two, central spaces, occupied by the crowned and armored virtues on the front cover, feature two scenes of what appears to be a dog, twisting to bite the animal it is attacking. According to Bianca Kühnel, "The animals and birds represented between the medallions of the backcover continue and extend the allegory of good and evil. They are actually the counterpart of the Virtues and Vices fighting on the front. Peter Damian (1007-1072) wrote that animals were created not only for man's use but also for his moral improvement, and he compares animals, both real and fabulous, to Vices and Virtues. This is a statement typical of the medieval attitude towards nature whose roots lay in the

⁴²⁸ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 158.

patristic literature.”⁴²⁹ Birds occupy the outer spaces and corners, but above and below the fighting animals are two equally prominent figures, a heron on the top labeled “Herodius” and a hare below. Although it has been suggested that “Herodius” may have been the name of the artist, it is much more likely that the artist used the word to indicate the heron as it is used in Psalm 104:17, *Herodii domus dux est eorum*. The placement of the heron and the hare suggests a relationship between the two. It has been suggested that the heron, also known as “fulica” in the medieval twelfth-century bestiaries, is a rebus for Fulk.⁴³⁰ According to a perhaps typical description found in a twelfth-century bestiary,

The fulica (coot) is a fowl, which is very intelligent and foresighted, and it does not eat corpses. Nor does it gad about and stray from place to place. On the contrary, it stays in one place and persists in remaining there all its life. There it gets its food and there it sticks.

In just the same way do the faithful live, all knit together in one flock. They do not go wandering hither and thither, flapping about in different directions as the heretics do. They are not delighted with secular longings and desires. They always keep together in one place and rest in the Catholic Church.

There our Lord causes them to live “with one mind in the house.” There they get their daily sustenance, the food and drink of immortality, verily the precious blood of Christ, restoring them by the words of God, which are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.⁴³¹

⁴²⁹ Kühnel, “The Kingly Statement of the Bookcovers of Queen Melisende’s Psalter,” 346.

⁴³⁰ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 154, note 95 on page 524: in this note, Folda discusses the varying opinions about the bird as a rebus for Fulk as well as the suggestion that the label “Herodius” is the name of the artist. He believes the bird is a fulica referring to Fulk and that the hand that wrote the name “Herodius” was the same one that wrote the other labels or inscriptions on the covers, such as the ones identifying the virtues and vices on the front. Most likely, “Herodius” is just a label to indicate that the bird is indeed a heron or fulica, because as Michael J. Curley points out in his translation of the *Physiologus*, the Vulgate uses the Latin word *herodion* for the heron in Psalm 104; see Michael J. Curley, trans., *Physiologus* (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, 1979), 82.

⁴³¹ T. H. White, ed and trans., *The Book of Beasts* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1954), 122-3; according White, this is a translation of a twelfth-century manuscript edited for the Roxburghe Club in 1928 by M. R. James. The manuscript is now preserved in the Cambridge University Library listed as II.4.26, however, its old number in the library is 278.

The text that inspired the above description and all of the descriptions found in medieval bestiaries was the *Physiologus*, a book on beasts, stones, and trees that was originally written in Greek perhaps as early as 140 CE in Egypt by an anonymous author.

According to Michael Curley, it was “one of the most popular and widely read books of the Middle Ages...and it became an established source of Medieval sacred iconography and didactic poetry....”⁴³² The *Physiologus* says,

There is a bird called the heron about which David was aware when he said, “The heron is a leader of their house” [Ps. 104: 17]. This is the coot of Psalm 104. This beast is prudent beyond all other birds for it does not seek many nests, but where it settles, there too it feeds and returns there and sleeps. Nor does this bird feed on carrion or fly off to many places. Her nest and food are in one place. And you, O citizen, let the Holy Catholic Church be your one and eternal nurse so that spiritual food and heavenly bread become easily digestible within you. Do not seek many places of foreign glory (that is, of heretics).⁴³³

It is an interesting theory because Fulk, as a leader, may have embodied some of the qualities designated to the fulica. Bestiaries were popular during the twelfth century and the later medieval centuries as serious works of natural history that consisted of compilations of animals of all kinds and their characteristics. Their qualities were used to illustrate Christian morality. Like the fulica, Fulk was loyal to his kingdom and he acted as a defender of the Catholic orthodoxy and of the Church. Perhaps the designer of the back cover added the fulica to associate the king with the characteristics of the bird in the mind of the viewer. It would follow then that the hare was placed in the program to invoke Melisende. Unfortunately, the hare does not feature prominently in the bestiaries or the *Physiologus*. Moreover, Melisende does not seem to hold the qualities of this animal, which is timid or easily startled, for instance. However, it is described in the

⁴³² Curley, i.

⁴³³ Curley, 40.

thirteenth-century in *The Book of Secrets* attributed to Albert the Great or *Albertus Magnus* as an animal that confers invincibility: “The Virtue of it is shewed to be marvelous, for Evax and Aaron said that the feet of it, joined with a stone, or with the head of a Black Ousel, moveth a man to hardiness, so that he not fear death.”⁴³⁴ This is a quality that Melisende embodied as she emerged from her political struggle with Fulk and began to participate in governing the kingdom. It follows then that the hare may also be placed on the cover with the fulica to remind the viewer that Melisende confers her invincibility on Fulk as she did the crown and kingdom, a fact that she would not have wanted him to forget.

It should be added that on another level, the probable significance of the animals, especially the dogs, was that they were also associated with hunting, an aristocratic pastime in Europe as well as in the crusader states. Aside from their functions as extensions of the allegory of good and evil, or representatives for the qualities of the king and queen, the animals were hunters or prey. The circumstances of Fulk’s death, as related by William of Tyre, certainly suggest that Fulk was an avid hunter and that Melisende enjoyed it too and accompanied her husband on at least one outing. Perhaps the animals carved on the back cover also serve to describe one of the leisure time activities enjoyed by the king and queen together that occupied them when they were not performing their other duties in ruling the kingdom. This then may be a depiction of another facet of their joint rule.

Together, the front and back covers present a complete picture of Melisende and Fulk’s reign. It is very possible, therefore, that Melisende commissioned the Psalter as

⁴³⁴ Michael R. Best and Frank H. Brightman, eds. *The Book of Secrets of Albertus Magnus of the Virtues of Herbs, Stones, and Certain Beasts* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 54.

dedicated for her own personal use, but had it designed and created to be a treasure; one that would demonstrate the skills of her kingdom's best scriptorium, the character of her joint rule with Fulk, and the power of her royal dynasty.

Abbey and Shrine Church of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat:

Situated at the heart of royal influence, the Cluniac Abbey of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat was located immediately east of Jerusalem at the bottom of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, below the Mount of Olives, at Gethsemane. Melisende seems to have had a particular attachment to the Abbey and shrine church there that were dedicated to Christ's mother, the Virgin Mary, and housed the underground site of the virgin's tomb. It was the burial place of her mother Morphia and presumably she also planned it to be her own as well. Her sister Alice, who made a gift to the Abbey in 1134, may have been attached to it for her mother's sake too.⁴³⁵ Jaroslav Folda believes that the decision to bury Morphia there instead of the Holy Sepulcher indicates that the monastery church had probably been rebuilt following sometime after 1112. The exact location of Morphia's tomb, however, is unknown.⁴³⁶ The church was entered through a remarkable Romanesque façade and an imposing staircase of forty-eight steps led to the crypt below it.

This crypt church served the monastery as well as the visiting pilgrims. Although the origins of this church go back to the fourth century, Godfrey of Bouillon, who located a group of monks there and conferred upon them many lands, founded the abbey. The

⁴³⁵ From Latakia in Antioch, Alice donated two carrucates of land in the region of Jabala to the Abbey of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat "for the soul of my Lord Bohemund and my parents and also for my own salvation and that of my daughter Constance...." See Asbridge, 39-40, n. 48; and Kohler, "Chartes de L'Abbaye de Notre-Dame," 129-30.

⁴³⁶ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 113.

monks had come on the First Crusade despite Pope Urban II's wish that they stay home.⁴³⁷ At that time, it appears that remains of a church above the crypt still stood there, but according to Daniel the Abbot around 1108, it had been mostly "destroyed by the pagans."⁴³⁸ Beginning in 1112, the monks rebuilt the church and monastic buildings. As noted by Adrian Boas, "the tomb chamber was decorated with frescoes representing the Dormition and Assumption of the Virgin and a remarkable new aedicule decorated with typically Frankish marble sculpture was built."⁴³⁹ By 1115, these monks of the Abbey of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat and the shrine to Mary were well endowed with villages, lands, and vineyards. Baldwin I issued two charters confirming all of their possessions in that year that included donations made by the baron William de Bures and his wife Agnes and a long list of villages and lands held all over the kingdom, including some near Jerusalem, Jaffa, Acre, Nablus, Sidon, and many other places.⁴⁴⁰ In memory of Morphia, Baldwin II had added the village of Bestella to that list of possessions in 1129, in a charter witnessed by Melisende.⁴⁴¹ By the time Melisende came to the throne with Fulk in 1131, it was a wealthy and well established abbey and church, supported by the monarchy, the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, and even the papacy, and it played a major role in the kingdom as it welcomed the throngs of Christian pilgrims who came to pray at the holy site.

The first piece of evidence we have for Melisende's support for the Abbey at Jehoshaphat comes from Gerard of Nazareth, Bishop of Laodicea, who describes an interesting episode involving her and the hermit Elias of Narbonne, whom Gerard knew

⁴³⁷ WT IX, 9, 392.

⁴³⁸ Daniel the Abbot, 134.

⁴³⁹ Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades*, 119.

⁴⁴⁰ RRH 79, 80.

⁴⁴¹ RRH 137a.

as a friend.⁴⁴² According to Gerard's biography, Elias of Narbonne was a grammar teacher from Narbonne who traveled to the Holy Land as a pilgrim sometime during the first years of Fulk and Melisende's reign. At some point during his journey, he stopped at an unnamed monastery of hermits and was ordained as a priest. Later on, after visiting the holy places, he hid himself in a cave with other men or followers near Jerusalem. Despite his efforts to remain anonymous, his piety became so well known that he was persuaded by the monks of Jehoshaphat to enter their monastery through their continuous prayers and the pleading of William of Flanders, the patriarch of Jerusalem. Andrew Jotischky argues that it is possible that Elias' removal from the caves may represent a general trend within the Latin Church in the Holy Land to bring these holy men within the authority of the churches and the Benedictine rule. "To outside observers, his ascetic life in the caves may have appeared impressive, but the church authorities could never be sure that priests like Elias were fasting at the proper hours or following the correct liturgical observances, or even using the right calendar."⁴⁴³ Elias conformed to the wishes of the patriarch and the monks, and must have been recognized as a good leader of their community, despite their lack of enthusiasm when he offered to exchange himself and his monks as hostages to the Muslim garrison at Ascalon in return for Christian prisoners. After an unspecified period of time, however, he was elected abbot of Palmaria, which was not far from Tiberias in Galilee.⁴⁴⁴ The archbishop of Nazareth then appointed him. According to Gerard, Elias did not turn out to be a very good abbot

⁴⁴² Gerard of Nazareth wrote a biography of Elias of Narbonne and an extensive summary of it has survived. See an edition of this text in the appendix of Benjamin Z. Kedar, "Gerard of Nazareth, a Neglected Twelfth-Century Writer of the Latin East: a Contribution to the Intellectual History of the Crusader States," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 37 (1983): 75; and for further analysis see Jotischky, 30-33, 45, 71.

⁴⁴³ Jotischky, 31.

⁴⁴⁴ For a history of the Abbey of Palmaria see Benjamin Z. Kedar, "Palmarée, abbaye clunisienne du XIIe siècle, en Galilée," *Revue Bénédictine* 93 (1983): 260-269.

because, “He gave so generously that his left hand did not know what his right one was doing.”⁴⁴⁵ Although there is no explanation, Gerard reports that Elias was soon after relieved of his duties in Palmaria by Melisende, who gave him an extremely irregular exemption from his office. He returned to Jerusalem for a few years until he was forced to go back to Palmaria by his superior, the Archbishop of Nazareth.⁴⁴⁶ Upon his return, he angered the monks by adhering to a stricter asceticism than that which was required by the Benedictine Rule. Because he admired the Cistercians, he sent a monk to France to learn their customs, but his monks protested after he insisted that they wear the Cistercian habits made of rough wool in the heat of Galilee’s climate. In 1138, as the Abbot of Palmaria, he (as well as many of the other church leaders in the kingdom) witnessed Fulk and Melisende’s charter, which acquired Bethany from the canons of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in order for Melisende to found her convent there.⁴⁴⁷ He died at Palmaria in 1140.

Melisende’s exemption for Elias clearly indicates her ability to intervene in church affairs as queen and is a display of her power and a reflection of the authority she wielded over the religious affairs of her kingdom. This is the earliest evidence of her doing so during her reign. Later on in 1146, of course, she would interfere again in church affairs during her effort to put her chancellor Ralph in office as the archbishop of Tyre. Both of these incidences involve Melisende boldly ignoring the wishes of the proper church authorities. However, while her support for Ralph risked alienating her

⁴⁴⁵ Kedar, “Gerard of Nazareth,” 75, “Egensis liberaliter dedit, ita ut sinistra manus nesciret quid faceret dextra.”

⁴⁴⁶ Kedar, “Gerard of Nazareth,” 75, “Isthinc iterum avocatus, abbas constitutus est cuiusdam monasterii, quod Palmaria dicitur, non procul a Tiberiade, et ab archiepiscopo nazareno ordinatus est. Inde rursus exemptus a Fulconis Regis coniuge, Ierosolymam petit: ubi cum annos paucos delituisse, as priorem sedem hortatu Nazareni archiepiscopi revertitur.”

⁴⁴⁷ RRH 174.

new Patriarch Fulcher and resulted in her decision to withdraw that support, her exemption for Elias appears to have been an effort to back up the wishes of Patriarch William and the monks of Jehoshaphat. Patriarch William, who had lobbied so hard for Elias to join them and leave his cave, would have been anxious to keep him in Jerusalem. It appears that Elias' presence was good for Jehoshaphat and might have added status to the monastery or conferred some extra amount of influence to it. Melisende would have favored keeping him there too. Moreover, since Patriarch William had supported Melisende during Fulk's bid to exclude her from governing in 1134, she had emerged politically stronger and as joint ruler of the kingdom. As Fulk is not mentioned as being involved in the irregular exemption, Gerard's account appears to put the initiative for it on Melisende alone. The timing suggests that Melisende may have taken advantage of her new position of strength to intervene on the patriarch's behalf in order to reciprocate with a favor in gratitude for his previous support of her. The charter of 1138, with its long witness list of the kingdom's highest churchmen in support of her Bethany project, indicates that her interference in Elias' appointment to Palmaria had little effect on her relationship with the church. Even the archbishop-elect Robert of Nazareth appeared on the witness list.

Two later royal charters indicate Melisende's additional patronage of the abbey of Jehoshaphat. In 1146, after Fulk's death, Melisende and her son Baldwin III settled a dispute over lands and olive groves between the inhabitants of their royal village or *casale* Thaeresibena and those of Bestella near the city of Tyre, which belonged to the monastery of Jehoshaphat. They settled the dispute in favor of the monastery, which they maintained had a more legitimate entitlement to the land and they decided that they

themselves and their villagers must give up their claims to it.⁴⁴⁸ Melisende issued the second charter with Baldwin's consent, in 1159.⁴⁴⁹ It was her last charter, as she was by then suffering from a long illness. In this charter, she referred to Baldwin as her "beloved son," as they had been reconciled for some time. Although no longer in power, she granted the abbey the village of Casracos near Nablus with all its appurtenances, *pro mea meorumque salute tam vivorum quam mortuorum*. This was a gift for the abbey and its monks who would pray for her after her death as they had while she had lived and continue the work of solemn celebrations and masses to honor Mary, the mother of God. Although Baldwin had previously issued this same grant in his own name earlier in the year, with her consent, his own list of witnesses included his constable Humphrey of Toron, his castellan and other officials and barons, but no churchmen except for Odo of St. Amando.⁴⁵⁰ Melisende's charter was authorized by her personal seal and its witness list was as impressive as his.⁴⁵¹ Reflecting her reputation and legacy as an important patron of the church, it included two of the kingdom's most influential churchmen, Amalric, the patriarch of Jerusalem, who she may have helped get elected through the efforts of her sister Ivette,⁴⁵² and Gerard of Nazareth, bishop of Laodicea, as well as her son Amalric, the count of Jaffa, and other barons. Perhaps she issued this second charter

⁴⁴⁸ RRH 240.

⁴⁴⁹ RRH 359.

⁴⁵⁰ RRH 336.

⁴⁵¹ For a description of Melisende's seal which authorized this charter, see Gustave Schlumberger, et al., *Sigillographie de L'Orient Latin*, Bibliothèque archéologique et historique 36 (Paris: Librairie Orientaliste Paul Geuthner, 1943), 5-6. Although the actual seal has been lost, it is known from a drawing that is somewhat reliable. It is described as being inscribed with the words SIGILLVM MILESENDIS DEI GRATIA IERUSALE REGINE. In the field of the front side of the seal, the legend under the initial cross is flanked by two small wings(?). The space ordinarily occupied by the legend is filled by an indented crown, separated from the field by a net. On the reverse side, the main monuments of Jerusalem are represented but in an order that is unique from the seals of her predecessors. Instead of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher flanked by the Tower of David and the *Templum Domini*, Melisende's seal features the crenellated Tower of David without banners in the center, flanked by the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on the right and the *Templum Domini* on the left.

⁴⁵² WT XVIII, 20, 271.

in her own name in order to have these important churchmen witness it. She also might have decreed it in order to make sure that the monks knew that the donation was an act of patronage that came from her specifically. It might have been a way for her to protect her legacy as one of its patrons and provide extra financial support to insure that the abbey would prosper long after her death.

***Templum Domini* or the Temple of the Lord:**

Towering over the city of Jerusalem since about 691 CE was the golden-domed, octagonal shrine the Dome of the Rock or *Qubbat al-Sakhrah* and next to it, the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque, both built by the Umayyad Caliph Abd al-Malik. They are located on the Temple Mount, an area today known as the *Haram al-Sharif* or the Noble Enclosure, which was the location of the Temple, reconstructed by King Herod the Great and later destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. The site is identified by both Jews in the Old Testament and Muslims in the *Qu'ran*, as the area of Mount Moriah, an outcropping of rock where Abraham offered up his son in sacrifice to God, and it is the place where King Solomon built the First Temple about three thousand years ago. The Babylonians in 586 BCE destroyed this Temple, but seventy years later, Jews returning from exile built the Second Temple there. According to Islamic tradition, the Temple Mount is the “furthestmost sanctuary” or *masjid al-aksa*, from which the prophet Mohammad, accompanied by the angel Gabriel, made what Muslims call the “Night Journey to the Throne of God.” It is the third holiest place to Muslims after the Ka’aba in Mecca and the Prophet’s Mosque in Medina. The Dome of the Rock was and is one of the architectural wonders of the world.

After the crusaders took Jerusalem, they changed the Dome of the Rock into a church run by Augustinians by 1112, the *Templum Domini*. Daniel the Abbot described the Dome of the Rock before the crusaders began to convert it into a church. He wrote,

From the Resurrection to the Holy of Holies is about the distance of two bowshots. The church of the Holy of Holies is wonderfully and skillfully decorated with mosaics within and its beauty is indescribable; it is circular and it is artfully and indescribably painted on the outside; its walls have slabs of precious marble and it is beautifully paved with marble slabs. It has twelve round columns standing in a circle beneath the roof and eight built columns and four doors; these doors are fashioned of gilded copper. And the roof is skillfully and wonderfully decorated inside with mosaic and covered on the outside with gilded copper.⁴⁵³

One of the first modifications the crusaders made was to replace the crescent moon on the top of the dome with a large golden cross. By 1114, they had begun building an abbey on the north side of the platform of the *Templum Domini* for the canons to live in. In that year, they also enclosed the rock under the Dome with marble plates and constructed an altar to be placed on top of it.⁴⁵⁴ New mosaics were added to the walls as well as Latin inscriptions. By around 1140, in order to protect the rock from damage and to keep pilgrims from touching it or collecting pieces as relics, a beautiful iron grill decorated with spirals was made to surround it. Although there is no evidence, it is possible that Melisende donated this grill. Jaroslav Folda suggests this because of her evident interest in the *Templum Domini* as attested to by a confirmation charter decreed by King Amalric, which will be discussed below, as well as because of her earlier recent generous patronage at the convent of Bethany, that included "...chalices, books, and other ornaments pertaining to the service of the church," according to William of Tyre.⁴⁵⁵

⁴⁵³ Daniel the Abbot, 132.

⁴⁵⁴ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 65.

⁴⁵⁵ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 136, 251; RRH 422a; WT XV, 26, 133-4.

Adrian Boas describes the grill as “of French Romanesque style, formed of eight parts consisting of panels or spirals held together by rings and supported by spikes crowned with fleur-de-lys on which candles could be placed. It is an outstanding piece of metalwork which outshines comparable examples in France and England.”⁴⁵⁶ This grill remained in place until the 1960’s, but now is on display in the Islamic Museum on the Temple Mount. To the interior of the church the crusaders added frescoes that depicted Jacob’s Vision at Bethel and the Presentation in the Temple.⁴⁵⁷ The *Templum Domini* was formally dedicated as a church three days after Easter in 1141 by Alberic, cardinal of Ostia, a visiting papal legate, as reported by William of Tyre.⁴⁵⁸ Second only to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the *Templum Domini* was prominently featured as the most recognizable landmark on medieval maps of the city and the seals of the kings of Jerusalem.

The crusaders also added a front portico to the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque, which became the home of King Baldwin I and was known as the *Palatium* or *Templum Salomonis*. It was designed as a basilica with a narrow central nave flanked by six aisles. In 1119, it was given to the Knights Templar, who took their name from it. They constructed their monastery to the west of it and reconstructed subterranean vaults to the east of it to serve as stables for their horses.⁴⁵⁹ Some time during one of his diplomatic visits to Jerusalem around 1140, Usamah ibn Munqidh went to the *Al-Aqsa* mosque to pray and described what happened there:

When I visited Jerusalem I always entered the Aqsa Mosque, beside which stood a small mosque, which the Franks had converted into a church.

⁴⁵⁶ Boas, *Crusader Archaeology*, 156.

⁴⁵⁷ Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades*, 110.

⁴⁵⁸ WT XIV, 6-7, 56-58.

⁴⁵⁹ Boas, *Crusader Archaeology*, 24.

When I used to enter the Aqsa Mosque, which was occupied by the Templars, who were my friends, the Templars would evacuate the little adjoining mosque so that I might pray in it. One day I entered this mosque, repeated the first formula, "Allah is great," and stood up in the act of praying, upon which one of the Franks rushed on me, got hold of me and turned my face eastward saying, "This is the way thou shouldst pray!" A group of Templars hastened to him, seized him and repelled him from me. I resumed my prayer. The same man, while the others were busy, rushed once more on me and turned my face eastward, saying, "This is the way thou shouldst pray!" The Templars came in to him and expelled him. They apologized to me, saying, "This is a stranger who has only recently arrived from the land of the Franks and he has never before seen anyone praying except eastward." Thereupon I said to myself, "I have had enough of prayer." So I went out and have ever been surprised at the conduct of this devil of a man, at the change in the color of his face, his trembling and his sentiment at the sight of one praying towards the *qiblah*.⁴⁶⁰

According to Usamah, the Templar knights were very accommodating to him and aware of aspects of Muslim religious prayer rituals. They also welcomed him to their headquarters and recognized that the *Templum Domini* was still regarded as an extremely holy site by their Muslim neighbors. According to him, the "stranger" they refer to is the newly arrived pilgrim from the West and the "friend" is Usamah himself. The incident further highlights the acculturation by the crusaders as they settled in and learned the ways of the East. The *Al-Aqsa* Mosque and the *Templum Domini* were examples of the way the crusaders took what they found in their newly conquered kingdom, altered the buildings and sites to suit their needs, and thereby transformed them and themselves into elements and participants of an adaptive and distinctive society.

Melisende supported the Augustinian canons of the *Templum Domini* by giving them lands and villages during her reign, most likely before she was removed from office in 1152.⁴⁶¹ Her gifts to the church and its canons are recorded in a confirmation charter

⁴⁶⁰ Usamah ibn Munqidh, 163-4.

⁴⁶¹ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 550, note 19.

drawn up by her son King Amalric in Acre during April 1166.⁴⁶² The charter mentions many prior gifts presumably recorded by charters that haven't survived in this confirmation to Abbot Hugh and his successors of all the diverse gifts and privileges made to the *Templum Domini* since the reign of King Baldwin I in the territories surrounding the cities of Jerusalem, Nablus, Caesarea, Acre, Ascalon, and Tyre. Ralph, Melisende's former chancellor and nominee for the archbishopric of Tyre, now bishop of Bethlehem and chancellor to Amalric, wrote it. The charter records that northwest of Jerusalem, Melisende gave the *Templum Domini* two *gastinae* named Heteyre and Beitdecoc and all their appurtenances, which Ferdinand Chalandon has identified as Et-Tiré and Beit Doukkou. She also gave it some lands outside Nablus, which were being cultivated with vineyards by the Franks. It is interesting to note that the charter also records many gifts made to the church by at least three of Melisende's most loyal supporters, perhaps through her suggestion or example. Her constable Manasses gave one hundred bezants received in a single year, presumably as taxes, at David's gate, Philip of Nablus gave two *gastinae* in the territory of Hebron, and Patriarch William is mentioned as a donor of funds, which were earned on the Church's possessions near Nablus. There is no mention of any gift made by Melisende's father Baldwin II, Fulk, or her son Baldwin III, however. In fact, apart from Baldwin I, who would have given the *Templum Domini* gifts when the church was founded in 1112, as well as patriarchs

⁴⁶² RRH 422a: The charter was found in the middle of a pile of acts relating to the Cathedral of Barletta that were stored in the archives of the Abbey of Monte Cassino. F. Chalandon, who edited the charter, suggests that the Archbishop of Nazareth may have transferred it to Barletta.

Warmund and Stephen, all of the other donors were Melisende's contemporaries and the gifts were most likely made before 1152 but probably earlier.⁴⁶³

Melisende must have supported the *Templum Domini* because it was one of her kingdom's most prestigious shrine churches. A pious gesture to be sure, but also one that ensured that the church would have an adequate income to accommodate the throngs of pilgrims that visited it each spring and to conduct its liturgical services, especially at Candlemas. In return for her gifts and protection, she would have received prayers said in her honor by the canons and their recognition of her power and authority as queen. Geoffrey, abbot of the *Templum Domini*, supported many of her acts of patronage, appearing prominently listed in the witness lists of six of her charters issued before 1152.⁴⁶⁴

Moreover, because the *Templum Domini* housed and protected one of Islam's most holy sites, it may even have generated compliance from her Muslim subjects, who lived mostly in the rural areas of the kingdom. The timing suggests, however, that it is possible that her gifts, and those of her allies, were also politically motivated. She and Fulk had formed a treaty with Unur of Damascus in 1140, the same year that Usamah visited Jerusalem and the *Al-Aqsa* Mosque and that the grill was erected to protect the

⁴⁶³ RRH 422a lists the following as donors to the *Templum Domini*: King Baldwin I; Manasses, Melisende's constable after Fulk's death; Melisende; Gauthier Mauduit, who is known from the witness list of one of Fulk and Melisende's charters in 1136, RRH 164, and another charter in 1152, RRH 274; Philip of Nablus; Robert of Tresponz, about whom nothing is known except that he gave the *Templum Domini* gifts of lands near Ascalon; Roger, the bishop of Ramla until 1147; Balian the elder, lord of Ibelin, who died in 1152; the patriarchs Warmund (1118-28), Stephen (1128-1130), and William (1130-1145) of Jerusalem; Guy of Milly, who held lands in the territory of Nablus; Ulric, the viscount of Nablus until 1152, and then John, his son and successor; Arnaldus and Alexander Costa, who are unknown but held possessions in Caesarea; and three other unknown men named Guibert of Portu, Cholet, and Adam Burdula, who gave the *Templum Domini* houses in Acre.

⁴⁶⁴ RRH 174, 181, 244, 245, 262, 268; for an examination of the prominent cultural and political role played by Abbot Geoffrey for some twenty-five years in the kingdom, see Rudolf Hiestand, "Gaufridus abbas Templi Domini: An Underestimated Figure in the Early History of the Kingdom of Jerusalem," in *The Experience of Crusading, Volume Two: Defining the Crusader Kingdom*, Peter Edbury and Jonathan Phillips, eds. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 48-59.

former Muslim Dome of the Rock from the efforts made by pilgrims to steal pieces of it to bring back home as relics or souvenirs of their journey. The gifts of lands and taxes made to the *Templum Domini* appear likely to have been made during the years that this alliance was in effect, especially after Fulk's death in 1143, since there is no mention of him in the charter, Manasses is identified as the kingdom's constable, and because the fate of that alliance must have been seriously called into question by Unur and the people of Damascus, who would not have acknowledged Melisende's position to rule alone. Perhaps the gifts were made by Melisende and her barons after 1143 in an attempt to convince Unur that she and her chief allies would continue to honor the treaty as well as continue to protect the holy site. According to the charter, therefore, it is possible to suggest that most of the gifts that Amalric confirmed were made between the years 1143 and 1148 in order to restore confidence in the alliance with Damascus. After the decision was made in 1148 to break the alliance and attack Damascus during the Second Crusade, the political motivation behind giving more lands and donations would have disappeared and perhaps that also explains why there are no new gifts recorded in the charter made by Baldwin III.

The Order of the Knights of St. Lazarus:

Although the history of its foundation is difficult to know with any certainty because of the lack of sources, by the 1140's, and perhaps even earlier, the leper hospital of Jerusalem, located outside the city's walls, gave birth to a new military order, which

followed the rule of St. Augustine for the care of lepers.⁴⁶⁵ The Order of the Knights of St. Lazarus, as it was known, was made up of lay knights and members of the Hospitallers and Templars who had contracted leprosy. Like the Knights of St. John, this was a military order with hospitaller functions. By 1142, the surviving charters of the order reveal that it was beginning to expand by acquiring new lands through the royal patronage of Fulk and Melisende as the other orders were.⁴⁶⁶ It even benefited from the royal patronage of King Louis VII of France, who noticed the devotion of the order when he was in Jerusalem during the Second Crusade. According to Malcolm Barber, once the king got back to France, “in an act dated 1154, he recalled that he had granted the house ten *livres* of rent while he had been on crusade, which ‘at the request and prayer’ of the brothers, he now exchanged for an estate on the royal demesne at Boigny, near Orléans. This house became the center of the order’s structure in France, which suggests a conscious plan to plant houses in the West, perhaps with the idea of creating a network of support for the eastern establishment.”⁴⁶⁷ By the 1170’s, their headquarters was located outside St. Stephen’s Gate in the holy city. The master of the order was required to be a leper, but knights who had not contracted the disease might also be accepted as brothers. However, there is no evidence for the lepers being involved in any military activity at this time. That evidence comes later in the mid-thirteenth century, when the leper knights

⁴⁶⁵ Malcolm Barber believes that the order could have existed as house that cared for lepers as early as the 1130’s. See Malcolm Barber, “The Order of Saint Lazarus and the Crusades,” *Catholic Historical Review* 80, 3 (1994): 440.

⁴⁶⁶ RRH 210, 227, 259, 269, 338.

⁴⁶⁷ Barber, “Order of Saint Lazarus,” 447.

were involved in the battle at La Forbie in 1244, in the Egyptian campaign of St. Louis IX, the king of France, in 1250, and in many other later battles.⁴⁶⁸

In the twelfth century, leprosy was believed to be highly contagious and incurable by all methods except divine intervention. Although people were very frightened of the disease, lepers were treated with the modification of their diet, the direction to bathe in hot springs, the use of drugs and bloodletting, the avoidance of sex, and the segregation of the sick in leprosaria.⁴⁶⁹ Medieval Christians believed that leprosy “was a disease of the soul as well as the body, and although the leper carried many burdens, few were so heavy as his reputation for immorality.”⁴⁷⁰ Once diagnosed, a “physician could assure the leper himself that his disease was a sign that God had chosen to grant his soul salvation, but he might simultaneously include in his diagnosis that his patient was morally corrupt. The Church might similarly decree that leprosy was a gift from God, but its bishops and priests would nonetheless use the disease as a metaphor for spiritual degeneration. The leper was seen as sinful and meritorious, as punished by God and as given special grace by Him.”⁴⁷¹ Caring for lepers, therefore, was a risk to body and soul, but considered to be an act of profound faith and humility. Those who did it followed in the very footsteps of Christ himself, who, according to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke,

⁴⁶⁸ Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades*, 28; Hamilton, *Leper King*, 28-29; Shulamith Shahar, “Des lépreux pas comme les autres: L’ordre de Saint-Lazare dans le royaume latin de Jérusalem,” *Revue historique* 267 (1982): 19-41.

⁴⁶⁹ Piers D. Mitchell, “An evaluation of the leprosy of King Baldwin IV of Jerusalem in the context of the medieval world,” appendix, in Hamilton, *Leper King*, 245-258.

⁴⁷⁰ Saul N. Brody, *The Disease of the Soul: Leprosy in Medieval Literature* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1974), 107. For recent research about how leprosy was regarded in the medieval West, see Nicole Bériou and François-Olivier Touati, *Voluntate dei leprosus: les lépreux entre conversion et exclusion aux XIIème et XIIIème siècles* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull’alto medioevo, 1991); Bruno Tabuteau, ed., *Lépreux et sociabilité du Moyen Age aux temps modernes* (Rouen: Publications de l’Université de Rouen, 2000); Peter L. Allen, *The Wages of Sin: Sex and Disease, Past and Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000); and Gerard A. Lee, *Leper Hospitals of Medieval Ireland: with a Short Account of the Military and Hospitaller Order of St. Lazarus of Jerusalem* (Blackrock, Co. Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1996).

⁴⁷¹ Brody, 60-61.

pitied lepers and cleansed them of their disease.⁴⁷² Gerard of Nazareth reports on a particularly enthusiastic hermit at the leper hospital in Jerusalem named Alberic, who “took care of the lepers’ daily needs, kissed each of them every day after Mass, and carried the feeble among them on his shoulders. As he was once washing a leper’s feet, the water mixed with blood and with sanies made him sick, and he forced himself to plunge his face into the foul liquid and to draw in some part of it.”⁴⁷³ Although there is no way to determine how prevalent leprosy was in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, it was regarded as a considerable threat to society. Jerusalem’s leper hospital was therefore a place where profound acts of charity took place daily, and it played an important role in the city as a place where those afflicted would be cared for humanely. The Order of St. Lazarus ran this hospital and possibly others as well in Acre, Beirut, Tiberias, Caesarea, and Ascalon.⁴⁷⁴

The lepers in the Order of St. Lazarus were treated more generously in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem than lepers in Western Europe at this time. Although relying mainly on legal sources from the thirteenth century, Shulamith Shahar has convincingly argued that the knights were not seen as objects of contempt or ostracized from society. They were able to play active roles in the order that probably included military services of some kind. She attributes this anomaly to the chronic lack of manpower in the Latin Kingdom and to the character of its nobility. She also suggests that the reign of King Baldwin IV (1173-84), Melisende’s grandson, who suffered from the most destructive form of the disease, may have instilled respect for the image of the leper in his society. William of Tyre, who was his teacher and first recognized his symptoms, did not

⁴⁷² Mt 8: 1-4; Luke 17: 11-19.; see also, Brody, 101-4.

⁴⁷³ Kedar, “Gerard of Nazareth,” 66, 72; see also, Jotischky, 170-1.

⁴⁷⁴ Shahar, 27.

condemn him for his disease. In her discussion of crusader laws, she points to the difference in the codes of the *Livre au roi* and the *Assises de las cour des bourgeois*. The *Livre au roi* decreed that the wife of a leper knight could not remarry and must retire to a convent, perhaps in an effort to protect the noble class from the disease spreading among them. The *Assises de las cour des bourgeois*, which dealt with the non-noble classes, allowed the annulment of the marriage by an ecclesiastical judge and the remarriage of the healthy spouse to a healthy partner.⁴⁷⁵ Although Shahar denies any Muslim influence in this matter, Michael Dols maintains that, regarding the burgher law, “the similarity to the status of the leper in Islamic society is striking.”⁴⁷⁶ In this instance, he remarks that it “is enticing to suggest in this unique instance that the burgher class in the Crusader state was more amenable to Islamic practice regarding the annulment and remarriage of lepers.”⁴⁷⁷ Compared to the Western Christian attitudes towards leprosy, Muslim society viewed the disease as difficult to contract, and it did not have laws regulating lepers or incidences of persecution. The Muslim leprosaria, where they existed at all, had features of the Christian hospitals but lacked the monastic aspects that demanded penitential discipline of their patients.⁴⁷⁸

During Melisende and Fulk’s joint reign, the Order of St. Lazarus was supported by the monarchy in order to support the important social and religious functions that it played in the kingdom’s society. In 1142, Fulk, with the consent of Melisende and their son Baldwin, conceded and confirmed the gift made by a man named Baldwin of Caesarea to the Church of St. Lazarus and the convent of the sick lepers, of some land

⁴⁷⁵ Shahar, 20, 23-5, 36.

⁴⁷⁶ Michael W. Dols, “The Leper in Medieval Islamic Society,” *Speculum* 58, 4 (1983): 916.

⁴⁷⁷ Dols, 916.

⁴⁷⁸ Dols, 912-16.

situated between the Mount of Olives and the Red Cistern, on the road that led to the Jordan River. This was Fulk's last charter before his death in 1143. It points to the presence of a church and a convent for the sick, who are called wretched, *concedo ecclesie Sancti Lazari et conventui infirmorum, qui miselli vocantur*.⁴⁷⁹ The church was located on the pilgrim's route between the Mount of Olives and the Jordan River, where the lepers could "gather alms and from which they might travel to bathe in the supposedly curative waters of the River Jordan."⁴⁸⁰ After Fulk's death, a charter of 1144 issued by Melisende and Baldwin III jointly confirmed a gift of lands and vineyards previously given to the order by her and Fulk. It recorded that these patches of land in front of the leprosarium had been bought by the king and queen from a certain unnamed Syrian, who was perhaps the *rais*, and that the lepers had planted on them and made their home on them. It also recorded that they deserved these as they had earned them by their service. They reveal that at least in part, the Order of St. Lazarus's income came from cultivating the lands that they had been given by the monarchy and that the service they performed for the kingdom was greatly appreciated.⁴⁸¹

The next two charters issued by Melisende regarding the Order of Saint Lazarus are of particular importance because they reveal a great deal about the relationship between her and her son in the two years leading up to the showdown between them in 1152. The first charter, decreed in the summer of 1150, reveals the deep division that existed between them by that time.⁴⁸² It might be a counter-response to Baldwin, as he

⁴⁷⁹ RRH 210.

⁴⁸⁰ Barber, "Order of St. Lazarus," 441.

⁴⁸¹ RRH 227, "... unam videlicet terre petiam et vineam quam ipsi leprosy, post factum donationem in ejusdem terre petia, plantaverunt, que est ante eorumdem leprosorum domus sita, quam pater noster et ipsa regina mater nostra a quodam Suriano, cujus erat predicta terre petia, emerant."

⁴⁸² RRH 259.

had issued a charter earlier on June 22, from Acre that confirmed the same sale of land and vineyards to the Order.⁴⁸³ In her charter, Melisende alone, without Baldwin's consent, confirmed a sale of four plots of vineyards in the plain of Bethlehem to the Order of St. Lazarus by a Syrian called Mozageth for the price of 1,100 bezants and a horse. This charter appears to be a declaration of her denial of his right to conduct the business of governing the kingdom as well as her intention to rule without him. Her clerk by the name of Guido wrote it, and Hans Eberhard Mayer believes that by this time she had created her own chancery with her own clerks that Baldwin could not use. Since she refers to having the support of her own praiseworthy vassals in the charter, *cum laudamento baronum meorum*, and because her witness list includes a man named Nicholas, her chamberlain, he also believes that she was setting up her own household as well as her own loyal vassalry. The chamberlain was an important figure in the kingdom's government. He had charge of the *camera*, which dealt with the expenses of the royal household, and was also responsible for arranging the performance of homage by the royal vassals.⁴⁸⁴ Through the appointment of this Nicholas, Melisende exerted some control over her vassals. The charter was definitely a product of a divided kingdom and it seems very likely that Melisende was preparing for an inevitable conflict with her son because things could not stay like this for long. In fact, when Count Joscelin II of Edessa had been captured in early May of 1150, Baldwin had called the crusader army to go to Antioch but Melisende's vassals had not reported to the summons. This had been a serious breach of loyalty and military obligation and it indicated that the army and the

⁴⁸³ RRH 258: In this charter, Baldwin confirms to the lepers thirteen *carrucae* of vineyards that they had bought in the plain of Bethlehem from a Syrian named Melenganos for the price of 1,050 bezants and a horse.

⁴⁸⁴ Hamilton, *Lepers King*, 44-45.

kingdom were in danger due to this internal family power struggle.⁴⁸⁵ Even Amalric was involved. He appeared in the list of Melisende's witnesses, indicating that he had sided with his mother against his brother. Manasses was present too, and so were the lords Rohard, viscount of Jerusalem, and Philip of Nablus.

In 1151, Melisende issued a second charter alone, without Baldwin's consent, for the Order of the Knights of St. Lazarus.⁴⁸⁶ Apart from strengthening the impression of a kingdom divided at this time, it also might indicate that Melisende was beginning to prepare for the coming conflict by taking measures to better defend the Tower. The charter says that in order to increase the utility of the Jaffa Gate next to the Tower of David, at the western end of David Street,⁴⁸⁷ she wanted to abolish or remove a mill that blocked the Tower and the gate that it touched.⁴⁸⁸ This was an extremely busy gate through which almost everyone passed. There were also two open-air markets in the vicinity of the gate, a grain market and a pig market.⁴⁸⁹ In order to clear away the mill, she had to compensate the lepers, who were its proprietors, with a valuable vineyard of five *carrucae* in the plain of Bethlehem, where they had many others. Since two men named George and Solomon already cultivated these vineyards, they would keep half of what was produced and the lepers would get the other half. In making the arrangements to clear away the obstruction from outside the Tower, she created a space for better defenses if she needed them and opened up the gate in order to bring in supplies or furnish an escape route. In the meantime, the improvements she made could not help but

⁴⁸⁵ Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 145-147.

⁴⁸⁶ RRH 269.

⁴⁸⁷ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land, 1098-1187*, 246.

⁴⁸⁸ RRH 269: "...utilitati Davitice porte introitus providere cupiens, quondam molendinum porte et turri nimis noxium a loco ubi situs est conservari desiderans..."

⁴⁸⁹ Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades*, 142.

win her support from the city's merchants and citizens. Mayer believes that this also was part of a deliberate policy to "woo" the population of Jerusalem especially since a year later she planned another city improvement by providing the city with the new street *Malquisinat*, to house vendors of prepared foods for the hungry pilgrims that flocked the city's streets.⁴⁹⁰

From her retirement in 1159, Melisende decreed one last charter for the Order of St. Lazarus.⁴⁹¹ With Baldwin's consent, she made another gift to the lepers of a *gastina* near Jerusalem named Betana so that they had the power to maintain one more leper than the fixed number that they did at that time. With the new income, they could expand their current capacity. This might indicate that the numbers of those afflicted had increased and that so had the order's costs of operations. This charter and the others for the Order of St. Lazarus indicate that Melisende primarily supported the lepers through gifts of lands, especially those used to grow grapes. She made them successful vintners, giving them an importance source of income. Her gifts are demonstrations of her piety and sympathy for the lepers of her kingdom, which supported the order that cared for them. They also show that she was concerned for the health and safety of her unaffected subjects. Since, the order probably also played some kind of military role, her patronage also provided extra manpower for her kingdom's defense, especially for its cities that hosted the leper hospitals, and won their political support.

⁴⁹⁰ Mayer, "Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem," 161.

⁴⁹¹ RRH 338.

The Orthodox Monastery or Laura of Saint Sabas or the *Laura Mar Saba* (its Arabic name):

Sometime before she died in 1161, Melisende bequeathed three *gastinae* to the Laura of Saint Sabas,⁴⁹² located twelve miles southeast of Jerusalem in the gorges of Kidron that had been founded by the saint in 483 CE. According to a charter preserved in the cartulary of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Melisende gave to the Laura of St. Sabas the villages of Kafarrus, Vetus Betor, and Deirfres, all three of which the Abbot Miletus sold to the Church for 480 bezants in 1164. With this amount, he then purchased the village of Thora from King Amalric.⁴⁹³ She gave the three territories to the Laura in return for the monks' prayers for the repose of her soul. This gesture of patronage shows the value and esteem with which she must have regarded this influential monastery and its monks of her mother's faith.

Daniel the Abbot, who was a Russian and Orthodox, stayed as a guest in the hospice of St. Sabas during his pilgrimage of 1106-8, just inside the walls of Jerusalem near the Tower of David, but he also visited the Laura in the Kidron Valley and an unnamed monk from the Laura served as his guide during his visit in the Holy Land. Daniel traveled with an entourage and it is possible that his journey was a diplomatic visit to the kingdom as much as a pilgrimage because many of the names he recorded as his companions were laymen and they all received favor from King Baldwin I.⁴⁹⁴ Because the city of Jerusalem was so important to Palestinian monastic life, the site for the Laura had been chosen carefully, as the Kidron Valley leads directly up to the city's walls and a

⁴⁹² A laura was an early type of Greek Orthodox monastic community, which was part eremitic, part communal, and that recognized a superior.

⁴⁹³ RRH 409.

⁴⁹⁴ John Wilkinson, Joyce Hill and W. F. Ryan, ed. and trans., *Jerusalem Pilgrimage, 1099-1185* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1988), 10.

well-worn road linked the two places. The beauty of the monastery and the wilderness at the site left a great impression on Daniel.

The Laura of St. Sabas was established by God in a marvelous and indescribable way: there was a river bed, fearful and very deep and dry and with high walls and to these walls cells are attached and held there by God in a marvelous and fearful manner. On the cliffs on both sides of this terrible ravine stand cells fixed to the rocks like stars in the sky. There are three churches here and among the cells to the west there is a wonderful cave beneath a rocky cliff, and in this cave there is the church of the Holy Mother of God, and this cave God showed to St. Sabas by a fiery column when he was living alone in that ravine. . . . And between these three churches is the tomb of St. Sabas, about four fathoms from the great church, and there is a beautifully executed chapel over the tomb. And here lie many holy fathers, their bodies as if still alive; the bishop St. John the Silent, St. John Damascene and St. Theodore of Edessa and Michael his nephew lie here, and St. Aphroditian and many other saints, their bodies as if still alive and exhaling an ineffable perfume. And I saw the well of St. Sabas in that ravine opposite his cell, which a wild ass showed him one night, and from this well I drank water, which was sweet and very cold. In that place there is no river nor stream nor spring, but only the well of St. Sabas, for it is a waterless place in rocky mountains and the whole of that wilderness is dry and waterless and the fathers who dwelt in that wilderness lived by rainwater alone.⁴⁹⁵

For Daniel, a stop at the Laura of St. Sabas was a major destination during his pilgrimage because, as the place where St. Sabas had lived and where he and the other saints were buried, it was a famous and holy site.

According to Cyril of Scythopolis, who included the *Life of St. Sabas* in his collection of the *Lives of the Monks of Palestine* the sixth century and was one of his followers, Sabas was above all a founder of monasteries. "...[B]y the favor of God the father, the assistance of Christ and the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, [he] colonized the desert with a huge number of monks and founded in it seven celebrated monasteries." However, Sabas' relationship with these communities did not extend to leading them or

⁴⁹⁵ Daniel the Abbot, 140.

financing them. Cyril went on to write that “[t]hrough exercising the care and oversight of these seven monasteries, he totally declined to secure them an income. Nevertheless, relying on faith and confidence in God, he never fell into despondency through anxiety....”⁴⁹⁶ Sabas was the son of a soldier, and according to Cyril, was educated at the monastery of Flaviana only in “the psalter and the observance of the cenobitic rule.”⁴⁹⁷ Not interested in teaching or giving instruction to his monks, he did not oversee the daily life of his monasteries, but rather preferred to retreat to a remote spot whenever a conflict developed, leaving it up to God to intervene. He did, however, recognize the importance of the great pilgrimage sites to his monks, and so he bought hospices in Jericho and Jerusalem. In Jerusalem near the Tower of David, he bought two guesthouses, one for the monks of the Laura and one for monks visiting from abroad, despite the fact that he didn’t have enough money. According to Cyril,

He tried to find a sufficient quantity of money, but had only one half solidus. Relying on faith in God, he gave the half solidus as a deposit, with the words, “If I do not pay you in full tomorrow, I forfeit the deposit.” On the same day, before sunrise, as he was thinking about this and praying mentally, a completely unknown stranger came up to him, gave him one hundred and seventy solidi, and immediately withdrew, not even giving his name. Astonished at the prompt assistance of God, the blessed one gave the price of the cells...⁴⁹⁸

In this story, Sabas is depicted as hopeless at fundraising, but as a great founder because he had personal energy combined with the financial backing of God himself. He was a humble holy man through whom God worked to carry out his plans for the monastic foundations of these holy places.

⁴⁹⁶ Cyril of Scythopolis, *Lives of the Monks of Palestine*, R. M. Price, trans., John Binns, intro. and notes (Kalamazoo, MI: Cistercian Publications, 1991), 167-68.

⁴⁹⁷ Cyril of Scythopolis, 95.

⁴⁹⁸ Cyril of Scythopolis, 125.

Although the history of the Laura of St. Sabas in the twelfth century is not well known, its scriptorium was a center of manuscript production and it was the greatest of the Orthodox monasteries in the Latin Kingdom, all of which were held in high esteem by the crusaders. It was presumably still, as it had been since the seventh century, the intellectual and spiritual center for the Orthodox patriarchate of Jerusalem and for Palestinian monasticism in general. Daniel visited other Orthodox monasteries in the valley during his pilgrimage, such as St. John the Baptist at the site of Christ's baptism, Our Lady of Kalamon, at the point where the Jordan River enters the Dead Sea, that of St. John Chrysostom, St. Theodosius, and St. Chariton, but none compared to the Laura of Saint Sabas in size and influence. It had three hundred monks at the beginning of the twelfth century and played a prominent role in the Easter liturgy celebrated at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher as early as 1107. According to Daniel, the miracle of the Holy Fire, which occurred every year, happened only when King Baldwin I commanded the abbot of St. Sabas and his monks to stand above Christ's tomb on Easter Saturday with the Latin priests and at "the eighth hour of the day, the Orthodox priests and monks and all the clergy and hermits began to sing vespers, while the Latins on the great altar began mumbling after their own fashion."⁴⁹⁹ This miracle occurred every year as long as the Orthodox priests and monks were present with the Latin priests and monarchs. It continued presumably throughout all of the years that the crusaders held Jerusalem and would have required Melisende's presence during her reign. Despite the continuation of many of the cultural and religious customs that the Latin Church found offensive, such as circumcising young boys, using leavened bread in the Eucharist, and so on, during the

⁴⁹⁹ Daniel the Abbot, 168.

twelfth century, Latin and Greek and Syrian Orthodox clerics celebrated liturgies together at times and nothing was done to disrupt the continuity of Orthodox religious life.⁵⁰⁰

According to the founder's *typikon* of the Laura of St. Sabas, which was most likely drawn up in the twelfth century, the lives of the monks were strictly supervised. They were not to have any contact or correspondence with women. Although the community included monks who lived in the Laura and those who lived as solitaries, only the monks who lived in the Laura were permitted to leave the monastery once a month during the week when allowed by the superior. The Georgians, Arab Christians or Syrians, and Latin crusaders, when present in the Laura as visitors, were allowed to sing the office and selected psalms, and were then allowed to join the rest of the congregation for the sacraments in the Great Church. Monks who quarreled or were found inebriated using violence or showering abuse on any other would be corrected or expelled. Regarding the Laura's hospitality, which was one of its biggest roles, the *typikon* limits the number of days pilgrims could stay by how far they had traveled: "As for guests coming from outside, should any of them have a mind to strike roots into the Laura, we shall offer them hospitality and rest for seven days. If they are from among those who are either living in the town or visiting as worshippers, even three days will be enough for their physical refreshment, given the large crowd of poor arriving daily."⁵⁰¹ It appears that without these rules of hospitality, the monastery might have been overrun with pilgrims and the poor.

Melisende's gift of the three *gastinae* to the Laura was a pious donation and perhaps an act of thanks or acknowledgement for the support of the monks throughout

⁵⁰⁰ Jotischky, 89-90.

⁵⁰¹ Thomas, et al., "Sabas: Founder's *Typikon* of the Sabas Monastery near Jerusalem."

her reign. As the largest and most influential Orthodox monastery, their support and the charitable role they played in the kingdom would have been extremely important to her. However, as depicted in the *Life of St. Sabas*, it would have been well known that the saint traveled to Jerusalem often and came to the aid of the patriarch there and the city many times. Many in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem could have read or heard the *Life* in Greek, even Melisende possibly too, but moreover, the saint's life and accomplishments would have been told and retold orally as they were intimately associated with the fame of the monastery. It would have been known therefore, that Sabas was even sent by the Archbishop Elias of Jerusalem on a diplomatic mission to the Imperial Court at Constantinople to help heal some doctrinal issues dividing the eastern Church at that time. On a second mission to the court of the Emperor Justinian for the Patriarch Peter, the emperor decided to give Sabas a donation of revenue for his monasteries. Sabas asked instead for a remission of taxes in Palestine and help in rebuilding churches that had been destroyed there in the past. He also asked the emperor to found a hospital in Jerusalem to care for sick strangers and "to build and appoint the church of the Mother of God whose foundations were laid some time ago by our archbishop Elias."⁵⁰² The emperor granted all of his requests. Many of Sabas' miracles were also dedicated to relieving problems in his monasteries as well as the Empire itself, especially during times of famine. In the introduction to the translation of Cyril's *Lives*, John Binns wrote that, "[t]here is an intimate connection between the building up of monastic life in Palestine and the well-being of the Church and Empire- and the saints have responsibility in both areas."⁵⁰³ Melisende supported the Laura because she must

⁵⁰² Cyril of Scythopolis, 184.

⁵⁰³ Cyril of Scythopolis, xxxiv.

also have admired the actions and foundations of St. Sabas. Her patronage of his monastery would have been an act of veneration and thanks to this saint who continued to help protect her kingdom and its people.

The Patronage of Melisende's Successors:

In all of Melisende's charters that have been examined thus far, Baldwin III's participation in the effort to support the kingdom's religious institutions up to 1152 was defined by his mother's intentions or purposes as she wielded power over the kingdom. After the civil war when Baldwin ruled alone, he from time to time relied on her advice and experience and an examination of his gift charters after 1152 until his death in 1163 reveals that he continued to generously support the kingdom's top two religious institutions, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Knights of St. John, as much as she had. There was an important distinction, however, in the pattern of his patronage activity. His gift charters were all confirmations of pre-existing gifts except one: toward the end of his reign in 1160 from Jerusalem, he made a gift of fifty Bedouin tents to the Knights of St. John, presumably for their use as shelters for their camps while on campaign in the deserts areas or the frontiers.⁵⁰⁴ This charter was written by his chancellor Ralph, as all of his charters were, except for the last in 1160, which was written by Ralph's replacement Bishop Stephen of Bethlehem, the new chancellor. Since the gift of tents would be used for military purposes, it makes sense that Baldwin had the charter witnessed not by any of the kingdom's churchmen, but rather by the Master of the Templars and the most powerful barons, including his brother Amalric, now count of Ascalon, which was Baldwin's most important and recent conquest, his constable

⁵⁰⁴ RRH 355.

Humphrey of Toron, Philip of Nablus, and the lords of Tiberias, Sidon, and Caesarea. The military nature of this gift was very striking in that it declared Baldwin a warrior king and provider for his army. The evidence indicates that the last royal military gift to the Hospitallers had been Melisende and Fulk's gift of the castle of Bethgibelin in 1136, which had conferred upon them their first military obligations. Melisende on her own, however, had never made a military gift, with or without Baldwin's consent. Perhaps this indicates that gifts could reflect gendered responsibilities in the kingdom and that military gifts were typically made by the kings or the barons, who led the armies into battle, and not by the queens who stayed behind. She could and did provide gifts of lands and villages to the Hospitallers to provide extra income to be used in war, but she handed over the responsibility of spending the income to the Master of the Order as he saw fit.

Soon after the end of the civil war, on April 20, 1152, Baldwin publicly declared his independence and victory over Melisende by issuing the first of his confirmation charters for the Abbey of Jehoshaphat, to which she was particularly attached, in his name alone without any mention of her or Amalric.⁵⁰⁵ It is a confirmation of all of the Abbey's possessions and privileges that had been given to it by his grandfather King Baldwin II. Written by Ralph, it announced his return to the office of chancellor after having been dismissed by Melisende some years before, and its witness list contains the names of some of Melisende's former supporters, including Philip of Nablus and Hugh of Ibelin, who were still very powerful lords. Notably absent from the witness list, however, were Patriarch Fulcher, Archbishop Robert of Nazareth, and Bishop Gerald of Bethlehem, and it is possible to suggest that Baldwin excluded them because of the loyalty they had shown his mother in the years leading up to their showdown. It didn't

⁵⁰⁵ RRH 291.

take long, however, for them to be restored to their former positions of influence in the kingdom because Baldwin needed their status and spiritual authority. They formed part of the retinue of clerics that traveled south with Baldwin and the army to besiege Ascalon in January 1153 and were a big part of the campaign's eventual success. William of Tyre reported that Patriarch Fulcher was there with the relic of the True Cross, as well as Archbishop Peter of Tyre, Archbishop Baldwin of Caesarea, Archbishop Robert of Nazareth, Bishop Frederick of Acre, and Bishop Gerald of Bethlehem. Both Master Bernard of the Templars and Master Raymond of the Hospitallers were there as well. They, and all of the princes and citizens of each of the cities, set up their tents separately and effectively blockaded Ascalon by land in preparation for the siege, which demonstrated how important the tents could be to the army. After a company of Templar knights was destroyed in an attempt to attack the city on its own to take credit for the victory, Baldwin and the barons wanted to retreat as the city seemed unassailable. Patriarch Fulcher, Archbishop Peter, Master Raymond, and the rest of the Hospitaller knights and clergy prevailed upon them to continue, and in the end they were victorious when the garrison in the city surrendered on August 22.⁵⁰⁶

The year after the taking of Ascalon was a tumultuous one as famine struck, Nur ad-Din took the city of Damascus, and the Patriarch's feud with the Hospitallers reached the breaking point, but in 1155, Baldwin began to travel around the kingdom and to turn his attention to some of the business of governing. He also issued four confirmation charters for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. On January 14 in Acre, he confirmed a sale made by Hugh of Ibelin of three villages, Vuetmoamel, Dersabeth, and Corteis, to the Church for seven thousand bezants, which was the same sale examined above that

⁵⁰⁶ WT XVII, 21-30, 218-234.

Melisende duplicated later in order that Philip of Nablus could witness it.⁵⁰⁷ His version had a long list of churchmen and barons that witnessed it there. Back in Jerusalem on June 27, he issued two more confirmations for the Church. The first confirmed, with Melisende and Amalric's consent, an exchange Melisende had previously confirmed between the Holy Sepulcher and John Patricius in 1151.⁵⁰⁸ The second charter confirmed another confirmation of Melisende's that she had made in April, 1152 after the kingdom had been formally divided but before he had defeated her.⁵⁰⁹ It was around this time that Patriarch Fulcher departed for Rome with Archbishop Peter of Tyre, Bishop Frederick of Acre, Archbishop Baldwin of Caesarea, and many other important churchmen of the kingdom to appeal for Pope Adrian's aid in the conflict between the kingdom's churches and the Hospitallers. They would return unhappily a year later, in 1156. In July, 1155, now back in Acre, Baldwin issued a blanket confirmation of all of the privileges and possessions of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.⁵¹⁰ These three charters placed his independent blessing and stamp of approval on all of the gifts made by his predecessors, especially Melisende, effectively demonstrating his authority over the social contracts or relationships the earlier charters had created with the patriarchate and the canons of the Church. They also indicated his continued support of the absent patriarch and his Church.

Later on in his reign in 1160, Baldwin issued two more confirmation charters for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. On July 25 from Acre, he reconfirmed its possession of a long list of Syrian Christians, lands, and also the *casalia* of Bethsurie that Melisende

⁵⁰⁷ RRH 299, 313.

⁵⁰⁸ RRH 306; and see RRH 200 and 268.

⁵⁰⁹ RRH 307; and see RRH 278.

⁵¹⁰ RRH 309.

had previously confirmed in 1152.⁵¹¹ A day later, he confirmed another list all of the possessions given it by his predecessors, including his mother.⁵¹² By that time, Fulcher had died in November 1157, and Amalric, the former prior of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, had been elected as Jerusalem's patriarch. Although it is not clear exactly why he confirmed the Holy Sepulcher's possessions again at this time, perhaps he did it to reconfirm royal patronage of the church in order to beseech the prayers of its canons for his dynasty, in light of the fact that Melisende was very ill at this time and he had recently married the Byzantine princess Theodora. It is interesting to note that a few months later Amalric gave the Church of the Holy Sepulcher some gifts from his possessions as count of Ascalon and Jaffa. With his brother and his mother's approval and consent, he gave it the village of *Geladia* or Gilead, with sixteen *carrucae* of lands, which was probably near the castle that Melisende and Baldwin of Lille had taken in November, 1157, when Baldwin was campaigning in Antioch. Amalric also gave the Holy Sepulcher sixteen *carrucae* of lands as well as a house in Ascalon and two *carrucae* in the village called *Baineolbederan* and four *carrucae* of lands with vineyards near Jaffa.⁵¹³ He too may have been inspired by her illness to make this gift on her behalf out of the lands that she had helped acquire. The charter records that he made these gifts for his health and the souls of his family, *pro salute mea et pro animabus omnium parentum meorum*.

For the Hospitallers, Baldwin issued three confirmations of their possessions after 1152. With Melisende's consent, the first was issued on July 30, 1154, and confirmed in

⁵¹¹ RRH 353; and see RRH 278.

⁵¹² RRH 354; and see RRH 299, 309.

⁵¹³ RRH 356.

full detail all of the donations made by all of his predecessors.⁵¹⁴ The second confirmed all of the Hospital's possessions in Nablus, with Melisende and Amalric's consent on June 7, 1156.⁵¹⁵ The third dated October 4, 1157, confirmed all of the gifts given to the Hospital by Humphrey of Toron, his constable.⁵¹⁶ These charters appear to indicate that Baldwin's support for the Hospital didn't wane during its quarrel with the patriarch. It seems likely that Baldwin refused to take a side in their conflict, remaining neutral in order to preserve his relationships with each. It was probably the wisest course, as he needed the support of both, for each played an extremely necessary spiritual and military role in the kingdom's defense and survival. The events on the plain of Ascalon would have convinced him of the important contributions they often made to his success.

In comparing Baldwin's patronage to Melisende's, some interesting aspects of their reigns are revealed. After 1152, most of his patronage for the kingdom's religious institutions consisted of confirmations of gift charters with the sole exception of the military gift of tents to the Hospitallers. Moreover, he only supported the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the Hospitallers, and once the Abbey of Jehosaphat. He did not make any new confirmations or gifts for the Order of the Knights of St. Lazarus, the Laura of St. Sabas, or the *Templum Domini*, all of which his mother supported. Despite the fact that confirmations maintain the long period of important royal support for these institutions, there also does not appear to be any specific strategy behind his confirmations beyond the continuation of general support established by his parents and their predecessors. The reasoning behind his confirmations appears to be partly this example set by his mother and his other predecessors, and partly the fact that by then they

⁵¹⁴ RRH 293.

⁵¹⁵ RRH 321.

⁵¹⁶ RRH 325.

would have been expected of him by these institutions. According to William of Tyre, Melisende advised him throughout his reign, and as has been related above, gave her consent to four of his confirmation charters. She, above all, had taught him how to govern the kingdom and win the support of its religious institutions. However, although the confirmations he made were important, after comparing them to her varied gifts, exchanges, and confirmations, they seem to be mostly general, non-specific, and even passive rather than active political gestures. They do not seem to correspond in any way to the events or circumstances of his reign. Her gift exchange is the opposite of his, with hers appearing to be much more active and politically motivated and therefore important to the way she wielded power. Her gifts were more numerous and more strategic than his because her need to access power through patronage was greater. She was a woman and ultimately her gender was what defined the actions she could take in order to keep her position and wield authority as queen regnant in the kingdom. After 1152, his position was much more secure than hers ever was because his authority was ultimately defined by the fact that he was a man and born to be king. He did not need to access power through the gift exchange as much as she did.

The gift charters of King Amalric reflect this too. He was secure enough in his reign to rule without accessing power through patronage in any significant political way. The number of his gift charters is also less than those issued during the reigns of Melisende and Baldwin III. Amalric succeeded to the throne in 1163, when Baldwin III died suddenly after taking some medicine to ward off sickness, at the age of thirty-three, without producing an heir. Before he was given the crown, Amalric was forced to annul his marriage to Agnes of Courtenay on the grounds of consanguinity, because she was the

daughter of Count Joscelin II of Edessa, who was the second cousin of Melisende, his mother. He agreed to do this in order to please the High Court, which demanded the annulment, only after the births of his daughter Sibyl and son Baldwin were declared legitimate. Amalric soon married Maria Comnena, the great-niece of the Emperor Manuel and they had a daughter named Isabel. During his reign, the crusader states were threatened by the power of Nur ad-Din, by now ruler of Damascus and Aleppo. He and Nur ad-Din fought each other for control over the weak Fatimid caliphate of Cairo, but early in 1169 Nur ad-Din's general Shirkuh was victorious. When Shirkuh died two months later, his nephew Salah al-Din or Saladin became the effective ruler of Egypt, although he was only the caliph's vizier. Amalric tried to dislodge him from power in the fall of 1169 with the help of the Byzantine navy, but failed. The situation became much more dangerous for the crusader states after that time because their enemies to the north and south had united.

Back home in Jerusalem in 1170, Amalric asked William of Tyre, who was one of the most learned men in the kingdom, to live in the court and become his son Baldwin's tutor. It was he who soon noticed that Baldwin had no feeling in his arms and diagnosed him with the first symptoms of leprosy.⁵¹⁷ Amalric hired the best Arab doctors to treat his son and heir, among whom was the Christian Abu Sulayman Dawud.⁵¹⁸ Four years later, Amalric's death was as unexpected as his brother Baldwin's had been. In June 1174, he led his army against Banias, which had been captured by Nur ad-Din in 1164, but accepted the peace terms that were offered to him by the government of Damascus. Before he struck camp he was sick with dysentery and just after he reached Jerusalem,

⁵¹⁷ WT XXI, 1, 397-8.

⁵¹⁸ Hamilton, *Leper King*, 28.

died on July 11 at the age of thirty-eight. After considerable debate, the barons and clerics of the kingdom in the High Court elected Amalric's son Baldwin to be the next king. He had not been formally diagnosed as a leper at this time, and although he was only thirteen, they decided that he was the best candidate to succeed his father. King Baldwin IV was crowned in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher on the auspicious day of July 15, 1174. The kingdom celebrated their new king on the seventy-fifth anniversary of the capture of Jerusalem by the First Crusade.⁵¹⁹

Early in his reign, on April 25, 1164, Amalric gave some slaves to the Order of the Knights of St. Lazarus to take on all of the military expeditions led by him.⁵²⁰ On July 15 of that year, the anniversary of the sixty-fifth anniversary of the taking of Jerusalem, he confirmed all of Baldwin III's concessions and privileges to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.⁵²¹ On April 7, 1165, he confirmed a division of territory for the Hospitallers and later on August 17, confirmed a sale of a house in Acre by Arnulf of Corbini to them.⁵²² On August 9, 1168, he confirmed the gift of villages that Melisende made to the Abbey of Jehosaphat in 1159 in her memory.⁵²³ Then on October 11, 1168, he gave the Hospitallers the town of Bilbais in Syria and a list of other towns and storehouses in Egypt, if they were taken by him, *si terra et terrae thesauri vi capta fuerint...*⁵²⁴ The next year on August 20, 1169, for his soul and those of the rest of his family, he confirmed only his gift of Bilbais to the Hospitallers.⁵²⁵

⁵¹⁹ For the best discussion of the circumstances of Baldwin IV's election, see Hamilton, *Leper King*, 32-43.

⁵²⁰ RRH 397.

⁵²¹ RRH 400; see RRH 74, 354, 356, 364, 368, 377.

⁵²² RRH 413, 416.

⁵²³ RRH 450.

⁵²⁴ RRH 452.

⁵²⁵ RRH 466.

Some time after Amalric learned of his son's symptoms of leprosy from William of Tyre, he made a gift on February 4, 1171, to the Order of St. Lazarus of fifty bezants, part of the taxes collected in one year at David's Gate, specifically for the support of one leper. The money was to be transferred to another after the original recipient died.⁵²⁶ While there is no way to know if the gift was connected to his son's illness, it is likely that it was. Because all knights who contracted the disease were required to join the order and do its work, Amalric would have turned his attention to patronizing the knights that might one day take care of his son. A month later, he made a concession to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher by declaring the Syrians of Turcho, a *casalia* it possessed, exempt from paying taxes at the same gate.⁵²⁷ Just before he died, Amalric issued three more gift charters in 1174. On February 24, he gave the Order of St. Lazarus an added income of forty bezants.⁵²⁸ On April 18, he confirmed a sale of lands and vineyards between the Hospital and a man named John Lombardo of Tyre.⁵²⁹ And that June he issued his last charter when he gave a road to the Hospitallers that lay between their hospital in Jerusalem and the convent of St. Mary Major.⁵³⁰

Baldwin IV was still a minor when he was crowned on July 15, 1174; however, no regent was appointed to rule the kingdom until he came of age. The lord of Transjordan, Miles of Plancy, was appointed to the position of seneschal in order to take Baldwin's place in the civil government and Humphrey II of Toron commanded the army for him as the kingdom's constable. Before Amalric died, he had planned to stage an attack on Alexandria with the help of the Sicilian navy, which had set sail before it could

⁵²⁶ RRH 487.

⁵²⁷ RRH 488

⁵²⁸ RRH 512.

⁵²⁹ RRH 514.

⁵³⁰ RRH 516.

be informed of his death. Unfortunately, the weakness of Miles of Plancy's leadership became apparent at that time when he could not persuade the masters of the Hospitallers and Templars to muster their knights for the planned campaign. The attack on Alexandria failed, therefore, because the Sicilian navy waited in vain for Jerusalem's army, which never marched to join them. The opportunity was lost to hand Salah al-Din a decisive defeat. Count Raymond III of Tripoli then requested the regency; however, he did not receive it until after Miles was assassinated that October. Raymond appointed William of Tyre as chancellor and allowed Baldwin's mother Agnes of Courtenay to return to the court as queen mother. Bernard Hamilton wrote that Baldwin was very fond of her and that her behavior showed that she cared for him in return; later on in his reign, when he was suffering from his disease and very ill, she accompanied him on his military campaigns and during his final years attended meetings of the High Court with him.⁵³¹ On December 13, 1174, Baldwin confirmed a gift made to Baldwin of Ibelin to Jobert, the master of the Hospitallers. It was written by William of Tyre and witnessed by Odo, the master of the Templars, the regent Raymond of Tripoli, Humphrey of Toron, and many of the rest of the powerful lords of the kingdom at that time, which demonstrated Raymond of Tripoli's ability to unite the barons under the leadership of his regency.⁵³² This was extremely important because Salah al-Din was on the move with his army in Syria. On March 17, 1175, he took Homs but Raymond was able to secure peace with him that year, which gave the kingdom a brief respite from the threat of his forces.

On July 15, 1176, Baldwin IV came of age to be king and, although his symptoms were becoming more apparent, no attempt was made to segregate him or send him to the

⁵³¹ Hamilton, *Leper King*, 96.

⁵³² RRH 518.

leper hospital beyond Jerusalem's walls. Like Amalric, Baldwin did not seem to access power through strategic patronage, in fact, the number of his gift charters was even less than his father's. At the beginning of his majority, he did not ratify the peace treaty with Salah al-Din that Raymond had made during the previous year. Instead, he conducted two brief campaigns that summer, during which he rode with the army and took part in the fighting one-handedly, as he had the use of one arm only, and also began to plan for a full-scale attack on Egypt. At the same time, he arranged for his sister Sibyl to marry William Longsword of Montferrat, who was a vassal of the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa, a powerful supporter of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem ever since he participated in the Second Crusade. They were married as soon as William arrived in the Holy Land that summer. He also sent an embassy to Emperor Manuel in Constantinople in 1176 to ask for the promise of aid from the Byzantine navy in the planned attack, which the Emperor agreed to do. A gift charter issued sometime that year for the Hospitallers by the king indicated that he helped the military order finance their preparations for war.⁵³³ It recorded his confirmation of all of the lands his father Amalric had given them in Egypt and promised them an additional thirty thousand bezants in revenue from the territory near Bilbais. He also confirmed a gift of a castle in Jaffa that his father had given to a chaplain named William Lovelle of the Abbey of Jehosaphat.⁵³⁴

The most significant military victory of Baldwin IV's reign was achieved in 1177. On November 25, Baldwin and Reynald of Châtillon, with a small army, surprised Salah al-Din and his army at Mont Gisard near Ibelin and routed and destroyed them, nearly capturing the sultan himself. Also in that year, however, William of Montferrat died

⁵³³ RRH 537.

⁵³⁴ RRH 538.

leaving Sibyl a young but pregnant widow. She gave birth to the future Baldwin V sometime during the winter of 1177-8. Because it was believed that leprosy could be transmitted sexually, Baldwin IV was never married and would never produce an heir. For this reason, from July 1, 1178, he began to associate his sister with him in some of his charters as his heir, just as King Baldwin II had done with Melisende.⁵³⁵ Sibyl did not appear, however, in the charter he issued on November 17, 1178, from Jacob's Ford which confirmed for the Hospitallers a gift of the *casalia* of Sileta in the territory of Nablus and all of the Bedouins that Amalric, the viscount of Nablus, had possessed.⁵³⁶ Nor was she mentioned in Baldwin's confirmation on December 31, 1178, of the convent of Bethany's possessions for grandaunt Abess Ivette.⁵³⁷ The king and his army were staying at Jacob's Ford in order to help the Templars over the winter of 1178-9 rebuild the fortress Le Chastellet there. Salah al-Din later attacked it in 1179. On May 1, 1179, Baldwin confirmed taxes received by the Hospitallers from their possessions near Acre.⁵³⁸

The winter of 1179-80 was peaceful for Baldwin IV. However, Hugh of Burgundy did not come that spring, as he had promised, to marry the widowed Sibyl. Instead, as the king was extremely ill at that time, William of Tyre reported that Bohemund III of Antioch and Raymond III of Tripoli entered the kingdom with their armies, perhaps in order to remove the influence of Agnes and the rest of the Courtenays from the court as well as to choose a suitable husband for Sibyl such as Baldwin of Ibelin. Baldwin, however, feared a coup d'etat, and hastily married Sibyl to the prince

⁵³⁵ See Hamilton, *Leper King*, 139; RRH 570, 587.

⁵³⁶ RRH 562.

⁵³⁷ RRH 562b.

⁵³⁸ RRH 582.

Guy of Lusignion during the Easter celebrations. Bernard Hamilton has observed that Guy was picked by the king, probably with the advice of his mother Agnes, in order to foil the coup d'état because he came from Poitou, which "formed part of the continental dominions of Henry II of England... the only western ruler who might realistically be expected to come to the help of the Holy Land....[and t]he presence of a Poitevan as heir to the throne of Jerusalem was arguably calculated to stimulate Angevin interest in the Latin East."⁵³⁹ Henry had not only made a penitential vow to go on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, although in the end he never fulfilled it, but also deposited a large sum of money with the military orders in Jerusalem to defray his costs after he arrived. With Antioch and Tripoli against Guy, the crusader states became deeply divided so Baldwin made a two-year truce with Salah al-Din in the late spring of 1180.⁵⁴⁰ On April 28, 1180, Baldwin gave the Hospitallers one hundred Bedouin tents.⁵⁴¹

As a leper himself, it is surprising that Baldwin IV did not support the Order of the Knights of St. Lazarus as his grandmother had. The charters indicate that he mostly supported the Hospitallers, and although no evidence has survived, he probably also supported the Templars, because of the huge demands he was placing on his army and the military orders during the almost constant warfare of his reign against Salah al-Din. Aside from his patronage for the Hospitallers as part of his military strategy, there does not seem to be any political strategy to the rest of his charters, even when he was most ill or when Raymond of Tripoli and Bohemund of Antioch tried to stage their coup d'état against him in the spring of 1180. On October 6, 1180, the patriarch of Jerusalem

⁵³⁹ Hamilton, *Leper King*, 156; for a very good analysis of the circumstances of the coup d'état, see the same pp. 150-8.

⁵⁴⁰ WT XXII, 1, 446-7.

⁵⁴¹ RRH 593.

Amalric died and was replaced by Heraclius, the archbishop of Caesarea, upon the advice of Agnes, his mother. On September 10, 1181, Baldwin IV confirmed a gift for the Hospitallers of the *casalia* of Chola. When the truce expired, Salah al-Din attacked Bethsan in southern Galilee but the king won what became known as the Battle of La Forbelet that he fought against him on July 15.

On May 16, 1185, Baldwin succumbed to his leprosy and died at the age of twenty-four. He had ruled effectively despite his illness and managed to put an army out into the field every time his enemies had attacked to keep them at bay. Out of great respect, the kingdom mourned for him as they buried him near his father and the rest of Jerusalem's kings in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, at the foot of Mt. Calvary. Bypassing Sibyl's right to inherit the throne as queen regnant with Guy of Lusignon as king-consort, the High Court decided that Baldwin IV's young nephew Baldwin V would succeed him. As Baldwin V was still a child, Raymond III of Tripoli was appointed as his regent but the young king died in the late summer of 1186 at the age of eight. He only issued three charters, each with Raymond's consent.⁵⁴² When he died, the High Court had no choice but to make his step-father Guy and his mother Sibyl king-consort and queen, to rule jointly as Fulk and Melisende had done, until their reign was dramatically ended with the catastrophic loss for the crusader army at the Battle of Hattin on July 4, 1187, during which Guy was taken prisoner by the victorious Salah al-Din. The sultan took Jerusalem on October 2 and won all of the Christian Holy Land for Islam except for the city of Tyre.⁵⁴³

⁵⁴² RRH 643, 644, 657.

⁵⁴³ For more on the fall of Jerusalem and the reaction of the Christendom, see Sylvia Schein, *Gateway to the Heavenly City: Crusader Jerusalem and the Catholic West (1099-1187)* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing, 2005).

Similar to his male predecessors, therefore, and despite his leprosy, Baldwin IV's position and authority as king was strengthened by his gender, birth right, and brave actions on the battlefields. He did not need to access power through patronage. The timing of his charters suggests that his gifts to the Hospitallers were made only in order to fund their war efforts, and not to win their political support. In fact, they and the Templars remained neutral during the coup d'état and the deep division that was the result.⁵⁴⁴ Baldwin V, Guy, and Sibyl did not get the chance to rule long enough to become important patrons of the kingdom's churches or military orders. However, it is possible that if Sibyl had been given the chance, she would have accessed power through patronage as Melisende had done. Sibyl had eventually found herself in exactly the same position: she too was a woman, who, due to the absence of male heirs, had inherited her crown from her father, and like her grandmother, she might have wielded her authority as a patron in order to create alliances through the gift exchange to make the most of the rare opportunity she had been given— to govern and rule the kingdom as a queen regnant.

⁵⁴⁴ Hamilton, *Leper King*, 158.

Chapter Five: Melisende's Contemporaries

Melisende lived in a world dominated by men. In the twelfth century, women were often viewed as the weaker sex, considered by nature to be unfit to wield power or influence. However, some did become very powerful because, like Melisende, they were born into extraordinary circumstances and had unique opportunities. Talented and ambitious queens, empresses, and baronesses, even abbesses of large nunneries could exert enormous influence over their domains through their male family connections, and through their clerical alliances, wealth, potential patronage, and leadership in times of crisis or the absence of their husbands. The lives of these women in the twelfth century, especially royal women in Western Christendom but also in the East, provide important comparisons for Melisende's reign as well as a context for her actions. Queens and noblewomen such as Eleanor of Aquitaine, Urraca of León-Castilla, Matilda II of England, queen of Henry I, Empress Matilda, his daughter and heir, Adela of Blois, Ermengard of Narbonne, and many others who wielded political power, lend themselves easily to this comparison because they faced the same kinds of pressures, expectations, and stereotypes that Melisende did. These were women who had enough resources and relative independence to enable them to control their own fortunes to a considerable extent. Most of them became significant patrons of the Church and the arts, and, at times, wielded power through patronage. While religious patronage was essential to good lordship in the twelfth century, these women had latitude as to which institutions and persons they would support, how much they would give, and when they would make their gifts. Their lives and actions as well as their patterns of gift-giving help put Melisende's

into perspective and illustrate how often patronage was used as a potent female strategy for self-empowerment; they provide examples of how women could acquire influence in a world that was determined to limit their full participation.

By the middle of the twelfth century, the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and the other crusader states in the East had developed a distinctive culture that was at once both Western and Eastern, predominantly Christian but containing all of the various religious and social elements of the eastern Mediterranean. The crusaders had fused these elements to create an unusual society in the Levant that was a receptacle of both Western and Eastern traditions and ideas, and this was reflected by its many peoples and their cultural achievements. Melisende, therefore, was influenced by both Western and Eastern royal female traditions, which were formed out of the lives and experiences of her predecessors and contemporaries, yet she was not bound to live by the rules of any of them as there was no concrete contemporary concept of “queenship” that existed anywhere in the twelfth century. Therefore, although her reign and its circumstances were unique, the following sections will examine some of the women who contributed to the tradition or context within which Melisende lived, and therefore informed the way she ruled and wielded power through patronage.

The Women of the West

Queen Eleanor of Aquitaine

Melisende’s contemporary Eleanor of Aquitaine (c. 1122-1204) exerted an enormous influence in twelfth-century politics as queen both to France and England,

heiress of her father's lands in Aquitaine and Poitou, mother to future kings of England, and patron of the Church and the arts. She was famous in the twelfth century for her beauty, energy, and longevity. As a young girl, she became duchess of Aquitaine upon the premature death in April 1137 of her father Duke William X, who was the son of the famous poet, troubadour, and crusader William IX. A few months later, she married the monkish young French king Louis VII and became queen of France. Even though she gave Louis two daughters, after their return from crusade, on March 21, 1152, the Council of Beaugency dissolved their marriage. On May 18 of that year, she was married to Henry Plantagenet, count of Anjou, Maine, and Tourraine and duke of Normandy, Fulk of Anjou's grandson, and therefore cousin to Baldwin III of Jerusalem. Eleanor brought to him Aquitaine and Poitou, and received from him the crown of England on December 19, 1154. Despite the fact that he was notoriously unfaithful to her, she and Henry had eight children, including the future kings of England Richard I, *Coeur de Lion*, her favorite, and John. While her husband was detained on the continent, she governed England in 1160 and 1162-64. In 1169, she imposed her will in Aquitaine and had Richard proclaimed its duke. In 1170, she managed to get Henry to associate their son and heir Henry the Younger with him on the throne. However, in 1173, she conspired with her sons to overthrow Henry; they were unsuccessful and she was imprisoned at Chinon, and later in England from November 1174 to July 1185 and again from spring 1186 to July 1189, until Henry died.

As a widow, Eleanor finally realized her full power and independence. After meeting up with the German Emperor Henry VI on his return from a visit in Rome with Pope Clement III, Eleanor went as far as Messina in Sicily to hand over to Richard his

future bride Berengaria of Navarre, whom she had chosen for him herself. Richard was on his way to the Holy Land for the Third Crusade and had stopped there to meet his men and fleet. When Richard was captured on his return from the crusade and held in captivity by Henry VI, Eleanor safeguarded his throne from John and assembled his ransom in order to win his release. Afterward, she even managed to reconcile her two sons with one another. In 1194, she voluntarily retired to Fontevraud, the abbey in Poitou that she had supported for many years, but she remained actively involved in the area around it. In 1199, she appeared in Châlus to be near Richard, who was dying there from a battle wound, and she rode out against the Angevins, who had elected her grandson Arthur of Brittany count instead of John. In 1200, she brought her grand-daughter Blanche of Castille north to France, as she was promised to be married to the future Louis VIII. In 1202, she rode to Mirebeau but thwarted Arthur's efforts to capture her. On March 31 or April 1, 1204, she died at Fontevraud and was laid to rest next to her husband Henry, her son Richard, and her daughter Jeanne of Toulouse. Although she had taken the veil just before she died, the effigy on her tomb there represents her as a queen.

Thus Eleanor can easily be compared to Melisende. Eleanor's inheritance of Aquitaine and Poitou from her father granted her involvement in its governance and power over it as Melisende's inheritance had granted her power in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Both women were married to powerful kings, but later in their lives won freedom and the ability to exert renewed authority after the deaths of their husbands. Both interfered in and ruled over the lives of their sons. There are other parallels in their experiences. For instance, one of the most infamous episodes of Eleanor's life as queen of France occurred during her participation in the Second Crusade and can be compared

to an episode in Melisende's life. Eleanor had taken up the cross to accompany her husband Louis VII and the French army in response to St. Bernard's preaching after the fall of Edessa. After the difficult journey east, Louis and Eleanor landed in Antioch in March 1148, and stayed briefly with Raymond of Poitou, the prince of Antioch, who was also Eleanor's uncle. Writing only about fifteen years after the crusade, John of Salisbury described the suspicious amount of affection between Eleanor and Raymond:

... the most Christian king of the Franks reached Antioch, after the destruction of his armies in the east, and was nobly entertained there by Prince Raymond, brother of the late William, count of Poitiers. He was as it happened the queen's uncle, and owed the king loyalty, affection and respect for many reasons. But whilst they remained there to console, heal and revive the survivors from the wreck of the army, the attentions paid by the prince to the queen, and his constant, indeed almost continuous, conversation with her, aroused the king's suspicions. These were greatly strengthened when the queen wished to remain behind, although the king was preparing to leave, and the prince made every effort to keep her, in the king would give his consent. And when the king made haste to tear her away, she mentioned their kinship, saying it was not lawful for them to remain together as man and wife, since they were related in the fourth and fifth degrees.⁵⁴⁵

Raymond tried to divert Louis from moving on to Jerusalem, with the hope that Louis would join with his army to defeat his enemy Nur ad-Din in the north, who threatened his kingdom, and then help him retake Edessa. According to William of Tyre, when Louis refused to agree to this plan, Raymond then seduced Eleanor in revenge and tried to convince her to use her influence with Louis to convince him to change his mind:

Raymond had already more than once approached the king privately in regard to the plans which he had in mind. Now he came before the members of the king's suite and his own nobles and explained with due formality how his request could be accomplished without difficulty and at the same time be of advantage and renown to themselves. The king, however, ardently desired to go to Jerusalem to fulfill his vows, and his

⁵⁴⁵ John of Salisbury, *The Historia Pontificalis of John of Salisbury*, Marjorie Chibnall, trans. and ed., Oxford Medieval Texts 1 (London: Thomas Nelson, 1956), 52-53.

determination was irrevocable. When Raymond found that he could not induce the king to join him, his attitude changed. Frustrated in his ambitious designs, he began to hate the king's ways; he openly plotted against him and took means to do him injury. He resolved also to deprive him of his wife, either by force or by secret intrigue. The queen readily assented to this design, for she was a foolish woman. Her conduct before and after this time showed her to be, as we have said, far from circumspect. Contrary to her royal dignity, she disregarded her marriage vows and was unfaithful to her husband. As soon as the king discovered these plots, he took means to provide for his life and safety by anticipating the designs of the prince. By the advice of his chief nobles, he hastened his departure and secretly left Antioch with his people. Thus the splendid aspect of his affairs was completely changed, and the end was quite unlike the beginning. His coming had been attended with pomp and glory; but fortune is fickle, and his departure was ignominious.⁵⁴⁶

Although there is no way to know whether an affair happened or not, the suspicion that Eleanor had committed adultery with her uncle had been circulating before William wrote his chronicle and was probably used by him to explain the political division and rivalry between Antioch and Jerusalem as well as the eventual estrangement between Eleanor and Louis that led to the annulment of their marriage on the grounds of consanguinity in 1152. He also might have used it to reinforce his later explanation that the close family bond between Eleanor and Raymond was the reason that the barons of the Latin Kingdom feared that Louis might stay in Antioch and why they sent Patriarch Fulcher to keep Louis and Eleanor on course to Jerusalem.⁵⁴⁷

The accusation of adultery made against Eleanor and Raymond is similar to the accusation made against Melisende and Hugh of Jaffa, as reported by William of Tyre, because both examples involve the queens with close male relatives and appear to reflect moments of high levels of anxiety about how much power the two queens held in comparison to their husbands. The two kings Louis and Fulk may have advanced their

⁵⁴⁶ WT XVI, 27, 180-1.

⁵⁴⁷ WY XVI, 29, 183.

accusations in an effort to discredit their wives, whose powers rivaled theirs, even though the episodes indicate that they, who both received much of their power, lands, and titles through their marriages, had somehow lost their authority over their wives and by extension their kingdoms. Peggy McCracken explains that the scandalous desire of the queens as represented in chronicle accounts like those of John of Salisbury and William of Tyre also suggests an overarching “anxiety about the queen’s sexual influence” over her husband and the danger that transgressive sexual behavior could pose to him.⁵⁴⁸ Melisende and Eleanor provoked this anxiety in their husbands and the chroniclers, and probably other men in their kingdoms, because they were formidable and for that reason dangerous queens, as they were ambitious women who had inherited power and lands, and also had the opportunity to control their husbands through sexual intimacy and therefore to influence the governments over which they ruled.

After the Second Crusade failed and the German Emperor Conrad III had gone home, Louis and Eleanor stayed in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem for over a year, only finally departing during the spring crossings to the West after celebrating Easter in Jerusalem.⁵⁴⁹ Although William did not relate any details as to how Louis and Eleanor spent their time in the Latin Kingdom after making pilgrimages to the sacred shrines and churches, it is very likely that they met with Melisende and her son Baldwin often and socialized with them in the royal court as their guests. They also must have been invited to stay in or near the royal apartments near the Tower of David. Certainly, throughout that time, the monarchs of France and Jerusalem would have celebrated the holy days

⁵⁴⁸Peggy McCracken, “Scandalizing Desire: Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Chroniclers,” in *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady*, Bonnie Wheeler and John Carmi Parsons, eds. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 256.

⁵⁴⁹ WT XVII, 8, 196.

together by attending the liturgies at the kingdom's shrines and churches with the court and sharing meals afterwards during the festivities. Thus it is highly probable that Melisende and Eleanor met and knew each other during Eleanor's stay in Jerusalem. If they had met, it is possible that they shared their recent experiences and informed one another about what it meant to be queen in their respective kingdoms. It would have been an intriguing example of female contact and exchange between the crusader East and the West. According to what is known about Melisende's life, this was the only opportunity that she ever had to meet a woman from the West with the same rank, problems, and concerns as her own, a woman with whom she had much in common.

Melisende was an important patron of religious institutions in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and, as argued in the preceding chapter, she spent her kingdom's resources and gave them gifts to access power in the gendered circumstances within which she lived and worked as well as to gain supporters who would defend her authority when it was inevitably challenged. Eleanor arguably did the same, especially in Aquitaine, which was the foundation of her power, but she was less successful than Melisende.

Jane Martindale wrote that "Aquitaine as a region undoubtedly holds the key to an understanding of the role which Eleanor of Aquitaine played on the political and social stage of her time."⁵⁵⁰ In a comparison of Eleanor to the Anglo-Norman queens who were her predecessors in England, especially King Stephen's queen Matilda III of Boulogne, who reigned from 1135-52 and was the niece of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem's Godfrey of Bouillon and King Baldwin I, Heather Tanner agreed and concluded that Eleanor's role as queen in England was more restricted than theirs had been. Even

⁵⁵⁰ Jane Martindale, "Eleanor of Aquitaine," in *Richard Coeur de Lion in History and Myth*, Janet L. Nelson, ed., (London: King's College London and the Centre for Late Antique and Medieval Studies, 1992), 23.

Eleanor's coronation *ordo* had followed a new model that "emphasized the queen as progenitor of royal heirs and subordinate to the king rather than a sharer of royal power."⁵⁵¹ Eleanor's power in England was limited by the lack of lands assigned to her and the kingdom's growing and more efficient financial and judicial administration. Her inheritance in Aquitaine and Poitou provided her with more extensive power in those areas than in England.⁵⁵² Matilda III's reign seems to mark the apogee in the power of Anglo-Norman queenship, and although Tanner writes that her "patronage rarely intersected with the needs of state that she helped govern with such energy and skill," there can be no doubt about her support of the reforming monastic orders and interestingly, even the Knights Templar. In fact, because of her family's distinguished history of crusading, Matilda supported the Templars "most extensively."⁵⁵³ Lois Huneycutt has also compared Eleanor to the Anglo-Norman queens of England who preceded her, and she too has concluded that in her role and scope of patronage activities there she was "eclipsed" by them.⁵⁵⁴

However, Marie Hivergneaux's recent study of Eleanor's charters involving Aquitaine reveals that during her marriage to Louis VII, she had only an "apprenticeship in legitimate power," and that during her marriage to Henry II, she had "discontinuous and incomplete power."⁵⁵⁵ Hivergneaux has observed that some of the extant charters reveal that as queen of France, Eleanor's official participation in the French kingdom's affairs was "restricted to no more than three references to her approval in Louis VII's

⁵⁵¹ Tanner, 146.

⁵⁵² Tanner, 146.

⁵⁵³ Tanner, 143-4.

⁵⁵⁴ Lois L. Huneycutt, "Alianora regina anglorum: Eleanor of Aquitaine and her Anglo-Norman Predecessors as Queens of England," in *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady*, Bonnie Wheeler and John Carmi Parsons, eds. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 129.

⁵⁵⁵ Marie Hivergneaux, "Queen Eleanor and Aquitaine, 1137-1189," in *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady*, Bonnie Wheeler and John Carmi Parsons, eds. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 56, 63.

acts.”⁵⁵⁶ For Aquitaine during that time, there are sixteen charters that mention her name; all of them are grants on behalf of religious or ecclesiastical beneficiaries, but she is mentioned only because Louis “could not completely ignore Eleanor, duchess of Aquitaine in her own right,”⁵⁵⁷ and although they indicate that Eleanor and Louis ruled Aquitaine jointly, her influence was limited by him and he used her as a “legitimizing authority”⁵⁵⁸ for his rule over the duchy. Some of the donations or confirmations indicate that they maintained “networks of fidelity in Poitou, the Aunis, and the Saintonge, areas that traditionally gave allegiance to the count-dukes of Aquitaine. They issued charters, for example to the influential Templars of La Rochelle, masters of a large part of that city, to the great landholder that was the Abbaye-aux-Dames at Saintes, to the abbey of la Trinité-de-Vendôme with its possessions in Poitou, Saintonge, and Aunis and especially the isle of Oléron, and to the greatest of Poitevan ecclesiastical barons, the abbey of Saint-Maixent, whose feudal networks extended over more than fifty parishes and which, as vassal to the count of Poitou, owed fifty foot serjeants for forty days.”⁵⁵⁹

Hivergneaux describes Eleanor’s charter production during her marriage to Henry II for Aquitaine as having “more maturity and autonomy but less continuity.”⁵⁶⁰ This reflects the different episodes of her thirty-seven-year second marriage. From 1152-54, Eleanor issued confirmation and gift charters alone to three prestigious religious houses, Fontevraud, Saint-Jean de Montierneuf at Poitiers, and Saint-Maixent, that confirmed her authority over Aquitaine and broke with her past identity as queen of France.⁵⁶¹

⁵⁵⁶ Hivergneaux, 56.

⁵⁵⁷ Hivergneaux, 60.

⁵⁵⁸ Hivergneaux, 60-63; for Eleanor’s role of patron for the Abbey of la Trinité-de-Vendôme, see Johnson 74-5.

⁵⁵⁹ Hivergneaux, 58.

⁵⁶⁰ Hivergneaux, 63.

⁵⁶¹ Hivergneaux, 63.

Hivergneaux maintains that Eleanor “exercised an autonomy that had not been hers in previous years. She seems to have enjoyed true freedom regarding her inheritance, for she was able to administer it without any sign of her new husband’s consent nor his confirmation.”⁵⁶² During the years 1154-57, however, Henry II, confidently king of England, began to bring Aquitaine under his control and assimilate it into his central government, and she gradually withdrew into the background of the duchy’s business and diplomatic activity. These actions on Henry’s part were similar to those of Fulk toward Melisende during the first five years of their reign from 1131-36 when he attempted to push her into the background of governing affairs in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Henry began to act as guarantor of acts previously issued by Eleanor and therefore became the new and legitimate proprietor of ducal power and authority. She still acted in charters for religious institutions at this time although her husband’s authority dominated hers.

After 1157, however, Eleanor disappeared from the charters of Aquitaine for ten years. During this period, she was probably preoccupied with her frequent pregnancies and her public role as regent in England.⁵⁶³ She reappeared at the head of Aquitaine’s administration in late 1167 to early 1168. Hivergneaux believes that her reemergence “underlines Henry II’s inability to control all his domains through his own administration. He put aside his centralizing policies, his hopes of creating a single homogenous domain, and the effort to govern his lands personally and redistributed his powers within his family so those lands might be as firmly controlled as possible. This recourse to the idea of patrimony, which so often benefited women, returned Eleanor to

⁵⁶² Hivergneaux, 65.

⁵⁶³ Hivergneaux, 66.

her personal inheritance, a duchy wracked by frequent revolts but a region she knew well. To calm and contain the Aquitainians, Henry gave them back *their* duchess.”⁵⁶⁴ Fulk too was forced to change his policy of excluding Melisende from involvement in governing the Latin Kingdom after Hugh of Jaffa’s revolt. His “recourse to the idea of patrimony” to keep the peace restored Melisende to her rightful position and gave her back to *her* citizens in the crusader kingdom, which required him to rule with her jointly, share power with her equally, and record her consent in his charters.

Eleanor’s next six years of administering Aquitaine saw a dramatic increase in her charter production. Most of these were issued independently from her husband by her and in her son Richard’s name after 1170 for religious houses or lay people, but they “also show that her authority extended only over a fairly limited region—the Poitevin heart of the count-duke’s possessions.”⁵⁶⁵ Hivergneaux has hypothesized from the evidence in the charters that Eleanor was trying to reassert herself as the head of the duchy, and even to distance herself increasingly from Henry II’s policies in the years leading up to the revolt of 1173. During these years, she “drew closer to, but never reached, the center of the decision-making process. This led her into the revolt of 1173-74 and forced her retreat into silence and the long years of political inactivity.”⁵⁶⁶ Only after Henry’s death would she find the independence and power that she desired.

Although a comprehensive scholarly analysis of Eleanor’s religious patronage in England and Aquitaine has not been written yet, she was most famous during her day for her generous gifts and endowments to Fontevraud Abbey that were made over a period of sixty years. Her patronage to this prestigious abbey, to which she was particularly

⁵⁶⁴ Hivergneaux, 66-7.

⁵⁶⁵ Hivergneaux, 68.

⁵⁶⁶ Hivergneaux, 72.

attached, should be considered carefully as it reveals a few efforts made by her to access its political support for herself and her sons. Fontevraud Abbey was founded in 1101 by Robert of Arbrissel for women, to be run by an abbess who governed the nuns and the brothers who served them there, and it soon became very well known for its piety and influence.⁵⁶⁷ Part of the diocese of Poitiers, it was located very close to the boundary that separated the counties of Anjou and Poitiers. Jean Marc Bienvenu has examined the charters that reflect Eleanor's patronage of this influential abbey and has drawn some interesting conclusions about the timing of her gifts and her motives. He wrote that the relationship between Eleanor and the abbey was more "complex" than previously believed.⁵⁶⁸ He maintains that it is in 1146, after taking the cross at Vézelay but before leaving for the crusade, that Eleanor is first mentioned in a gift donation charter for Fontevraud but only incidentally, as having approved of a gift to the nuns from Louis VII. However, she is not designated as countess of Poitou and duchess of Aquitaine, but as the queen of France, who lives nearby, *assentiente Alienordi regina, collateralis nostra*. He believes that the fact that Louis does not refer to her as his wife could be an early indication of the dissension between the royal couple that would become accentuated on the crusade. The charter granted the nuns an annual rent of five hundred Poitevan *sous* out of the revenues of the fair held by the city of Poitiers at the start of Lent. Louis made the gift out of consideration for the pious edification of the nuns and because of their deplorable poverty. Bienvenu believes that Eleanor was not the inspiration for this gift but rather that the abbess had solicited it from the king while he was in Poitou, and that

⁵⁶⁷ For an excellent collection of medieval sources relating to the life and times of Robert of Arbrissel, see Bruce L. Venarde, trans., *Robert of Arbrissel: A Medieval Religious Life* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2003).

⁵⁶⁸ Jean-Marc Bienvenu, "Aliénor d'Aquitaine et Fontevraud," *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 29 (1986): 15-27.

he made it sincerely, because the last thing he did before he left France was to ask Geoffrey of Rancon, who was in charge of the administration of Poitou, to watch over the payments.⁵⁶⁹ Later on, however, in 1152, just after her marriage to Henry Plantagenet, she visited it for the first time, on her own as Henry was not mentioned as being present, and confirmed her prior approval, in her new role as Henry's wife, with a concerned heart, *corde compuncta*.⁵⁷⁰ Eleanor granted Fontevraud the right to take timber and firewood from her forest of Chizé in 1170, as it had been arranged by her father. However, for some reason, the gift had not been completed and the abbey had not received the forest rights. Bienvenu suggests that it was not until 1172-73 that Eleanor made her first really personal and politically motivated gift to Fontevraud, when she completed this grant herself. At the same time, she fined Pierre of Ruffec, a notable bourgeois of La Rochelle, whom she forced to pay to the nuns one hundred Poitevan *sous* each year. Bienvenu believes that she issued this charter and got personally involved because she was intent on securing Fontevraud's political support just before the great revolt against Henry, which she helped start with her sons.⁵⁷¹

When she came back to France for some time in 1185-86, temporarily free from her long exile and imprisonment by Henry after the revolt of her sons failed, Eleanor granted the order many favors. During the long years of her absence, however, the nuns of Fontevraud managed to stay on good terms with Henry, who continued to multiply his gifts to them and to intervene in their favor. However, when Eleanor returned, she

⁵⁶⁹ Marie Hivergneaux believes that this gift was made by Eleanor and Louis to Fontevraud "to improve their control over a precarious frontier region" because it "attracted a large number of seigneurial widows and daughters of that region, from throughout the west, and even from much of the north of the kingdom," see Hivergneaux, 58.

⁵⁷⁰ Bienvenu, 17-19.

⁵⁷¹ Bienvenu, 20-21.

doubled all that the king had given them. It was at this time then, that she became truly generous to the abbey. Bienvenu believes that she did this because she meant to challenge her husband's political influence, which had spread widely in Aquitaine and Poitou during her absence. He writes that in these years, Henry and Eleanor were enemies, but because of their conflict and resulting competition they were paradoxically rejoined in common solicitude toward Fontevraud.⁵⁷² Then in 1190, before Henry died, with the consent of her husband, and sons Richard, Geoffrey, and John, she founded and gave to the abbey the priory of St. Catherine in La Rochelle, which added to its already growing expansion.⁵⁷³

After becoming a widow in 1190, Eleanor showed great kindness to the abbey and eventually retired there in 1194. During the intervening years, however, she helped Richard pacify and secure England before his coronation, and she governed the kingdom while he was on crusade and captive in the Holy Roman Empire. Bienvenu believes that Fontevraud then became chiefly a strategic base of operations for her to aid her sons in their struggle against the French king Philip Augustus. Moreover, according to RáGena DeAragon, she made the personal and political choice to retire at Fontevraud because "she and her family had a close association with the monastery, and she had been its patron for many decades. Its location on the frontiers between Poitou and Anjou symbolized the link between her lineage and that of King Henry; perhaps it appealed to her as an order subject to the rule of an abbess."⁵⁷⁴ From that time on, her support for Fontevraud may have been determined by her residence there, and after the deaths of her

⁵⁷² Bienvenu, 22.

⁵⁷³ Bienvenu, 21-22.

⁵⁷⁴ RáGena DeAragon, "Wife, Widow, and Mother: Some Comparisons between Eleanor of Aquitaine and Noblewomen of the Anglo-Norman and Angevin World," in *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady*, Bonnie Wheeler and John Carmi Parsons, eds. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 106.

son Richard and daughter Jeanne in 1199, she may have had a desire to make it a royal abbey, dedicated to protecting and promoting the cult and memory of her dynasty. In that year of grief, she made an annual grant of 100 Poitevan sous to the nuns of Fontevraud out of income of her administration on the Island of Oléron, and it was given so that they would observe the Queen's anniversary after her death. It was to remain "firm and undisturbed in perpetuity... for the health of our soul and the pious commemoration of our revered husband King Henry, and King Henry our son of good memory, and the powerful man King Richard and our other sons and daughters."⁵⁷⁵

All of the scholarly research that has been reviewed here on Eleanor's political career and influence as queen in England and Aquitaine has revealed that her opportunities and need to access personal power through religious patronage were significantly less than Melisende's. This may be explained by the events of her reign and the subordinate position she held as Henry's consort, which was defined by him, as well as the small but growing effectiveness of the bureaucratic administration in England. The few examples cited above clearly indicate that Eleanor made use of the opportunities to exercise influence through religious patronage solely in Aquitaine, and only during her long second marriage, but that the circumstances of her authority, including the periods during which she wielded substantial power at the requests of her husband and later her son as well as the periods during which she was restrained by the power of her husband and her long years of imprisonment, must be considered as part of the explanation as to why there appear to be so few.

⁵⁷⁵ Martindale, 17-18.

Queen Urraca of León-Castilla

The only medieval woman who was recognized as a queen regnant in a Western European kingdom before Melisende was Queen Urraca of León-Castilla, who ruled from 1109-26. The circumstances of her reign, therefore, are vital to the study of Melisende's. Both queens ruled over large kingdoms in the first half of the twelfth century that had very similar characteristics. Both of their kingdoms were on the frontiers of Christian Western Europe and each faced constant threats from Muslim enemies on their borders, defended prominent holy pilgrimage shrines, hosted throngs of pilgrims, were mobilized for war at all times, supported powerful religious institutions, held the interest of the papacy, and were divided by tensions and baronial rivalries from within. Moreover, both queens faced similar situations in their reigns. Analogous to Melisende, Urraca became a queen regnant at the death of her father Alfonso VI because, in the absence of a male heir, he had wished it. Thereafter, she too had to face the inevitable challenges to her authority, first from her husband and his supporters and then from her eldest son and his. To build up her support, Urraca made political allies out of the highest-ranking churchmen of her kingdom as well as the barons as Melisende had, and she used patronage of religious institutions as a powerful strategy in defending and reinforcing her authority.

Urraca's first husband, Count Raymond of Burgundy, died in 1107 leaving her a widow with two small children. Two years later, just before he died, her father Alfonso VI arranged in 1109 for her to succeed him and marry King Alfonso I of Aragón to rule jointly with him. Her reign, regrettably, was disturbed by strife among the powerful nobles and especially by recurrent warfare with her second husband, who seized her

lands. After her second marriage was annulled in 1114, Urraca eventually recovered most of her stolen lands with the help of her son, who succeeded her as Alfonso VII. Bernard Reilly, her chief historian, whose book *The Kingdom of León-Castilla Under Queen Urraca, 1109-1126* was published in 1982, undertook the difficult task of reconstructing the events of her reign out of the 118 charters and some 900 other documents that had survived because he believed that it had been misunderstood since “contemporary and subsequent historians alike have been so disappointed in it... [and] disliked the tumult and civil war that resulted from its disruption and regarded both as the natural products of sole rule by a woman.... [T]he prevailing tendency has been to consider Urraca’s reign as a kind of interregnum to be discussed and dismissed as quickly as possible.”⁵⁷⁶ However, he believes that Urraca “governed and administered the realm of León-Castilla on the whole successfully.”⁵⁷⁷ Yet, mistrustful of a more empathetic approach, he does not call himself Urraca’s biographer and writes that “I have avoided for the most part the sort of inferences proper to biography because the materials vital to a biographical approach simply do not exist.”⁵⁷⁸ Interestingly, these have been the same problems that have contributed to the neglect and misunderstanding by historians of Melisende’s reign as well.

When Urraca’s husband Raymond of Burgundy died in late September, 1107, she succeeded him as the sole ruler, under her father King Alfonso VI, of Galicia, the Zamorra district, and a piece of territory stretching south and east as far as Coria. Before this time, she had confirmed most of Raymond’s grants but stayed out of politics, acting in what Reilly refers to as a “spectator” role. After becoming a widow, however, she

⁵⁷⁶ Reilly, ix-x.

⁵⁷⁷ Reilly, 251.

⁵⁷⁸ Reilly, xiii.

asserted her influence in Galicia and, participating fully in the government, controlled politics and royal affairs by building networks of political alliances and patronizing religious institutions extensively. In fact, soon after her husband's death, on December 13, 1107, she issued a gift charter that identified her as *totius gallecie domina* to the Church of Santiago of Compostela, the great shrine church and pilgrimage destination within her kingdom, in the presence of all of the bishops of Galicia. Confirmed by the abbots of the great monasteries of Antealtares and Celanova and most of the great barons of the land,⁵⁷⁹ this charter was signed at a council or curia meeting held in León during which it was decided that Urraca would retain control over Galicia herself unless she remarried, and upon that event it would pass to her son, the young Alfonso. Having accepted this decision, on January 21, 1108, Urraca supported the see of Lugo in her name as *tocius Gallecie imperatrix*. Later on, Urraca was able to install her own chaplain as bishop of Lugo through the Council of Palencia in 1113, and afterward this busy town on the pilgrimage road to Santiago de Compostela remained loyal to her all throughout her reign and served as a base of support for her in Galicia.⁵⁸⁰

A few months later on May 30, 1108, everything changed for Urraca when Sancho Adefónsez, her half-brother and their father's heir, died with the rest of the relief force sent to defend the fortress of Uclés, which was destroyed by the army of Tamin ben Yusuf, the governor of Granada. After this crisis, she "immediately became the center of political attention" as her father's only legitimate heir, and joined him in Segovia in early July.⁵⁸¹ It was at this time that her father probably made the decision to marry her to Alfonso I, the king of Aragón. Reilly wrote that her father had very good reasons to

⁵⁷⁹ Reilly, 48.

⁵⁸⁰ Reilly, 333.

⁵⁸¹ Reilly, 51.

choose the king, even though it became apparent later that Urraca herself and many others including the Galicians and Castilians were against it. Reilly comments further that,

[d]espite the fact that he intended to designate [Urraca] as his heir, upon his own death every head of a powerful faction was bound to attempt to dominate her government. Because she was a woman, the claims of her young son would be used against her. Her half sister Teresa might be expected to press her own claims as well, despite her illegitimate birth. Teresa's husband, Count Henry [of Portugal], was sure to press his own suitability as warrior, male, and possible regent for Urraca's son. Yet Henry's claim would have the inevitable weaknesses of his own foreign birth, his wife's illegitimacy, and the suspicion that he would seek to supplant rather than support the claims of the young Alfonso Raimúndez.⁵⁸²

Thus when Alfonso VI died on June 30, 1109, in Toledo, and Urraca became queen, the great barons and churchmen of the kingdom decided to honor the marriage arrangements made by the dead king to marry Urraca to the king of Aragón. The marriage took place in October, 1109. The couple was expected to rule jointly over León-Castilla and Aragón just as Melisende and Fulk would do in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Urraca's second husband Alfonso I, the "Batallador" was regarded as one of the greatest warriors of his day; on December 18, 1118, he famously conquered the great taifa of Zaragoza. Aside from his unhappy marriage to Urraca, he is largely known for his will in 1134 "that left his much-enlarged realm to the new military orders of the Hospital, Temple, and the Holy Sepulcher."⁵⁸³ According to Reilly, the main reason that their marriage and settlement determined by Alfonso VI began to "unravel" in its first few years was that the couple had personal problems (Urraca was reported to have accused her husband of physical abuse) and because they had remained childless, which

⁵⁸² Reilly, 52-3.

⁵⁸³ Reilly, 59.

left the marriage open to attack on the questions of consanguinity and the rights of other heirs.⁵⁸⁴ Despite their dislike for one another, the couple traveled with the court together and signed and confirmed charters and other documents as joint sovereigns early in the year 1110.⁵⁸⁵ However, she traveled to León without him in May, and in July she received a papal condemnation of her marriage because she and Alfonso were related too closely. She then agreed to separate from her husband. In a charter dated August 15, 1110 in Nájera, at the head of an army on her way to Zaragoza, Urraca made a gift to the monastery of San Millán in her name alone as queen of León-Castilla, which was witnessed and confirmed by most of her kingdom's influential barons.⁵⁸⁶

Reilly wrote that scarcely six months after separating from her husband, Urraca enjoyed the support of Castilla, León, Rioja, the trans-Duero "Extramadura," and at least part of Galicia. It was around this time that Urraca took the Castilian Count Pedro González of Lara as her lover and companion until her death, and he became one of her most loyal supporters and a pillar of her strength in Castilla, appearing in no less than fifty-two of her charters. They had at least two children together, Fernando Pérez and Elvira, whose birthdates are unknown.⁵⁸⁷ It was also at this time that Urraca began to make use of the strategy of accessing power through religious patronage. This strategy would serve her well during some of the most precarious moments of her reign. Her income was based mainly on the proceeds of rents and dues from the lands of the royal demesne or what Reilly refers to as the fisc lands, which were scattered mainly around the political centers of the realm as well as taxes, and coining money. When she chose to

⁵⁸⁴ Reilly, 60-1.

⁵⁸⁵ Reilly, 65; n70 for a list of the documents signed jointly by Urraca and Alfonso of Aragón.

⁵⁸⁶ Reilly, 68.

⁵⁸⁷ Reilly, 216-7.

alienate these lands, she either sold them for extra money or granted them as rewards for loyalty, support, or services to her bishops, abbots, barons, and even some of her common citizens on occasion.

Through these gifts, she asserted her independence as queen regnant of León-Castilla in spite of her estranged husband and created political alliances in order to influence prominent churchmen, especially her kingdom's bishops. An early example of her ability to access power through patronage in the eastern part of her kingdom, for instance, was a donation at this time to the monastery of Oña.⁵⁸⁸ She also began to cultivate a strong political alliance with Archbishop Bernard of Toledo, the most influential churchman in her kingdom, which would last for fifteen years until his death in 1125. Urraca's relationship with him can be compared to the relationship between Melisende and the patriarchs of Jerusalem. Bernard was a regular member of her court and, according to Reilly, since his power rivaled her own, she needed his political support. He also acted as the chief royal officer of the city of Toledo when he was present there. Bernard was a Cluniac monk who had been sent to the Iberian peninsula by Abbot Hugh of Cluny at the request of Urraca's father Alfonso VI. He served first as the abbot of Sahagún, the prestigious royal monastery of León-Castilla in 1080, and then in Toledo after its reconquest. In 1088, Pope Urban II, who would launch the First Crusade seven years later, made Toledo the metropolitan see for all of the traditional sees that still lay within Muslim territory. Then on April 25, 1093, Pope Urban gave Archbishop Bernard the authority of a papal legate in the peninsula. In return for his support, his see was generously supported by royal gifts and he enjoyed the prestige of a

⁵⁸⁸ Reilly, 71.

long relationship with the crown during Urraca's reign as well as her father's and her son's.⁵⁸⁹

Realizing clearly by now that he was swiftly losing control in his new kingdom, Alfonso decided to retaliate against Urraca and assert his rights through the language of a gift charter of his own. According to Reilly, “[a]t Carrión in Castilla, only thirty-five kilometers from Sahagún, he issued a donation in February 1111 *regnante me dei gratia in toleto, legione, castella et aragone*. Suiting action to words, in April 1111 he struck south and occupied Toledo. For all parties concerned, the recourse would now be arms.”⁵⁹⁰ In response, Urraca reached an agreement with her son Alfonso Raimúndez, still only six years old, and his supporters in Galicia including Bishop Gelmírez of Santiago de Compostela, which led to her son's anointing and coronation there as king and heir on September 19, 1111. He then sent an army from Galicia to assist his mother in the developing civil war, but she and her supporters were defeated at the battle of Candespina near Sepúlveda on October 26, 1111, by the combined forces of her husband and Count Henry of Portugal. Urraca then offered Count Henry a division of her kingdom and titles in order to extract him from his alliance with Alfonso, but secretly began negotiations with Alfonso against Henry and gave him León before retreating into the mountains of Galicia. Her son was delivered to her custody safely by Bishop Gelmírez, and although Alfonso had conquered the rest of her kingdom, her position still remained strong because her husband had no titles to any of his newly taken lands or possessions without her and she continued to have the loyalty of her son's supporters in Galicia.

⁵⁸⁹ Reilly, 316.

⁵⁹⁰ Reilly, 72.

With much diplomatic skill, Urraca began to consolidate her position and garner support to form a coalition against her husband Alfonso, even reaching some kind of an agreement with Henry of Portugal. Reilly wrote that she went to the province of Asturias to rally her cause and to “ensure the support of Bishop Pelayo of Oviedo, appointee and chronicler of her father. There, on March 27, 1112, she granted a charter to the church of Oviedo in return for substantial financial support.”⁵⁹¹ By May 1, Urraca had completed her preparations and her army was marching against her husband. According to Reilly, with her were “Prior Stephen of the Cluniac house of San Zoil in Carrión; the treasurer of Cluny, Dalmatius Geret; and Archbishop Maurice of Braga. The presence of the Cluniacs probably indicates negotiations to secure the support of that great power for her sole rule on the condition that she designate her son as successor.”⁵⁹² Alfonso was defeated and besieged by her army in Carrión, but Urraca ended the siege and sued for a temporary peace with her husband. It lasted only for the summer of 1112. By the fall of that year, her marriage over, Urraca had declared herself fit to rule her father’s realm in her own right as “queen of Spain,” but her husband still held most of Castilla and the city of Toledo had received him the previous spring. Although she had the support of Toledo’s Archbishop Bernard, she would need to marshal all of her forces to restore her inheritance. Reilly maintains that at that point in her reign, “[t]o restore and protect the integrity of her inheritance, the kingdom of her father, could be the only task of Urraca.”⁵⁹³

During the next few years until 1116, Urraca traveled widely in her kingdom campaigning against her enemies, especially the king of Aragón. Her army had many

⁵⁹¹ Reilly, 79.

⁵⁹² Reilly, 81.

⁵⁹³ Reilly, 86.

successes against the forces of her husband in Castilla, she consolidated her position in Galicia, and she continued to look after the churches and monasteries in the troubled areas of her realm to win their political support. According to Reilly, for instance, on January 20, 1116, she made a donation of lands to the monastery of San Isidro de las Dueñas, confirmed by her son, her half-sister Sancha, Archbishop Bernard of Toledo, and the bishops of Palencia and Burgos. In the east, she made a donation to the church of Palencia on February 9, 1116, which was witnessed by a great number of her faithful followers from the eastern and western parts of her realm. In the west, she made an attempt to strengthen her position by making a donation to the Galician monastery of San Juan de Poyo. She also may have tried to enlist the support of the Hospitallers in the border areas of Zamora through at least one donation.⁵⁹⁴ In October of 1116, she granted a mint and the profits from its operations to the abbot of Sahagún to win his support at this critical moment.⁵⁹⁵ By the end of the year 1116, her efforts were rewarded when Alfonso called for an end to the hostilities with Urraca and a truce with her because he wished to turn his attention to the taking of Zaragoza.

During the truce with Aragón, which lasted from the Council of Burgos in 1117 to 1120, Urraca reinforced her political control and defended her interests in Galicia and in the south of her kingdom in an area that bordered Portugal against the ambitions of her sister Teresa. As queen regnant, she was the source of all legitimate secular authority, but as Reilly maintains, she functioned in and with a curia of about thirty men, officials, bishops, and barons of the kingdom, who were her companions, advisors, and witnessed

⁵⁹⁴ Reilly, 108-9, 111-2; Delaville le Roulx, *Cartulaire Générale de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers*, 38, 39.

⁵⁹⁵ Reilly, 273.

to her charters. Together they made up the governing body of the realm.⁵⁹⁶ When she was away from the curia on business or campaigns, for instance during the entire year of 1116, it is likely that the archbishop of Toledo became the informal leader of this governing body in her absence.⁵⁹⁷

In the late spring of 1117, Urraca campaigned in the south of Galicia and then moved north to Santiago de Compostela to negotiate a settlement between her ally Bishop Gelmírez and the town's *concejo*, which had been excluding the bishop from governing for a year. Unhappy with Urraca's interference, the townspeople responded with violence and rose up against her and the bishop. What happened next was astonishing and what must have been a frightening ordeal for Urraca that resulted in a humiliating violation of her sacred person. According to the *Historia Compostelana*, an episcopal *gesta* about Bishop Gelmírez and one of the most important contemporary literary accounts of the period 1109-26:

While Urraca and Gelmírez were conferring in the episcopal palace the townspeople suddenly rose in rebellion, and the pair were forced to take refuge in a new tower being built for the cathedral. The rebels then fired the tower and Urraca was forced to emerge, whereupon, in one of the most extraordinary of scenes, she was stripped and pelted with stones before being rescued by calmer heads. After extracting from the queen promises of forgiveness and concessions that probably even they knew would be worthless, the rebels allowed her to leave the city because no other course was practical. Awaiting her were the forces of Count Pedro Froilaz and her son; they were soon joined by Gelmírez, who had effected his own escape from the town. Overawed by the forces arrayed against them, the burghers capitulated quickly.⁵⁹⁸

In the end, Bishop Gelmírez was restored at the head of the town's government and the leaders of the rebellion were exiled. According to Reilly, Urraca recovered quickly and

⁵⁹⁶ Reilly, 252.

⁵⁹⁷ Reilly, 253.

⁵⁹⁸ Reilly, 124.

her extreme humiliation “finds scarcely an echo in her own vigorous policy.”⁵⁹⁹ At the very least, the episode demonstrated the strength and determination that she drew upon to defend her own interests and policies as the reigning queen as well as her courage in the face of her vulnerability to violence as a woman.

Three years later, Urraca was forced to end her alliance with Bishop Gelmírez and compel him to give up his power in Galicia by imprisoning him because of the threat that his close relationship with Teresa, her sister and longtime rival, posed to the kingdom’s western borders. Gelmírez’s see of Santiago de Compostela had been elevated to an archbishopric on February 27, 1120, and his new powers were threatening Urraca’s. According to Reilly, on July 24, 1120, Urraca entered Compostela and “informed the canons of the church that she had terminated the ‘honor’ of Santiago, had reclaimed its castles, and intended to make an inquiry into the use the archbishop had made of his authority.”⁶⁰⁰ He believes this action was one of the most serious mistakes of her reign because her actions alienated the bishop’s supporters, including her son, and exposed her to the threat of excommunication from the papacy.⁶⁰¹ Making an enemy of her son was dangerous because he was her heir and as he grew older, the possibility of his overthrowing her grew greater, especially if she was excommunicated. It was the same kind of danger that Melisende would face in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem some decades later from her son Baldwin as she continued to deny him a role in her government. Alfonso Raimúndez was joined by the forces of Count Pedro Froilaz, which encouraged the bishop’s supporters in the town to begin a riot, and Urraca was forced to take refuge in the cathedral and free Gelmírez eight days later. However, later, on

⁵⁹⁹ Reilly, 124.

⁶⁰⁰ Reilly, 146.

⁶⁰¹ Reilly, 361.

August 6, 1120, Urraca was in eastern Galicia and made a donation to the monastery of Samos, which was confirmed by Gelmírez and a large number of the barons and churchmen of Galicia, indicating the “continuing reality of her power and the fact that negotiations were still in progress.”⁶⁰² It was at this time that she also made another gift to Cluny, which Reilly believes was an attempt to secure aid from the influential monastery both in negotiations with Gelmírez and her son’s faction and in preventing too severe a reaction from Pope Calixtus II, who had threatened to excommunicate her and place an interdict on the entire realm for her brief imprisonment of the bishop.⁶⁰³

Urraca was successful in appeasing and even winning over the pope to her cause, although how she managed it is unknown. Reilly believes that the pope regarded Gelmírez’s actions as too aggressive and agreed with her that his ambitions must be checked, and as a result, on November 3, 1121, he extended the powers of Archbishop Bernard of Toledo to counterbalance those of Gelmírez, because Bernard had mediated the reconciliation between the pope, Urraca, and her son. Urraca and her son stayed on relatively good terms for the next few years leading up to his arming ceremony, which took place at Santiago de Compostela on May 25, 1124, and which she permitted. Reilly wrote that Alfonso Raimúndez was “rapidly becoming the political nexus of the kingdom,”⁶⁰⁴ although within León-Castilla there were no signs that Urraca’s powers were diminishing in any way. In fact, Reilly observed that their accord seemed to be increasing, especially in the sphere of their religious patronage. On May 10, 1125, for instance, Urraca made a joint gift, together with Count Rodrigo González, of the Asturian

⁶⁰² Reilly, 148.

⁶⁰³ Reilly, 148.

⁶⁰⁴ Reilly, 190.

monastery of Vega to the French Abbey of Fontevraud, which was confirmed by her son while they were together at court in Sahagún.⁶⁰⁵

When Urraca died a year later at the age of forty-six on March 8, 1126, at Saldaña on the Rio Carrión in the Tierra de Campos, she passed on to her son a kingdom that was intact and internally at peace. This was her greatest accomplishment. Just as Melisende would do a few decades later on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea, Urraca had prevailed as a queen regnant, ruled well, defended her interests, preserved her dynasty's hold on the throne, and won the loyalties of her subjects as if she had been their king. The evidence for her reign, therefore, demolishes the erroneous impression held in the past that León-Castilla experienced an interregnum from 1109 to 1126 between the reigns of Alfonso VI and Alfonso VII. The circumstances of León-Castilla would have been well known to the crusaders in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, and Urraca's success may have paved the way for Melisende's acceptance as her father's heir by the barons of the High Court. Due to the similar political circumstances of each of their reigns and the political structures and gendered expectations within which each of them worked, perhaps it should not be surprising that they made similar decisions throughout their lives. For instance, after the marriages of both queens had ended, Urraca's by papal annulment and Melisende's upon the death of Fulk, and the experiments of joint rule had become obsolete, each woman made the decision not to remarry. Aside from the desire to keep their new-found power and independence, each queen probably made the decision in order to preserve the political status quo and prevent the political crises that might ensue if they were to marry one of their barons or someone from outside the kingdom.

⁶⁰⁵ Reilly, 196-7.

Urraca's death prevented her from having to make the difficult decision that Melisende was forced to make regarding the royal authority of her son during her lifetime. If Urraca had not died when she did, she too would have had to make a choice from among the three available options that only a medieval queen regnant was forced to face regarding the question of succession: step down in order for her son to take the throne when he came of age, rule jointly with him, or exclude him from governing altogether. At the end of Urraca's life, it seemed as if she and her son had begun to rule jointly; however, it is possible to speculate that, like Melisende, she would not have completely given up her authority to rule without a fight if he had challenged her.

Queen Matilda II of England

While Urraca ruled León-Castille on the south-western frontier of Europe, Queen Matilda II, princess of Scotland and wife of King Henry I of Anglo-Norman England from 1100 to 1118, ruled as an active queen consort and partner to her husband in his kingdom in the north. One of Eleanor of Aquitaine's predecessors, Matilda was another powerful and influential queen consort, who made the most of the opportunities she found to wield authority by manipulating the political structures of her day in the first few decades of the twelfth century as well as by exercising lay and religious patronage.⁶⁰⁶ According to Lois Huneycutt, the leading historian on Matilda's reign, "[a]t every turn, the sources reveal the queen intimately and actively involved in the public affairs of the

⁶⁰⁶ The best and most recently published study of Matilda II's reign in England is Lois L. Huneycutt's *Matilda of Scotland: A Study in Medieval Queenship*. Huneycutt has also written many articles about Matilda II including: "Proclaiming Her Dignity Abroad': The Literary and Artistic Network of Matilda of Scotland, Queen of England 1100-1118," in *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women*, June Hall McCash, ed., (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1996, 155-174); and "Intercession and the High Medieval Queen: the Esther Topos," in *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women*, Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth Mac Lean, eds. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995, 126-146).

kingdom, and none of the writers of these sources exhibit any surprise or dismay that this should be the case. By 1100, it had become commonplace that the queen was, by right, entitled to the role specified in the coronation ritual: ‘a participant in the affairs of the kingdom.’”⁶⁰⁷ Matilda and Henry I ruled jointly in many ways and she provided another example of successful female rule that might have influenced the contemporary thinking that made Melisende’s queenship acceptable to the minds of the barons and western European citizens of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Matilda was the daughter of King Malcolm Canmore of Scotland and his second wife, the Anglo-Saxon princess Margaret, who would later be canonized as a saint, and therefore “carried the blood of the kings of England as well as those of Scotland.”⁶⁰⁸ Christened Edith, she was educated as a child in the nunnery at Wilton where her Aunt Christina, Margaret’s sister, was the abbess. Her father Malcolm negotiated a marriage for her with Count Alan Rufus, a powerful Anglo-Breton baron of northern England, but the marriage did not take place because the English King William II opposed the union after he had visited Matilda at Wilton and determined that she was a nun and therefore not free to marry. In this, he was supported by the then Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm of Bec. Malcolm was furious that the marriage plans between his daughter and the Count had fallen apart, and so he removed her to Scotland and ignored Anselm’s demand that she be returned to the convent. Anselm was exiled from England due to his quarrel with William II over lay investiture (the right of the king to appoint his own bishops, and for any bishops to do homage to the king for the estates they held for the crown), but on his return in 1100, he found the new King Henry I planning to marry

⁶⁰⁷ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 74.

⁶⁰⁸ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 9.

Matilda in order to create a political alliance between England and Scotland. Henry consulted with Anselm, and after further investigating the matter, Anselm determined that Matilda had never really been a nun (she had always denied it) because she had only worn the veil to save herself from unwanted suitors.⁶⁰⁹ Anselm blessed the marriage at a council of the Church at Lambeth. Matilda and Henry were married on November 11, 1100 at Westminster Abbey, and she was crowned and consecrated the same day. Sometime later she was given the Norman name of Matilda. She and Henry had two children, William the Aetheling, who drowned on a trip across the English Channel when the White Ship was lost in 1120, and Matilda, who became the wife of the German Emperor Henry V and later Geoffrey, Count of Anjou, Fulk's son.

Anselm quarreled with Henry over investiture as he had with his brother William II. As Archbishop of Canterbury, Anselm refused to do homage to Henry for his lands or to be invested by him. Anselm was a scholar and later widely recognized as a saint, and he was gentle and peace-loving but adamant in defense of his principles. He refused to recognize that the king might have a case. Henry stood his ground regarding his position as well, and the conflict continued for several years, becoming very awkward for them both. Because she loved and revered Anselm, Matilda acted as an important intermediary with the king for a settlement between them.⁶¹⁰ Her letters to Anselm show that she often turned to him for spiritual guidance and considered him her spiritual father, similar to the way Melisende must have turned to St. Bernard of Clairvaux and the patriarchs of Jerusalem for spiritual consolation and advice. In one letter, Matilda wrote c. 1103, “[Henry’s] mind is better disposed towards you than many men think; and, I favoring it,

⁶⁰⁹ Frank Barlow, *The English Church, 1066-1154* (New York: Longman Group Ltd., 1979), 170-1.

⁶¹⁰ Barlow, *English Church*, 299.

and suggesting wherever I can, he will become yet more courteous and reconciled to you.”⁶¹¹ Anselm would later inspire some of Matilda’s most important gifts and foundations to the Church.

Matilda often acted as the official regent with vice-regal authority in England when Henry was in Normandy. Lois Huneycutt wrote that “[n]ot only did she serve as a member of Henry’s curia, but she was also the delegated head of the council during many of Henry’s trips to Normandy. Working in conjunction with the king’s barons and ‘curiales’, Matilda sat in judgement and issued charters dealing with a wide spectrum of cases. She had the means to support ecclesiastical institutions of her choice, and she also had a hand in determining the direction of Henry’s patronage.”⁶¹² Matilda also had her own staff, known as the *curia reginae*, who helped her administer and manage her demesne.⁶¹³ Roger, bishop of Salisbury, worked closely with her and gradually took over more and more of the vice-regal duties under her. When she died in 1118, Roger emerged as second to the king in England. Herbert Losinga, bishop of Norwich, once wrote to Matilda in 1109 or early 1110 to request help with a financial problem. Recognizing her control of the government, Herbert praised her administrative talents while apologizing for adding another burden for her consideration. Lois Huneycutt believes that this letter illustrates the contemporary perception of her authority in the public sphere.⁶¹⁴

⁶¹¹ Anne Crawford, ed., *Letters of the Queens of England* (Stroud, UK: Sutton Publishing Ltd., 2002), 23.

⁶¹² Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 73, 79: According to Huneycutt, thirty-three charters are known to have been issued by Matilda, which along with other documents that she attested for Henry or confirmed for others, provide the evidence of her participation in public affairs.

⁶¹³ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 95.

⁶¹⁴ Huneycutt, “Medieval Queenship,” 19; Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 87.

William of Malmesbury, a monk writing some fifteen years after her death, described Matilda as “singularly holy, by no means despicable in point of beauty, a rival of her mother’s piety, never committing any impropriety....Clad in haircloth beneath her royal habit, in Lent, she trod the thresholds of the church barefoot.”⁶¹⁵ She also personally cared for lepers, for whom she built a hospital in St. Giles in the Fields outside London. William of Malmesbury portrayed her in his *History of the English Kings* as a saintly queen who played many roles: wife, mother, benefactor, peace-maker, intercessor, administrator, church-founder, and friend and ally to the leading bishops of the kingdom. To him, she embodied all of the characteristics expected in a queen of the twelfth century. This therefore was the ideal that Melisende and the other queens of the twelfth century had inherited and were expected to embody in order to succeed in their circumstances as female rulers.

Matilda II was given the cognomen *Mathilda bona regina* by the clerical and monastic chroniclers in order to distinguish her from the numerous other Matildas of the Anglo-Norman period and because of her many good works and generous gifts to the kingdom’s church institutions. Lois Huneycutt examined all of the charters that record Matilda’s gifts and concluded that “the key to understanding Matilda’s impact on the people and the institutions of the Anglo-Norman church lies in personalities, not policies....[Overall], in the relationship between Matilda of Scotland and the Anglo-Norman church, personal factors reigned supreme. Places associated with Queen Matilda’s childhood or her ancestry were likely to be favored, as were those institutions

⁶¹⁵ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum anglorum: The History of the English Kings*, R. A. B. Mynors, R. M. Thompson, and M. Winterbottom, eds and trans. , volume 1 (Oxford, UK: The Clarendon Press, 1998), 757.

headed by her friends and counselors.”⁶¹⁶ Thus Huneycutt believes that Matilda’s piety and personal interests and relationships with churchmen such as Archbishop Anselm guided the choices she made in her patronage activity, not political issues or strategy. However, as Henry I’s administration grew to meet the challenges posed by the king’s enlarged realm of Normandy and England, finding loyal and intelligent men to serve in it could be a problem. Matilda’s support and patronage for the kingdom’s leading churchmen, who were some of the kingdom’s top administrators in England, helped solve this problem because her patronage won the allegiance of these men for the government.⁶¹⁷ In this way, her patronage was a political strategy that helped to enhance the power of the crown and the loyalty and strength of England’s government.

One of the most striking similarities of Matilda’s patronage activities to those of Melisende was their shared concern and support for the lepers of their kingdoms, especially in their capital cities. Like her mother Queen Margaret of Scotland, Matilda took a special interest in improving the condition of her kingdom’s lepers, especially those in London. Caring for lepers was considered one of the responsibilities of the monarchies in European kingdoms of the twelfth century whose citizens suffered from the disease in significant numbers, and often the queens played an important role by taking on some of the burden at that time. Just as Melisende made sure to give to the Order of St. Lazarus, which cared for the lepers of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, sometime during the last few years of her reign, Matilda founded a leper hospital dedicated to St. Giles in Holborn, located just outside London, on the road that linked

⁶¹⁶ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 123-4.

⁶¹⁷ Richard W. Southern wrote that the history of patronage as an instrument of government in England and social change began during the reign of Henry I and his Queen Matilda, see Richard W. Southern, *Medieval Humanism* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1970), 206-233.

London to Oxford. “Matilda endowed the hospital with an annual income of sixty shillings from the revenues of Queenhithe, which was to be spent on food for the residents. The hospital also received the soke of the parish of St. Giles. Later in the century, Matilda’s grandson Henry II added another ninety shillings and five pence per annum to provide candles and habits. Henry’s charter refers to a former chaplain, John, who may have been the original chaplain appointed by Queen Matilda.”⁶¹⁸ David Marcombe noted that later in the history of the leper hospital of St. Giles, Holborn, “it was a royal free chapel, exempt from episcopal visitation and generously endowed by English kings and the citizens of London in the expectation that it would help relieve the considerable problem of leprosy with which the capitol was beset. It would appear that the king anticipated that the Lazarites would develop a hospitaller role, using St. Giles as the base from which their rebirth would begin.”⁶¹⁹ Matilda was also generous to the leper hospital at Chichester, and may even have founded it as well.⁶²⁰

Matilda cared for the rest of her subjects too. She became an enthusiastic supporter of the new Augustinian order in England when, sometime around 1107 or 1108, upon the advice of Archbishop Anselm, she founded the priory of Holy Trinity of Aldgate in London for them, providing it “with the London gate and its soke and a cash income of two-thirds of the tolls from the city of Exeter.”⁶²¹ Lois Huneycutt believes that the “group appealed to the practical nature of England’s queen” because when they came to England, they fed the hungry, nursed the sick, and took care if the physical needs of

⁶¹⁸ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 106.

⁶¹⁹ Marcombe, *The Order of St. Lazarus*, 161.

⁶²⁰ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 106.

⁶²¹ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 109.

the communities in which they lived.⁶²² She chose a canon named Norman, from St. Botolph's in Colchester, to be the head of her new priory and he became her confessor. This chapter of canons at Holy Trinity of Aldgate became extremely influential and soon the Augustinians ran other houses all over the kingdom, including Merton Priory, backed by Matilda but established by the royal official Gilbert the Sheriff. Huneycutt wrote that "[l]ike Gilbert, other members of the royal curia followed the example of the queen and directed their religious patronage toward the order of the Augustinian canons. Together, Holy Trinity and Merton colonized nearly a dozen daughter houses, all but a few of which were founded by members of the royal circle."⁶²³ Matilda's patronage activities, therefore, played an enormous role in the spread of the Augustinians and their acts of charity in the kingdom, thereby greatly improving the social and physical well-being of her citizens.

No other place and its people in England received more attention and demonstrations of generosity from Matilda than the city of London and it was there that she spent most of her time. Besides founding the leper hospital of St. Giles and the new priory of Holy Trinity Aldgate in London, she also spent a substantial amount of money on construction projects designed to improve the lives of the people in the city. However, these projects do not seem to be orchestrated as political acts by Matilda to woo the city's inhabitants the way Melisende's building projects in Jerusalem were probably meant to be, but rather as "'good works' for the benefit of her soul as much as for the welfare of those whose lives they improved."⁶²⁴ According to Huneycutt, Matilda paid for a large bath house to be constructed in London, which included the city's first

⁶²² Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 107.

⁶²³ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 109.

⁶²⁴ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 114.

public toilets. She also built several bridges linking London to the surrounding rural areas, one on the London-Portsmouth road, in the village of Cobham, and two that linked London to Essex, including an arched bridge over the Lea known as the Bow Bridge. Matilda gave Barking Abbey the responsibility of maintaining the bridges over the Lea, and gave them a mill that she bought in West Ham to cover the costs of the bridge with its income.⁶²⁵

Matilda gave gifts to some of the other religious houses in England, but according to Huneycutt, did so mostly to foster personal connections. For instance, she gave Wilton Abbey, the place she was educated, a privilege to collect wood in the royal forest. Huneycutt also maintains that “throughout the analysis of Queen Matilda’s relationship to, and influence on, the Anglo-Norman church, the queen was likely to lavish her gifts and attention on the churches pastured by men whom she liked and admired.”⁶²⁶ For the Benedictines, she made several gifts to the monastery of Abingdon after both of her children were born to thank its abbot Faritius, who was her physician. She also made several gifts to Salisbury Cathedral, the see of Bishop Roger, who helped her govern England when Henry was away. And, she gave two manors from her demesne to Lincoln Cathedral and its Bishop Robert of Bloet, who was a member of the curia.⁶²⁷

Matilda’s reputation for generosity to the Church was not perfect. In the beginning of her reign, she received some criticism regarding her excessive taxation of her churches when she was in need of extra income to impress foreign dignitaries and entertainers. This led to William of Malmesbury’s complaint:

⁶²⁵ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 114-5.

⁶²⁶ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 122.

⁶²⁷ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 117-9.

The news of her liberality consequently spread throughout the world, and hither flocked in troops any scholars who had a name for turning verses; happy he thought himself, the man who could please his lady's ear with a new song. Nor were they the only recipients of her bounty; it went to all sorts of men, especially to foreigners, who might accept her presents and then advertise her fame in other countries....Hence it was, they say—and indeed it was true, that our lady was beguiled into sweetening with presents all the foreigners she could, and kept the others dangling with promises that were sometimes honoured, and sometimes—indeed more often—empty. Thus it came about that she did not escape the vice of prodigality, laid all kinds of claims upon her tenantry, used them despitefully and took their livelihood, winning the name of a generous giver but ignoring the wrongs of her own people.⁶²⁸

Lois Huneycutt wrote that William's grievance "cannot be dismissed as an aberration.

Letters between Matilda and her continental correspondents bear witness to the truth of these allegations."⁶²⁹ In 1103, even Anselm reprimanded her and she expressed regret for her behavior. Based on her later acts of generosity, Huneycutt believes that her repentance was sincere. She wrote that "[f]rom that point onward, her relationship to the English church was harmonious, earning her the cognomen 'Matilda the Good Queen', from the priests and monastic chroniclers who commented on her life and reign."⁶³⁰

In the end, unlike Melisende, Matilda II does not seem to have made much use of the strategy of religious patronage to achieve specific political goals. In fact, according to the evidence, her patronage of the Church was more strongly dictated by her personal reasons and pious concerns rather than her political needs. Although her support for her friends in the Church must have won their loyalty and admiration, as well as their administrative talents for her husband Henry's government, it does not seem to have been directed toward enhancing her own authority. Matilda seems to have enjoyed an

⁶²⁸ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta regum anglorum*, 757.

⁶²⁹ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 116.

⁶³⁰ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 117.

uncontested position of political power in her husband's government, and wielded his power and trust during his long absences. She had no need to strengthen her political position through patronage because as queen consort, her marriage, coronation, and son William, the pillars upon which it was based, were enough to support it. She supported the churches of the men whom she liked and admired to build and strengthen her ties of friendship with them and of course, as acts of piety and devotion. This may explain why she sometimes "promised more than she could deliver."⁶³¹ Although her friendships and generous reputation depended on the integrity of her gifts, her position and authority did not.

Empress Matilda

Queen Matilda II's daughter, known as the Empress Matilda after her marriage to the German Emperor Henry V at the age of twelve, was the third woman of the first half of the twelfth century in a western European kingdom, after Urraca and Melisende, to be designated as her father's successor and queen regnant in the absence of legitimate male heirs. Ultimately, however, her situation was much more difficult than theirs because, upon her father King Henry I's death in 1135, she was supplanted by her cousin Stephen of Blois and therefore denied the status that would have been conferred upon her with her coronation and anointment as a queen regnant, mainly because she was a woman. Many historians of Stephen's reign, including C. Warren Hollister, have concluded, that her "great impediment was her sex."⁶³² Although for nine years she was determined to take

⁶³¹ Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland*, 120.

⁶³² For one of the most authoritative histories of Stephen's reign, see R. H. C. Davis, *King Stephen 1135-1154* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1967); C. Warren Hollister, "The

England and the throne away from Stephen by force with her army, which was led by the barons loyal to her and committed to upholding the oaths they had made to her father to defend her right to succeed him, she ultimately failed. Melisende and Fulk must have closely watched the civil war fought in England and Normandy during Empress Matilda's bid for the throne. Matilda was married to Fulk's son Geoffrey, the Count of Anjou during the struggle for her inheritance, and the consequences of the Empress's actions or the failure of her efforts must have affected the opinions and attitudes that framed and influenced Melisende's reign as a queen regnant before and after Fulk's death. It is equally likely that Matilda made herself as familiar as possible with Melisende's reign in the Holy Land, for Melisende's successes or failures would have repercussions on her situation in England, especially concerning her relationships with the kingdom's barons and churchmen.

Marjorie Chibnall provides a definitive examination of Empress Matilda's life and career in her aptly titled book *The Empress Matilda: Queen Consort, Queen Mother, and Lady of the English*.⁶³³ In this work, she has examined the many references to Empress Matilda in the chronicles written during her time by both friendly and hostile authors, and the hundreds of charters and notices of charters that have survived, most of which have been published in the *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, and the foundation histories, cartularies, and necrologies of the monasteries that she supported, in order to "form a balanced assessment of her character."⁶³⁴ Due to the Empress Matilda's contested

Anglo-Norman Succession Debate of 1126: Prelude to Stephen's Anarchy," *Journal of Medieval History* 1 (1975): 20.

⁶³³ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*; see also her article, "The Empress Matilda and her Sons," 279-294.

⁶³⁴ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 3; *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum*, volume.3, *Regis Stephani ac Mathildis Imperatricis ac Gaufridi et Henrici Ducum Normannorum*, 1135-1154, H. A. Cronne and R. H. C. David, eds. volume.4, Facsimiles of original charters and writs of King Stephen, the Empress Matilda,

position and unpredictable future after her father's death and Stephen's coronation in 1135, one would expect that she would make the most of the strategy of accessing power through patronage, as her predecessors and contemporaries had done, during the following years in her attempt to strengthen her authority in England during the civil war and, in fact, she did. This is supported by Chibnall's examination of charter and chronicle evidence. However, initially Empress Matilda had to place an emphasis on patronizing her baronial supporters with gifts of lands and titles over gifts to church institutions, for she needed their military support to win the crown. She must have promised to continue to favor her barons after her hoped-for victory and subsequent coronation, and so her gifts during the war would have served as pledges of future favors for their support in the present. Since her authority to grant these lands and titles came only from her status as Henry I's rightful heir after her seizure and possession of them during the war, this position must have been considered as a significant source of potential power and lawful authority to her supporters. She did not neglect the religious institutions in England and Normandy, however, for the political backing of the Church was just as important to her cause.

Empress Matilda was born in early February 1102, and grew up in England's royal household. According to Chibnall, Matilda's rival Stephen of Blois, the third son of Henry's sister Adela, lived there too, training to be a young knight. He had become one of her father's favorites by 1106, receiving afterwards the estates of Mortain and Lancaster. Married to the heiress Matilda of Boulogne in 1124, Stephen received the homage of his wife's lands also. Two of Henry's other favorites, however, were

and Dukes Geoffrey and Henry, 1135-1154, H. A. Cronne and R. H. C. Davis, eds. (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1913-70).

Matilda's future supporters: Henry's bastard Robert, who was married to the heiress of Gloucester, and Brian fitz Count, a younger, possibly illegitimate son of Alan Fergant, count of Brittany, who was married to the heiress of Wallingford. These two men owed their titles and lands to the generosity of Matilda's father, and they never forgot their debt to him.⁶³⁵

At the age of eight, Matilda left England for the court at Liège of her future husband Emperor Henry V, who had become the ruler of Germany four years earlier. They were married in 1114. Chibnall wrote that in Germany at that time, "the right of the queen consort to intervene in response to petitions and in support of royal grants was firmly established. Matilda's name appears in charters and chronicles from time to time during her years in Germany as the petitioner who obtained mercies or favors from the king, and she was remembered afterwards as 'the good Matilda',"⁶³⁶ a description her mother Matilda II would have been proud of. Later in her reign, she may have been present with her husband in Worms on September 23, 1122, when he agreed to the Concordat of Worms that ended the controversy over investiture that had been at the root of the Empire's conflicts with the papacy for two generations.⁶³⁷ When Henry V died at Utrecht on May 23, 1125, he and Matilda had not produced any children and he had not designated a successor, although he entrusted the imperial insignia to Matilda and placed her in the care of his nephew, Frederick of Swabia. Eventually Lothar III was elected Emperor and Matilda returned to England to her father as his only living, legitimate heir, and as she was a "young woman of twenty-three, with many years of potential child-bearing ahead...on her hung all his hopes of leaving his realm to his direct

⁶³⁵ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 12-13.

⁶³⁶ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 24.

⁶³⁷ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 35.

descendants.”⁶³⁸ In September 1126, she crossed the English Channel to return home, bringing with her marvelous jewels, personal regalia, and the precious relic of the hand of St. James, which she had not handed over to the Imperial chapel with the other treasures she had possessed.⁶³⁹

Empress Matilda’s father had remarried in 1121 to Adeliza of Louvain, in order to produce a son after the accident of the White Ship and the death of William, but they were still childless by the time Matilda had returned to England. Henry, therefore, immediately took steps to secure Matilda’s acceptance as his heir by his barons. During his Christmas court of 1127, he obtained oaths from all of the bishops and barons present, in which they swore to accept Matilda as their queen if he died without a male heir. Hollister wrote that there is evidence, however, that the court was divided into factions for and against the naming of Matilda as heir and that this division foreshadowed the political factions that would emerge during the civil war.⁶⁴⁰ Ignoring the discord in his court, Henry then turned his attention to finding another husband for Matilda. Her brother William had been betrothed to one of Fulk’s daughters before his death, and Henry “had no reason to fear that an Angevin husband for his daughter would prove more unacceptable to his vassals than any other outside the kingdom. His thoughts turned to the possibility of another marriage alliance with Anjou, where Count Fulk’s eldest son, Geoffrey, was just reaching marriageable age.”⁶⁴¹ Before Fulk left for the Holy Land to marry Melisende, everything had been arranged: Geoffrey succeeded his father as the Count of Anjou, and Matilda and Geoffrey were married on June 17, 1128, at Le Mans.

⁶³⁸ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 43.

⁶³⁹ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 44.

⁶⁴⁰ Hollister, “The Anglo-Norman Succession Debate,” 19-39.

⁶⁴¹ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 54.

Just as Fulk married Melisende with the expectation of becoming King of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem through her, his son Geoffrey probably expected to become King of England someday through his marriage to Matilda, although those hopes, if he had held them, would have been dashed by 1131, when he was ignored in the oaths of fealty Henry extracted again from his barons at a great council held in Northampton in support of Matilda as his heir. Nevertheless, the marriages of the counts of Anjou to the heirs of England and Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem created ties of mutual interest between the two kingdoms as well as serving to improve their political stations.

After 1129, Henry I began to prepare Matilda for her future role as queen of England by including her as a witness in his gift charters, allowing her to participate in and be associated with his patronage. According to Chibnall, in May 1129, Henry

issued a charter for the abbey of Fontevraud, granting an annual payment for the food of the nuns in Lent out of the farms of London and Winchester. A notification of the terms of the grant, addressed generally for England and Normandy, was separately confirmed by the Empress Matilda, with different witnesses. It may have been taken to her in Anjou by Richard and Ralph de la Haye, whose father, King Henry's steward, witnessed the royal grant....The notification shows that the king was already associating her with grants made out of farms paid into the exchequer in England. An act for Cluny, issued in 1131, when he and his daughter were together in Rouen, points to exactly the same intention. It is a notification that he has granted to St. Peter of Cluny 100 marks of revenue yearly in England—60 marks from the farm of London and 40 marks from that of Lincoln. The charter was written by one of the royal scribes and witnessed by King Henry and his daughter, the Empress Matilda.⁶⁴²

Henry's inclusion of Matilda in these charters through her confirmations and witnesses is strikingly similar to the way that Melisende's father King Baldwin II began to include her in the witness lists of his gift charters as his heir, before and after her marriage to Fulk.

⁶⁴² Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 58-9.

Even the timing is extraordinary. Within the years 1129-31, in their respective kingdoms on the opposite ends of Christendom, faced with identical situations, Henry and Baldwin acted with the very same intentions at the very same time, both issuing charters that included their daughters, in order to give them official roles in their governments as witnesses and their designated heirs.⁶⁴³ The other witnesses of these charters, the barons and churchmen who were also included in the lists, thereby gave through their very presence and approval of the grants, another formal pledge to support their monarch's intentions regarding the succession of their daughters.

In March 1133, Matilda gave birth to Henry, the future Henry II, King of England and second husband of Eleanor of Aquitaine. The next year she gave birth to another son Geoffrey. One year later, after a short illness, Matilda's father Henry I died on December 1, 1135. When the news arrived, Matilda was with her husband Geoffrey in Anjou, but Stephen of Blois was in his wife's county of Boulogne, and acting quickly, he immediately crossed the Channel to England, traveled to London, won over the city's citizens who had trading connections with his lands in Boulogne, and proceeded to Winchester, where his brother Henry, Bishop of Winchester, "persuaded the initially reluctant Archbishop of Canterbury to crown him king, the custodian of the treasure to hand over the keys, and the magnates who were present to accept him."⁶⁴⁴ On December 22, 1135, Stephen was anointed King of England. Matilda and Geoffrey acted as quickly as possible to secure her rights in Normandy by heading immediately to the border castles of Argentan, Exmes, and Domfront that had been part of her dowry. Geoffrey received some castles in Maine. From this foothold in Normandy, which Matilda and Geoffrey

⁶⁴³ RRH 121, 137, 137a.

⁶⁴⁴ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 65.

never lost, they launched a series of campaigns over the next five years to recover the duchy. In Argentan, Matilda gave birth to her third son William in July, 1136. “She was the center of resistance in the dangerous outpost of Argentan until enough support rallied to make a crossing to England possible. In all this, as in the remainder of her career, she acted as might be expected of a woman who, as Arnulf of Lisieux wrote, showed no sign of feminine weakness.”⁶⁴⁵ While it is unknown whether Matilda protested Stephen’s actions to the papacy, in the same year, Stephen applied for and received an approval of his coronation as King of England from Pope Innocent II and by Easter, he displayed a letter to the English court from the pope that approved and validated his usurpation of the throne. Most of the Anglo-Norman barons who preferred Stephen over Matilda accepted it as a reason to break the oaths they had taken for Henry.⁶⁴⁶

A small number of charters have survived from this time that Marjorie Chibnall believes show only a hesitant assertion by Matilda to her claims. After leaving the Holy Roman Empire, Matilda adopted the title of “Empress” and kept it until the end of her life. In two charters that belong to before the year 1139, she styled herself “Matilda, Empress, daughter of the king of the English.”⁶⁴⁷ One of these charters is an act of religious patronage for the abbey of St. Nicholas in Angers, to which she confirmed previous grants of English churches that had been made by earlier Norman kings, claiming that she had authority in England. However, at that time, her situation was precarious and she had very little patronage to give; a confirmation of rights to English

⁶⁴⁵ Chibnall, “Empress Matilda and her Sons,” 283, n32: In her note, Chibnall explains, “The epitaph by Arnulf of Lisieux contains the lines, ‘Virtutum titulis humani culmen honoris/ Excessit mulier, nil mulieris habens’ (Migne, *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 101, col. 199).”

⁶⁴⁶ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 65-69.

⁶⁴⁷ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 70.

churches, which St. Nicholas had already enjoyed for fifty years, was a well-chosen occasion to begin to make her claims because it was not likely to be questioned.⁶⁴⁸

In early 1139, Matilda received the backing of her brothers Robert of Gloucester and Reginald of Dunstanville and began her initiative to take away the English throne from Stephen. She formally appealed to the papacy during the Second Lateran Council, which opened on April 4. Presented by Bishop Ulger of Angers, her case challenged Stephen's usurpation based on her right to succeed as her father's heir, on the grounds of hereditary right and the oaths sworn to her by the leading prelates and barons of the kingdom. Defending Stephen, Arnulf, the archdeacon of Sées and later bishop of Lisieux, countered Ulger's arguments by avoiding the thorny question of the oaths and attacking Matilda's hereditary claim by declaring that she was illegitimate because her mother had been a nun. Innocent refused to go back on his previous acceptance of Stephen but Matilda did not give up. Instead Chibnall wrote that she "prudently kept open the channels of communication with the cardinals who opposed Innocent, and hoped for a more favorable outcome in the future. Meanwhile, she and her brothers Robert and Reginald laid plans and prepared to raise arms against Stephen and carry their claims into England."⁶⁴⁹ Stephen made a mistake at that time by seeking to curtail the powers of the English bishops; he attacked three of his most influential churchmen, Bishop Roger of Salisbury, and his nephews Bishop Alexander of Lincoln and Bishop Nigel of Ely, alienating his brother Bishop Henry of Winchester, who had just been appointed papal legate by Innocent II. Chibnall asserts, therefore, that Matilda's "cause

⁶⁴⁸ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 70-1.

⁶⁴⁹ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 76-77.

was far from hopeless when she and Earl Robert set out for England in September 1139.⁶⁵⁰

Matilda and her brother landed at Arundel Castle, where they were welcomed by Matilda's stepmother Queen Adeliza, who had received the castle as part of her dower, and her second husband William of Albini, who continued to be a supporter of Stephen. Later on, after Matilda had safely left Arundel, Adeliza and her husband were not punished by Stephen for doing this. The historian Laura Wertheimer wrote that the former queen's political loyalties are difficult to establish.

On the one hand, she had several ties with the empress: Adeliza was the empress's stepmother, the empress had once interceded with her first husband, Emperor Henry V, on behalf of Adeliza's father, and Adeliza had sworn with the barons of the realm to support Matilda's succession in 1127. On the other hand, Stephen's frequent attendance at Henry's court suggests that he and Adeliza would have known each other. A donation made by Adeliza to Reading abbey in 1136 included the current king and queen as beneficiaries. Stephen was at Arundel in the winter of 1138 or the summer of 1139, at which time he confirmed Adeliza's donation to Reading abbey, and Adeliza's husband, as noted above, was a supporter of Stephen.⁶⁵¹

Wertheimer concluded that "Adeliza's connections to both Matilda and Stephen, therefore, combined with Adeliza's rank and her relations to both parties may thus have made it possible for her to receive the empress with impunity, and perhaps even allowed her to arrange for Matilda's safe departure from Arundel."⁶⁵² Matilda was given a safe conduct to Bristol and, once she was there, many men joined her cause, motivated by hope of patronage and material reward, strong principles, or a combination there of.⁶⁵³

⁶⁵⁰ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 80.

⁶⁵¹ Laura Wertheimer, "Adeliza of Louvain and Anglo-Norman Queenship," *Haskins Society Journal: Studies in Medieval History* 7 (1995): 113-114.

⁶⁵² Wertheimer, 114.

⁶⁵³ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 81.

From Bristol, Matilda traveled to Gloucester, which was the only one of the great royal residences of the Norman kings held by her supporters, and it became her chief residence from 1139 until after her victory at Lincoln in February, 1141. There she was able to give Miles of Gloucester the castle of St. Briavel and the whole forest of Dean, and later made him earl of Hereford. These acts of patronage ensured his crucial military support and he became one of her most talented commanders until his death in a hunting accident at Christmas 1143.⁶⁵⁴ According to Chibnall, during this time, for fifteen months Matilda and Stephen fought a war of sieges and slow attrition that resulted in increasing anarchy and won the opposing sides only local gains.⁶⁵⁵ During Whitsuntide after the feast of the Pentecost, Henry of Winchester arranged a meeting of the two sides to try for a settlement but the talks quickly broke down. Then Henry went to France to confer with King Louis VII, Count Theobald of Blois and Champagne, and many other churchmen, and reportedly returned with proposals by the end of November. Marjorie Chibnall writes that the proposals are unknown but according to William of Malmesbury, “the Empress and the earl agreed at once; the king put off a decision from day to day and finally made the whole plan of no avail.’ The legate then abandoned the attempt, ‘watching, like others, to see the outcome of events.’”⁶⁵⁶ While it would be fruitless to speculate what the proposals from the French might have been, here was evidence that Louis VII was carefully paying attention to the conflict and even participating in the negotiations for a truce or settlement. However, Matilda’s quick acceptance of the French proposals may indicate that the French king was leaning toward her cause.

⁶⁵⁴ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 84.

⁶⁵⁵ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 88.

⁶⁵⁶ William of Malmesbury, *The Historia Novella by William of Malmesbury*, K. R. Potter, ed., London: Nelson’s Medieval Texts, 1955), 44-5, quoted in Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 92.

Within a few weeks, the tide of the war turned to favor Matilda regardless of Louis's support. Two of Stephen's supporters, Earl Ranulf of Chester and William of Roumare, rebelled against him and took the castle of Lincoln for themselves. The citizens of Lincoln sent news to the king, who quickly marched north with an army and lay siege to the castle. Ranulf managed to escape to Chester, where he called up his vassals and Welsh allies and sent word to Robert of Gloucester with a promise of loyalty to Matilda. Robert joined him with his own men and together they advanced on the castle of Lincoln where a pitched battle with Stephen's army ensued. The result was Stephen's defeat and capture on February 2, 1141; he was taken to Matilda in Gloucester and imprisoned by her in Bristol castle.

Matilda's struggle for her inheritance and the crown was almost won but she faced not unexpected difficulties winning the acceptance of England and Normandy's hostile barons, in spite of the oaths they had sworn, and of many of the kingdom's clerics, because she was a woman. Her ability and character were immediately questioned by them and as Marjorie Chibnall has observed, "unfortunately the comments of hostile chroniclers make plain that what might in a man have passed for dignity, resolution and firm control were condemned in her as arrogance, obstinacy and anger."⁶⁵⁷ The attitudes that prevailed against her ability to rule successfully with full authority because she was a woman, although not held by all, were common in the twelfth century and they reflect the attitudes Melisende and Urraca faced as well. This could be one of the main reasons that Matilda began to associate her son Henry's name with hers in the charters she issued from this point on.⁶⁵⁸ The inclusion of Henry's name might have made the idea of female

⁶⁵⁷ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 97.

⁶⁵⁸ Chibnall, "Empress Matilda and her Sons," 284.

rule by Matilda more acceptable to England's barons because it would have indicated an end to her power in the future when he came of age. Melisende may have associated her son Baldwin's name with hers for the same reason in the charters she issued after Fulk's death; that is, until she began to exclude him from her government in 1149, in order to block his aims of overthrowing her.⁶⁵⁹

Despite her victory over Stephen at Lincoln, she needed to buttress her position with the support of England's leading churchmen, especially the papal legate Bishop Henry of Winchester. On March 2, he received her ambiguously as "Lady of England" in his cathedral of Winchester and called a church council there where he persuaded most of the clerics present to switch their allegiance to Matilda in order to end the civil war. The citizens of London, who had been invited to the council, were reluctant to agree and asked for more time. Stephen's wife Queen Matilda III sent letters denouncing the council's acceptance of the empress as queen. By midsummer, Matilda, now "Lady of England," had reached Westminster but was still negotiating with the Londoners for entrance into the city. At this time, she won the necessary support of Geoffrey of Mandeville, the castellan of the Tower of London, and granted him the earldom, sheriffdom, and justiciarship of Essex, custody of the Tower, and other lands and rights.⁶⁶⁰ However, as Marjorie Chibnall writes, "when the crown was almost within her grasp," Matilda made two crucial mistakes that lost her London and ultimately the crown. During the election for the bishopric of Durham, she supported William Cumin, who her uncle David, the King of Scotland, was attempting to force upon the monks of Durham and Henry of Winchester, who refused to accept such an obviously uncanonical

⁶⁵⁹ For instance see RRH 244. 245.

⁶⁶⁰ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 102-3.

election,⁶⁶¹ and then she alienated the citizens of London when she demanded more money from them after they had asked her to reduce their financial burdens. As a result of these mistakes, the Londoners decided against Matilda and rose up in arms to expel her from Westminster. Matilda and her supporters barely managed to escape from the armed crowds and withdraw to Oxford.⁶⁶² According to Jean Truax, it is likely that, while Matilda had spent most of the years before and after her father's death in Normandy and Anjou with her husband, Stephen had been shrewdly constructing a network of political and personal alliances and ties in London, aimed at binding the people of his capital to his cause. As a result, Matilda was a stranger to the Londoners, and after blundering badly in her first encounters with them, the city's leaders became convinced that their long-term business and political interests lay with Stephen and his party.⁶⁶³

Matilda's fortunes in England began to decline after this time as she and her loyal army and barons left Oxford for Winchester, which they lost that August, 1141. By that autumn, Chibnall wrote it was probably "becoming clear to the more far-sighted among her supporters that she would never be crowned queen of England....[and] that all efforts must now be directed to preparing young Henry to take up the challenge, and the sooner his claims were associated with those of his mother the better. Matilda may already have accepted this view; she certainly did so within a year or two."⁶⁶⁴ On November 1, 1141, Stephen was released from imprisonment. Matilda lived in Bishop Roger of Salisbury's

⁶⁶¹ Chibnall believes, however, that apart from this one mistake during the election of Durham, "her relations with the church show that she had a better grip of the realities of papal politics than many of her contemporaries. She never deserved the reputation, foisted upon her by many historians, of an old-fashioned opponent of church reform," see *Empress Matilda*, 127; and also Marjorie Chibnall, "The Empress Matilda and Church Reform," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 38 (1988): 107-33.

⁶⁶² Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 104-5.

⁶⁶³ Jean A. Truax, "Winning over the Londoners: King Stephen, the Empress Matilda, and the Politics of Personality," *Haskins Society Journal: Studies in Medieval History* 8 (1996): 52-61.

⁶⁶⁴ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 115.

castle in Devizes until she was to leave England in 1148, and she worked steadily from there to prepare the way for her son Henry to realize his inheritance. In Devizes, she remained at the heart of her party's continued resistance, and continued to receive vassals, grant charters, and even occasionally take charge of captives.⁶⁶⁵

Matilda's relations with the church remained strong throughout her struggle for the throne, aside from the one mistake she made regarding the election of Durham, which proved to be so detrimental to her cause. She was also guilty, however, just as Stephen was, as Chibnall observed, of plundering "church lands to requisition food for their garrisons, and repeatedly took advantage of stone-built churches to use as strongpoints during a siege or campaign, so turning them, as churchmen bitterly complained, into fortresses."⁶⁶⁶ But Matilda was as generous to as many of the churches and monasteries of England and Normandy as she could be given her circumstances and lack of resources. She favored Cluny, and made many grants to houses held by the Augustinians just as mother had, as well as the Premonstratensians and the Cistercians.⁶⁶⁷ From 1125 on, she generously gave to the abbey of Bec, which her mother had supported, and its priory of Notre-Dame-du-Pré, even during her eight and a half years in England. Bec was granted many manors and churches from Devonshire to Norfolk, from Warwickshire to Sussex.⁶⁶⁸ In her examination of Matilda's surviving charters, Chibnall has concluded that the Empress gave little during to the church during the first eighteen months after she arrived in England, when her authority was restricted and her patronage not widely sought. However, after the battle of Lincoln and her recognition as "Lady of England,"

⁶⁶⁵ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 120.

⁶⁶⁶ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 127.

⁶⁶⁷ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 178-184.

⁶⁶⁸ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 136.

she assumed the right to make gifts out of the royal demesne, most of them politically motivated, and her charters indicate that she regarded all grants made by Stephen from the royal demesne as invalid. According to Chibnall, since “she had no wish to deprive churches of any lands which they held, her normal method was to issue charters making the grants, or confirming those of her father, in her own name, without reference to Stephen.⁶⁶⁹ It is important to note that Matilda issued a charter during the first few weeks of the summer of 1141, when her writ ran in London, to her mother’s foundation of Holy Trinity Aldgate in London, which replaced an earlier grant by Stephen and added new pasture rights.⁶⁷⁰ Similar to Melisende’s gift charter of April, 1152 to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher,⁶⁷¹ this gift should be viewed as a political act and part of Matilda’s effort to woo the Londoners to her cause and away from Stephen’s at this crucial time. Holy Trinity Aldgate was an influential and popular priory in the city; Matilda’s patronage of it would have reminded its inhabitants of their past loyalty to her parents during their prosperous reign, as well as her mother’s pious contributions and her father’s intention to make her his successor. It would also have served as a promise that she would continue the tradition of generous patronage that her parents had been committed to.

Most of Matilda’s religious gifts and confirmations in 1141 were made to monastic houses in the vicinity of castles that she held, many of which had been founded by either by her ancestors or her vassals. Reading Abbey was one of the first to receive grants from her in March 1141, as it was the place where her father Henry I was buried. Later in 1144, she gave the monks there the royal manor of Blewbury, for the souls of her ancestors and the loyal service of Brian fitz Count. Chibnall wrote that “[t]he lands of

⁶⁶⁹ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 129; Chibnall, “Empress Matilda and Church Reform,” 109-113.

⁶⁷⁰ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 129.

⁶⁷¹ RRH 278.

Reading lay in the thick of the fighting, and the abbey suffered loss from the partisans of both sides. Brian fitz Count, holding out in Wallingford, was often desperate for the means to feed his garrison and was driven to plunder when his own lands had been ravaged. Matilda seems in this gift to be making reparation for the wrong done to the church by her loyal vassal fighting in her cause; he had lost too much to be able to offer anything of his own.”⁶⁷² Also in 1141, Matilda made sure to confirm many of Queen Adeliza’s gifts to Stanton Harcourt Church and a few years later to Berkeley Church, probably motivated by gratitude for Adeliza’s hospitality at Arundel in 1139. While Matilda was in residence at Oxford, she made gifts to Osney Abbey and St. Frideswide’s Priory out of the royal demesne, and favored Shropshire and Staffordshire with more. “Motives of genuine piety, a wish to make reparation for the occupation of church property and monastic buildings and to escape from excommunication after such violation, all contributed to the exceptionally large number of new houses founded in these years; strategic considerations often determined the sites chosen. Matilda was no stranger to such devices, and her son pursued the same policies even more purposefully.”⁶⁷³ Matilda, therefore, accessed power and extended her influence and authority in all of the areas of England that she could through the strategy of religious patronage, especially during the final years of her residence there, in order to further her cause by paving the way for her son’s acceptance as the kingdom’s king.

After Matilda returned to Normandy in early 1148, she settled in Rouen but spent much time in Le Pré at Bec’s priory of Notre-Dame-du-Pré. A year later, Henry was knighted at Carlisle by her uncle King David of Scotland and personally began to take

⁶⁷² Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 131.

⁶⁷³ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 133.

over the struggle for the English throne.⁶⁷⁴ According to the charter evidence, before she returned to Normandy, she seemed “to have taken no direct part in the government of Normandy from the time her husband Geoffrey won the duchy in 1144 until he invested Henry with it in December 1149 or January 1150.”⁶⁷⁵ Upon Matilda’s return, she began to make plans to fulfill a vow she had made to found an abbey if she survived while under siege at Oxford in the late autumn of 1142. To honor that vow, she founded her abbey for the Cistercians at Le Valasse in 1157.⁶⁷⁶ Also at this time, just as her mother had built bridges for the city of London to strengthen its infrastructure, Matilda took on the construction of a bridge in Rouen that rested on the Ile de la Roquette and connected the city with Saint-Sever.⁶⁷⁷ After Henry became king of England, Matilda acted as regent frequently in Normandy for him, and just as Melisende was advising her son Baldwin during his reign after 1152 based on her experience as ruler in the Latin Kingdom, so too was Matilda simultaneously counseling and advising Henry based on her knowledge of European and papal politics.⁶⁷⁸ Later, however, Matilda disapproved of her son’s choice of his chancellor Thomas Becket in 1159 for the archbishopric of Canterbury, but she was overruled. Chibnall believes that “her failure to prevent the election of Thomas marks the beginning of a decline in her influence over her son. He still consulted her on some matters, and was ready to listen; and she was widely respected not merely in Normandy but also by the king of France and the pope as a fair and

⁶⁷⁴ Chibnall, “Empress Matilda and her Sons,” 285.

⁶⁷⁵ Marjorie Chibnall, “The Charters of the Empress Matilda,” in *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy: Essays in Honour of Sir James Holt*, George Garnett and John Hudson, eds. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 289.

⁶⁷⁶ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 182-7.

⁶⁷⁷ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 152.

⁶⁷⁸ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 159-64.

sometimes effective mediator.”⁶⁷⁹ She was closely involved in the early years of the dispute between Henry II and Archbishop Thomas Becket during 1164-67, but did not live to see its tragic ending.

One of her last political functions was to act as a mediator between her son and Louis VII, whose relationship had begun to deteriorate in the summer of 1167. Interestingly, one of the issues dividing the two kings at that time involved the collection of money to send as aid to the crusader states, who at that time were threatened by the power of Nur ad-Din during the reign of King Amalric. According to Chibnall, “Henry wished to send the contributions from his lands, which had been collected at Tours, through his own messengers; Louis insisted that Tours was in his kingdom and the money should be transmitted through him. Matilda wrote urgently to Louis asking to know more about the issues between him and her son, in the hope that she could do something to check hostilities, so that the people of Jerusalem would not be kept waiting for the badly needed subsidies.”⁶⁸⁰

Matilda died on September 10, 1167, politically active to the end, concerned about the survival of the crusader kingdoms in the East. She was buried in the abbey church of Bec-Hellouin, before the high altar dedicated to the Virgin Mary, according to her wishes and by the consent of her son.⁶⁸¹ Ultimately unsuccessful in her own bid for her father’s throne, she had triumphantly won it for her son Henry II, and had remained throughout her life a woman who wielded considerable power. In the final analysis, Matilda’s losses and England’s suffering during the civil war gave fuel to her enemies’ criticisms of her and reinforced their general prejudices against female rule, but her

⁶⁷⁹ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 167.

⁶⁸⁰ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 173.

⁶⁸¹ Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, 190.

generosity to her barons and patronage of the Church won her just as much praise and influence as a good leader of men and as a pious woman. What effect did Matilda's career have on Melisende's reign on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea? On the one hand, her struggle and failure may have inspired Melisende to continue to rule as queen regnant after Fulk's death and hold on to her exceptional power as long as possible. Melisende's backing for her English chancellor Ralph, in the Tyre election of 1146, may also have been connected to her support for Matilda, especially if Ralph was loyal to the Empress, although Melisende's withdrawal of that support may have reflected her desire not to repeat Matilda's error in judgment during the Durham election in 1141. On the other hand, Matilda's defeat and withdrawal to Normandy in 1148 may have hurt Melisende's cause and given Baldwin III the encouragement he needed to begin planning to overthrow his mother in Jerusalem and may even have helped him win over supporters from her side to his.

Countess Adela of Blois and Viscountess Ermengard of Narbonne

Queens were not the only lay women who wielded power and authority in twelfth-century Western Europe. Noblewomen like Adela of Blois and Ermengard of Narbonne inherited lands and titles, ruled over large counties or duchies within the major kingdoms, and wielded power and patronage as the queens did in their territories. They lived and ruled in the same circumstances and faced many of the same challenges as the queens, and so their actions also contributed to the political and cultural circumstances within which Melisende lived and worked. They are included in this chapter because each had a profound influence on the secular and religious politics in areas of Western

Europe that haven't been discussed yet. They are also included because they wielded power just before and during the time Melisende ruled in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem and because, like the queens discussed above, they ruled over the homelands of many of the knights, soldiers, pilgrims, and settlers of the West who lived in Melisende's kingdom across the sea.

Countess Adela of Blois

Adela of Blois was the youngest daughter of William the Conqueror, the first Norman duke to become King of England. When she married Stephen-Henry, the future leader in the First Crusade and the eldest son and heir of Thibaut III, she became the countess and lord of Blois, Chartres, Meaux, and Troyes and the link that joined the two most powerful aristocratic families of England, Normandy, and northeastern France at that time. Her marriage cemented the strength and ability of the Anglo-Normans to block the ambitions of the king of France and the count of Anjou. The historian Kimberly LoPrete, the leading authority on Adela, has examined many sources that record Adela's actions as a female lord and has concluded that Adela, like Melisende, was successful in using her talent for governing and instinct for politics to take advantage of the unique opportunities for wielding power that were offered by her birth and marriage as well as the strategic location of her lands and the independence she obtained as a result of the long absences and premature death of her husband.⁶⁸²

⁶⁸² LoPrete, *Adela of Blois, Countess and Lord*; "Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship," 7-43; "Adela of Blois and Ivo of Chartres: Piety, Politics, and the Peace in the Diocese of Chartres," *Anglo-Norman Studies: Proceedings of the Battle Conference* 14 (1991): 131-152; "Adela of Blois as Mother and Countess," 313-33.

Born sometime in late 1067-68, Adela was educated most likely in the monastery La Trinité in Caen, which was a family foundation and where her older sister Cecilia lived as a nun.⁶⁸³ After her marriage to Stephen-Henry, she gave birth to a son named William before her father-in-law died in 1089, and then after becoming countess, bore at least five and perhaps seven other children, including the future King Stephen of England and Bishop Henry of Winchester. She and Stephen-Henry ruled jointly over their lands and Adela was an active participant in governing. Their relationship as husband and wife, therefore, appears to have been based on trust and respect despite an age difference of at least eighteen years.⁶⁸⁴ They demonstrated their new joint comital rule in 1089 with a tour of their domains during which Adela appeared publicly at Stephen-Henry's side in Blois and Coincy and consented to donations for two monasteries in those areas. LoPrete relates that the charters recording their actions reveal that Adela continued to play an active role in comital affairs throughout the next few years, often on her own. In 1092, "alone and on her own initiative, [Adela] swore an oath binding both herself and her husband to protect [Ivo] the bishop of Chartres, who then was embroiled in a dispute with the king of France. In 1094 and 1096, she acted alongside her husband when the couple consented to the sale of houses in Blois and persuaded the bishop of Soissons to grant an altar to a Parisian monastery. The documents show the young countess participating in judicial affairs and property transfers of comital followers, as well as sharing in decisions regarding reform-motivated bequests. The bishop of Chartres, for one, assumed that her oath could bind her husband in the lordly prerogative of protecting churchmen."⁶⁸⁵ In October 1095, Adela was prominently present at Hautvillers to participate in the

⁶⁸³ LoPrete, "Adela of Blois as Mother and Countess," 316.

⁶⁸⁴ LoPrete, "Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship," 16.

⁶⁸⁵ LoPrete, "Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship," 17.

celebration held by the monks there on the occasion of the translation of the relics of the St. Helena, mother of the Roman Emperor Constantine, to their monastery. The monk Notcher, who described the event, related that when the relics were translated from the old to the new reliquary, Adela read aloud to the assembled multitude the identifying label “corpus sanctae Helenae reginae, matris Contantine, sine capite.”⁶⁸⁶ Then Stephen-Henry and other members of his family established a weekly market for the monastery. LoPrete believes that “the rank and Latin literacy of the countess allowed her to represent the extended comital family alongside bishops in the religious ceremony designed to honor the sainted female patron and protector of the monastery. By honoring the saint and her monastic guardians through both the translation ceremony and the market grant, the comital couple, as the earthly protectors of the monks, demonstrated that they knew how to act as honorable lords and patrons to their assembled lay followers as well.”⁶⁸⁷ The couple’s actions that day, as well as their patronage during the preceding few years of their marriage, demonstrated their ability to win popular, monastic, and ecclesiastical support through religious patronage.

After Pope Urban II’s address at Clermont on November 27, 1095, Stephen-Henry decided to join the other nobles gathering forces to participate in what became known as the First Crusade: “[t]hat he could depart without fear of diminishing his power, fortune, or patrimony was due, in large part, to the wealth and abilities of his wife, Adela, then in her late twenties.”⁶⁸⁸ Adela not only raised the funds her husband would need for the journey but also ruled without him while he was gone. Before he left in

⁶⁸⁶ LoPrete, “Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship,” 17-18; and Kimberly A. LoPrete, “A Female Ruler in Feudal Society: Adela of Blois, c. 1067-1137,” PhD (dissertation), (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992), Appendix, 469.

⁶⁸⁷ LoPrete, “Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship,” 18.

⁶⁸⁸ LoPrete, “Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship,” 20.

October 1096, the two gave some of Adela's lands in the Long Forest to Marmoutier for "creation of priory and new town on behalf of not only past and future generations, but also for Stephen's safe return from his *iter* to Jerusalem and protection for Adela and children during his absence."⁶⁸⁹ LoPrete relates that by 1099, the new settlement named *Francheville* or "Freetown" by Adela, was flourishing to such an extent that she was able to persuade Bishop Ivo of Chartres to let the monks build a new parish church there, free from episcopal dues.⁶⁹⁰ Stephen-Henry, of course, famously left the crusaders during the terrible siege of Antioch in June 1098 before they took Jerusalem and returned home to Blois. As a result, he was regarded as a deserter instead of hero once news of the miraculous victory became well-known. In order to complete his pilgrim's vows and avoid excommunication, Stephen-Henry recruited another army and returned to the Holy Land. Before he left for the second time, Adela and Stephen-Henry "publicly renounced their right to control episcopal properties at the death of the bishop of Chartres in response to the urgings of Bishop Ivo [a leading proponent of church reform]. They received in exchange annual anniversary prayers and a written guarantee that Ivo's new stone residence would not be fortified. The bishop also provided a valuable countergift, but he was wisely ambiguous about its precise nature when later writing to the pope to request confirmation of the privilege. By championing church reform when Stephen was under threat of excommunication and as Adela again would be ruling without her husband, the couple enhanced their authority as the true respecters of divine law in a diocese where they competed for power with a then-excommunicate [French] king."⁶⁹¹

They also designated their eldest son William as their principal heir and displayed him on

⁶⁸⁹ LoPrete, "A Female Ruler in Feudal Society," Appendix, 471.

⁶⁹⁰ LoPrete, "Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship," 23.

⁶⁹¹ LoPrete, "Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship," 24.

a tour of their domains taking “several measures to consolidate comital authority should the aging count not return fit to rule.”⁶⁹² Stephen left for the Holy Land again in 1100 confident in the power of his wife to rule without him.

In her husband’s absence, Adela ruled alone again with full comital authority. Just as Melisende fostered good relations with Patriarch Fulcher in Jerusalem, Adela allied with Bishop Ivo of Chartres, “in order to enhance her effective authority as a ruler.”⁶⁹³ Together they collaborated in the promulgation and enforcement of peace statutes in the diocese of Chartres. Notification of Stephen-Henry’s death in May 1102 arrived in 1103 at the same time that their son William came of age to rule; Adela avoided sharing power with him, however, just as Melisende avoided sharing power with her son Baldwin. William remained as the heir-designate until 1107, when his name vanished from the charters and Thibaut the second oldest son was knighted and given the comital title, apparently having been chosen by Adela to be her husband’s principal heir instead.⁶⁹⁴ Although the reason for Adela’s decision cannot be determined, LoPrete believes that she chose Thibaut over William because he was a better knight and would make the more effective ruler.⁶⁹⁵ However, in 1103, Bishop Ivo of Chartres maintained that William “resorted to violent threats to disrupt Adela’s efforts to resolve her dispute with the canons of Chartres cathedral [but the bishop] blamed William’s advisors and refrained from excommunicating him.”⁶⁹⁶ Perhaps William, encouraged by his advisors, refused to back his mother’s political actions because he wished to replace her and take on full comital power at the news of his father’s death. If so, his attempt failed because

⁶⁹² LoPrete, “Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship,” 24.

⁶⁹³ LoPrete, “Adela of Blois and Ivo of Chartres,” 133.

⁶⁹⁴ LoPrete, “Adela of Blois as Mother and Countess,” 320-21.

⁶⁹⁵ LoPrete, “Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship,” 35.

⁶⁹⁶ LoPrete, “Adela of Blois as Mother and Countess,” 320.

there is no mention of it in the sources and he continued to remain subordinate to her. Adela's powerful position was clearly unassailable, probably due to her skillful governing and strategic political and religious patronage. William's situation with his mother was similar to Baldwin's with Melisende in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. Unlike Baldwin, however, William was neither a leader nor a skilled warrior, and therefore was probably unable to gather the support amongst the nobles that he would need to overthrow Adela. Thibaut must have agreed to share power with his mother until she chose to retire. LoPrete writes that "Adela apparently did not try to find Thibaut a wife, likely because the Thibaudian-Anglo-Norman alliance confirmed by her own marriage continued to serve comital interests. Perhaps she felt that a wife's presence might confuse relations with her son....He did so only in his early thirties, after Adela retired."⁶⁹⁷ A wife might have lessened Adela's control over him.

In the meantime, Adela conducted the affairs of Blois and her other domains with characteristic skill. She remained a widow to preserve her independence just as Melisende and Urraca had done. Like Melisende and Matilda II, she also cared for the lepers in her realm by making grants at that time to those who served the sick at the leprosarium at Le Grand-Beaulieu, Chartres, giving them comital protection and immunity from all other customs and judicial dues.⁶⁹⁸ Bishop Ivo worked with Adela on the leprosarium and "prepared a set of statutes to govern the life of the inmates and acted as both spiritual and administrative overseer of the hospice."⁶⁹⁹ LoPrete writes, however, that though later "young Thibaut played an increasingly active role in affairs, especially during the war-torn second decade of the twelfth century, charters reveal that Adela acted

⁶⁹⁷ LoPrete, "Adela of Blois as Mother and Countess," 322.

⁶⁹⁸ LoPrete, "A Female Ruler in Feudal Society," Appendix, 539.

⁶⁹⁹ LoPrete, "Adela of Blois and Ivo of Chartres," 145.

with full authority without her son until she retired to a monastery in the spring of 1120.”⁷⁰⁰ Adela does not appear to have been criticized by any of her male contemporaries for refusing to relinquish her authority and hand it over to one of her sons. Her sons do not seem to challenge her control in any way either. In fact, as LoPrete relates, all observers, such as the monk Orderic Vitalis, Bishop Ivo of Chartres, and Bishop Hildebert of Le Mans, praised her generosity and administrative abilities as a Christian lord during the years following Stephen-Henry’s death, acknowledging that she exercised the same powers as her male peers.⁷⁰¹ Her generous patronage and ability to protect churchmen and citizens alike worked to strengthen her authority and forced her sons to wait until she stepped down and retired.

Soon after Easter in 1120, Adela, then in her early fifties, retired to the monastery of Marcigny. She continued to advise her son Thibaut who became known as “the Great” by his contemporaries and to correspond with her friends in the church such as Hildebert of Le Mans. She received prominent visitors at the monastery, such as Peter the Venerable, the abbot of Cluny, who sent her letters to keep her informed about worldly affairs, especially in England and Normandy. In 1135, he wrote to tell her about her brother King Henry I’s death and the troubled state of affairs in his kingdom caused because he died without a male heir. As the youngest daughter of William the Conqueror, she gave her younger son Stephen a claim to the English throne. She lived long enough to hear that he was crowned king of England, but she died on March 8, 1137, and was therefore spared of the knowledge that his seizure of the throne produced a civil war with his cousin Matilda. Like Melisende, Adela made the most of her

⁷⁰⁰ LoPrete, “Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship,” 26.

⁷⁰¹ LoPrete, “Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship,” 27-29.

exceptional opportunities, accessed power through patronage, and overcame the limits usually placed on her sex. LoPrete maintains that by “acting as a generous patron and able protector of churchmen and castellans across the Thibaudian domains, she also worked to strengthen comital authority. Ever alert to changing circumstances within her own two families as well as in the wider world around her, Adela used her comital powers and position in the comital family to assure that Thibaudian power would not be eclipsed after she retired from the active life.”⁷⁰²

Viscountess Ermengard of Narbonne

Recently, the historian Fredric Cheyette in his *Ermengard of Narbonne and the World of the Troubadours* has marvelously illuminated Viscountess Ermengard of Narbonne’s life and times through an examination of the sixty-four documents referring to her that he discovered in the archives and libraries of Europe, “from Barcelona to Paris,” which for “a twelfth-century individual who is not a king, pope, emperor, or clerical author, is a respectable number, even when compared with the 158 extant for her exact contemporary, Count Raymond V of Toulouse.”⁷⁰³ Until Cheyette’s book was published in 2001, Ermengard had remained largely forgotten and unknown, even by most medievalists. The feminine subject of numerous love songs written by the troubadours of Occitania in southern France, Ermengard was the city of Narbonne’s well-known and lauded viscountess, and she wielded the authority she had inherited from her father by travelling through Occitania receiving oaths of fidelity, negotiating treaties,

⁷⁰² LoPrete, “Adela of Blois: Familial Alliances and Female Lordship,” 30.

⁷⁰³ Cheyette, 5.

granting gifts to monasteries, settling land disputes between her barons, and camping with her armies along the walls of the besieged cities.

Born into a world dominated by politics and war sometime during the years 1127-29, Ermengard inherited the city of Narbonne at the age of four or five from her father Viscount Aymeri II, who died in 1134, because she was his eldest surviving child.⁷⁰⁴ Her two older brothers had both died before their father. Little is known about her childhood,⁷⁰⁵ but on October 21, 1142, she was forced to marry Alphonse Jordan, the count of Toulouse and son of Raymond IV, who had taken over the city of Narbonne in a coup at least three years earlier. Cheyette wrote that this conquest marriage “reopened the long-standing conflict between the counts of Toulouse and the counts of Barcelona, the conflict that formed the most basic theme of Ermengard’s political life.”⁷⁰⁶ Eventually the Barcelonese alliance in Occitania, made up of the Trencavel brothers (Roger of Béziers, Raymond Trencavel, and Bernard Ato) and William, the lord of Montpellier and count of Rodez, defeated and imprisoned Alphonse Jordan, who was made to return Ermengard to Narbonne and release her from marriage and her men from the oaths of fidelity that they had sworn to him regarding their lands. As Cheyette remarked, “all the military power of the region had come together to settle the future of Ermengard and her city.”⁷⁰⁷

After her marriage was ended, the allies chose Bernard of Anduze as a new husband for her. According to Cheyette, he was the “head of a noble family that lorded it

⁷⁰⁴ For the most comprehensive study of the region of Occitania, see Claude Devic and Joseph Vaissete, *Histoire générale de Languedoc* (Toulouse: E. Privat, 1872).

⁷⁰⁵ Jacqueline Caille, “Ermengarde, vicomtesse de Narbonne (1127/29-1196-97): une grande figure féminine du Midi aristocratique,” in *La femme dans l’histoire et la société méridionales (IXe-XIXe s.)*, Fédération Historique du Languedoc Méditerranéen et du Roussillon, Actes du 66e Congrès (Montpellier: Arceaux, 1995), 9-13.

⁷⁰⁶ Cheyette, 17.

⁷⁰⁷ Cheyette, 21.

over the dry and wild hills north of Nîmes, cousin of the lords of Montpellier, colleague of Ermengard's father, and close ally of the Trencavels. To seal Alphonse's defeat, Peter of Anduze, Bernard's brother, replaced Archbishop Arnold [of Narbonne] when he died in 1149."⁷⁰⁸ Cheyette believes that Bernard was chosen to be Ermengard's husband in order to place her in power in Narbonne. Bernard was probably around forty years old when he married Ermengard and already the father of several children by his first marriage. Cheyette writes,

And no sooner had he married Ermengard and received the customary oaths of fidelity from the great men of Narbonne than he vanished from the city and from Ermengard's life. None of the records of the city and its countryside ever mentions him again. Even the oaths of fidelity sworn to him assert by implication that in the event of Ermengard's death without heirs, it would be her half sister Ermessend, and not Bernard, who would inherit the viscounty. Not once in all the years that follow does Bernard appear with Ermengard.... There is more than a suspicion here of a marriage of convenience with an older man who already had a son and successor. Safely married to such a man, Ermengard would be out of the way of fortune hunters, especially neighboring counts. No longer available, she would be more securely in control of her city and a more dependable ally to those who had just freed her.⁷⁰⁹

This unique arrangement of a marriage "on parchment only," gave Ermengard the independence of widowhood, and at the same time, sheltered her from greedy suitors like Alphonse Jordan. Confident in her as a reliable ally, her protectors had created the perfect strategy for controlling a young female heiress in such an important city; her "marriage" preserved her power and made sure that her independence would not be stolen by a vanquisher again. She would make the most of her newly found freedom and sovereignty. "During the half century of her rule, she was a full partner in all the region's alliances, sieges, battles, truces, and treaties and in what must have been the constant,

⁷⁰⁸ Cheyette, 21.

⁷⁰⁹ Cheyette, 22.

tangled, negotiations as well that ordered this quadrille of shifting aristocratic friendships. Like other great ladies of her age, she was often courted, but no longer for her hand in marriage. The real prize was power, and especially the strength in men, money, and history of her city, Narbonne.”⁷¹⁰ However, this arrangement meant that Ermengard would not have children or provide an heir for the city. This problem was solved years later when her sister Ermessend, married to the Castilian Count Manrique of Lara, the son of Count Pedro Gonzalez (Queen Urraca’s lover), sent her son Aymeri to grow up at her sister’s court to inherit her title and authority. Aymeri appears at Ermengard’s side for the first time in 1163, when she makes a gift to the small monastery of Sainte-Eugenia.⁷¹¹

Ermengard “became ruler of her city in fact as well as in name.”⁷¹² Cheyette believes that the “tumults of 1142-43 shaped her political vision as they shaped the political world within which she would navigate for the next half century.... [S]he would be a full partner in the alliance, often on the move from Catalonia to Provence, deploying her military and political forces in the interests of herself, her city, and her friends.... [T]hose who restored Ermengard to sole control of her city remained her allies until her very last years.”⁷¹³ He also suggests that Ermengard’s political education may have benefited from the models of female power in her dynasty’s past as well as those provided by Empress Matilda and Eleanor of Aquitaine from the 1130’s to the 1160’s.⁷¹⁴

Like Melisende and the other powerful women who ruled in the twelfth century, Ermengard wielded political authority and cared for her city, its religious institutions, and her subjects through patronage. Throughout her reign, she generously endowed the

⁷¹⁰ Cheyette, 35.

⁷¹¹ Cheyette, 274, n. 2.

⁷¹² Cheyette, 24.

⁷¹³ Cheyette, 24.

⁷¹⁴ Cheyette, 30.

Cistercians at Sylvanès and Valmagne, and the Augustinian monasteries of Quarantes and Lagrasse, where her uncle was abbot.⁷¹⁵ Cheyette observed that after she took power, one of Ermengard's first grants was a gift of lands to the Cistercian abbey of Fontfroide. Connected to that gift was an enormous construction project: she built an expensive, new, and economically important road that paralleled the old Roman *via Dormitia* south of Narbonne that led to Roussillon. Her new road ran further inland from the sea past the monastery of Fontfroide. He wrote, "as important as this road was, we know about it only by chance, because Ermengard's gift of the land of Fontfroide to the abbey mentions in its boundary description 'the new merchant road to Rousillon which was built on my orders.'"⁷¹⁶ Just as Melisende had benefited politically from building the street known as *Malquisinat* in Jerusalem, so too perhaps did Ermengard hope to win the political loyalty and acceptance from her subjects, especially from her merchants, with this road. By facilitating the ability to travel by building a better road, and thereby strengthening the economic ties and potential profits from trade between her city's inhabitants and those of Rousillon, she would have won the support of her urban citizens and may also have enhanced her military strength. Cheyette suggests that in Occitania, "the fate of urban merchants was intimately tied to the policies of their rulers. But such ties were reciprocal; for here on the shores of the Mediterranean, merchants were sailors, and sailors were warriors, to whom piracy and raiding were sometimes a convenient alternative to more peaceful exchange. The urban militia and its seaborne partner were as essential to a ruler's military force as her knightly host."⁷¹⁷

⁷¹⁵ Cheyette, 342.

⁷¹⁶ Cheyette, 82.

⁷¹⁷ Cheyette, 83.

Regarding Ermengard's patronage of the church in Narbonne, just as Melisende carefully constructed a friendly and mutually beneficial alliance with the Patriarchs of Jerusalem during her reign, Ermengard also recognized the political and spiritual value of an alliance with the archbishops of Narbonne, whom Cheyette refers to as "another power center"⁷¹⁸ in her city. In 1143, Archbishop Arnold of Narbonne demonstrated his widespread territorial strength by promulgating an act for peace that demanded and won the obedience of everyone in the ecclesiastical province of Narbonne. According to Cheyette, just after Ermengard was freed from her marriage to Alphonse Jordan, the Archbishop brought together the participants in the conflict, including Alphonse Jordan, Roger of Béziers, and Hugh of Rodez, and made them swear to a peace that would make Ermengard's position secure. To enforce it, he hired the Knights Templars. To pay for the services of the military order, Arnold decreed that "the owners of every plow in the ecclesiastical province of Narbonne were to give the Templars a sétier of grain per plow per year. The archbishop was to arrange to have 'suitable persons' named in each fortified town and village to collect the tax."⁷¹⁹

Due at least partially to the archbishop's efforts, therefore, from 1144 to the 1160's, Ermengard wielded authority successfully in Narbonne. She spent those years in the company of her army in the sieges of Tortosa and les Baux, and also by throwing her support behind Pope Alexander III during the church schism that followed his election as well as by remaining a faithful ally to the counts of Barcelona. But then, Count Raymond Berenguer IV of Barcelona died suddenly in 1162, and his five-year-old son Alfons became the Barcelonese count as well as the king of Aragon. Count Raymond V of

⁷¹⁸ Cheyette, 102.

⁷¹⁹ Cheyette, 120.

Toulouse, the son of Alphonse Jordan, used the opportunity opened up by the minority of Barcelona to begin to “dismantle the Catalan alliance in Occitania.”⁷²⁰ Later, toward the end of her reign, Ermengard, who had won the loyalty of Pons d’Arsac, then archbishop of Narbonne, rewarded him in 1176 “‘for his fidelity and service’ by giving him the castle of Ferrals ‘with *potestativum*, rights to collect rations for fighting men, military service, justices, oaths and everything whatsoever that ought to belong to the viscount.’”⁷²¹ Her patronage was well timed because she soon greatly needed her archbishop’s political and military support. A few months after she made this gift, her nephew and heir Aymeri of Lara died at the end of January, 1177, and her enemy Raymond V successfully occupied Narbonne.

Raymond’s coup “provoked the old coalition to reassemble—the Trencavels, Roger of Béziers and his nephew the young Bernard Ato of Nîmes, and the lords of Montpellier, Guy Guerrejat and his nephews William and Burgundio.”⁷²² By the autumn of 1179, Aymeri of Lara’s brother Pedro of Lara replaced him as heir to Narbonne at Ermengard’s side. War resumed and as Cheyette wrote, “it would continue on and off from 1178 until the mid-1190’s—until all the principals were dead.”⁷²³ Raymond V was eventually expelled from Narbonne “but not before he profoundly reshaped the politics of Occitania and brought new plagues of violence upon its hapless population. Over the following decade, sieges with their squadrons of mercenaries pillaging the countryside gave way to truces, and truces once again to renewed sieges and fresh pillaging; but neither side seemed capable—or perhaps even interested—in inflicting a decisive blow, if

⁷²⁰ Cheyette, 255.

⁷²¹ Cheyette, 133, 319-20.

⁷²² Cheyette, 275.

⁷²³ Cheyette, 276.

such a thing indeed were possible.”⁷²⁴ According to Cheyette, monastic chroniclers and clergymen called the raping and pillaging mercenaries “heretics” with ominous consequences.⁷²⁵ Occitania slid into a prolonged crisis of violence, war, interference from outside powers, and vice. As early as 1177, Raymond V asked the church for help against his enemies, including Ermengard, and “to entice it into the fray he conjured up the specter of heresy. His lasting contribution to Occitania would finally be a Holy War brought home to Christendom.”⁷²⁶ He called attention to the growing popularity of the dualist Cathars in Occitania, and called on the Cistercians to destroy them, resulting eventually in the Albigensian Crusade.

Ermengard quietly wielded her authority as viscountess of Narbonne and weathered the 1180’s mainly in the company of Roger of Béziers. Then sometime in September of 1192, Pedro of Lara, Ermengard’s heir, apparently grew impatient to succeed his aging aunt and, placing himself at the head of the city’s government, ousted her from power, exiled her from the city, and began “to call himself ‘by the grace of God viscount of Narbonne.’”⁷²⁷ This is reminiscent of Baldwin III’s impatience and success in overthrowing Melisende from power. Having out-lived or been abandoned by her supporters, and deprived of her position, power, and wealth, Ermengard retreated to Mas-Deu, a Templar house in Rousillon. There, apparently very ill, on April 30, 1196, she dictated her last testament. She gave some of her last properties to a Hospitaller house and to two Templar houses, including Mas-Deu where she chose to be buried. Unfortunately, although she begged Pedro to execute these last gifts, he never did.

⁷²⁴ Cheyette, 276.

⁷²⁵ Cheyette, 280.

⁷²⁶ Cheyette, 286.

⁷²⁷ Cheyette, 339-40; Caille, 23-27.

Poignantly Cheyette wrote, “And because she gave birth to no king, because the language of her poets gave birth to no national tongue but became instead a provincial ‘dialect’ and their songs an esoteric realm of academic specialists, because she was but the ruler of a city that gradually lost its port, its industry, and its commerce, turned into a provincial backwater, her memory fragmented and finally vanished.”⁷²⁸ Although she was forgotten until now, Cheyette has restored Ermengard to her rightful place in the list of powerful woman in twelfth-century Western Europe. Her political power and religious patronage shared many characteristics with the women who ruled at that time, including Melisende. When she could, Ermengard preserved and wielded her power through patronizing influential monasteries and leading churchmen while benefiting from their support, by waging war, strengthening her city’s infrastructure, and by forging alliances with her barons, her merchants, and her powerful aristocratic neighbors to defend her city and her power from her enemies.

The Women of the East

The Byzantine Empresses

Byzantine culture in the eleventh and twelfth centuries underwent a coherent pattern of change “that encompassed various fields of human activity, from humble agriculture and craft production to the creation of great monuments and the reformulation of ways of thinking.”⁷²⁹ Traditional social structures established in the ninth and tenth centuries were beginning to loosen and modify as the aristocracy grew in economic and

⁷²⁸ Cheyette, 362.

⁷²⁹ Alexander P. Kazhdan and Ann Wharton Epstein, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 231.

political dominance. The elite Byzantine family structure, for example, while it remained patriarchal, relaxed enough to allow aristocratic women to begin playing more visible public roles. As one would expect, the economic and even political roles of aristocratic women in Byzantine society evolved and emerged as a response to these cultural changes because they partly owned and controlled landed property and ensured legitimate ancestry to their children.⁷³⁰ From the eleventh century into the twelfth, educated and politically astute aristocratic women, who carried power and prestige, lived and ruled in the Imperial Palace at the side of the Byzantine emperors as empresses who wielded considerable political power. Moreover, as Dion Smythe has observed, “[t]here were no queens in Byzantium and therefore no concept of ‘queenship,’ but the careers of Byzantine empresses in the period 1025-1180, present interesting comparisons with those of queens in the West and in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.”⁷³¹

Melisende would have been very aware of the political roles these women were playing at the Byzantine Imperial Court as she wielded her own authority in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. During her reign, contact between her crusader kingdom, the kingdoms of the West, and Byzantium had dramatically increased since the initial eastward expansion of the crusaders during the First Crusade, especially through pilgrimage and trade. Indicating this increasing contact and communication between east and west, the anonymous author of the dialogue *Timarion* wrote that a fair held annually on the feast day of St. Demetrios in Thessaloniki in the twelfth century was reported to have attracted people from all over Europe: “Greeks come from every place, as well as

⁷³⁰ See Angeliki E. Laiou, “The Role of Women in Byzantine Society,” *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 31, 1 (1981): 233-260.

⁷³¹ Dion C. Smythe, “Behind the Mask: Empresses and Empire in Middle Byzantium,” in *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe: Proceedings of a Conference Held at King’s College London, April 1995*, Anne Duggan, ed. (New York: The Boydell Press, 1997), 141.

the neighboring tribes of Mysians [Bulgarians] who live as far as the Danube and the land of the Scythians, and the inhabitants of Campania, Italians, Spaniards and Portuguese, and Celts from beyond the Alps.”⁷³² An examination of some of the powerful Byzantine women of the Imperial Court in the late-eleventh and twelfth centuries should therefore be an important part of portraying the cultural milieu within which Melisende ruled.

From the earliest times in the history of the Byzantine Empire, women exercised power at the Imperial Court by virtue of their intelligence, personality, and administrative ability as sisters, wives, or regents for their sons, and in exceptional cases, some women even ruled in their own right and name. Among these should be mentioned Pulcheria, the sister of Theodosios II, his wife Athenais-Eudokia, Theodora, the wife of Justinian I, Irene, the wife of Leo IV and mother of Constantine VI, Euphrosyne, wife of Michael II, and Theodora, wife of Theophilos and mother of Michael III.⁷³³ At the end of the Macedonian Dynasty in the middle of the eleventh century, imperial rule was exercised for two months jointly by two empresses, Zoe and Theodora, the daughters of Constantine VIII, because they had the will of the people. Zoe went on to marry Constantine IX Monomachus, which restored the “normal situation” of a male emperor, but the “sense of dynastic loyalty triumphed once more over the privilege of gender, which reserved imperial rule for men: following the death of Constantine IX Monomachus, Theodora reigned again, this time alone (Zoe having died in the meantime); a year later, Theodora herself died, unmarried and childless.”⁷³⁴ As a result, throughout the history of the Byzantine Empire leading up to the eleventh and twelfth

⁷³² Kazhdan and Epstein, 236 (Appendix).

⁷³³ For the lives of Irene, Euphrosyne, and Theodora, who exercised considerable power in the last quarter of the eighth and the first half of the ninth as wives of emperors, see Herrin, *Women in Purple*.

⁷³⁴ Diether R. Reinsch, “Women’s Literature in Byzantium?—The Case of Anna Komnene,” in *Anna Komnene and her Times*, Thalia Gouma-Peterson, ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), 84-85.

centuries, the Byzantines were experienced and familiar with women exercising imperial political power in order to preserve the interests of the ruling dynasties. The only sphere in exercising power that was closed to women was the army.

In their great study of this period, *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Alexander Kazhdan and Ann Epstein described a revival of urban life in the Byzantine Empire that included the emergence of educational institutions and growth in scholarship and science, which coincided with similar developments made in the medieval West. However, they observed many differences between those parallel achievements. For instance,

... urban growth in the East did not emerge through conflict with a feudal system. The Byzantine provincial towns of the eleventh and twelfth centuries developed not in a denial of serfdom, great landownership, or Episcopal power, but rather evolved concurrently with those structures. The same circumstances that stimulated science and skepticism also fostered aristocratic, martial ideals. Popular modes of cultural expression—from the introduction of vernacular into the rarified realm of Byzantine literature to the proliferation of steatite prophylacteries—merged with aristocratic modes—from the introduction of chivalric romances to the veneration of knightly martyrs—so that distinctions may appear artificial to the critical scholar.⁷³⁵

Kazhdan and Epstein suggest that perhaps Byzantium, at this time, was “ripe for change” due to its emergence from the isolation imposed upon it by the “arrogance of the imperial court in the tenth century. The Byzantines became more closely related to their Western and Eastern neighbors.”⁷³⁶

The image of the male ideal Byzantine ruler changed in the twelfth century when it embraced a new vision of the emperor as the “archetypal warrior.”⁷³⁷ After Alexius I

⁷³⁵ Kazhdan and Epstein, 232.

⁷³⁶ Kazhdan and Epstein, 232.

⁷³⁷ Kazhdan and Epstein, 110.

Comnenus, a member of the Byzantine military aristocracy, took possession of the throne in 1081, he promoted the image of the emperor as a skilled war leader and later on, his successors John II and Manuel I carefully cultivated it too. Embracing this new military ethic brought the emperors closer to the kings and knights of the West and “Byzantine noblemen and even emperors in the twelfth century readily participated in tourneys with Crusader knights, occasionally even suffering severe wounds.”⁷³⁸ Similar to the kingdoms in the West, military training was given to noble men and not to women. The militarization of the imperial image in the twelfth century, therefore, made it more difficult for women to be accepted as rulers in Byzantium. However, the frequent absence of their husbands and sons from the Court when they were away on military campaigns gave their female relatives independent space from within which they could wield a great amount of power and authority. According to *The Alexiad*, written by Anna Comnena, the daughter of Alexius I, Anna Dalassena, Alexius I’s mother, was officially recognized as co-ruler by her son, and he left the government in her hands when he was away from Constantinople at war.⁷³⁹ Anna also described the relationship between her father and grandmother:

[M]y father, when he had taken the scepter, reserved for himself the contests and sweats of war at which his mother looked on, but her he established as mistress and like a slave he would do and say whatever she bade. The Emperor verily loved her exceedingly, and he hung on her counsels (so fond was he of his mother) and he made his right hand the servant of her wishes and his sense of hearing the listener to her words, and in every case the Emperor would agree or disagree according as she agreed or disagreed. To put it concisely, the situation was as follows, he indeed had the semblance of reigning but she really reigned—moreover she

⁷³⁸ Kazhdan and Epstein, 109.

⁷³⁹ Anna Comnena, *The Alexiad of the Princess Comnena*, Elizabeth A. S. Dawes, trans. (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1967), 82-3. Anna began her history around 1138, twenty years or so after her father’s death. Her history of the Byzantine state and society was written after her husband’s death and she was still writing in 1148 when she was sixty-five years old.

drew up laws, administered and directed everything; all her orders, written or unwritten, he confirmed by his seal or by word—and thus it may be said, he was the instrument of Empire for her, but not the Emperor. He was satisfied with everything his mother arranged and decided and not only was he very obedient as a son to his mother, but he subjected his mind to her as to a master of the science of ruling. For he was convinced that she had reached perfection in all points and that in knowledge and comprehension of affairs she far surpassed all men of the time.⁷⁴⁰

Throughout her history, Anna indicated that she firmly believed in the rights of the women in her family to exercise political power in Byzantium.⁷⁴¹ She also described them as exceedingly pious and generous to clerics, especially Anna Dalassena. She wrote, “[a]gain, what words could describe her compassion for the poor and her liberality to the needy? Her home was a refuge, open to any of her kinsfolk who were in want and equally open to strangers too. But above all she honoured priests and monks, and nobody ever saw her at table without some monks. Her character as outwardly manifested was such as to be revered by the angels and dreaded by the very demons....”⁷⁴² She gave generously to the convent Myrelaion and was a major patron of the monastery of Christ Pantepoptes, perhaps even its founder. Only when Alexius’s position was more secure and he could spend more time in the capital, did he ease his mother from power. His wife Eirene Doukaina, who followed him on military expeditions and later openly intrigued against their son John II to replace him with their daughter Anna Comnena and her husband Nikephoros Bryennios in 1118, was another good example of a woman who made the most of that space and participated in the politics of the twelfth-century empire.

⁷⁴⁰ Anna Comnena, 85-86.

⁷⁴¹ Barbara Hill, “Actions Speak Louder than Words: Anna Komnene’s Attempted Usurpation,” in *Anna Komnene and her Times*, Thalia Gouma-Peterson, ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), 45.

⁷⁴² Anna Comnena, 86-87.

It is probable that Alexius made Eirene accompany him on military campaigns because “she was too dangerous to be left alone in Constantinople at the centre of power.”⁷⁴³

Anna Comnena is the most well known twelfth-century Byzantine woman at the center of the Imperial Court because she recorded reflections of her own life and times in her famous history of her father’s reign known as *The Alexiad*. She is also familiar to crusade historians because her view of the First Crusade was given a prominent place in *The Alexiad* as she vividly described and vindicated her father’s handling of the crusaders as they passed through the Empire on the way to the Holy Land. She was the first-born porphyrogennite of Alexius I and Eirene Doukaina, and was given an extremely good classical Greek education. She grew up to become a historian, patron of the arts, and the center of a political and literary circle opposed to her nephew Emperor Manuel I. She was born on December 2, 1083, and at an early age was betrothed to Constantine Doukas, the son of Emperor Michael VII Doukas (1071-78) and the Empress Maria of Alania. Her succession to her father became less certain upon the birth of her brother John in 1087, and in 1092, she lost priority in the succession to him. Her husband Constantine died two years later. By 1097, she was married to Nikephoros Bryennios, and they had two sons and a daughter, although the children are not mentioned in *The Alexiad*. When Alexius died in 1118, Anna struggled to stop her brother John from taking the throne. John, however, captured the Great Palace in Constantinople and won over the Varangian Guard as well as the clergy of Hagia Sophia and members of the Senate. Anna tried to raise an army to overthrow John, but her husband Nikephoros refused to join her, and she was unable to do so. Anna was banished by her brother to the monastery of

⁷⁴³ Smythe, “Behind the Mask,” 147.

Kecharitoumene, founded by her mother, who joined her there. Anna died in Kecharitoumene about 1153-54.⁷⁴⁴

Anna's attempted usurpation of the throne failed because she was unable to secure her husband's support. Just as her mother and grandmother had ruled jointly with Alexius, Barbara Hill believes that Anna intended to rule jointly with her husband Nikephoros: "legitimized by her Komnenian blood, [he] would continue his distinguished career on the battlefield, leaving her in control in Constantinople. After all, that was what Anna had been accustomed to all her life."⁷⁴⁵ She was proud of her lineage and demonstrated throughout her descriptions of women in her history that she "believed that woman in general were competent and could be trusted to handle the weightiest matters in an exemplary fashion."⁷⁴⁶ As most of *The Alexiad* was written after the accession of Manuel I in 1143, Paul Magdalino suspects that "her portrayal of her father's reign was more than a little conditioned by her reaction to events through which she was living at the time of her writing."⁷⁴⁷ For instance, Manuel was still dealing with the "anomalous existence of the crusader principalities on former Imperial territories and the mass movement of western nations in the Second Crusade," which were both consequences of the First Crusade that could have been viewed at the time as a "policy failure on the part of his grandfather" Alexius.⁷⁴⁸ In her descriptions of the First Crusaders, she implicitly rejects any such idea.⁷⁴⁹ It should be noted here, of course, that also during the first five

⁷⁴⁴ Smythe, "Behind the Mask," 149; for an outline of Anna Komnena's life and accomplishments, see Angeliki Laiou, "Introduction: Why Anna Komnene?" in *Anna Komnene and her Times*, Thalia Gouma-Peterson, ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000).

⁷⁴⁵ Hill, "Actions Speak Louder than Words," 54.

⁷⁴⁶ Hill, "Actions Speak Louder than Words," 58.

⁷⁴⁷ Paul Magdalino, "The Pen of the Aunt: Echoes of the Mid-Twelfth Century in the *Alexiad*," in *Anna Komnene and her Times*, Thalia Gouma-Peterson, ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 2000), 16.

⁷⁴⁸ Magdalino, "The Pen of the Aunt," 24.

⁷⁴⁹ Magdalino, "The Pen of the Aunt," 24.

years of Manuel's reign, and the years Anna wrote most of her history from 1143-48, Melisende was ruling successfully on her own in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem after the death of Fulk. It is possible that Anna's descriptions of her mother and grandmother, and her general acceptance of women wielding power and authority, may also reflect her reluctant admiration and acceptance of Melisende's competency in ruling over her kingdom, especially when she ruled the kingdom jointly with Fulk. As concerned as she was in *The Alexiad* with the actions of the crusaders, Anna would surely have been well aware of Melisende's role in the Latin Kingdom at the time she was writing, and identified with, or even envied, Melisende's success in wielding power after inheriting the throne as her father's eldest child and heir. *The Alexiad* featured two western women who were Normans: Sigelgaita, the Norman wife of Robert Guiscard, and Bohemund's sister who is unnamed, and Anna made "no secret of her admiration for these women warriors."⁷⁵⁰ Anna's description of Sigelgaita may grudgingly reflect her attitude toward Melisende, because even though Sigelgaita was a barbarian like Melisende, she was portrayed as devoted to her husband, courageous, and able to control others to act justly and bravely, especially her husband and his soldiers. When Robert was dying, Sigelgaita was with him in the end, as a devoted wife should be, just as Melisende was with Fulk when he died in 1143.⁷⁵¹ Anna also described Bohemund's sister positively as a determined and strategic thinker in her efforts to defend the fortress of Brindisi.⁷⁵² It is possible that Anna described these two western women favorably in order to emphasize her general support for women wielding power in her own society as well as the crusader states, especially Melisende.

⁷⁵⁰ Reinsch, 95.

⁷⁵¹ Hill, "Actions Speak Louder than Words," 57-8; and Anna Comnena, 32, 38, 109, 147.

⁷⁵² Anna Comnena, 317-9.

Although Anna doesn't mention her in *The Alexiad*, Bertha of Sulzbach, a westerner and relative of the Emperor Conrad of Germany, married Manuel in 1146 and took the Byzantine name of Eirene. Barbara Hill relates that the "chroniclers were unkind about her appearance, and Manuel took his time about marrying her: she had arrived in Constantinople in 1142. She appears to have made an attempt to fit into the cultured society into which she was plunged.... Her part in politics is obscure, but she seems to have had influence with Conrad, and her philanthropy was widespread."⁷⁵³ She died in 1159 or 1160 and thus was another contemporary female ruler during Melisende's reign. It appears that by the time of Bertha/Eirene's death, an ideal for the Komnenian imperial women had been constructed as reflected by the speeches and orations composed for them: the ideal empress was physically beautiful and she was a pious and philanthropic mother upon whom her sons would rely for support and advice, a loving consort to her husband with a commitment to good works, and a sister and a daughter who served the needs of her family above the needs of herself.⁷⁵⁴ Despite the importance of the virtue of generosity in this ideal, Barbara Hill has noticed that imperial female patronage of the church, especially toward monasteries, decreased over time, suggesting to her that "[w]omen's power was being deliberately curtailed in this area because of the prestige it generated."⁷⁵⁵ Hill also notes that the patronage activity of the Komnenian women was greatest during the relative independence of widowhood, suggesting that the marital status of women in twelfth-century Byzantine society determined their freedom to allocate resources for philanthropic activities. Perhaps Bertha-Eirene is omitted from

⁷⁵³ Barbara Hill, *Imperial Women in Byzantium, 1025-1204: Power, Patronage, and Ideology* (New York: Longman Publishing, 1999), 35.

⁷⁵⁴ Hill, *Imperial Women*, 72-95.

⁷⁵⁵ Hill, *Imperial Women*, 175.

Anna's work because she had difficulty living up to this ideal during the first years of her marriage and would not have served as a good example of a strong ruling woman whom Anna she admired. Bertha-Eirene was plain in appearance, bore only daughters for Manuel, one of whom died before she was six years old, and possessed limited resources for philanthropic activity from her husband.

Melisende may have benefited from the general tradition and acceptance in the Byzantine East for women exercising legitimate imperial power when circumstances called for the preservation of dynastic continuity. The Byzantine people and clergy who lived in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem would have accepted her authority and its circumstances without question and that acceptance would have motivated the Franks to do the same. The virtuous qualities of wisdom, generosity, self-control, and courage which were expected in an ideal Byzantine empress of the twelfth century were very similar to those expected by her Latin subjects too. As long as Melisende met those expectations, she would have their loyalty and obedience.

The lives of Melisende's female contemporaries in the twelfth century, especially Urraca because she too ruled as a queen regnant, and the other royal women of Western Christendom and the Byzantine Empire, provide important comparisons for Melisende's reign as well as a context for her circumstances and actions. The fortuitous luck of royal or noble birth gave them their chance, but she and they made the most of that opportunity to rule through marriage, hard work, and risk taking. They were all women who won access to their kingdom's resources and achieved enough independence to enable them to direct its expenditure and control their own fortunes to a considerable extent. This

independence was sometimes achieved within their marriages but most often came from either the death of a husband or his absence due to governing responsibilities in far off territories, estrangement, or crusade. All of them reinforced their hard-won authority by becoming significant patrons and defenders of religious men and institutions as well as the arts, wielding power through patronage. The Christian queens of the West did this by making alliances through gift giving with influential churchmen and supporting new and old monastic orders, cathedral and shrine churches, convents, and leprosariums, which were pious as well as political acts. They also spent their kingdom's wealth strategically in construction projects that improved their military defenses and infrastructure to benefit their cities and citizens. The Byzantine empresses used the same strategies within the contexts of their different circumstances and religious traditions. All of their lives and actions, which were similar to Melisende's in so many ways, help put hers into perspective and illustrate how often patronage was used as a potent female strategy for self-empowerment; they provide examples of how women could acquire influence in a world that was determined to limit their full participation. Above all, they overcame the limitations usually placed on female sovereignty in order to rule effectively and as each did, they forged a new conception of female power in the minds of the men they knew.

The evidence from Melisende's life, as well as that of the other ruling women in the twelfth century, indicates that a cultural milieu of acceptance for women to rule alone existed by this time under certain circumstances and needs, an acceptance that crossed the barriers of religion and borders. Melisende benefited from this milieu because her circumstances qualified her for this acceptance. Her new kingdom was under constant siege and man-power was always in short supply. Because she was her father's eldest

daughter and his choice to be his heir in the absence of sons, she was accepted by the barons and citizens of her kingdom because her succession ensured stability by preserving the interests and leadership of the ruling dynasty and its supporters. To the qualifying power of her inheritance and birth, however, must be added her political instincts and talent, which helped her keep the ruling position that she had been given. None of the women examined here could have stayed in power and survived the challenges to their reigns from their husband's and/or sons without the talent to manipulate the power structures of their day. Because those power structures provided for the possibility of female inheritance and independent rule, some women such as Melisende and the others could find acceptance by winning powerful support. In the West, the Church played a large role in sanctifying that acceptance and providing that support, at least as much as the barony did in the twelfth century. Melisende and the women, who successfully wielded power there, knew this and made sure to win the backing of the Church by cultivating friendships with its most important ecclesiastics and providing patronage for its projects and institutions.

Chapter Six: Afterword

Today, the physical remains and evidence of Melisende's life and achievements are all but gone, destroyed by the enemies of her kingdom and faith as well as by time and the vicissitudes of history in the Holy Land. When one goes to Israel and the West Bank today to see the sites associated with Melisende's piety and patronage, one finds that a few still stand as they did during her lifetime, but most survive as protected ruins or not at all.

If Melisende visited Jerusalem's Old City today, she would find the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the heart of the Christian Quarter largely as she and her successors left it. Today, the ownership of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher is shared by six Christian denominations, each with responsibility for the upkeep of its own shrines and areas of the church: the Roman Catholic, Greek Orthodox, and Armenian, Syrian, Coptic, and Abyssinian churches. Disagreements throughout the twentieth century among the denominations have blocked efforts to fully renovate the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Thus it remains for the most part as it has since Melisende and Patriarch Fulcher consecrated it in 1149 although the present Edicule housing the Tomb of Christ was rebuilt after it was destroyed during a fire in 1808. Today, it is literally held together by a cradle of steel girders placed around in 1947 to keep it from collapsing due to the damage it sustained during an earthquake of 1927.⁷⁵⁶

Strolling down the narrow streets of the Christian Quarter, Melisende would not find the large hospital built by the Knights of St. John, or the leper hospital run by the Order of the Knights of St. Lazarus located during her time just outside the Old City's

⁷⁵⁶ Martin Biddle, *The Tomb of Christ* (Stroud, UK: Alan Sutton Publishing, 199), 9, 103-8.

eastern wall; she could, however, visit the Tower of David next to the Jaffa Gate, which is now a museum, and view some of the stone remains of the citadel and the buildings in which she lived. In the Armenian Quarter, she could visit the twelfth-century Cathedral of St. James, whose priests still venerate both the disciple James, whose body is beneath the altar, and James the Apostle, whose head is in a side chapel. Walking through the narrow streets lined with souks in the Muslim Quarter, she could stroll down the *Via Dolorosa* to the Church of St. Anne, which still stands as a lasting example of crusader architecture. Near the Jewish Quarter's *Cardo*, she would find Malquisinat Street still lined with trader and craftsmen's shops and stalls. The Temple Mount or Dome of the Rock, which she knew as the *Templum Domini*, still dominates the Old City, but today, as a Christian, she would probably need special permission to visit the interior of the building, which is now a mosque. She would also need permission to visit the Al-Aqsa Mosque, which she had known as the headquarters of the Knights Templar or the Temple of Solomon. Outside the Old City, she would immediately recognize the shrine church of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat that houses the tomb of the Virgin Mary as well as her own tomb, because it too has survived as it was during her lifetime just east of the city near the Garden of Gethsemane. And, in the West Bank, she could visit Bethany, now known as El Azaria, to walk down into the narrow tomb of Lazarus and see the significant ruins and small sections of floor mosaics, which are all that remain of the convent she built there for her sister Ivette. At the Orthodox Monastery of St. Sabas, she would still not be allowed in the monastery or the church because she was a woman, but she could view the buildings from the Women's Tower on an adjacent hill.

In some ways, the conditions of Melisende's kingdom in the twelfth century closely resemble those in Israel and the West Bank today. The Holy Land is a place where the past, present, and future converge. The sacred land is still defined today as it was then by its location on the Mediterranean Sea and the attraction and profits of its beaches and ports. It is still vulnerable and suffers from the anger of its enemies. It is still a place of enormous spiritual significance as a nexus of holy sites for all of the faiths of Abraham and it hosts pilgrims from all over the world. Its culture still distinctly fuses Western and Eastern elements. One has only to visit there for a short time to notice these elements combined in the faces of the people who live there, as well as in the food sold in the souks, and the music, clothing, merchandise, languages, and celebrations of its people. Its cities continue to be melting pots where people of many faiths from places all over the West and the Middle East live and work together. And, just as it was in the twelfth century, the search for peace and continuing prosperity still seems elusive, despite the best efforts of political leaders and the various establishments of peace treaties and periods of truce.

Melisende would surely notice the high level of female involvement in positions at all levels of the Israeli Government today, a pattern that began in 1969 when Golda Meir was elected Prime Minister. Although powerful women were rare in the twelfth century, under certain circumstances, women like her in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem as well as in some of the kingdoms of Western Europe, were accepted as rulers and regents when more suitable male candidates were unavailable. For Melisende, the support of her kingdom's churchmen as well as the barons was an indisputable factor in the acceptance of her position as queen regnant, and, as many of her female

contemporaries did, she knew the importance of winning the Church's support from the earliest moments of her reign to the last. Although the strategy of generously demonstrating piety through awards of patronage was used by all rulers of the twelfth century, male as well as female, in the West as well as in the East, Melisende and the other ruling women of her time, tended to use it more strategically than men did because they had fewer acceptable ways to access power through the existing male-dominated political structures.

The most important ideas in this study of Melisende's life and reign have resulted from my analyses of William of Tyre's *A History of the Deeds Done Beyond the Sea* and of the surviving charters that record her gift-giving, building, and patronage activities. In particular, the timing and contexts of Melisende's charters have revealed some striking possibilities about her motives and methods of accessing political power. An examination of her patronage for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the patriarch of Jerusalem, for example, has suggested that many of her gifts were made to the church in order to solicit the patriarch's powerful political support and express gratitude for it. Melisende was extremely generous to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Throughout her reign as queen regnant of the Latin Kingdom she approved and confirmed its land transactions, gave it additional sources of income, supported the patriarchs, and likely oversaw, funded, and directed the rebuilding of the church itself. Melisende and the patriarchs relied on each other as they worked to strengthen the church's influence in the kingdom and abroad as well as their own. The evidence suggests that she wielded a significant amount of influence over the religious affairs of the kingdom. It is also highly likely that she supported the fine artists and scribes of the scriptorium of the Church of

the Holy Sepulcher by commissioning deluxe manuscripts such as the *Melisende Psalter* as a way of highlighting or depicting the strengths of her joint rule with her husband Fulk.

Melisende's patronage of the kingdom's military orders, especially the Hospitallers and the Order of the Knights of St. Lazarus, also helped strengthen her position as queen. With Fulk, Melisende militarized the Hospitallers with the grant of Bethgibelin Castle in 1136 in order to shore up the kingdom's defenses. Later, with her patronage, they would be able to play a prominent role in leading the army of the Second Crusade. It is likely that she supported them in the years leading up to the showdown with her son in 1152 in order to win their support or at least their neutrality if an armed conflict was to break out between them. Demonstrating her piety and sympathy for those who suffered from leprosy, her patronage of the Order of St. Lazarus reflected her support for their important social and religious functions in her kingdom. Since they likely played some military role as well, her patronage for the knights enhanced her kingdom's defenses and probably won their political support too.

Melisende's devotion to her family and her desire to foster good relations between her kingdom's Christian sects must have been the motives behind her foundation of the convent and church of Bethany in 1138. According to William of Tyre, she built and fortified it to honor her parents, husband, and sons as well as to create a fitting position for her sister Ivette, who left the convent of St. Anne to be its second abbess. Melisende founded her convent on the site of a pre-existing Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Lazarus. As a place that attracted Latin as well as Orthodox pilgrims and those of other Christian sects, the convent at Bethany was another location in the Latin Kingdom that

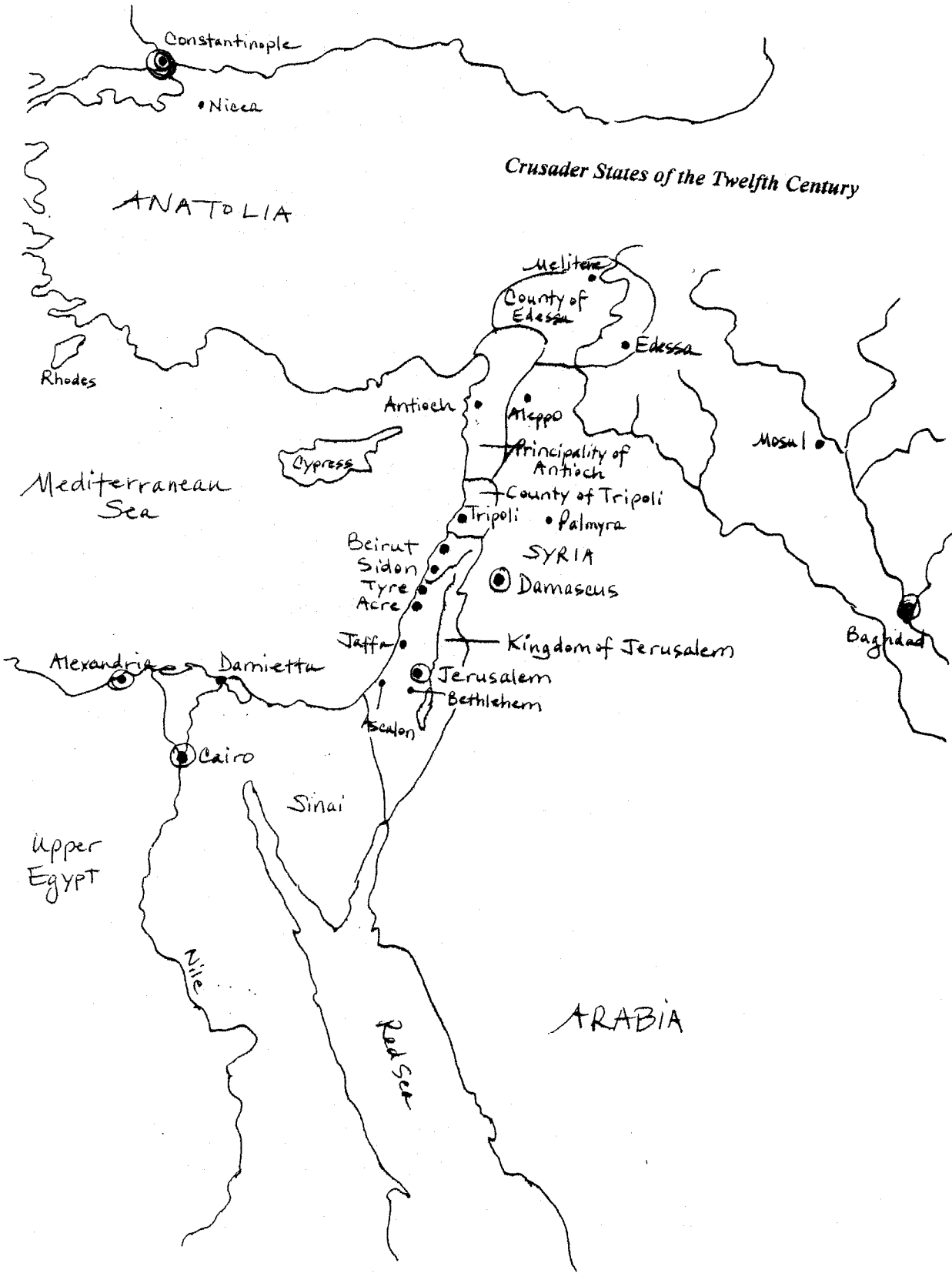
brought all Christians together for worship and veneration. It therefore seems likely that Melisende selected Bethany as a location for her patronage because she and Ivette were the children of a Latin father and Orthodox mother. Creating a space that would foster good relations between Latin and Orthodox Christians would have been a proper tribute to her family and the memory of her parents. She likely supported the Orthodox Monastery of St. Sabas because of its religious significance and because it too was a pilgrimage site for all Christians. Her patronage for St. Sabas was part of her broader policy of support for the Orthodox Church in her kingdom. In return, it is probable that she received the important political support of her Orthodox subjects and priests.

Melisende's patronage for the *Templum Domini* during the years 1143-48 indicated her support and protection for it because it was one of her kingdom's most visible and important holy sites, cherished by her Christian and Muslim citizens alike. Her gifts appear to have won the political support of its Abbot Godfrey, who witnessed many of her charters before 1152. They also might have served to emphasize her position as queen and ruler of the kingdom after Fulk's death and to publicly strengthen her intention to uphold and enforce the peace treaty she and Fulk had made with Unur of Damascus. Her patronage for the Abbey and Shrine Church of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat, however, appears much less politically motivated. Most likely, she favored it because it was dedicated to the Virgin Mary and because her mother was buried there. Although it cannot be known when she made the decision to be buried there herself, it is likely that her patronage for the abbey was connected to the work, prayers, and dedication of its monks in the preservation of her mother's memory as well as her own.

A comparison of Melisende's religious patronage to that of her predecessors, successors, and female contemporaries has also led to some interesting conclusions. Godfrey, Baldwin I, and Baldwin II each acted as important patrons of the Latin Church in the new kingdom, and their political and financial support was essential to the establishment of bishoprics and monasteries in the newly conquered territories. During Godfrey's brief reign, he generously supported the churches of Jerusalem, especially the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the *Templum Domini*, and the Abbey of Our Lady of Jehoshaphat. Baldwin I favored the Hospitallers and the Church of St. Anne as well as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Baldwin II continued and increased support for all of these religious institutions. However, the level of the monarchy's religious patronage activity for these and the other institutions for which records have survived increased substantially during Melisende's reign from 1131-52. In fact, after comparing her gift charters with those of Baldwin III, and his successors Amalric, and Baldwin IV, this dissertation has shown that the monarchy's religious patronage was most varied and politically motivated during her reign. This pattern is explained by the insecurity of Melisende's position as a queen regnant in a world dominated by men and her use of patronage as a strategy to reinforce and strengthen her authority. The other queens and aristocratic women who ruled during the twelfth century, especially in Western Europe, also used religious patronage as an important strategy within the contexts of their own unique circumstances. Utilizing her formidable political instincts to keep the ruling position she had been given for as long as possible, Melisende manipulated the power structures of her day by wielding power through religious patronage and winning the political backing of the churchmen in her

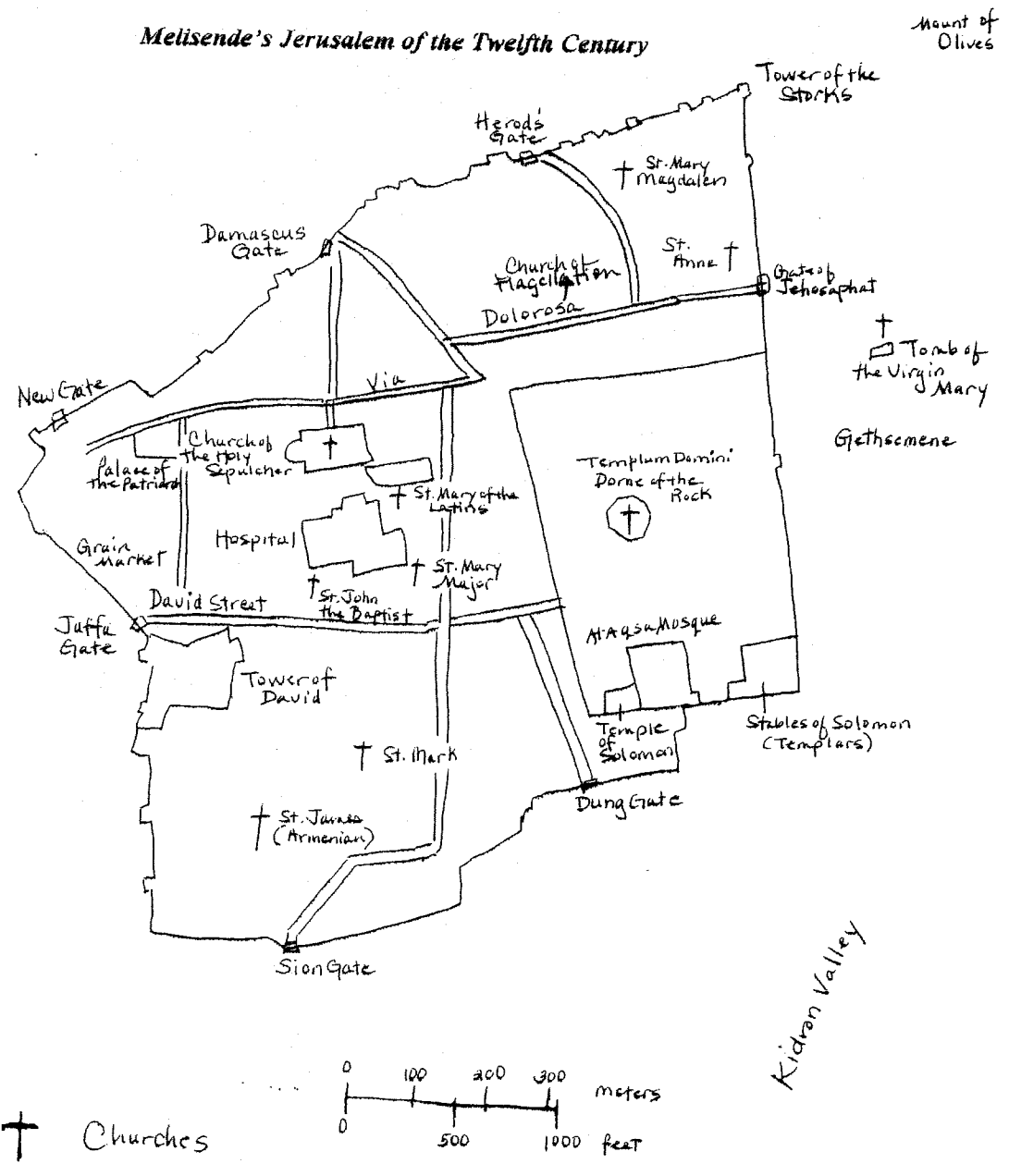
kingdom. During her reign, therefore, the kingdom's churches and monasteries grew and flourished under her care and attention. Her patronage helped protect the holy sites and secure the claims of Latin Christendom in the Holy Land before 1187.

Appendix I

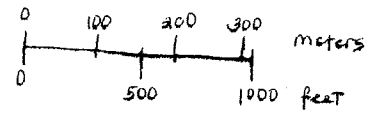


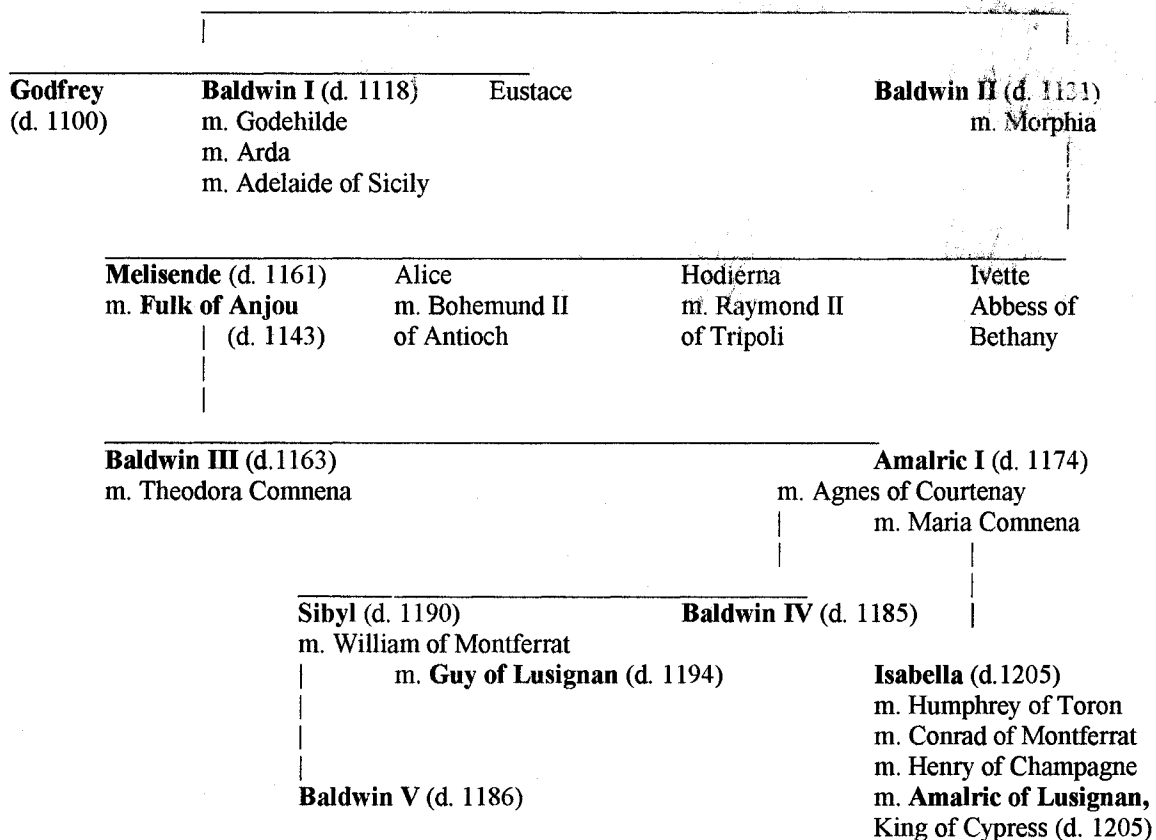
Appendix II

Melisende's Jerusalem of the Twelfth Century



† Churches



*Appendix III**Royal House of Jerusalem*

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