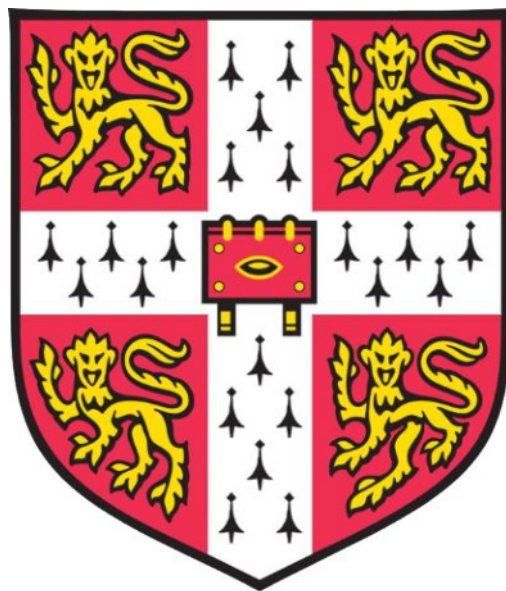


A comparative study of Urraca of León-Castilla (d. 1126), Melisende of Jerusalem (d. 1161), and Empress Matilda of England (d. 1167) as royal heiresses

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This dissertation is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Declaration

This thesis is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text.

It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text

It does not exceed the prescribed word limit for the relevant Degree Committee.

A comparative study of Urraca of León-Castilla (d. 1126), Melisende of Jerusalem (d. 1161),
and Empress Matilda of England (d. 1167) as royal heiresses

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Abstract:

This dissertation is a comparative study of Urraca of León-Castilla (r. 1109–1126), Melisende of Jerusalem (r. 1131–1153–d. 1161), and the Empress Matilda of England and Normandy (b. 1102–d. 1167). Despite the vast research on aristocratic heiresses and queens consorts, a comparative study of royal heiresses as rulers in their own right does not exist. The few studies that focus on royal heiresses examine individual royal women or are region-specific studies. However, by studying royal heiresses comparatively, greater insight can be gained regarding the challenges women faced in their attempt to gain the throne, the methods they employed to keep power, and the unique variations of rulership that are specific to each queen regnant. In general, medieval society expected royal power would be held by men, but in the absence of a male heir, women, on occasion, held royal office. This study observes how royal heiresses could mostly, but not always, overcome the limitations of their gender to establish a rule in their respective kingdoms. This thesis explores aspects of rulership over five chapters, aimed at understanding how a royal heiress might succeed or fail to gain the throne, keep the throne, and preserve it for future generations. Through the use of a comparative methodology, this thesis provides a fresh discussion of royal heiresses as rulers. It shows that royal heiresses faced different obstacles to their rule than their aristocratic counterparts and, that because of their royal status, they were able to overcome complications that aristocratic heiresses could not. Demonstrations of female power were, in many cases, approved of at the royal level but were condemned at the aristocratic level, as was the case for Melisende of Jerusalem and her younger sister, Alice of Antioch (c. 1110–1136). Studying Urraca of León-Castilla, Melisende of Jerusalem, and the Empress Matilda side-by-side, this thesis also establishes the individual pitfalls of female rulership and identifies the methods each aspiring queen regnant utilized in order to overcome them.

Acknowledgments

Reflecting on the process of writing this dissertation, I am overwhelmed by the generous support I received from so many wonderful people. This dissertation, and my time at the University of Cambridge, would not have been possible without the facilitation and assistance of numerous people.

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Finally, I wish to thank my family for their enduring support and belief in my dreams. I am grateful for my sister, Laura, who willingly listened to my many ramblings and acted as my most vocal cheerleader. I am profoundly appreciative for the constant assistance, care, and love from my parents who have gone above and beyond to make sure I am successful. Finally, I have to thank my beloved grandmother, Ruth Eisenmenger Koch, who has supported my education and dreams from the very start. I am always inspired by her lifelong commitment to education and family. I feel very blessed to have reached this milestone and share this success with my family.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated in memory of my undergraduate mentor, Professor Jeremy DuQuesnay Adams. I am sincerely grateful to him for introducing me to the study of medieval history. His passion and generosity of spirit have guided me throughout this PhD and I am eternally grateful for his early support of my academic career.

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Introduction

Aim of thesis:

Urraca of León-Castilla (r. 1109–1126), Melisende of Jerusalem (r. 1131–1153), and the Empress Matilda of England and Normandy (b. 1102–d. 1167) were three medieval royal women who, as royal heiresses, pushed the boundaries of gender to demonstrate an alternate form of rulership unique to their own set of circumstances. The aim of this thesis is to address the gap of historical research on royal heiresses. Although individual studies exist on Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda, no study currently features a comparative analysis of the three heiresses collectively. Thus, in order to add to the understanding of medieval rulership, this work argues that a study of female rulership can help to appreciate how, in the central Middle Ages, monarchical rules could or could not be applied to men and women equally.

The historiography shows the tendency of modern scholars to reflect on these queens exclusively within the context of their individual kingdoms. It is my hope that, by examining the three heiresses, each from the distinct geographical regions of Northern Spain, the Holy Land, and the Anglo-Norman realm, the comparative method can shed new insights on the field of queenship and female inheritance. This methodology examines themes that connect the three women, regardless of their geographical and cultural separations. Chris Wickham has explored the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach.¹ He has stated, ‘no historical explanation can be regarded as convincing without some attempt at comparative testing; everything else is provisional’.² Nevertheless, there are problems inherent with such a methodology. Differentiation in documentation and data, historiographical variations, and overwhelming options regarding what to compare constitute three such problems. However, this approach to history is the most effective for this study, which is restricted to royal heiresses of the twelfth century. This research explores a variety of themes to gain deeper understanding of queens regnant and heiresses.

By studying royal heiresses comparatively, the comparative approach also offers greater insight regarding the challenges women faced in their attempts to gain the throne, the methods they employed to keep power, and the unique variations of rulership specific to each of the queens regnant. Despite the fact that the medieval world expected that royal authority would be held by men, in the absence of a male heir, on occasion women held royal office.

¹ C. Wickham, ‘Problems in Doing Comparative History’, in P. Skinner, ed., *Challenging the Boundaries of Medieval History: The Legacy of Timothy Reuter* (Turnhout, 2009), pp. 2–28.

² Wickham, ‘Problems in Doing Comparative History’, p. 7.

This study observes how royal heiresses could mostly, but not always, overcome the limitations of their gender to establish themselves as rulers in their respective kingdoms.

While Urraca and Melisende succeeded to the thrones of their respective kingdoms, Matilda remained an aspiring queen regnant. The twelfth century stands out for the presence of royal heiresses, perhaps in part because of the relatively young dynasties in the Anglo-Norman realm and the kingdom of Jerusalem. The kingdom of León-Castilla could trace its royal roots slightly further back, but this frontier land experienced constantly fluctuating borders and dynastic conflict. In all three kingdoms, the importance of dynastic continuity enabled female heiresses to make claims to royal rule.

Geography and context:

This thesis explores aspects of male and female royal authority because, as aspiring queens regnant, the women's special status permitted them to reach greater heights of autonomy and power. However, their gender remained a constraint that the heiresses had to manage. The kingdoms of León-Castilla, Jerusalem, and the Anglo-Norman realm were as distantly located and culturally unique as could be in twelfth century Christendom, impacting events leading up to and surrounding the inheritances of each royal heiress. However, in some key ways, the situations of these three realms were similar and provided the opportunity for female royal inheritance.

The late eleventh and twelfth centuries saw the rise of three new royal dynasties. Urraca's kingdom of León-Castilla was set on the path of *reconquista* against Muslim forces in the south and suffered from a fractured monarchical system in the Christian north.³ Only two generations of Jiménez rulers preceded Urraca. Fernando I of León-Castilla (r. 1035–1065) achieved a kind of hegemony over his two older brothers, the rulers of Aragón and Navarra, but again divided these lands in three parts to his three sons. Urraca's father, Alfonso VI (r. 1065–1109), consolidated his realm and conquered Toledo from Muslim control in 1085. Under his consolidated rule, he left a more secure kingdom to his daughter, Urraca, but generations of familial infighting meant that her succession was not without threat from her Aragonese cousins.

³ For further reading on León-Castilla in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, see S. Barton, *The Aristocracy in Twelfth-Century León and Castile* (Cambridge, 1997); R.A. Fletcher, 'Reconquest and crusade in Spain, c. 1050–1150', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 37 (1987), pp. 51–67; J.F. O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1975); J.F. O'Callaghan, *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia, 2013); J.J. Tordesca, ed., *The Emergence of León-Castile c. 1065–1500: Essays Presented to J.F. O'Callaghan* (New York, 2015).

The dynasty of the Kingdom of Jerusalem was similarly young, having been established in 1099 after the first crusade;⁴ Godfrey of Bouillon (r. 1099–1100) became the first ruler of the newly formed Christian state. His unexpected and premature death meant that he had yet to produce an heir, and leadership thus fell to his brother, Baldwin I (r. 1100–1118), who accepted the royal title. Upon his ascension, his cousin, Baldwin of Bourcq (r. 1118–1131), inherited the County of Edessa and married an Armenian noblewoman. However, for the second time, the ruler of Jerusalem failed to produce offspring, and when he died in 1118, succession fell to his elder brother, Eustace III of Boulogne, with the stipulation that if the aging brother failed to make the journey from northern France to the Levant, the crown would fall to his cousin Baldwin of Bourcq. Baldwin seized upon this opportunity and secured his coronation on Easter Day (14 April) 1118. Baldwin I's brother, Eustace, had already begun the journey but decided not to contest the succession upon learning of his cousin's anointing and coronation. Thus, the first three rulers of Jerusalem were from the same generation. Baldwin de Bourcq, later Baldwin II, ultimately produced offspring and secured the dynastic continuity of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Baldwin II's eldest child and heir was Melisende, making her the first ruler from a new generation to wear the crown.

The Kingdom of England shares a similar story of a new dynasty since the Norman conquest of England in 1066.⁵ Duke William of Normandy's triumph at the Battle of Hastings established the Anglo-Norman realm, but he endeavored to consolidate his control over England and his Norman lands over the remainder of his life. Upon his death in 1087, he divided his realm between his eldest two sons: England went to William II Rufus (1087–1100) and Normandy to Robert Curthose (1087–1106, d. 1134). However, the succession was far from secure. William's other son, Henry (d. 1135), aspired to more. At the onset of the First Crusade, Robert, Duke of Normandy, joined the cause and left custody of his holdings to his brother, William Rufus. When William Rufus died in a hunting accident in 1100, Henry hastily arranged for his coronation, becoming the third Norman king of England. Upon Robert's return from crusading, Henry and Duke Robert fought at the battle of Tinchebrai in 1106, after which Robert spent his remaining years in captivity. With only two legitimate children, one of them a son, the succession to Henry I seemed secure. Tragically, William Adelin died while crossing the channel in 1120, which left Empress Matilda as Henry I's sole

⁴ For further reading on the foundation of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, see T. Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (London, 2004); J. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (New Haven, 1987); J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders 1095–1131* (Cambridge, 1997); S. Runciman, *A History of the Crusades, vol. II: The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Frankish East, 1100–1187* (Cambridge, 1952); C. Tyerman, *The Invention of the Crusades* (London, 1998).

⁵ For further reading on the foundation of the Anglo-Norman dynasty, see D. Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery: Britain 1066–1284* (New York, 2004); G. Garnett, *Conquered England: Kingship, Succession, and Tenure 1066–1166* (Oxford, 2007).

surviving, legitimate heir. Matilda was set to inherit her father's realm upon his death, but her cousin, Stephen, grandson of William the Conqueror by his daughter Adela of Blois (d. 1137), took the crown in 1135 when Henry I died, marking the start of a cross-channel civil war.

These three realms shared the unique feature of being newly established, and two were on the frontiers of Christendom. The fragility and vulnerability of these fledgling dynasties permitted the experiment of female royal rulership, whereas more established kingdoms, such as Capetian France or the Holy Roman Empire, rejected such a solution to succession crises. Female royal inheritance presents a paradox: these three dynasties were already vulnerable and they perhaps increased their vulnerability by designating women as royal heiresses. Female rule was inherently more exposed to threats and the designations of Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda's as royal heiresses reveals an overwhelming importance of dynastic continuity. In these three kingdoms, the continuation of the dynasty was the preferred solution to the absence of direct male heirs. These women's positions as royal heiresses were far from secure, and each dynasty and realm sought a solution to their vulnerabilities in a number of ways, as is explored throughout this dissertation.

Historiography:

Male Rulership:

As this is a study of female royal heiresses, it is noteworthy that there is a gap in the scholarship on rulership. Historians have evaluated kingship by describing its evolution, the nature of authority, and the boundaries of royal power.⁶ However, these studies have focused on male royal authority and fail to account for the rare occurrence of female royal inheritance. The works that investigate queenship are limited to queens consort rather than queens regnant. In essence, these royal heiresses attempted to be female kings and thus do not fit neatly into either category of scholarship. This dissertation attempts to address this omission.

If Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda strove to be female kings, it is important to establish at the start the unique ways kings were elevated above the aristocracy. The idea of

⁶ H. Beumann, 'Die Historiographie des Mittelalters als Quelle für die Ideengeschichte des Königtums', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 180 (1955), pp. 449–88; F. Graus, 'Die Herrschersagen des Mittelalters als Geschichtsquelle', in H.G. Gilomen, P. Moraw, and R.C. Schwinges, eds., *Ausgewählte Aufsätze von Frantisek Graus (1959–1989)* (Stuttgart, 2002), pp. 3–27; S. Bagge, *Kings, Politics, and the Right Order of the World in German Historiography, c. 950–1150* (Leiden, 2002); J.M. Bak, 'Legitimization of Rulership in Three Narratives from Twelfth-Century Central Europe', *Majestas*, 12 (2004), pp. 43–60; A. Rodriguez, 'History and Topography for the Legitimization of Royalty in Three Castilian Chronicles', *Majestas*, 12 (2004), pp. 61–82.

sacral kingship is at the heart of medieval kingship.⁷ The divine nature of medieval kingship elevated a royal man and gave him extra legitimacy over his aristocracy.⁸ Sacral kingship hinges on the crowning and anointing of a royal claimant, which made him God's holy deputy on Earth. The ritual of anointing imbued a king with special power and wisdom that legitimized his actions. Without the power of anointing, the king was no different than any other nobleman, and he was indistinguishable from his aristocratic followers; divine grace is what elevated him.

A medieval king relied on his aristocracy for support and could not be a successful ruler without their collaboration; indeed, the reciprocal relationship between a king and his aristocracy was the foundation of medieval government. In an ideal case, the aristocracy would respect the king's leadership and military authority in addition to his role as the ultimate judge and peacekeeper. The king was powerful because of an army, but it was his special connection to God, achieved through coronation, that was ultimately the source of his power. The king could not govern with only his sacrosanct position as God's representative on Earth; his secular aristocracy defended his realm on the battlefield, and his ecclesiastical aristocracy of bishops and abbots aimed at guiding him to follow the precepts of the Bible. In return for supporting the king, the aristocracy could benefit from his generosity, thus making this relationship one of reciprocity. All of this was, however, part of a male-dominated world.

In the event of female royal inheritance, which aspects would extend to a queen regnant? The infrequent occurrence of queens regnant in the medieval period is perhaps why kingship historians limit the scope of their research to male kings alone. The study of queens regnant does not clearly fit into any pre-established field, such as kingship or queenship, because it was an office unto itself and broke gender norms. One of the most fundamental problems for a woman leader was how to fit into this overwhelmingly male world that celebrated the warrior and priestly elite. A queen regnant could perform the duties of judge and receive counsel from her advisors and direct her deputies to perform those tasks prohibited to her by nature of her gender. However, the occurrence of a female heiress did nothing to change the nature of a hierarchical society in which men were dominant and demanded women's obedience. When an heiress became a queen regnant, her sacred position as anointed regnant elevated her above the aristocracy and thus demanded their obedience. The unlikely and undesired event of female royal inheritance created tension between crown and aristocracy that medieval society struggled to correct.

⁷ K.J. Leyser, *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottonian Saxony* (London, 1979), pp. 75–108; J. Nelson, 'Kingship and Empire', in J.H. Burns, ed., *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350–c.1450* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 211–51.

⁸ Nelson, 'Kingship and Empire', pp. 211–251.

In a world in which rulership was so carefully constructed around the male identity, the woman's role was ambiguous if the crown fell to her. The principle historians of the studies of kingship have not accounted for how queens regnant might similarly enjoy the same privileges of sacral kingship. In one striking example, an article by Björn Weiler explores ideas of kingship as it relates to usurpation, using the claim Stephen I made for the crown in England (r. 1135–1154) as his principle case study.⁹ Weiler expounds on the duties of the king that were structurally necessary: defense of the realm, maintenance of peace internally, promotion and protection of the Church, and positive relationships with magnates. It seems an obvious but necessary statement that, to succeed to a royal throne, a candidate required a hereditary claim; one from outside the metaphorical tribe was not eligible. On the topic of usurpation, Weiler makes the interesting assertion that such a rise to office could be justified and found legitimate so long as the king's deeds and actions proved successful. A potential king's claim had to be 'made, accepted, exercised and justified'.¹⁰ It seems a glaring omission that this article features Stephen's case so prominently, and yet Weiler does not contrast Stephen with his rival claimant, Empress Matilda. Such a comparison would have demonstrated how far his theory extends when also factoring in a female claimant to royal authority. The warrior king was centered on his male identity, and the question remained whether a woman could fulfill those roles in the same or alternative ways. In the medieval world, if, on occasion, a woman was in the position of ruling, she faced disadvantages that male rulers did not. The vulnerabilities of female rule meant that many attempted to take advantage of a woman's position as ruler, which reveals the realities and perceptions of power and government in the medieval period.

Female rulership:

Whereas queens regnant have not yet been considered in studies on kingship, they also do not fit into the field of queenship, and many studies do not differentiate between queens consort and queens regnant. To date, queenship as a subject is comprised of studies regarding queens consort that outline the official and unofficial duties of a royal wife, mother, or daughter. The feminist movements of the late twentieth century gave rise to feminist stances on medieval history with particular interest in how women functioned in a highly gendered and misogynistic world. Since then, the field of queenship has developed and received careful attention, demonstrating how women had agency and wielded their own authority and power.

⁹ B. Weiler, 'Kingship, Usurpation and Propaganda in the Twelfth-Century Europe: The Case of Stephen', *ANS*, xxiii (2001), pp. 211–51.

¹⁰ Weiler, 'Kingship, Usurpation and Propaganda in the Twelfth-Century Europe', p. 325.

The field of queenship features works that explore the nature of female authority in general and specific cases.

Many of the pioneering works on queenship have centered on the concept of power and authority. A significant early work on women and power by Erler and Kowaleski underlined the difference between the two concepts: they argue that the actions of those with authority carried legitimacy, while, in contrast, power brought influence without legitimate sanction.¹¹ Therefore, men could have legitimately sanctioned authority, but a woman might only have power if she were capable and privileged. There are, however, limitations to this argument. The king did, in fact, wield legitimately sanctioned authority, but so did his queen consort, as she had been crowned and anointed at her coronation.¹² The coronation of a queen consort, however, only gave her the authority to manage affairs on behalf of the king in the event that he was sick or absent. In the event that the king was a minor, the coronation of the queen mother could similarly provide her with the authority to hold the regency, as was the case for Blanche of Castile (d. 1252). Coronation and consecration gave the queen consort, like the king, a special status as God's anointed.¹³

Several studies on queenship have approached the assertion that medieval women were powerless and lacked agency, but when contrasted with studies of powerful queens consort or aristocratic heiresses, this argument has its faults. Many historians of queenship or powerful women have perceived that medieval women exercised a different type of power than most men. The king or nobleman was the executive head of his government and had all the resources of that office available to him. In contrast, medieval noblewomen wielded power through influence and diplomacy. Women could demonstrate their influence through religious and cultural patronage, persuasion, and ritual. The power to influence or manipulate, the use of patronage, and to exploit others are not, however, solely the purview of women. Kings have left a record of extraordinary patronage, revealing nuances to their personal loyalties, preferences, and policies. However, these were the primary tools medieval women had at their disposal to impact events and demonstrate their power.

¹¹ M. Erler and M. Kowaleski, eds., *Women and Power in the Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1988), p. 2.; See also J. Bianchini, *The Queen's Hand: Power and Authority in the Reign of Berenguela of Castile* (Philadelphia, 2012).

¹² J. Nelson, 'Early Medieval Rites of Queen-Making and the Shaping of Medieval Queenship', in A. Duggan, ed., *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe* (New York, 2003), pp. 302–5; R.C. DeAragon, 'Wife, Widow, and Mother: Some Comparisons between Eleanor of Aquitaine and Noblewomen of the Anglo-Norman and Angevin World', in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, eds., *Eleanor of Aquitaine, Lord and Lady* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 97–113.

¹³ For thirteenth-century French queen's coronation practices, see R. A. Jackson, *Ordines coronationis Franciae: Texts and Ordines for the Coronation of the Frankish and French Kings and Queens in the Middle Ages* (2 vols, Philadelphia, 2000 1995), vol. i, pp. 264–7; vol. ii, pp. 303–4.

Several studies on queenship have focused on the ability of the queen consort to influence the king. The danger of influence was that it was informal and, using Erler and Kowaleski's model, it lacked the legitimate sanction of authority. Although influence could be viewed as devious in some cases, one of the most important duties of the queen consort was to use her influence with the king for the benefit of the kingdom as a mediator or intercessor. The queen's influence and intercession with the king could provide a ruler with the ability to show mercy without relinquishing his position of strength.¹⁴

However, the primary role of the medieval queen consort was ensuring dynastic continuity by producing a male heir. The failure to produce a male heir threatened the queen consort's position and, therefore, her power. For example, Eleanor of Aquitaine's (d. 1204) marriage to Louis VII of France (d. 1180) was annulled in 1152 when she had produced only daughters after fifteen years of marriage. Similarly, Philip II of France (d. 1223) threatened to divorce Isabella of Hainault in 1184 for political reasons, but, when she gave birth to a son, the future Louis VIII, in 1187, that door was closed to him. As Lindy Grant has noted, 'the birth of an heir transformed the queen from the daughter of an alien and perhaps enemy house into the mother of the future ruler'.¹⁵ The power of queens consort depended on men; their positions as wives and mothers of kings were at the root of their power. By contrast, queens regnant were free from this dependency because their power derived from God. Queens consort could, in the event of regency, run the kingdom because of illness, absence, or the king's minority, but the main difference between a queen regent and a queen regnant was that all of the actions of the queen regent were done in the name of the king.

A queen regent in the medieval period provided the opportunity for a few women to enjoy less restricted access to power and authority. A woman's role as regent was to maintain the status quo for the king. This provisional arrangement would last only as long as the king was indisposed or underage. In the gendered medieval world, queens consort could wield power in impressive and notable ways, but it was always on behalf of the king, and later confirmed by him.¹⁶ Queens consort could demonstrate power in tangible ways and could even, on occasion, display authority. For Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda, queens consort were close to female role models. The model their fathers represented did not exactly fit the royal heiresses, but neither did the model of their mothers as consorts. Urraca, Melisende, and

¹⁴ J. Carmi Parsons, 'The Queen's Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England', in *Power of the Weak*, pp. 147–77; L. Huneycutt, 'Intercession and the High Medieval Queen: The Esther Topos', in J. Carpenter and S.B. MacLean, eds., *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women* (Urbana, IL, 1995), pp. 126–46.

¹⁵ L. Grant, *Blanche of Castile, Queen of France* (London and New Haven, 2016), pp. 6–7.

¹⁶ E. Van Houts, 'Queens in the Anglo-Norman realm 1066–1216', in C. Zey, ed., *Mächtige Frauen? Königinnen und Fürstinnen im Europäischen Mittelalter (11.–14. Jahrhundert)* (Zürich, 2015), pp. 199–224, esp. p. 202.

Matilda were to be female kings and also their own consorts, but there was no clear solution for how to do so.

Royal Heiresses:

As noted above, to date, there are no studies focusing on a comparative analysis of queens regnant. Individual studies on individual queens regnant exist and are particularly useful to this thesis, yet the study of queens regnant as a separate field from kingship and queenship is still in its infancy. By examining the three case studies of the twelfth century comparatively, we can begin to understand how royal heiresses could or could not overcome the limitations of their gender to inhabit the royal office.

Urraca of León-Castilla has received considerable modern scholarship.¹⁷ In 1982, Bernard Reilly published his monograph on Urraca,¹⁸ his historical analysis of the twelfth-century queen continues to be the most comprehensive study of Urraca's reign. It is in large part thanks to Reilly that modern historians have begun to reevaluate Urraca's policies, private life, and ability to rule. Assembling a meticulous collection of evidence, Reilly constructed a political history for Urraca that aimed to avoid the tendency of earlier historians of focusing on the infamy and scandal associated with her reign and instead focused on representing a fair accounting of her tenure as queen. Reilly criticized earlier historians for 'the prevailing tendency...to consider Urraca's reign as a kind of interregnum to be discussed and dismissed as quickly as possible.'¹⁹ Reilly presents an alternative interpretation after inspecting 118 charters and documents, nearly a thousand private documents, and numerous contemporary chronicles that show Urraca as a capable ruler.

Building on Reilly's monograph, Therese Martin devoted much of her career to studying Urraca's architectural patronage.²⁰ In Martin's 2005 article, she attempts to explain how Urraca came to be erased from history.²¹ In 'The Art of a Reigning Queen as Dynastic Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain',²² Martin evaluated how a ruling woman could use architectural patronage as a method of garnering power. Urraca's access to funds was greater

¹⁷ For general studies on Iberian queenship, see N. Jaspert, 'Indirekte und direkte Macht iberischer Königinnen im Mittelalter. "Reginale" Herrschaft, Verwaltung und Frömmigkeit', in C. Zey, ed., *Mächtige Frauen? Königinnen und Fürstinnen im Europäischen Mittelalter (11.–14. Jahrhundert)* (Zurich, 2015), pp. 73–130; T. Earenfight, *Queenship in Medieval Europe* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. esp. pp. 16–68; J. Fuente Pérez, *Reinas medievales en los reinos hispánicos* (Madrid, 2003).

¹⁸ B. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca, 1109–1126* (Princeton, 1982).

¹⁹ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. x.

²⁰ T. Martin, 'The Art of a Reigning Queen As Dynastic Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain', *Speculum*, 80 (2005), pp. 1134–1171; T. Martin, 'De "gran prudencia, graciosa habla y elocuencia" a "mujer de poco juicio y ruin opinion": Recuperando la historia perdida de la Reina Urraca (1109–1126)', *Compostelanum*, 50 (2005), pp. 551–78.

²¹ Martin, 'De "gran prudencia"', 551–578

²² Martin, "The Art of a Reigning Queen," 1134–1171.

than that of a queen consort, which allowed her to participate in more works of patronage. Because they are art historical works, considerable discussion falls outside the parameters of this study. Building on this research, in 2006 Martin published her book, *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain*.²³ In the same vein as Reilly, Martin attempts to cast a favorable light on Urraca's role as patroness and reevaluates her participation in the building projects at the Leonese church of San Isidoro. Her book strives to avoid the more antiquated view of Urraca as an ineffective ruler and instead presents her as a great patroness of Romanesque buildings.

The modern historiography on Urraca of León-Castilla is considerably richer than that of her contemporary, Melisende of Jerusalem.²⁴ Modern scholarly works on Melisende are relatively scarce; most historians have overlooked her significance in their studies of the crusader kingdom. Commonly relegated to only a few, brief pages, she is pithily mentioned and rewarded with little recognition. Often, mentions of Melisende include her perceived connection to the failure of the Second Crusade or the civil war against her son in 1152. However, recently, new works on Melisende have prioritized her political involvement, the sources that depict it, and the artistic endeavors she financed.

Hans E. Mayer's 'Studies in the History of the Queen Melisende of Jerusalem'²⁵ assesses the royal charters alongside the nearly contemporary chronicle of William of Tyre to evaluate the series of events that led to the outbreak of civil war in 1152. Mayer draws conclusions about Melisende's political activity between the years 1131–1161, and he suggests possible causes for her struggle for power. He also reports how her son, Baldwin III, and his supporters eventually pushed Melisende out of power. Finally, he reviews several aspects of her reign that differ from the then-conventional interpretations. As the first modern study of Melisende's reign, Mayer's work is fundamental to this dissertation. First, his reconstruction of events and timeline are crucial. Additionally, he draws key conclusions about the nature of Melisende's role as royal heiress and her authority as queen regnant. While his scholarship forms the foundation for modern study of Queen Melisende, his interpretations can often appear cynical.

²³ T. Martin, *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain* (Leiden, 2006).

²⁴ For studies on queenship and women in the Holy Land, see T. Asbridge, 'Alice of Antioch: A Case Study of Female Power in the Twelfth Century', in M. Bull and N. Housley, eds., *The Experience of Crusading: Western Approaches* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 29–47; P. Edbury, 'Women and the High Court of Jerusalem according to John of Ibelin', in D. Coulon, C. Otten-Froux, P. Pagès, and D. Valérian, eds., *Chemins d'outremer: Études sur la Méditerranée médiévale offertes à Michel Balard*, 1 (2 vols, Paris, 2004), pp. 285–92; N. Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative* (Woodbridge, 2007); N. Hodgson, 'Women and Crusade', in A.V. Murray, ed., *The Crusades: An Encyclopaedia*, iv (4 vols, Santa Barbara, 2006), pp. 1285–1290.

²⁵ H.E. Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (1972), pp. 95–182. Reprinted in his *Probleme des lateinischen Königreichs Jerusalem* (London, 1983).

Subsequent articles have analyzed the lives and careers of Melisende of Jerusalem alongside other queens regnant, queens consort, and aristocratic heiresses of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Bernard Hamilton's 1978 article develops Mayer's earlier work by examining queens consort, queens regnant, and other aristocratic ladies of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.²⁶ As another of the pioneering scholars of Melisende's history, his viewpoints influenced scholarship for many decades. An important difference between Mayer and Hamilton is Hamilton's belief that Melisende continued to demonstrate considerable power after being ousted from ruling in 1152. Natasha Hodgson's 2007 book explores the lives of crusader women from all levels of society throughout their various life stages, from childhood, to marriage, to motherhood, and widowhood.²⁷ While much of her research falls outside the parameters of this study, she provided insightful perspectives on several key moments of Melisende's reign. Alan Murray's 2015 article similarly reveals new assessments of Melisende's reign by comparing her to her female successors.²⁸ These two modern studies build upon Mayer and Hamilton's earlier work, accepting the general timelines proposed by the earlier scholars but providing new insights that support the view that Melisende was a powerful and authoritative queen regnant.

Scholarship on the Empress Matilda is dominated by Marjorie Chibnall, who published her monograph on Empress Matilda in 1991.²⁹ In this excellent work, Chibnall does for Matilda what Reilly did for Urraca. By providing a comprehensive analysis of the entirety of Matilda's life, Chibnall's work remains the most thorough resource on the twelfth-century would-be queen regnant. In addition to this work, Chibnall researched several key facets of Matilda's life in various articles that are invaluable to this study.³⁰ However, Matilda also features prominently in studies focused on her political rival, King Stephen.³¹ A wide variety of research on Anglo-Norman kingship and queenship³² provides insight into the world in

²⁶ B. Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States: The Queens of Jerusalem (1100–1190)', in D. Baker, ed., *Medieval Women* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 143–74.

²⁷ Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*.

²⁸ A.V. Murray, 'Women in the Royal Succession of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1291)', in C. Zey, ed., *Mächtige Frauen? Königinnen und Fürstinnen im Europäischen Mittelalter (11.–14. Jahrhundert)* (Zurich, 2015), pp. 131–162.

²⁹ M. Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: queen consort, queen mother and lady of the English* (Oxford, 1991).

³⁰ M. Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and Her Sons', in B. Wheeler, and J.C. Parsons, eds., *Medieval Mothering* (New York, 1996), pp. 279–94; M. Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and church reform', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 38 (1978), pp. 107–30; M. Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and Bec-Hellouin', *ANS*, 10 (1987), pp. 35–48; M. Chibnall, 'The Charters of the Empress Matilda', in G. Garnett and J. Hudson, eds., *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 276–98.

³¹ J. Bradbury, *Stephen and Matilda, The Civil War of 1139–53* (Stroud, 2005); H.A. Cronne, *The Reign of Stephen* (London, 1970); D. Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen, 1135–1154* (Harlow, 2000); R.H.C. Davis, *King Stephen, 1135–1154* (London, 1990); E. King, *King Stephen* (New Haven, 2010).

³² E.M.C. Van Houts, 'Queens in the Anglo-Norman/Angevin realm 1066–1216', in C. Zey, ed., *Mächtige Frauen? Königinnen und Fürstinnen im Europäischen Mittelalter (11.–14. Jahrhundert)* (Zurich, 2015), pp. 199–224; J. Martindale, 'Succession and Politics in the Romance-Speaking World', in M. Jones and M. Vale,

which Matilda lived; however, there is a gap in the scholarship that investigates Matilda's position as royal heiress.

Sources:

Chronicles:

One of the main bodies of sources used in this study is the contemporary chronicles of the Iberian Peninsula, the kingdom of Jerusalem, and the Anglo-Norman realm. The provision for each royal heiress varies significantly. The cultures of the three separate kingdoms fostered literary culture in differing degrees, with the writing of history strongest in the Anglo-Norman realm and very sparse in the Holy Land. The Anglo-Norman realm had a strong monastic culture where historical writing flourished, particularly with the support of the monarchy and aristocracy. Leonese monastic chronicle production was considerably less abundant than in Northern Europe, but several key chronicles emerged during Urraca's reign. Sadly, there are very few contemporary works from the Holy Land, whether from lack of production or a failure of preservation through dissemination or safekeeping.

The most important chronicle on the reign of Queen Urraca is the *Historia Compostelana*, commissioned by the powerful bishop (and later archbishop) Diego Gelmírez of Santiago (d. 1140).³³ While it may be the most exhaustively detailed account of Urraca's reign, it is not necessarily accurate. Bishop Gelmírez was often in conflict with the queen; therefore, the chronicle is obviously biased and must be evaluated carefully for a reconstruction of Urraca's motivations and actions. The true focus of the chronicle was the bishop of Santiago, Gelmírez, whose entire episcopacy is recounted in the work. The *Historia Compostelana* begins with the final years of Alfonso VI's reign and includes all of Urraca's and the first half of Alfonso VII's. Bishop Gelmírez played a key role in both Urraca and Alfonso VII's lives, as is discussed in Chapters Three and Four of this thesis. Four different scribes worked on the chronicle, and they had varying degrees of hostility towards Urraca. One scribe in particular, a Frenchman named Giraldo, viewed her actions with disdain and is the source her infamy in the thirteenth century and onwards.³⁴ Despite its bias, the *Historia Compostelana* remains the most important contemporary chronicle discussing Urraca's reign, and it cannot be overlooked.

eds., *England and her Neighbors 1066–1435* (London, 1989), pp. 19–41; P. Stafford, *Queen Emma and Queen Edith: Queenship and Women's Power in the Eleventh Century England* (Oxford, 1997); L. Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland: A Study of Queenship* (Woodbridge, 2003); J. Green, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy, and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm* (Manchester, 2003); S. Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy, and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm* (Manchester, 2003).

³³ E. Falque Rey, ed., *Historia Compostelana* (Turnhout). See also R.A. Fletcher, *Saint James's Catapult: The Life and Times of Diego Gelmírez of Santiago de Compostela*. (Oxford, 1984), p. esp. pp. 301–2.

³⁴ Martin, *Queen as King*, p. 10.

There are no extant sources commissioned by Melisende or anyone who knew her personally. William of Tyre's history, *A History of Deeds Done Across the Sea*,³⁵ which he commenced in 1169, is the principal source for the history of the kingdom; however, 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'.³⁶ Sarah Lambert, describing the relatively recent 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... Their omissions and inclusions can be used to discover patterns of thought in these writers'.³⁷ William of Tyre's twenty-three books, written between 1169 and 1184, comprise the most extensive crusading history written and one of the chief works of the twelfth century. Although Melisende appears infrequently in his work, a paucity of narrative sources exists for her reign, and much of what is known about her comes from William's chronicle. William was a formidable historian, and scholars consider him to be fundamentally trustworthy because the charter evidence supports his accounts.³⁸ 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.³⁹

Of the three royal heiresses, there is no doubt that there are more narrative series for Empress Matilda than for Urraca or Melisende; book production flourished in the Anglo-Norman realm during the twelfth century.⁴⁰ Most often, the chroniclers recorded the major events of Matilda's life without commentary. Typically, they mention her marriage to the Emperor Henry V, her return to England in 1126, the oath to uphold her succession sworn by the barons in the same year, her marriage to Geoffrey of Anjou in 1128, the Angevin invasion of England in 1139, the battle of Lincoln in 1141 at which her forces captured King Stephen, Matilda's expulsion from London by the angry citizens, and the subsequent rout at Worcester in the same year. As is explored below, criticism of Matilda survives in contemporary sources clustered around her brief tenure as Lady of the English and the sudden uprising of the Londoners, allegedly due to her aggressive demand for cash, which drove her from the city

³⁵ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Turnhout, 1986). See also R.H.C. Davis, 'William of Tyre', in D. Baker, ed., *Relations between East and West in the Middle Ages* (Edinburgh, 1973), pp. 64–76.

³⁶ S.B. Edington and S. Lambert, eds., *Gendering the Crusades* (Cardiff, 2002), p. 2.

³⁷ Edington and Lambert, eds., *Gendering the Crusades*, p. 2.

³⁸ P. Edbury and J. Rowe, *William of Tyre: Historian of the Latin East* (Cambridge, 1988); For an analysis of how the chronicle was composed, see A.C. Krey, 'William of Tyre, the Making of an Historian in the Middle Ages', *Speculum*, 16 (1941), pp. 149–66.

³⁹ I will follow the chronological arguments found in Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', pp. 95–182.

⁴⁰ On Anglo-Norman writing, see: E.M.C. Van Houts, 'Historical Writing', in C. Harper-Bill and E. Van Houts, eds., *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 103–122; E.A. Winkler, *Royal Responsibility in Anglo-Norman Historical Writing* (Oxford, 2017).

and ended her hopes of being crowned queen. A discussion of the original sources should help pinpoint any objections that the English barons had to her rule.

Perhaps the strongest partisan among the chroniclers was William of Malmesbury. Two of his numerous works bear directly on the period under consideration – his *Gesta Regum*,⁴¹ which covers the history of England from the coming of the Saxons until 1120, and his *Historia Novella*,⁴² which deals with Stephen's reign. William wrote the *Gesta Regum* around 1125 and revised it during the 1140s. He produced the *Historia Novella* between 1140 and his death in 1143. William was a strong partisan of the Angevin cause, and he dedicated both of these works to Robert of Gloucester.⁴³ Although William of Malmesbury's chronicle provides important insights into the events of his time that cannot be found elsewhere, it must be noted that he constructed a partisan account designed to flatter his intended patron, the earl of Gloucester.

On the other side, the most clearly anti-Angevin source is, as might be expected from its title, the anonymous *Gesta Stephani*.⁴⁴ The work was written in two stages: the first in 1148 and the second some time after 1153.⁴⁵ The author changed sides during the interval between the composition of the two parts of the work, and the second half clearly favors the eventual succession of Henry Fitz Empress, whom it frequently describes as the rightful heir to the throne.⁴⁶ The partisan *Gesta Stephani* preserves some of the bitterest rhetoric against Matilda, and perhaps because the author's invective is often very quotable, modern historians seem to have given considerable weight to the medieval chronicler's words. The *Gesta Stephani* in some respects appears to substantiate the contention of modern historians that the Anglo-Norman barons rejected Matilda because she was a woman; the core of its criticism is that, instead of being gentle and retiring as befitted a woman, Matilda arrogantly demanded her rights – in other words, she was an unnatural woman who behaved in an unnatural way.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*⁴⁷ continued at Peterborough Abbey, but in the years after 1100, the entries became shorter and more concerned with local affairs around

⁴¹ William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, eds. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom (2 vols, Oxford, 1998).

⁴² William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella: The Contemporary History*, ed. E. King (Oxford, 1998).

⁴³ R.M. Thomas and E.A. Winkler, *Discovering William of Malmesbury* (Woodbridge, 2017); R.B. Patterson, 'William of Malmesbury's Robert of Gloucester: A Reevaluation of the *Historia Novella*', *American Historical Review*, 70 (July 1965), pp. 983–997.

⁴⁴ K.R. Potter and R.H.C. Davies, eds., *Gesta Stephani* (Oxford, 1976).

⁴⁵ A. Gransden, *Historical Writing in England, c. 550 to c. 1307* (London, 1974), pp. 190–1.

⁴⁶ R.H.C. Davis, 'The Authorship of the *Gesta Stephani*', *EHR*, 303 (April 1962), pp. 212–18. Gransden considers this evidence circumstantial, and suggests that the author was French, based on his careful explanation of some English place names, such as Bath, which presumably a native would have taken for granted, Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, p. 190.

⁴⁷ M. Swanton, ed., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicles*, tran. M. Swanton (London, 2000); D. Whitelock, D.C. Douglas, and S.I. Tucker, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London, 1961).

Peterborough.⁴⁸ The closest that the Peterborough chronicler came to a criticism of Matilda was the statement recorded in the year 1127 that her marriage to Geoffrey of Anjou caused great dissatisfaction among both the English and the French.⁴⁹ A closely related work is the Worcester chronicle, which combines English material from a now-lost version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* with information about continental affairs drawn from the universal chronicle of Marianus Scotus and Irish monks at Fulda.⁵⁰ The authorship of the work used to be ascribed to a monk named Florence, but later scholarship indicates that the author was actually a monk called John, who wrote the chronicle between 1124 and 1140, perhaps based on material collected by Florence, whose death John noted under the year 1118.⁵¹ The chronicle is generally favorable to King Stephen, but it offers little commentary, critical or otherwise, about Matilda. Unlike the monastic authors of these chronicles, Henry of Huntingdon was a secular clerk who served in the households of Bishops Robert Bloet and Alexander of Lincoln.⁵² He wrote his popular *Historia Anglorum*⁵³ between 1133 and 1154. Henry's second ecclesiastical superior, Bishop Alexander of Lincoln, commissioned the history. In general, Henry displayed little bias toward either side and recorded the events of the reign without comment.

Like these English chroniclers, Orderic Vitalis, a monk of St. Évroul in Normandy, also wrote without obvious favoritism toward either Stephen or Matilda.⁵⁴ Orderic was born in England, the son of a French father and an English mother, and he was sent to become a monk in Normandy at the age of ten.⁵⁵ He wrote his life's work, *The Ecclesiastical History of England and Normandy*,⁵⁶ at the command of his abbot, Roger le Sap, beginning in about 1114 and ending in 1141.⁵⁷ He dedicated the work to Roger's successor as abbot, Guérin des Essarts,⁵⁸ rather than seeking a patron from outside his monastery. The work was not widely circulated, and only two medieval copies survive.⁵⁹ Although Orderic wrote in Normandy, he

⁴⁸ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, p. 142–3.

⁴⁹ Whitelock, Douglas, and Tucker, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 1127 A.D.

⁵⁰ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, p. 145.

⁵¹ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, p. 144; Davis, *King Stephen*, p. 146; R.R. Darlington, *The Anglo-Norman Historians* (London, 1947), pp. 13–15; John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. P. McGurk (Oxford, 1998).

⁵² Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, p. 193.

⁵³ Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People*, ed. D. Greenway (Oxford, 1996).

⁵⁴ M. Chibnall, 'Women in Orderic Vitalis', *Haskins Society Journal*, 2 (1990), pp. 105–21.

⁵⁵ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, pp. 151–2; M. Chibnall, *The World of Orderic Vitalis* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 3–16; C.C. Rozier, D. Roach, G.E.M. Gasper, and E.M.C. Van Houts, *Orderic Vitalis: Life, Works and Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2017).

⁵⁶ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall (6 vols, Oxford, 80 1969).

⁵⁷ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, p. 152. See also Darlington, *The Anglo-Norman Historians*, pp. 11–12.

⁵⁸ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, p. 152.

⁵⁹ Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, p. 165; Chibnall, *World of Orderic Vitalis*, pp. 218–9.

was generally well informed about events in England. He ended his account in 1141 with King Stephen still in prison and devoted the last pages to an account of the peace agreements between the Norman nobles and Geoffrey of Anjou.⁶⁰ He does not mention Matilda's flight from London, and it is possible that news of that event had not reached Normandy by the time he decided to bring his life's work to an end.

Robert of Torigny was one monastic chronicler who displayed evident partiality for Matilda. He is the author of two surviving works, an interpolation and continuation of the *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*⁶¹ of William of Jumièges (written in the late 1130s) and a continuation of the chronicle of Sigebert of Gembloux (written after he became abbot of Mont-Saint-Michel in 1154). Robert began his ecclesiastical career at Bec, where he possibly met Henry of Huntingdon in 1139, and his own chronicle owes much of its material on English affairs to Henry's *Historia Anglorum*.⁶² Robert's early career as a monk of Bec undoubtedly accounts for his unfailing support for the empress, for Matilda was a notable patron of the abbey.⁶³

Charters:

In addition to chronicles, this study also relies on charters to reconstruct events and extrapolate from them. In the last twenty years, three critical studies of Urraca's charters have appeared. This study relies mostly on Christina Monterde Albiac's edition published in 1996.⁶⁴ In 2002, Manuel Recuero Astray published a collection that exclusively featured Urraca's charters from Galicia, both before and after the death of her father and her ascension to the throne of León.⁶⁵ Irene Ruiz Albi published a second collection of all Urraca's royal charters in 2003.⁶⁶ Ruiz Albi's work adds little to Monterde Albiac's edition to the text, but she does provide an extensive study of Urraca's chancery. The most notable improvement to the text of the charters occurs in the case of Urraca's three charters to the Hospitallers, since Ruiz Albi had access to the Hospitaller cartulary in London. Her study, however, overtakes

⁶⁰ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, vol. vi, pp. 546–50.

⁶¹ E.M.C. Van Houts, ed., *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum of William of Jumièges, Orderic Vitalis and Robert of Torigny* (2 vols, Oxford, May 1992).

⁶² D. Bates, 'Robert of Torigni and the *Historia Anglorum*', in D. Roffef, ed., *The English and their Legacy* (Woodbridge, 2012), p. 54; Gransden, *Historical Writing in England*, pp. 199–200; R. Foreville, 'Robert de Torigni et Clito', *Millénaire monastique du Mont Saint-Michel*, ii (4 vols, Paris, 1967), pp. 141–53; B. Pohl, 'Robert of Torigni and Le Bec: The Man and the Myth', in B. Pohl, ed., *A Companion to the Abbey of Le Bec in the Central Middle Ages (11th–13th centuries)* (Leiden, 2017), pp. 92–124.

⁶³ Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and Bec-Hellouin', pp. 35–48.

⁶⁴ C. Monterde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca de Castilla y León (1109–1126)*. (Zaragoza, 1996).

⁶⁵ M. Recuero Astray, ed., *Documentos medievales del Reino de Galicia: Doña Urraca (1095–1126)* (Santiago de Compostela, 2002).

⁶⁶ I. Ruiz Albi, ed., *La reina doña Urraca (1109–1126): Cancillería y colección diplomática* (León, 2003).

Luis Sánchez Belda's 1953 work.⁶⁷ Neither Monverde Albiac nor Ruiz Albi include the categories of 'false' or 'suspect' to judge the authenticity of a specific charter. Accordingly, the authenticity of the documents of Urraca is evaluated on the basis of Ruiz Albi's general comments and the judgments of Bernard Reilly.

In the Holy Land, many royal charters have survived, although no royal or princely archive from any of the four crusader states has.⁶⁸ They have been calendared and edited by Reinhold Röhricht in his *Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani*⁶⁹ and most recently by Hans Mayer in *Die Urkunden der lateinischen Könige von Jerusalem*.⁷⁰ There are thirty-one royal charters connected to Melisende, which are quite revealing. For instance, of the twelve royal charters that survive from the years 1144–1152, four were issued by Baldwin and Melisende together, two by Melisende with Baldwin's consent, and two by Baldwin alone. 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 into the power relations among the barons. The rest show the kinds of disputes that arose and how the crown settled them.

As a royal heiress who did not secure her inheritance to be queen regnant, Empress Matilda's charter record is quite surprisingly substantial. Matilda's known and likely authentic charters total almost one hundred.⁷¹ Matilda's role in both England and Normandy came at a time when chancery practices were only beginning to be standardized. As Chibnall warns, any conclusions drawn from her charters must be tentative.⁷² Her charters reveal the fluctuating fortunes of the Angevin party as she rose to power in 1141, only to relinquish the fight in 1148.

Contents of thesis:

⁶⁷ L. Sánchez Belda, 'La cancellería castellana en el reinado de Doña Urraca', in *Estudios Dedicados a Menéndez Pidal*, 4 (Madrid, 1953), pp. 587–99.

⁶⁸ On charters in the Holy Land, see: C.K. Slack, *Crusade Charters 1138–1270* (Tempe, 2001).

⁶⁹ R. Röhricht, ed., *Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani 1097–1152*, 2 vols., (New York, 1960); J. Riley-Smith et al., *Revised regesta regni Hierosolymitani Database*, <http://crusades-regesta.com>.

⁷⁰ H.E. Mayer, *Die Urkunden der lateinischen Könige von Jerusalem* (4 vols, Hanover, 2010).

⁷¹ H.A. Cronne and R.H.C. Davis, eds., *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154, Vol. III, Regesta Regis Stephani ac Mathildis Imperatricis ac Gaufridi et Henrici Ducum Normannorum 1135–1154* (Oxford, 1968); Chibnall, 'The Charters of the Empress Matilda', p. 276.; See also H.W.C. Davis, 'Some documents of the Anarchy', in H.W.C. Davis, ed., *Essays in History Presented to Reginald Lane Poole* (Oxford, 1927), pp. 128–9; J.O. Prestwich, 'The Treason of Geoffrey de Mandeville', *EHR*, 102 (1988), pp. 283–312; E. King, 'Waleran, count of Meulan, earl of Worcester (1104–1166)', in D. Greenway, ed., *Tradition and Change* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 165–81; K. Yoshitake, 'The Place of Government in Transition: Winchester, Westminster and London in the Mid-Twelfth Century', in P. Dalton and D. Luscombe, eds., *Rulership and Rebellion in the Anglo-Norman World, c. 1066–c. 1216, Essays in Honour of Professor Edmund King* (London, 2016), pp. 61–76.

⁷² Chibnall, 'The Charters of the Empress Matilda', p. 293.

This thesis explores aspects of rulership over five chapters with the aim of understanding how a royal heiress might succeed or fail to gain the throne, keep it, and preserve it for future generations. After an introduction, this thesis begins with Chapter One, 'Gaining the Throne and Marriage', which establishes that the selection of a co-ruling husband did not involve the agency of the heiress herself; instead, it was inspired, negotiated, and performed by men, i.e., their fathers. Analytical themes explored in this chapter concern the paternal selection of husband for the heiress, the diplomatic process of arranging marriages, the marriage negotiation process resulting in contracts, and the contrasts of aristocratic heiress' marriages. Chapter Two, 'Co-ruling with Husbands', concerns the beginning period of each aspiring queen regnant's reign as she and her husband navigated a variety of issues facing their authority including sharing power, marital discord, and external threats. This chapter explores the impact of the selection of the spouse on the heiress, conflicts and problems that arose due to sharing power, moments of successful co-rule, and instances of co-rule with spouses at the aristocratic level. Chapter Three, 'Ruling Alone', argues that, when circumstances left them without a male co-ruler, the strategies these royal heiresses used included collaborating with male deputies and promoting their dynastic legitimacy. The analytical themes of collaboration with male deputies and archbishops, the power of dynastic legitimacy, threats to ruling alone, and the differences between sole rule over lands for royal and aristocratic heiresses comprise the core of this chapter. Chapter Four, 'Co-ruling with Sons', addresses the often rule-ending impact of sharing power with or ceding power to sons. While motherhood was a universal element of all medieval queens, for the queen regnant, the birth of an heir could eventually mean the loss of her own power as ruler. In two of the three case studies, Melisende and Empress Matilda eventually found alternative means of involvement in their sons' rules. This chapter focuses on the coronation and investiture ceremonies shared or arranged by a royal heiress and her co-ruling son, instances of sharing power and co-rule between mother and son, their participation in their son's rules as advisors and administrators, and the differences aristocratic heiresses faced when sharing power with their sons. Finally, Chapter Five, 'Queens Regnant as Queens Consort', explores the distinctive differences in the types of patronage royal heiresses or queens regnant bestowed. Although they performed acts normally executed by queens consort, their method and purpose were politically motivated to promote, bolster, and enrich their own royal rule. This chapter is comprised of four analytical themes: patronage and exploitation of monasteries and churches, the maintenance of dynastic memory, Jerusalem-related acts, and the fostering of urban development.

This study makes two main contributions to the study of royal heiresses that can be extended to the broader history of medieval Europe. The first reveals that co-rulership as a solution to female royal succession was an unsuccessful model for aspiring queens regnant. Melisende of Jerusalem's co-rule with her husband Fulk and son Baldwin created tension when Melisende sought to assert her own authority. The presence of a male co-ruler lent legitimacy and security to a vulnerable royal heiress and made her succession more palatable. However, Melisende, similar to her contemporaries Urraca and Matilda, did not view her position as heiress as anything other than divine and legitimate. Furthermore, a formal recognition of co-rulership between mother and son was also inherently problematic. An officially crowned son would take priority over his mother, as evidenced by Baldwin III's triumph over his mother in 1152. Urraca of León-Castilla managed to relieve herself of the yoke of co-rulership with both her second husband, Alfonso el Batallador of Aragón, and her son, Alfonso Raimúndez. Without any restrictions on her authority, Urraca is the only heiress of this study to demonstrate a successful queenship throughout the entirety of her reign, and this was largely due to her unimpeded access to power and authority.

The second main contribution of this study of royal heiresses regards the insights it provides for aristocratic heiresses. Numerous works on aristocratic heiresses have shown that these women enjoyed greater freedom and power than most other highborn women in the medieval period. However, aristocratic heiresses were still more tightly bound to conventions of the period, and they had the greatest chance of exercising more unfettered power only during widowhood. By contrast, royal heiresses operated with a different set of rules. Their advanced positions allowed them to act in more typically male ways, and, in the cases of queens regnant Urraca of León-Castilla and Melisende of Jerusalem, when they broke social conventions, their behavior was forgiven. Comparatively, the English viewed Empress Matilda more harshly for breaking societal gender norms. This type of condemnation echoes the criticism aristocratic heiresses faced when they attempted to assert their authority.

This thesis explores the nuances between female rulership and female kingship. Existing scholarship has noticed that queens consort can enjoy the privileges of female rulership thanks to their coronations as queens consort with the understanding that they are legitimately sanctioned to assume authority only if the king is indisposed or unable to rule due to illness or youth. The idea of female kingship is a relatively new one; if they succeeded in gaining the throne, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda would have had divinely inspired and legitimately sanctioned authority in their own right. While successful queens consort, like Eleanor of Aquitaine in England, Leonor of England in Castilla-León, Berenguela of Castilla-León, and Blanche of Castile in France, faced similar hurdles to their authority as queens

regnant, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda, as royal heiresses, claimed authority in their own names.

Through the use of a comparative methodology, this thesis provides a fresh discussion of royal heiresses as rulers, demonstrating that they faced different obstacles to their rule than their aristocratic counterparts and that, because of their royal status, they were sometimes able to overcome complications that aristocratic heiresses could not. Demonstrations of female power were, in many cases, approved of at the royal level but were condemned at the aristocratic level, as was the case for Melisende of Jerusalem and her younger sister, Alice of Antioch (c. 1110–1136). The contingent aspects of the public lives of these three aspiring royal heiresses reveal the regional differences of rulership: there were different demands on rulership in Northern Spain, the Holy Land, and England. The structural aspects of rulership meant that these women had a greater hurdle to overcome in their efforts to claim their inheritances because kingship was divinely inspired and heavily gendered. In studying Urraca of León-Castilla, Melisende of Jerusalem, and the Empress Matilda side by side, this thesis also establishes the individual pitfalls of female rulership and identifies the methods each aspiring queen regnant utilized in order to overcome them. It provides an in-depth analysis of the explicit and implicit characteristics of female rulership, and how, if rulership was won, it was maintained and exploited in each context.

Chapter One

Gaining the Throne and Marriage

For medieval royal heiresses, the selection of a husband was of critical importance. Because these women were destined to inherit kingdoms, particular care was needed when selecting husbands, who were expected to collaborate with heiresses and establish some form of co-rule. The traditional goals of marriage were offspring and advantageous alliances. However, in these special cases where dynastic interests were involved, the marriages of royal heiresses were critically important because there were additional considerations. Through the heiress, a husband could expect to benefit from his wife's inheritance of lands and wealth, and in the cases of Urraca of León-Castilla, Melisende of Jerusalem, and the Empress Matilda, to hopefully gain the ability to rule, if not by right of his wife, to rule side by side with her. Although this dissertation investigates aspects of female rule, there are some problems that male and female heirs both faced, one of which was being excluded from the marriage negotiation process by their fathers. Medieval marriage at this level of society was highly political and it was equally important for kings and queens regnant alike to produce heirs for a peaceful succession.

This chapter explores key aspects of the marriage processes for royal heiresses by examining the cases of Urraca of León-Castilla to Alfonso I el Batallador of Aragón, Melisende of Jerusalem to Count Fulk V of Anjou, and Empress Matilda of England and Normandy to Count Geoffrey of Anjou. Firstly, it examines the father's role in the selection of bridegroom and reveals the absence of the bride's participation in her upcoming nuptials. Secondly, it discusses the lengthy and complicated diplomatic process for the two Angevin marriages, especially the details surrounding the multiple embassies involved. Previous scholarship has debated the relationship of the two marriage negotiations, which were further complicated by additional embassies from the Holy Land recruiting crusade support and papal approval. Thirdly, the particulars of the marriage negotiations are explored, revealing both subtle and overt protections for the interests represented by heiresses. Finally, the figure of the aristocratic heiress is reconsidered and compared to her royal counterpart. The comparison establishes that a royal heiress who became queen regnant enjoyed greater possibility for authority independent from her spouse than even the most powerful aristocratic heiress.

i. Paternal Selection of husband

When the heiresses' fathers designated their daughters as heiresses, it was not, so it seems, with the intention that they rule as independent queens regnant. Instead, they arranged

for a suitable spouse so that the husband might rule by right of his wife, as in the case of married aristocratic heiresses, and so that the royal heiress could focus on the womanly duty of producing sons and tasks more commonly associated for women. For the husbands, these marriages provided the opportunity to expand their power and to ascend to the upper-most rungs of the social ladder. Melisende of Jerusalem and Empress Matilda each married a count of Anjou. For Fulk and Geoffrey, this was the opportunity for them to rise from count to king consort through the union. This section concerns paternal involvement in an aspiring queen regnant's marriage. In all three cases, the royal heiress' fathers arranged the marriages of their daughters with, it seems, minimal input from the women themselves. Although women often played a role in the marriage process, in these three cases, each heiress' mother was deceased and thus female involvement was absent.¹

Toward the end of Alfonso VI of León-Castilla's life (1040–1109), he had no male heirs. With his eldest daughter, Urraca, in line to succeed him, he initiated the arrangement of her second marriage. As the widow of Raymond of Burgundy (d. 1107), Urraca had two children from her first marriage, Sancha Raimúndez (b. ca. 1095/1102) and Alfonso Raimúndez, the future Alfonso VII (b. 1105). Although Urraca was a mature and capable woman who had already secured the continuation of her dynasty, her position as heiress was still vulnerable. Her father and his advisors sought to marry Urraca to a man who would be capable of commanding armies on her behalf and performing the typically male duties associated with kingship. Whether Alfonso VI considered multiple candidates is not known, nor is it known who among his court suggested El Batallador marry his eldest daughter. Alfonso VI's choice of El Batallador is surprising considering that the two neighboring kings had been in conflict over Navarra and al-Andaluz for many years and that numerous important lords disapproved of the match.

The marriage of León-Castilla's heiress to the king of Aragón would provide the kingdom with an experienced military leader, for Alfonso el Batallador was considered one of the most successful warriors in Spain, so much so that his sobriquet was 'the battler'. He would, therefore, have the necessary qualifications to lead the defense of the realm. El Batallador was from the same family as Alfonso VI, and the two sides of the family had struggled to find peace.² It appears likely that the marriage between Urraca and El Batallador

¹ On Eleanor of Aquitaine's role in the marriage of her granddaughter, Blanche of Castile to Louis VII of France, see L. Grant, *Blanche of Castile, Queen of France* (New Haven, 2016), pp. 31–32; On Eleanor of Aquitaine's role in the marriage of her son, Richard the Lionheart to Berengaria of Navarre, see R. Turner, *Eleanor of Aquitaine* (New Haven, 2009), pp. 263–64; J. Gillingham, 'Richard I and Berengaria of Navarre', in *Richard Coeur de Lion* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 160–61.

² See Chapter Two, Section ii for a discussion of the marriage's dissolution.

could resolve the conflict. El Batallador and Urraca shared a common great-grandfather and were, therefore, within the proscribed degrees of consanguinity.³ However, Urraca's first marriage to Raymond of Burgundy (1070–1107) was similarly within the proscribed degrees, although no protest had been made for that earlier arrangement.⁴ No evidence exists of a papal dispensation aimed at circumventing any opposition on those grounds.

In the Holy Land, King Baldwin II (r. 1118–1131) was without a male heir. Securing the dynasty through his eldest daughter and heir, Melisende, required finding an appropriate husband to serve as co-ruler. With his kingdom and dynasty at risk, Baldwin II sought to resolve his problems through Melisende's marriage. Her marriage would provide the kingdom with a military leader as well as a partner to father her children. At the same time, Fulk's participation in a crusade aimed at conquering territory from the Muslim rulers of Syria would protect the interests of the kingdom. The marriage and the crusade were solutions to two separate problems.⁵ The initiative for a crusade in 1129 came from King Baldwin II of Jerusalem, who sought Western support for a major campaign against Damascus. First, they launched the successful siege of Tyre during the summer of 1124.⁶ In 1125, Baldwin II and his troops focused on the city of Aleppo, and although he eventually withdrew from the siege, he won a major victory against Bursuqi, lord of Mosul, at the Battle of A'zaz on 11 June 1125. Baldwin II then launched a raid deep into Muslim territory, which served as a precursor to a major campaign in 1126 that brought the forces of Jerusalem within ten miles of Damascus. Despite these successes, manpower was in short supply, and thus, Baldwin II's efforts to overwhelm Damascus were ineffectual.⁷ Baldwin hoped that launching a new crusade with Western support would provide the solution to his manpower shortage; he thus sent Hugh of Payns, the Templar master, to Europe to acquire reinforcements.⁸

At the same time, Baldwin II faced a potential crisis over the succession of Jerusalem. His wife Morphia had died on 1 October 1126/1127, leaving behind four daughters and no

³ Urraca and Alfonso el Batallador shared the same great-grandfather, Sancho III el Mayor of Pamplona (990–1035).

⁴ Raymond of Burgundy was the cousin of Urraca's mother, Queen Constance. See J.M. Ramos y Loscertales, 'La sucesión del rey Alfonso VI', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 13 (41 1936), p. 283.

⁵ J. Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land: Relations between the Latin East and the West, 1119–1187* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 19–28.

⁶ J. Riley-Smith, 'The Venetian Crusade of 1122–24', in G. Airaldi and B.Z. Kedar, eds., *I Comuni Italiani Nel Regno Crociato di Gerusalemme* (Genoa, 1986), pp. 339–50.

⁷ J. Richard, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*, tran. J. Shirley (2 vols, Amsterdam, 1979), p. 33; R.C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare, 1097–1193* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 30–31.

⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Turnhout, 1986), bk. 13, no. 26; Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, pp. 23–4, 26–7. See Chapter Five for further discussion of the Templars and other military orders.

sons.⁹ The kingdom's stability was at stake without a male heir, and the king grew concerned for the continuation of his dynasty if he died before making suitable arrangements. Baldwin had firsthand knowledge of the problems that could arise in a disputed succession.¹⁰ Thus, Baldwin II wisely attempted to avoid a succession crisis after his death. He sought the advice of the ecclesiastical and secular leaders of the Latin East, convening an assembly. Baldwin had already determined that the crown would pass to his eldest daughter, Melisende, and her future husband, but he was uncertain about whom that husband should be. The secular nobility and ecclesiastical officials unanimously agreed that an offer of marriage should come from outside the Holy Land, and they decided on Fulk of Anjou (1089/92–1143).¹¹ William of Tyre remarks that the deliberations took time, although the final decision was unanimous, indicating that the nobility was initially divided on the appropriate candidate.¹² In the end, the assembly chose to initiate negotiations with Fulk of Anjou, and the king appointed William of Bures, prince of Galilee, and Guy of Brisebarre, lord of Beirut, as heads of his ambassadorial envoy. The two were loyal companions of Baldwin II, which lent legitimacy and credibility to the marriage proposal and their assurances that he could enjoy the support of the aristocracy of the Holy Land.¹³

It is necessary to examine the reasons for seeking an outsider to wed Melisende. As heiress to the throne, she needed widespread support from the aristocracy, and the choice of husband would impact the ease of her transition from royal heiress to queen regnant. Other members of Melisende's family, including her father and younger sisters, had found spouses from within the established aristocracy. Prior to deciding on Fulk of Anjou in 1127, the assembly surely weighed the respective advantages of a husband from within the Holy Land and one from Europe. In this case, they decided that the risk associated with promoting a local lord to co-ruler of the kingdom was too great and would have revealed the political divisions within the nobility. The example of Melisende's sister highlights this policy difference: in 1126 Baldwin II arranged the marriage of his second daughter, Alice, to the lord of Antioch, Bohemond II. Although Alice of Antioch was among the most powerful people in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, the different considerations given in selecting Melisende's spouse

⁹ On the dating of Queen Morphia's death, see R. Hiestand, 'Chronologisches zur Geschichte des Königreichs Jerusalem', *Deutsches Archiv für Erforschung des Mittelalters*, 26 (1970), pp. 220–4.

¹⁰ For a discussion of disputed successions, see B. Weiler, 'The rex renitens and the medieval ideal of kingship, c. 950–c. 1250', *Viator*, 31 (2000), pp. 1–42; See the Introduction for a summary of succession conflicts for the first three kings of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

¹¹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, no. 24; bk. 14, no. 2.

¹² William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, no. 2; See also P. Edbury and J. Rowe, *William of Tyre: Historian of the Latin East* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 61–70.

¹³ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, no. 24; bk. 14, no. 2; H.E. Mayer, 'The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem: English Impact on the East', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (1985), pp. 140–1; Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, pp. 24–6, 28–30; see Section ii for more discussion.

demonstrates that royal daughters, who were less important for dynastic succession, did not experience the same status and considerations as royal heiresses.¹⁴

Finding a husband for Melisende from outside the Holy Land averted a potential succession crisis. The promotion of a member of the local nobility would have surely deepened the existing factions that had been evident since the succession of Baldwin II in 1118. The Kingdom of Jerusalem was a Christian outpost surrounded by hostile forces; the next ruler of Jerusalem would be required to ensure stability, have proven leadership abilities, and garner the respect and support of the local aristocracy. Moreover, one of the most important prerogatives of rulership was fathering sons thus guaranteeing the survival of the dynasty, something that no king of Jerusalem had yet been able to achieve.¹⁵

Fulk of Anjou was a man who possessed the skills, reputation, and traits desired for kingship in the medieval period.¹⁶ For nearly twenty years, Fulk had been at the head of government for three counties, Anjou, Touraine, and Maine. During this time, he established his authority over disobedient castellans and challenged formidable opponents along the borders of his domain, against such adversaries as Count Theobald of Blois and King Henry I of England.¹⁷ Furthermore, Fulk's first marriage had produced numerous children, including a male heir, Geoffrey.¹⁸ Fulk's proven capacity to father children would certainly have enhanced his position as a candidate for Melisende's hand in marriage.

Thanks to an earlier visit to Jerusalem in 1120–21, Fulk of Anjou was a known entity among the aristocracy of Jerusalem. William of Tyre reported in his chronicle that Fulk stayed in the Holy Land for a year and personally funded a hundred *milites* to aid in the security of the kingdom. During this time, Fulk made lasting connections among the lords of the Latin East, a point also noted by William of Tyre.¹⁹ It is possible that these personal connections lasted for some time after Fulk returned to Anjou in 1121. He continued to show interest in the events occurring in the Holy Land and acted as benefactor for the Knights Templar.²⁰ The recently founded military order had drawn Fulk's attention during his time in Jerusalem, and he offered an annual donation of 30 Angevin *libri* to maintain the Knights Templar. The exact details regarding how this money was delivered to the Templars are

¹⁴ Mayer, 'The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem', p. 140.

¹⁵ For more on Baldwin's relationship with his wives, see B. Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States: The Queens of Jerusalem (1100–1190)', in D. Baker, ed., *Medieval Women* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 143–7.

¹⁶ Fulk V's first wife Eremburge had died in 1126, thus making him eligible to remarry Melisende.

¹⁷ J. Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109–1151: Foulque de Jérusalem et Geoffroi Plantagenêt* (Paris), pp. 1–25; J. Dunbabin, *France in the Making, 843–1180* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 333–8.

¹⁸ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall (6 vols, Oxford, 80 1969), bk. 6, pp. 310–1. Fulk and Eremburge had three other children: Sybilla, Geoffrey Plantagenet (b. 24 August 1113), and Helias.

¹⁹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, no. 2.

²⁰ See Chapter Five, Section iii for a brief history of the Knights Templar.

unknown; however, this yearly payment necessitated Fulk's contact with the Order at least annually.²¹ The perhaps unintended benefit of his largesse was that it kept Fulk apprised of events in the Holy Land and preserved his reputation as a noble, generous lord.

The king and aristocracy of Jerusalem chose Fulk in large part because of his established connection to the crusader kingdom; thus began the long process of opening negotiations with the Angevin lord regarding his marriage to Melisende and his possible succession to Baldwin II. Central to this proposition was the chosen candidate's ability to leave behind his holdings in Europe to assume command in Jerusalem. However, because Fulk had an heir, Geoffrey, and a younger son, Helias, the aristocracy of Jerusalem hoped that kingship in the Holy Land would prove enough of an incentive for Fulk to leave his European life behind. Fulk's continued interest in the developments in Jerusalem gave the assembly hope and provided the opening for the diplomatic embassy charged with negotiating the terms of the royal marriage.

The marriages of Melisende of Jerusalem and Empress Matilda are closely intertwined as each married a count of Anjou. Henry I approached Fulk of Anjou with the proposal of marriage between Matilda and Geoffrey during the spring of 1127 after a long series of dynastic conflicts, the most pressing of which was the assassination of Charles the Good, count of Flanders (1084–1127).²² Charles left no heir, which enabled King Louis VI of France (1081–1137) to intervene in the ensuing succession crisis. At a meeting in Arras on 20 March 1127, Louis VI blocked from consideration William of Ypres (1090–1164/5), who reportedly enjoyed Henry's support, and instead backed William Clito (1102–1128) as the subsequent count of Flanders.²³ The promotion of William Clito further complicated Anglo-Norman politics because William was Henry's nephew and heir to Robert Curthose (1051–1134), the former duke of Normandy. Henry had infamously imprisoned his older brother after Robert's capture at the Battle of Tinchebray in September 1106. Although Robert Curthose lived the remainder of his life in custody, his son William continued his struggle for supremacy of the Anglo-Norman realm.²⁴

Fulk sided with William Clito in this conflict and had considered joining forces with Louis VI and Baldwin VII of Flanders (1093–1119) against Henry I in 1111–13 and again in

²¹ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, bk. 6, pp. 310–1.

²² Charles the Good was murdered on 2 March 1127 while attending mass at the church of Saint Donatian in Bruges. See Galbert of Bruges, *The Murder of Charles the Good*, tran. J.B. Ross (New York, 1959), pp. 118–9; Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, bk. 6, pp. 370–1.

²³ Galbert of Bruges, *The Murder of Charles the Good*, pp. 186–91, 194–8.

²⁴ For the period of Robert's captivity, see W.M. Aird, *Robert 'Curthose', Duke of Normandy (c. 1050–1134)* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 245–81; C.W. David, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy* (Cambridge, MA, 1920), pp. 77–89.

1118–19.²⁵ To neutralize the threat from his Angevin neighbor, Henry acknowledged Fulk's authority in northern Maine and arranged for the marriage of his heir, William Adelin (1102–1120), to Fulk's daughter, Matilda of Anjou (1111–1154).²⁶ This break from hostilities came to an end with the sinking of the White Ship less than two years later. When news reached the Holy Land regarding William Adelin's death, Fulk returned from Jerusalem in 1121 and faced a challenge from the English court over fortifications in Maine that remained under Anglo-Norman control.²⁷ Fulk responded to this by betrothing his second daughter, Sybilla, to Henry's long rival, William Clito, in 1123. To make matters worse, as part of Sybilla's dowry, Fulk granted William Clito command of Maine until William could claim his rightful inheritance of Normandy.²⁸ This marriage and agreement was a personal affront to Henry's position as lord of Normandy. Henry I appealed to the papal curia to annul the marriage on the grounds of consanguinity. Pope Calixtus II (d. 1124) issued a bull to dissolve the marriage on 26 August 1124.²⁹ An irate Fulk burned the papal letters and imprisoned the papal envoys, resulting in Fulk's excommunication by Pope Honorius II (d. 1130) in the spring of 1125.³⁰

The short-lived marriage of William Clito to Sybilla of Anjou destroyed the tenuous peace between Fulk of Anjou and Henry I, which was further deteriorated by William Clito's rise to authority in Flanders. To protect Anglo-Norman interests, Henry I needed to find a solution to his conflict with Fulk.³¹ To neutralize the threat of William Clito, and renew his accord with Fulk, Henry I decided to begin negotiations with Fulk for a marriage between their heirs. Henry I reportedly decided on Geoffrey of Anjou and rejected other offers of marriage for his daughter and heir.³² Matilda's opposition to the union was overcome, although her second husband's rank, merely the heir to a county, was substantially lower than her first husband, Emperor Henry V of Germany.³³ A preliminary agreement had been

²⁵ Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109–1151*, pp. 6–13.

²⁶ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, bk. 6, pp. 180–1; A. Salmon, ed., 'Chronicon Turonense Magnum', in *Recueil de Chroniques de Touraine* (Tours, 1854), p. 131; L. Halphen and R. Poupardin, eds., 'Gesta Consulm Andegavorum: Additamenta', in *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou et des seigneurs d'Amboise* (Paris, 1913), p. 161.

²⁷ D. Whitelock, D.C. Douglas, and S.I. Tucker, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London, 1961), pp. 187–8; Symeon of Durham, *Historia Regnum, Opera Omnia*, ed. R.T. Arnold (2 vols, London, 85 1882), vol. ii, p. 267.

²⁸ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, bk. 6, pp. 164–5, 333.; See also W. Hollister, *Henry I* (New Haven, 2001), p. 292.

²⁹ Calixtus II, 'Epistolae', in *PL*, 166 cols 1323–4; For Henry I's part in this annulment, see Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, bk. 6, pp. 166–7; Hollister, *Henry I*, pp. 304–5; B. Schilling, *Guido von Vienne-Papst Calixt II* (Hanover, 1998), p. 542; M. Stroll, *Calixtus II (1119–1124): A Pope Born to Rule* (Leiden, 2004), pp. 165–7.

³⁰ Honorius II, 'Epistolae', in *PL*, 166 col. 1231; Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109–1151*, pp. 17–8.

³¹ J. Green, *Henry I: King of England and Duke of Normandy* (New York, 2006), pp. 198–9; Hollister, *Henry I*, pp. 322–3.

³² William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella: The Contemporary History*, ed. E. King (Oxford, 1998), pp. 4–5.

³³ M. Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: queen consort, queen mother and lady of the English* (Oxford, 1991), p. 55.

reached by the end of May 1127, when Matilda departed England to meet her future husband, Geoffrey, at their formal betrothal at Rouen.³⁴

In the cases of Urraca of León-Castilla and Matilda, their spouses were chosen from neighboring lands. Urraca's father Alfonso VI might have hoped that a marriage alliance between his daughter and El Batallador, a man who had troubled his reign for years, might allow a more peaceful transition. In a similar fashion, Geoffrey of Anjou was the heir to his father, Fulk, who had posed a threat to Henry I's Norman rule. Matilda and Geoffrey's union would hopefully protect Anglo-Norman interests against threats made from rival claimants. Both the Angevins and Anglo-Normans faced threats from William Clito, and this marriage was established with the hope of neutralizing the threat.³⁵ In contrast, Melisende of Jerusalem's husband was chosen from outside the existing nobility in the Holy Land. Wedding Melisende to a local lord might thus have caused a problematic succession, and Fulk of Anjou was a sensible alternative. Not only was Fulk from outside the political world of the Holy Land but also, he was a known figure from his earlier crusading endeavors. The selection of a royal heiress's spouse was left to her father. As in the cases of male heirs, the heiress' opinions and preferences of the women were deemed irrelevant by contemporary authors, and no record survives of the women's own considerations regarding the match. For these kings and fathers who secured the unions, however, the primary concern was securing a suitable male co-ruler for their daughters so that they might continue their line.

ii. Diplomacy

The process by which marriages were arranged was lengthy and complicated, often due to geographic divides, intense negotiations, and the numerous parties involved. The marriage negotiations of Fulk of Anjou and Melisende of Jerusalem must be discussed in tandem with those of Empress Matilda and Geoffrey of Anjou, as the two marriage arrangements were inextricably linked right from the start. Fulk stood at the center of both unions, working to ensure Angevin interests were advanced. Disappointingly, the historical records are silent regarding the diplomatic process for Urraca's marriage to El Batallador, although the marriage contracts are extant. Therefore, this section focuses solely on the two marriages of the Angevin father and son to, respectively, Melisende and Matilda.

³⁴ Whitelock, Douglas, and Tucker, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, p. 193; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People*, ed. D. Greenway (Oxford, 1996), pp. 476–7; William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, pp. 8–9.

³⁵ See Chapter Two, Section i.

The chronology of the two marriage alliances reveals how closely they were related. The first alliance was that of Empress Matilda and Geoffrey of Anjou, instigated in the spring of 1127 and celebrated on 17 June 1128. Around three months before this wedding, the betrothal of Fulk and Melisende was suggested and followed on 31 May by Fulk's announcement to go on crusade and their wedding on 2 June 1129. These two Angevin marriages in the span of one year were aimed at expanding Angevin prestige and control, and reveal the powerful position Fulk enjoyed as political and dynastic matchmaker.

When Baldwin II of Jerusalem and his supporters decided that his heir, Melisende, would marry Fulk of Anjou, the negotiation process began with three separate embassies to Europe. One embassy was tasked with securing military support and launching a crusade. Another embassy sought to negotiate a marriage between Fulk and Melisende. The third embassy went to Rome to secure papal support for the marriage and for Melisende's inheritance. The king appointed William of Bures, prince of Galilee, and Guy of Brisebarre, lord of Beirut, as his principal ambassadors for the marriage negotiations. An additional ambassador, Hugh of Payns, was appointed to garner support for military action against Muslim threats in the Holy Land.³⁶ These two envoys reached Anjou during the spring of 1128. The precise objective of these missions is contested, however. Some historians have argued that the prime objective was an Angevin commitment of military support and participation in a crusade to the Holy Land. Other historians have argued that the marriage between Fulk and Melisende was the main motivation. The potentially separate intentions of the two embassies have been the subject of scholarly debate.³⁷ Central to this debate is how Baldwin II perceived the marriage negotiations: were the negotiations part of a strategy to guarantee an increase in much needed manpower, or did he view these as two independent aims? Riley-Smith argues that the crusade and Melisende's marriage to Fulk were part of a consistent strategy, coordinated by the Montlhéry family, of which Baldwin II was part, in order to maintain control of Jerusalem's throne.³⁸ Mayer is similarly persuaded that these two issues were considered during the same assembly, although there is no evidence to substantiate this.³⁹ However, regardless of an Angevin pledge to crusade, the aristocracy of

³⁶ See Chapter Five, Section iii for further discussion of the royal couple role in the promotion of the Knights Templar.

³⁷ Mayer, 'The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem', pp. 146–7 viewed both embassies as part of the same process of convincing Fulk of Anjou to leave his lands for the Holy Land, whereas ; Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, pp. 35–40 argues that they had separate focuses for the entirety of their respective itineraries.

³⁸ J. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders 1095–1131* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 183–5.

³⁹ H.E. Mayer, 'The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem: English Impact on the East', p. 147; William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, nos. 24, 26, and bk. 14, no. 2 mention that Baldwin II met with his nobility regarding both issues, although William of Tyre regards them as separate issues and does not elaborate on the proceedings.

Jerusalem could undoubtedly be assured of an influx of Angevin manpower if Fulk agreed to marry Melisende. Furthermore, the marriage would increase the likelihood that Fulk would indeed pledge support for a crusade, as his interests would be tied to the success of the kingdom.

The principal contemporary source on the marriage, William of Tyre, appears to have viewed the tasks of the two embassies as separate. His introduction of the embassy of William of Bures and Fulk of Anjou's eventual arrival in the Holy Land appear before the matter of Hugh of Payns is discussed. However, William of Tyre's records are not entirely reliable, as he arranges events corresponding to their importance to the Holy Land. In this case, Melisende and Fulk's marriage in May 1129 was followed by a campaign against Damascus in November and December of that same year, a subject about which William of Tyre remains silent, making it difficult to pinpoint the exact details of the embassies and the impetus for them.⁴⁰ In his chronicle, William of Tyre notes that William of Bures presented Fulk of Anjou with an offer of marriage to Baldwin II's eldest daughter and heir, and that the marriage would be celebrated within fifty days of Fulk's arrival in the Holy Land. For their marriage, the couple would receive the cities of Tyre and Acre. According to William of Tyre, William of Bures ventured to Anjou with the single-minded intention of obtaining a worthy husband for Melisende, not the recruitment of Angevins for the crusade.⁴¹

In contrast, Angevin sources imply a greater amount of interaction and partnership between the two embassies. Both William of Bures and Hugh of Payns first appeared in Anjou during the spring of 1128, and both were present when Count Fulk took the cross at Le Mans on 31 May 1128.⁴² Mayer reports that Guy of Brisebarre is missing from the local sources, suggesting that Guy might have returned to Jerusalem with Fulk's conditions for accepting the marriage proposal. Mayer contends that by the time Fulk of Anjou took the cross at the ceremony at Le Mans, William of Bures and Guy of Brisebarre had already commenced negotiations and, therefore, Guy's absence from local records reveals the progress already made in finalizing the marriage negotiations. Mayer also argues that Fulk's crusading vow and his acceptance of the marriage proposal were not dependent on one another, but that Fulk's pledge was a sign of goodwill for the marriage negotiations. He believes that had the negotiations fallen apart, Fulk would have become 'a seasonal crusader'. The implication of this argument is that William of Bures and Guy of Brisebarre were key to

⁴⁰ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, no. 24 and bk. 13, no. 26.

⁴¹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, no. 24 and bk. 13, no. 26

⁴² Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109–1151*, pp. 369–72, no. 39.

achieving Angevin commitment to the crusade and that Fulk had taken the cross as part of the marriage negotiations.⁴³

Mayer's interpretation highlights the importance of William of Bures and the prominence of his matrimonial mission, which, as Phillips notes, diminishes the role of Hugh of Payns and his efforts to recruit Angevin crusaders. Mayer and Phillips agree that the objective of both embassies was to endear the Angevins to the causes of the Holy Land, but Phillips argues that each diplomatic envoy had specific missions. Phillips gives equal weight to the two embassies, noting that William of Bures and Guy of Brisbarre focused on the marriage of Fulk and Melisende, while Hugh of Payns was tasked with the recruitment of crusaders to address the manpower shortage in Jerusalem.⁴⁴ Because both embassies were in Anjou at the same key moment, it is easy to conflate the two, especially when a certain amount of collaboration between them was expected.

In order to understand the distinction between the two diplomatic missions, it is useful to examine the progress of their individual itineraries. Scholars have suggested that the embassies journeyed together from the Holy Land before the autumn of 1127.⁴⁵ However, there is some evidence to suggest that Hugh of Payns made his way to Europe before William of Bures and Guy of Brisebarre had even left the Levant. On 30 October 1127, Theobald of Blois, heir to Count Hugh of Champagne, made a gift of property to the Templars at Provins. Although there is no extant witness list, Hugh of Payns hailed from Champagne, where he had previously served as the *dominus* of Payns before settling in the Holy Land.⁴⁶ Therefore, if Hugh, the current Master of the Templars, was the one to receive the property on behalf of the Templars, it suggests that the aristocracy of Jerusalem had decided on a policy of crusade recruitment before their decision to approach Fulk of Anjou with an offer for Melisende's hand.

Angevin charters provide the first concrete evidence of the arrival of the two embassies in Europe. Hugh of Payns appears in a witness list without his other ambassadors in April 1128. The charter confirms a gift that Fulk and his deceased first wife, Eremburge, had granted to two hermits before Fulk's earlier pilgrimage to Jerusalem in 1120. William of

⁴³ Mayer, 'The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem', pp. 139–47, esp. pp. 141–45.

⁴⁴ See Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, pp. 35–66 for his criticism of Mayer.

⁴⁵ M. Barber, *The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of the Temple* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 11–2; Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, pp. 31–32; Mayer, 'The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem', pp. 146–47 combines the two embassies upon their arrival in Anjou. Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders 1095–1131*, pp. 184–85 associates the departure of Hugh of Payns with a third embassy, which arrived at the papal court in Rome in the spring of 1128.

⁴⁶ Marquis d'Albon, ed., *Cartulaire Général de l'Ordre du Temple, 1119–1150* (Paris, 1913), no. 9; M.L. Bulst-Thiele, *Sacrae Domus Militae Templi Hierosolymitani Magistri: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Templeordens 1119–1314* (Göttingen, 1974), pp. 19–29; Barber, 'The Origins of the Order of the Temple', *Studia Monastica*, 12 (1970), pp. 221–24.

Bures and Guy of Brisebarre do not appear in the witness list for this charter, although William of Bures was later listed in 1129 in another confirmation charter, prior to Fulk's departure for the crusade and his impending marriage. It is unlikely that the monks omitted William of Bures from the 1128 confirmation given that he was deemed worthy of inclusion in the later confirmation. A man named Rainald Fremaudi appears in the witness lists to both confirmations, which suggests that William would have been included in both witness lists had he been present. The simplest explanation is that Hugh of Payns arrived in Anjou first and began his efforts to recruit crusaders and was later met by William of Bures to propose an offer of marriage to Fulk.⁴⁷

It follows that Baldwin II had sent the two embassies with the expectation that they would function independently; any partnership between them must have occurred upon arrival in Anjou. This argument is supported by the actions of the third embassy sent to Rome. Leading this third embassy were Archbishop William I of Tyre (d. 1130) and Bishop Roger of Ramla, who arrived at the papal curia in the spring of 1128. There were three principal purposes to their mission. Firstly, the ambassadors sought papal advice on whether the archdiocese of Tyre fell within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the patriarch of Jerusalem or Antioch and how best to settle the issue. Secondly, William of Tyre sought confirmation of his consecration as archbishop, which had only recently occurred before his departure from the Holy Land.⁴⁸ On 29 May 1128, Pope Honorius II sent a letter to Baldwin II notifying him that he had received the royal ambassadors and affirming Baldwin's position as rightful ruler of Jerusalem. This letter reveals the third goal of this embassy: obtaining papal approval of the marriage between Melisende and Fulk.⁴⁹ The letter, written only two days before Fulk took the cross at the ceremony at Le Mans, affirms Fulk as Baldwin's successor to the throne of Jerusalem. The topic of papal support for a new crusade does not appear in any of the letters composed at the curia of 1128, nor does any evidence supporting a theory that Baldwin sought it. It follows that Baldwin's principal concern for this third embassy was papal consent for Melisende and Fulk's marriage and, therefore, Fulk's succession to the Kingdom of Jerusalem.

Fulk and Melisende's marriage was not contingent on his pledge to crusade. It seems that Baldwin II gave precedence to securing a marriage for his heir. As previously stated, the aristocracy of Jerusalem likely believed that if Fulk left his Angevin lands and married

⁴⁷ Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109–1151*, pp. 367–69, no. 38.

⁴⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, no. 23. For more on the dispute between the patriarchs of Jerusalem and Antioch, see J. Rowe, 'The Papacy and the Ecclesiastical Province of Tyre (1100–1187)', *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, 43 (61 1960), pp. 160–89; Edbury and Rowe, *William of Tyre*, pp. 116–23; T. Asbridge, *The Creation of the Principality of Antioch, 1098–1130* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 208–13.

⁴⁹ Honorius II, 'Epistolae', cols 1279–80.

Melisende, he would bring with him capable fighting men regardless of whether he pledged Angevin support for a crusade. Baldwin had entrusted Hugh of Payns with convincing Fulk to lend his aid in a crusade before he settled on Fulk as husband for his daughter and heir. While the embassies led by Hugh of Payns and by William of Bures and Guy of Brisebarre were two separate entities, it appears that there was coordination between the second and third envoys because both were focused on an Angevin marriage alliance and not the promotion of a crusade.

Both of Baldwin's embassies tasked with recruiting Fulk were successful: he departed his homeland in the spring of 1129 with the intention of marrying Jerusalem's heiress and participating in the upcoming siege of Damascus, with broad Angevin support. Nearly a year passed between the start of the marriage negotiations and Fulk's arrival in the Holy Land and marriage in late May 1129.⁵⁰ Mayer takes the view that this delay reveals the intricacies of negotiating marriages, and that Fulk's pledge to take the cross at Le Mans on 31 May 1128 is not indicative of an end to the negotiations. Mayer believes, with little evidence to support his theory, that the negotiations were prolonged because of Melisende's status as *haeres regni*.⁵¹ According to Mayer, Fulk wanted to ensure that Melisende would have the same assurances for succession that Matilda had when Henry I of England declared her *haeres Angliae* in January 1127.

Mayer's argument hinges on the idea that the initial terms offered by Baldwin through his ambassadors were inadequate. Mayer's presumption that Fulk would have doubts about his reception in the Holy Land as successor seems plausible. However, Mayer relies predominantly on Baldwin II's charters without consideration of Angevin sources. What results is a theory based on assumptions. While it is plausible that Fulk delayed his departure for the Holy Land until he received reassurances regarding Melisende's position as heiress, this does not eliminate other explanations. Phillips notes there were practical reasons for Fulk's delay. Firstly, the transfer of comital power to his teenaged heir, Geoffrey, needed to be arranged with care so that his son's position would be secure. Secondly, because Fulk pledged his support for the crusade, he needed to organize the departure of his retinue of soldiers and gather the necessary resources. Phillips does not theorize how Fulk viewed his participation in the crusade next to his position as successor to the crown.⁵² The evidence regarding marriage negotiations is scarce. A charter from 31 May 1128 reveals that Fulk

⁵⁰ A papal letter dated 24 March 1129 refers to Geoffrey Plantagenet as count of Anjou, indicating that Fulk had left for the Holy Land by that time. See Honorius II, 'Epistolae', col. 1295. This corresponds with William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, no. 24, which states Fulk was married prior to Pentecost (2 June 1129).

⁵¹ Mayer, 'The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem', pp. 142–44.

⁵² Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, pp. 33–35.

assembled his supporters at Le Mans. A main topic of conversation surely must have been his marriage to Melisende and the transfer of power to his son Geoffrey.⁵³ Ensuring that Geoffrey could expect continued support after Fulk's departure undoubtedly would have been one of Fulk's concerns. A key purpose of this assembly was assessing the reactions from the supporters who would remain in Angevin lands after Fulk's departure. Fulk's rise to royal power through his marriage to Melisende would mean less if it came at the expense of the loss of Plantagenet control over Anjou.

Although there is no evidence to suggest it, William of Bures and Guy of Brisebarre must have paid careful attention to allaying Fulk's fears regarding the security of his claim to the throne of Jerusalem. The letter from Pope Honorius II to Baldwin II from 29 May 1128 may have been useful in relieving his doubts. The letter does not focus on Fulk. Instead, it expounds on Baldwin's legitimacy as ruler of Jerusalem. The pope states that Baldwin II ruled the kingdom *cum dignitate* as his predecessors, Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin I, had done and advises him to preserve the kingdom and the Church. It is in this context that pope mentions Fulk.⁵⁴ The purpose of the embassy to Rome was not to reaffirm Baldwin's authority as king. By this point, he had ruled as king for nearly ten years and encountered no threats to his position. The pope drew out the line of succession, from Godfrey of Bouillon to Baldwin II and to Fulk of Anjou as next in line. This letter indicated papal support for Baldwin's plans for succession as well as the approval of the aristocracy of the Holy Land.⁵⁵ In all likelihood, news of the pope's stance on the marriage and succession had already reached Fulk before a copy of the letter made its way to Anjou. The papal legate, Bishop Gerard of Angoulême, arrived in Touraine in the spring of 1128 and was present at the assembly at Le Mans and potentially carried word of the pope's opinion.⁵⁶ The pope's letter mentions that because Fulk had offered his support to the protection of the Holy Land, Honorius was endorsing Fulk's position in line for the throne of Jerusalem. Therefore, it is possible that Gerard of Angoulême was in contact with the pope earlier in the month with news that Fulk had consented to the marriage and that Fulk's participation in the crusade was a token of his decision.⁵⁷

⁵³ Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109–1151*, pp. 369–72, nos. 39, 278; Bulst-Thiele, *Sacrae Domus Militae Templi Hierosolymitani Magistri*, pp. 25, 29; Mayer, 'The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem', pp. 142, 147; Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, pp. 32–40; Riley-Smith, *The First Crusaders 1095–1131*, p. 244.

⁵⁴ Honorius II, 'Epistolae', cols 1279–80.

⁵⁵ Mayer, 'The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem', p. 143.

⁵⁶ Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109–1151*, pp. 369–72, no. 39. Gerard of Angoulême was present at the curia at Le Mans. Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land*, p. 38 associates his presence in Anjou with the crusade but also notes that there is no evidence that the pope consented to the campaign against Damascus and, therefore, has no backing to support this claim.

⁵⁷ Honorius II, 'Epistolae', cols 1279–80.

The complexity of the marriage negotiations stemmed also from the fact that Fulk of Anjou was a vassal of King Louis VI of France; William of Bures and Guy of Brisebarre hoped, therefore, to acquire royal consent for Fulk to become king of Jerusalem and to pass control of his county to his fifteen-year-old son. The embassy hoped to obtain Louis's endorsement before they approached Fulk with the offer of marriage as they traveled northward through France. The Angevin chronicles provide clues to this issue: they state that Baldwin II's ambassadors traveled to France to procure a husband for Melisende and that with the advice of the king of France (*consilio regis Francorum*), the men chose Fulk of Anjou as the candidate.⁵⁸ In contrast to this record, William of Tyre recounts that Baldwin II had settled on Fulk before he dispatched his ambassadors, giving sole agency to him and not to the French king.⁵⁹ The Angevin sources approached the matter from a different perspective than William of Tyre, who was deeply concerned with the events of the Holy Land, rather than marriage negotiations in France. The endorsement of the king of France could positively impact Geoffrey's position as count early in his tenure and was yet another assurance that Plantagenet rule in Anjou would not be compromised because of the marriage.

It is probable that Fulk made demands of his own before accepting the offer of marriage. One likely demand was that Baldwin II formally recognize Melisende as *haeres regni*, as Henry I had done with Matilda only two years earlier.⁶⁰ The notable absence of Guy of Brisebarre from the witness lists in charters from May 1128 and early 1129, in which his compatriot, William of Bures, does appear, suggests his return to Jerusalem to consult with Baldwin II on the progress of the negotiations. It was around this same time that Baldwin began to include Melisende in his charters.⁶¹ At this time, Fulk was already organizing his departure for Jerusalem, indicating Fulk's acceptance of the marriage proposal was not conditional on her formal recognition as heiress.

Pope Honorius II gives the appearance that he believed negotiations had concluded when he sent his letter to Baldwin II on 29 May 1128. Honorius praises Fulk for putting aside the *dominium* of his people and his barons and forsaking the riches of Anjou, to serve God and the king of Jerusalem. The pope viewed Fulk's plans to take the cross and depart for the

⁵⁸ L. Halphen, and R. Poupardin, eds., 'Chronica de gestis consulum Andegavorum', in *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou et des seigneurs d'Amboise* (Paris, 1913), p. 69; L. Halphen and R. Poupardin, eds., 'Gesta Ambaziensium Dominorum', in *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou et des seigneurs D'Amboise* (Paris, 1913), p. 115.

⁵⁹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, no. 24 and bk. 14, no. 2.

⁶⁰ Mayer, 'The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem', pp. 143–46.

⁶¹ R. Röhrich, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani* (Innsbruck, 1904 1893), p. nos. 121 and 137a.; For the dating of these charters, see Hiestand, 'Chronologisches zur Geschichte des Königreichs Jerusalem', p. 223 nn. 15, 224 27, 229 60; H.E. Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (1972), p. 99 n. 15.

Holy Land as an indication that he had accepted the offer of marriage. Additionally, because the pope's letter was dated two days prior to Fulk's oath-taking ceremony at Le Mans, it suggests that Fulk had reached some kind of agreement with Baldwin's ambassadors, even if negotiations had not been finalized; his vow thus carried greater implications. The pope was not alone in his thinking; other contemporary sources follow Honorius's logic. Writing after the fact, in 1155, the anonymous author of the *Gesta Ambaziensium Dominorum* states that Fulk's participation in the crusade was part of his long strategy to assume royal power.⁶² According to the *Gesta*, this began with Fulk's acceptance of the offer of marriage and continued with his selection of a retinue and arrangement for a crusade.⁶³ Orderic Vitalis, writing in the 1130s, omits the crusade, observing that Fulk arrived in the Holy Land with the express purpose to marry Melisende of Jerusalem, through whose claim he could rule. He mentions certain 'Angevin strangers and other raw newcomers' whom Fulk appointed as his main advisors and castellans during the early years of his reign as co-king of Jerusalem.⁶⁴ Henry of Huntingdon, writing from 1129 until 1154, is the only contemporary to emphasize the role of Hugh of Payns in securing the support of Count Fulk of Anjou for the crusade.⁶⁵

Based on this evidence, it seems that the assembly at Le Mans in May 1128 was the final phase of Fulk's decision-making process, rather than the beginning. For Fulk, there were two pressing issues impacting his acceptance of the marriage proposal: first, obtaining assurances that he would have support to succeed Baldwin II through Melisende's claim; and second, protecting Geoffrey Plantagenet's assumption of comital rule. For Baldwin II of Jerusalem, his primary concern was finding Melisende a suitable husband, who could perform the male duties associated with rulership and fulfill the procreative imperatives of marriage. It appears that Baldwin II could expect a peaceful succession for Fulk and his daughter Melisende because the aristocracy had voiced their support for the union before the ambassadors left for Anjou. To overcome any potential legal issues associated with Melisende's position as royal heiress, Baldwin began recognizing Melisende as *regni Ierosolimitani haeres* in his charters.⁶⁶

⁶² R.E. Barton, 'Writing Warfare, Lordship and History: The *Gesta Consulium Andegavorum*'s Account of the Battle of Alençon', *ANS*, 27 (2004), p. 34.

⁶³ Halphen and Poupardin, eds., '*Gesta Ambaziensium Dominorum*', pp. 115–16.

⁶⁴ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, bk. 6, pp. 390–93.

⁶⁵ See Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, pp. 482–83 for a brief narrative of the siege of Damascus, though he excludes Fulk of Anjou's participation in the campaign.

⁶⁶ Röhrich, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 137a; C. Kohler, 'Chartres de l'abbaye de Notre-Dame de la Vallée de Josaphat en Terre Sainte (1108–1291). Analyse et Extraits', *Revue de l'Orient Latin*, 7 (1899), no. 21, p. 128; Mayer, 'The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem', pp. 143–44; Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States', p. 149; Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', p. 99.

iii. Marriage negotiations and contracts

Once a husband had been selected for a royal heiress, next came the all-important process of negotiating a marriage contract. These marriages were arranged and negotiated primarily by their fathers. Because these alliances were intended to promote the family's wealth, power, and prestige, it was essential that the marriage contract be carefully negotiated.⁶⁷ Marriage preliminaries could be initiated either by an ambassadorial contingent or by personal overtures.⁶⁸ For each of the royal heiresses, emissaries and concerned barons were responsible for carefully orchestrating the negotiations. In the case of these royal matches and many aristocratic marriages, embassies were the solution to the obstacle of physical separation. The embassies comprised lay and ecclesiastical men who worked to ensure that their lord's assets and agendas were preserved. For an heiress, however, marriage negotiations were of greater importance because she would someday succeed her father and it was crucial that her assets and holdings be protected from an over-reaching husband. The marriage contracts set the terms of the agreement with careful regard to the gifting of dower lands, control over territories, and what should happen in the event of death or the dissolution of the union.⁶⁹ The following section discusses the negotiation of marriage contracts and their contents, where possible.

Alfonso VI of León-Castilla died in 1109 before concluding marriage negotiations with Alfonso el Batallador. Despite vocal opposition from many important Leonese magnates, plans for the marriage continued. When Alfonso VI died without a son to succeed him as king, there was no precedent for a woman to inherit the throne as queen regnant in León-Castilla; Urraca thus faced an uphill battle to claim her inheritance. One tactic she used to overcome opposition to female rule was to execute her father's wishes by marrying El Batallador.⁷⁰ Alfonso VI had begun preliminary arrangements with the Aragonese king prior to his death in the summer of 1109, and the marriage likely took place that October, although negotiations do not appear to have been finalized until December.⁷¹ This experiment with female kingship in León-Castilla raised questions about the nature of rulership and the possibility of sharing power and authority between spouses. The marriage contract for a queen

⁶⁷ G. Ribordy, 'The two paths to marriage: The preliminaries of noble marriage in late medieval France', *Journal of Family History*, 26 (2001), p. 324.

⁶⁸ Ribordy, 'The two paths to marriage', pp. 323–36.

⁶⁹ L. Morelle, 'Marriage and Diplomats: Five Dower Charters from the Regions of Laon and Soissons 1163–1181', in P.L. Reynolds and J. Witte, eds., *To Have and To Hold: Marrying and Its Documentation in Western Christendom, 400–1600* (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 182, 185–86.

⁷⁰ The most thorough study of Alfonso el Batallador's reign is the work of J.A. Lema Pueyo *Instituciones políticas del reinado de Alfonso I el Batallador, rey de Aragón y Pamplona (1104–1134)* (Bilbao, 1997).

⁷¹ As studied and published by Ramos y Loscertales, 'La sucesión del rey Alfonso VI', pp. 36–99.

regnant was understandably complicated because the kingdom's interests needed to be safeguarded and the negotiators struggled to work within the established gender framework of the period. The dower agreements, or *carta de arras*, of December 1109 give insight into the difficulty of negotiating a marriage between two ruling monarchs, with each side working to gain an advantage.⁷²

Two marriage contracts were created to grant both Urraca and El Batallador certain rights and privileges in the other's kingdoms.⁷³ Both contracts use similar wording, but key differences reveal the limitations of female rulership and the special provisions necessary to protect it. Examining the language in these contracts makes understanding Urraca's position as queen regnant ambiguous. The word *regina* described a queen consort, not a queen regnant; there was no female equivalent of the word *rex*. Therefore, when the marriage contracts refer to Urraca as *regina*, modern scholars cannot be sure of how the people of León-Castilla or Aragón viewed her position. Royal scribes struggled with Urraca's gender and the use in charters of an appropriate title to express her authority. Many of Urraca's scribes chose to use the same styles as used for kings, but it was a novel situation that did not have a clear solution.

The *carta de arras* El Batallador made for Urraca defines her position in the Kingdom of Aragón as a queen consort, with castles and dower lands. However, it is the *carta de donación* made by Urraca for El Batallador that is more interesting. The contract opens with Queen Urraca's acceptance of El Batallador as her lord and husband.⁷⁴ Urraca's scribes were careful to exclude language referring to him as king in León-Castilla. Instead, the contract uses vague language such as, 'I shall command that all my men who honor me become your men and swear their loyalty to you before all other men'.⁷⁵ This line had two purposes: it refrained from titling Alfonso el Batallador as king; it also recognized the concern that Urraca's subjects would not readily accept El Batallador as their lord. Urraca pledged to compel her subjects to accept her husband in León-Castilla and to help El Batallador against them. Interestingly, this arrangement was not included in his *carta de arras* as Urraca's authority in Aragón was evidently not a threat. In other words, a king as spouse was seen as a greater threat than a queen regnant as spouse. According to Reilly, El Batallador bequeathed

⁷² J.A. Lema Pueyo, *Instituciones políticas del reinado de Alfonso I el Batallador*, pp. 48–52.

⁷³ T. Martin, *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain* (Leiden, 2006), p. 179.

⁷⁴ Ramos y Loscertales, 'La sucesión del rey Alfonso VI', p. 68: *Et ego Urraca regina convenio ad vos regem domnum Adefonsum, domino et viro meo.*

⁷⁵ Ramos y Loscertales, 'La sucesión del rey Alfonso VI', p. 69: *quod ego faciam totos illos meos homines que per me et por vos tenent honores, et ut totos deveniant vestros homines et vobis iurent fidelitatem super totos homines de hoc seculo.*

Urraca lands in Aragón ‘of surprising extent and importance’.⁷⁶ In their contracts, both Urraca and El Batallador note their awareness of potential papal condemnation and agree not to abandon their spouse because of excommunication or consanguinity, as the two shared a common great-grandfather, Sancho the Great of Navarra.⁷⁷ Despite their attempted protections in their marriage contracts, their marriage was denounced by the pope in the summer of 1110 on the grounds of consanguinity.⁷⁸

One of the most important passages for both contracts regards succession. Given that Urraca had two children from her first marriage to Raymond of Burgundy, careful considerations were necessary to protect Urraca’s heir, the future Alfonso VII, if Urraca had no other children by El Batallador. Both Urraca and El Batallador agreed that if they produced a son, he would inherit both the kingdoms of León-Castilla and Aragón, serving as the single ruler of a joint kingdom. However, if no children came from the union, Urraca’s son, Alfonso Raimúndez, would inherit both kingdoms.⁷⁹ Urraca and El Batallador’s marriage was riddled with strife and produced no offspring, with no evidence of any pregnancies. Nevertheless, Urraca was clearly able to conceive, as she had borne Raymond of Burgundy two healthy children (and probably had other unsuccessful pregnancies by him), and would go on to bear two additional children, a daughter born in 1112 and a son born in 1114, both fathered by her lover, Count Pedro González de Lara. These more fruitful relationships draw attention to the childlessness of the one with El Batallador: either the marriage was unconsummated, or Alfonso el Batallador was sterile.⁸⁰ El Batallador was thirty-six at the time of his marriage to Urraca, and there is no evidence that he had any lovers during his life. Hints about his possible homosexuality come from the Arab historian Ibn al-Athir (1166–1234), who

⁷⁶ B. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca, 1109–1126* (Princeton, 1982), p. 63; Ramos y Loscertales, ‘La sucesión del rey Alfonso VI’, pp. 67–68. Urraca was given ‘the castle of Stella with its land rights, except for the portion held by Lope Garcez on my behalf’ (*et dono vobis propter vestras arras illo castello de Stella cum illa mea dominicatura, excepto illo quod ibi tenet Lope Garcez per me; et per ipsum quod ibi tenet iuret vobis inde fidelitatem et deveniat inde vestro homine de boca et de manibus*) either Sos or Unocastello, Exeia, Osca, Mount Aragón, the castle of Bespen, the castle of Napale, Iacca with all related land rights, and ‘all the land rights that I have in other castles and other places throughout my land for which I hold land rights’ (*Dono etiam vobis adhuc in arras totas illas dominicaturas meas que ego habeo in illos alteros castellos et in alios locos per totam meam terram que ad meam dominicaturam pertinent*).

⁷⁷ On the topic of consanguinity, see C. Bouchard, ‘Consanguinity and Noble Marriages in the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries’, *Speculum*, 56 (1981), pp. 268–87.

⁷⁸ As Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 58 indicates, Urraca and her first husband, Raymond of Burgundy, shared the same degree of blood relationship. Their common ancestor was Robert the Pious of France, but their relationship was never considered an impediment to their union. However, when Urraca remarried Alfonso el Batallador, the stakes were considerably higher as the designated heiress of León-Castilla.

⁷⁹ Alfonso VII of León-Castilla never became King of Aragón after El Batallador’s death. The Aragonese crown passed to Ramiro II in 1134.

⁸⁰ E. Lourie, ‘The Will of Alfonso I, “El Batallador”, King of Aragón and Navarre: A Reassessment’, *Speculum*, 50 (1975), pp. 635–51, esp. pp. 639–49 argued that Alfonso was sterile. It has also been suggested that he was homosexual, but as Lourie notes, if it were true, ‘It would have been reasonable to expect him to marry in order, strictly for reasons of state, to produce an heir’.

recounted that El Batallador declined to choose a daughter of one of the Muslim rulers he had taken captive, stating that a real soldier needs the company of men, not women.⁸¹

A strict written marriage contract was not a guarantee for a successful marriage. In fact, a harmonious union might have been undermined by the rigidity of written contract. A verbal agreement, by contrast, allowed greater flexibility, as evidenced by both Melisende's marriage to Fulk and Matilda's marriage to Geoffrey. The couple vowed to honor the other: El Batallador promised he would honor Urraca 'as a good man should his good wife', and Urraca vowed to honor him 'as a good woman should her good lord'.⁸² Although Urraca referred to him as her *dominus*, he never called her his *domina*. Further, Urraca was called *regina* in the dower contracts while El Batallador received the title *imperator*.⁸³ It is likely that these titles were a topic of conversation during the marriage negotiations. It was important to El Batallador to build up his position and image, as he was marrying the heiress to a more powerful kingdom. It is clear that his expectation was to have power and authority over Urraca and to rule by her right in León-Castilla. It is clear from Urraca's marriage, and that of Melisende and Matilda, that the husbands of royal heiresses presumed that they would have sole rule over their wives' kingdoms. Although El Batallador claimed the imperial title in his contract, Urraca managed to restrict his access to royal Leonese authority and established her own independent rule, without conceding authority to her husband or son.⁸⁴ Almost immediately following the conclusion of negotiations and the wedding, the marriage faced broad opposition; the Leonese and Galician aristocracy rebelled, and even their Muslim enemies voiced criticism. By May 1110, only six months after the wedding, the couple had separated. By the fall of 1112, a truce was brokered between the estranged couple and the marriage was annulled.⁸⁵

These marriage negotiations differ from the two Angevin unions because Alfonso VI died before the marriage and the ensuing contract could be fulfilled, leaving his aristocracy responsible for negotiating the terms. An Aragonese match made political sense: El Batallador was of the direct, dynastic line, already in possession of a throne, and had proven himself as a capable warrior. However, there was fierce opposition to this proposed marriage, from Count Henry of Portugal (Urraca's brother-in-law), Archbishop Bernard of Toledo,

⁸¹ Ibn al-Athir, 'Al-Camal fi 'Tarikh', in *Receuil des Historiens des Croisades, Historiens Orientaux* (Paris, 1877), vol. i, p. 414.

⁸² Lema Pueyo, *Instituciones políticas del reinado de Alfonso I el Batallador*, p. 51: *sicut bonus vir debet tenere suam bonam uxorem, quomodo bonam feminam debet facere ad suum bonum seniore*.

⁸³ Ramos y Loscertales, 'La sucesión del rey Alfonso VI', pp. 36–99. The title *imperator* appears in Alfonso el Batallador's *carta de arras* for Urraca but not in Urraca's *carta de donación*.

⁸⁴ See Chapter Two, Section iii for a more thorough discussion of the proposed joint rule.

⁸⁵ See Chapter Two, Section iii for more information regarding Alfonso and Urraca's co-rule.

Bishop Maurice of Braga, and Bishop Gonzalo of Coimbra, who carried news of the marriage to the pope in Rome.

When Alfonso VI died on 30 June 1109, Urraca became the sole ruler of León, Castilla, and Galicia. The author of ‘Las crónicas anónimas’, writing between 1109 and 1117, says that he witnessed Alfonso’s designation of her as his successor. Present were Archbishop Bernard, Bishop Pedro of Palencia, and almost all the nobles and counts of León-Castilla.⁸⁶ Twelve of the realm’s sixteen bishops confirmed a charter proclaiming Urraca as queen of all Spain.⁸⁷ The bishops who were not present included those of Coimbra and Orense in the west and of Nájera and Burgos in the east. Also absent was Count Henry, the husband of Urraca’s half-sister Teresa of Portugal (b. 1080–1130), who had his own royal ambitions. Of the secular confirmants, those most notably absent are again from Henry’s domains in Portugal. Representatives from Castilla were few in number: only Count Gómez González and Count Pedro González signed. In contrast, nobles from León were numerous. Counts Pedro Ansúrez of Carrión, Froila Díaz of León, Rodrigo Muñoz of Astorga, Martín Ordóñez, and Diego Alvítez were the Leonese nobles present. However, the largest single contingent was men largely identified with previous service to the crown under Alfonso VI: Alvar Fáñez, Fernando González; Alonso, Fernando, and Telo Téllez; Diego Díaz; Diego Sarracíniz; and Muño Gutiérrez. It was this last group of men who probably decided that the marriage arranged by Urraca’s late father would be honored. Lacarra has asserted that Alfonso el Batallador was in Toledo before the death of Alfonso VI, although the historical record does not support this claim.⁸⁸ As a strategy for gaining the throne, Urraca was wise to proceed with the marriage proposed by her father Alfonso VI, because she was able to rule independently until her death seventeen years later.⁸⁹ As a marriage, however, the union was a disaster, as it spread civic unrest across Christian Iberia and fractured the aristocracy.

The marriages of Melisende of Jerusalem to Fulk of Anjou and Empress Matilda to Geoffrey of Anjou are so closely intertwined that it is useful to examine them together. Matilda’s marriage to Geoffrey occurred before Melisende’s to Fulk; therefore, this union is examined first. Matilda’s early life followed the established model for most medieval royal daughters. She was betrothed to Holy Roman Emperor Henry V in 1108 when she was just

⁸⁶ J. Puyol y Alonso, ed., ‘Las crónicas anónimas de Sahagún’, *BRAH*, 76 (1920), pp. 120–21: *Quasi todos los nobles e condes de Espanna, los quales todos oyendolo, dexo el senorio de su rreino de la dicha donna Hurraca su fixa, la qual cosa me aconteçio oir, porque yo alli era presente.*

⁸⁷ R.P. Azevedo, ed., *Documentos medievais portugueses* (Lisbon, 1958), i, vol. i, pp. 19–21: *Urraka dei nutu totius yspanie regina.*

⁸⁸ J.M. Lacarra, *Vida de Alfonso el Batallador* (Saragossa, 1971), p. 31.

⁸⁹ Martin, *Queen as King*, p. 181.

eight years old; the couple was wed in 1114 at Worms.⁹⁰ For the next eleven years, Matilda performed the duties required of queens consort, yet she was unable to fulfill her most important duty, to produce healthy children and heirs. Therefore, when Henry V died in 1125, she had no further ties to Germany: she was an imperial widow rather than a dowager, and her status in Germany was ambiguous. To further compound the situation, her younger brother, William Adelin, died in the sinking of the White Ship in 1120, elevating her status from royal daughter to royal heiress. With no children and no husband, Henry I of England knew her remarriage would need to be arranged and, having decided on Geoffrey of Anjou, began the process of negotiations.

Fulk, Geoffrey's father, could not have known when he began negotiating with Henry I that Baldwin II would send ambassadors to Europe with an offer of marriage and the opportunity to rule the Holy Land. In hindsight, the marriage alliance of Matilda and Geoffrey came at the perfect moment for Fulk. He could proceed with his plans to marry Melisende and permanently relocate to Jerusalem without the worry of an Anglo-Norman threat on the borders of Anjou from their traditional rival.

Because written contracts were uncommon in Northern Europe, the details of the marriage terms are unknown, just as they are for Melisende and Fulk. It seems likely that Henry and Fulk agreed to preliminary terms by the end of May 1127 and celebrated a formal betrothal at Rouen.⁹¹ Despite a history of conflict between the two families, there was much to be gained on the Angevin side if Matilda succeeded with her claims to royal authority after the death of Henry I. Geoffrey stood the chance of ruling England and Normandy through the rights of his wife. Henry began securing the inheritance of his daughter prior to the opening of negotiations with Fulk. On 1 January 1127, Henry officially recognized Matilda as his heir and received the pledges of his aristocracy to support her claims as the sole legitimate heir.⁹² Therefore, it follows that any discussion regarding the terms of Matilda and Geoffrey's marriage also included the topic of Geoffrey's co-succession to the English throne.

As was the case in León-Castilla, there was no precedent for female royal inheritance in England and Normandy. Therefore, Matilda's succession was an experiment of the limitations of female authority. The marriage agreements likely set the terms for how Henry envisioned his daughter's rule. With no written document, historians cannot know whether Henry I wished for co-rule between Matilda and Geoffrey or if he intended their succession to function as a sort of regency until their first son could be crowned king.⁹³ Geoffrey's role in

⁹⁰ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 15.

⁹¹ Green, *Henry I*, pp. 200–01.

⁹² Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, pp. 51–53; Green, *Henry I*, pp. 191–95; Hollister, *Henry I*, pp. 313–18.

⁹³ Green, *Henry I*, p. 203; Hollister, *Henry I*, pp. 324–25.

English and Norman government became clear only after Fulk departed for the Holy Land. Fulk likely assumed that his son Geoffrey would rule England by right of his wife, as he likewise expected to do in the Holy Land. At the very least, Fulk would have anticipated co-rule between his son and new daughter-in-law. The English chronicler Symeon of Durham believed Geoffrey would become king if Henry did not have a male heir.⁹⁴ This expectation was repeated by Angevin writers even after it became apparent that Geoffrey would never sit on the English throne. Writing after Geoffrey's death in 1151, John of Marmoutier asserted that Matilda and Geoffrey journeyed to Angers following their wedding and were welcomed as the successors to the 'island of Great Britain and lands overseas'.⁹⁵ Furthermore, the chronicler of the bishops of Le Mans believed Geoffrey had legitimate claims to Normandy and England after Stephen of Blois usurped Matilda's inheritance in December 1135.⁹⁶

The betrothal at Rouen in May 1127 indicates that Henry and Fulk had agreed on initial terms for the marriage. More than a year later, Matilda and Geoffrey celebrated their marriage on 17 June 1128.⁹⁷ It is probable that the long delay was due to Geoffrey's age, rather than a prolonged series of negotiations. It was not, however, contingent on Fulk's own marriage plans to Melisende of Jerusalem.⁹⁸ William of Bures and Guy of Brisebarre did not approach Fulk of Anjou until the spring of 1128, by which time, arrangements were already underway for Geoffrey's marriage to Matilda.

The assurances that Fulk received about his son's position in the English succession by right of his future wife must have been useful for Fulk in his efforts to gauge his place in the succession to the throne of Jerusalem. As discussed, Mayer argues that Fulk wanted assurances from Baldwin II that Melisende was recognized as *heres regni*, as Matilda had been for the English crown at the Christmas court of 1126.⁹⁹ If Fulk could gain the guarantee of Matilda's position in the line of English succession for his son, he could similarly hope to gain similar promises from Baldwin II. The terms for the marriage between Matilda and Geoffrey must surely have been finalized by the time Fulk left Anjou to journey to Jerusalem. The prize of kingship in the Holy Land was not worth risking Plantagenet rule of Anjou; it

⁹⁴ Symeon of Durham, *Historia Regnum, Opera Omnia*, pp. 281–82.

⁹⁵ John of Marmoutier, 'Historia Gaufridi ducis Normannorum et comitis Andegavorum', in L. Halpern and R. Poupardin, eds., *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou et des seigneurs d'Amboise* (Paris, 1913), p. 181: *Duxerunt deinceps in bonis dies suos et Britannie Majoris insulam et transmaritimas partes magnifici germinis successione nobilitaverunt.*

⁹⁶ G. Busson and A. Ledru, eds., *Actus Pontificum Cenomannis in Urbe Degentium* (Le Mans, 1901), p. 445.

⁹⁷ For the date of the wedding, see Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109–1151*, pp. 22–23 and n. 4; K. Norgate, *England under the Angevin Kings* (2 vols, New York, 1887), vol. i, p. 258.

⁹⁸ Green, *Henry I*, pp. 200–01 suggests that negotiations over the marriage were tied to Fulk's own plans to wed Melisende. However, the chronology outlined here indicates that the arrangements for Geoffrey Plantagenet's marriage were completed by the time the ambassadors from Jerusalem entered negotiations with Fulk.

⁹⁹ Mayer, 'The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem', pp. 144–46.

was imperative that he leave Geoffrey protected from threats, and unresolved issues with the King of England was one such threat. Only fifteen years old, Geoffrey of Anjou was young and untested, and would be without the support of his father if he encountered a major crisis. Fulk was fully aware of the challenges of inheriting Anjou as a young man. He had succeeded his own father, Fulk le Réchin, when he was approximately nineteen years of age.¹⁰⁰ He became heir to Anjou and Touraine only after his older brother, Geoffrey II Martel, died while besieging Candé in 1106.¹⁰¹ Some Angevin castellans in Touraine defied Fulk early in his tenure as Count of Anjou in 1109, and Fulk spent the next several years building up his authority throughout the region.¹⁰² Fulk could be sure that some castellans would view the inheritance of the teenaged Geoffrey as an opportunity to rebel and increase their power. Geoffrey's marriage to Henry's heir, Matilda, meant that the threat of the Anglo-Normans was neutralized and Henry might even prove to be an ally to the new Count of Anjou.

The two Angevin marriages clearly demonstrate a broader policy of familial advancement. It was not uncommon for medieval families to seek the promotion of their dynasty or an increase in status or power through strategic marriages.¹⁰³ However, the two marriages took place within two years of each other, which is striking. Duke William's success in conquering England was a recent memory, and Fulk likely had similarly lofty goals for his son: a French territorial prince made king of England. The crusades provided new outlets for power. Fulk was crowned king of Jerusalem on 14 September 1131, three weeks after the death of his father-in-law, Baldwin II. He thereby achieved a status he hoped could be replicated for Geoffrey. The establishment of Angevin authority in the Holy Land undoubtedly carried symbolic meaning for Fulk of Anjou, but his successful rise to royal authority surely enhanced the reputation of his dynasty. Geoffrey, now count of Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, recognized his father's new royal status in his charters by calling himself 'son of King Fulk of Jerusalem'.¹⁰⁴ Just as Duke Robert Curthose and Henry I had done with their father, William the Conqueror, the Angevins could now claim a royal connection.

¹⁰⁰ Fulk V could have been as young as seventeen upon his succession in April 1109. See Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109–1151*, p. 1.

¹⁰¹ Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109–1151*, pp. 1–4; O. Guillot, *Le comte d'Anjou et son entourage au XIe siècle* (2 vols, Paris, 1972), pp. 123–24.

¹⁰² Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109–1151*, pp. 26–27.

¹⁰³ J. Martindale, 'Succession and Politics in the Romance-Speaking World', in M. Jones and M. Vale, eds., *England and her Neighbors 1066–1435* (London, 1989), p. 38.

¹⁰⁴ The extant sources note that Geoffrey Plantagenet first made use of his father's status as king of Jerusalem when he confirmed one of Fulk's donations to the abbey of Tiron in 1132. See L. Merlet, ed., *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de La Sainte-Trinité de Tiron* (2 vols, Chartres, 1883), no. 165: *Ego Goffredus, comes Andecavensis, donum quod pater meus Fulcho, qui nunc est in Jerusalem rex, concessit.*

The possibility that Geoffrey might have some claim to the crown of Jerusalem upon his father's death became irrelevant as soon as Melisende gave birth to her first son, Baldwin, in August 1130. It appears that Baldwin II feared that Fulk's other children might attempt to usurp the throne, so he exerted control of the line of succession in ways Fulk may not have predicted. On his deathbed in August 1131, Baldwin II designated succession as a three-way rulership, with Fulk, Melisende, and the infant Baldwin III sharing power.¹⁰⁵ Baldwin II thus ensured that Fulk would not bypass his heirs by Melisende in favor of his older sons and that royal power would continue through Melisende's line. Whatever incentives Baldwin's ambassadors promised Fulk never came to fruition because Baldwin II ensured that the *cura regni* could not pass out of the royal dynasty. Geoffrey of Anjou's expectations of royal rule were ended the moment Matilda's cousin Stephen of Blois usurped the crown in 1135, following Henry's death in Rouen. Both Angevin marriages did, however, supply kingdoms with precious male heirs, something that neither Baldwin II nor Henry I had managed to do.

Comparing the three marriage negotiations for royal heiresses proves difficult. For the Angevin marriages, there is plentiful evidence of the events surrounding the negotiations but little documentary evidence for what was promised. For Urraca and El Batallador's marriage in Spain, there is an extant contract, but the narrative sources remain quiet on how the marriage was negotiated. Presumably, an embassy was employed to conduct negotiations between the Leonese and Aragonese courts. Urraca and El Batallador's contract is unusual in its presumption that the marriage would face opposition from local aristocrats and bishops as well as from the pope. Because the marriage was ultimately unsuccessful, and none of the sources show surprise at this, it is possible that the vulnerable marriage needed the extra weight of the contract. While some opposed Matilda and Geoffrey's marriage, it had the backing of their fathers and enough powerful nobles to make the marriage worthwhile. Additionally, both Angevin marriages faced no papal opposition. These negotiations reveal that for Urraca, the contract served as a protective measure allowing her to gain and retain control of the throne of León-Castilla. Iberian royalty faced far greater instability than northern dynastic rule. The political climate of medieval Iberia was constantly in flux, and preserving Urraca and her dynasty was of the utmost importance. Although Alfonso VI may have intended for El Batallador to rule in place of or alongside Urraca, her political skill was unmatched. The negotiation process was of great importance to the institution of marriage. Whether through written contract or drawn-out assemblies and discussions, the intention was

¹⁰⁵ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, no. 28.

to establish what each party could expect in marriage. However, these cases demonstrate that the oral agreement tradition allowed for greater flexibility and perhaps was to the benefit of the couple in their efforts to claim the throne and rule.

iv. Marriages of aristocratic heiresses

Aristocratic heiresses faced similar challenges in marriage and inheritance as their royal counterparts. Medieval women at all levels were impacted by the structural aspects of society: their principal role was bearing and raising children, and women were not expected to hold public office. It was common for a medieval heiress, either royal or aristocratic, to have very little power or authority before she married, had an heir, and succeeded her father. Therefore, the marriages of aristocratic heiresses mirror the marriage arrangements of Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda. It was only after coming fully into their own authority that these women might have the opportunity to define the terms for their relationships. Aristocratic heiresses, and indeed other royal daughters, were privileged with greater power than many other medieval women. However, because royal heiresses might become queens regnant, a different set of rules governed their lives, allowing them to achieve far more than their aristocratic counterparts. The marriages of aristocratic heiresses highlight this disparity. The spouse of an aristocratic heiress should, in theory, safeguard his wife's territory and inheritance. In general, heiresses had little freedom of choice in partner and had an obligation to produce an heir for their lands, and indeed, so too did male heirs. However, an heiress might be permitted to remain a widow after the death of her husband if she already had a minor heir whose interests might be compromised by her remarriage. A strong husband would ensure the uniquely male aspects of rulership would be carried out in the event of a female succession. Few patterns emerge for comparison in Iberia whether because of a paucity of aristocratic heiresses or a lack of historiography. Therefore, the circumstances in Iberia can only be extrapolated from patterns established in other parts of the medieval world.

It is worth focusing on female succession in the Latin East. The Holy Land witnessed a significantly higher number of heiresses than other parts of Christendom. Inheritance of daughters occurred with regularity in a frontier society where lords and knights were often taken captive or killed on the battlefield. Accordingly, succession laws in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem were inclined to treat women more favorably than those in the West. According to Philip of Novara, there was an early assize that enabled women to inherit—a decision that Praver argues provided an added incentive and assurances to prospective settlers.¹⁰⁶ As the

¹⁰⁶ J. Praver, *Crusader Institutions* (Oxford, 1980), p. 25.

Latin occupying force was relatively small, female succession to property and land was crucial to the transmission of power throughout the Levant. In order to provide the greatest manpower per area of land, knights were prevented for a time from holding more than one fief. According to Philip of Novara, this meant that even if there were a male heir, a woman could inherit if he was unable to perform the necessary service for that fief.¹⁰⁷

From around the time of Baldwin II, noble heiresses in the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem were required to marry by law so that their husbands could provide military service.¹⁰⁸ Laws stipulated that only those women who inherited a fief with personal military service attached to it were required to marry; further, the lord was required to provide three candidates suitable to her rank from whom she (or her family) could choose, thus preserving the appearance of a consensual match. She did have the right to refuse, but this could ultimately result in the loss of her fief.¹⁰⁹ During the reign of Melisende's youngest son, Amalric, in the second half of the twelfth century, partible inheritance was enforced if there was more than one female heir, again with the intention of maximizing the tax owed to the crown. This rule did not apply to the major baronies or the royal house of Jerusalem, and it created, to an extent, a two-tier system of government, preserving the power of the established noble families.¹¹⁰

Still, marriage to an heiress with a claim, even one not in possession of her lands, could attract a suitor who had the means to take back his prospective wife's inheritance. This gave legitimacy to a knight's territorial ambitions; thus, dispossessed women were often married to crusaders in order to reclaim lost land and to give men from the West an incentive to fight. Most importantly, it encouraged crusaders to settle and contribute to the permanent feudal levy that was necessary for the continued survival of a Latin presence in the East. Members of established noble families in the Latin East also benefitted from marriage to heiresses. Mayer has described the Ibelins as 'a family which, at all times, placed great

¹⁰⁷ Philip of Novara, *Livre* (1841), 1, vol. i, pp. 559–60.; See also P. Edbury, 'Women and the High Court of Jerusalem according to John of Ibelin', in D. Coulon, C. Otten-Froux, P. Pagès, and D. Valérian, eds., *Chemins d'outremer: Études sur la Méditerranée médiévale offertes à Michel Balard*, 1 (2 vols, Paris, 2004), vol. i, pp. 285–86.

¹⁰⁸ Widowed heiresses were encouraged to remarry until the age of sixty, following the advice of St Paul. J.A. Brundage, 'Marriage Law in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem', in B.Z. Kedar, H.E. Mayer, and R.C. Smail, eds., *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem Presented to Joshua Prawer* (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 270–1; See also Prawer, *Crusader Institutions*, p. 27; Edbury, 'Women and the High Court of Jerusalem according to John of Ibelin', pp. 288–9.

¹⁰⁹ Brundage, 'Marriage Law in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem', pp. 269–70; Prawer, *Crusader Institutions*, pp. 287–8.

¹¹⁰ For the assize referring to the partible inheritance between brothers and sisters, see Philip of Novara, *Livre*, vol. 1, p. 542.

importance on concluding marriages which would accelerate their family's rise to the top'.¹¹¹ In particular, the marriage of Barisan (Balian the elder) to Helvis, lady of Ramla, was a significant factor in elevating his family's profile. Mayer suggests that Helvis held a position as an heiress, similar to that of Melisende, with Barisan as her consort; her brother Renier challenged successfully for patrimony when he came of age in 1143–44, however, and King Fulk was obliged to soften the blow by giving the newly built fortress of Ibelin to Barisan. Renier then died in 1146–48, and the lordship of Ramla fell to Barisan once again, and later their son Hugh.¹¹² William of Tyre did not consider Helvis significant beyond her later remarriage to Manasses of Hierges. Throughout the twelfth century, the Ibelins' dynastic policy grew ever more ambitious. Ernoul went as far as to suggest that Baldwin of Ibelin, lord of Ramla, entertained hopes of marrying Sybilla, the heiress to the throne of Jerusalem, and was deeply upset by her marriage to William of Montferrat.¹¹³

In the Anglo-Norman realm, as in others, women became heiresses in the absence of male heirs. Jane Martindale makes the point that Matilda's rival for the crown, Stephen of Blois, had advanced his claims and power by marrying one such heiress.¹¹⁴ His wife, Matilda of Boulogne (d. 1152), was the daughter and heiress of Eustace III, count of Boulogne (d. 1125) and Mary of Scotland, daughter of St Margaret of Scotland and thus cousin to Empress Matilda.¹¹⁵ Her marriage to Stephen in 1125 meant that their children would be descended from both the Anglo-Norman and Anglo-Saxon dynasties. By marrying an heiress, Stephen was able to increase his annual income by £770, with significant wealth derived from East Anglia. Matilda's father, Eustace III, gave 'his inheritance to Stephen along with his daughter in marriage'.¹¹⁶ The heiress, Matilda of Boulogne, had no recorded participation in the marriage negotiation process. Her silence during this period of her life contrasted to her later demonstration of power during Stephen's reign as King of England.

Eleanor of Aquitaine (r. 1137–1204), by contrast to many medieval women, demonstrated moments of considerable power and authority throughout much of her life. But she, too, follows the model of other aristocratic heiresses. Eleanor inherited the Duchy of Aquitaine at the age of thirteen upon the death of her father, William IX. Her guardian, Louis

¹¹¹ H.E. Mayer, 'Carving up Crusaders: The Early Ibelins and Ramlas', in B.Z. Kedar, H.E. Mayer, and R.C. Smail, eds., *Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem Presented to Joshua Prawer* (Jerusalem, 1982), pp. 108–9.

¹¹² Mayer, 'Carving up Crusaders: The Early Ibelins and Ramlas', pp. 115–18.

¹¹³ N. Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 86.

¹¹⁴ Martindale, 'Succession and Politics in the Romance-Speaking World', p. 32; R.H.C. Davis, *King Stephen, 1135–1154* (London, 1990), pp. 7–10.

¹¹⁵ E. King, *King Stephen* (New Haven, 2010), p. 61.

¹¹⁶ King, *King Stephen*, p. 61; A. Bernard and A. Bruel, eds., *Recueil de chartes de l'abbaye de Cluny* (6 vols, Paris, 1903 1876), pp. 340–41: *laudante simulque confirmante Stephano comite Boloniensi, cui hereditatem meam cum Mathildi filia mea dedi.*

VI of France (d. 1137), quickly arranged her marriage to his son and heir, Louis VII. Eleanor's young age and inexperience made her vulnerable: Louis VI and Louis VII both intended the Duchy of Aquitaine to be integrated into the royal domain through Eleanor's offspring.¹¹⁷ The marriage lasted from 1137 to 1152 and provided Eleanor with many opportunities to learn statecraft. Aristocratic heiresses who were also queens consort could hold even greater power than other women because they had power as consort and authority from her aristocratic inheritance.

Eleanor's marriage to Louis VII of France was unsuccessful; the couple's relationship was troubled, and only two daughters were produced during the fifteen years of the marriage. It is unclear which party initiated the divorce, although some have suggested it was Eleanor's prerogative.¹¹⁸ The divorce from Louis VII was pronounced at Beaugency on 21 March 1152, and within two months, on 18 May 1152, Eleanor remarried Henry Fitz Empress, soon to be Henry II of England and Normandy. As a woman of thirty years and sole ruler of a large, powerful, and wealthy duchy, Eleanor of Aquitaine was able to arrange her own remarriage. Her maturity and ability to wield legitimate authority in her duchy enabled her to establish her own agency. Only one earlier aristocratic heiress in western Christendom is known to have begun divorce proceedings from her husband. Countess Beatrice of Guines (d. 1146), heiress to a cross-channel estate like Matilda of Boulogne, was married to Aubrey de Vere III (d. 1194). Beatrice's inheritance was under threat from a rival male claimant. Her husband, Aubrey, was invested as Count of Guines in 1138 but soon returned to England to participate in the conflict between King Stephen and Empress Matilda. Beatrice repeatedly implored her husband to return to their holdings to come to her aid, but de Vere remained embroiled in the English conflict, and was named earl of Oxford by Empress Matilda in 1141. The Countess initiated annulment proceedings in 1145.¹¹⁹

In unions where aristocratic heiresses married into royal houses, such as Jeanne of Champagne's marriage to Philip IV of France, the heiress's lands were eventually brought into the royal domain. However, this was a delayed process as it was only after the heiress' son's inheritance that these lands were brought into the royal dominion. Champagne lost its

¹¹⁷ M. Hivergneaux, 'Queen Eleanor and Aquitaine, 1137–1189', in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, eds., *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady* (New York, 2002), p. 59.

¹¹⁸ D.D.R. Owen, *Eleanor of Aquitaine, Queen and Legend* (Oxford, 1993), pp. 30–31; R.C. DeAragon, 'Wife, Widow, and Mother: Some Comparisons between Eleanor of Aquitaine and Noblewomen of the Anglo-Norman and Angevin World', in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, eds., *Eleanor of Aquitaine, Lord and Lady* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 99–100.

¹¹⁹ DeAragon, 'Wife, Widow, and Mother', p. 31, n. 16. Aragon notes that there is doubt that the marriage was consummated, as Beatrice of Guines was young and in poor health. See Lambert of Ardes, *Historia Comitum Ghisnensium* (1879), 24, chap. 60, p. 591.

independence once it was subsumed into the royal kingdom of France upon Louis X's ascension as king of France in 1314. Eleanor of Aquitaine's two marriages, by contrast, followed a different model; her lands were not subsumed into the royal domains of either France or England and remained separate principalities. For a royal heiress, an aristocratic husband might have been a safer option because he stood to enhance the prestige of his own house, whereas a royal spouse might seek to overtake his wife's kingdom, as El Batallador aimed to do with Urraca's kingdom.

For an heiress to successfully inherit, a co-ruler was necessary to ensure that the ruler's duties could be seamlessly carried out. Aristocratic heiresses' marriages were aimed at stabilizing relations and protecting interests in the same manner as the marriages of royal heiresses. For royal heiresses, the stakes were higher because the choice of spouse could have ramifications for generations. The documentation for royal heiresses is thus more extensive than that of their aristocratic counterparts and indicates the significance of the marriages. These marriages were intended to be a stepping-stone on the path toward female succession, but the betrothals were arranged and negotiated by men. Heiresses had little authority or agency before they inherited their lands and reached the age of maturity. It was only after they claimed their inheritances and secured their successions that they had the potential to demonstrate unfettered authority; there was not, however, a guarantee that they would be able to do so.

Conclusion

Although Urraca of León-Castilla and Melisende of Jerusalem would eventually rule as queens regnant without a male co-ruler, they were unable to attain the throne alone; their aristocracies accepted female royal inheritance only if a male figure exercised royal authority. This chapter demonstrates the relative weakness of a woman's chances to rule as queen regnant without marriage to a suitable co-ruler. From the women's perspective, consenting to a marriage can be viewed as part of a strategy to gain the throne. While some medieval kings, like William the Conqueror, were able to seize the throne through battle and conquest, marriage to a royal heiress was an easier and peaceful way to expand authority.

The differences between written and oral marriage contracts reveal the possible rewards of each method. Written contracts, the Iberians' preference, allowed both parties to define clear parameters for the union and to attempt to address potential conflicts before they arose. Urraca and Alfonso el Batallador's marriage makes clear, however, that these contracts did not guarantee a successful union. The provisions they made for steadfastness in the face of

papal condemnation, excommunication, or spousal abandonment reveal their very real worries. In contrast, both Angevin marriages preferred verbal agreements. This allowed the negotiators to discuss their concerns and to try to find solutions. Yet because female royal inheritance was such an unusual occurrence in the twelfth century, oral agreements allowed flexibility to find solutions as the need arose. For example, it can be assumed that Fulk of Anjou was promised unencumbered rule of Jerusalem, but Baldwin II, evidently skeptical of his son-in-law's support for the succession rights of a son by Melisende, declared Fulk, Melisende, and Baldwin III co-rulers. A written agreement might have undermined a marriage by imposing rigid parameters that restricted both parties' abilities to respond to changing circumstances.

A comparative examination of the marriages of royal and aristocratic heiresses makes clear that medieval heiresses and, by extension, medieval women, were in positions of relative weakness before marriage. For royal heiresses, marriage to a suitable co-ruler enabled women to claim their inheritances. For aristocratic heiresses, it does not appear that their inheritances were as dependent on marriage. However, both classes of heiress were excluded from the marriage negotiation process and their consent was assumed. Aristocratic heiresses could demonstrate their own authority only after the deaths of their fathers and once they had reached maturity. These high-ranking women had the potential to claim their own legitimate authority, independent of the king or lord, and enjoy a level of agency that other medieval women did not. Nonetheless, it was only after their marriages that it was possible for these women to exert any authority. Fathers and potential husbands arranged marriages of medieval heiresses, and the voices of women are silent.

Chapter Two

Ruling with Husbands

In the event of female royal succession, the solution for overcoming the vulnerabilities of female rule was to secure a male co-ruler through marriage. While many kings could rely on their wives to assist in matters of ruling, a different set of circumstances and expectations applied to queens regnant and their spouses. Co-rule between husband and wife was a delicate and complex matter that the kingdoms of León-Castilla, Jerusalem, and potentially the Anglo-Norman realm dealt with in the twelfth century. As queens regnant, these women would have legitimate authority and power uncommon for women in the medieval period and could, therefore, participate in ruling to a greater degree. In typical circumstances, wives were subservient to their husbands and men were expected to rule. Therefore, unique challenges emerged in the reigns of Urraca of León-Castilla, Melisende of Jerusalem, and Empress Matilda as each woman attempted to establish rules and share power with their husbands.

This chapter explores the impact of the selection of spouse had on a royal heiress' chances to successfully gain the throne, the conflicts she might have had with her husband regarding the delicate matter of sharing power, and instances of success with their co-rule. In contrast to other chapters, relevant comparisons to aristocratic heiresses are raised throughout the chapter, rather than appear as a stand-alone section. As always, the career of Empress Matilda remains a challenge in light of her unsuccessful attempts to claim the English crown against her cousin King Stephen I and establish herself in England as its queen regnant. However, Matilda and her supporters viewed her position as legitimate, and therefore her tenure in England (1139–1148) is treated as a *de facto* rule.

i. Impact of the selection of spouse

For a woman to gain the throne, the previous monarch and his aristocracy believed that coordinating a marriage to a capable man who could serve as a co-ruler to his royal wife was the first step towards female royal inheritance. After the death of the previous monarch, however, the ascension of a royal heiress was far from guaranteed, as most clearly evidenced by Matilda's case in England. As a way to protect the positions of the aspiring queens regnant, Alfonso I el Batallador of Aragón (r. 1104–1134), Fulk of Anjou (r. 1131–1143), and Geoffrey of Anjou (1129–1151) were each carefully chosen for their perceived political, territorial, and military advantages. Once the previous king had died, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda were without the protection of their father. Whatever apparent benefit their husbands

brought to the union could quickly shift, and instead of acting as the women's protectors, they could become their rivals for the throne.

Several factors determined the impact the husband had on a royal heiress' succession. For a woman to gain the throne, she required the support of the aristocracy, and the nuances of aristocratic politics and rivalries could impact her chances to gain the throne, especially if the royal heiress' husband was unpopular among certain factions. Comparing these three cases suggests that the decision to marry an outsider or a known political player from the same region could visibly influence the success or failure of the marriage and co-rule, although other comparisons to foreign queens consort can also be made. Scholars have explored the role and impact of the 'alien queen', foreign women who become queen consort. Pauline Stafford and Robert Bartlett, amongst others, have investigated the perceived advantages and fears regarding foreign-born queens.¹ Bartlett correctly argues that foreign queens consort could avoid 'polarizing tendencies within the native aristocracy'.² No equivalent study exists for the 'alien' husbands of royal heiresses. Marriage to a neighboring lord or king, as in the cases of Urraca to El Batallador and Matilda to Geoffrey of Anjou, were both sought as immediate solutions to complicated problems within the regions. Furthermore, the time that elapsed between the marriage and the death of the king could be years, and within that time, any number of shifts might occur. With marriage secured for all three royal heiresses, in this section, the impact of the selection on the women's chances of securing the throne is explored.

Despite all his efforts, Alfonso VI of León-Castilla (d. 1109) had no male heirs to succeed him. His only son, Sancho Alfónsez had been retroactively legitimized in either 1103 or 1107 but died in battle in late May of that same year.³ Therefore, he designated his eldest child, Urraca, as his successor.⁴ In his final months, Alfonso VI betrothed his recently widowed daughter to the neighboring king, El Batallador in the summer of 1109 and the wedding probably took place in October 1109.⁵ Then, in December 1109, the couple signed

¹ P. Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers: The King's Wife in the Early Middle Ages* (Athens, GA, 1983), p. 44.

² R. Bartlett, *The Making of Europe: Conquest, Colonization and Cultural Change 950–1350* (London, 1993), pp. 230–31.

³ R. Arco, 'El Monasterio de Montearagón', in *Linajes de Aragón* (1914), reprinted in; R. Arco, 'El Monasterio de Montearagón', *Argensola: Revista de Ciencias Sociales del Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses*, 53–54 (1963), pp. 377, 383.

⁴ His illegitimate daughter, Teresa, Countess of Portugal, was born the following year in 1080 and married to the Burgundian nephew of Queen Constance, Henry, in 1096.

⁵ The most thorough study of Alfonso el Batallador's reign is the work of J.A. Lema Pueyo *Instituciones políticas del reinado de Alfonso I el Batallador, rey de Aragón y Pamplona (1104–1134)* (Bilbao, 1997).

the marriage contracts that outlined the parameters for their union.⁶ Alfonso VI had valid reasons for settling on Alfonso el Batallador; the Aragonese king was a capable military commander and the marriage alliance with Urraca of León-Castilla would likely neutralize the threat that El Batallador would likely pose in different circumstances. This marriage, for all its perceived advantages, was unpopular with many important Leonese nobles.⁷

Urraca's success as heiress was contingent on the support from her aristocracy. The powerful group of nobles that were in favor of the Aragonese match lent their support to Urraca only if she agreed to the marriage. In many ways, Urraca's reign was unique; she was the first Leonese queen regnant, her independent rule resulted from an annulment rather than the death of a spouse, and she overcame the perceived necessity of a co-rule in order to fully achieve her vision of rulership in her own right without a spouse. When Urraca attempted to separate from El Batallador and establish an independent rule, she found support from an outspoken group of nobles who had protested the match. The selection of El Batallador made political sense at the moment of her father's death but lost its impact when the couple remained childless and civil conflict erupted. The potential benefits for marrying Urraca were significant, which explains why El Batallador agreed to the union. However, the longstanding rivalry between the kingdoms of León-Castilla and Aragón resulted in direct opposition to the union from its very start. Additionally, the claims of Urraca's half-sister, Teresa of Portugal, and her ambitious Burgundian husband, Henry, posed a threat to Urraca's ascension. Combined with the personal dissatisfaction the couple had with each other and Urraca's belief in her legitimacy as sole ruler of León-Castilla, the union was not successful. The marriage did, however, secure the requisite support from her aristocracy to move forward with her independent coronation as queen regnant and provided the opportunity to assert her claims as queen regnant.

In contrast, Melisende of Jerusalem's marriage to Fulk of Anjou occurred before the death of her father, the king. As the eldest daughter of Baldwin II of Jerusalem (r. 1118–1131), Melisende was fortunate that her father took steps to ensure she succeeded to the throne with relative ease by gaining the consent of his aristocracy for both her succession and her marriage to Fulk. The Kingdom of Jerusalem continually had a shortage of able-bodied soldiers. Fulk's arrival in the Holy Land for his marriage to Melisende not only provided the

⁶ As studied and published by J.M. Ramos y Loscertales, 'La sucesión del rey Alfonso VI', *Anuario de Historia del Derecho Español*, 13 (41 1936), pp. 36–99. See Chapter One, Section iii for a discussion of the details of the *carta de arras*.

⁷ See Chapter One, Section iii for details of those that favored and opposed the union.

kingdom with a capable co-ruler but also brought with him a large retinue of trained and well-equipped men.

As a known outsider to the Holy Land, Fulk of Anjou's marriage to Melisende was a careful and well-thought decision because by selecting a husband from outside the established aristocracy, no single faction was advanced over another. Fulk's outsider status ties into the idea of the alien queen. The foreign queen consort could bring many valuable assets to a marriage, just as Fulk did with his vital fighting retinue, the queen's foreign influence would eventually be seen as corruptive.⁸ Although Fulk would later encounter difficulties and a certain amount of resistance to his authority on account of his favoring newly arrived Angevins, his perceived neutrality to the various factions within the aristocracy helped ensure a peaceful transition after Baldwin II's death. It was only after succeeding to royal authority that he met with resistance.

When Fulk of Anjou departed for the Holy Land in the spring of 1129, he expected to eventually succeed King Baldwin II as King of Jerusalem. Without written marriage contracts, the exact promises he had received from Baldwin II's ambassadors regarding his position as king of Jerusalem are unknown. Mayer relies on William of Tyre's chronicle as the source of his argument, that Fulk was promised that 'within fifty days of his arrival in the Holy Land he would be given the hand of the King's eldest daughter *cum spe regni post regis obitum*.'⁹ Mayer then points to a series of charters issued by Baldwin II in 1129 in which he referred to Melisende as '*Milissenda filia regis*'¹⁰ and '*Milissendis filia regis et regni Ierosolimitani haeres*'.¹¹ After Fulk's arrival and marriage to Melisende, Baldwin changed how he addressed Melisende in his documents. In a grant made to the Holy Sepulchre, which Mayer dates to 1130 or 1131, the charter the couple are included as '*in praesentia comitis Andegavensis atque Milissendis filie mee*'.¹² By dropping the *haeres regni* style, Baldwin II indicated that Fulk was considered the sole heir.¹³ Mayer's argument carries weight and it seems likely that Fulk anticipated ruling Jerusalem, a prize worthy of leaving his Angevin lands behind and abdicating in favor of his son, Geoffrey. However, the spoken marriage agreements allowed Baldwin II flexibility to change or adjust the succession to include his daughter and grandson.

⁸ Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers*, p. 44; M.A. Pappano, 'Marie de France, Aliénor D'Aquitaine, and the Alien Queen', in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, eds., *Eleanor of Aquitaine: Lord and Lady* (New York, 2002), p. 343.

⁹ H.E. Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (1972), p. 98; William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Turnhout, 1986), bk. 13, no. 24.

¹⁰ R. Röhrich, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani* (Innsbruck, 1904 1893), no. 121.

¹¹ Röhrich, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 137a.

¹² Röhrich, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 137.

¹³ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', p. 99.

As with queens regnant, the language used for the husbands of ruling queens is ambiguous. Just as no Latin equivalent exists for a female king, medieval scribes did not have a word to describe a king consort or co-ruling king. Baldwin II evidently felt the need to safeguard the future claims of his grandson from the possibility that Fulk of Anjou would support any claims from his Angevin children and also protect Melisende in the event that Fulk repudiated her in favor of a different woman. Baldwin II became ill in August 1131 and called Melisende, Fulk, and their infant son, Baldwin, to his deathbed. After summoning his closest magnates, he designated the succession to the royal trio. Other scholars have supported the claim that Fulk had been incentivized to leave his Angevin holdings to his son, Geoffrey, and permanently depart for the Holy Land upon the explicit promise of the right to rule alone.¹⁴ Baldwin II made it clear to his successors and his aristocracy that he intended Fulk to rule as joint sovereign with Melisende and their son.

While extant sources for the Holy Land are not as plentiful as for the Anglo-Norman realm or León-Castilla, they indicate that Fulk anticipated widespread support from the aristocracy of Jerusalem for his eventual accession. During the three years between his marriage to Melisende and the death of Baldwin II in 1131, the couple's relationship appears to have been peaceful. The timing of events also benefitted the couple; this period allowed Fulk to build up relationships among the existing aristocracy and Melisende's position as heiress was strengthened by her inclusion in her father's government. Furthermore, during this time, they had their first son, which reinforced their claim to the throne. The rapid change from sole king to co-ruler with wife and child meant that Fulk would have to manage political situations differently than he had expected. Sources do not indicate that Baldwin II considered these changes prior to his health decline.

Fulk's marriage to Melisende of Jerusalem was advantageous in many ways: Fulk was a battle-tested warrior who could promote the military interests of the Kingdom of Jerusalem; he brought with him much needed well-equipped and seasoned fighting men, and he was well-versed in managing political affairs after his many years as Count of Anjou during a contentious period when all his neighbors might have been enemies or rivals. Fulk was an ideal choice of husband for Melisende on many levels, but he was also perhaps too powerful for Baldwin to trust him. This tentative trust meant that on his deathbed, Baldwin II specified that the line would continue specifically through his daughter, and not through her husband.

¹⁴ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', pp. 98–102; H.E. Mayer, 'The Succession to Baldwin II of Jerusalem: English Impact on the East', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (1985), pp. 139–47; N. Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 76; B. Kühnel, *Crusader Art of the Twelfth Century* (Berlin, 1994), p. 80.

Empress Matilda's marriage to Geoffrey of Anjou stands in sharp contrast to the other royal heiresses of the twelfth century for the principle reason that the choice of Geoffrey as husband and potential co-ruler possibly hindered Matilda's chances of claiming her inheritance and succeeding her father as queen regnant. Of course, Geoffrey's impact on the English succession is only known in hindsight. At the time of Matilda and Geoffrey's betrothal in May 1127, the greatest threat to her succession came from her cousin William Clito (d. 1128).¹⁵ Henry I had opened negotiations with Fulk of Anjou for the marriage of Matilda and Geoffrey in the spring of 1127 as a response to the assassination of Charles the Good.¹⁶ Due to Louis VI's (d. 1137) intervention, William Clito's candidacy was accepted. William Clito had a legitimate claim to the English throne, and Matilda and Geoffrey's marriage must be viewed as a reaction to these events.

In this context, Henry approached Fulk again with another marriage proposal.¹⁷ The lucrative offer of marriage between Henry's only surviving legitimate child, Empress Matilda, and Fulk's teenaged heir, Geoffrey. The wedding of Geoffrey and Matilda in 1128 secured a political alliance between Anjou and Normandy once again and protected the claims of Henry's heir, Matilda, against her ambitious cousin, William. However, on 28 July 1128, William Clito died. Marriage to Anjou's heir solved a problem that suddenly no longer existed. Without the threat of William Clito, Geoffrey of Anjou was no longer the ideal husband for the Matilda. The animosity between Anjou and Normandy lingered long after the wedding.

Henry I died on 1 December 1135 in Rouen, sparking the beginning of a civil conflict in England and Normandy that lasted until 1153. Although Matilda had been designated as Henry's heir, her cousin Stephen of Blois (d. 1154) asserted his own claim to the English throne through his mother, Adela of Blois (d. 1137), the daughter of William the Conqueror.¹⁸ When news of Henry's death reached Stephen at Boulogne, he quickly crossed the channel to claim the English throne.¹⁹ Matilda, by contrast, was in her husband's lands in Anjou and was pregnant with their third child. For the next four years, Matilda remained in Normandy as

¹⁵ See Chapter One, Section i for a discussion of events surrounding William Clito's investiture as Count of Flanders in 1127 and death in 1128.

¹⁶ Charles the Good was murdered on 2 March 1127 while attending mass at the church of Saint Donatian in Bruges. See Galbert of Bruges, *The Murder of Charles the Good*, tran. J.B. Ross (New York, 1959), pp. 118–19; Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall (6 vols, Oxford, 80 1969), bk. 6, pp. 370–71.

¹⁷ See Chapter One, Section i for a discussion of the marriages of William Adelin to Matilda of Anjou and William Clito to Sybilla of Anjou.

¹⁸ See Chapters Three and Four for more discussion regarding the succession crisis and Matilda's struggle against Stephen.

¹⁹ See D. Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen, 1135–1154* (Harlow, 2000), pp. 30–39 for a detailed description of Stephen's itinerary.

Geoffrey endeavored to secure the Norman inheritance. Geoffrey and Matilda managed to gain control over key holdings at Exmes, Domfront, Argentan, Ambrières, Gorrion, and Colmont.²⁰ It appears that the decision to remain in Normandy, rather than assert her claims in England, was Geoffrey's. Because he had been in conflict with Henry I over Norman castles near the Angevin border prior to Henry's death, it follows that he was resolved to repossess those castles. Matilda showed little agency during this period in Normandy and although Matilda had many important ties to the region, Geoffrey showed a primary interest in claiming the duchy.

Shortly after her father's death, Matilda gave birth to her third child, William, on 22 July 1136.²¹ Chibnall reconstructed Matilda's path to England and noted that she remained in Normandy, likely at Argentan, during the preparation for her departure for England in 1139.²² Their next target was Falaise, which Robert of Gloucester, Matilda's half-brother, had previously secured in favor of Stephen. Crucially, Falaise housed the Norman treasury. Robert of Gloucester shifted the tide of the war by pledging support to his half-sister. When Matilda arrived in England on 30 September 1139, Geoffrey was not with her. Instead, she brought Robert of Gloucester to champion her cause and left Geoffrey to secure their interests in Normandy. There is historical precedent for the royal couple to divide tasks in a cross-channel realm. The standard practice under William I and Henry I was to utilize their consorts, Matilda of Flanders and Matilda of Scotland respectively, to govern one polity while the king attended to the more problematic of the two entities. From their foothold along the Maine-Normandy border, Geoffrey continued his advances into the north, east, and west of the duchy. One of the most pivotal moments in the war was Matilda's capture of Stephen at Lincoln on 2 February 1141. Geoffrey made significantly more substantial gains in Normandy following Stephen's capture than previously. Political advantages accompanied these military victories as an increasing number of magnates defected to the Angevin cause.

The conquest of Normandy was ultimately successful because of Geoffrey's efforts to steadily expand his power. He worked to control military fortresses and install loyal supporters in key outposts, win over the church, and finally receive the symbolically important investiture. With Normandy secure for the Angevins, Matilda needed to replicate her husband's successes in England to effectively win the war for her inheritance. Rather than

²⁰ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, bk. 6, pp. 454–55; M. Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: queen consort, queen mother and lady of the English* (Oxford, 1991), p. 66 n. 11; William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella: The Contemporary History*, ed. E. King (Oxford, 1998), p. 27 recounts that 'some castles in Normandy, of which Domfront was the chief, sided with the heiress'.

²¹ P. Marchegay and E. Mabille, eds., 'Chronicae Sancti Albini Andegavensis', in *Chroniques des églises d'Anjou* (Paris, 1869), p. 34: 1136. *Guillelmus natus est xi° kal' Augusti*.

²² Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 67.

join in his wife's efforts in England, Geoffrey remained across the channel in his lands.

Haskins described Geoffrey's tenure as duke as 'a regency rather than a permanent government',²³ an image that persists still.²⁴ It is clear that Normandy held personal significance for Matilda as she kept in contact with leading church figures and chose to retire near Rouen after 1148. However, Geoffrey deserves the credit for conquering it.

Although it was common practice among Anglo-Norman kings to entrust their spouses to administer part of their realm, Geoffrey's actions in Normandy reveal a more personal agenda. It was only through Matilda's designation as heir to Normandy that Geoffrey had any claim, although Matilda never adopted a title specific to her Norman inheritance.²⁵ According to Robert of Torigni, Henry I wanted Matilda 'to succeed to the kingdom of England after his death by hereditary right,' and Normandy was 'her inheritance', however, she focused her attentions on England and Geoffrey took up the task of conquering Normandy.²⁶ Geoffrey remained behind in Normandy and was invested Duke. Eventually, he established a position in Normandy that few refuted and when he died, Henry Fitz Empress succeeded him.

In comparison to Melisende's situation in Jerusalem and Urraca's in León-Castilla, Henry's arrangements for Matilda remain vague. England and Normandy were two separate entities and may have been envisaged differently. She had been designated as heir to both principalities before her betrothal to Geoffrey, but a repeated oath ceremony occurred in 1127 after her betrothal to Geoffrey. If the goal had been a co-rule, Geoffrey did little to achieve those aims. When Matilda was struggling to overcome her cousin Stephen's hold on England, she sought her husband's assistance and according to some people in England, 'he ought by right to defend the inheritance of his wife and sons in England', but Geoffrey never came.²⁷ Matilda references sharing power with Geoffrey in England in the second surviving charter in favor of Geoffrey de Mandeville, when she granted him lands in England and Normandy.²⁸ In a grant issued for Aubrey de Vere, de Mandeville's brother-in-law, Matilda again mentions sharing power in England.²⁹ At this point in 1142, Matilda may have anticipated her husband

²³ C.H. Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (Cambridge, MA, 1918), p. 135..

²⁴ E. King, *King Stephen* (New Haven, 2010), p. 265.

²⁵ G. Garnett, *Conquered England: Kingship, Succession, and Tenure 1066–1166* (Oxford, 2007), p. 223.

²⁶ Robert of Torigni, 'Chronicle', in R. Howlett, ed., *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, 4 (London, 89 1884), vol. ii, pp. 240, 275; Garnett, *Conquered England*, p. 223.

²⁷ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, p. 122.

²⁸ H.A. Cronne and R.H.C. Davis, eds., *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154, Vol. III, Regesta Regis Stephani ac Mathildis Imperatricis ac Gaufridi et Henrici Ducum Normannorum 1135–1154* (Oxford, 1968), no. 275, cf. no. 634; Garnett, *Conquered England*, p. 225.

²⁹ Cronne and Davis, eds., *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154*, vol.iii, no. 634; J.O. Prestwich, 'The Treason of Geoffrey de Mandeville', *EHR*, 102 (1988), pp. 290–91, 311; Garnett, *Conquered England*, p. 226.

coming to her aid in England, which is perhaps why she conceded to sharing power with him in England.

Matilda faced a considerable struggle to claim her inheritance. Her father had not bequeathed any land to her in England, as there was no need because she was heir to the throne, and her dowry lands were located in Normandy. The only thing that was in Matilda's favor was that she had been appointed Henry's heir. Any advances in land or power, whether by Matilda or Geoffrey on his wife's behalf, were due to Matilda's position as Henry's heir. Geoffrey's success in Normandy undoubtedly helped his wife's position, but his assistance or support could have impacted the outcome of the 1142 stalemate. Geoffrey seemed principally concerned with advancing the prospects of Anjou for himself and his heirs. Questions remain regarding his involvement, or lack of it on behalf of his wife, in the civil war in England.

Geoffrey of Anjou, as Matilda's husband, was initially a politically astute choice. He provided insurance of a Norman-Angevin alliance against William Clito. However, this arrangement was a short-term solution to a long-term problem. Without the threat of William Clito, the marriage became less advantageous to Anglo-Norman interests. Geoffrey had difficulty gaining support for his Norman ambitions and only through military might did he achieve his ambitions. The type of reign Matilda and Geoffrey envisaged can only be imagined, but based on the evidence available today, it seems likely that Geoffrey prioritized securing Normandy over England. His lack of involvement in the civil war in England and cooperation in his wife's efforts stands in stark contrast to Melisende of Jerusalem and her marriage to Geoffrey's father, Fulk. Because Melisende and Fulk were co-crowned with their heir Baldwin III, there were moments of great collaboration and partnership in Jerusalem. Urraca's marriage to Alfonso el Batallador of Aragón was short-lived and volatile. Their animosity resulted in very few observable moments of collaboration and co-rule. The spouse's influence on an heiress' chances to inherit did not always solve problems resulting from female succession. It varied situation by situation. In Matilda's case, Geoffrey of Anjou was pivotal in determining the course of history in Normandy but did little to help in England.

The selection of a co-ruler for a royal heiress was one of the most important decisions a king and father could make. This section reveals a few key characteristics about the impact of the husband on a royal heiress' potential to inherit. First, some marriages were arranged hastily, which provided immediate solutions to existing conflicts. Alfonso VI of León-Castilla's lack of sons prompted Urraca's marriage to Alfonso el Batallador. El Batallador was a threat to Leonese borders and was also a rival claimant to the throne. The purpose of Empress Matilda's marriage to Geoffrey of Anjou was to create an alliance with an ambitious

neighbor and neutralize the threat of William Clito, a rival claimant to the throne. However, after William's death, the imminent threat had passed and the reasons for the marriage no longer seemed pressing. In both of these cases, the solution the kings found was marriage to neighboring lords. Proximity meant that Urraca and Matilda's husbands were familiar with the existing politics, but they also had pre-established enemies. Melisende's marriage to Fulk of Anjou stands in sharp contrast because Baldwin II and the court of Jerusalem took a slow approach to arranging the marriage. Ambassadors for Baldwin took months to secure Fulk's consent to the betrothal with assurances of his acceptance by the aristocracy in addition to papal approval.³⁰

Because Melisende and Fulk's marriage was the only successful co-rule, it seems that marrying an outsider was a factor in the success of a royal heiress to claim the throne, presumably because he did not upset the balance of power among the established aristocracy. Fulk would, however, face trouble later in his co-rule by prioritizing the needs of his fellow Angevins over the established aristocracy. Both El Batallador and Geoffrey, while not technically members of the courts of León-Castilla and the Anglo-Norman realm, were too closely tied with the regions. El Batallador and Geoffrey had pre-established relationships with the aristocracies of their wives' kingdoms and upset the status quo, which was ultimately to their disadvantage. In the cases of Urraca and Matilda, marrying a neighboring lord was, in hindsight, a poor decision because the survival of El Batallador and Geoffrey's patrimony remained the most pressing issue, rather than the new kingdoms of their wives.

ii. Conflicts and problems

Medieval societal norms dictated that the wife's duty was to obey her husband. However, the rare instances of an heiress succeeding her father to royal rule complicated the standard relationship between husband and wife. Royal heiresses who became ruling queens were imbued with the special aspects of sacral rulership. After all, sacral rulership was the most fundamental element of kingship that granted a king authority and legitimacy, and queens regnant were, in essence, female kings. Female royal succession was a difficult problem in the twelfth century. Only the presence of a male co-ruler made female royal succession palatable. Although the husbands of royal heiresses expected to enjoy immense power and authority through their wives' claim, the aspiring queens regnant themselves evidently expected a different sort of relationship. While queens regnant could, and indeed did, raise armies and participate in the organization of war, they could not actively fight on

³⁰ See Chapter One, Section ii for a detailed account of the marriage negotiation process for Fulk's marriage to Melisende.

the field of battle nor join in many of the other highly masculinized structural aspects of medieval society. Therefore, male deputies were necessary for female rule. However, for Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda, the idea of ceding all authority to their husbands was unacceptable. The resistance they offered created conflicts within each kingdom, inspiring unique outcomes to the experiment of co-rule.

For Urraca, her marriage to El Batallador was plagued with conflict, which ultimately proved impossible to overcome. Melisende prevailed over a conflict with her husband Fulk, when he attempted to seize total control in Jerusalem, establishing the only successful example of co-rule of its kind in the twelfth century. Matilda's early displeasure with the teenaged Geoffrey later transformed into a cooperative endeavor to secure her father's lands for her line by dividing responsibilities with Geoffrey in Normandy and Matilda in England. Female rule was infrequent, but each of these heiresses struggled with their husbands to balance the more traditional role of wife with their anticipated power as queen regnant.

Urraca of León-Castilla's brief marriage to Alfonso el Batallador was acrimonious. The couple married in October 1109 but the union quickly descended into conflict that resulted in a separation by May 1110³¹ and eventually an annulment in 1112. Urraca's father intended the marriage of his heir to a rival king, El Batallador, to unite the two kingdoms through their heirs and protect Urraca's inheritance for future generations. The marriage was childless, which has prompted scholars to claim, including Bernard Reilly, that El Batallador was sterile.³² For El Batallador, making the marriage a success had many advantages: he had a large, powerful, and wealthy kingdom within his grasp to add to his own through their heirs. For Urraca, however, marriage to El Batallador meant a possible loss of authority over her inheritance. El Batallador's actions reveal his desire to claim León-Castilla for himself. Questions remain whether the marriage and co-rule could have been successful if he would have been willing to share in the responsibilities of ruling, as Melisende and Fulk would later discover. However, judging by events, Urraca deemed El Batallador's desire to claim León-Castilla intolerable, and as a result, the couple entered into a conflict that lasted for years and involved nearly the whole of Christian Iberia.

³¹ A papal condemnation arrived in Iberia regarding Alfonso and Urraca's consanguinity in 1110, and according to the advice of Archbishop Bernard of Toledo and Bishops Pedro of León and Pelayo of Oviedo, Urraca agreed to separate from el Batallador; J. Puyol y Alonso, ed., 'Las crónicas anónimas de Sahagún', *BRAH*, 76 (1920), p. 246; The only extant evidence of the papal letter is undated, addressed to Bishop Gelmírez, and preserved in E. Falque Rey, ed., *Historia Compostelana* (Turnhout), bk. 1, no. 20, pp. 46–47.

³² B. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca, 1109–1126* (Princeton, 1982), p. 60; E. Lourie, 'The Will of Alfonso I, "El Batallador", King of Aragon and Navarre: A Reassessment', *Speculum*, 50 (1975), pp. 639–641.

Urraca's second marriage presents a conundrum. If many within her aristocracy required her marriage to El Batallador to go forward in order for her to claim the crown, how then could she separate from him to establish an independent rule? Many within the kingdom of León-Castilla strongly disapproved of the marriage from the beginning. Numerous factions with different aims objected to the match and Urraca was able to organize resistance to El Batallador's expansionist agenda.³³ Urraca's interests coincided with the Raimundists, those who supported the succession rights of Urraca's son, Alfonso Raimúndez. The powerful Count Pedro Froilaz acted as guardian for Urraca's son, Alfonso Raimúndez, who now enjoyed patrimony over Galicia. As guardian to the heir of León-Castilla, he would benefit only if the marriage remained childless, as the succession might one day go to his ward. The bishop of Santiago de Compostela in Galicia, Diego Gelmírez, also shared this preference.

Resistance to their marriage might have been overcome if the couple had begotten any heirs. However, during the first year of their marriage, Alfonso was preoccupied with protecting his own kingdom from the armies of al-Mustain of Zaragoza during the winter of 1109–1110 and quelling a rebellion in Galicia in May of 1110. During this period, Urraca centralized her control and developed her relationships with necessary supporters. While some sources, such as the *Historia Compostelana*, indicate that Urraca sought reconciliation, the historical narrative and charter evidence indicate otherwise.³⁴

From the moment her father died, Urraca demonstrated her vision of authority and autonomy. She had the chance, however brief, to reign alone with no co-ruler before she married El Batallador in 1109, and she used this opportunity to strengthen her position as queen regnant, which formed the foundation for her sole rule a year later when the marriage effectively ended. The charter record for both León-Castilla and Aragón clearly reflects the conflict that existed between the couple. Urraca firmly believed that she had legitimate authority to rule over the kingdom she inherited from her father. Gordo Molina and Melo Carrasco have argued that throughout her reign, Urraca asserted herself, not as the king's wife, but as the king.³⁵ For Urraca, acceptance of El Batallador's authority in León-Castilla could not come at the expense of her own. However, Urraca's gender was a complicated problem for her scribes.³⁶ With no female equivalent for *rex* in Latin, scribes were forced to creatively define her position as queen regnant.³⁷

³³ See Chapter Three for analysis of Urraca's independent rule.

³⁴ Falque Rey, ed., *Historia Compostelana*, bk. 1, no. 20, pp. 98–99.

³⁵ A. Gordo Molina and D. Melo Carrasco, *La reina Urraca I (1109–1126): la práctica del concepto de imperium legionense en la primera mitad del siglo XII* (Gijón, 2018), p. 67: 'hacerse valer no como el rey, sino como *el rey*; como la reina heredera, soberana y propietaria de Hispania'.

³⁶ See Chapter One, Section iii regarding gendered language in Urraca's charters.

³⁷ See Chapter Three, Section I for more information on Urraca's chancery.

The first opportunity to establish her position as ruling queen came immediately following her father's burial when she confirmed the privileges of the cathedral of León.³⁸ The charter began, 'The old law of the holy fathers orders earthly kings to build and expand God's churches'.³⁹ She refers to herself 'by the assent of God queen of all *Hispania*, daughter of the Catholic *imperator* Lord Alfonso of blessed memory and Queen Constance'.⁴⁰ Urraca adopted the same title as her father, and the *arenga* places her within the same pantheon of Leonese rulers as her father and grandfather. Urraca granted two further charters prior to her marriage to El Batallador, both confirmations of *fueros* previously issued by her predecessors, Alfonso VI and Fernando I. These two charters record fewer witnesses, a fact which Reilly links to the Leonese resistance to the Aragonese marriage.⁴¹ These charters show that Urraca's scribes were constructing the image of their ruler as the sole legitimate heir to Alfonso VI's kingdom. These charters confirmed grants issued by the two previous kings of León-Castilla who acted according to 'ancient instructions' for kingship.

However, after the marriage in the autumn of 1109, Urraca's scribes carefully outlined El Batallador's position within León-Castilla. The contract attempted to establish terms for the marriage to safeguard it against conflict and papal condemnation. It did not, however, determine the parameters of a co-rule or how El Batallador would assume authority in León-Castilla. With this ambiguity, Urraca hoped to keep El Batallador from pushing her out of royal government in her kingdom. Leonese scribes often promoted Urraca's position as regnant and minimized El Batallador's place within her government. Before the couple separated in May 1110, they confirmed a charter to Sahagún pertaining to property located within Urraca's lands in which the scribe wrote 'Alfonso, king of Aragón, and Urraca, queen of León and Toledo, reigning confirm...'.⁴² By contrast, in another charter from 1110, the scribe described the couple as 'Reigning King Alfonso along with Queen Urraca in Aragón and in Castile and in León and in Toledo'.⁴³ In this case, the scribe was most likely Aragonese, which perhaps explains Urraca's ambiguous position.⁴⁴ From this charter, the

³⁸ According to the chronicle of Pelayo of Oviedo. B. Sánchez Alonso, ed., *Crónica del Obispo Don Pelayo* (Madrid, 1924), p. 87.; See also Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, pp. 56–57.

³⁹ C. Monterde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca de Castilla y León (1109–1126)*. (Zaragoza, 1996), p. no.1: *ANTIQUA SANCTORVM PATRVM INSTITVCIO TERRENIS PRECIPIT REGIBVS VT REGIBVS VT ECCLESIAS DEI EDIFICENT ET AMPLIFICENT*. See Appendix B for excerpt of this charter.

⁴⁰ Monterde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 1: *Dei nutu totius Yspanie regina, beate memorie catholici imperatoris domni Adefonsi Constancieque regina filia*.

⁴¹ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, pp. 58–59.

⁴² Monterde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 5: *Regnante rege Adefonso Aragonensi et Urraka regina in Legione et in Toletoque et conf.*

⁴³ Monterde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 8: *Regnante rege Adedefonso et cum regina Urracha in Aragona et in Castella et in Legione et in Toletuo*.

⁴⁴ I. Ruiz Albi, ed., *La reina doña Urraca (1109–1126): Cancillería y colección diplomática* (León, 2003), p. 235.

scribe seems to identify Urraca's position as queen consort in both Aragón and León-Castilla. By extension, if Urraca is a queen consort, then Alfonso el Batallador is the ruler of both his and his wife's kingdom. The phrasing suggests doubt regarding the details of their supposed co-rule. The Aragonese scribes appear to expand Alfonso's authority whereas the Leonese scribes seem reluctant to give too much power to Urraca's husband. The language of these two charters hints at the complex relationship between Urraca and Alfonso as they both attempted to settle into married life as well as establish stable rules. It seems that his mismanagement of affairs led to the couple's separation and a years-long conflict between the neighboring kingdoms. Urraca's brief experience of ruling alone revealed that Urraca could, in fact, find solutions to female rule that did not include marriage to a co-ruler. Her refusal to cede power to a co-ruler would prove to be a defining characteristic of Urraca's reign, resulting in endemic conflict until her death.

In sharp contrast to Urraca's marriage to Alfonso el Batallador, Melisende's marriage to Fulk of Anjou demonstrates a successful model of co-rule. According to Mayer, Fulk had come to Jerusalem on the assumption that he alone would rule after Baldwin II's death. However, when Baldwin II died, the terms of succession specified that his daughter and grandson would inherit and rule equally. Therefore, with this unexpected shift, Fulk had to reconcile himself to sharing power with his wife in unprecedented ways. This clear designation enabled Melisende to assert her own authority as queen regnant and gave her a position of power otherwise not available to her. Melisende's improved position of authority enabled her to challenge Fulk for a place within the administration of their kingdom and, therefore, eventually resolve their conflicts to establish the most successful example of a spousal co-rule of a twelfth-century kingdom.

The couple's first significant crisis of co-rule came three years after their coronation in 1134 when Fulk accused Melisende of having an affair with Hugh II of Le Puiset, Count of Jaffa. Hugh of Jaffa had amassed considerable power and favor during the reign of his cousin, Baldwin II, and devoted himself to Melisende after Baldwin's death in 1131. Fulk attempted to exploit the rumor of their affair to push Melisende out of power by discrediting her.

Writing between 1170 and 1184, William of Tyre described the events:

'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'.⁴⁵

William of Tyre discounted these rumors and favorably represented Queen Melisende, as he did throughout his chronicle. William believed that Fulk was unfairly favoring the newly arrived Angevins over the established aristocracy.

Walter of Caesarea, Hugh of Jaffa's stepson, further complicated the issue when he publicly accused Hugh of high treason and conspiring to assassinate Fulk. Hugh of Jaffa protested his innocence and insisted on a trial by combat. Hugh's strong position of favor during the reign of Baldwin II meant that he had support from the court. However, he sought additional aid against the forces of Fulk, so he entered an alliance with the Muslim Fatimid city of Ascalon. However, in response to this betrayal, Fulk of Anjou set siege to Jaffa and demonstrated his military strength. Hugh of Jaffa's actions with the Muslim enemy lost him his support from his allies at court. Patriarch William then intervened and negotiated peace, and Hugh was exiled for three years.

Prior to this episode, Count Hugh of Jaffa and Roman de Puy opposed Fulk. According to William of Tyre, the court began spreading rumors that Melisende had an inappropriately intimate relationship with Hugh of Jaffa.⁴⁶ These remarks have been understood mean that Melisende had an adulterous, incestuous affair with her cousin. However, as Murray identifies, it is 'mistakenly interpreted by earlier scholarship'.⁴⁷ When Hugh failed to attend his trial by combat, he triggered additional disorder by entering into an alliance with Ascalon for support; Patriarch William acted to adjudicate the conflict. While Hugh was in exile, Fulk would rule over Jaffa. However, before Hugh could leave for his banishment, either Fulk or his supporters is credited with attempting to assassinate Hugh. He survived, and a Breton knight took blame for the attack, claiming he acted alone with the hopes of garnering favor with Fulk.

This episode was an attempt by Fulk to limit or exclude Melisende from ruling. However, Fulk's decision to favor his Angevin companions over the established aristocracy created resentment, which culminated with the conflict with Hugh of Jaffa. Melisende and her

⁴⁵ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, no. 15, pp. 70-71; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey (2 vols, New York, 1943), pp. 70-71: *ecce iterum turba periculosa nimis suboritur. Nam ex causis quibusdam quidam in dominum regem de maioribus regni principibus coniurasse dicuntur, Hugo videlicet comes Ioppensis et Romanus de Podio, dominus regionis illius que est trans Iordanem...contigit inter eundem dominum regem et prenommatum comitem ex causis occultis graves oriri simultates. Dicebatur a nonnullis quod dominus rex suspectum nimis haberet comitem ne cum domina regina familiaria nimis misceret colloquia, cuius rei multa vedebantur extare argumenta.*

⁴⁶ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, nos. 15-18; A.V. Murray, 'Women in the Royal Succession of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099-1291)', in C. Zey, ed., *Mächtige Frauen? Königinnen und Fürstinnen im Europäischen Mittelalter (11.-14. Jahrhundert)* (Zurich, 2015), pp. 141-42.

⁴⁷ Murray, 'Women in the Royal Succession of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem', p. 141.

supporters capitalized on this opportunity to definitively establish herself as a major political player in the Holy Land. Both Mayer and Hamilton have concluded that Fulk resented sharing power with his wife and was threatened by her authority.⁴⁸ Gossip about inappropriate behavior, or even adultery, could have been started by Fulk or his supporters with the intention of damaging Melisende's reputation. Adultery, usually with a close member of the court or royal household, was the most common accusation made against queens during the Middle Ages.⁴⁹ Melisende's contemporary, Eleanor of Aquitaine (1112–1204), was famously accused of an adulterous affair with her uncle Raymond of Antioch while married to Louis VII of France after their relationship deteriorated.⁵⁰

The conflict concerning Hugh of Jaffa revealed the growing resentment for Fulk's leadership in Jerusalem.⁵¹ Fulk's treatment of Melisende displeased the nobility and clergy of Jerusalem. According to Hamilton, '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'.⁵² A king could only be effective if he had the support of his aristocracy and the existing nobles found Fulk's prioritizing Angevin newcomers intolerable. By forcing Fulk to share power with his wife, the established aristocracy may have thought they would receive better treatment and rewards from Melisende. This crisis enabled Melisende to establish her agency as she managed her supporters against Fulk to support her claim.⁵³ The patriarch of Jerusalem sided with her and arbitrated lenient terms for Hugh of Jaffa, despite his treasonous decision to ally with Muslims, and established a long, mutually beneficial relationship with Melisende. Her position was strong enough after the attack on Hugh of Jaffa's life that 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'.⁵⁴ Scholars have had different interpretations of the cause of the rumors about Melisende: that Fulk was looking for an excuse to discredit and discard Melisende,⁵⁵ the rumors were meant

⁴⁸ B. Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States: The Queens of Jerusalem (1100–1190)', in D. Baker, ed., *Medieval Women* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 149–51; Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', pp. 106–13.

⁴⁹ Stafford, *Queens, Concubines, and Dowagers*, p. 82.

⁵⁰ K. Crawford, 'Revisiting Monarchy: Women and the Prospects for Power', *Journal of Women's History*, 24 (2012), pp. 160–71.

⁵¹ Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States', pp. 149–51; Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', pp. 106–13.

⁵² Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States', p. 150.

⁵³ Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States', p. 151.

⁵⁴ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, no. 18; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 76: *Rex autem ab ea die ita factus est uxorius, ut eius, quam prius exacerbaverat, mitigaret indignationem, quod nex in causis levibus absque eius conscientia attemptaret aliquatenus procedere,*

⁵⁵ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', p. 110.

to divert the public from the unpopularity of Fulk's rule⁵⁶ or to mask Fulk's attempt to push the queen aside and rule independently from her.⁵⁷ Fulk's motivation is irrelevant as he was forced to share authority with his wife, and the situation was eventually resolved through third-party intervention.

Rumored adultery was a common tool to discredit threateningly powerful women. Melisende of Jerusalem's alleged affair or inappropriate intimacy with her second-cousin was treated far more kindly than other aristocratic heiresses. William of Tyre's chronicle dismisses the charges by depicting the conflict as one created by marital jealousy. William of Tyre certainly did not condone adultery, but Melisende's position as queen regnant set her apart from all other women. Her elevated position of authority meant that William of Tyre did not have to adopt the tropes applied to other women in his chronicle, women as submissive, weak wives whose only access to power was through intercession and diplomacy. This treatment contrasts sharply with Eleanor of Aquitaine's alleged infidelity with her uncle Raymond of Antioch. Stories abound regarding Eleanor's inappropriate sexual relationships, which make it difficult to determine the validity of the charge of her affair with Raymond and the starting point for her infamous reputation.⁵⁸

Eleanor of Aquitaine journeyed to the Holy Land with her first husband, Louis VII of France, for the Second Crusade. While there, Raymond of Antioch sought her help in securing additional aid for the defense of Antioch, as it was common practice to appeal to queens consort as royal intercessors. Furthermore, as her uncle, Raymond of Antioch would most definitely attempt to exploit their familial relationship to achieve his goals. William of Tyre, writing long after the end of the marriage, portrayed Raymond as the instigator of the affair; after Louis declined his request for aid, he seduced Eleanor out of spite.⁵⁹ He believed Eleanor was impudent and unfaithful, 'contrary to royal dignity and neglecting marital law'.⁶⁰ However, Eleanor differed from many other consorts because she was heiress of a large, powerful, and wealthy duchy with a vibrant crusading history. Therefore, Eleanor may have viewed her participation in the crusade as a joint venture.⁶¹ The growing discontent between Eleanor and her husband brought them closer to the end of their marriage. Raymond seemed

⁵⁶ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 2, no. 72.

⁵⁷ Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, p. 135.

⁵⁸ J. Flori, *Aliénor d'Aquitaine: La Reine Insoumise* (Paris, 2004), pp. 295–335.

⁵⁹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 16, no. 27; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 180.

⁶⁰ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 16, no. 27, p. 180.

⁶¹ Eleanor had taken the cross with Louis VII in a public ceremony. See E.A.R. Brown, 'Eleanor of Aquitaine Reconsidered: The Woman and Her Seasons', in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, eds., *Eleanor of Aquitaine, Lord and Lady* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 1–54; E.A.R. Brown, 'Eleanor of Aquitaine: Parent, Queen, and Duchess', in W.W. Kibler, ed., *Eleanor of Aquitaine, Patron and Politician* (Austin, 1977), pp. 9–23.

determined to secure support from his niece, either by her convincing Louis to give his aid, offering her own financial and military support, or divorcing her husband so that she was in a different position to act. However, the interpretation of their relationship was a simplified one: Eleanor had an adulterous relationship with Raymond of Antioch. Her desire to separate from her husband broke the established gender norms of the twelfth century and made her a wicked character. The simple explanation of an affair reveals the contemporary medieval perceptions about powerful women who posed a threat to male authority. By leveling charges of infidelity or adultery, medieval chroniclers could invalidate the power of an aristocratic or royal woman, making the contrast in treatment of Melisende more notable.

Fulk certainly had support within the Holy Land, but he had also brought many men with him from Anjou. He was a foreigner far removed from his power base in northern France. His ability to restrict Melisende's power was limited by the circumstances of his status as an outsider king. The reciprocal relationship between the king and the aristocracy meant that to keep power, kings would need to wisely patronize their aristocracy to keep internal peace. Fulk made the mistake of prioritizing his Angevin supporters, which fomented broad discontent. Although the patriarchal norms of the twelfth century made female rulership unwelcome, Fulk underestimated Melisende's ability to garner support if it meant the aristocracy could gain more from her co-rule than Fulk's sole rule. In order to restore peace to the region and proceed with the defense of the realm against their Muslim foes, Fulk was forced to share power with his wife, Melisende.

Empress Matilda never became queen regnant of England and because she never managed to establish a legitimate rule, Matilda and Geoffrey do not demonstrate a clear model for co-rule. Geoffrey's success in adding Normandy to his control was the result of his wife's position as heiress. Beyond her hereditary claim, Matilda had a limited role in Geoffrey's triumph. Likewise, because Geoffrey was consumed with claiming Normandy, he had a small role in Matilda's efforts to claim England. Geoffrey and Matilda spent a significant part of their marriage apart from one another; Matilda departed for England in 1139 and returned to Normandy in 1148, for Geoffrey to die shortly after in 1151. Although Matilda never ruled in England, the couple did adopt a kind of partnership with a division of labor. Their physical separation and separate interests resulted in considerably less marital or ruling conflict. Matilda's preoccupation with English affairs kept her out of Normandy, and therefore, no issues arose over sharing power in Normandy to threaten Geoffrey. However, Geoffrey's actions along the Norman border in the years leading up to Henry I's death in

1135 negatively impacted Matilda's claim on the English inheritance and is the topic of discussion here.

The couple married in 1128; thereafter, they resided in Anjou, isolated from Matilda's father's court. During the next several years, Matilda bore several children: Henry (b. 3 March 1133), Geoffrey (1 June 1134), and William (22 July 1136) shortly following her father's death. While Henry was pleased with the births of his two grandsons and his heir's third pregnancy, Geoffrey's actions on the border with Normandy stirred up conflict. Geoffrey had a legitimate claim to certain castles along the Norman border in Maine. The castles at Domfront, Argentan, and Exmes were of strategic importance and were most likely part of Matilda's dowry.⁶² Equally, castles in the same area that made up the dowry for Fulk's daughter, Matilda, for her marriage to William Adelin (d. 1120) were at the center of this conflict. Henry refused to part with the castles from Matilda of Anjou's dowry and had also refused to cede control of his daughter's dowry to Geoffrey.⁶³ The castles that Geoffrey wanted back under Angevin control, Ambrières, Gorrion, and Colmont, were located within Maine and, therefore, should have been part of Geoffrey's control by inheritance rights alone. Logically, Henry showed reluctance to part with these key castles in Maine because of his ambitions of expansion. In response to Henry's stubbornness and expansionist aims, Geoffrey resorted to aggression.

Robert of Torigni stated, 'the king was unwilling to do the fealty required by his daughter and her husband for all castles in Normandy and England'.⁶⁴ Another chronicler, William of Malmesbury, similarly claimed that on his deathbed Henry 'assigned all his lands on both sides of the sea to his daughter in lawful and lasting succession, being somewhat angry with her husband because he had vexed the king by not a few threats and insults'.⁶⁵ Orderic Vitalis records a similar account: 'Geoffrey of Anjou aspired to the great riches of his father-in-law and demanded castles in Normandy, asserting that the king had covenanted with him to hand them over when he married his daughter'.⁶⁶

As a royal heiress married to a lord with lands of his own to rule, Matilda faced a unique problem. Obviously, the reproductive necessities of marriage required Matilda to remain with her husband in order to produce heirs, which they did in rapid succession in 1133, 1134, and 1136. However, Geoffrey had his own county of Anjou to rule, and he could

⁶² Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 66.

⁶³ Hollister, *Henry I*, p. 291 citing; Robert of Torigni, 'Chronicle', vol. i, pp. 197, 199, 335.

⁶⁴ Robert of Torigni, 'Chronicle', vol. i, p. 200.

⁶⁵ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, pp. 12–13: *filie omnem terram suam citra et ultra mare legitima et perhenni successione adiudicavit, marito eius subiratus, quod eum et minis et iniuriis aliquantis irritauerat.*

⁶⁶ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, bk. 6, pp. 444–45: *Gener enim eius Iosfredus Andegauensis magnas potentis soceri gazas affectabat, castella Normanniae poscebat: asserens quod sibi sic ab eodem rege pactum fuerat, quando filiam eius in coniugem acceperat.*

not trust the turbulent Angevin nobles to remain faithful in his absence if he and Matilda attempted to follow the Anglo-Norman court in its journeys back and forth across the channel. The couple remained in Anjou, cut off from the affairs of Henry's court. That meant that Matilda and Geoffrey were absent from the everyday tasks of Henry's government and had little opportunity to build the necessary relationships with the Anglo-Norman aristocracy, upon whom they would one day depend for loyalty and support.

The charter record reveals Matilda's isolation from her father's court and exclusion from his government. Before her official designation as heiress in 1126, Matilda confirmed her father's donation to the abbey of Reading the gift of the relic of the hand of St. James the Apostle, which she had brought from Germany with her after the death of her first husband Henry V (d. 1125).⁶⁷ In 1129 at Rouen, Henry I granted one hundred pounds from Rouen and thirty marks of silver from London to the abbey of Fontevrault.⁶⁸ Matilda issued a separate confirmation that the sons of King Henry's steward Robert de la Haye, Richard and Ralph de la Haye, witnessed.⁶⁹ That Matilda received the opportunity to consent to her father's charter indicates that, at the very least, she was still considered a potential heir. Matilda confirmed only two other of Henry's charters, both issued at Rouen: a grant to the abbey of Cluny in May 1131,⁷⁰ and a notification settling a dispute between the canons of Cherbourg and the church of Coutances in 1134.⁷¹ The charter record shows that Matilda did not actively participate in the affairs of her father's government but made only sporadic appearances when the court was nearby at Rouen. Geoffrey of Anjou appears only once in the documents of Henry's reign, in an agreement with Bishop Ulger of Angers in which Geoffrey agreed to obtain a concession of certain rights from the monks of Beaulieu for the bishop.⁷² The limited record of their involvement shows that Matilda and Geoffrey only visited Henry's court in Normandy but never in England.

If Henry wished for his only surviving legitimate child, Matilda, to inherit his lands, he failed to establish a broad network of support for his heir that she would later need to claim her inheritance. The ambiguity regarding Matilda's candidacy allowed her cousin Stephen to claim the throne in his own right in 1135. Henry's actions, or rather inactions, may indicate a

⁶⁷ Davis, Davis, and Cronne, eds., *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066–1154*, vol. ii, no. 1448.; On the subject of the relic, see K.J. Leyser, 'Frederick Barbarossa, Henry II and the Hand of St James', *EHR*, 90 (1975), pp. 481–506; K.J. Leyser, *Medieval Germany and its Neighbors, 900–1250* (London, 1982), pp. 215–40.

⁶⁸ Davis, Davis, and Cronne, eds., *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum*, vol. ii, no. 1580.

⁶⁹ Davis, Davis, and Cronne, eds., *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum*, vol. ii, no. 1581.; For a discussion of this charter, see Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, pp. 59–59. Chibnall believes that this charter and no. 1691 are evidence that Henry actively associated his daughter in the government of his realm.

⁷⁰ Davis, Davis, and Cronne, eds., *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum*, vol. ii, no. 1691.

⁷¹ Davis, Davis, and Cronne, eds., *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum*, vol. ii, no. 1902.

⁷² Davis, Davis, and Cronne, eds., *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum*, vol. ii, no. 1920a.

reticence to leave his kingdom to his daughter. He had fathered at least twelve illegitimate sons and one legitimate son, so the possibility existed that he might father another male heir with his second wife, Adeliza of Louvain. Henry's hope for further legitimate sons meant that he failed to make his expectations for the succession explicitly clear. In the fifteen-year period between the death of William Adelin in 1120 and Henry's death in 1135, the king did little more than hold symbolic ceremonies recognizing Matilda as heiress. In contrast to Urraca and Melisende, Matilda did not spend her time at her father's court. Instead, she resided mainly with her husband in Angevin territory. In the key years before Henry's death, Matilda was focused on the role of motherhood. While there is little evidence to argue, it could be put forward that Matilda's overall health and attention was on pregnancy and recovery, and not engendering support amongst her father's magnates. The conflict between Henry I and Matilda at the end of his life presented an opportunity for a rival claimant to present an alternative option. Henry's constant hope that he might have another legitimate son meant that the oaths taken in support of Matilda were conditional, effective only if he himself did not have a son to succeed him. Henry's conditional oath-taking combined with Matilda's geographic isolation meant that her position as heir was tenuous at best and impacted her chances of claiming the throne. This issue alone, however, was not the sole factor that impeded Matilda's success at becoming queen regnant.

In León-Castilla, Jerusalem, and the Anglo-Norman realm at this moment in history, dynastic continuity was favored over male rulership. Therefore, a co-rulership between the heiress and an advantageous spouse would alleviate any concerns about the duties of state being performed. However, the husbands of royal heiresses evidently did not expect their wives to offer such impressive opposition. In Urraca's case, it is unknown if she would have been receptive to sharing power with her husband, Alfonso el Batallador. El Batallador's expansionist ambitions and heavy-handedness in León-Castilla motivated Urraca to seek an annulment and bar him from wielding power in her kingdom. Both Urraca and Melisende's marriages reveal the significant role the aristocracy had in the success of a ruler. Urraca combined forces with the faction that promoted the interests of her son, Alfonso Raimúndez, with her most loyal supporters to push out Alfonso's influence. Melisende also managed to force Fulk to accept her participation in ruling when he mismanaged his patronage of the aristocracy in the Holy Land. By promoting his Angevin followers, he created discontent with his rule, which provided Melisende the opportunity to shift the balance of power between the couple. Her supporters could hope for better treatment and promotion if she wielded power. For Matilda, however, the conflict central to her efforts to gain the throne, apart from a rival

claimant, stemmed from her father, Henry. Henry's desire to have another legitimate male heir with Adeliza of Louvain damaged Matilda's chances by default. He neglected to make his wishes explicitly clear, although both Stephen and Matilda claimed that he did. Had Henry devoted more effort to including Matilda in matters of his kingdom, she and Geoffrey might have been in a stronger position when Henry died in 1135. These conflicts occurred early in the political careers of Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda, and resolving them meant success or failure for their reigns.

iii. Teamwork and sharing power

The experiment of female rulership began with an idea of co-rule between husband and wife. Both queens regnant, Urraca and Melisende, encountered moments of conflict with their husbands that they overcame in different ways. For Urraca, she ended her marriage to El Batallador when he attempted to exclude her from ruling in her kingdom. Melisende resolved the conflict with Fulk masterfully by aligning herself to the correct combination of supporters in order to emerge from the crisis with more power than she had previously. By contrast, Matilda's tenuous position as royal heiress prevented her from becoming the crowned ruling queen of England and did not solve the early problems of her position as heiress. Collaboration became an essential part of co-rule that each royal heiress managed to achieve in very different ways.

The instances of teamwork and sharing power in the case of Urraca and El Batallador are limited as their marriage was short-lived and remarkably unsuccessful. Throughout Urraca's seventeen-year reign as queen regnant, she showed consistent political shrewdness and, more often than not, appears to have had more skill than her opponents. Urraca had a firm belief in her own ability and right to rule León-Castilla. However, throughout her reign, her actions reveal her own awareness of the limitations of her gender. The structural aspects of medieval society prevented Urraca from participating in the male-dominated warrior society. Therefore, she relied on male deputies and showed a willingness to utilize El Batallador's strength as a warrior to defend her realm.

Before their official separation in 1110, Urraca issued an independent charter. In March of 1110, a grant ordered 'all the men of my land' (*omnibus hominibus terre meae*) to tithe to the monastery of Montearagón.⁷³ Montearagón had been part of Urraca's dower lands,

⁷³ Monterde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 7.

and the charter shows the caution Urraca's scribe took in acknowledging El Batallador's presence in her kingdom, while balancing it against her own independent authority.

'It pleases me that willingly, when I first came to Aragón I received the aforesaid church of Jesus of Nazareth and all of its benefice in my own protection and guardianship; and for the remedy of the souls of my parents, whom that same Jesus of Nazareth, whose handmaiden I am, will place in paradise; and so that God will defend me from all evil, and my lord King Alfonso, and that he may give us victory over all our enemies; and so that those same men who serve the aforesaid church of Jesus of Nazareth will pray for us to our Lord Jesus Christ every day in masses, in their prayers and psalms, and that they unite us all to their good works'.⁷⁴

The language of this charter establishes Montearagón as under Urraca's control, despite it being associated with the Aragonese monarchy.⁷⁵ It appears that this charter is Urraca's prerogative and not a joint endeavor. Furthermore, the emphasis on the first-person pronoun *ego* and the emphasis on 'my own' custody reveals Urraca's agency. Furthermore, the scribe leaves out how Montearagón came to be under Urraca's guardianship, ignoring the fact that it had been her marriage gift from El Batallador. Her husband is mentioned after prayers for her parents and herself, implying a certain amount of God's protection separate from El Batallador.

The charter makes a dramatic shift to first-person plural when she prays for protection from 'all our enemies'. In 1109, Murabit forces encroached on Christian lands to the north, culminating in the fall of Talavera de la Reina, and a less successful attack on Aragón by al-Mustain of Zaragoza.⁷⁶ The *data* of the charter mentions that same event. It was issued 'in the year that al-Mustain died at Valtierra, and knights of Aragón and Pamplona killed him'.⁷⁷ Urraca and Alfonso el Batallador shared a common enemy, and Urraca appears willing to accept him as her deputy to lead her army.

The scribe managed to establish Urraca's power in this charter by emphasizing her

⁷⁴ Monterde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca.*, no. 7: *Placuit mihi libenti animo quando ego primum ueni in Aragonem recepi ego ecclesiam predictam Ihesu Nazareni et totum suum honorem in meam propriam defensionem et custodiam et ob remedium animarum parentum meorum, quas ipse Ihesus Nazarenius, cuius ego ancilla sum, in paradiso collocet, et ut Deus me defendat ab omni malo, et dominum meum regem Anfussum, et donet nobis uictoriam de omnibus inimicis nostris, et ipsi seniores qui seruiunt predicte ecclesiae Ihesu Nazareni orent pro nobis ad Dominum nostrum Ihesum Christum cotidie in missis, in orationibus suis, in psalmis et colligant nos in omnibus bene factis suis.*

⁷⁵ R. Arco, 'El Monasterio de Montearagón', in *Linajes de Aragón* (1914). Reprinted in R. Arco, 'El Monasterio de Montearagón', *Argensola: Revista de Ciencias Sociales del Instituto de Estudios Altoaragoneses*, 53–54 (1963), pp. 1–2. Later in the charter Urraca guarantees the customs and rights provided by Sancho Ramírez.

⁷⁶ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, pp. 64–65.

⁷⁷ Monterde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 7: *Anno quo mortuus est Almustaem super Ualterra, et occiderunt eum milites de Aragone et de Pamplona.*

legitimate authority to rule through law and patronage, while simultaneously acknowledging El Batallador's military role, including him in her charter only when mentioning their mutual enemies. Urraca's independence is lost in the only two charters issued jointly by El Batallador and Urraca from this period.⁷⁸ Aragonese scribes likely wrote the two donations to Santa María de Valvanera in Rioja.⁷⁹ The first, in particular, seems concerned with supporting El Batallador's claims, stating that he 'holds the monarchy of all Iberia,'⁸⁰ whereas Urraca is included as his wife (*coniux*), whose father 'the most powerful king Alfonso... [is] joined to me in a certain way by blood'.⁸¹ The stress on El Batallador's blood ties to Alfonso VI, and therefore to Urraca, is remarkable given their consanguinity.⁸² Conceivably this was an attempt on the part of Alfonso el Batallador to assert his authority in León-Castilla independent of his claim through marriage to Urraca. Regardless, the remainder of the charter follows in the first-person plural, and the subscript describes them as 'Reigning King Alfonso along with Queen Urraca in Aragón and in Castile and in Leon and in Toledo'.⁸³ The charter exposes the uncertainty and ambiguity of the marriage itself, and by June of that year, they had separated and Urraca was issuing charters on her own without mention of her estranged husband, despite his usefulness in battle.

Melisende of Jerusalem's marriage to Fulk of Anjou lasted from 1129 until his death in 1143. Fulk took the dominant role in the administration of the kingdom from his coronation in 1131 until 1134, when conflict erupted over Count Hugh of Jaffa and his perceived intimacy with Melisende. Fortunately for the stability of the region, Fulk and Melisende reconciled in 1136 due to the intervention of Patriarch William, and for the remainder of Fulk's life, he consented to a co-rule with his wife.⁸⁴ Her involvement in the rule of the kingdom becomes evident in the charter record; after their reconciliation, her name appears alongside Fulk's in their charters.⁸⁵

Because Fulk was forced to come to terms with the authority of his wife and make room for her in the administration of their joint kingdom, Melisende's impact is evident for

⁷⁸ There are also two charters with unremarkable language to the monastery of Ofia that date from their brief reconciliation in 1111.

⁷⁹ Ruiz Albi, ed., *La reina doña Urraca*, p. 325; Reilly also notes the Aragonese diplomatic style, Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 66.

⁸⁰ Monterde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 8: *Totius Hiberie monarchiam tenens*.

⁸¹ Monterde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 8: *Strenuissimo regi Adefonso... michique quodammodo iuncto consanguinitate*.

⁸² A. Ubieto Arteta, ed., *Crónicas anónimas de Sahagún* (Zaragoza, 1987), 75, p. 27.

⁸³ Monterde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 8: *Regnante rege Adefonso una cum regina Urracha in Aragona et in Castella et in Legione et in Toletuo*.

⁸⁴ Kühnel, *Crusader Art of the Twelfth Century*, p. 81.

⁸⁵ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', p. 110.

the next eight years before Fulk's death. One clear example of the new relationship between the co-rulers involves the case of Melisende's younger sister, Alice of Antioch (d. 1151). As a powerful royal daughter and mother to the heiress, Constance of Antioch, Alice also reveals the limitations of female authority and power faced by aristocratic heiresses. Alice continued to cause problems for Fulk throughout his reign as co-king of Jerusalem. Alice's also shows a shift in the balance of power as authority transitioned from Fulk's sole agency to a system of co-rule.

Alice married Prince Bohemund II of Antioch in 1126, two years before ambassadors were sent to Anjou to secure a husband for Melisende. After Bohemund died early in 1130, Alice's position as regent for her two-year-old daughter left her in a vulnerable position. Thus, she began the first of three attempts to gain control over Antioch. William of Tyre's chronicle did not fairly represent Alice; in his view, Alice was manipulative and wicked. Because William of Tyre is the most informative source for the region, his views have permeated all further historiography. Thomas Asbridge's article on Alice refutes many of William of Tyre's accusations.⁸⁶

The conflict with Alice began during the reign of Baldwin II and continued into the early years of Fulk's co-rule with Melisende. William of Tyre negatively represented Alice's desire to command authority on behalf of her two-year-old daughter, Constance, in the capacity as regent of Antioch. He believed her conduct was inappropriate and revealed the resentment she harbored against Melisende's position as royal heiress. Therefore, to stay in control, she treacherously appealed to Zengi, the same man whose forces had killed her husband. According to William of Tyre, 'Whether she remained a widow or remarried, Alice was determined to disinherit her daughter and keep the principality for herself in perpetuity'.⁸⁷ Murray argues that this statement 'strains credulity'.⁸⁸ In addition, Murray argues rightly that her appeal to potential husbands stemmed from her access to her daughter Constance's inheritance of Antioch. If the widowed Alice had remarried, the only reward for her new spouse would be gaining the regency of Antioch. It is unknown if Alice aimed at disinheriting Constance, as William of Tyre asserted, or if she simply hoped to serve as regent for her daughter.

With the death of Bohemund in 1130, a council from Antioch notified Baldwin II regarding his appointment as regent. Alice of Antioch responded by barring the gates.

⁸⁶ T. Asbridge, 'Alice of Antioch: A Case Study of Female Power in the Twelfth Century', in M. Bull and N. Housley, eds., *The Experience of Crusading: Western Approaches* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 29–47.

⁸⁷ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, no. 27, p. 44, A.V. Murray, 'Constance, Princess of Antioch (1130–1164): Ancestry, Marriages and Family', *ANS*, 38 (2016), p. 85.

⁸⁸ Murray, 'Constance, Princess of Antioch', p. 86.

William describes Alice bribing her few supporters into supporting her cause.⁸⁹ Asbridge begins his reevaluation of William of Tyre's trustworthiness with this claim. He questions, if all of the 'great men' supported Baldwin's regency, and not Alice's, how did she have the necessary support to bar her father from entering the city? Asbridge notes that Renaud Masior and Patriarch Bernard were missing from the accounts. Renaud Masior was an influential landholder and the constable of Antioch; he later served as regent by Fulk's appointment in 1132. None of the records indicate he posed any opposition to Alice's grab for power. Patriarch Bernard (1100–1135) was Antioch's most important churchman and highly involved with local politics. Again, his absence from records, Asbridge contends, may stem from a paucity of sources or a story that contradicted William of Tyre's account.⁹⁰

Alice's attempts to resist Baldwin II were thwarted because some within Antioch managed to send messages to him and open the gates. 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.⁹¹ This story is uncorroborated by any other sources. 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'.⁹²

Upon the death of her father in 1131, Alice hoped to install herself as regent for the second time. Fulk, however, decided against her candidacy and kept his sister-in-law from power in Antioch. Fulk, as Melisende's husband, sought the opportunity to establish a powerbase independent of his wife and halt any potential alliance between Melisende and her sister, Alice. Presumably she remained in her dower territories during the next several years as William of Tyre is silent on her actions. William contrasts the situations in Antioch and the Latin Kingdom and the actions of Alice and Melisende. The perceived illegitimate actions of the younger sister resulting in chaos in Antioch contrasts the legitimate actions of the elder

⁸⁹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, no. 27, p. 44.

⁹⁰ Asbridge, 'Alice of Antioch: A Case Study of Female Power in the Twelfth Century', p. 34.

⁹¹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, no. 27, pp. 44–45.

⁹² Asbridge, 'Alice of Antioch', p. 33.

sister who ably preserved the security of the Latin Kingdom while her husband was away.⁹³ William highlights this contrast in order to demonstrate implicitly 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 before the outbreak of hostilities over the actions of Count Hugh of Jaffa, the barons of Antioch asked Fulk to suggest a suitable candidate to marry the princess Alice's daughter Constance.⁹⁴ Raymond of Poitou was chosen by consensus to marry the young heiress; he was the second son of William IX, Duke of Aquitaine, and uncle to Eleanor of Aquitaine and had led a small crusade to the Holy Land in 1101.⁹⁵ 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.⁹⁶ The mission was sent secretly to avoid interference by Alice or by 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.⁹⁷

By the time Raymond agreed to the marriage and arrived in the Holy Land, the conflict over Hugh of Jaffa was resolved, and Fulk had relented to Melisende's growing authority. Therefore, in 1136, Alice attempted to gain the regency for the third time. However, now 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'.⁹⁸ Melisende's influence had increased by this time and, with it, her desire and ambition to see her sister 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 gain 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 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

⁹³ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, no. 5, p. 55.

⁹⁴ Murray, 'Constance, Princess of Antioch', pp. 81–95.

⁹⁵ Murray, 'Constance, Princess of Antioch', p. 87.

⁹⁶ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, no. 9, p. 59.

⁹⁷ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, no. 9, pp. 59–60.

⁹⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, no. 20; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 78: *interveniente apud regem sorore sua ne actibus eius obviaret, quorundam procerum fulsa patrocinio iterum Antiochiam ingressa est, pro domina se gerens, et universa ad suam revocabat sollicitudinem.*

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'.⁹⁹ Ralph, patriarch of Antioch, had deceived Alice that Raymond had arrived to marry her, and not her 9-year-old daughter. Therefore, when Raymond wed Constance in 1136, Alice was ultimately defeated and forced to retreat once more to her domain on the coast.

Alice and her elder sister, Melisende's story share similarities. Melisende was fortunate to be designated by her father to inherit his kingdom. Alice, on the other hand, was forced to compete for authority. Whether she intended to disinherit her daughter or simply act as regent is unknown. Both sisters utilized similar methods of advancing their prestige: they each hand-picked powerful allies to fight for them and established their own scriptoria and appointed chancellors to control their message.¹⁰⁰ However, William of Tyre's depiction of Alice has possibly forever tainted her story and vilified her in ways that are unfounded. For Alice, her position as wife to Bohemund and mother to Constance disqualified her for an active role in government. Melisende's legitimate inheritance presented opportunities that were unavailable to Alice.

Melisende as queen regnant was capable of asserting far more control and autonomy than her contemporaries, even other royal daughters. Fulk resolved the conflict in Antioch militarily while Melisende governed from Jerusalem. Fulk might have preferred to have unchecked power in the Holy Land, but after peace had been reached in 1136, he gained an able partner and ally in his wife. The favorable terms for Alice of Antioch reflect Melisende's newfound position of authority in the co-rule with Fulk, but also the powerlessness other medieval women faced.

Matilda and Geoffrey of Anjou collaborated on their independent efforts to claim Matilda's inheritance, albeit on opposite sides of the channel; Geoffrey took up the conquest of Normandy while Matilda attempted to gain the throne of England. In the nearly seventy years since Duke William's victory at the Battle of Hastings in 1066, each successive king of England struggled to govern a realm that was spread across both sides of the English Channel. The kingdom of England and the Duchy of Normandy were two separate entities with their own unique sets of traditions, customs, and key players. Reconciling the two and solidifying control over them proved a tremendous task for the Anglo-Norman kings. When civil war and

⁹⁹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, no. 20, p. 79.

¹⁰⁰ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', pp. 133–57; Asbridge, 'Alice of Antioch', p. 42.

a succession crisis erupted in 1135 upon the death of Henry I, the victor of the struggle would be the party who mastered the complexities of a cross-channel world.

When news reached Normandy of Henry's death and Stephen's seizure of the crown, the realm was thrown into chaos. Stephen's elder brother Theobald of Blois was in Normandy negotiating with the leading magnates. Henry's illegitimate son, Robert of Gloucester, was with Theobald when news reached them of Stephen's actions.¹⁰¹ Crouch convincingly argues that whereas Geoffrey and Matilda's first actions in this struggle were to secure the borderlands between Anjou and Normandy, Theobald of Blois conveniently met with magnates far removed from Angevin interests and, therefore, more likely to support Stephen. Robert of Gloucester immediately gave his support to Stephen and travelled to Falaise to obtain control of the Norman treasury for him.¹⁰² Chibnall states that Robert's acceptance and support of Stephen were the actions of a 'practical man'.¹⁰³ Coming out in support of Matilda too early would endanger his inheritance. Chibnall also argues that Robert, in due course, may have been one of the first to recognize the potential of the future Henry II. Robert of Gloucester's early support for Stephen was short-lived.

In 1138, Robert changed the tide of the conflict by declaring his support for his half-sister and became Matilda's partner in the war against Stephen. William of Malmesbury explained Robert's change of heart by stating that Robert had always intended to desert Stephen's cause.¹⁰⁴ He wrote that Robert was correcting a wrong he had committed when 'after the oath which he had taken to his sister, he had not been ashamed to give himself with his hands to another during her lifetime'.¹⁰⁵ Stephen had confirmed all of Robert's estates and had listened to his guidance at the siege of Exeter.¹⁰⁶ Malmesbury attested that the king, through his lieutenant, William of Ypres, ambushed Robert, which resulted in an insurmountable breach of trust.¹⁰⁷ Robert was not the first magnate to lend his support to Matilda, but his loyalty was the most influential.¹⁰⁸ With Robert by her side, Matilda arrived

¹⁰¹ Robert of Torigni, 'Chronicle', vol. i, p. 200; Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, bk. 6, pp. 454–55.; Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen*, p. 33 describes how Geoffrey and Matilda were consolidating power in the southwest of Normandy whereas Theobald and Robert were off in the east.

¹⁰² Robert of Torigni, 'Chronicle', vol. i, p. 200; Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, bk. 6, pp. 448–49, states that Henry willed £60,000 from the Falaise treasury to Robert as discussed by R.H.C. Davis, *King Stephen, 1135–1154* (London, 1990), p. 16; J. Green, *Henry I: King of England and Duke of Normandy* (New York, 2006), p. 220.

¹⁰³ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 82.

¹⁰⁴ On the attitude of William of Malmesbury, see J. Bradbury, 'The Early Years of the Reign of Stephen, 1135–1154', in D. Williams, ed., *England in the Twelfth Century* (Woodbridge, 1990), p. 17; R. B. Patterson, 'William of Malmesbury's Robert of Gloucester: A Reevaluation of the *Historia Novella*', *American Historical Review*, 70 (July 1965), pp. 251–62; William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, pp. 18–24.

¹⁰⁵ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, pp. 40–42.

¹⁰⁶ K.R. Potter and Davies, R.H.C., eds., *Gesta Stephani* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 14–15.

¹⁰⁷ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁸ For other early supporters, see J. Bradbury, *Stephen and Matilda, The Civil War of 1139–53* (Stroud, 2005), pp. 36–51.

in England at Arundel on 30 September 1139. From there, Matilda and her allies embarked on a nine-year struggle to see Matilda on the throne.

The role of Geoffrey's ducal reign in a cross-channel world has received little scholarly attention, except in the case of the Angevin presence in Matilda's charters of 1141 and William of Malmesbury's statements on Geoffrey's lack of appearance in England in 1142.¹⁰⁹ Kathryn Dutton's 2011 doctoral dissertation fills this historiographical gap.¹¹⁰ According to Garnett, Geoffrey's ducal reign only began in 1142,¹¹¹ but it minimizes the role Geoffrey played in England prior to 1142, when he appeared more frequently in Matilda's charters, a result, it could be argued, of his increased role in Normandy.¹¹² Geoffrey had to work within the context of a cross-channel society, regardless of the disintegration of the Anglo-Norman realm. Geoffrey issued a considerable number of charters and writs in Normandy, which echoed earlier sources from Henry I's reign. In effect, Geoffrey consciously depicted himself as Henry's heir in the production of these confirmations. He spent the remainder of his ducal reign restoring order to Normandy and resolving conflicts in his Angevin holdings.

On 29 May 1147, Geoffrey and Matilda's eldest son Henry fitz Empress crossed the channel to return to Normandy to receive his Norman inheritance,¹¹³ although he did not receive his investiture until 1150. Henry Fitz Empress had begun to take up his mother's fight in England and continued to do so after 1148, when Matilda left England. Geoffrey handed over the 'inheritance from his mother's side'.¹¹⁴ The following year, Matilda returned to Normandy and installed herself at the priory of Le Pré and Henry Fitz Empress returned to England. The reunion of Matilda and Geoffrey was short-lived, however. Robert of Torigni details that while travelling to Lisieux, Geoffrey stopped to swim in the river near his castle of Château-du-Loir in southeastern Maine and developed a fever.¹¹⁵ At the age of thirty-eight, Geoffrey, Count of Anjou and Duke of Normandy, died on 7 September 1151.

Matilda's career differs remarkably from the rules of Urraca and Melisende. Unlike them, Matilda failed to gain her father's crown. Because a decade had passed between her

¹⁰⁹ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, pp. 123–25; M. Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and Bec-Hellouin', *ANS*, 10 (1987), p. 109; Davis, *King Stephen*, p. 72.

¹¹⁰ K. Dutton, 'Geoffrey, Count of Anjou and Duke of Normandy, 1129–51', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Glasgow, 2011.

¹¹¹ Garnett, *Conquered England*, pp. 222–31.

¹¹² Garnett, *Conquered England*, pp. 225–26.

¹¹³ Robert of Torigni, 'Chronicle', vol. i, p. 243.

¹¹⁴ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, bk. 6, p. 161; Garnett, *Conquered England*, p. 256 n. 1040, Garnett notes that 'Normandy and England are described as Henry's *ius Maternum* in the account of Geoffrey of Anjou's will' given by William of Malmesbury, *Gesta Regum Anglorum*, eds. R.A.B. Mynors, R.M. Thomson, and M. Winterbottom (2 vols, Oxford, 1998), vol. i, p. 112.

¹¹⁵ Robert of Torigni, 'Chronicle', vol. i, pp. 255–6.

designation ceremony and her inheritance, and Henry I did not include Matilda in his court as Alfonso VI and Baldwin II did with their daughters, Matilda's claim was weakened. The struggles of a cross-channel realm provided countless challenges. For Stephen and Matilda both, and indeed all Anglo-Norman kings, wrangling two geographical entities proved nearly impossible.

Co-rule between husband and wife was a complicated concept with no clear models for success prior to the twelfth century. Many kings could benefit from their wives' assistance, but in these cases of female rulership, the woman could potentially demonstrate greater authority and agency than her consort counterpart. Urraca's brief marriage to Alfonso el Batallador shows her willingness to utilize her husband's ability to serve as her military deputy. However, when El Batallador attempted to block her from ruling, she found other solutions to her vulnerabilities as queen regnant. Melisende's special position as queen regnant protected her from the unfavorable treatment that other women faced if deemed too powerful. Her new position of strength after the resolution of the crisis over Hugh of Jaffa in 1136 allowed her to participate in ruling her kingdom and make crucial decisions about alliances. Her legitimate authority as queen regnant allowed her to seek favorable terms for her sister, Alice of Antioch, who, by contrast, was repeatedly shut off from accessing power. The cross-channel realm of England and Normandy required a division of labor between Matilda and Geoffrey, but it left Matilda without her husband's aid in England. She was forced to seek outside support. Although they collaborated to claim her inheritance, Matilda and Geoffrey demonstrate a different, and possibly less successful model of co-rule. Examining instances of sharing power reveals that whatever the husband of a royal heiress anticipated regarding his wife's succession, as royal heiress, she had legitimate authority that could not be denied.

Conclusion:

Each father of a royal heiress believed that his daughter could not inherit his kingdom without a male co-ruler. Having a male to rule alongside a queen regnant was perceived as fundamental to female royal authority. Furthermore, the continuation of the dynasty required a husband to give a queen regnant heirs. However, the cases of Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda were the first instances of female royal inheritance in the twelfth century and each kingdom struggled to come to terms with how female royal rule should function. The royal heiresses had undeniable legitimacy and authority that other women did not. However, the

medieval world was patriarchal, and this chapter demonstrates the unique structural and contingent aspects of co-rule in the twelfth century.

A co-ruler was necessary for a royal heiress to gain the throne. However, the choice of husband could negatively impact on her chances to inherit. As the cases of Urraca and Matilda suggest, marriages aimed at overcoming an immediate crisis or conflict were usually with neighboring lords and were ultimately unsuccessful. By contrast, the model of Melisende and Fulk was more effective; the king and aristocracy of Jerusalem took a measured approach. Each marriage to an aspiring queen regnant resulted in conflict early on in their marriage or co-rule. In each case, the conflict resulted from the husband's attempts to remove his royal wife from authority. Both Urraca and Melisende overcame their conflicts because of aristocratic support, revealing the importance of aristocratic support for both kings and queens regnant. Urraca's supporters and the Raimundist faction blocked El Batallador from taking control of León-Castilla. With tangible authority, Melisende could promote the established aristocracy as Fulk of Anjou had neglected to do. Out of self-interest, the aristocracies of León-Castilla and Jerusalem favored the ruling rights of their queens instead of men. Matilda, by contrast, had few alliances within the Anglo-Norman court. She had grown up in Germany because of her first marriage to the Holy Roman Emperor and spent the majority of the years between her marriage to Geoffrey in 1128 and Henry's death in 1135 in Anjou. Therefore, the limited support from the aristocracy weakened her chances of becoming the ruling queen of England. If conflict could be overcome, co-rule could work. Melisende and Fulk's reign in Jerusalem was the only one to survive as a visible example of royal co-rule. For co-rule to work, a husband had to share royal responsibilities with his wife. However, the success of a co-rule required aristocratic support of a royal heiress, and not the willingness of a male co-ruler to share power.

Chapter Three

Ruling Alone

In the twelfth century, the presence of male co-rulers allowed the three royal heiresses to be considered viable options for inheriting the kingdoms of León-Castilla, Jerusalem, and the Anglo-Norman realm. With the male co-ruler solution to female royal rule, these kingdoms were able to preserve dynastic continuity while still ensuring that the exclusively male aspects of ruling were carried out. However, each heiress encountered moments of their rules in which they were without the presence, assistance, or oversight of a male co-ruler and could therefore establish sole rules. Thus, when the aspiring queens regnant were left without male co-rulers, whether through annulment of marriage, the death of the spouse, or physical separation, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda were each left without the support of, or threat from, their co-ruling husband.

This chapter examines the structural and contingent aspects of twelfth-century history that enabled a queen regnant to rule her kingdom alone, without the collaboration or input of a co-ruler. By utilizing dynastic memory, an aspiring queen regnant could emphasize her position by reminding her subjects of her rank and birth. As queens ruling alone, they were forced to rely on alliances with important male magnates. Having powerful allies who would fight for one's cause ensured the success of a queen. Allies varied from men of warrior status who could command forces on the queen regnant's behalf to powerful religious men who controlled centers of power and wealth. Additionally, no female royal rule was without conflict, due to pressure from outside the kingdom. The twelfth century was a period of conquest and war, which defined the societies these queens presided over. The themes of dynastic legitimacy, alliance, and outside conflict represent three subsections with significant opportunities for comparative analysis. The final section examines the relevant cases of aristocratic heiresses expressing independent authority over their lands.

Finally, it is worth reiterating that the case of Empress Matilda is unique from those of Urraca and Melisende, as she never rose above the rank of royal heiress. Nevertheless, for the period c. 1139–1147, she established a rival reign to that of her cousin, the consecrated King Stephen (1135–1154), and can therefore be profitably discussed alongside Urraca and Melisende, as she did effectively rule in the areas controlled by her allies. As royal heiresses, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda were socially ranked far higher than most other aristocratic heiresses. Therefore, the available evidence for these three women is rich. This period of ruling alone, without a co-ruler, is the best opportunity to observe each heiress's agency and individual power.

i. Collaboration with male deputies and archbishops

Medieval kingship was a collaborative effort between rulers and their aristocracy.¹ A king's rule could not function effectively without positive support from his nobles. As explored in Chapter Two, aspiring queens regnant, especially Urraca of León-Castilla and Melisende of Jerusalem, capitalized on disgruntled aristocratic factions that opposed the authority of the male co-ruler, and in a sense, this accounts for Matilda too, as she and Stephen each vied for support from the aristocracy. The support from key nobles in each case enabled the aspiring queens regnant establish different degrees of independent authority that were essential for the sole rule that, in time, each would experience. All three aspiring queens regnant utilized a two-pronged approach to aristocratic support. First, each found male deputies to undertake the militaristic duties of ruling. However, they would have to be careful not to advance a lord's position too much in the event that he posed a threat to his queen's independent authority. The second line of support came from the clergy. Ecclesiastical supporters imbued the ruler with symbolic power and could serve as faithful advisors and allies. In return, they could expect their queen regnant to faithfully defend the Church and donate generously.² Ecclesiastical supporters were significant for queens regnant because they did not pose the same type of threat to a woman's independent rule as secular supporters; there was a chance that unwed queens regnant could remarry and upset the power balance. While these women were attempting to rule alone, they could never be without the influence or assistance of powerful men.

Any discussion of Urraca of León-Castilla's allies must begin with Count Pedro González de Lara (d. 1130), Urraca's closest supporter among the aristocracy and her lover for the greater part of her reign.³ Count Pedro features in the witness lists of fifty-two charters from Urraca's independent rule⁴ but was attributed as *armiger regina*, or the queen's *alférez*, in only the first two charters of her reign.⁵ As the ruler's standard-bearer, the *alférez* held a highly prestigious court position; his duties included serving as bodyguard and military commander in the field of battle in the event that the ruler was elsewhere.⁶ In the case of a queen regnant, she would be perennially absent from the field of battle, and thus the position

¹ B. Weiler, 'The rex renitens and the medieval ideal of kingship, c. 950–c. 1250', *Viator*, 31 (2000), pp. 1–42.

² See Chapter Five for a discussion of ecclesiastical and monastic patronage.

³ S.R. Doubleday, *The Lara Family: Crown and Nobility in Medieval Spain* (Cambridge, MA, 2001), pp. 21–27; A. Sanchez de Mora, *Los Lara: un linaje castellano de la plena Edad Media*, Burgos, 2007, p. 73.

⁴ B. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca, 1109–1126* (Princeton, 1982), p. 216.

⁵ C. Monterde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca de Castilla y León (1109–1126)*. (Zaragoza, 1996), nos 1–2.

⁶ Doubleday, *The Lara Family*, p. 22.

of *alférez* took on added significance. Apart from the two earliest charters, Count Pedro's position was never mentioned in Urraca's other charters. According to Bernard Reilly, although Count Pedro continued in the position of *alférez* with all the requisite duties, the title was perhaps 'not grand enough' for the queen's lover and unofficial consort.⁷ However, it is just as likely that the title was too grand; the marriage received papal condemnation in 1110, and Urraca and El Batallador gave up hopes of reconciliation in 1113, effectively ending the marriage. Thus, she was technically free to marry again. As Pedro was Urraca's lover and one of the highest-ranked, wealthiest nobles of her court, it was a deliberate choice for her to remain unmarried and keep him in an ambiguous position. She had learned that ambitious men would attempt to claim more authority and power if they could, and she would have to be cautious about the honors she granted. Urraca conferred titles with caution, particularly after the dissolution of her disastrous marriage to El Batallador. Urraca's charters depict Count Pedro as yet another noble in a long list of counts, though one whose presence was ubiquitous.⁸ His ambiguous position allowed Urraca to take full advantage of his strengths as an advisor and military leader, while also protecting herself from his. Her shrewd move to restrain Count Pedro's authority and power reveals Urraca's own belief in her authority and the careful attention she paid to her image in her charters.

Urraca's decision to remain unmarried or recognize Pedro in an official capacity is even more remarkable since she had at least two children with him. A charter from the Cathedral of León shows her confirmation and that of her heir, 'her son Lord King Alfonso', followed by the appearance in the witness list of 'her younger son Fernando, son of Pedro'.⁹ As she was wont to do throughout her reign, Urraca played a careful game of recognition. Her policy of not officially recognizing Pedro applied to their illegitimate children too; they were given no special acknowledgment in her official royal charters. Urraca was willing to recognize these two children, Elvira and Fernando, but not officially.

Urraca's documents reveal a strategy to elevate her own position as queen regnant while keeping all others who might threaten her authority in positions of inferiority. Before discussing individual examples, it is worthwhile to briefly discuss Urraca's chancery. Her chancery was not a formalized office but rather four or five scribes who traveled with the queen on a regular, long-term basis, and several others whose presence among the Leonese court was only sporadic.¹⁰ Under Urraca's reign, the chancery gradually evolved to a more

⁷ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, pp. 214–15.

⁸ J.M. Mínguez Fernández and M. Herrero de la Fuente, eds., *Collección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún* (7 vols, León, 1976), vol. 5, no. 1378, p. 118.

⁹ Mínguez Fernández and Herrero de la Fuente, eds., *Collección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún*, vol. 5, no. 1378, p. 118: *Filius eius rex domnus Adefonsus conf. - Fernandus Petri minor filius conf.*

¹⁰ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 259.

established organization but would not achieve a more formal structure until Alfonso VII's reign.¹¹ Two scribes in particular remained in the service of their queen for nearly the entirety of her rule: Fernando Perez, who wrote twenty-seven charters between 1110 and 1123; and Pedro Vicentex, who wrote eighteen documents between 1110 and 1124. An additional three scribes spent less time Urraca's service but produced a large body of charters, drafting between ten and eighteen charters each.¹² Of course, not all the charters were written by scribes that were in the direct service of Urraca. Many of the most elaborate and significant charters were drafted by scribes from 'outside the chancery'.¹³ These charters show characteristics that were specific to the documents produced by the various institutions. These ecclesiastical houses would regularly draft charters for kings if the business they contained concerned their institution. Members of the Leonese court, both lay and ecclesiastical, would be well-versed in the language of these documents and would undoubtedly be able to balance the needs of the monarch with the promotion of their own agendas.

One such document was drafted after 1112, when Urraca was separated from her second husband and Count Pedro was firmly established as the court favorite and Urraca's trusted deputy, her half-sister, Sancha,¹⁴ married Rodrigo González de Lara.¹⁵ With her half-sister married to her lover's younger brother, the Lara family was officially tied to the royal Jiménez dynasty through their children.¹⁶ Urraca's scribes were careful to recognize this extension of her family in a roundabout way in a donation with her brother-in-law Rodrigo and his daughters by Sancha:

'I, Queen Urraca, daughter of prince Alfonso, inspired by love of charity and taught in the holy faith of Christianity, and I, count Rodrigo González, along with my daughters whom I had with my wife Doña Sancha, daughter of the *imperator* King Alfonso, make a charter...'¹⁷

The familial ties that connect Urraca and Sancha, and by extension Rodrigo, become clear in the document, but the scribe was careful to only subtly connect them. Sancha's relationship to Urraca is through their shared father, Alfonso VI, but even then, the scribe attributes different titles to their father ('prince' and 'imperator King'). An uninformed reader might even think the scribe referred to two separate men. Most likely, Urraca was apprehensive about honoring

¹¹ B. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Alfonso VII, 1126–1157* (Princeton, 1998), pp. 146–52.

¹² I. Ruiz Albi, ed., *La reina doña Urraca (1109–1126): Cancillería y colección diplomática* (León, 2003), pp. 87–184.

¹³ Ruiz Albi, ed., *La reina doña Urraca*, p. 203: *notarios extracancillerescos*.

¹⁴ Sancha (b. 1101) was the daughter of Alfonso VI and his sixth wife, Elizabeth (d. 1107).

¹⁵ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 217.

¹⁶ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 217.

¹⁷ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 201: *Ego Urraka regina, Adefonso principis filia, amore karitatis suscensa, adque fide sancte christianitates edocta, et ego comite Roderigo Gunzalviz, una cum filias meas quas ego abuit de mea mulier infanta domna Sancia, filia regis imperatori Adefonsi, facimus testamentum....*

her other family members or anyone who might threaten her independent authority as queen regnant. Sancha was not identified as Urraca's sister in her official charters, nor are Sancha's daughters referred to as her nieces. In another charter, Sancha confirmed one of Urraca's documents, stating, 'I, Sancha, daughter of the above-mentioned most noble king and Queen Elizabeth, confirm this deed of my lady and sister'.¹⁸ The explicit connection between the two women establishes their sisterhood and Sancha's father as the 'above-mentioned' king, who was Urraca's sire as well. Sancha's willingness to connect herself to her half-sister stands in contrast to Urraca, who preferred to obliquely suggest relationships rather than overtly advertise them. Her intimate relationships with Count Pedro González de Lara and their two illegitimate children were not hidden from the public, but she kept them from entering the official record.

Urraca's charters reflect a consciousness on the part of the queen and her scribes to represent her reign as legitimate and strong. Because she was dependent on her aristocracy to serve in her place on the battlefield, honoring these men in her charters was necessary. However, she was careful to maintain a delicate balance of acknowledging her allies while protecting herself from overly ambitious men. Throughout her reign, Urraca faced nearly constant fluctuating alliances and factions, which she meticulously managed. Her charters allowed her to create a faultless, official version of her rule; they do not recount the activities of her reign, but rather create a sanctioned image of her rulership that she was able to create through the cooperation of her scribes.

If Count Pedro González de Lara was Urraca's most powerful secular ally, her greatest episcopal ally was Bernard, Archbishop of Toledo (d. 1125). During the wave of the Benedictine Reforms of the eleventh century, Abbot Hugh of Cluny sent Bernard to the Iberian Peninsula at Alfonso VI's request. First ordained as abbot of Sahagún in 1080, Bernard was relocated to Toledo after its reconquest in 1086. Bernard created a network of French Cluniac bishops throughout the kingdom, who each owed his loyalty to the new archbishop of Toledo. Bernard was able to build this web of protégés because of the impressive authority he wielded as archbishop, which was made more imposing after 1088 when Pope Urban II made Toledo the metropolitan see for all dioceses whose customary metropolitan see fell within the boundaries of Muslim rule. On 25 April 1093, Pope Urban granted the archbishop of Toledo the papal legateship for the Iberian Peninsula. Bernard was the most powerful ecclesiastical lord in Iberia, and his strong working relationship with Alfonso VI and, eventually, Urraca enabled him to participate in government at the highest

¹⁸ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 1: *Sancia, filia supradicti noblissimi regis, et Elisabet regine, hoc factum domine et sororis mee confirmo*. See Appendix B for this charter.

levels.

Bernard was a constant presence at Urraca's court, and his support of her rule was essential to Urraca's hold of her throne. His open enmity over her marriage to El Batallador proved to be the cornerstone of her campaign to end the marriage and establish her own sole rule of León-Castilla. For fifteen years, the two worked as close allies until the archbishop's death at the beginning of April 1125. Bernard's network of protégés meant that Urraca had supporters scattered across her kingdom, each intent on promoting her and her ally Bernard, even after his death.

In addition to the threat El Batallador posed to Urraca's authority, she had to take precautions against her young son, whom some wanted to rule instead of Urraca.¹⁹ To neutralize the threat her son posed, Urraca removed him from the care of key Galician nobles and placed him under Bernard's care. Count Pedro Froilaz and Bishop Gelmírez of Compostela had served as guardians to the young Alfonso Raimúndez. In 1116, Urraca arranged for her son to be crowned in Galicia, a position last held by Urraca and her first husband, Raymond of Burgundy (d. 1107). By this time, Urraca's favorability in the region had dropped considerably, and it benefitted Urraca for her son to expand the areas under his control. With the trans-Duero region and Toledo now under the titular rule of her son, any victories in the region would come at the expense of her ex-husband. Alfonso Raimúndez had marched through the region in the spring of 1116 and stood as a clear-cut alternative to El Batallador. Furthermore, the imperial history of Toledo had masculine connotations of military conquest that could be to Alfonso Raimúndez' benefit. Then, Urraca completed her strategy by placing her heir under the protection and mentorship of Bernard in 1116. By removing him from the epicenter of the Raimundist faction, Urraca had defused the growing power of Alfonso Raimúndez.²⁰ Urraca's power came from her independent coronation in 1109 before her marriage to El Batallador. From this, she could afford to allow her son to be crowned king in Galicia without actually ceding any authority to him, as discussed in the next chapter.

Melisende of Jerusalem's reign follows an unusual pattern, as events unfolded that created two separate periods of co-rule; her nine-year independent rule was bracketed by periods of shared power with either her husband, Fulk, or son, Baldwin. Thus, during her sole

¹⁹ See Chapter Four, Section i for a discussion of Urraca's political relationship with her son. He was crowned king in Galicia in 1111 but she never ceded any authority to him and did not establish a form of co-rule with Alfonso Raimúndez.

²⁰ After 1116 and the removal from their protection, Count Pedro Froilaz confirmed only four of Alfonso Raimúndez' charters and Gelmírez confirmed only three.

rule, Melisende took full advantage of her positive relationship with ecclesiastical leaders in the Holy Land as well as with secular lords who hoped to benefit from her largesse. Before her husband Fulk died in 1143, Melisende shared responsibilities with her husband. The triumvirate of father, mother, and son co-rulers shielded the monarchy from threats, but without Fulk to lead the army and a son still too young to replace him, Melisende's position was precarious.

Melisende's first priority in her besieged kingdom was to find a man to serve as her military commander. While she could not physically partake in battle to defend her kingdom, Melisende needed a loyal ally in this role. For this job, she chose her cousin Manasses of Hierges,²¹ who had recently relocated from the Ardennes. As constable, Manasses was responsible for leading the army in the event that the king was underage or otherwise incapacitated, which for Melisende, solved a major problem of her sole rule.²² Hamilton argues that this prevented a local magnate from amassing too much power and upsetting the status quo.²³ Manasses arrived in the Holy Land in 1140, three years prior to Fulk's death. The appointment of Manasses, an outsider, to the position of constable arguably employed the same logic Baldwin II used in outsourcing Fulk for the role of husband and co-ruler. But, according to William of Tyre, Manasses was haughty and not well received by his comrades. There were other capable military leaders from outside the Kingdom of Jerusalem that would not have upset the aristocracy, but Melisende's decision to appoint her cousin to such a powerful position kept the power within her own family.

As commander of the royal forces of Jerusalem, Manasses made several decisions that greatly impacted events in the Holy Land for years to come. His first major action came in 1144, when he led troops on behalf of Melisende to come to the aid of the besieged city of Edessa, the weakest and least settled of the Crusader States. However, Manasses did not arrive in time, and it fell to Zenghi (d. 1146) on 24 December 1144. This event inspired the launch of the Second Crusade, and in 1148, Manasses attended the Council of Acre, where the assembled men decided to attack Damascus. To the lament of the crusaders, the campaign ended in disaster.²⁴ After the dispersal of the crusaders, Manasses wed the wealthy widow of

²¹ Manasses of Hierges was the son of Héribrand II of Hierges and Hodierna of Rethel; Hodierna was daughter of Hugh I of Rethel and sister of King Baldwin II of Jerusalem. The precise dates of his birth and death are unknown. H. Mayer, 'Manasses of Hierges in East and West', in *Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire/Belgisch Tijdschrift voor Filologie en Geschiedenis* 66 (1988), pp. 757–766.

²² A. V. Murray, 'Women in the Royal Succession of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1291)', in C. Zey, ed., *Mächtige Frauen? Königinnen und Fürstinnen im Europäischen Mittelalter (11.–14. Jahrhundert)* (Zurich, 2015), p. 143.

²³ B. Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States: The Queens of Jerusalem (1100–1190)', in D. Baker, ed., *Medieval Women* (Oxford, 1978), p. 152.

²⁴ On the Second Crusade, see D. Nicholle, *The Second Crusade 1148: Disaster outside Damascus* (London, 2009); J. Phillips, *The Second Crusade: Extending the Frontiers of Christendom* (New Haven, 2007); S.

Barisan of Ibelin (d. 1150), Helvis of Ramla, and thus managed to add to his lands and wealth. His increase in good fortune, contrasted with his prominent role in two failed military campaigns, sparked resentment against him. While he is not always a reliable source, William of Tyre claims Manasses was ‘said to have conducted himself very haughtily. He assumed an insolent attitude of superiority towards the elders of the realm and refused to show them proper respect’.²⁵ Baldwin III would place the blame for the conflict with his mother on Manasses in 1152.²⁶ Manasses was loyal to Melisende throughout her rule and defended her against her son’s eventual efforts to oust her from authority but would eventually lose his position as constable to Humphrey II of Toron (d. 1179).

Melisende utilized a two-pronged approach like Urraca, and enjoyed steady support from the ecclesiastical aristocracy. Three different men occupied the position of patriarch of Jerusalem throughout her reign, but only the first proved to be influential in assisting Melisende to stay in power: William of Malines (1130–1145), Fulk of Angoulême (1146–1157), and Amalric of Nesle (1157–1180). William of Malines intervened in the conflict over Hugh of Jaffa, as discussed in the previous chapter, and negotiated terms favorable to Melisende’s second cousin, indicating the church’s support for Melisende. There are several likely reasons for his support. Baldwin II and William were both originally from Flanders and had established a positive relationship after Baldwin nominated him to the position in 1130. Throughout his reign, when William held the positions of patriarch of Tyre from 1128–1130 and prior of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Baldwin had established a cooperative relationship with William. After Baldwin II’s death in 1131, it is likely that Fulk did not follow suit, and Patriarch William might have hoped that Melisende would show more support for the church than Fulk had. Patriarch William was key to Melisende’s independent sole rule, and it was after his death in 1145 that her authority began being corroded.

Empress Matilda is best known for her role in the succession dispute and ensuing civil war against her cousin and rival claimant, Stephen I (1135–1154). Stephen’s claim is discussed later in this chapter; however, because Matilda’s active years in England (1139–1148) are centered on this issue, it is impossible to separate the topics entirely. It is worth pointing out that Matilda never had the equivalent of Count Pedro González de Lara or Manasses of Hierges in England or indeed the ecclesiastical support that Urraca or Melisende

Runciman, *A History of the Crusades, vol. II: The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Frankish East, 1100–1187* (Cambridge, 1952).

²⁵ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Turnhout, 1986), bk. 17, no. 13.

²⁶ See Chapter Four, Section ii for an analysis of the conflict between Melisende of Jerusalem and Baldwin III of Jerusalem.

had, presumably because her husband was alive and well until 1151, albeit across the channel. For Matilda to win the succession crisis against her cousin, she would have to depend on alliances with powerful men who could handle the militaristic aspects of campaigning on her behalf. Matilda's case most clearly demonstrates the necessity of broad aristocratic support for female royal rule, because while she could build relationships with certain allies, she was unable to construct the required networks of support throughout her realm to promote her rule in favor of a male rival claimant. Matilda's independent actions in England came from a geographical separation from her husband, who was campaigning in Normandy, rather than annulment or widowhood. Therefore, Matilda is evaluated as a sole leader of her cause in a similar fashion to Urraca and Melisende.

Robert of Gloucester brought Matilda to England on 30 September 1139 to begin efforts to claim her inheritance. The decision to come to England meant that Matilda had to leave her husband and three young sons, aged six, five, and three, in Normandy. Robert and Matilda landed at Arundel, a strategic choice because it was the new home of Matilda's stepmother, Adeliza of Louvain, who had remarried William of Albini after Henry I's death in 1135. The choice of destination allowed Matilda to land in England under the pretense of reuniting with her stepmother. However, Robert and Matilda were soon joined by supporters of their cause and marked the opening round of conflict in England over the succession. Matilda's arrival in England was certainly legal, and Stephen had no grounds to arrest her.²⁷ When Matilda landed in Arundel, she brought only a small force of 140 knights.²⁸ The *Gesta Stephani*, the partisan chronicle in favor of Stephen's succession, believed their arrival in Arundel indicated to Robert's supporters that 'all who secretly or openly favored the earl were keener than usual and more eager to trouble the king'.²⁹

Early in her struggle against her cousin Stephen, Matilda accepted the homage and support of several key nobles, including Miles of Gloucester, Brian Fitz Count, and eventually Geoffrey de Mandeville. Some, including Robert's son-in-law, Earl Ranulf of Chester, attempted to remain detached from the war and exploit the foreseeable opportunities for greater lands and wealth that came from a disjointed central government. Evidently, Matilda received sufficient aristocratic support to establish a base in the west of England, where she could act as an alternate ruling monarch of England by issuing writs, charters, and grants of land and minting coins. Her decisions and largesse were, of course, contingent on her victory over Stephen for the crown of England. Matilda's entrance into the succession crisis initiated

²⁷ Bradbury, *Stephen and Matilda*, p. 85.

²⁸ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, p. 34.

²⁹ Potter and Davies, eds., *Gesta Stephani*, pp. 86–7.

a long period of turmoil, in which the aristocracy attempted to profit by switching sides, and resulted in numerous castles being built without royal license.

For the first year of Matilda's direct involvement in the English dispute, neither side gained any clear victories. Therefore, the leaders of both parties attempted to resolve the conflict through diplomacy and negotiation but the assembly failed to restore peace. At Whitsuntide 1140, the leaders of both sides met, with Robert representing his half-sister. Representing Stephen were the archbishop of Canterbury and his wife, Queen Matilda, heiress of Boulogne (d. 1152).³⁰ Queen Matilda was countess of Boulogne in her own right and had inherited the counties of Boulogne and Lens, including the port of Wissant, and the English honor of Boulogne, which ranked as the tenth largest holding after the royal demesne.³¹ Queen Matilda is an interesting counterpoint to the empress. As an heiress, she enjoyed authority in her own lands, but as queen consort, she was granted royal authority and power on behalf of her husband. Like the king, she was anointed and crowned in a ceremony that elevated her above the aristocracy.³² Medieval writers praised Queen Matilda's actions on behalf of her husband, Stephen, even when she broke gender norms, like when she participated in the siege at Dover in 1138.³³ Her independent authority and wealth, combined with her access to royal authority through marriage, allowed Queen Matilda to act as a limited co-ruler with her husband: confirming and issuing charters, directing military offenses, building alliances, serving as a diplomatic representative, and exercising the powers of judge. Her actions did not draw censure because her authority was on behalf of the king. Empress Matilda, by contrast, attempted to claim her own authority.

The year 1141 brought about significant changes in the succession crisis; a pitched battle at Lincoln on 2 February 1141 resulted in Stephen's capture. With Stephen imprisoned in Bristol Castle, Matilda was in a prime position to win over Stephen's vassals and become England's first queen regnant. Stephen's wife, Queen Matilda, however, was equally committed to keeping her husband in power. Her significant resources allowed her to secure the support of a mercenary force of Flemings led by William of Ypres that kept Stephen's cause alive.³⁴ Henry of Huntingdon wrote that 'the whole of the people of England accepted the empress as their ruler, with the exception of the men of Kent, where the queen and

³⁰ See Chapter One, Section i for information regarding Queen Matilda's marriage to Stephen of Blois.

³¹ The Honor of Boulogne included lands in eleven counties, centered in Essex; revenue in 1086 was £770; W. Hollister, 'Magnates and Curiales in Early Norman England', *Viator*, iv (1973), p. 99; H.J. Tanner, 'Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc? The Case of Queen Matilda III', in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, eds., *Eleanor of Aquitaine, Lord and Lady* (New York, 2003), p. 136.

³² P.E. Schramm, *A History of English Coronation*, tran. L.G. Wickham Legg (Oxford, 1937), pp. 28–31.

³³ Tanner, H.J., 'Queenship: Office, Custom, or Ad Hoc', p. 140.

³⁴ M. Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: queen consort, queen mother and lady of the English* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 95–6.

William of Ypres resisted her to the utmost of their power'.³⁵ Queen Matilda possessed widespread favorability in Kent, Sussex, and Essex and key pockets of support in London, which depended on the Flemish wool trade that came into the country through her port at Wissant.³⁶ Evidently, there were still places in England that rejected the empress's claim, and it is difficult to imagine a scenario in which they would have supported the empress over Queen Matilda.

Among the most loyal to Matilda were Miles of Gloucester (d. 1143) and Brian Fitz Count (d. 1153). Miles of Gloucester, created Earl of Hereford in 1141 by Empress Matilda, initially declared his support for Stephen in order for him to confirm Miles' lands and his positions as sheriff of Gloucester and constable of England. When Robert openly declared loyalty to Matilda, Miles remained outwardly committed to Stephen.³⁷ However, when Matilda landed in Arundel in 1139, Miles followed in Robert's footsteps and publicly declared his support for her. The Worcester continuator incorrectly believed Miles and Robert worked in tandem in order to bring Matilda to England's shores, implying that Miles was secretly in favor of Matilda earlier than the summer of 1139.³⁸ Davis suggested that Miles changed sides when Stephen arrested several key bishops, including Roger of Salisbury and his nephews, in June 1139,³⁹ but it is unlikely that this is the reason for his change of heart, since none of the imprisoned bishops had any personal connection to him.⁴⁰ But regardless of his reason, Miles of Gloucester was a keen military leader and was invaluable to Matilda.

After Robert and Miles, the third of Matilda's chief allies was Brian Fitz Count. Brian was likely an illegitimate son of Alan VI Fergant, Duke of Brittany, and was therefore distantly related to Matilda. Brian was Lord of Abergavenny in Wales and held Wallingford in Berkshire. In the months following Matilda's arrival in England, alliances shifted incrementally. Matilda attempted to promote her cause and gain support from the aristocracy through patronage; however, she was limited to the royal demesne within the lands of her supporters.⁴¹ She could make what Chibnall called 'anticipatory promises', which she would confirm when she had established her challenge. The tremendous effort of waging a cross-channel war was an impossible endeavor. It is interesting to speculate what roles these men

³⁵ Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum: The History of the English People*, ed. D. Greenway (Oxford, 1996), p. 280.

³⁶ R.H.C. Davis, *King Stephen, 1135–1154* (London, 1990), pp. 54–5.

³⁷ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 82; Bradbury, *Stephen and Matilda*, p. 60.

³⁸ John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, ed. P. McGurk (Oxford, 1998), p. 270; Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 80, n. 66.

³⁹ S. Marritt, 'King Stephen and the Bishops', *ANS*, 24 (2001), p. 132; T. Callahan, 'The Arrest of the Bishops at Stephen's Court: a Reassessment', *HSJ*, 4 (1992), pp. 97–108, esp. p. 100.

⁴⁰ Van Houts, ed., *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, vol. 6, pp. 530–1; Davis, *King Stephen*, p. 42.

⁴¹ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 91.

would have played in her administration. Matilda's patronage held the promise of power if she could win against Stephen.

To say that Matilda enjoyed the support of mighty bishops in England in the same manner as Urraca or Melisende would be false. In contrast to León-Castilla and Jerusalem, the bishops of the Anglo-Norman realm were often blood relatives of the royal family or other aristocratic houses. These familial relationships meant that family loyalties often influenced politics. In León-Castilla, Archbishop Bernard of Toledo filled bishoprics and abbeys with loyal followers, oftentimes immigrants from his native France. Additionally, the patriarchs of Jerusalem shared no family ties to Melisende, although they were originally from the same region of Flanders. Their more distant relationships with the monarchy allowed for more independence in their political positions. Throughout the confusion of the civil war with Stephen, Matilda could not count on bishops to aid her to the same degree that Archbishop Bernard or Patriarch William backed their queens.

At the time of Henry I's death in 1135, William of Corbeil (d. 1136) held the office of archbishop of Canterbury. He was elected to the office in February 1123 and died shortly after Henry on 21 November 1136. Despite the limited overlap with Stephen's reign, he played an important role in establishing Stephen's authority as king. When news reached Stephen in Boulogne that his uncle Henry I had died, he set sail for England, where he obtained the English treasury and organized his coronation as king. As archbishop of Canterbury and the ecclesiastical leader of the English Church, William of Corbeil had the power to disrupt Stephen's plans. He was hesitant to disregard the two oath-taking ceremonies Henry had held to designate Matilda as the legitimate heir to the throne.⁴² However, Stephen's own brother, Henry of Blois, was the bishop of Winchester (d. 1171) and reassured William that if crowned king, Stephen would promote church interests.⁴³ The *Gesta Stephani* reported that William decided to support Stephen because it was revealed that Henry had changed his mind about the succession on his deathbed, an event that had also occurred in Jerusalem upon the death of Baldwin II in 1131.⁴⁴ This shocking revelation came from Hugh Bigod, an East Anglian baron who claimed that he and two unnamed knights were present at Henry's deathbed and heard from Henry himself that he had changed his mind and released his court from the oaths they had sworn to uphold Matilda's succession.⁴⁵ Hugh Bigod's claim would shortly come under question when it came out that he was not, in fact, present at Henry's deathbed. Others, such as Arnulf, the archdeacon of Sées and later the bishop of Lisieux, reported that 'King Henry

⁴² See Chapter Three, Section ii.

⁴³ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, p. 15.

⁴⁴ Potter and Davies, eds., *Gesta Stephani*, pp. 10–11.

⁴⁵ John of Salisbury, *The Historia Pontificalis of John of Salisbury*, ed. M. Chibnall (Oxford, 1986), p. 85.

had changed his mind, and on his death bed had designated his sister's son Stephen as his heir'.⁴⁶ But before doubt was cast on Hugh Bigod's claim, William of Corbeil consented to Stephen's coronation, and he was crowned at Westminster Abbey on 22 December 1135.

Two years passed between the death of William and the election of his successor, Theobald of Bec, in 1138. Theobald was previously a monk and later an abbot at the Abbey of Le Bec in Normandy, where Matilda had been a devoted patron and a frequent visitor of its priory of Notre-Dame-du-Pré at Rouen.⁴⁷ Despite this personal connection to Matilda, Stephen appointed Theobald to the highest ecclesiastical position in England. Theobald was devoted to his principles, was an ardent defender of the church's rights, and would prioritize the Church over dynastic politics. Henry, Bishop of Winchester, was equally important to episcopal politics of the time as England's papal legate and, conveniently, the king's own brother. Henry became bishop of Winchester in 1129 and served in the post until his death in 1171. During this time, he witnessed his brother's coronation at the Cathedral of Winchester but would later enter negotiations with his cousin Matilda for her coronation in 1141. In March 1139, he obtained a commission as papal legate, which gave him a higher rank than Theobald. These two men held control over the church during the period of Stephen and Matilda's conflict.

After Stephen's capture at Lincoln in 1141, Matilda was on the cusp of realizing her goals to be crowned queen regnant of England. Following the model of Stephen in 1135, Matilda needed to secure the English treasury, gain the support of strategic allies both secular and ecclesiastical, and undergo a coronation ceremony. Gaining Henry's support as papal legate and brother to the king would go a long way. In the six years since his coronation, Stephen had not been a good friend to the Church, and perhaps Henry of Winchester hoped Matilda would be a better option. The strength of the Angevin position in 1141 was undeniable, and Bishop Henry had to weigh this against his allegiance to his brother. He agreed to meet Matilda and the core group of her supporters on 2 March 1141, one month after Stephen's capture.⁴⁸ It was at this meeting that Matilda swore to Bishop Henry of Winchester 'that all matters of chief account in England, especially gifts of bishoprics and abbacies, should be subject to his control if he received her in Holy Church as lady, and kept his faith to her unbroken'.⁴⁹ Henry then received her and pledged support to her, provided she did not break her promise.

⁴⁶ John of Salisbury, *The Historia Pontificalis of John of Salisbury*, p. 84.

⁴⁷ M. Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and Bec-Hellouin', *ANS*, 10 (1987), pp. 41–3.

⁴⁸ Potter and Davies, eds., *Gesta Stephani*, pp. 118–9; William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, p. 51.

⁴⁹ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, pp. 50–1.

The following day, on 3 March 1141, Matilda entered the city of Winchester, where Henry gave her possession of the royal treasury and keys to the castle, while Turstin the clerk gave her the royal crown. Henry then arranged for the citizens ‘at a public meeting in the market place to salute her as their lady and their queen’.⁵⁰ Matilda’s triumph was put into motion as she had a procession at the Cathedral of Winchester, the site of Stephen’s own coronation in 1135, with the support of the legate and bishops of St Davids, Lincoln, Hereford, Ely, Bath, and Chichester. Missing from this important event was the archbishop of Canterbury. Theobald postponed his visit to Matilda until he had seen the imprisoned Stephen. Henry of Winchester, again, orchestrated the next event of Matilda’s triumph when he summoned a church council. William of Malmesbury, an eyewitness to the event, recorded the legate’s wishes for peace and church freedom, therefore promoting Matilda’s succession to the throne.⁵¹ On 7–9 April, the council accepted Matilda as ‘Lady of England and Normandy’, and she agreed to the title until she was anointed, but it would take two more months before she was permitted to enter London, where she would hopefully be crowned in Westminster.⁵²

As Lady of the English, Matilda made further progress to become queen regnant of England in mid-June 1141 when she held a second conference with Londoners at St Albans.⁵³ She was permitted entry into London, where she took up residence at the Royal Hall at Westminster. There were three important defections from Stephen’s party to the Angevin side: Hugh Bigod, Aubrey de Vere, and Earl Geoffrey de Mandeville, three men with large interests in Essex and Suffolk, who could hopefully counteract the strength of Queen Matilda’s forces in the same region. During this brief period, Matilda reportedly attempted to rule more independently and was accused of showing insult to her new supporters who joined her cause after the Battle of Lincoln, not listening to Robert of Gloucester or Henry of Winchester’s advice and also annulling many of Stephen’s grants in favor of her supporters.⁵⁴ This period reveals that while Matilda was firmly in a better position, the court was deeply divided about the inevitability of Matilda’s coronation from February to June 1141. The tipping point occurred when Queen Matilda attempted to negotiate for Stephen’s release and protection for her son Eustace’s inheritance, in addition to Londoners requesting certain

⁵⁰ Potter and Davies, eds., *Gesta Stephani*, pp. 118–9.

⁵¹ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, pp. 52–6; Davis, *King Stephen*, pp. 53–5.

⁵² D. Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen, 1135–1154* (Harlow, 2000), p. 281. William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, pp. 52–6; Davis, Davis, and Cronne, eds., *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066–1154*, vol. iii, no. 343. The charter appears in a cartulary copy. Chibnall believes that *regina Anglorum* was copied down in error for *domina Anglorum*. See M. Chibnall, ‘The Charters of the Empress Matilda’, in G. Garnett and J. Hudson, eds., *Law and Government in Medieval England and Normandy* (Cambridge, 1994), p. 279.

⁵³ John of Worcester, *The Chronicle of John of Worcester*, vol. iii, p. 294.

⁵⁴ Potter and Davies, eds., *Gesta Stephani*, p. 120.

privileges. Empress Matilda's refusal broke the fragile acceptance of the Londoners and pushed them firmly back to Stephen's side, mobilizing a mob to attack the empress, forcing her to flee on 24 June 1141.

Matilda's brief glory as Lady of the English was cut short when Londoners revolted at her coronation. The ensuing rout of Winchester and siege at Oxford ended with the capture of Robert of Gloucester. The brief alliance between the Angevin forces and Bishop Henry did little to affect the overall outcome of the conflict. Theobald's participation and support of Matilda seemed reluctant. Despite Matilda's renowned piety and loyalty to the church, she lacked a significant episcopal power broker for her cause like Urraca and Melisende had in their kingdoms. Without the firm support of the leading bishops, Matilda never became queen regnant. Although it would be inaccurate to pin the failure of her war on this lack of episcopal loyalty, it was undoubtedly a factor. Stephen's coronation was an undisputable fact; he had legitimacy to his claim that Matilda could not overcome in addition to the limitations of her gender.

Unlike Matilda's contemporaries, Urraca and Melisende, she was not a queen regnant and her promises were ultimately empty. The efforts of her aristocratic allies, allowed Matilda's chance of gaining royal power to last long enough for her son and heir, Henry Fitz Empress, to reach maturity and continue his mother's fight. Matilda's closest allies were relatives who stood to benefit greatly if she could triumph over Stephen. It is perhaps cynical to suggest that Robert, Miles, Brian, and others supported Matilda for no altruistic reasons or familial devotion but because they hoped for positions of power in a kingdom governed by a woman. Without an equally important and faithful episcopal ally, the Angevin cause faced difficulties.

As evidenced by Urraca and Melisende, having both secular and episcopal support provided security against threats to female rule. Noble magnates were key in the defense of a kingdom, for a woman could not participate in battle. For Urraca and Melisende, their staunchest allies were recipients of increased power and wealth that they might not have attained under other rulers. Historical conjecture aside, Matilda's policy of patronage and promissory grants suggests the likelihood that the Anglo-Norman aristocracy hoped to benefit financially from Matilda's success. The support of bishops and patriarchs gave legitimacy to queens regnant. Again, support was a two-way system: divine protection and bishops' rights backed queens regnant, and ecclesiastical causes were promoted by the state. This system functioned in both León-Castilla and Jerusalem, where both Urraca and Melisende achieved coronations and independent rules. Because Matilda never realized her goals of becoming

ruler of England, it is unknown if this system would have ultimately been implemented. However, during the succession crisis, aside from the brief victory of 1141, the bishops of England stood behind Stephen. Alliances were key to the functioning of a female royal rule, and when they failed, so did the queen.

ii. Dynastic legitimacy

For all the problems and limitations of female royal rule, one strategic advantage of a queen regnant was her dynastic legitimacy. As designated heiresses, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda were able to impress upon their kingdoms their positions as their fathers' legitimate successors, the next links in the metaphorical chain of dynastic continuation. It was each heiress's unequaled position as eldest surviving child that allowed her to enter the line of succession. Urraca, whose source material in this case is particularly rich, used language and charters to channel her indomitable father, Alfonso VI. The events that unfolded after the collapse of her marriage in 1110 meant that her estranged husband could make a claim on her kingdom. To counteract this threat, Urraca made use of her advantageous birth on numerous occasions, proving to her audience that she was the rightful ruler of her father's lands. Melisende made little use of dynastic legitimacy during her reign, in large part, arguably, because of the familial co-rule with her husband and son, which her father had stipulated on his deathbed. Playing up her legitimacy against the conflict with her son and co-ruler, Baldwin III, might have hurt the dynastic succession, the preservation of which was paramount to royal families. As with much of the history of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, sources for Melisende are considerably fewer than for her Spanish or English counterparts, and thus there is not enough extant evidence to consider Melisende's use of dynastic legitimacy. For Matilda, the designation ceremonies served as the principal events that enabled her to rally aristocratic support against her cousin's usurpation. The various ways these medieval heiresses utilized dynastic legitimacy show that circumstance largely dictated strategy.

Urraca of León-Castilla found herself in the unusual position of redefining her rule after the collapse of her marriage to El Batallador (d. 1134) in 1110. The animosity that existed between the couple meant that Urraca would have to carve out her place in history by herself. Urraca, by large degrees, relied on dynastic memory to secure her place on the throne and made a case for legitimacy that was remarkably effective. Her charters serve as clear evidence of her vision for herself and the careful attention her scribes put toward preserving familial memory and legitimacy. While Urraca surely did not participate in the precise

wording of her charters, her collective documents present an image of the ruler that suggests a broader policy of royal representation.

In the first two documents she issued after separating from El Batallador in 1110, she made it clear that she was queen of *Hispania*.⁵⁵ In both, she established herself as the daughter of Alfonso VI, and the *data* of the second declares ‘Reigning Doña Urraca in all of the kingdom of my father Lord Alfonso’.⁵⁶ The charters from Urraca and El Batallador’s first and effectively only year of marriage had cautiously attempted to describe their relationship and define Alfonso’s authority in León-Castilla. However, after their separation in 1110, her scribes were able to defiantly establish Urraca’s sole authority as queen regnant. In August 1111, a donation to the monastery of Santa Juliana records her ‘with the same queen reigning in the dominion (*honor*) of her father’.⁵⁷ The scribe clarified that Urraca ruled her father’s kingdom after his death in 1109. This connection to dynasty was a key tool in her arsenal to counteract the rival claims of El Batallador.

Urraca and El Batallador separated but reunited off and on over the next few years before their final separation in 1113, although El Batallador attempted reconciliation negotiations until 1114. During this time, there were factions on both sides that attempted to resolve the conflict. Therefore, the timing of the usage of the imperial title seems a deliberate attempt to ward off the threat of Aragonese rule. Urraca is often titled in her *intitulationes* as ‘Queen of all *Hispania*’. Alfonso VI highlighted his conquest of Toledo in 1086 by claiming the imperial title, and it was a central feature of his kingship. By contrast, Urraca’s scribes were less consistent in the use of the feminine form, *imperatrix*, using it only five times. The first use, if authentic, is in the earliest charter written by the royal notary Petrus Vincentii.⁵⁸ The *intitulatio* of the donation of a monastery to a certain Juliano of Almunicer states, ‘I, Urraca, by the grace of God queen and *imperatrix Yspanie*, daughter of king *imperator* Alfonso of blessed memory’.⁵⁹ The donation occurred during Urraca and El Batallador’s first period of separation in 1110 and can be seen as an attempt to assert Urraca’s position as sole ruler of León-Castilla and reclaim her father’s kingdom and title. The conscious choice to style Urraca as *imperatrix* links her to the legitimate rule of Alfonso VI and undercuts the authority

⁵⁵ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 10: *Ego Hurraca, tocius Ispanie regina*; no. 11: *ego Urraka, gratia Dei Hispania [sic] regina*.

⁵⁶ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 11: *Regnante domna Urraka in toto regni patris mei regis domni Aldefonsi*.

⁵⁷ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 25: *Regnante eadem regina in honore Patris sui*.

⁵⁸ Reilly has ‘strong reservations about accepting it.’ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 210, n. 18; Ruiz Albi suggests that the uniqueness of its form may be due to Petrus Vincentii’s inexperience. Ruiz Albi, ed., *La reina doña Urraca*, p. 121.

⁵⁹ Ruiz Albi, *La reina doña Urraca*, p. 121: *Ego Vrracha, Dei gratia regina et imperatrix Yspanie, filia regis Ildefonsi beate memorie imperatoris*.

of El Batallador, especially because her estranged husband had frequently used the title since their marriage in 1109.

The next time Urraca used the imperial title came later in 1110, at her Christmas court. She was still focusing on defining her position as queen regnant and issued two charters on 26 December. Interestingly, they were both later confirmed by El Batallador when they reconciled. The language of the charters can only be described as victorious, as they express the strength of Urraca's position.⁶⁰ The first, a donation to a certain Suarío Ordóñez and his wife, states, 'I Urraka, through the ordering of the Lord, *imperatrix* of all of *Ispanie*'.⁶¹ El Batallador is styled simply as 'king' (*rex*). The second charter, a donation to Countess Enderquina, also has an elaborate *intitulatio*, though it does not use the word *imperatrix*: 'I, Urraca, by the arrangement of the Lord Queen of [all of] *Ispanie*, daughter of the most noble lord King Alfonso and Queen Constance'.⁶² She begins the *dispositio* with an echo of the title: 'It pleases the serenity of my rule (*imperium*)'.⁶³ In the confirmation, El Batallador signs as '*imperator* of all of *Ispanie*' and Urraca signs as '*imperatrix* of all of *Ispanie*'. Reilly notes that these charters clearly demonstrate the greater strength of Urraca's position from the previous year, when El Batallador had issued charters in both of their names.⁶⁴

These two charters were issued on the same day, although perhaps not consecutively, as the witness lists are not identical. It is likely that Urraca used them to reiterate her dynastic legitimacy and claim as royal heiress, because they would have been granted at the public assembly of her Christmas court. The scribes' decision to use the imperial title for Urraca was surely a conscious one. Her title in her charters changed throughout her reign, and it was used only twice more after 1110. The charter from her Christmas court does include El Batallador with the imperial title, but it mirrors Urraca's own use of *imperatrix*. Her claim to the title was through the divine providence of her rulership. These two charters make it clear that his only claim to imperial glory was through his marriage to Urraca.

Urraca's scribes only used the title on two more occasions. In a 1112 charter to the cathedral of Lugo, she was styled as 'I, empress of Hispania Dona Urraca'.⁶⁵ The charter

⁶⁰ Reilly makes a similar point about the charters: 'Both are issued in her own name and both are confirmed by her husband. They illustrate well the changed state of affairs since the previous winter, when Alfonso issued charters in both their names.' Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 121.

⁶¹ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 19: *Ego Urraka, Domini dispositione tocius Ispanie imperatrix*.

⁶² Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 20: *Ego Urraka, Domini institutione [...] Ispanie regina, noblissimi regis domini Adefonsi et Constancie regina filia*. There is a hole in the parchment in the first line. Blanco Lozano suggests the missing word is '*divina*' but I have used Ruiz Albi's suggestion '*tocius*', which is more typical of Urraca's charters. Ruiz Albi, ed., *La reina doña Urraca*, p. 379, no. 15.

⁶³ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 19: *Placuit serenitatis imperii mei*

⁶⁴ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 71.

⁶⁵ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 39: *Ego imperatrix Ispanie domna Urraka*. See Appendix B for this charter.

details the arrangement to exchange royal lands for church vessels ‘so that I may give payment to my soldiers’.⁶⁶ In 1112, Urraca and Alfonso’s marriage was over, and opposing sides were at war. Urraca needed to raise funds to pay her military, and exchanging royal lands for moveable wealth held by churches and monasteries was a common solution, as monarchies were often land rich and cash poor.⁶⁷ The decision to employ *imperatrix* after years of disuse was surely a way to strengthen Urraca’s image as queen regnant. There were clear militaristic connotations associated with *imperator*, and perhaps Urraca wished to connect her rule to the glory of her conquering father. Two years after this charter, Urraca’s scribes used *imperatrix* for the final time in October 1114. In a grant to the cathedral of Palencia, she was styled as ‘I Urraca, through the ordering of the Lord *imperatrix* of all of *Hispaniae*, daughter of the most noble lord King Alfonso and Queen Constance’.⁶⁸ This charter was issued during a difficult period for her; she was in conflict with Bishop Gelmírez again with rebellions in Galicia and Portugal, and central Castilla, Toledo, Segovia, and the trans-Duero had pledged support for El Batallador.⁶⁹ Therefore, her use of the imperial title appears more defensive than victorious in this charter.

It is possible that the use of *imperatrix* for Urraca was nothing more than an experiment by her scribes early on in her sole rule as they struggled to describe her unique position as queen regnant.⁷⁰ However, the occasions where it was employed came at pivotal moments in her reign; it was used at times when she was establishing her independent rulership, attempting reconciliation in a position of newfound strength, utilizing the power to seek funds from the church to pay troops, or defending her rule from the threat of El Batallador. The title was not used after 1114, when Alfonso el Batallador stopped pursuing matrimonial reconciliation. The reasons her scribes abandoned the imperial title are unknown, but it did not come from a decline in her authority. Instead, Urraca and her scribes experimented with other forms of styling, but none connected her more to dynastic legitimacy than the imperial title. Alfonso VI had called himself *imperator* of *Hispania*, and Urraca made it her own, declaring herself ruler ‘of all *Hispania*’ (*totius Hispanie*) in thirty-six documents, although its use dwindled after 1117 with the truce with Aragón and her son’s gradually

⁶⁶ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 39: *Ut reddam donatiua militibus meis*.

⁶⁷ T. Martin, *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain* (Leiden, 2006), p. 189. For further discussion of exploitation of monasteries, see Chapter Five, Section i.

⁶⁸ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 76: *Ego Vrraca, Domini disposition totius Hispanie imperatrix, nobilissimi regis domni Aldefonsi Constantiae reginae filia*.

⁶⁹ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 102.

⁷⁰ There were five key notaries in Urraca’s chancery: Martín Peláez, Martín *notarius*, Fernando Pérez, Juan Rodríguez, and Pedro Vincétez. The only notary that employed the title of chancellor was Martín Peláez, but only in a defensive manner in 1112, when Urraca’s struggle against Alfonso el Batallador was at its peak. Martín Peláez referred to himself as chancellor in five charters of 1112, however none are original, and produced two charters styling Urraca as *imperatrix*. See Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Urraca*, pp. 207–210.

expanding power.⁷¹ In a different way, Urraca's scribes connected her reign to her father's when they used different variations of *Hispania* without *totius* in forty-five documents throughout her reign.⁷²

Perhaps Urraca and her scribes stopped styling her as *imperatrix* was because it was not as flexible or did not convey as many meanings as the male *imperator*. The male form evoked images of military grandeur that may not have extended to the feminine form. In fact, perhaps it even demoted Urraca's authority to the level of consort, as her close contemporary Empress Matilda was consort to the Holy Roman Emperor. In Urraca's case, she seemed to prefer *regina*, as it perhaps conveyed more intrinsic power than *imperatrix*. However, the title was so closely tied with her father, Alfonso VI, that it is possible that it was simply used to remind the reader of her legitimacy as his heir. The use of language in Urraca's charters demonstrates the consciousness and attention she and her scribes paid to them as she established and protected her independent rule of León-Castilla.

For Matilda, conveying dynastic legitimacy centered on her designation as heiress by her father, Henry I. The circumstances of her inheritance differed greatly from those of Urraca and Melisende because Matilda had a younger brother who was expected to inherit, until his untimely death in 1120. Matilda's early life mirrored those of many royal and aristocratic daughters; she married into a powerful house and left her family and homeland behind. Matilda's marriage to Holy Roman Emperor Henry V provided her with the opportunity to be educated on the continent and have a taste of high-stakes politics. However, after her younger brother's death, Matilda's position within the succession was reevaluated.

Shortly after Henry V's death at Utrecht and burial in Speyer, Matilda rejoined her father in Normandy before returning to England in September 1126. At the Christmas court of 1126, Henry designated Matilda as his heir.⁷³ According to the chronicles, Henry announced that Matilda was the heir to England and Normandy and required all the magnates present to swear oaths of support for her. This event remained an argument in her favor throughout the civil war that followed after Henry's death. The designation of Matilda was, however, contingent on the fact that Henry did not have another legitimate son. Henry faced a dilemma: he needed to choose an heir in order to insure an orderly succession when he died. Several chroniclers stated that Henry had the oath that the magnates swore be conditional upon the

⁷¹ Ruiz Albi, *La reina doña Urraca*, p. 292.

⁷² Ruiz Albi, *La reina doña Urraca*, p. 292.

⁷³ D. Whitelock, D.C. Douglas, and S.I. Tucker, eds., *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London, 1961), 1127 A.D.; William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, pp. 690–93; Symeon of Durham, *Historia Regnum, Opera Omnia*, ed. R.T. Arnold (2 vols, London, 85 1882), pp. 281–82; Henry of Huntingdon, *Historia Anglorum*, p. 247; Van Houts, ed., *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, vol. ii, p. 240; Potter and Davies, eds., *Gesta Stephani*, p. 10.

fact that he did not leave a son of his own to succeed him.⁷⁴ The narrative sources are frustratingly vague about the exact circumstances under which the oath of 1126 was taken.

The *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* states that when King Henry held his Christmas court at Windsor,

‘David, the king of Scots, was present, and all the most important men in England, ecclesiastics and laymen; and there he obtained an oath from archbishops, abbots, earls, and all those thanes present, that England and Normandy should pass after his death into the possession of his daughter...’⁷⁵

William of Malmesbury noted that William of Corbeil, the archbishop of Canterbury, took the oath first, and among the secular lords mentioned by name were King David of Scotland, Stephen of Blois, and Robert of Gloucester.⁷⁶ Malmesbury also stated that Roger of Salisbury maintained that he had been absolved of his oath because he had sworn on the condition that Matilda not be married to anyone outside the realm without his consent and that of the rest of the nobility.⁷⁷ Although the chronicles unanimously report that all the great men of the realm swore the oath to support Matilda in 1126, only a few of them were mentioned by name. After the designation ceremony, Matilda’s marriage to Geoffrey of Anjou was arranged in 1127 and celebrated in 1128. Following these events, Matilda traveled to her new husband’s lands in Anjou, where she would be increasingly isolated over the next several years.

In 1129, perhaps surprisingly, Matilda left her husband behind in Anjou and rejoined her father’s court, where she remained for two years. In addition to the oaths of fidelity and support of Matilda’s claim taken at the Christmas court of 1126, two further oaths were taken. William of Malmesbury wrote regarding the pledge taken in 1131 that ‘a full meeting of the nobility being held at Northampton, the oath of fidelity to her was renewed by those who had already sworn and also taken by those who had not done so previously’.⁷⁸ The assembly at Northampton in 1131 brought together many of the greatest lords of the Anglo-Norman realm, both lay and ecclesiastical, and a visiting papal legate, who swore to uphold Matilda’s succession rights. On that occasion, Henry issued a charter restoring the church of Malmesbury to the church of St Mary of Salisbury and to Bishop Roger. Twelve bishops, seven abbots, and twenty-seven lay magnates, as well as the papal legate, Peter, cardinal priest of St Sylvester and St Martin, witnessed it.⁷⁹ Perhaps the chroniclers’ insistence that all the great men of the realm had sworn allegiance to Matilda reflects the state of affairs only after 1131, when Matilda may have sought and won clarification of her position as heir.

⁷⁴ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, p. 518; Symeon of Durham, *Historia Regum, Opera Omnia*, p. 281.

⁷⁵ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 1127 A.D.

⁷⁶ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, p. 692.

⁷⁷ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, pp. 692–3.

⁷⁸ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, p. 698.

⁷⁹ Davis, Davis, and Cronne, eds., *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum*, vol. ii, no. 1715.

The ways Urraca and Matilda used dynastic legitimacy were quite different. For Urraca, after the collapse of her marriage to El Batallador, she had the opportunity to redefine her rule without a male co-ruler. By connecting her reign to her father's, she was able to promote her position as the legitimate heir to the *imperator*. Reclaiming the imperial title that was so popular with her estranged husband allowed her to bolster her position as queen regnant by reminding the reader of her position as Alfonso VI's legitimate heir. The crucial period for Urraca's sole rule was immediately after her initial separation from El Batallador in 1110. She was vulnerable to multiple claimants to the Leonese throne, and Urraca demonstrated her political acumen to reinforce her position as her father's royal heiress. By contrast, Matilda's authority to rule as queen regnant derived from designation ceremonies, because her father had not made sufficient plans for the succession following his death. Without a strong presence in the Anglo-Norman court, no co-rule with her father, or an irrefutable will, Matilda was left with the oath-taking ceremonies of 1126 and 1131 to stake her claim on the English inheritance. Dynastic legitimacy was at the center of an aspiring queen regnant's authority as legitimate ruler, and each woman found her own ways of exploiting it.

iii. Conflict during sole rule

All rulers, to some extent, encountered resistance to their authority, so conflict was not unique to female rules. However, because of their gender, these queens regnant were vulnerable in ways kings were not. In addition to facing threats from her husband Alfonso el Batallador, Urraca also encountered the Muslim threat from the south and civil unrest from within. Melisende was queen of a region that was surrounded on all sides by Muslim forces intent on conquering her kingdom. It was during her tenure as sole ruler that the Second Crusade began. Her son Baldwin III was technically her co-ruler but remained a minor during this period, and therefore, she was solely responsible for the management of her kingdom in a new way and had to balance her own authority with that of the European crusader kings Louis VII of France (1137–1180) and Conrad III of Germany (1138–1152). Matilda fought against her cousin's claim on her kingdom. Matilda is primarily known for the civil war fought against her cousin Stephen, and her efforts in England to claim the throne in her own name are the clearest examples of her agency. The conflicts that Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda confronted tested the limits of their authority. Conflict was in no way unique to queens regnant but was an aspect of rulership that seemed destined to occur, no matter the gender of the ruler.

The major threat during Urraca's reign came from her estranged husband, El Batallador. However, one specific moment in her life uniquely demonstrates the vulnerabilities of female rule. In a spectacular sequence of events in 1117, a Galician revolt targeted Urraca and she was assaulted in her own kingdom. The partisan *Historia Compostelana* is the sole source for this episode, but considering the chronicle focused on the deeds of Bishop Gelmírez and Santiago de Compostela, it stands to reason that the author would be well apprised of this event. The author's intention was to promote the glory of his bishop and this revolt ensured the restoration of episcopal authority. Both Reilly and Martin have analyzed this portion of the *Historia Compostelana* and have concluded that it fits with Urraca's reconstructed timeline.⁸⁰ Sometime in early June 1117, Urraca arrived in Galicia. Decades earlier, Urraca had enjoyed popularity there when she and her first husband, Raymond of Burgundy (d. 1107), were given nominal control over the region. However, in 1117, it fell under the titular leadership of her son Alfonso Raimúndez. Galicia was located close to her half-sister's lands in Portugal, and she had constantly been a thorn in the side of Urraca's rule.⁸¹ Perhaps Urraca ventured to Galicia to campaign against Portuguese incursions into Galicia. When she arrived in Santiago de Compostela, she had the intention of arbitrating a disagreement between Bishop Gelmírez and the town's *consejo*. However, some townspeople were wary of the terms Urraca would offer them, and their doubt was at the root of the events that followed.

While Urraca and Bishop Gelmírez were in discussion in the episcopal palace, an angry crowd formed and forced them to seek shelter in a bell tower. To force them out, the crowd set the tower afire. Gelmírez was able to escape the city disguised by 'a most vile cape',⁸² but Urraca was not so fortunate. The crowd seized her and stripped and pelted her with stones, before realizing the extent of their actions. They extorted promises from Urraca for forgiveness and concessions that were likely worthless before allowing her to depart the city. Count Pedro Froilaz, her son Alfonso Raimúndez, and her troops were waiting for her outside the city, along with the escaped Gelmírez, who all entered the city en masse. Seeing the scope of their opponents, the townspeople gave up their fight. Bearing in mind the enormity of their offense, the consequences were relatively mild; episcopal oversight was

⁸⁰ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 124; Martin, *Queen as King*, pp. 192–93.

⁸¹ E. Falque Rey, ed., *Historia Compostelana* (Turnhout, 1994), bk. 2, no. 20, pp. 260–62.

⁸² Falque Rey, ed., *Historia Compostelana*, bk. 1, no. 114, p. 203: *abieto pallio suo et accepta a quodam capa uilissima*.

reinstated and the leading rebels were banished from the city with their property confiscated and a sizeable tax imposed on the townsmen.⁸³

The sources are not clear on how long this entire event lasted, but it most likely took up the whole month of June. On 4 July 1117, Urraca was most probably in León when she issued a charter to San Isidro de las Dueñas, confirmed by Alfonso Raimúndez, Archbishop Bernard, and the bishops of Palencia, León, Burgos, Salamanca, and Osma. The *Historia Compostelana* reads:

‘They called from outside: “Let the queen come out, if she wishes, to her alone do we give permission to come out and license to live, let the rest perish by iron and fire.” Upon hearing this, as the fire was growing inside and the bishop also urged her to leave, after receiving a guarantee of safety from the attackers the queen left the tower. When the rabble saw her leave, they rushed at her, took her and threw her to the muddy ground, they ravished her like wolves and rent her clothes; with her body naked from the chest down, she shamefully lay before all on the ground a long time. Many also wanted to stone her, among them an old Compostelan woman who wounded her seriously on the cheek with a stone’.⁸⁴

Shocking as this treatment of the queen seems today, it would have been even worse in the twelfth century. Heath Dillard, writing of the laws of later twelfth-century Castilla, made clear that, for a woman, being thrown to the ground and having her coif pulled off was the legal equivalent of rape. In the Calatayud and Marañón regions, for example, a man might be charged the same fine for hitting or disheveling a married woman as he would if he committed murder.⁸⁵ However, it is worth noting that these were frontier towns populated predominantly by soldiers, and lawmakers perhaps took extremes measures to ensure the safety of the few women living there. But one still has a sense of the shame inflicted on Urraca by the townspeople of Santiago de Compostela.

The account continues:

‘Then [Gelmírez] arrived at the place where the queen lay in the mud, stepped on by the enemy rabble, and seeing her so shamefully naked and thrown down, he left, filled with pain... Finally the queen, with her hair discheveled, her body naked and covered with mire, escapes and arrives at the same church

⁸³ Falque Rey, ed., *Historia Compostellana*, bk. 2, no. 20, pp. 260-62.

⁸⁴ Falque Rey, ed., *Historia Compostellana*, bk. 1, no. 114, pp. 202-03: *Clamabant autem foris ‘Regina, si uult, egrediatur, illi sole egrediendi licentiam et uiuendi facultatem concedimus, ceteri armis et incendio pereant’. Quo audito, incendio intus iam conualescente, intus regina coacta ab episcopo, accepta fide securitatis ab eis egressa est a turre. Quam ut uidit cetera turba egredientem, concursus in eam faciunt, capiunt eam et prosternunt humi in ualutabrum, rapiunt eam more luporum et uestes eius dilaniant; a papillis siquidem deorsum nudato copore et coram omnibus diu humi iacuit inhoneste. Multi quopue lapidibus eam uoluerunt obruere, inter quos anus quedam Compostellana percussit eam grauiter lapide in maxillam.*

⁸⁵ H. Dillard, *Daughters of the Reconquest: Women in Castilian Town Society, 1100–1300* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 174–5.

[of Santa María de la Corticela] in which the bishop was hiding but without knowing anything about him...After this the Compostelans presented themselves before the queen in the Church of Santa María and, rejoicing at her salvation, they guarded her and filled the church with arms to defend her'.⁸⁶

The outrageous events at Compostela demonstrate the character of the kingdom of León-Castilla; conflict was a regular product of the environment. Urraca's decisions reveal her as a decisive, although ruthless, ruler, not dissimilar from her father and other kings. Although it is improbable that she led the charge, after the humiliating events, it seems likely that she wanted to play a more active role in subduing the town. In this event, the vulnerabilities of female rule also became clear. It is unlikely that a male king would have suffered the same treatment at the hands of the townspeople as Urraca did. Her punishment was specific and unique to women; designed to debase, the act of stripping a woman in a crowd lowers her position as queen regnant. While no other queen suffered a similar blow, it is evident that even though a woman might be consecrated and crowned as queen, her failures were received differently than those of a man.

The main conflict that occurred during Melisende's reign was the Second Crusade. Countless historians have explored aspects of the Second Crusade but its aims, battles, and outcomes are not the focus here.⁸⁷ Instead, this section will investigate whether the leaders of the Second Crusade deliberately excluded Melisende. With the fall of Edessa in 1144, Pope Eugenius III launched the Second Crusade. Holy Roman Emperor Conrad and King Louis of France embarked on the long journey to the Holy Land, each making comprehensive plans before leaving on their crusade in the spring of 1147. Both chose to march their large armies overland, following the same 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 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, Louis and Conrad were intending to march directly across Anatolia to Edessa, bypassing even the

⁸⁶ Falque Rey, ed., *Historia Compostellana*, bk. 1, no. 114, p. 203: *Tunc ad locum, ubi iacebat regina in uolutabro turbis inpetentium proculcata, peruenit, et respiciens eam tam turpiter denudatam et prouolutam nimio dolore conpunctu preteriit...Tandem regina, dilaniata crines, nudata corpore, prouoluta luto, euasit et peruenit ad eandem ecclesiam, in qua episcopus latebat, nesciens tamen quicquam de episcopo...Post hec conueniunt Compostellani ad reginam in ecclesia beate Marie et quasi saluti eius congratulantes eam comittantur et ad eius tuitionem replent armis ecclesiam.*

⁸⁷ Phillips, *The Second Crusade*; G. Constable, 'The Second Crusade as Seen by Contemporaries', *Traditio*, 9 (1953), pp. 213–79; Nicholle, *The Second Crusade 1148*.

principality of Antioch'.⁸⁸ However, another interpretation for this omission must be considered here. The Second Crusade endeavored to recover Edessa if possible, but more importantly, its purpose was to preserve the remaining cities held by the crusaders in order to stop them from succumbing to the impressive might of Zengi's forces. The armies marching from Europe were even greater than those of the First Crusade, but they lacked organization.

Whether the European crusaders' lack of coordination with the rulers of Jerusalem stemmed from oversight or was a deliberate decision cannot be definitively known. Louis of France had a personal connection to the Holy Land through his wife's uncle. Raymond of Antioch sought assistance to defend Antioch against Zengi and hoped his niece, Eleanor of Aquitaine, and her husband might come to his aid.⁸⁹ William of Tyre viewed this as a plot to increase his holdings by attacking Aleppo and other areas of northern Syria under Nur al-Din's control. 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', demonstrating ongoing communication between France and the Holy Land.⁹⁰ Raymond's efforts to seek aid from France amounted to nothing and Louis took no actions to coordinate with his wife's uncle or any other leader in the Holy Land; once Louis and Eleanor arrived in the Holy Land, Louis refused Raymond's request for aid, which marked the start of the rumors of Eleanor's infidelity.

Crusading was still in its infancy when the Second Crusade was launched. It seems likely that the westerners' lack of communication with the Holy Land stemmed more from poor organization than a supercilious attitude towards a kingdom ruled by a woman. It stands to reason that Louis and Conrad would not seek out collaboration with Melisende on account of her gender; she could not actively participate in battle and did not have a background in military strategy. However, they also did not contact her constable, Manasses, or her son, Baldwin III, who was technically her co-ruler, albeit a currently powerless one. Their lack of collaboration with any important noble or ruler in the Holy Land might suggest a disregard for their input. It is unclear if Empress Matilda's failed bid for the English throne in 1141 negatively impacted their views of queens regnant. Matilda's continuing struggle for succession with Stephen had resulted in a civil war, which both Louis and Conrad had been

⁸⁸ J. Riley-Smith, *The Crusades: A Short History* (New Haven, 1987), p. 98 Pope Adrian IV's letter to Louis VII in 1159 cautioned him against hastily undertaking a crusade in Spain and referred to his previous failure in preparing for the Second Crusade to consult the people in the East. See J.P. Migne, *Patrologiae cursus completus. PL* (Paris, 55 1844), vol. 188, cl. 1615: *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...*

⁸⁹ See Chapter Two, Section iii.

⁹⁰ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 16, no. 27; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 179.

closely observing for some time, and by 1147, her fortunes were declining.⁹¹ It is possible that Matilda's war with Stephen affected their attitude towards Melisende, whose fortunes also seemed to be declining with the loss of Edessa as she continued to maintain her right to rule. Although they might have viewed a female rule with skepticism, it seems more likely that the western crusaders did not have the forethought to make plans with the local rulers in the Holy Land prior to launching their expeditions.

The central moment of Empress Matilda's life was the succession crisis after Henry I's death in 1135. Many historians have dissected the causes and outcomes of the war between Matilda and her cousin, Stephen, and have successfully concluded that there was no single reason why Matilda ultimately was unsuccessful in winning the crown.⁹² When Henry died in 1135, he did so without making explicitly clear how the succession should proceed. The two previous oath-taking ceremonies had done little to cement the idea of Matilda as queen regnant in the minds of many in the Anglo-Norman realm. Henry's death prompted his nephew Stephen to race across the channel, claim the English treasury, and ensure his coronation on 22 December 1135, only twenty-two days after Henry's death. His quick reaction proves to Bradbury that this event had required forethought on Stephen's part.⁹³ According to the *Gesta Stephani*, there was 'no one else at hand who could take the king's place and put an end to the dangers'.⁹⁴ His reaction was not all that different from his predecessor's. It is worth remembering that Henry I had made decisive moves to claim the throne after the death of his brother, William Rufus, in 1100.

Stephen was, like Matilda, a grandchild of William the Conqueror. Blessed with royal blood, Stephen was well liked, well married, and well positioned to take the crown. The truth about his claims that Henry had changed his mind about Matilda's accession are impossible to corroborate and verify. However, in the world of the twelfth-century Anglo-Norman kingdom, Stephen was a viable choice to be the next king. As a rival claimant to the throne, Matilda faced a challenge neither of the other royal heiresses had to deal with. While Matilda never did become a queen regnant, there were certainly parts of England that recognized her authority. Stephen's decision to cross the channel and his coronation of 1135 were his two best decisions as a royal politician. Matilda's attempt to claim the English throne began in

⁹¹ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, pp. 88–117.

⁹² H.A. Cronne, *The Reign of Stephen* (London, 1970); Cronne, *The Reign of Stephen*; Crouch, *The Reign of King Stephen*; J. Bradbury, 'The Early Years of the Reign of Stephen'; Bradbury, *Stephen and Matilda*; Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*.

⁹³ Bradbury, *Stephen and Matilda*, p. 22.

⁹⁴ Potter and Davies, eds., *Gesta Stephani*, pp. 6–7.

1139 and she reached the zenith of her power when forces loyal to her captured Stephen at the Battle of Lincoln on 2 February 1141.

Upon Stephen's capture, his wife, Queen Matilda, took command of his government and army and began work to free her husband and protect her son's inheritance. From her base in Kent, Queen Matilda attempted to rally Stephen's supporters to demand his release; she 'made supplication to all, importuned with prayers, promises, and fair words for the deliverance of her husband'.⁹⁵ Stephen's brother, Bishop Henry of Winchester, called a legatine council on 7 April to arrange Stephen's deposition as king, but Queen Matilda sent a letter to be read by her clerk, Christian, requesting her husband's release.⁹⁶ This letter inspired the bishops to wait until they heard directly from Stephen before arranging for Matilda's coronation. Critically, Empress Matilda had only lukewarm support from Londoners, and it was only with the defection of Geoffrey de Mandeville, castellan of London, to the Angevin side that she was granted entry into the city. However, four days later, on 24 June 1141, Queen Matilda and her Flemish forces forced Empress Matilda out of the city, and she fled to the safety of Oxford. The pro-Stephen forces managed to capture Matilda's greatest ally, her half-brother Robert, at the siege at Winchester. Thus, with King Stephen and Matilda's deputy both imprisoned by opposing sides, the war had reached a stalemate. In early November, both men were released in a prisoner exchange.⁹⁷ For nearly a year in 1141, it had seemed that the tide had turned in the war, but Matilda had not undergone an official coronation ceremony, which was necessary for ruling. Despite this, Matilda did participate in acts of rulership by meting out justice and issuing coinage.⁹⁸ For the next six years, the two sides remained at odds, with each ruling in the regions loyal to them. But in 1147, Empress Matilda suffered an insurmountable blow when Robert of Gloucester died. A year later, Matilda gave up on her inheritance and returned to Normandy. Her only victory was that rulership would extend through her family; her son Henry II became king of England in 1154.⁹⁹

For Matilda, her Angevin husband was disliked by many Normans, and her male cousin Stephen had a claim to rival hers; the previous Anglo-Norman successions had proved that those with a reasonable blood claim and the necessary resources could successfully claim the crown. These two factors are, arguably, instrumental to her lack of success in England. Moreover, the fact that Stephen had participated in a coronation ceremony enhanced his

⁹⁵ John of Hexham, 'Continuation of Simeon of Durham's *Historia regum*', in Simeon of Durham, *Opera omnia*, ii (London, May 1882), bk. 2, p. 310; Potter and Davies, eds., *Gesta Stephani*, p. 127; Gervase of Canterbury, *Opera Historica*, ed. W. Stubbs (2 vols, 80 1879), bk. 1, p. 19.

⁹⁶ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, pp. 54–57.

⁹⁷ William of Malmesbury, *Historia Novella*, p. 61; Potter and Davies, eds., *Gesta Stephani*, p. 133; Gervase of Canterbury, *Opera Historica*, bk. 2, p. 74.

⁹⁸ G.C. Boon, *Coins of the Anarchy, 1135–1154* (Cardiff, 1988), pp. 10–12.

⁹⁹ See Chapter Four, Section iii for Matilda's role in her son's government.

authority and shored up more support for his claim. The solemn nature of coronation provided a symbolic and holy advantage to Stephen's claim. Coronation was not something that could be undone and gave Stephen a great advantage, although crowned kings could still be deposed.¹⁰⁰ Matilda faced considerable odds against her in her struggle to claim the throne and Stephen's coronation in 1135 was a tremendous hurdle she was not able to overcome. Interestingly, Queen Matilda, who wielded authority on behalf of her husband, was praised for her service to her husband. The contrast in reaction to a good wife versus a royal heiress attempting to claim her inheritance is revealing. Royal heiresses who could not secure their inheritance, as in the case of Empress Matilda, were without the protection of divine rulership that a coronation could provide, and their authority was perceived as illegitimate.

Each woman faced threats to her rule, which was unique to the circumstances surrounding her. Conflict was in no way the exclusive feature of female royal rule; kings and lords experienced affronts to their authority that mirrored those encountered by Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda. However, as independent queens regnant, Urraca and Melisende dealt with conflict to their sole rule in ways that revealed the vulnerabilities of female royal rulership. Their actions were taken as queens regnant, not on behalf of any king, which left them open to threats no king had to face. The gendered response to conflict also contrasts with earlier conflicts they experienced with their husbands as co-rulers. While neither the Galician revolt nor the disastrous outcome of the Second Crusade removed either Urraca or Melisende from power, it does demonstrate the problems inherent with female royal rule. The challenges each aspiring queen regnant faced were all unique to each woman and kingdom, suggesting that there was no universal problem to female royal rule. Conflict was, quite simply, an inevitable product of ruling.

iv. The independent authority of aristocratic heiresses

The cases of aristocratic heiresses governing without the co-rule of a husband (*iure uxoris*) or son are rare, making the achievements of Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda that much more impressive. Their rulerships were exceptional because they had the privilege of royal descent. If queens regnant similarly enjoyed the type of sacral rulership that kings did, they could be able to access authority and rule alone.¹⁰¹ Aristocratic heiresses, by contrast, were

¹⁰⁰ Some notable English kings who suffered deposition were Edward II (1307–1327), and Richard II (1377–1399).

¹⁰¹ On sacral kingship, see A. Duggan, *Kings and Kingship in Medieval Europe* (London, 1993); J. Nelson, 'Kingship and Empire', in J.H. Burns, ed., *The Cambridge History of Medieval Political Thought c. 350–c.1450* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 211–251; B. Weiler, 'Kingship, Usurpation and Propaganda in the Twelfth-Century Europe: The Case of Stephen', *ANS*, xxiii (2001), pp. 299–326; B. Weiler, 'The rex renitens and the medieval

subject to the same gender norms that other medieval women experienced. Men undertook the administration of aristocratic lands; in the event of female aristocratic inheritance, the husband would rule by his wife's right. It appears that the same rationale for co-rulership existed on both the royal and aristocratic level. However, if queens regnant found themselves without the influence of a male co-ruler, they were able to act with sole agency.

If an aristocratic heiress was left without a male ruler to govern her lands, she was often remarried. Constance, Duchess of Brittany (1166–1201) and Countess of Richmond (1171–1201),¹⁰² married Geoffrey II in 1181, and he assumed authority through her claim as heiress. However, when he died in December 1186, Henry II of England arranged her remarriage to Ranulf de Blondville, Earl of Chester, but the marriage was later annulled in 1198. She wed her third husband, Guy of Thouars, the following year in 1199, demonstrating the policy of remarriage for royal heiresses in the Anglo-Norman realm. Constance ruled jointly with her son Arthur (b. 1187) until her death in 1201.

The Holy Land features a history that is remarkably rich in heiresses, both aristocratic and royal.¹⁰³ Melisende's niece by her sister Alice, Constance, inherited the principality of Antioch in 1136. As discussed in the previous chapter, she was married to Raymond of Antioch in April 1136 at the age of nine. Raymond ruled in her name until his death at the Battle of Inab in late June 1149. It was at this point that Baldwin III became regent of Antioch and pressured Constance to remarry.¹⁰⁴ Some potential husbands he recommended were Ives, Count of Soissons, Walter of Falkenburg, or Ralph of Merle. As a widowed heiress, Constance faced criticism for her refusal to remarry. According to William of Tyre,

‘she, however, fearing the shackles of wedlock and resolving to have a free and independent life, was largely ignoring that which the people wanted, being more concerned about pursuing matters of the flesh according to her own desires’.¹⁰⁵

By declining to remarry, Constance was abandoning her duties as aristocratic heiress. Therefore, in 1152, Baldwin III called a council at Tripoli, which Melisende and her sister Hodierna, Countess of Tripoli, attended.¹⁰⁶ However, Constance refused to agree to a

ideal of kingship, c. 950–c. 1250’, pp. 1–42; B. Weiler, ‘Tales of the First Kings and the Culture of Kingship in the West, c. 1050–1200’, *Viator*, 46 (2015), pp. 101–28; K.J. Leyser, *Rule and Conflict in an Early Medieval Society: Ottonian Saxony* (London, 1979), pp. 75–108.

¹⁰² J. Everard and M. Jones, *The Charters of Duchess Constance of Brittany and her family (1171–1221)* (Woodbridge, 1999); J. Everard, *Brittany and the Angevins: Province and Empire* (Cambridge, 2000).

¹⁰³ Murray, ‘Women in the Royal Succession of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem’, p. 136.

¹⁰⁴ Baldwin III was nineteen-years-old in 1149 and in the opening stages of separating his rule from his mother's. See Chapter Four for more discussion.

¹⁰⁵ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 17, no. 18; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Across the Sea*, p. 213.

¹⁰⁶ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 17, no. 18, pp. 212–14; N. Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 187.

remarriage despite the increasing pressure. She was fortunate to have the backing of the new patriarch of Antioch, Aimery of Limoges. He supported her decision to remain widowed and unwed, claiming to uphold the ecclesiastical tradition of protecting the rights of widows.¹⁰⁷ William of Tyre, who believed that the patriarch was hoping to exploit the political situation by accessing power as her unofficial administrative deputy, refuted this.¹⁰⁸ Constance had four children from her previous marriage, and although mortality rates were high for the region and period, there was no urgent need for further children. The weakness of Constance's rule of Antioch was a weakness shared by royal heiresses; Constance could not direct her troops to defend her principality and a military commander was necessary.

Eventually Constance remarried to her chosen candidate, Reynald of Châtillon, in early 1153, although this too caused a scandal, as he was considered of inferior status. William later wrote, 'Many were astonished that a woman so distinguished, powerful, and illustrious, and [once] the wife of such an excellent military man, would deign to marry a virtual commoner'.¹⁰⁹ Constance's reasons for marrying Reynald are unknown. Hodgson interestingly speculates that it was a strategy for staying in power in Antioch and not for love, as others have claimed.¹¹⁰

The examples of Constance of Brittany and Richmond and Constance of Antioch both demonstrate the pattern of aristocratic heiress remarriage. The fact that Urraca of León-Castilla and Melisende of Jerusalem both remained unwed after the ends of their marriages highlights the different priorities for royal rule. If the royal line of succession had been secured by the time an aspiring queen regnant's husband had died, there was no need for her to remarry. In fact, Urraca or Melisende's remarriage would have likely thrown her realm into further chaos. Therefore, it was more advantageous for queens regnant to rule alone, without the oversight of a co-ruling husband, than to risk upsetting the line of succession or royal authority.

Conclusion

Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda undoubtedly believed in their God-given right to rule as queens regnant. This meant that with or without a male co-ruler, they could successfully carry out the duties of rulership despite the limitations of their gender. One tremendously important strategy for an aspiring queen regnant's sole rule was fostering key alliances with her aristocracy. As rulership was a collaborative effort between the monarch and the

¹⁰⁷ Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, p. 222.

¹⁰⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 17, no. 18, p. 213.

¹⁰⁹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 17, no. 26, p. 224.

¹¹⁰ Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, p. 223.

aristocracy, it was doubly imperative for a female ruler. She would be dependent on her secular aristocracy to lead her army and perform tasks that she was excluded from for on account of her sex. What becomes clear by examining the cases of the three royal heiresses is how crucial it was to have the support of the ecclesiastical aristocracy. It was only through bishops, archbishops, or patriarchs that an aspiring queen regnant could undergo a coronation ceremony and become truly royal. It was the sacral aspects of rulership that would enable a royal heiress to undertake roles that would otherwise be prohibited to her. This two-pronged approach to aristocratic support meant that a royal heiress could effectively govern as queen regnant. This chapter has shown that both types of aristocratic collaboration were necessary; without one, an heiress would be unable to establish sole rule as queen regnant.

Aspiring queens regnant were vulnerable to threats to their authority throughout the entirety of their reign. Kings and queens regnant alike faced challenges to their rules and conflict in their kingdoms. However, conflict reveals the vulnerabilities of female royal rule. The crowd revolt in Galicia was the result of displeasure with the bishop of Santiago, but the way the people responded was to target the gender of their monarch. The queen's treatment at the hands of the townspeople was specific to her gender, and her response to it was that of a king. In the aftermath, she directed her commanders to take control of the city, and she administered justice accordingly. During the Second Crusade, Louis VII of France and Emperor Conrad III failed to include Melisende in the planning of their travels and battles. However, they also ignored the potential input from her constable or son, who although he did not have power at this point, he was still nominally the king. While the crusaders' exclusion of the leaders of the Holy Land might have been related to Melisende's gender and inability to participate in battle, it seems more likely that it was simply an oversight.

Comparing the sole rules of royal heiresses to aristocratic heiresses reinforces the claim that Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda were three women with extraordinary power and authority for the twelfth century. As queens regnant, Urraca and Melisende were both imbued with the unshakable qualities of sacral kingship through their coronations, which enabled them to establish their independent, sole rules without the oversight of a male co-ruler. Aristocratic heiresses, by comparison, were viewed as overwhelmingly vulnerable when circumstance left them without a male co-ruler. Therefore, the heiresses were remarried to suitable lords so that the duties of lordship did not fall by the wayside. The stakes were higher on the royal level, which allowed aspiring queens regnant to retain their independence and remain unmarried. Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda were able to demonstrate their authority without the presence of male co-rulers, breaking the boundaries of gender.

Chapter Four

Ruling with Sons

Motherhood was one of the most important aspects of the medieval woman's life. For all queens, providing heirs to the throne was vital to dynastic continuity. In this way, queens regnant and queens consort were no different; without heirs to the throne, the stability of their kingdoms were at risk. However, queens regnant had far more expansive responsibilities than their consort counterparts. Urraca of León-Castilla, Melisende of Jerusalem, and Empress Matilda of England and Normandy all secured the continuation of their dynasties by producing male heirs. As mothers, they aimed to raise their children appropriately and see them to adulthood so that they might someday rule, but as aspiring queens regnant, they had to maintain firm control over their sons' ambitions for the throne. For each queen, a different model of motherhood and co-rulership can be discerned.

Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda endeavoured to establish their eldest sons as legitimate heirs through coronation or investiture ceremonies. These symbolically rich ceremonies gave their sons legitimacy and marked the beginning of their political lives. However, with her newfound position, a queen regnant had to be careful about how she acknowledged her son in documents and made room for him in government. With the sacred power of coronation and the support of magnates, a queen regnant was careful to manage her son's growing ambition against her own authority. Queens regnant were not alone in facing threats from their adult male children; kings too experienced a growing danger from their ambitious heirs. Conflict between mother and son might, as in the case of Melisende, prove to be her downfall. Melisende and Matilda eventually retired from active political life and participated in their sons' reigns as advisors and administrators. Because Urraca ruled until her death in 1126, her life yields very little comparative material for this section. This chapter reveals the complexities of the relationship between the aspiring queen regnant and her heir as the heiress learned ways of managing the growing threat to her authority that her adult male child posed.

i. Coronations and investiture ceremonies

Coronation and investiture ceremonies were significant events in the medieval period because they gave additional legitimacy to kings and nobles. As aspiring queens regnant, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda used symbolic ceremonies in different ways. This section focuses on the methods each royal heiress employed to crown her son as king. It was important for all rulers to find ways to promote the careers and successions of their designated

heirs without compromising their own authority. This section reveals the complexities of maintaining female royal rule while an aspirant king laid claim to the crown.

For Urraca of León-Castilla, sharing power as a co-ruling duo appears to have been entirely unacceptable. Her brief marriage to Alfonso el Batallador of Aragón (r. 1104–1134) demonstrates her resistance to ceding authority. She had to carefully balance her relationship with her young son by her previous husband, Raymond of Burgundy (d. 1107), giving him authority for the sake of dynastic continuity and placating his fervent supporters while never acknowledging his right over her own. One way Urraca managed this was through charters and ceremonies. She first acknowledged her heir, Alfonso Raimúndez (b. 1 March 1105) as king as early as 1111, two years into her reign and only one year after the first period of separation from El Batallador. The decision to acknowledge the power and authority of her son was a politically wise move: Urraca was in the early stages of establishing her independent rule and recognizing her son as king appeased the Galician faction that favored him. On 11 February 1111, seven months before his coronation in Galicia, a document of Sahagún styles them as ‘Reigning Queen Urraca and her small son Alfonso in León’.¹

At that time, Urraca’s heir was a minor and thus could not yet rule, but he was symbolically powerful as numerous lords in Galicia supported his succession rights in the hope of profiting from his rule. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Alfonso Raimúndez was under the guardianship of Count Pedro Froilaz and Bishop Gelmírez of Santiago in Galicia, both of whom disliked the Aragonese marriage.² Had Urraca’s marriage to El Batallador been successful, their children would have removed Alfonso Raimúndez from his position as the Leonese successor; it was therefore to the Galician faction’s benefit that Urraca’s marriage end. Pedro Froilaz had spent a significant period of Urraca’s second marriage in revolt against her.³ When the Aragonese marriage collapsed in 1110, it appeared that Alfonso Raimúndez’ succession was safe, providing Urraca with the opportunity to make peace with her son’s supporters through his coronation.⁴

In September 1111, Urraca’s six-year-old son was anointed and crowned by Bishop Gelmírez in a coronation ceremony recounted in the *Historia Compostelana*.⁵ It is clear that Urraca was not present at the ceremony because Alfonso Raimúndez and his supporters

¹ J.M. Mínguez Fernández and M. Herrero de la Fuente, eds., *Collección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún* (León, 1976), vol. 4, p. 28, no. 1183.

² See Chapter Three, Section i.

³ B. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca* (Princeton, 1982), p. 61.

⁴ There was more than one faction in Galicia, and the intrigue between parties was often complex. See Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, pp. 61–78; R. A. Fletcher, *Saint James’s Catapult: The Life and Times of Diego Gelmírez of Santiago de Compostela*. (Oxford, 1984), pp. 131–34.

⁵ E. Falque Rey, ed., *Historia Compostellana* (Turnhout), bk.1, no. 66, pp. 105–6.

joined Urraca the following day in León. The ceremony seems to have been intended to position him as a joint ruler with Urraca.⁶ This event reveals Urraca's political skills on many levels. Firstly, in her attempt to position herself as the sole legitimate ruler of León-Castilla, associating her son with her reign was one way to overcome the restrictions of her gender. Alfonso Raimúndez was elevated in name only; Urraca achieved this by not directly witnessing his coronation, as it was held in Santiago de Compostela, leaving his position ambiguous. Furthermore, his coronation in Galicia broke the norm for Leonese ceremonies, which were usually conducted in León.⁷ As the bulk of Alfonso Raimúndez' supporters were Galician and one of the primary reasons for his coronation was to appease them, it was a politically astute decision to hold the coronation there.

The elevation, however ambiguous, also protected Urraca and her son's positions from the threat of her half-sister Teresa of Portugal and her husband Count Henry of Portugal. It was a realistic fear that they would press their rival claim to the throne or join forces with El Batallador.⁸ Alfonso Raimúndez' coronation forever ended their chances of obtaining royal authority. Urraca enjoyed an almost immediate benefit of her consent to his coronation when the armies of Galicia joined her cause and marched on El Batallador.⁹ By pacifying the Raimundist faction with her son's Galician coronation, Urraca was able to associate her rule with a royal male, but crucially, she did so without explicitly relinquishing her authority as queen regnant.

Her policy of limited acknowledgment of her son's authority is evident in her charters. The first charter Urraca issued after Alfonso Raimúndez' coronation was a donation to the Galician cathedral church of Túy. The *intitulatio* features a brief comment that demonstrates her program of controlled recognition of Alfonso Raimúndez' authority:

‘I, Urraca, queen of all *Hispania*, after the death of my father, lord King Alfonso, came to Túy and, moved by pity, for my soul and for those of my parents, give and concede along with my son, lord king Alfonso...’¹⁰

Urraca's scribes clearly distance her from her son by placing a separation between her name and title and that of her son's. Furthermore, the interesting inclusion of her father reminds the reader of her legitimacy as Alfonso VI's eldest surviving heir.¹¹ Alfonso VI had

⁶ Fletcher, *Saint James's Catapult*, pp. 134–45.

⁷ J.F. O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1975), pp. 420–23; T. Ruiz, ‘Unsacred Monarchy: The Kings of Castile in the Late Middle Ages’, in S. Wilentz, ed., *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics Since the Middle Ages* (Philadelphia, 1985), p. 118.

⁸ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 53.

⁹ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 73.

¹⁰ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 34: *Ego Urracca tocius Ispanie regina post mortem patris mei, regis domni Adefonsi, ueni ad Tudam et, pietate comota, pro mea et parentum meorum anima do et concedo una cum filio meo, rege domno Adefonso.*

¹¹ See Chapter Three, Section ii.

been dead for three years when this document was drafted, but his death led directly to her succession as queen regnant, which her scribes highlight by referring to her as ‘queen of all *Hispania*’. It is only after this narration and numerous mentions of her emotions (moved by pity for her soul and those of her parents) that Alfonso Raimúndez is mentioned in the *intitulatio*. It should be clear that this charter presents her son as participating in the donation with Urraca; however, the unique structure of this excerpt reinforces his inferior position of authority in relation to Urraca’s. The charter uses the first-person plural only towards the end, in the *subscriptio*: ‘this document which we ordered to be made we confirm with our own hands’.¹²

A charter dated May 1112 adopts a similar *intitulatio*: ‘I, Urraca, queen of all *Hispania*, along with my son lord King Alfonso...’¹³ While this document does not feature the earlier charter’s disconnection between mother and son, Urraca’s scribes found other ways of differentiating her status, for instance by styling her as ‘Queen of all *Hispania*’, in contrast to her son’s simple title of ‘king’. Although the *intitulatio* states that Urraca and Alfonso Raimúndez jointly issued the charter, the verbs throughout it appear in the first-person singular; a close reading therefore makes evident that it was Urraca’s prerogative to issue this charter, which her scribes were able to communicate through careful language. By crowning Alfonso Raimúndez, she established a nominal joint rule that could protect her from the danger El Batallador posed. However, Urraca administered her kingdom and represented herself through her actions and charters as queen regnant, not queen regent. She ruled with her own authority, not because of her son’s minority.

In a different charter from 1112 to the church of Santiago, Urraca distances her rule from that of her son through a different method. Alfonso Raimúndez confirmed a donation made by Urraca to the church prior to her father’s death. She then confirmed her son’s confirmation:

‘Thus I give and confirm to you, just as I already gave to you upon the death of my husband lord Count Raymond and just as my son lord King Alfonso gave and confirmed to you when you chose him king in your church, so that you and your successors may have all these above-mentioned things in perpetuity’.¹⁴

Alfonso Raimúndez’ confirmation of Urraca’s earlier donation was part of the coronation

¹² Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 37: *Hoc testamentum quod fieri iussimus propriis manibus roborauimus.*

¹³ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 37: *Ego Vrraca totius Hisaniae regina vna cum filio meo rege domno Alfonso.*

¹⁴ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 38: *Sic domo et confirmo uobis, sicut uobis iam dedi in morte uiri mei comitis domini Raimundi et sicut filius meus rex domnus Alfonsus uobis dedit et confirmauit quando eum eleegistis regem in ecclesia uestra habeatis uos et successores uestri hec omnia super scripta usque in perpetuum.*

proceedings. Urraca's re-confirmation emphasizes her position as queen regnant. Furthermore, the document's language removes her from the event of her son's coronation, at which she was absent. Importantly however, Urraca subtly acknowledges her son's coronation by referencing his election and new title. But this document also implies the event was a localized, Galician undertaking. The phrasing 'you chose him king' 'in your church' detaches his accession from her rule in a roundabout way. The document would further emphasize her ultimate authority as queen regnant through the evolution of the original donation: it was first given to the cathedral when she was an *infanta*, then confirmed by a minor king, and then re-confirmed by the queen of all *Hispania*. Therefore, it reinforced her power as the sole legitimate ruler of León-Castilla while still recognizing the new authority of her son. The author of this document allowed Urraca to clarify Alfonso Raimúndez' position as her successor, while underlining the fact that he remained her subject. Urraca was the administrator of royal authority and maintained that status until her death.

Urraca was a masterful politician throughout her reign, as is evident in how she managed her son and his supporters. One of the key differences between Urraca's reign and those of Melisende and Matilda is her designation as a co-ruler. The ambiguity surrounding the establishment of a co-rule provided Urraca with the opportunity to establish her own strategy and protect her authority, while also insulating her rule from all threats, including that of her own son.

Melisende of Jerusalem's succession as queen regnant was explicitly designed as a co-rule. According to Baldwin II's order, Melisende became the ruling queen of Jerusalem in 1131, alongside her husband Fulk of Anjou (d. 1143) and her son Baldwin III (b. 1130). As Baldwin was only thirteen-years-old when his father died in 1143, he posed no immediate threat to his mother's power.¹⁵ Because he was still a minor and was not of legal age to rule, 'the royal power passed to the Lady Melisende, a queen beloved of God, to whom it belonged by hereditary right'.¹⁶ As William of Tyre emphasizes, Melisende became the authority in government as queen regnant, not as regent for her young son. It is worth noting that William of Tyre (d. 1186) is not the most reliable of sources considering he was writing after the events of Melisende's life, during the reign of Amalric (r. 1163–1174) and benefited from the

¹⁵ E. Ward, 'Child Kingship in England, Scotland, France, and Germany, c. 1050–c. 1250', Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2017: Males entered their majority at the age of fourteen. Other child kings such as Henry IV of Germany and Philip I of France began ruling at fourteen. However, the thirteenth century saw child kings under some form of guardianship until the age of twenty or twenty-one.

¹⁶ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. R.B.C. Huygens (Turnhout, 1986), bk. 15, no. 27, p. 135; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey (2 vols, New York, 1943), p. 711: *reseditque regi potestas penes dominam Milissendem deo amabilem reginam, cui iure hereditario competebat.*

king's patronage.¹⁷ Through her unexpected widowhood, Melisende established her independent rule, and paved the way for her son while also blocking rival claimants who might seek to benefit from the absence of an adult royal male. In September 1143, during the feast of the Nativity, '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 princes and all the prelates of the church'.¹⁸

By holding a second coronation ceremony, Melisende reminded her subjects of the dynasty's power. The joint coronation with Baldwin beside her was no threat to her own authority. However, at fifteen he came of legal age to rule, in 1145, and Melisende's strong position as queen regnant became clear.¹⁹ Seven years later however, when Baldwin was well into his majority, he began to challenge his mother's authority. After pressing his claims for independent rule of Jerusalem, civil war broke out throughout the Holy Land. In 1152, Baldwin demanded another coronation but was initially unable to find a willing bishop to perform the ceremony,²⁰ at which point Melisende's policy of patronage towards the church came to her aid.²¹ With no bishop to crown him and no crown jewels to use, for they were in Melisende's possession, Baldwin was forced to proclaim himself king and use a crown of laurel leaves.²²

Baldwin's desire for an independent coronation to mark his sole rule finally came to fruition in April 1152. The newest patriarch of Jerusalem, Fulcher of Angoulême (1146–1157), had formed close ties to Melisende during her independent rule and openly supported her continued authority after Baldwin reached majority in 1145.²³ Fulcher, 'who desired peace for the kingdom, begged him [Baldwin] earnestly to allow his mother to participate in his glory'.²⁴ Baldwin participated in three separate coronation ceremonies, each marking the beginning of a pivotal moment in his life and the history of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. It is worth noting that Baldwin III's first coronation took place in 1131 upon the death of his grandfather Baldwin II, with his mother and father as co-rulers; while his second occurred in 1143 after Fulk of Anjou died, with his mother as co-ruler; and he was finally crowned

¹⁷ See Introduction for historiography of William of Tyre and other sources.

¹⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, no. 20, p. 79.

¹⁹ J. Claster, *Sacred Violence*, p. 170.

²⁰ L. Huneycutt, 'Images of queenship in the high Middle Ages', *Haskins Society Journal* (1989), p. 65.

²¹ See Chapter Three, Section i for a discussion of her ecclesiastical allies and Chapter Five, Section i for a discussion of patronage and exploitation of churches and monasteries.

²² H.E. Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (1972), p. 569.

²³ N. Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 186–7.

²⁴ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 17, no. 13; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 205: *qui pacem regni diligebant, instanter rogaretur ut matrem participem faceret.*

independently from any co-ruler in 1152, at the beginning of his sole rule. The power of coronation is clear: it was a legitimate, customary, and symbolic method of establishing control. It is likely that Baldwin took inspiration from his mother with his third coronation ceremony, aiming to firmly establish himself as the figure of authority, precisely as his mother had done in 1143. Curiously, the topic of Baldwin's third coronation has received little scholarly attention. The literature covering this period focuses instead on the preceding civil war, the Second Crusade, and the eventual retirement of Melisende to her dower lands.²⁵

William of Tyre's interpretation of the 1143 coronation illustrates the power Melisende wielded and the essentially ornamental position of Baldwin III. Because Melisende marked the beginning of her independent rule with a coronation, Baldwin engaged in the same practice. The rulers of the Kingdom of Jerusalem took full advantage of their relationship with the patriarch to give their reigns the sacred authority that could be derived only from coronation.²⁶

Although Matilda never became the ruling queen of England, her greatest success was her son Henry II's coronation as king of England in 1154. Henry Fitz Empress (b. 1133) became the leader of the Angevin cause in England after Matilda's retirement to Normandy. When Matilda left England for the last time in 1148, victory must have seemed improbable. The political career of her eldest son and heir, Henry, was in its infancy. In 1149, Henry was sixteen-years-old and had reached the age of knighthood. Roger, Earl of Hereford and a number of young noble Angevin supporters went with him to Carlyle where his great-uncle David, King of the Scots would perform the service. David and Henry also made an agreement of mutual support and entered into an alliance with Ranulf, Earl of Chester, who had joined the party. Therefore, the new Angevin coalition formed in 1149 at the onset of a new male Angevin leadership. Henry came into the first element of his inheritance in 1150 with an investiture ceremony for the Duchy of Normandy. He left England and arrived in Normandy in January 1150 to assume the title 'Dux Normannorum', which replaced his previous epithet, 'son of the duke of Normandy and count of Anjou'.²⁷

²⁵ B. Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States: The Queens of Jerusalem (1100–1190)', in D. Baker, ed., *Medieval Women* (Oxford, 1978), pp. 143–174; Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem'; Claster, *Sacred Violence*, p. 170.

²⁶ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', p. 269; Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States', pp. 14–42.

²⁷ H. W. C. Davis, R. H. C. Davis, and H. A. Cronne, eds., *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066–1154* (4 vols, Oxford, 69 1913); C.H. Haskins, *Norman Institutions* (Cambridge, MA, 1918), pp. 131–32; M. Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: queen consort, queen mother and lady of the English* (Oxford, 1991), p. 145; K. Dutton, 'Geoffrey, Count of Anjou and Duke of Normandy, 1129–1151', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 2011, p. 250.

Many of the difficulties of ruling the Anglo-Norman realm were due to the geographical realities of a cross-channel kingdom. Geoffrey of Anjou's success in Normandy might have been the crucial link in securing the ultimate victory.²⁸ By 1145, Normandy had been added to the great swathe of Angevin territories. The conquest was a remarkable achievement that allowed Geoffrey to style himself as duke, issuing over forty extant charters and making decisions in his own name and not in Matilda's or his son Henry's. It is unlikely that he abdicated before his death, though historians frequently suggest this to be the case.²⁹ He began to associate his eldest son, Henry, with himself in Normandy's government. This was a relatively common practice and it groomed Henry for succession, but does not mean that Geoffrey stood aside. Under the previous regime, chroniclers such as Orderic Vitalis had described Norman chaos; the duchy 'cruelly harassed by its own sons', who 'gnawed themselves with their own teeth'.³⁰ John of Marmoutier wrote that now 'the land was quiet under the watchful count for about ten years'.³¹

Geoffrey had won and preserved the Duchy of Normandy for his heir Henry. However, as Dutton explains, he maintained control over the duchy until his death in 1151.³² Matilda's presence at the investiture was not commented upon and her participation in the governance of Normandy is minimal. The differences between the three royal heiresses in this study are clear concerning this issue, Matilda had a very limited role in Henry's position in Normandy. Geoffrey secured Normandy to extend the borders of his control. While he did endeavor to continue the policies of Henry I and attempt to link his rule to that of his father-in-law for dynastic continuation, his efforts seem to have been largely personally motivated. Matilda's energies remained focused on gaining control over England. Because Normandy was essentially Geoffrey's victory, Henry's eventual succession to the duchy was thanks to his father, even if the initial claim to Normandy came from Matilda. She played a role in the negotiations to ensure that her son was accepted as the Norman heir through the initial correspondence with Bishop Arnulf of Lisieux and Abbot Suger of Saint-Denis.³³ Arnulf of Lisieux had come to support Geoffrey and Matilda late in the war and he backed the

²⁸ Dutton, 'Geoffrey, Count of Anjou and Duke of Normandy', see pp. 240–244.

²⁹ W. Hollister and T. Keefe, 'The Making of the Angevin Empire', *Journal of British Studies*, 12 (1973), pp. 1–25; T. Keefe, 'Geoffrey Plantagenet's Will and the Angevin Succession', *Albion*, 6 (1974), pp. 266–74; J. Le Patourel, 'Angevin Successions and the Angevin Empire', in J. Le Patourel, *Feudal Empires: Norman and Plantagenet* (London, 1984), pp. 1–17; J. Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire* (London, 2001), pp. 10–11.

³⁰ Orderic Vitalis, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*, ed. M. Chibnall (6 vols, Oxford, 80 1969), bk. vi, pp. 452–62.

³¹ John of Marmoutier, 'Historia Gaufredi ducis Normannorum et comitis Andegavorum', in L. Halpern and R. Poupardin, eds., *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou et des seigneurs d'Amboise* (Paris, 1913), p. 215.

³² Dutton, 'Geoffrey, Count of Anjou and Duke of Normandy', p. 243.

³³ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: queen consort, queen mother and lady of the English*, pp. 154–55; W.L. Warren, *Henry II* (Berkeley, 1973), p. 42; F. Barlow, *The Letters of Arnulf of Lisieux* pp. xxvii–xxviii.

inheritance of her son, Henry. Together with Suger, they convinced Louis VI of France to recognize Henry as duke of Normandy. Her retirement from seeking her own inheritance allowed her to fully back her son in his efforts to claim the Anglo-Norman throne and therefore, he was not a threat to her power.

Urraca and Melisende were both queens regnant of their respective kingdoms. Because they each had male heirs to eventually succeed them, their positions as rulers were enhanced and protected from rival claims. However, their sons could, in fact, be a threat to their rules. Urraca avoided her son's coronation in Galicia to give it less authority. Her charters display careful language in order to minimize Alfonso Raimúndez' status as king of Galicia and heighten her own standing. Melisende used coronations to remind her magnates of her legitimacy. The second ceremony of 1143 took place when her son Baldwin was still a child and thus posed no threat to her authority. While it may be tempting to view this period as a regency, because he eventually did oust his mother from government, this would be a mistake. Her reign continued after Baldwin reached majority, thus disproving any suggestion of regency. Coronation and investiture ceremonies played an altogether different role for Matilda and Henry. Her retirement from public life in 1148 meant her son had to continue the fight for the crown of England independently of his mother. While Matilda was a capable advisor, but she did not have success in the same way as Urraca and Melisende. Henry had the backing of Normandy when he confronted Stephen in 1153 and was ultimately successful in ending the war.

There is no universal method or strategy for coronations. Each of the royal heiresses used them differently for their heirs. Urraca and Melisende were both keenly aware they had to give their sons sufficient legitimacy for the continuation of their dynasties while never elevating them enough for them to threaten their own authority. Had Matilda had a coronation ceremony in 1141, perhaps a similar balancing act towards Henry Fitz Empress would have been made. Instead, her individual failures in England make this issue purely speculative. One wonders how events might have unfolded had Melisende chosen to hold an independent coronation ceremony without her son beside her when Fulk died in 1143 or even in opposition to him in 1152. Coronations carried political and symbolic weight in ways that few other moments of medieval royal life did. Coronations gave legitimacy to the recipient, and when that recipient was the grandson of a king, his mother ought to use caution in his promotion so as not to be pushed aside.

ii. Sharing power and conflict

Female royal rule was always at risk of being pushed aside in favor of an alternate male rule. Threats to female royal rule came from many sides and sometimes even from a royal heiress' son. A queen regnant had to be careful to balance the many different factions within her kingdom, including those supporters who favored the rule of a son. This section demonstrates that co-rule between mother and son was an ineffective model. A grown and competent male king would always be preferable to a queen regnant, no matter how successful and legitimate her reign.

Urraca was meticulous in her efforts to remain the dominant authority in her kingdom. In her charters of 1115, Urraca's scribes address her son's title of king but is careful to trivialize his position as her inferior. In two charters for Santiago de Compostela from 1115 to the church at Santiago, the *intitulatio* states, 'I, Urraca, Queen of *Hispania* by the grace of God, along with my son lord Alfonso, already blessed and consecrated in the summit of the kingdom'.³⁴ Alfonso Raimúndez' 'summit' implies that he was in fact on equal footing with his mother, as he was a consecrated king. In contrast to him, however, Urraca was queen by the grace of God, which may indicate that her authority derived from her inheritance rights, while Alfonso's was only the result of his coronation, making her claim implicitly more legitimate. As throughout much of her reign, Urraca utilized the first-person singular in the remainder of the document, underlining her special authority as regnant. Alfonso's position in the *intitulatio* was later balanced in the *subscriptio*. Urraca, as 'Queen of Hispania by the grace of God', confirms 'this charter which I ordered to be made'.³⁵ In one of the charter's witness lists, her son is styled simply as 'Alfonso, her son', making no mention of his royal title.³⁶ Alfonso Raimúndez is absent on the other charter's witness list.

The document specifies that Gelmírez had been 'most faithful in all things to me and to my son'.³⁷ In reality, however, Urraca's relationship with the Galician bishop was tumultuous, and his support of her reign could not always be depended on.³⁸ At the time when these charters were issued, Urraca and Gelmírez were not in opposition to each other, and the bishop had attended her Christmas court at Palencia earlier that year.³⁹ It is no mistake that these charters mention Alfonso Raimúndez' sacral status as king and Gelmírez' faithfulness,

³⁴ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 79: *Ego Urraca gratia Dei Hispanie regina, una cum filio meo domino Adefonso in regni fastigia iam benedicto et consecrato.*

³⁵ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 79: *Ego Urraca gratia Dei Hyspanie regine hanc cartam quam fieri iussi, proprio robore et manu conf.*

³⁶ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 79: *Adefonsus filius eius.*

³⁷ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 79: *Michi et filio meo in omnibus fidelissimo.*

³⁸ See Chapter Three, Section iii for information regarding the Galician revolt over Bishop Gelmírez' role in the town *consilio*.

³⁹ Fletcher, *Saint James's Catapult*, p. 139.

as they were issued in a public manner, before the court of her secular and ecclesiastical aristocracy. Unsurprisingly, these are the only two documents in which Urraca mentions her son's coronation and consecration was mentioned. However, in the time between issuing these two charters, an additional document for the church of Toledo dated March 1115 there was another document issued, in which her son is excluded from the *intitulatio*, with the exception of his mention as 'Alfonso, son of that same queen, king'.⁴⁰

Urraca issued four charters from November 1115 to 1119 that feature Alfonso Raimúndez ruling different lands than those of his mother's rule. Firstly, a document from November 1115 mentions 'Reigning Queen Urraca in Leon and in Castile and in Burgos. Her son reigning in Segovia and in Salamanca and in all of Extremadura'.⁴¹ Next, a charter from November 1116 states 'Reigning Queen Urraca in Leon and Sahagún. And reigning King Alfonso in Segovia and in all of Extremadura'.⁴² The third charter that may be miscopied from 1118 reads 'Reigning Queen Dona Urraca with my son in León, Alfonso and Toledo'.⁴³ The fourth document, from 1119, states 'Reigning Queen Dona Urraca in Leon and in Castile and in Galicia. Alfonso, her son, in Toledo and in Extremadura'.⁴⁴ Reilly indicates that all of the lands attributed to Alfonso's titular rule were located within the Trans-Duero region, the hotly contested region in Urraca and her estranged husband El Batallador's rivalry.⁴⁵ It is worth noting that Alfonso Raimúndez had been placed under the guardianship of Archbishop Bernard and removed from Galicia's combative environment. Furthermore, it was Urraca and Archbishop Bernard's hope that by featuring him more prominently in Toledo and the trans-Duero region, he would appeal to those who opposed El Batallador.⁴⁶

Alfonso Raimúndez' association with the city of Toledo was part of a broader strategy to protect Urraca's rule. To overcome the limitations of her gender, Urraca highlighted the instances in which her male deputies performed duties on her behalf, ensuring that the tasks of rulership were accomplished. Reilly believes that Alfonso Raimúndez' relocation to Toledo

⁴⁰ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 81: *Adefonsus, eiusdem regine filius*.

⁴¹ I. Ruiz Albi, ed., *La reina doña Urraca (1109–1126): Cancillería y colección diplomática* (León, 2003), p. 462, no. 67: *Regnante regina Urracha in Legione et in Castella et in Burgos. Filio suo in Segouia et in Salamanca et in tota Stematúra regnans*. This charter is not included in the Monterde Albiac collection.

⁴² I. Ruiz Albi, ed., *La reina doña Urraca*, p. 482, no. 80: *Regnante regina Urracha in Legione et Sanct Facundi. Et regnant rege Adefonso in Secouia et in omni Stremadira*. This charter is included in the Monterde Albiac collection but is dated to 1117 and edited from a poorly preserved copy that lacks the *data*.

⁴³ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 124: *Regnante regina domna Vrracha cum filio meo in Legione, Alfonso (sic) et Toletto*.

⁴⁴ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 136: *Regnante regina domna Urraka in Leone et in Castella et in Gallicia. Andefonso, filio suo, in Toletto et in Estremadura*.

⁴⁵ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 116. See Chapter Three, Section i for a discussion on Archbishop Bernard's guardianship of Alfonso Raimúndez and his travels through the trans-Duero region.

⁴⁶ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 116.

was motivated by the ‘essentially masculine connotations’ of the imperial title.⁴⁷ The visible presence of Urraca’s successor in the Visigothic city allowed her overall rulership to stop El Batallador’s attempts to claim Toledo for himself. Toledo bordered the al-Murabit Kingdom and lay at the center of the struggle between Urraca and El Batallador. After her marriage collapsed in 1110, Urraca dispatched her father’s old lieutenant Alvar Fáñez to Toledo to secure the city her father conquered in 1086. She then issued a charter of donation to the cathedral of Toledo, interestingly stating, ‘along with the consent of Alvar Fáñez, at that time prince of Toledo’.⁴⁸ In the early years of her independent rule, Urraca was dependent on promoting established military leaders to prominent positions along the borders of her kingdom. The first time Alfonso Raimúndez was recorded as reigning in this region, he was only eleven years old and thus incapable of leading troops. This fact was irrelevant, as the purpose of this document was to associate Urraca’s independent rule as queen regnant with another royal male. The promotion of her son to ruler of Toledo allowed her to keep royal power centralized, and by 1115 she no longer needed Alvar Fáñez in that position.

Urraca was able to keep her son at bay because Alfonso VI had left no decisive instructions at the time of his death. The fact that her father left no clear provisions for how he envisioned his daughter’s rule and how his grandson would factor into it provided sufficient ambiguity for Urraca to take advantage of the situation. As a result, Urraca was in a strong position to prevent her son from gaining too much power and manage the situation with aplomb. Alfonso Raimúndez may have posed a greater threat to Urraca’s power if he had remained in Galicia under the direction of Bishop Gelmírez, but because Urraca moved her son to Toledo and placed him in the care of her faithful ally, Archbishop Bernard, the potential danger was neutralized.

Melisende of Jerusalem’s relationship with her son, Baldwin III, suffered later in her life, as Baldwin asserted his claim to rule independently. Melisende and Baldwin had been crowned co-rulers on two separate occasions, and Melisende was not in a position to restrict her son’s authority when he eventually reached his majority. Baldwin entered his majority in 1145 at the age of fifteen and appears to have been content with Melisende’s grasp of royal authority because he did not push his claims until 1150. There is some confusion regarding Melisende’s position as queen: was she a queen regnant or a regent? Mayer views the period

⁴⁷ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 116.

⁴⁸ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 57: *Una cum consensus Albari Fanniz tunc Toletanti principis*.

from Fulk's death in 1143 to Baldwin III's majority in 1145 as a regency.⁴⁹ However, Melisende's two coronation ceremonies made her a consecrated queen regnant, albeit one who technically shared power with male co-rulers. William of Tyre reflects on Melisende's life by writing the following after her death in 1160:

‘Transcending the strength of women, the lady queen, Melisende, a prudent woman, discreet above the female sex, had ruled the kingdom with fitting moderation for more than thirty years, during the lifetime of her husband and the reign of her son’.⁵⁰

William of Tyre implies that her reign began after her father's death and that her son's reign began during that of his mother. The fact that she was able to keep Baldwin from pushing her out of power five years into his majority demonstrates the full extent of her authority.

The relationship between mother and son began to deteriorate in 1148 after the failed siege of Damascus. Baldwin's military career started several years earlier, in 1144 at Wadi Musa, but he had little success as a warrior.⁵¹ Mayer reckons that Melisende attempted to capitalize on Baldwin's failures in order to tarnish his reputation and thus ensure her continued authority.⁵² This, he argues, is the reason for the outbreak of civil war. The twelfth-century chronicler, William of Tyre, on the other hand, believed that Manasses of Hierges was to blame and other nobles, most likely the Ibelins, prodded Baldwin to assert his independence.⁵³ The Ibelin family disliked Manasses of Hierges because he married the widowed wife of Balian of Ibelin, the heiress Helvis.⁵⁴ As a result of this marriage, the inheritances of Balian's three sons, Hugh, Baldwin, and Balian, were considerably diminished.

Baldwin's participation in the unfortunate attack on Damascus helped Melisende's efforts to remain the primary authority in Jerusalem for a longer duration. Because Baldwin was the leader of a failed campaign, some within the Outremer aristocracy seem to have harbored uncertainty regarding his readiness to rule. It appears plausible that if the Second Crusade had been an outright triumph, Baldwin would have appeared to be entirely qualified for kingship and Melisende would very likely have been removed from authority sooner. Before the outbreak of war in 1150, Melisende began issuing charters independently in 1149.

⁴⁹ H.E. Mayer, ‘The Wheel of Fortune: Seignorial Vicissitudes under Kings Fulk and Baldwin III of Jerusalem’, *Speculum*, 65 (1990), p. 65.

⁵⁰ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 18, no. 27; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 283: *domina Milissendis regina, mulier provida et supra sexum discrete femineum, qui regnum tam vivente marito quam regnante filio congruo moderamine annis triginta et amplius vires transcendens femineas, rexerat.*

⁵¹ Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, p. 186.

⁵² Mayer, ‘Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem’, pp. 117–18; 124.

⁵³ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, pp. 777–8.

⁵⁴ See Chapter Three, Section i for information regarding Manasses of Hierges.

She donated to the Hospitallers on numerous occasions and began to regularly exclude Baldwin from her charters.⁵⁵ Her documents were issued in her name alone, and Baldwin added his consent in some of them. A 1149 document recording a property exchange with the Hospitallers in Acre and a donation of the village of Assera, near Caesaria, features Baldwin's consent, but is his mother's document.⁵⁶ These documents stand in contrast to earlier documents in which Baldwin's name appears alongside Melisende's. In 1147, they jointly issued a charter of donation to the Hospitallers and jointly confirmed a donation to the Order of St. Lazarus.⁵⁷ It is key that Melisende's support of the Hospitallers centered on the north of her kingdom. Mayer suggests this charter from 1149 shows Melisende's authority in the north and her attempt to strengthen her relationship with the Hospitallers in preparation for her son's resistance.⁵⁸ However, since the north was under threat from their Muslim enemies, it seems more likely Melisende's support was geared towards a less cynical purpose.

The steadily worsening relationship between Melisende and Baldwin came to a head when the security of the kingdom's northern region was at risk. Raymond of Antioch died on 29 June 1149, which prompted Baldwin to muster in his troops to protect Antioch, as well as assume the regency of Antioch for his cousin, the heiress Constance.⁵⁹ After settling affairs in Antioch, word arrived that Joscelin II of Edessa had been captured by Nur ad-Din's forces and taken to Aleppo.⁶⁰ He was paraded in front of a crowd and publicly blinded, dying nine years later in 1159. With two main cities in the north without male leadership, the security of the kingdom was imperilled.

Upon hearing of the new loss in Edessa, Baldwin left Gaza's fortress in the hands of the Knights Templar and headed north. William of Tyre is the sole source for Baldwin's response to the crisis and, interestingly, makes a scathing comment about female rule:

'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'.⁶¹

⁵⁵ See Chapter Five, Section iii for a discussion on her support of Military Orders.

⁵⁶ R. Röhrlich, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani* (Innsbruck, 1904–1893), p. 256.

⁵⁷ Röhrlich, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, pp. 244, 245.

⁵⁸ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', pp. 129–30.

⁵⁹ See Chapter Three, Section iii where it was previously discussed.

⁶⁰ R.L. Nicholson, 'The Growth of the Latin States, 1118–1144', in K.M. Setton, ed., *A History of the Crusades*, 1 (Madison, WI, 1969), p. 517.

⁶¹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 17, no. 15; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 207: *At vero nuntiatum est regi Ierosolimorum et fama certiore compertum quod comes Edessanus sorte tam miserabili captus erat et regio tota absque defensoris cura hostium late patebat partes, femineo relicte*

Melisende's vassals in her domains had denied their military obligations to him and ignored his summons. This is evidence of the deep division between mother and son that had divided the loyalties of the kingdom's vassals. Melisende presumably attempted 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.⁶² Mayer sums up Baldwin's weak position at this time, 'the fact remains that Baldwin III, 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'.⁶³

Both Antioch and Edessa were left with the widows Constance of Antioch and Beatrice of Edessa to assume command of the endangered cities. Baldwin was accompanied by Humphrey of Toron, whom Baldwin would promote to constable as soon as he was able, and Guy of Beirut. William of Tyre reports the following:

'The king [Baldwin III] 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 ruled by the will of a woman. He ought to assume some of the responsibility of governing the realm himself'.⁶⁴

William of Tyre's perception of female rule is at odds with his support of Melisende. His harsh depiction of her sister, Alice of Antioch, along with his critical responses to many other aristocratic women from the period, makes his stance on Melisende's reign all the more interesting. His view on female regencies was that it was evidence of God's displeasure. He wrote, 'Therefore in recompense for our sins, both regions were bereft of better councilors, barely surviving by themselves, were ruled by the judgment of women'.⁶⁵ Melisende was, however, free from his censure as regnant. Hodgson states, 'William, along with most

moderamini, suam exposcebant sollicitudinem; unde assumptis sibi Henfredo constabulario et Guidone Beritensi - nam de his, qui in portione domine regine erant, licet singillatim evocasset, neminem habere potuit.

⁶² Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende', p. 149.

⁶³ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende', p. 151.

⁶⁴ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 17, no. 15; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 207: *Habebat autem super eodem facto plurimos incentores, odiorum fomitem ministrantes, quibus predicti viri invisa erat porentia et molesta nimis dominatio. Hii dominum regem impellebant etiam ut matrem regni amoveret potestate, dicentes eum iam ad adultam pervenisse etatem, indignum esse ut fimineo regeretur arbitrio et regni propree curam alii quam sibi committeret moderandam.*

⁶⁵ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 17, no. 11, p. 202.

contemporary writers, believed that rulership was an unnatural activity for women, and saw most widows in positions of power as the unhappy victims of fortune, struggling to manage tasks to which they were evidently unequal'.⁶⁶

The year 1151 was a critical one for Melisende and Baldwin. Baldwin was consumed with his military duties in defending the realm from Nur ad-Din and an Egyptian fleet that attacked the coastal cities of Jaffa, Acre, Sidon, Beirut, and Tripoli. Melisende, though restricted to her dower lands at Nablus, bestowed the county of Jaffa to her second son, Amalric (b. 1136), perhaps with the intention of endearing him to her cause.⁶⁷

Baldwin's struggle to assert sole rule of Jerusalem reached its climax in 1152. Beginning with his independent coronation on Easter Sunday in April 1152, and following this, he called a council of his aristocracy, demanding to divide the kingdom with Melisende. The High Court coerced her to acquiesce; Baldwin assumed control of Tyre and Acre while Melisende ruled Jerusalem and Nablus.⁶⁸ Baldwin then removed Manasses from his post as constable, and then besieged Manasses at Mirabel, exiling him from 'the kingdom and all the region on this side of the sea'.⁶⁹ Baldwin then decided to attack Melisende at Nablus, causing her to flee to the castle and take refuge at the Tower of David in Jerusalem. William of Tyre suggests a reason for Baldwin's removal of Jerusalem from his mother's control: '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 Amalric, count of Jaffa, a very young man; Philip of Nablus; and Rohard the Elder, with a few others whose names are unknown'.⁷⁰ At this point, most of Melisende's supporters recognized her rule as queen regnant was untenable and she had lost the war.

In 1152, the civil war came to an end with Baldwin assuming sole control of Jerusalem. It seems that Melisende was ousted from authority because she was a woman. Once Baldwin became a grown man and proved himself both politically and militarily,

⁶⁶ Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, p. 213.

⁶⁷ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', pp. 98, 124–5. In the charters Röhricht, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, nos. 268 in 1151 and no. 278 in 1152, Amalric is newly designated with the title of Count of Jaffa.

⁶⁸ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', p. 166. Mayer believes that this formal division only legalized a situation that had existed for some time.

⁶⁹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 17, no. 14, p. 206.

⁷⁰ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 17, no. 14, p. 206: *Recesserant autem a domina regina, iuramentorum et fidelitatis inmemores, quidam ex his, qui infra sortem eius habebant possessiones et ei fide media erant obligati, pauci vero, ei adherentes, fidei servaverant integritatem, Amalricus videlicet comes Ioppensis, filius eius valde adolescens, Phillipus quoque Neapolitanus et Rohardus senior et pauci alii, quorum nomina non tenemus.* 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', p. 82.

Melisende's retirement was inevitable. As Hodgson notes, this was not a statement on her capabilities or skills as a ruler but only on her gender.⁷¹ In fact, the support she received from her aristocracy extended into the period after Baldwin reached majority, pointing to her talent for ruling.

Of the three royal heiresses in this study, Melisende and her son Baldwin endured the greatest conflict between mother and son. Their struggle lasted for four years and divided the kingdom over their loyalties. Between the cases of Urraca and Melisende, Urraca fared better in light of her pre-established sole rule. Because Melisende began her reign with co-rulers, it was impossible to remove her son from the political arena once he had reached maturity. Although kings also faced threats to their authority from their adult sons, the situation with Melisende was very different. While kings had to be careful of ambitious heirs or perhaps even crowned junior kings, the example of Henry II of England and his eldest son, Henry the Young King (1155–1183) shows it that the father retained the greater authority. The infamous case of the Henry II's rebellious son erupted in 1173 when Henry the Young King conspired with two of his brothers, his mother Eleanor of Aquitaine, and many of their rebel supporters. The revolt was put down within eighteen months and Henry II came out victorious as the rebels all sought reconciliation. Melisende began and ended her reign with her son as her equal co-ruler. Urraca managed to control her son's ambitions and had the authority to do so. Melisende established the authority of her rule and that of her son's, so that when her aristocracy was forced to choose sides, the triumph of male rule was inescapable.

Matilda's political career was dominated by her efforts to win the English crown during a decades-long war against her cousin Stephen. Although she ultimately failed to become queen regnant, the Angevin side eventually emerged victorious as her son, Henry Fitz Empress, succeeded Stephen to become King Henry II of England in 1154. The war had taken its toll on Matilda; her key supporters had died, namely Miles of Gloucester in 1143, Geoffrey de Mandeville in 1144, and most devastatingly, her half-brother Earl Robert of Gloucester in 1147. These losses prompted Matilda to return to Normandy by early March 1148, which may have given many cause to believe that Stephen had won the war. But his victory was incomplete. The original group of Angevin partisans was gradually replaced by new, younger participants, who viewed the succession crisis differently than their parents.

As Matilda's successor, Henry Fitz Empress' first trip to England occurred in the Spring of 1142 when Matilda's illegitimate half-brother, Robert, crossed the channel to

⁷¹ Hodgson, *Women, Crusading, and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, p. 187.

Normandy to meet Geoffrey and returned to England with the nine-year-old Henry. Chibnall records that Henry most likely spent his earliest years in Matilda's care in Normandy, but after she left for England in 1139, he remained in Anjou. In 1142, he joined his uncle Robert's household for his education, which was celebrated for its learning.⁷² It is likely that Henry's physical presence in England did for Matilda what Urraca and Melisende's sons did for them, namely heighten their own political legitimacy as rulers. Unsurprisingly, Matilda integrated Henry into her administration, confirming charters and grants that provided a supplementary guarantee to the recipients of their patronage whose lands were fought over between Stephen and Matilda.⁷³ Henry's attendance in England helped keep the Angevin cause alive. During this period of English residence, Matilda surely began grooming Henry in, as Chibnall calls it, 'the arts of government'.⁷⁴ Writing during Henry II's reign, Walter Map commented on Matilda's teachings, regarding her as a bad influence on her son who taught him ruthless practices.⁷⁵ Henry remained in England until 1144, when he returned to Normandy to aid his father in his campaign to secure Louis VII's recognition of Geoffrey's new status as Duke of Normandy. In 1148, Matilda returned to Normandy and retired from the war, allowing her fifteen-year-old son Henry to become the leader of the Angevin party.

Henry returned to England on 6 January 1153 to resume the war as a twenty-year-old. His forces were not large enough for a full-blown invasion but large enough to form a considerable threat; he brought with him only 140 knights, with 3,000 infantry, and 36 ships. In the four years since his last visit to England, Henry had been invested as Duke of Normandy and had inherited his father's lands as Count of Anjou when Geoffrey died in 1151. Adding to his fortune was his recent marriage to the heiress, Eleanor of Aquitaine. Henry at this point had control of Normandy, Anjou, Maine, and through his wife's inheritance, Aquitaine, Poitou, and Gascony. Furthermore, through his mother's designation as *haeres Angliae*, he claimed inheritance rights to the Kingdom of England. Henry took up the battle against Stephen, although his victories were relatively insignificant.

Stephen was not overthrown by Matilda during her seven years in England, nor was he militarily defeated by Henry Fitz Empress in any of his campaigns, including that of 1153. Yet despite this, he lost the peace. At its core, the war had been about the succession of the English throne, and because the peace ended with Henry II as the successor, Stephen

⁷² E. King, *King Stephen* (New Haven, 2010), p. 184.

⁷³ By 1144, Matilda and Henry began to jointly issue charters, signifying themselves as *Anglorum domina* and *filius ducis Normannorum*. *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum*, vol. 3, 15, n. 43.

⁷⁴ M. Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and Her Sons', in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, eds., *Medieval Mothering* (New York, 1996), p. 284.

⁷⁵ Walter Map, *De Nugis Curialium*, eds. M.R. James, C.N.L. Brooke, and R. Mynors (Oxford, 1983), p. 479; Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, pp. 62, 162.

essentially lost. The events of 1153 had gradually come to appear as if Henry had the upper hand: numerous important lords such as Earls Robert of Leicester and Ranulf of Chester had pledged support to Henry, the Angevin forces had won at Malmesbury, and Stephen and Henry had agreed to a truce at Wallingford. Stephen attempted to circumvent any losses by breaking with tradition and attempted to crown his heir Eustace as co-king. Had Stephen been successful in crowning a co-king, he may have altered the English tradition of kingship to a model more reminiscent of the French tradition.⁷⁶ Eustace had gained the county of Boulogne, his *ius maternum*, in 1147.⁷⁷ The *Gesta Stephani* shows that Eustace was upset with their weakening grip on England and enraged ‘because the war, in his opinion, had reached no proper conclusion’.⁷⁸ In 1153, after Henry’s arrival in England, Eustace took up arms in Cambridgeshire in an attempt to break up the impending peace between Stephen and Henry, but his efforts were ultimately thwarted when he suddenly died on 17 August 1153.⁷⁹ Stephen was however not without heirs; his sixteen-year-old son William inherited the County of Boulogne, but was not officially named heir to his father’s throne in England.

After several meetings and two near-battles, a peace was finally made at Winchester in November 1153. Stephen’s charter issued at Westminster confirmed the formal agreement, but the peace was first made and enacted at Winchester.⁸⁰ The Westminster charter was not a peace treaty but a confirmation of the agreements that had already been made at Winchester. There were three important elements to the treaty: acknowledgment of Henry Fitz Empress’ claim to Normandy, recognition of Henry as Stephen’s heir to England, and protection of the interests of William, Stephen’s second son. The treaty clarified that Stephen would be king for the duration of his life and specified that he would not attempt to claim ducal authority in Normandy. Furthermore, the treaty excludes anything that might indicate that Henry owed his ducal title to Stephen. Garnett believes that ‘Henry must have extracted this capitulation at an early, unrecorded stage in the negotiations’.⁸¹

The most important aspect of the treaty concerns Henry’s role in the English succession. Duke Henry was confirmed as Stephen’s heir, thus putting him next in line to succeed to the throne. Henry’s recognition of Stephen and his fealty to him was the first

⁷⁶ G. Garnett, *Conquered England: Kingship, Succession, and Tenure 1066–1166* (Oxford, 2007), p. 264.

⁷⁷ K.R. Potter and R.H.C. Davies, eds., *Gesta Stephani* (Oxford, 1976), p. 208; Garnett, *Conquered England*, p. 264.

⁷⁸ Potter and Davies eds., *Gesta Stephani*, pp. 238–9: *bellum, uti aestimabat, ad effectum nequaquam processerat*.

⁷⁹ E. King, ‘The Accession of Henry II’, in C. Harper-Bill and N. Vincent, eds., *Henry II: New Interpretations* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 30.

⁸⁰ The full text of the Treaty can be found in Davis, Davis, and Cronne, eds., *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066–1154*, vol. iii, no. 272; J.C. Holt, ‘1153: the treaty of Winchester’, in E. King, ed., *The Anarchy of King Stephen’s Reign* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 291–316.

⁸¹ Garnett, *Conquered England*, p. 267.

instance of an heir performing ‘homage to the other in return for being constituted as the other’s heir, thereby resolving the cause of the conflict between them’.⁸² Stephen recognizes Henry as ‘successor to the kingdom of England and my heir by hereditary right, and thus to him and to his heirs I have given the kingdom of England, and confirmed it’.⁸³ It comes as no surprise that Henry’s succession was through Stephen’s claim and not Matilda’s. It was through Matilda’s right that Geoffrey, and later Henry, could claim Normandy, but Stephen had no intention of ceding the validity and strength of his claim to the English throne.

With peace secured, much of the accord concerned the place and rights of Stephen’s youngest son, William.⁸⁴ Henry agreed that, upon his ascension to the throne, he would concede to William all of the lands that had come to him from his marriage to the heiress of William of Warenne, Isabel.⁸⁵ Stephen also endeavored to secure for William the holding that had been Stephen’s in Normandy and Mortain under Henry I. Additionally, William was to have the castle of Norwich, which had been desired by Hugh Bigod, Earl of Norfolk.⁸⁶ William performed fealty to Henry and the leading churchmen took oaths to recognize Henry as heir. With these promises, the civil war finally came to an end after eighteen years of struggle.

The Angevins ultimately emerged as victors in the civil war. But did Matilda? When Matilda left England for Normandy in 1148, Henry’s position was precarious. Both Robert and Miles of Gloucester were dead and Brian Fitz Count was no longer active. The war entered a new phase and one in which Matilda played little part. Henry of course needed support, but he did not need powerful magnates to lead his troops into battle. As a capable young man, Henry himself was the leader in the field, with the support of his uncle Reginald of Cornwall, who sometimes acted as deputy, and Robert Fitz Harding, who supplied the necessary funds.⁸⁷

Because of Henry’s resounding victory in 1153 and his establishment of a new Angevin dynasty, many have come to define Matilda only by the men around her. Indeed when Matilda died on 10 September 1167, Henry II consented to her wish to be buried at Bec-Hellouin and erected an epitaph that read ‘Great by birth, greater by marriage, greatest in her

⁸² Garnett, *Conquered England*, p. 273.

⁸³ Davis, Davis, and Cronne, eds., *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum*, no. 272, pp. 97–9: *Sciatis quod ego rex Stephanus Henricum duce[m] Normannie post me successorem regni Anglie et heredem meum jure hereditario constitui, et sic et heredibus suis regnum Anglie donavi et confirmavi.*

⁸⁴ Garnett, *Conquered England*, p. 268; J.H. Round and J.H. Round, ‘The Counts of Boulogne as English Lords’, in *Studies in Peerage and Family History* (Westminster, 1901), pp. 169–71.

⁸⁵ R.H.C. Davis, *King Stephen, 1135–1154* (London, 1990), p. 131; Garnett, *Conquered England*, p. 269.

⁸⁶ J. Bradbury, *Stephen and Matilda, The Civil War of 1139–53* (Stroud, 2005), p. 200.

⁸⁷ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 150.

offspring: here lies Matilda, the daughter, wife, and mother of Henry'.⁸⁸ Her legacy was, no doubt, great; her heirs would keep control of the English throne until the death of Richard II in 1400. However, Matilda's life was more than her role as daughter, wife, and mother; it was an attempt to show that royal authority could be both held and transmitted through the female line. Henry's accomplishments on the battlefield and his ambition, combined with his gender, allowed him to pose as a greater threat to Stephen's reign than Matilda. Had Matilda cemented her position in 1141 and forced Stephen's abdication, further conflict may have arisen between mother and son. However, the events of history unfolded differently and Henry II came to the throne through his mother, although his strategy was to act through Stephen. The mother-and-son conflict was not between them; instead, it was with a shared rival. Whereas Urraca aimed at keeping her son inactive, Matilda supported her son's claims and efforts because doing so was to her benefit.

Conflict played a different role in the lives of Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda, and indeed for most rulers too. For Urraca, the major conflict was between the queen and her estranged husband, El Batallador. But her relationship with her son might have become an additional problem for Urraca had she mismanaged it. She was careful to partially recognize her son's royal legitimacy and authority in order to protect her throne from outside threats. However, under the direction of Bishop Gelmírez of Galicia and other supporters, Alfonso Raimúndez might have been a credible threat to her control of the throne. Thankfully, Urraca managed with the assistance of Archbishop Bernard to remove her son from Galicia and install him in Toledo under her loyal ally, thus neutralizing the threat. With her son under control, historical record shows no further conflict between mother and son. In contrast to this is Melisende's relationship with Baldwin III. While Baldwin was a minor, Melisende enjoyed unfettered control of the kingdom. However, when he was well into his majority, as a man of twenty, he pushed back and sparked a civil war that fractured the aristocracy. This period coincided with outside threats from Muslim invaders and Melisende ultimately lost to her son. Matilda on the other hand ceded her claims to her son and there is no evidence of her and Henry attempting to share power. Instead, he inherited the major conflict of Matilda's life. Melisende was the only queen regnant to have a co-rule with her son, and she was the only queen to have such a pronounced and prolonged conflict with her son. Based on this model, it is clear that the nature of co-rule between mother and son was ineffective because a fully-grown king, glorified in a sacred coronation, would always win in a struggle against his

⁸⁸ A.A. Porée, *Histoire de l'abbaye du Bec* (2 vols, Evreux, 1901), 2, vol. 2, p. 615: *Ortu magna, viro, major, sed maxima partu, / Hic jacet Henrici filia, sponsa, parens.*

mother because the male aristocracy rallied around him and not her. However, this model does protect dynastic continuity, which was a deciding factor upon the death of Baldwin II in 1131. Only by examining the three cases of royal heiresses through a comparative methodology can insight into this model of queenship be gained.

iii. Former queen regnants as regents

Queens could serve on the king's behalf as regents in the event that he was absent, ill, or a minor. In these cases when the king was indisposed and could not rule, the queen consort or dowager queen would sometimes be appointed regent. A few queen mothers acted as regents for their adult sons, such as Adela of Champagne for Philip Augustus of France and Blanche of Castile for Louis IX of France.⁸⁹ In the cases of Melisende of Jerusalem and Empress Matilda, they became trusted advisors after retiring and acted as unofficial regents for their sons, Baldwin III of Jerusalem and Henry II of England, respectively. Their key asset as advisors was their experience. Both women had ruled, crowned or not, and that wisdom was invaluable. Because Urraca of León-Castilla kept her son from accessing too much power during her life, there is no material for comparison in her case. For Melisende and Matilda, however, their prior experience allowed them to work as advisors, allies, and unofficial regents during certain periods of their sons' reigns.

Once her conflict with Baldwin was resolved, Melisende was forced into retirement in Nablus, which was unfortified and not intended for her to govern. When, according to William of Tyre, Baldwin promised to protect her possession of Nablus as a 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'.⁹⁰ Baldwin did not force his mother to enter a convent, such as the one Melisende had built in Bethany, after he defeated her, as his great-uncle Baldwin I had done to dispose of his queen, Arda.⁹¹ 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. Whether Melisende's new position as advisor was negotiated at the time of settlement or

⁸⁹ L. Grant, *Blanche of Castile, Queen of France* (New Haven, 2016), pp. 78–146; on the power and authority of the consort, see pp. 265–290.

⁹⁰ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 17, no. 14; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 207: *sicque eis in mutuum redeuntibus gratiam, quasi stella matutina in medio refulgens nebule regno et ecclesie restituta est tranquillitas*

⁹¹ H.E. Mayer, 'Études sur l'histoire de Baudouin Ier roi de Jérusalem', in *Mélanges sur l'histoire du royaume latin de Jérusalem* (Paris, 1983), pp. 56–7.

thereafter, once Baldwin ruled independently, is debatable, as is how formal an arrangement it was. It is impossible to identify whether it was Melisende or Baldwin who took the initiative for her to act as an intermittent advisor. Melisende's influence throughout the last ten years of her life can be discerned in many charters and military actions.⁹² Mayer argues that 'on the whole, it may be said that after 1152, Baldwin III allowed his mother just enough influence to prevent her feeling totally excluded, without, however, allowing her actually to share in his rule'.⁹³ While Mayer is correct in arguing that Melisende's participation in the kingdom's government was greatly decreased, he undervalues her wisdom and experience which made her an asset. Once peace was reached, there is no evidence to suggest that Melisende challenged her son's rule; therefore, Mayer's more cynical interpretation begs reflection. Clearly, Baldwin was in a position of greater power to include his mother in his government by associating her in his public documents and acts of patronage. If, as Mayer argues, Baldwin was employing a strategy to keep his mother at bay, he likely would not have tasked her with advising him on matters of war and the succession of the patriarch of Jerusalem after Fulcher of Angoulême's death in 1157.⁹⁴ Battle strategy and the relationship between the crown and the patriarch were too sensitive to pass off as method of placating a rival.

Melisende continued to have a role as advisor to her son during the remaining years of her life. 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'.⁹⁵ He goes on to note that Baldwin generously bestowed the city upon his younger brother Amalric, the Count of Jaffa. This was a very magnanimous decision considering Amalric had sided with Melisende throughout the entire conflict between Baldwin and their mother. It indicates that Baldwin felt secure in his position and authority as king as well as in making an end to the bitterness and division within the royal family. Melisende must have been pleased, as she would have surely favored the bestowal of Ascalon upon her loyal younger son. It is however curious that Baldwin promoted his younger brother, considering he was a threat to Baldwin's power. At the time, in 1153, Baldwin remained unwed and without children, leaving his younger brother Amalric as his heir.⁹⁶ At this time, Melisende had moved to Nablus and her grip on the crown had weakened.

⁹² Folda, 'Melisende of Jerusalem', p. 440; Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende', pp. 172–74; Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States', p. 155.

⁹³ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', p. 172.

⁹⁴ Hamilton, 'Women in the Crusader States', pp. 155–56.

⁹⁵ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 17, no. 30; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, p. 233: *Rex autem tam in urbe quam in suburbanis, matris consilio, bene meritis, et quibusdam etiam precii interventu, possessionibus et agris in funiculo distributis.*

⁹⁶ Baldwin III married Theodora Komnene in 1157 but the couple remained childless.

It is possible that Melisende still had enough power and influence to pressure Baldwin to show beneficence to his brother. Again, it is impossible to identify initiative in these historical narratives given the scarcity of sources. However, it is likely that Melisende had greater influence than is commonly believed. When Baldwin was still in his minority and later unchallenging to Melisende's authority, she was able to demonstrate a remarkable ability to rule, which allowed her to remain politically active as an advisor after Baldwin began ruling alone.

Empress Matilda brought considerable value as an advisor to her son during his reign as king of England and duke of Normandy. After nearly a decade apart from her husband Geoffrey, she rejoined him in Normandy in 1148, where he had been invested as Duke. As an older and experienced politician, Matilda interestingly did not assume the title of Duchess of Normandy in her official documents, nor did she retain the title of *Domina Anglorum* in her Norman charters.⁹⁷ Accepting her personal defeat in England, Matilda turned her attention to advancing the prospects for her son and heir, Henry. She saw him invested with the duchy in Normandy in 1150, and when Geoffrey died in September 1151, Henry became count of Anjou. The following year in 1152, Henry married Eleanor of Aquitaine, the divorced wife of the king of France and heiress of Aquitaine. By the time Henry turned twenty in 1153, he was lord of much of northern and western France, to which he would later add England in 1154 and Ireland in 1171. With her son victorious, she would assist him in matters of governance, serving as an administrator, advisor, and deputy, mostly in matters pertaining to Normandy for the remainder of her life.⁹⁸ However, her power to influence her son had its limits, and weakened significantly towards her last years.

Early in Henry's reign, Matilda's influence can be easily discerned. When Henry was away from Normandy overseeing other parts of his vast dominion, Matilda was his obvious deputy.⁹⁹ Matilda often served as a voice of caution to her son by working as a peacemaker and intermediary for his many enemies. When in 1153 Henry was in England negotiating the terms of Stephen's succession, Theobald of Blois infringed upon lands in Tourraine that Henry viewed as his. During this conflict, Matilda's second son Geoffrey and Sulpicius of Amboise, the castellan of Chaumont, resisted Theobald's encroachment and were captured.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 159.

⁹⁸ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, pp. 151–76.

⁹⁹ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, pp. 158–59.

¹⁰⁰ L. Halphen and R. Poupardin, eds., 'Gesta Ambaziensium Dominorum', in *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou et des seigneurs d'Amboise* (Paris, 1913), pp. 127–31; Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 157; M. Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and Her Sons', in B. Wheeler and J.C. Parsons, eds., *Medieval Mothering* (New York, 1996), p. 285.

Theobald's condition for Geoffrey's release was the destruction of the castle of Chaumont-sur-Loire. While the account of this incident is confusing,¹⁰¹ it demonstrated Matilda's capacity to serve as peacemaker and negotiator. She kept a cool head in order to see her son released from captivity while also maintaining a tolerable relationship with an important magnate. Theobald (d. 1191) was Stephen's nephew and maintaining the status quo with his family was wise considering King Stephen was still alive and showed no immediate signs of poor health.¹⁰² Matilda's participation in this episode is indicative of her familial role as peacemaker and peacekeeper.¹⁰³ She intervened on occasions in which her guidance and wisdom might prove beneficial.

Soon after the Angevin triumph of 1154, Matilda's influence on Henry's rule in England can be identified. In 1155, his attention turned to Ireland with the hopes of conquering it. With papal consent, he installed his younger brother William (d. January 1164) as lord. However, Matilda cautioned him against it and suggested instead that he focus on consolidating his control and establishing stability throughout his realm.¹⁰⁴ Matilda favored English lands for William, to which Henry consented, bestowing extensive lands to him in East Anglia and Sussex, as well as the vicomté of Dieppe from the escheated holdings of William of Blois, Stephen's youngest son (d. 1159).¹⁰⁵ In addition to these rich lands, William Fitz Empress also hoped to add to his wealth by marrying the heiress of Warenne, Isabel (d. 1203). As the widow of William of Blois, she was one of England's wealthiest women as well as the heiress to the County of Surrey.¹⁰⁶ Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury,¹⁰⁷ refused the union on the grounds of consanguinity, although this could be overcome with papal dispensation.¹⁰⁸ Geoffrey and Matilda were more closely related than Isabel de Warenne and William, but the latter had sought and received papal dispensation to marry in 1128. Instead, Isabel de Warenne married Hamelin of Anjou in April 1164, an illegitimate son of Geoffrey. Therefore, the Warenne wealth stayed within the Angevin family. It is unknown

¹⁰¹ Halphen and Poupardin, eds., 'Gesta Ambaziensium Dominorum', pp. 127–31.

¹⁰² Theobald V of Blois (b. 1130) was the second son of Theobald II, count of Champagne (1125–1152), brother of Stephen.

¹⁰³ Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and Her Sons', p. 286.

¹⁰⁴ Robert of Torigni, 'Chronicle', in R. Howlett, ed., *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I*, 4 (London, 89 1884), vol. i, p. 186; Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 163.

¹⁰⁵ Robert of Torigni, 'Chronicle', p. 186; Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and Her Sons', p. 287; T. Keefe, 'Place-date Distribution of Royal Charters and the Historical Geography of Patronage Strategies at the Court of King Henry II Plantagenet', *HSJ*, ii (1990), pp. 179–88, 185–87; Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 163.

¹⁰⁶ E.M.C. Van Houts, 'The Warenne View of the Past 1066–1203', *ANS*, xxvi (2003), p. 103.

¹⁰⁷ For information regarding Thomas Becket, see: A. Duggan, *Thomas Becket: A Textual History of his Letters* (Oxford, 1980); A. Duggan, *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury (1162–1170)* (Oxford, 2000); A. Duggan, *Thomas Becket* (London, 2005); D. Knowles, *Thomas Becket* (London, 1970).

¹⁰⁸ J.C. Robertson, *Materials for the history of Thomas Becket, archbishop of Canterbury, canonized by pope Alexander III, A.D. 1173* (7 vols, London, 85 1875), iii, vol. iii, p. 142: *Hoc habeas pro amore domini mei Willelmi fratris regis*; See also E.M.C. Van Houts and R. Love, eds., *The Warenne (Hyde) Chronicle* (Oxford, 2013), p. xxix.

to what extent Matilda participated in the wedding arrangements.

One of Matilda's greatest assets was her experience and knowledge. She had been educated in the imperial court of her first husband, Henry V, Holy Roman Emperor, where she had been schooled in continental and papal politics and formed relationships with powerful men who still remained in power. Her familiarity with the imperial and papal court gave her position as queen-mother prestige. Chibnall rightly suggests that Henry II learned the value of mercantile wealth to fund armies thanks to Matilda and Geoffrey in Rouen, and that he benefitted from his mother's positive relationship with the imperial court.¹⁰⁹ This, combined perhaps with filial devotion, meant that his mother played a featured role in the administration of his empire. In their joint charters, Matilda's name always preceded her son's.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Matilda served as his deputy in Normandy to issue writs, hear cases, and confirm church elections.¹¹¹

Matilda most famously acted as advisor to Henry when his relationship with Thomas Becket deteriorated in the 1160s. Becket entered the household of Theobald of Bec, Archbishop of Canterbury, as a clerk. Under Theobald, Becket rose to the position of archdeacon of Canterbury and other ecclesiastical offices. Shortly after his coronation, Henry appointed Becket to Lord Chancellor, in January 1155. His meteoric rise pushed him into the most rarified circles. In 1162, Theobald of Bec died and Henry decided to elevate his friend Becket to the position of archbishop of Canterbury. Even though he had been trusted and trained by his predecessor and had faithfully served his king, Matilda cautioned her son against the appointment.¹¹² Chibnall suggests that Matilda's reasoning stemmed from an earlier experience with her first husband, Henry V, and the promotion of his chancellor Adalbert to archbishopric of Mainz.¹¹³ Adalbert transformed from being the most steadfast defender of imperial rights to being the leader of the reformists in the German Church upon his consecration as archbishop. Matilda's reservation seems a likely one to have, as Becket was an unknown entity, new to an episcopal position. By this point, Matilda's health had deteriorated and her focus turned more towards acts of piety. Her inability to prevent Becket's elevation shows the limitations to her influence with her son.¹¹⁴ This is not to say that Matilda was powerless or disregarded, but her influence did not extend as far as English episcopal elections. Despite her objections, Henry proceeded with his plans and on 2 June 1162, Becket resigned his position as chancellor and was ordained a priest at Canterbury and consecrated as

¹⁰⁹ Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and Her Sons', p. 164.

¹¹⁰ Chibnall, 'The Charters of the Empress Matilda', p. 290.

¹¹¹ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 160; Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and Her Sons', p. 288.

¹¹² Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 167, n. 111.

¹¹³ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 167.

¹¹⁴ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 167.

archbishop by Henry, Bishop of Winchester, who played important roles previously in the succession crisis of 1135.¹¹⁵ This marked a pivotal moment in the relationship between mother and son for it signaled the decline of Matilda's influence over her son.

In his first year as archbishop, Becket took a stand against the wishes of William Fitz Empress and blocked the marriage between Matilda's son and the heiress of Warenne. This did little to endear Matilda to Becket's cause. However, the struggle between Henry and Becket did not take shape until the subject of royal rights in connection to the church arose. Henry wanted to preserve the traditional royal rights in order to retain jurisdiction of secular courts over English clergymen, while Becket hoped to expand the rights of the archbishopric. Henry's next move was to draft a constitution outlining royal customs at Clarendon, demanding that all bishops swear to observe them. Unsurprisingly, Becket resisted and by 1164 decided to go to the papal court, without permission. During the next six years of his exile, multiple parties attempted to broker peace between the king and his archbishop. When peace was finally brokered in 1170 and Becket returned to England, any peace achieved was nominal at best and Becket was infamously murdered at the Canterbury Cathedral, at the vespers service. Of course, Matilda had died three years earlier on 10 September 1167 and thus, did not live to see the outcome of the conflict. She did however attempt to resolve it in her final years.

However, early in the conflict, in November 1164, Becket began his exile in France. During this period, many on both sides of the conflict hoped Matilda would intervene and bring about a resolution to the controversy, acting in the role of intercessor, as was common for medieval women. Matilda's success as an intermediary and advisor had given her credibility. Henry's ally, John of Oxford, approached Matilda in Rouen to explain the specifics of the conflict. Similarly, a supporter of Becket, Nicholas, prior of the hospital of Mont-Saint-Jacques, arrived a few days later. At this first occasion, Matilda listened to John of Oxford's case while refusing to admit Nicholas. John of Oxford's representation of the events motivated Matilda to ignore the letters sent by Nicholas. After Nicholas' third attempt, she received his letters privately, expressing remorse for her earlier words and earlier correspondence with Henry.¹¹⁶ Henry had obscured his actions with the church from his mother. In response to her new information, Matilda summoned Nicholas to Rouen to gather the precise details about the Constitutions of Clarendon. Nicholas acted as an intermediary for Matilda and Becket, advising him to 'show by [his] words and deeds that [he] disapprove of

¹¹⁵ See Chapter Three, Section i regarding Empress Matilda's relationship with the Bishop of Winchester.

¹¹⁶ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 169.

these things. If you send letters to the lady empress, make your disapproval clear'.¹¹⁷ As Chibnall rightly argues, Matilda would gladly defend the rights of the church and its reforms only in so far as they did not infringe on accepted royal custom.¹¹⁸

Matilda engaged in the issue directly by corresponding with Becket. She wrote, 'The Lord Pope [Alexander III] commanded me and charged me for the remission of my sins to encourage the restoration of peace and concord between my son the king and you and to attempt to reconcile you with him. And as you know, you also made the same request to me. Accordingly, with great zeal for God's honour and for the honour of holy Church, I have taken pains to begin the task and deal with the matter. But it seems a very grievous matter to the king and his barons and his council, inasmuch as he loved and honoured, and made you lord of his entire realm and of all his lands, and elevated you to the highest position that he had in all his territories, so that he could rely more securely on you in the future, especially since they allege that you have turned the whole realm against him as much as you could, and that you did not stop at striving to disinherit him with all your power. For this reason, I am sending to you our faithful Archdeacon Laurence [of Rouen], a member of our household, so that I may learn your will on all these matters, and what your attitude is to my son, and how you wish to restrain yourself, if it should happen that he desires to hear my petition and prayer regarding you in full. One thing I tell you truly: that you will not be able to recover the king's grace, except by the greatest humility and most conspicuous moderation. Nevertheless, let me know by your own messenger and in writing what you wish to do in the matter'.¹¹⁹

She spoke bluntly and made clear her multiple roles and loyalties. She emphasized taking great care and spoke of the trust connecting advisers to the king. She set out reasons for the enmity and impresses on Becket how close he came to destroying the king, implying this would have been in no one's best interests. She was clear in her advice: 'I plainly tell you'. What is unusual in this case is that Henry's mother was a royal heiress and had been exposed

¹¹⁷ L. Delisle and E. Berger, eds., *Recueil des actes de Henry II concernant les provinces françaises et les affaires de France* (3 vols, Paris, 1909), vol. I, pp. 169–70. Delisle contended that Henry depended on his mother, rather than his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine in Normandy. There remains a lack of information regarding the relationship between Eleanor and her mother-in-law. See also, Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: queen consort, queen mother and lady of the English*, pp. 160–61.

¹¹⁸ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 171.

¹¹⁹ Duggan, *The Correspondence of Thomas Becket*, vol. i, pp. 211–13, no. 49: *Mandavit mihi dominus papa, et in remissionem peccatorum meorum injunxit, quatenus de pace et concordia inter filium meum regem et vos reformanda intromitterem, et vos ipsum eidem reconciliari satagerem. Inde etiam, sicut scitis, me requisistis. Unde majore affectione tam pro honore Dei, quam pro honore sanctae Ecclesiae rem istam incipere, et tractare curavi. Sed multum grave videtur regi, et baronibus suis, atque consilio, sicut vos dilexit, et honoravit, atque dominum totius regni sui, et omnium terrarum suarum constituit, et in majorem tandem honorem, quem habebat in tota terra sua, vos sublimavit, ut de caetero vobis securius debeat credere, praecipue cum asserant quod totum suum regnum, quantum potuistis, adversus eum turbastis, nec remansit in vobis, quin ad eum exhaeredandum pro viribus intenderitis. Eapropter mitto vobis fidelem et familiarem nostrum Laurentium archidiaconum, ut per eum sciam voluntatem vestram super his omnibus, et cujusmodi animum vos habetis erga filium meum, et qualiter vos continere volueritis, si contigerit, quod petitionem meam, et precem de vobis ad plenum exaudire voluerit. Unum quoque vobis veraciter dico, quia nisi per humilitatem magnam, et moderationem evidentissimam, gratiam regis recuperare non poteritis. Verumtatem quid super hoc facere volueritis, nuntio proprio, et litteris vestris mihi significate.*

to greater power and authority than many of her contemporaries. However, by the end of her life, her influence on her son Henry had dwindled. Although many of Henry and Becket's allies believed Matilda could mediate the conflict, she was unable to persuade Henry to back down. As Chibnall states, even if she had lived through the next few years, it is unlikely she could have restrained Henry.¹²⁰ Although she continued to assist her son in more commonplace matters until her death, retaining some influence and power, her role as an advisor to the king was considerably diminished.

Matilda's role as advisor for her son Henry has little in common with the roles of Urraca and Melisende in an equivalent capacity. Firstly, Matilda never became a queen regnant or had to contend with some form of co-rule with her heir, as was the case for Melisende. Circumstances ensured that Urraca's coronation for her kingdom was an independent act, free from any co-ruler; therefore, the occasion never arose for her to act as regent for her son Alfonso Raimúndez. Additionally, Henry sought his mother's help possibly because he had never needed to oust her from power. When she returned to Normandy in 1148, she ceded her claims to England, which provided Henry with an unencumbered path to the throne. The positive relationship between mother and son was never tarnished by a succession dispute or civil war. In his early years as king of the Anglo-Norman realm, Matilda was a credible and trustworthy source of wisdom. Her experiences as empress of the Holy Roman Empire and campaigner of a major war gave her experience that few could equal. These occasions of maternal direction reveal that Matilda was particularly adept at sorting out problems in areas of familial dispute. However, when the kingdom was split over an enormous controversy, over a decade into Henry's reign, her influence had truly waned. Matilda was consistent in her promotion and defense of Henry until her death, but in her role as mother and advisor, her tenacity was respected. Her position as advisor and administrator for her son were positively received, as was Melisende's later role in Baldwin's affairs. Melisende's retirement to Nablus did not prevent her from interjecting during pivotal moments in the administration of the Kingdom of Jerusalem. Retirement from active life was a condition that Melisende and Matilda were forced into for their respective reasons: Matilda was forced into retirement when her key supporters died and she stood no chance of winning the war and Melisende was forced out by her son. Urraca proves to represent a more successful model of queenship because circumstances allowed her to have sole control over her kingdom and not share it with a husband or son.

¹²⁰ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 173.

iv. Aristocratic heiresses and queen-mothers with their sons

In the final section of this chapter on queens regnant as mothers in relationship with their sons, it is instructive to examine one aristocratic case in the Holy Land in which a mother acted in favor of her heiress daughter. Admittedly, the case forms more of a context for Melisende than for Urraca or Matilda, but it nevertheless highlights what might happen to an aristocratic heiress who has only a daughter as heiress.

Mothers were not automatically accepted as regents, simply by the fact of their motherhood, as is evidenced most clearly in the case of Melisende's sister, Alice of Antioch, and her daughter Constance. Although Alice and Constance are both discussed previously in this dissertation, it is worth focusing further on the regency, as it reveals the difference between the authority of a queen regnant and that of other medieval women, including aristocratic heiresses. For a female regent to succeed and stay in power, it was imperative that she act obviously in the best interests of her child. Alice, in contrast to more successful regents such as Blanche of Castile, was portrayed as an over-reaching mother who attempted to exclude her daughter Constance from her succession. According to William of Tyre, Alice attempted to disinherit her daughter, writing, 'so that having disinherited her daughter, she could seize control of the principality for herself in perpetuity, whether remaining in widowhood or moving on to a second marriage'.¹²¹ Despite this negative portrayal, it is possible that Alice believed she had a legitimate claim to the regency, as both Bohemond II's widow and mother of the heir. However, William was against female authority, with the exception of Melisende, and wrote, 'For in that very city there were God-fearing men, contemptuous of the impudence and foolishness of a woman'.¹²² Both Baldwin II and Fulk assumed control of the regency of Antioch, implying they believed Alice unacceptable for the role. It is possible that their reasons for excluding Alice had more to do with her particular characteristics than her female gender, as there were other female regents who did rule on behalf of their children or absent husbands in the Holy Land.

As the lone source for Alice's supposed plan to disinherit her daughter, William of Tyre's chronicle must be evaluated carefully. Asbridge concludes there is little corroborating evidence to believe this was Alice's plan, particularly because William of Tyre is not usually a reliable source for events from this period.¹²³ It is possible that Alice was attempting to

¹²¹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, no. 28, p. 44.

¹²² William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, no. 28, p. 45.

¹²³ T. Asbridge, 'Alice of Antioch: A Case Study of Female Power in the Twelfth Century', in M. Bull and N. Housley, eds., *The Experience of Crusading: Western Approaches* (Cambridge, 2003), pp. 29–47. He notes that the question of female regency in Antioch was 'untested' at this time.

assert her authority in order to obtain the regency and that she believed this to be her right as Constance's mother. William of Tyre believed Alice was attempting to capitalize on the situation by finding a second husband. The new husband of the regent of Antioch had good motivation to enter the marriage. Hence, while it may be accurate that Alice wished to remarry, this does not mean it was her only motivation for being the regent. It is worth noting that a strong marriage to a battle-tested man could have resulted in a co-regency with her new husband and that his new position might have provided stability for the regency and for Antioch.

There is evidence to suggest that Antioch opposed female regencies, although there was no legal limitation on the subject.¹²⁴ Cahen bases his argument on the Antiochene response to both Alice and Constance's experiences of ruling. Although the two widows were barred from authority, there are several important factors that may be responsible for their exclusion. Alice's age at the time of her marriage to Bohemond II is unknown. It is estimated that she was at least twelve but not older than twenty one in 1126, when she was first wed, and that she could not have been beyond her mid-twenties when she was widowed.

In terms of experience, Melisende had ruled with Fulk of Anjou and Baldwin for twelve years before ruling independently in her thirties, although some present this time as a regency. The age of the heirs may also be a contributing factor; Constance was two when Bohemond II died, which would mean a long period of regency, whereas Baldwin was thirteen and would come of age, at least officially but not in practice, in two years' time. Constance herself was widowed after Raymond of Poitier's death at the battle of Inab in 1149, and her children were similarly very young at the time of their father's death.

Initially after Constance's husband died, Aimery, Patriarch of Antioch, acted as her advisor. While he could help Constance with the administration of Antioch, as a member of the ecclesiastical clergy he could not participate in the defense of the city, nor could Constance on account of her gender. Crucially, Constance was twenty two years old when she was first widowed and may have been viewed as too young and inexperienced to rule as an aristocratic heiress, but the history of her mother may have also negatively impacted her. As discussed in the preceding chapter, Baldwin assumed the regency; he left Constance nominally in command and entrusted Aimery to guide her.

The current political condition was also a factor in deciding whether a woman could be entrusted to be a regent. However, in a frontier society such as the Kingdom of Jerusalem,

¹²⁴ C. Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord à l'époque des croisades et la principauté d'Antioche* (Paris, 1940), p. 440; J. Phillips, *Defenders of the Holy Land: Relations between the Latin East and the West, 1119–1187* (Oxford, 1996), p. 47.

the realm was always under threat. By the time Constance was widowed in 1149, Edessa had fallen to the Muslims and the Second Crusade had ended in disaster: a marked difference from the situation in 1143 when Fulk of Anjou died and Melisende began her period of sole rule. For the security of the whole realm, male leadership in Antioch was necessary. Among aristocratic women, the ability to engage in the political world through regencies varied. In some cases, tremendous power can be seen to have been made available to some mothers, while in others women are excluded from the process. Interestingly, at the royal level, aristocratic heiresses faced similar conflicts in opposing their sons' efforts to expand their power. Providing heirs was a necessary duty of medieval women and whereas it might provide an opportunity to directly participate in the political arena, it did not mean free and unrestricted access, even at the highest possible level as queen regnant.

Conclusion

There appears to be consensus among the fathers of royal heiresses that the solution to female royal inheritance was the establishment of a co-rule between the king's daughter and a male co-ruler. Previous chapters explore the joint rule of an aspiring royal heiress and her husband, while this chapter investigates the co-rule of a mother and her son. The most significant conclusion of these chapters is that a joint rule with a male co-ruler was an ineffective model for queens regnant. Aspiring queens regnant needed to balance protecting their sons as their heirs and imbuing them with the same dynastic legitimacy that they themselves enjoyed as royal heiresses. However, the contingent aspects of the lives of Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda did not always permit these heiresses to balance their son's legitimacy against their own authority.

The three different heiresses each represent a different model for female royal rulership. Urraca was fortunate to organize her independent coronation and thus ensure her succession to the Leonese throne as queen regnant before her marriage to Alfonso el Batallador of Aragón. This independent authority as the legitimate successor to Alfonso VI enabled her to both separate from her husband and keep her son, Alfonso Raimúndez, from usurping or sharing her rule. Urraca represents the most effective model for female royal rulership because she was able to establish a sole rule and protect it. Melisende of Jerusalem, in contrast, most clearly represents the model for joint rule with a male co-ruler. Her independent rule was bracketed by two periods of joint rule, first with her husband and later with her son. However, conflict with Fulk is what made her co-rule successful because the established aristocracy of Jerusalem could benefit from her patronage rather than Fulk's. Thus, when the nobles began to support Melisende's increased authority, Fulk was forced to

respect the legitimacy and ruling rights of his wife. Years later however, when Baldwin III had surpassed the age of majority and pushed back against his mother's authority, Melisende could not overcome the claims of a crowned and consecrated royal male descended from the same legitimate line. Matilda demonstrates the power of coronation; because she was not crowned and consecrated Queen of England, she did not manage to establish her rule. Therefore, her participation in her son's political career was most effective as an advisor and administrator in Normandy. Female royal rulership was essentially an experiment to discover how a royal heiress could gain the throne and keep it. While a co-rule with a son was a possibly effective strategy to gain the throne, it was sometimes an unsuccessful one to keep it.

Chapter Five

Queens Regnant as Queens Consort

As ruling queens, or in one case, the aspiring queen regnant, Urraca of León-Castilla, Melisende of Jerusalem, and Empress Matilda of England and Normandy could also be found regularly performing acts of patronage. As June Hall McCash argues, ‘Because it was one of the few domains in which a public role for women was sanctioned, patronage was an area that provided rich opportunities for women to make their voices heard.’¹ Therefore, patronage is often closely associated with the role of queen consort. This chapter will investigate the nuances of Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda’s patronage, revealing aspects of conventional female cultural patronage and acts that take on a more political aim geared towards their ruling statuses. Logically, if these aspiring queens regnant did not participate in battle and instead deputized that duty to faithful male allies, they had ‘free’ time available to them that their male counterparts did not. The duties of a queen consort were not trivial or a consolation prize for medieval women and, by acting at times as their own consorts, in a sense, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda exploited some of the roles normally executed by consorts for the benefit of their position as ruler. This is not to say, however, that kings did not use patronage in their rules. There are many examples where kings founded abbeys and demonstrated their power and piety through benefactions and donations.

Because of their gender, various ways of accessing power and demonstrating strength that were open to kings (fighting on the field of battle) were denied to queens regnant. This chapter explores four key aspects of patronage that allowed royal heiresses to promote their political and personal agendas. First, patronage and the exploitation of monasteries and churches allowed these women to develop friendships with leading churchmen and foster piety within their kingdoms, and it also provided sources of revenue needed to fund their projects and wars. Second, dynastic memory enforced their own legitimacy as heirs and protected the future claims of their own heirs. Third, royal heiresses could support movements that stressed the centrality of the city of Jerusalem in the time of crusades. Fourth, promoting urban development allowed aspiring queens regnant to directly impact local populations and foster the support of urban elites. Through these four avenues of patronage, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda executed the tasks normally performed by queens consort. Ostensibly, if these royal heiresses had male deputies to see to all aspects of the military, then there was spare capacity in their daily schedule to pay attention to other aspects of their role. This left

¹ J.H. McCash, *The Cultural Patronage of Medieval Women* (Athens, GA, 1996), p. 1.

them potentially with an opportunity to also fill the role of queen consort in certain respects. There are indications that, in doing so, they fell back into established gendered roles, which they knew from their mothers. Additionally, because patronage was considered a socially acceptable form of demonstrating female autonomy, it is this aspect of the royal heiress' lives in which their authority and agency are most clearly visible. In other areas of rulership, the royal heiress or queen regnant had male co-rulers, male deputies, and male allies. However, through patronage, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda exploited the female role model's tasks for their primary role as rulers.

i. Patronage and exploitation of monasteries and churches

Demonstrations of piety through religious patronage were an acceptable behavior for medieval women, and Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda each left behind a substantial record of patronage. In addition to the public display of religious devotion that came with patronage, it also provided the women an avenue to build networks of alliances with influential men. It is worth noting that patronage was not an exclusively female activity; kings could also benefit from showing largesse to religious institutions. Matilda's father, Henry I, founded Reading Abbey in 1121 and her rival, Stephen, founded Furness Abbey in 1124. Numerous examples from around Christendom demonstrate monastic patronage was also a tool of kings used to showcase their wealth, power, and piety. The support and exploitation of churches and monasteries reveals a policy that combines typically male and female demonstrations of power. As royal daughters, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda each witnessed acts of generosity and devotion performed by their mothers and other highborn women. A royal daughter might be taught to read or speak different languages, but the purpose of her education was not typically directed toward ruling.² Royal women thus often emulated their mothers and followed their example by demonstrating piety through religious patronage. However, they could do more than a queen consort could because a king did not need to confirm their actions. Using patronage as a political strategy to promote relationships with powerful allies was a behavior their fathers demonstrated. Therefore, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda display a blend of roles: the actions of a queen consort and the intentions of a male king.

As the sole ruler of her kingdom, Urraca was responsible for ensuring that all aspects of government were addressed, including the acts performed by the consort. Urraca's relationship with churches and monasteries indicate her position as ruling queen because she

² M. Gudrun Büttner, 'The education of queens in the eleventh and twelfth centuries', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 2003.

exploited their wealth for practical means; she utilized the moveable wealth located in monastic and ecclesiastical centers in exchange for lands in order to further her political goals in ways that were not typical of queens consort. This other type of patronage reveals a more immediate political goal. Short on money to pay her troops, Urraca took advantage of the land she inherited through the *infantazgo* as a royal princess and the *realengo*, the royal demesne, to exchange lands for money.³

In 1112, Urraca gave the Cathedral of Oviedo lands and property in exchange for moveable wealth, including gold and silver, stating, ‘we do this for the protection of our kingdom against the great infestation of foreign peoples in times of war’.⁴ At that particular moment in 1112, the enemy she mentions could have been either the threat from Aragón or their Muslim enemies to the south. The *Historia Compostelana* details a similar exchange with the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela around the same time that has the intention of funding Urraca’s army to fight her estranged husband, El Batallador. Urraca gave the cathedral lands from the *realengo* and from the *infantazgo*, lands given to Leonese royal daughters; the scribe noted,

‘by their own initiative [the cathedral canons] ordered that the queen be given what she had asked for, one hundred ounces of gold and two hundred silver marks from the treasury of Santiago, in order to fight against the worst devastator of Spain and to put to flight he who was disturbing the entire kingdom’.⁵

In another charter of 1112 to the church of Lugo, Urraca demonstrated a similar method of exchanging lands for moveable wealth.⁶ Bernard Reilly writes that, while exchanging land from the *realengo* for money was a common practice, the year 1112 featured several such exchanges in order to fund Urraca’s war with Aragón.⁷ Furthermore, in several of these charters from 1112, Urraca was forthcoming about receiving not just coin but also sacred objects from the churches to pay her troops; this practice might be the source of her criticism by the *Historia Compostelana*: ‘Without doubt she had despoiled churches throughout her kingdom of gold, silver, and every precious thing’.⁸ Regarding this text, as

³ For information regarding the *infantazgo*, see T. Martin, *Queen as King: Politics and Architectural Propaganda in Twelfth-Century Spain* (Leiden, 2006), pp. 62–97, 96–131.

⁴ C. Monderde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca de Castilla y León (1109–1126)* (Zaragoza, 1996), no. 32: *Et hoc fecimus pre nimia infestatione gentis extranee in tempore belli ad tuicionem regni nostri*

⁵ E. Falque Rey, ed., *Historia Compostelana* (Turnhout), bk. 1, no. 71, p. 111: *Ad debellandum itaque pessimum Hispanie uastatorem et effugandum totius regni perturbatorem de thesauro sancti Iacobi centum untias auri et CC marcas argenti regine postulanti spontanea uoluntate preceperunt dari*. The donation charter is published in Monderde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la reina Urraca*, no. 38. Translation by Martin, *Queen as King*, p. 190.

⁶ Monderde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 39. See Appendix B for an excerpt from this charter.

⁷ Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 263.

⁸ Falque Rey, ed., *Historia Compostelana*, bk 2, no. 53, p. 322: *Ipsa nimirum ecclesias ubique per regnum suum auro, argento et quibusque pretiosis spoliauera*.

Therese Martin mentions, this portion was written by Giraldo, one of several authors of the chronicle, who was the most openly critical of Urraca and exaggerated her wrongdoings.⁹ He claims she ‘destroyed cities, towns, castles, and villages’ and that, under her reign, ‘peace and justice and what accompanied them had fled’. He also calls her ‘Jezebel’.¹⁰ Martin argues that the exchanges were an ordinary royal practice spitefully presented by unfriendly authors as the desecration of churches and monasteries.¹¹ Claudio Sanchez-Albornoz views the exchanges differently, writing, ‘It is proved through the documentation that her path of extortion reached the point of sacrilege’.¹² A close reading of the charters can ascertain whether Urraca herself believed she committed a sacrilege or despoiled the church.

The 1112 charter to Lugo makes her position as queen regnant clear. This charter was discussed earlier in this thesis for Urraca’s use of the imperial title, *imperatrix*.¹³ However, in this section, she verbalizes her policy of land exchange:

‘And I receive from the treasury of Blessed Mary one hundred silver marks from the sacred altar ornaments of that same Virgin so that I might give payments to my knights’.¹⁴

This portion relates a practical and political need to pay her armies, but, strikingly, the funds came from the church coffers, and perhaps even from consecrated altar ornaments. Canon law stipulated that sacred objects could be sold by churches to ransom prisoners, but that does not appear to be the case here. Although Urraca was at risk of committing sacrilege by using sacred objects to pay her knights, she did not shy away from admitting her actions or reasons for them.

The rest of the document features elevated and religious language and particularly references the Virgin Mary. The scribe chooses regal language, referring to Mary as ‘queen’ (*regina*) and ‘lady’ (*domina*, which implies ownership and power) twice. Urraca praises the power and holiness of the church of Lugo; the queenship of its divine patroness, the Virgin Mary; and also her own position as queen regnant. With this context, therefore, Urraca reveals her intention to use sacred objects as a source of funds to pay her troops, and by extension, protect her rulership. She employed a similar strategy to overcome the obstacle of limited

⁹ Martin, *Queen as King*, p. 10.

¹⁰ This is not the first time this insult was made against a medieval queen. J.T. Nelson, ‘Queens as Jezebels: The Careers of Brunhild and Balthild in Merovingian History’, in *Medieval Women*, ed. D. Baker (1978), pp. 31–77, 58.

¹¹ Martin, *Queen as King*, pp. 10–14.

¹² C. Sánchez-Albornoz, ‘Notas para el estudio de “petitum”’, in *Viejos y nuevos estudios sobre las instituciones medievales españolas*, ii (Madrid, 1976), p. 939.

¹³ See Chapter Three.

¹⁴ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 39: *Et accipio de gazofilatio beate Marie marcas argenti C^m. de sacratis ornamentis altaris eiusdem Uirginis ut reddam donatiua militibus meis* See Appendix B for an excerpt from this charter

funds throughout the remainder of her reign, using elaborate charters on each occasion, possibly her attempt at defending her decision to remove sacred objects and church wealth. It is also possible that Urraca's charters were part of an overall strategy to present an image of authority as ruling queen.

The Leonese monarchy tended to be land rich and cash poor, and Urraca was no exception.¹⁵ While medieval sources demonstrate that Urraca and the future Alfonso VII turned to church wealth to pay their troops, only Urraca was censured for her actions. The scribes of the *Historia Compostelana* repeatedly reported examples of Urraca's wealth exchange program, presenting her unfavorably each time. However, it would be unfair to present her solely as a religious patroness who exchanged lands for moveable wealth, and even the *Historia Compostelana* acknowledges this. One of the prized possessions of the treasury at the cathedral of Santiago de Compostela was the relic of the head of St. James, patron saint of the Cathedral, given by Urraca. She also generously donated a silver reliquary containing a piece of the True Cross.¹⁶ Urraca's typical patronage of churches and monasteries featured donations and acts that drew no condemnation. However, the most remarkable form of her program of patronage was the land exchange policy, which was the act of a queen regnant with the deliberate intention of staying on the throne. While Urraca participated in patronage more commonly associated with queens consort, this special type follows examples set by her father and grandfather, and was continued by her male descendants,¹⁷ revealing her authority as queen regnant.

Melisende's position as queen regnant while performing a consort's duties is, at times, ambiguous. Because of her relationship with her co-ruling husband, Fulk of Anjou, she might be seen to be the most like a queen consort, in contrast to Urraca and Matilda. Melisende was an active patroness throughout her adult life, beginning in the early years of her reign alongside Fulk of Anjou. By undertaking projects together, the couple helped transform religious communities in the Holy Land through their patronage. But Fulk's death in 1143 altered the political environment and impacted Melisende's program of patronage. Without a husband to rule alongside her, and with a son too young to rule, Melisende's relationship with the church was at the center of her rulership. As a widow, she turned to religious men to advance her causes, and they became her most important allies. The sources are silent regarding Melisende's personal wealth or the details of how she funded her programs of

¹⁵ Martin, *Queen as King*, p. 194.

¹⁶ Falque Rey, ed., *Historia Compostelana*, bk. 2, no. 57, p. 34.

¹⁷ Martin, *Queen as King*, pp. 13–14.

patronage. The various revenue streams that made up her income came from the royal demesne, customs and taxes levied on Muslim traders, fees paid by non-Christian travelers, the funds acquired by minting coins, or enemy booty. From this income, Melisende was able to finance her patronage to demonstrate her piety, as well as foster relationships with churchmen.

The largest and most significant building project in the Kingdom of Jerusalem occurred during Melisende's sole rule. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher underwent the most substantial development during the period 1143–1149, which coincided with her independent rule.¹⁸ Although Melisende's patronage of the Holy Sepulcher is a subject of some scholarly debate, it seems likely that she would have participated in the endeavor to some extent. Before discussing Melisende's potential patronage of the church, however, it is important to discuss the Holy Sepulcher as a state church. Believed to be the site on which Christ was buried, the Holy Sepulcher was imbued with symbolic significance in Christianity.¹⁹ With the victory of the First Crusade, European settlers set out to rebuild it to the highest standard. The year 1131 was pivotal in the development of the church as a royal site: Baldwin II's funeral and the subsequent joint coronation ceremony of Fulk, Melisende, and Baldwin III all occurred there.²⁰ Previous kings of Jerusalem organized their coronations in Bethlehem, but Melisende's reign signalled a change in the coronation customs that presented the Holy Sepulcher as a sort of state church.²¹

Jaroslav Folda concluded that the majority of the construction of the Holy Sepulcher occurred between the years 1143–1149, although work continued after its consecration on 15 July 1149.²² It is significant that this period of building output overlaps with Melisende's sole rule, which began after Fulk's death in 1143. While Fulk was still alive, the major acts of patronage were directed towards building up defenses throughout the kingdom.²³ The royal program of patronage influenced other nobles, and the period witnessed the expansion of non-royal defenses. With widespread and costly building ventures, very few funds were probably

¹⁸ For a full survey of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, see D. Pringle, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, A Corpus* (3 vols, Cambridge, 2007 1993), iii.

¹⁹ The Emperor Constantine built the first church on the site in the fourth century, but it was gradually destroyed over the centuries by fire, earthquake, and inevitable disrepair. The Persian invasion in 614 and Muslim conquest of 634 further destroyed the church. It was destroyed in 1009 under the direction of the Fatimid Caliph al-Hakim (996–1021). The Byzantine Emperor Constantine IX Monomachus attempted to rebuild the church in 1042–1048.

²⁰ J. Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land 1098–1197* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 29.

²¹ J. Folda, 'Melisende of Jerusalem: queen and patron of art and architecture in the Crusader kingdom' in T. Martin, ed., *Reassessing the Roles of Women as "Makers" of Art and Architecture* (New York, 2002), vol. 1, p. 460.

²² Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land*, p. 39.

²³ On crusader castles, see H. Kennedy, *Crusader Castles* (Cambridge, 1994). Bait Jibrin, Banyas, Belvoir, Belfort were all constructed on the frontiers of the kingdom with the intention of protecting it from Muslim incursions.

left over to devote towards religious patronage. Despite the effort of Fulk and others towards building defensive structures throughout the realm, the crusaders were not likely to forget about the rebuilding of the Holy Sepulcher. Although the main period of construction occurred after 1143, planning for the site likely occurred years earlier.

In addition, Jaroslav Folda also argued that Melisende played a significant role as patroness for the construction of the Holy Sepulcher.²⁴ At this time, she was at the zenith of her power; Baldwin III was underage and did not begin to chafe at her authority until 1149, reaching the tipping point in 1152. Melisende enjoyed a close friendship with the two successive patriarchs of Jerusalem, William of Malines (d. 1145) and Fulcher of Angoulême, who Folda believes collaborated with Melisende on the final stages of construction after 1146. Although William of Tyre and other sources do not reveal the degree of Melisende's participation in the funding or plans for the Holy Sepulcher, it is inconceivable that she would have been excluded from the process.

Before her son Baldwin III pushed her from power in 1152, a year earlier, Melisende issued two charters for the Holy Sepulcher that established her commitment and patronage of the church. Melisende's position on the throne was becoming increasingly precarious, and her continued patronage of the Holy Sepulcher could be viewed as a political act designed to retain the support of the patriarch. Many high-ranking members of her aristocracy witnessed the first charter of 1151, including Giraud, the 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. More importantly, Melisende issued this document alone, without Baldwin's consent; it confirms an exchange of villages made during Melisende and Fulk's co-rule between a certain 'John Patricius' and the Holy Sepulcher.²⁵ Although the exchange was never made, Melisende witnessed its arrangements while Fulk was still alive. Mayer argued that the timing of this document indicates that Melisende attempted to 'ingratiate herself with the Church'.²⁶ Mayer's statement implies that the queen had no power or authority, that it was all in the hands of the patriarch, which is improbable. As with all queens in this study, maintaining strong relationships with powerful allies was imperative, and Patriarch Fulcher and his supporters were key to her rulership. However, there was no real pressure from the aristocracy for Melisende to relinquish control until 1152; therefore, prudent politics rather than ingratiation motivated her to uphold the exchange detailed in the charter. This document

²⁴ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land*, pp. 22–3.

²⁵ R. Röhricht, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani* (Innsbruck, 1904–1893), no. 268.

²⁶ H.E. Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* (1972), p. 161.

thus reveals Melisende's agency to assemble a large group of nobles to support her actions.

Melisende continued to serve as patroness for the church after Baldwin III removed her from power in 1152. However, afterwards, her actions appear more in keeping with those of a queen consort. The last charter Melisende issued for the Church of the Holy Sepulcher indicates that she still enjoyed some political power, despite the fact that, by 1155, she had retired to Nablus.²⁷ She confirmed a charter that her 'beloved son' Baldwin (*Balduini dilecti filii mei*) 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.²⁸ This confirmation indicates that the reconciliation between Melisende and Baldwin was real, and that they had come to an arrangement that allowed her to step in and conduct some of the business of governing the kingdom with his permission. Gone were the days of unimpeded access to authority; in her retirement, Melisende's acts of generosity required Baldwin III's confirmation. Melisende's reign began and ended with a restriction on her authority, first by her husband and later with her son. During the period of 1143–1152, however, Melisende could run her kingdom with agency, and one course of action she took to maintain her position as ruling queen was to support and exploit religious spaces.

As one might expect, the Empress Matilda's patronage of ecclesiastical institutions differs from Urraca's and Melisende's in a sense because she was never queen in her own right. Additionally, she differs because she had been queen consort in Germany and thus had experience in that role, which was not the case for the other two queens of this study. As an heiress who never became a queen regnant, her agency and access to wealth were perhaps more indirect than Melisende's or Urraca's. Matilda's life can be divided into clear chapters, and it follows that her patronage varies according to those circumstances. The first period of interest for this chapter is from 1139–1147, when Matilda actively sought the crown in England. During this period, the focus of her patronage appears to align with that of Urraca and Melisende (during the period 1143–1152) as a queen regnant. After she retired to Normandy in 1148, her patronage conforms to that of queens consort. It cannot be known what Matilda might have done in the way of patronage had she achieved her aims in becoming a ruling queen, but by studying her actions, it is possible that she might have participated in systems of patronage in keeping with other queens regnant. To be more specific, both Melisende and Urraca used patronage as a tool in their arsenal against challenges to their rules. Through patronage, they employed a strategy that won them

²⁷ Röhrlich, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 313.

²⁸ Röhrlich, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 299.

powerful allies and participated in fostering religious devotion, the acts of both a regnant and a consort. Matilda, in her capacity as royal heiress, Lady of the English, advisor and administrator for her son, and widow of the Duke of Normandy, utilized similar strategies; however, these had different intentions and impacts according to the various stages of her life.

Marjorie Chibnall studied Matilda's patronage and concluded that, during the period 1139–1147, it was an aspect of her queenship designed to demonstrate her authority as aspiring queen regnant and rightful controller of the royal demesne.²⁹ Chibnall astutely notes that Matilda was limited in her spending potential by her access to her dower, marriage portion, and designated sources of revenue, similar to the situations of aristocratic ladies.³⁰ Prior to Henry I's death in 1135, Matilda had little, if any, land of her own in England, presumably because she would one day inherit the royal demesne. Her ambiguous position during the period in England (1139–1148) meant that the authority behind her charters and donations was questionable. If she could win the struggle against Stephen and become a ruling queen, supporting the Angevins could be beneficial. But the reality of the situation always tempered her efforts to act as patroness in England; she was embroiled in an all-out conflict against Stephen and the outcome was unpredictable.

In her examination of Matilda's surviving charters, Chibnall determined that the Empress gave little to the church during the first eighteen months after arriving in England in 1139, when her authority was restricted and her patronage not widely sought. There is one known charter from 1139 for the early period of her English campaign; it confirms William de Berkeley's gift of Kingswood to Tintern for the foundation of a Cistercian abbey.³¹ However, after the battle of Lincoln and her recognition as 'Lady of England', Matilda 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, because 'she had no wish to deprive churches of any lands which they held, her preferred method was to issue charters making the grants, or confirming those of her father, in her own name, without reference to Stephen'.³² Furthermore, the geographical distribution of religious houses to which Matilda granted charters all fell within the areas where she established residences and had a strong presence.

²⁹ M. Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and church reform', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 38 (1978), pp. 107–30; see also M. Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda: queen consort, queen mother and lady of the English* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 127–37, 177–94.

³⁰ Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and church reform', p. 107.

³¹ H.A. Cronne and R.H.C. Davis, eds., *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154, Vol. III, Regesta Regis Stephani ac Mathildis Imperatricis ac Gaufridi et Henrici Ducum Normannorum 1135–1154* (Oxford, 1968), no. 419.

³² Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 129; Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and church reform', pp. 109–13.

Her ancestors and her vassals had, in fact, founded many of these houses. Reading was one of the first to obtain her favor; she visited the abbey, where her father was buried, in March 1141 as Lady of the English. The appearance of the previous master of her father's writing office, Robert de Sigillo, among the monks of Reading might have inspired them to seek her patronage. Five of her charters for Reading are extant for the period from March to July in that year. Three of these at least partly supplanted grants made by Stephen.³³ The charter regarding Stanton Harcourt church, however, confirmed a charter of Queen Adeliza, and it may have replaced her earlier grant of 100s. in Stanton, which Stephen had confirmed. Matilda was seemingly concerned that Adeliza's donations should be recognized; a few years later, between 1144 and 1147, she confirmed the gift of Berkeley church, which apparently originated with the dowager queen and her clerk, Serlo.³⁴

In 1144, most likely, Matilda made a new grant to Reading for a special reason, giving the monks the royal manor of Blewbury for the souls of her ancestors and for the love and loyal service of Brian Fitz Count.³⁵ The lands of Reading were located in the epicenter of the fighting, and the abbey experienced loss from participants on both sides. Holding the line in Wallingford, Brian frequently lacked the necessary supplies to feed his garrison and was driven to loot when his own lands were plundered.³⁶ With this donation, Matilda perhaps appeared to be making reparations for her deputy's wrongdoing, given that he fought in her name. A year or two later, Stephen, similarly culpable of plundering Reading's lands, disregarded Matilda's gift and gave Blewbury to the monks for his soul and those of his wife and sons.³⁷ Undaunted, Henry Fitz Empress, in the course of his English campaign in 1147 or 1149, confirmed his mother's charter and granted Blewbury in words parallel to hers, demonstrating that Brian should receive the monk's prayers for his soul.³⁸

Naturally, lay patronage demonstrated one's own personal piety, but as her contemporaries Melisende and Urraca demonstrate, Matilda could also benefit politically in England from cultivating alliances with the church through the act of giving. Matilda's access to funds ebbed and flowed throughout her life, as did her fortune in the succession dispute. In her later years, when she had retired to Normandy, she relied on personal funds³⁹ to focus

³³ Cronne and Davis, eds., *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154*, vol. iii, nos 697-701; for Stephen's charters see nos 675, 679, 690.

³⁴ Cronne and Davis, eds., *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154*, vol. iii, no. 702.

³⁵ Cronne and Davis, eds., *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154*, vol. iii, no. 694.

³⁶ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 131.

³⁷ Cronne and Davis, eds., *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154*, vol. iii, no. 694.

³⁸ Cronne and Davis, eds., *Regesta Regum Anglo-Normannorum 1066–1154*, vol. iii, no. 694.

³⁹ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 176: Matilda's personal wealth consisted largely of the jewels and relics she brought back from Germany, the dowry provided for her second marriage, which included revenues from the vicomté of Argentan and the forest of Gouffern, and any widow's dower she may have received after the death of Geoffrey of Anjou.

more on deep personal piety aimed towards dynastic remembrance. However, as Lady of the English, Matilda made more official donations, constrained by her ability to draw funds from the regions she held.⁴⁰ She paid particular attention to family foundations as a central part of her patronage. Foundations in both England and Normandy were special for their connections to her immediate family and dynasty, and she made donations of jewels, valuable objects, or land to her preferred religious houses. Undoubtedly, the religious house most important to Matilda's personal piety was the monastery at Bec-Hellouin, outside Rouen.⁴¹ Before she died in September 1167, she chose Bec as her final resting place, likely because of earlier experiences there while recuperating from the difficult delivery of her second son in 1134. Furthermore, Henry I's entrails were buried at Bec's priory church at Notre-Dame-du-Pré, while his body was interred at Reading Abbey across the channel in England. Matilda was consistently generous to Bec throughout her life and made provisions in her will to donate the majority of her personal wealth to the monastery upon her death.⁴² Unfortunately, Matilda's ultimate failure to establish herself as queen regnant of England means that the study of her patronage with personal political motivations is limited to her brief duration in England (1139–1148).

It is not unusual that these three royal heiresses were closely associated with monastic patronage. Queens consort and aristocratic ladies often demonstrated their piety by spending large amounts of their income to support churches or monasteries. Furthermore, they had witnessed their fathers' patronage and learned to use it strategically to further their political goals. In Urraca's case, she was known to utilize her relationships with churches and monasteries far more than her contemporaries. Many of her most important allies were affiliated with religious institutions, and she was a master of utilizing these relationships to further her own political agenda. More damning, by the historical record at least, is her policy of drawing wealth from monasteries. It was an established practice for which her contemporary chroniclers condemned her, but it was imperative in order for Urraca to maintain control over her kingdom. These were the actions of a queen regnant: they follow the pattern of her male ancestors and successive generations of Leonese kings continued them. Melisende took advantage of the opportunity to develop mutually beneficial friendships with the leading churchmen in her kingdom by participating in the construction of the Holy

⁴⁰ Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and church reform', p. 109.

⁴¹ M. Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and Bec-Hellouin', *ANS*, 10 (1987), pp. 35–48, esp. p. 48 for Matilda's will.

⁴² Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, pp. 189–90. These donations included jewels and regalia from the Holy Roman Empire, crowns, crosses, manuscripts, sacred objects, relics, and vestments. Many of these pieces were lost in the post-Revolutionary period.

Sepulcher. Her participation exceeded that of a queen consort perhaps by inspiring the direction of the project's scale or design but, more specific to her role as ruling queen, it did so by developing strategic relationships that she would later need in the struggle for authority against her son. During her tenure as aspiring queen regnant in England, the Empress Matilda used monastic patronage as a way to weaken the claims of her rival. By invalidating Stephen's charters, Matilda's patronage is markedly different from that of queens consort. Her later patronage during her retirement in Normandy provides a stark contrast. Set against each other, this difference reveals the more politically motivated policy of strategic patronage she used in England. Generosity to ecclesiastical and monastic centers was commonplace among queens consort, but Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda's patronage carried more weight because they had the full authority of the crown behind them.

ii. Dynastic memory

In medieval society, one of aristocratic women's important duties was to preserve familial memory. High-ranking medieval women found ways of commemorating their natal families while also promoting the dynasty into which they had married.⁴³ However, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda, with regard to England, were not queens consort; therefore, it is remarkable that these women assumed the traditional female role of upholding dynastic remembrance while also serving as monarchs. Patronage was a key way to commemorate one's dynasty, and Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda all engaged in remembrance in this way. However, their patronage differed in special ways from that of queens consort or royal daughters. These aspiring queens regnant continued established patterns of commemorating their dead by focusing on the same sites as their ancestors, but they had the ability to change the existing patterns for commemoration because of their authority as ruling queens. For them, the focus was on glorifying their lineage and creating spiritual spaces that would survive throughout the ages, delivering a clear message of their respective families' power, piety, and authority.

Urraca's efforts to commemorate her dynasty differ from those of Melisende and Matilda because she seemed consistently aware of her position as queen regnant, and she used every opportunity to strengthen her position, including through dynastic commemoration. Urraca viewed her inheritance as hers alone, not something to be shared or entrusted to her

⁴³ For further reading on commemoration, see E.M.C. Van Houts, *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900–1200* (Toronto, 1999); P. Geary, *Phantoms of Remembrance. Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994), pp. 48–80; E. Brenner, M. Cohen, and M. Franklin-Brown, eds., *Memory and Commemoration in Medieval Culture* (Farnham, 2013).

second husband, El Batallador. The most visible way Urraca commemorated her dynasty was through her patronage of San Isidoro in León. The major rebuilding project transformed the space into a pilgrimage site, a monastery, and, crucially, into a space for the glory of her dynasty. By extension, as the latest embodiment of royal legitimacy, Urraca's position as queen-regnant and 'kinkeeper' merged in this space.

The *infantado*, or *infantaticum* in the Latin charters, was central to a Leonese royal woman's patronage and role as preserver of dynastic memory. Leonese *infantas* were the administrators of a large landholding, and they had total judicial and economic freedom that reverted to the crown after their death. The city of León's San Isidoro was at the center of this tradition. Therese Martin's 2006 work on Urraca's relationship to San Isidoro is necessary to the study of Urraca's management of the *infantado*.⁴⁴ Martin argues that San Isidoro is a visual testament to Urraca's power and lineage. It was a familial chapel in León, founded by her grandparents, Fernando I (d. 1065) and Sancha (d. 1067), and it honored one of the Visigothic past's greatest men, Isidore of Seville. Fernando's consort Sancha showed agency in her patronage of San Isidoro and established the framework for Leonese royal women to have a location where their patronage and agency was visible. In the generations that followed, royal women added their mark to the development of San Isidoro. However, whereas Queen Urraca's aunt, the *infanta* Urraca (d. 1101), and later generations followed traditional patterns of patronage, Queen Urraca's actions and intentions are specific to her status as a queen regnant because they overhauled the architecture of the space and opened it to the public as a key pilgrimage stop en route to Santiago.

Sancha's daughter, the *infanta* Urraca, was the next to oversee development at San Isidoro, and as another *infanta*, the future Queen Urraca was raised with the tradition of benefaction focused on the Benedictine house. However, when she became queen regnant of León-Castilla, her actions and generosity towards San Isidoro surpassed those of her aunt or grandmother. Under her direction, San Isidoro was enlarged and opened to pilgrims traveling to Santiago de Compostela. Urraca's wisdom made San Isidoro part of the tradition of pilgrimage that can be felt even to the present day. Martin has argued that 'San Isidoro served as a visible locus of the queen's power and a public affirmation of her legitimacy as ruler; it was built by Urraca precisely because her turbulent times required its impressive urban presence'.⁴⁵

Urraca and her female relatives managed to permanently impact traditionally male institutions and establish historical precedent for a system of agency that would be utilized for

⁴⁴ Martin, *Queen as King*, pp. 96–131; esp. pp. 100–107, 114; 131.

⁴⁵ Martin, *Queen as King*, p. 131.

centuries. At the center was the display of a connection to familial memory and dynastic legacy. Urraca's belief that she had a divine right to rule her kingdom stemmed from her descent from León's triumphant past. She alone was the heir to Alfonso VI, the conquering hero of Toledo. Framed within the context of her conflict with her ex-husband El Batallador, Urraca's program of patronage across her kingdom becomes clear.

There were two key reasons for Urraca's patronage at San Isidoro: a penitential act for the remission of her sins and a permanent commemoration of her dynasty. In comparison to other religious sites, such as the cathedrals of Santiago de Compostela, Toledo, León, or indeed the Burgundian monastery of Cluny, San Isidoro was not as renowned. Urraca frequently donated quite generously to those other centers of faith. However, in those cases, the intention of her patronage took a different form; she aimed to create alliances with powerful churchmen to suit her political goals. Therefore, her patronage to San Isidoro reveals a more personal goal; it allowed her to manifest her dynasty and rulership in a tangible way. Commemorating the dead was the act of a queen consort, but her administration of the *infantado* was the act of a queen regnant. The purpose of San Isidoro was first and foremost to serve as a place to remember her dynasty. Looking closely, however, it was designed to subtly denote her legitimacy and position as regnant.

For Melisende, her dynasty was young, having been founded just thirty-two years earlier, and hers was only the second generation to rule. With few roots in the region, Melisende was largely responsible for the development of dynastic remembrance. One of the most important examples of her religious patronage supporting dynastic remembrance was the foundation of a convent for religious women at Bethany in 1138. This was Melisende's only individual project—every other project she undertook was done collaboratively with others.⁴⁶ Melisende decided on Bethany as the site of her new monastic foundation 'after much deliberation'; 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'.⁴⁷ Bethany was a small, isolated village located within two miles of Jerusalem. Its isolation was ideal for monastic life, but its proximity to Jerusalem also provided security for the community of nuns. The foundation at Bethany was a wise choice of location; in addition to its proximity to Jerusalem, it was also the location of one of Christ's miracles, the raising of Lazarus from the dead. Therefore, Bethany would attract pilgrims to

⁴⁶ Folda, 'Melisende of Jerusalem', p. 444.

⁴⁷ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 15, ch. 26, p. 133.

the site who would then spread word of its glories through their travels and, crucially, support its existence financially.

William of Tyre focused on Melisende's foundations and donations in a separate chapter of his chronicle, revealing her decision to found a monastic community for women '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'.⁴⁸ This undertaking appears in keeping with other queenly patronage coinciding with her co-rule with Fulk of Anjou. At this point in her reign, Melisende ruled jointly with her husband, and although she had considerably more authority and power after 1136, she still shared power. The convent at Bethany was her most personal demonstration of patronage as its purpose was to commemorate her family and royal dynasty. The foundation at Bethany would memorialize her family for years to come, which was her intention as she assumed the queenly role of 'kinkeeper'.⁴⁹ Another important aspect of this community involved the monastic career of her younger sister, Ivetta, who became abbess of the community. Ivetta entered monastic life at St. Anne in Jerusalem, most likely at a young age after serving as the hostage of Timurtash in exchange with her father, Baldwin II, from 1124–1125. William of Tyre wrote that 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'.⁵⁰

Melisende's foundation at Bethany had two churches under its direction: the Church of St. Lazarus, which the nuns used, and the Church of Sts. Mary and Martha, reserved for the pilgrims' use. When construction finished, Melisende brought her sister and other nuns to the foundation and installed an elderly and experienced abbess with the expectation that Ivetta would succeed her eventually. William of Tyre described the plan in his chronicle, saying that Melisende

'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 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

⁴⁸ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 15, ch. 26, p. 132.

⁴⁹ A.E. Komter, 'Women, Gifts, and Power', in A.E. Komter, ed., *The Gift: an Interdisciplinary Perspective* (Amsterdam, 1996), p. 125.

⁵⁰ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 15, ch. 26, p. 133.

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'.⁵¹

William of Tyre's description clarifies that this was a royal foundation; Melisende was a generous patroness by establishing the community and equipping it with lavish accoutrements. By providing her sister with a spiritual home, Melisende acted similarly to other European queens consort.⁵² As the foundation at Bethany no longer stands, the provenance of Melisende's gifts and donations cannot be known. It stands to reason, however, that she gifted objects brought to the Holy Land from Europe by crusaders or that she commissioned objects from local artisans and craftsmen. William of Tyre also mentions Melisende's donation of books; the *scriptoria* associated with the Church of the Holy Sepulcher was active during this period, and Melisende was known to commission books.⁵³

Of the extant examples of Melisende's attention to dynastic memory, the convent at Bethany stands as the clearest example. Melisende appeared to be primarily concerned with establishing a spiritual home for her sister and providing an appropriate place for future generations to commemorate and worship. Its symbolic significance as the site of the Lazarus miracle would aid in its existence and promote pilgrimage. Melisende was part of the second generation of Christian rulers in the Latin East, and her mother's Armenian heritage did not feature prominently in the westernized kingdom. Therefore, it fell to her to establish spaces and traditions for future generations. Founding a monastery for women in Bethany can be viewed as the act of a queen consort; however, Melisende's position as queen regnant allowed her greater freedom and scope to create the space and traditions she wished.

Matilda could not employ the same programs of patronage to exploit her role as ruler as Urraca or Melisende could as queens regnant, given the tumultuous circumstances in England and her failure to achieve the same status. In her struggle to become the ruling queen of England, she was keenly aware of her place within her family's dynasty. By commemorating her family, Matilda showed her generosity to as many of the churches and

⁵¹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 15, no. 26; William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, trans. E.A. Babcock and A.C. Krey (2 vols, New York, 1943), pp. 133–4.

⁵² For example, the Castilian queen consort, Leonor of England, founded the Abbey of Santa María la Real de Las Huelgas in Burgos in 1187, in which her daughter Constanza was abbess.

⁵³ Folda, *The Art of the Crusaders in the Holy Land*, pp. 32–6, 154, 156–8; H. Buchthal, *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem* (Oxford, 1957), pp. 1–14; B. Kühnel, *Crusader Art of the Twelfth Century* (Berlin, 1994), pp. 67–125.

monasteries of England and Normandy as she could, despite her tenuous position in the war and lack of resources. Matilda is the only aspiring queen regnant who took advantage of literary patronage to create family histories; by supporting written family history that glorified her ancestors, she both legitimized her position as heiress and kept her deceased family members' memory alive in a lasting, tangible way. Robert of Torigni's *Gesta normannorum ducum* and her support of the abbey of Bec are the two most important ways Matilda commemorated her family.

Matilda's preference for the abbey of Bec was clear, and it appears that Reading Abbey was the English equivalent. As discussed above, both abbeys held familial sentimental value for her. Matilda's patronage preferences became clear during the 1140s; 1141 was the year she nearly became the crowned and consecrated queen of England, and most of her patronage from that year was to monasteries close to castles she held, to which she had a personal link because they were founded by either her ancestors or vassals.

However, because Matilda was involved in a long civil war for her inheritance, her spending capacity in England was limited. After retiring to Normandy in 1148, her role as patroness and 'kinkeeper' became more prominent. She settled near Rouen and spent much of her time at Bec's priory house, Notre-Dame-du-Pré. Years earlier, while under siege at Oxford in late Autumn 1142, she had promised to found an abbey if she survived. To keep her promise, she created a Cistercian abbey at Le Valasse in 1157.⁵⁴ For nearly twenty years, Matilda lived in Normandy, and during her widowhood, her agency can be most clearly identified with her contributions to the house. Again, Chibnall is invaluable in studying Matilda's relationship to Bec and her patronage of it.⁵⁵ Bec was granted the foundation of a priory, expanding its power beyond the Abbey, which happened to be near Henry I's park at Quevilly.⁵⁶

Matilda's connection to Bec seems to have been formed in 1134 when she fell ill after the birth of her second son, Geoffrey. Chibnall contends that Matilda may have been staying in guest quarters at Bec's daughter house, Notre-Dame-du-Pré, at this time. Believing she might not recover from the birth of her son, Matilda prepared for death by distributing her moveable wealth, namely money and jewels, to the abbey, and she requested permission from her father to be interred there. Robert of Torigni reported that Henry denied this request, saying, 'it was not worthy that his daughter, an Empress who had twice been crowned in Rome, the capital city of the world, by the hands of the supreme pontiff, should be buried in

⁵⁴ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, pp. 182–7.

⁵⁵ Chibnall, 'Empress Matilda and Bec-Hellouin', pp. 35–49.

⁵⁶ Chibnall, 'Empress Matilda and Bec-Hellouin', p. 38.

any monastery, even one of the purest religious observance; she should be taken into the city of Rouen, the metropolis of Normandy, and buried in the cathedral church beside her ancestors, Rollo and William Longsword'.⁵⁷ Although Matilda did recover from her pregnancy and indeed gave birth to a third son two years later in 1136, her time at the priory had a lasting influence, and she kept in contact with the abbey during her years in England in spite of the difficulties of a cross-channel realm embroiled in civil war, and she returned there when her ambitions failed in 1148.

Bec and its subsidiary houses benefitted from Matilda's attention. Not only did her preference and devotion contribute to its reputation, but also she generously donated significant wealth to it. Among the many gifts she bestowed were two gold crowns, one of which used in the coronation of the emperor, 'two golden chalices, a gold cross decorated with precious stones, two gospel books bound in gold studded with gems, two silver censers decorated with gold, a silver incense box and spoon, a gold pyx for the Eucharist, three silver flasks, [and] two portable altars of marble decorated with silver'.⁵⁸ Additionally, Matilda bequeathed the books from her private chapel, a golden chalice, and sumptuous garments, along with many other items after her death in 1167. It is also worth noting her donations of relics, particularly the hand of St. James, which she brought back from her time in Germany as wife of the emperor.⁵⁹

When Matilda died on 10 September 1167, she was buried in the abbey church at Bec with her son King Henry II's consent. Whereas Henry I had objected to his heir's burial in a monastery many decades earlier, her son left no record of resistance. Her royal ancestors were spread across their domain: William the Conqueror in Caen, William Longsword and Rollo at Rouen, Henry I at Reading.⁶⁰ With no defined royal mausoleum, Matilda's decision to be buried at her preferred abbey seems logical; she had passed many years near it and had been cared for by the monks earlier in her life. In response to her benefaction, the monks at Bec buried her in front of the altar of the Virgin Mary and commemorated her death on its anniversary.

One further avenue of dynastic remembrance that Matilda utilized was the promotion of family biographies. Throughout her life, she encouraged historians to write about and glorify the deeds of her family. This is perhaps most visible with her patronage of Robert of

⁵⁷ Van Houts, ed., *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, pp. 304–5; Chibnall, 'Empress Matilda and Bec-Hellouin', p. 35.

⁵⁸ A.A. Porée, *Histoire de l'abbaye du Bec* (2 vols, Evreux, 1901), 2, pp. 650–1, 653; Chibnall, 'Empress Matilda and Bec-Hellouin', p. 48.

⁵⁹ Chibnall, 'Empress Matilda and Bec-Hellouin', p.48; Leyser, 'Frederick Barbarossa, Henry II and the hand of St James', pp. 489–95.

⁶⁰ Chibnall, 'Empress Matilda and Bec-Hellouin', p. 35.

Torigni, a monk who was later prior of Le Bec and abbot of Mont-Saint-Michel.⁶¹ In the late 1130s, after Henry I's death, Robert began a project to revise Orderic Vitalis' *Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, to which he added a section on Matilda's father. Elisabeth van Houts has argued that this new work came at Matilda's request.⁶² While this certainly reveals the value medieval writers placed on female patrons of writing, it also shows Matilda's effort to use every resource at her disposal to promote her family, as it created a permanent record and also established her own legitimacy as heiress.

Although Matilda used this path towards dynastic remembrance, interestingly, her contemporaries Urraca and Melisende did not. There is no record of either queen regnant's involvement with the creation of a written dynastic history. William of Tyre's chronicle was highly favorable to Melisende, but it came at the behest of her son, Amalric I, after her death between 1170 and 1184.⁶³ Nonetheless, female patronesses of writing were an accepted occurrence in the Anglo-Norman realm.⁶⁴ Matilda's mother, Matilda II, most likely with support from her sister Mary of Boulogne, commissioned the *Life* of their mother, St. Margaret, written by Turgot of Durham, who later went on to become the bishop of St. Andrews (d. 1115).⁶⁵ Stephen's wife, Matilda of Boulogne, Queen Matilda III (1135–54), also participated in this tradition by commissioning a *Life* of her grandmother, Ida, by a monk at the monastery of Waast.⁶⁶ Empress Matilda could not establish similar programs of patronage geared towards dynastic remembrance with the dual purpose of justifying her legitimate reign, as crowned queens regnant could. Therefore, after her retirement in 1148, she reverted to the role, demonstrated by her mother and other queens consort, that commemorated her ancestors.

Preserving dynastic memory was usually a role taken on by queens consort, royal daughters, and aristocratic women. The queens of this study demonstrated tremendous agency by investing in spiritually symbolic and significant sites within their kingdoms and carving out places for future generations of royal women to continue to assert authority. In Urraca's

⁶¹ E.M.C. Van Houts, 'Historical Writing', in C. Harper-Bill and E.M.C. Van Houts, eds., *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World* (Woodbridge, 2002), pp. 118–19; R. Foreville, 'Robert de Torigni et Clito', in *Millénaire monastique du Mont Saint-Michel*, ii (4 vols, Paris, 1967), pp. 141–53.

⁶² Van Houts, ed., *The Gesta Normannorum Ducum*, vol. ii, pp. 196–298; Van Houts, 'Historical Writing', p. 119; Chibnall, 'The Empress Matilda and Bec-Hellouin', pp. 35–48.

⁶³ P. Edbury and J. Rowe, *William of Tyre: Historian of the Latin East* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 26, William's patron was Amalric I (d. 1174) and Baldwin IV (d. 1185), whom he had tutored as a child.

⁶⁴ E.M.C. Van Houts, 'Remembrance of the Past', in E.M.C. Van Houts, ed., *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900–1200* (Basingstoke, 1990), pp. 73–77.

⁶⁵ Van Houts, 'Remembrance of the Past', p. 74; L. Huneycutt, 'The Idea of the Perfect Princess: The Life of St Margaret in the Reign of Matilda II (1100–1118)', *ANS*, 12 (1990), pp. 81–98.

⁶⁶ Van Houts, 'Remembrance of the Past', p. 74; R. Nip, 'Godelieve of Gistel and Ida of Boulogne', in A.B. Mulder-Bakker, ed., *Sanctity and Motherhood. Essays on Holy Mothers in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1995), pp. 191–223; G. Duby, *Love and Marriage in the Middle Ages*, tran. J. Dunnnett (Oxford, 1994), p. 449.

case, she transformed the practice of the *infantado* to not only manage wealth and direct its spending but also to undertake major building projects that would transform the religious landscape, while Melisende founded a monastic institution in which her sister could rise to a place of prominence as abbess. Preserving memory was not just about remembering one's ancestors; it also created systems of female agency for descendants.

iii. Jerusalem-related acts

After the success of the First Crusade, many people in western Europe became more intensively engaged in acts devoted to the defense of the Holy Land, and in particular, the holy city of Jerusalem. Given where she lived, it is not surprising that every religious act of Melisende is connected to this theme, but the trend was widespread. Religious pilgrimage had long been established as an intrinsic part of Christian spiritual practice and was not unique to Jerusalem; pilgrimage routes can be traced throughout the west with particular strength in Spain. The most important aspect of Jerusalem-related patronage for Urraca and Melisende, in particular, was their support of military orders. These queens regnant needed male military leaders as this field fell outside the boundaries of their gender. Therefore, by supporting organizations of highly trained, devout soldiers, Urraca and Melisende could access military power. The foundation of the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the early successes of the crusades allowed for a dynamic spiritual environment that revolved around the Holy Land. However, before turning to specific cases, it is worth discussing the distinct military orders that arose from Jerusalem.

The Knights of St. John, known as the Hospitallers, originated in the hospital located next to St. Mary of the Latins, but this military order of monk-knights did not begin in the church. After the Christian conquest of Jerusalem, a small company led by a Provençal knight named Gerald immediately began to care for the sick and wounded. Through donations and gifts from pilgrims, and eventually wealthy noble and even royal houses in the West and in the East, their resources grew, and the hospital rapidly expanded 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. 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 Fulk granted

the Hospitallers the castle of Bethgibelin, on the road from Hebron to Ascalon in the south of the kingdom.⁶⁷ As the twelfth century progressed and the situation changed, the Hospitallers gained more rights and possessions in the frontier regions, which included ecclesiastical authority, in order to ensure their vital help in the defense of the kingdom. Although they were not explicitly chartered to do so, the Hospitallers became increasingly involved in the Kingdom's defense under Fulk and Melisende's reign; however, the exercise of arms is not mentioned in the order's legislation until 1182, and then only briefly.⁶⁸

Around 1118, the threat to episcopal authority in the Holy Land only increased with the emergence of another military order of monks: the Order of the Templars, named for its earliest headquarters in the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, the Mosque of al-Aqsa, which Baldwin II granted them as a temporary dwelling place in his own palace on the north side of the Temple. Established by Hugh of Payens⁶⁹ 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 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. 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. In response, the Hospitallers competed by taking on more military responsibilities. Together, the two orders became the Kingdom's standing army—ready in peacetime as well as in war.

All three royal heiresses participated in patronage for these orders, and rather than beginning with a discussion of Urraca's support for military orders and other Jerusalem-related devotion, it is worthwhile to start with Melisende's case, as she was instrumental in supporting these developments. Given the origins of these two military orders, it is unsurprising that the rulers of the Holy Land supported them enthusiastically. The Hospitallers grew in power and importance under the joint reign of Fulk and Melisende. In 1136, Melisende and Fulk changed the character of the organization when they granted

⁶⁷ R. Röhricht, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani* (Innsbruck, 1904 1893), no. 164; William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, ch. 22, p. 82.

⁶⁸ J. Riley-Smith, *The Knights Hospitaller in the Levant, c. 1070–1309* (New York, 2012), p. 46.

⁶⁹ Hugh of Payens was one of the emissaries sent by King Baldwin II to Western Europe to recruit more crusaders to the Holy Land and arrived in Anjou in 1128 at the same time as the other embassy sent to recruit Fulk to marry Melisende. See Chapter One for detailed discussion.

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 road from Hebron to Ascalon.⁷⁰ William of Tyre reported their successful defense of the fortress: ‘They have guarded their charge with all due diligence, even to the present time; and from that day, the attacks of the enemy in that place have become less violent’.⁷¹ Their lordship of Bethgibelin likely militarized the Hospitallers by entrusting them with the defense of the vulnerable southern region, in addition to their duties of caring for the sick. Melisende and Fulk issued the charter from Nablus and included a long witness list, featuring Patriarch William of Jerusalem. The co-rulers also donated four *casalia* named Fectata, Sahalin, Zeita, and Courcoza. These four villages provided the Hospitallers at Bethgebelin the necessary resources and income.⁷² William of Tyre reported that substantial funds were allocated before construction on the fortress was even finished to strengthen the infrastructure of the region.⁷³

Just as she had done with monasteries and churches in her kingdom, Melisende found that a beneficial relationship with the Hospitallers could prove politically advantageous. She continued to support the Hospitallers after Fulk’s death in 1143. Melisende’s role as a benefactress for a military order was an insurance policy for her position as a royal widow and ruler supplanted by her son; having a military-focused ally was fundamental to furthering her goals. Without a husband, Melisende’s rule faced greater pressure. Before the western armies arrived in the Holy Land during the Second Crusade, Melisende issued two charters for the Hospitallers, who were making their military preparations to participate in the upcoming battles. Raymond of Puy was, of course, present at the war council held in Acre, where the leaders of the Second Crusade decided to attack Damascus. The first charter was a gift confirmation, confirmed by both Melisende and Baldwin III on 1 February 1147.⁷⁴ It confirms a gift made in 1141 in the presence of Fulk and arranged by Patriarch William, an example of early ecclesiastical patronage of the order.⁷⁵

The original charter of 1141 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, confessions and visitations, and which have baptisteries and cemeteries’.⁷⁶ By the time Melisende and Baldwin confirmed

⁷⁰ Röhricht, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 164; William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, no. 22, p. 82.

⁷¹ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, no. 22, pp. 81–2.

⁷² Folda, ‘Melisende of Jerusalem’, p. 459–60.

⁷³ William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 14, no. 22, pp. 80–1.

⁷⁴ Röhricht, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 244.

⁷⁵ Röhricht, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, p. 205.

⁷⁶ Röhricht, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 205; translation by J. Riley-Smith, *Knights of St. John in Jerusalem and Cyprus* (New York, 1967), p. 393.

the gift of Emmaus in 1147, the Hospitallers had begun building their hospital and church beside the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and Patriarch Fulcher had only been in office for one year. Melisende's patronage of the Hospitallers reveals her agency because, while she technically shared power with her son, Baldwin III had not yet sought independence from his mother. It is interesting to note that the confirmation charter does not reiterate the parochial rights, which were at the center of a dispute between the patriarch and the Hospitallers. It is possible Melisende was trying to appease both sides and maintain peace through the content and the wording of the charter. With this confirmation, she appeared to support the Hospitallers in order to secure their rights over Emmaus. However, by omitting the original wording of the 1141 charter, she may also have attempted to assuage the concerns of the patriarch.

A few months later, on 4 July 1147, Melisende, with the cooperation of her two sons, Baldwin and Amalric, jointly issued another charter recording a gift exchange with the Hospitallers.⁷⁷ 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 Hospitallers were taking on more military duties by accepting this gift, and they pledged to aid in the recovery effort for Edessa, *ad provectum et ad amplificationem et liberationem regni Iherosolimitani*; it is therefore logical that Manasses, the kingdom's constable, appears in the witness list.⁷⁸

Melisende issued two more charters for the Hospitallers before 1152, and, as expected, they reflect the growing division between herself and Baldwin. Mayer has suggested that, in the first, issued in 1149, she attempted 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.⁷⁹ Melisende issued it in her name, stamped it with her seal, and only mentioned Baldwin's consent, which reduced his legal position. These were the politically motivated actions of a ruling queen reinforcing her position of authority against a threat. From this point on, no more charters were issued jointly leading up to the civil war. The charter notes that the Knights were to relinquish the public baths in the street of St. Leonard in Acre and, in return, receive a loggia opposite their Church of St. John the Baptist, which had once belonged to Franco, the castellan of Acre, and for which Melisende had previously filed a suit so that they would be returned in *potestatum et dispositionem regni*. At this time, however,

⁷⁷ Röhricht, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, p. 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', pp. 124–5.

⁷⁸ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', p. 126.

⁷⁹ Röhricht, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 256; Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', pp. 129–30.

she waived her claim to the baths. In the charter, she also confirmed the sale of a house with an adjacent tower, made by the former Viscount Robert of Acre, to the Hospitallers and concluded by giving them the village of Assera, near Caesarea.

In the second charter of early 1150, Melisende again showed interest in Acre.⁸⁰ Mentioning both Baldwin and Amalric's consent, she gave the Hospitallers the village of Beroeth, which is close to the city, with all of its farms and other appurtenances in order to ensure the continuance of peace in the rule entrusted to her.⁸¹ The charter also says that she made the grant after carefully considering the advice offered, especially by those who generally gave her the most correct advice, presumably her vassals.⁸² Mayer believes that this is the first indication that Melisende sought to deliberately create a vassalry of her own that would be loyal to her foremost.⁸³ Some of her most loyal supporters from among the barons were listed as witnesses, including Balian of Ibelin and his son Hugh, Manasses, Rohard of Jerusalem, and Philip of Nablus and his son. Surprisingly, even Humphrey of Toron, who proved to be one of Baldwin III's most loyal supporters, was on the list. Mayer believes that his presence indicates his support for her up to this point and that he must have witnessed the charter before participating in Baldwin's military campaign in Syria in the summer of 1150, during which he changed his mind and decided to support him instead of Melisende.⁸⁴ 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.

Before her son supplanted her, Melisende, as queen regnant, contributed in many ways to the rapid formation of the Hospitallers as a great military order. Her gifts of villages and confirmations of their territories helped them finance their operations and extend their influence in the kingdom. Eventually, countless gifts and even recruits began to pour into the Hospitallers' hands from all over the Christian world, creating the basis for its international power, but the order's remarkable start owed a large debt to Melisende. In return, the Hospitallers gave the kingdom their military and social services, which were vital to its health, defense, and 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 Master Raymond of Puy ever backed Melisende specifically, and he does not appear in any of the witness lists from any of the charters she issued; however, there is no evidence that he

⁸⁰ Röhricht, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 262.

⁸¹ Röhricht, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 262: *ad consequendam in commisso regimine pacis preserverendam.*

⁸² Röhricht, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 262: *consilio itaque discretorum et maxime rediora nobis consulentium studiosissime percunctato.*

⁸³ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', p. 141.

⁸⁴ Mayer, 'Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem', p. 141.

backed Baldwin. This lack suggests that Melisende's patronage of the Knights of St. John won their neutrality throughout the political showdown with her son.

In Northern Spain, Urraca participated in Jerusalem-based faith practices and developed new traditions and practices in her kingdom. Of the three subjects of this study, she consistently displays the behavior of a ruling queen more than her twelfth-century contemporaries. The trend of Jerusalem-based devotion had spread to the Iberian Peninsula by the time Urraca's reign began, and she was the first Leonese monarch to serve as patroness of the Hospitallers. This support coincided with a devotional movement focused on the Holy Sepulcher that had spread across Europe, even before the First Crusade. Urraca's support of the Hospitallers began early in her reign, as early as 1113, when she gave her first donation to the organization.⁸⁵ Urraca's interest in them was not just as a military organization, but also as a charitable one that was specifically related to Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

Urraca's purpose in establishing military orders in Spain was two-fold: control of a disputed territory by those loyal to her, and encouragement of pilgrimage within her kingdom. The growing trend of pilgrimage in Iberia and the birth of military orders came at a similar time, and the Hospitallers were much better equipped to deal with pilgrims than Benedictine monks, who were, after all, supposed to be cloistered.⁸⁶ The original purpose of the Hospitallers in Jerusalem had been to protect Christian pilgrims, and Urraca likely envisioned a similar role for them in her kingdom.⁸⁷ In 1113, she gave them the village of Paradinas, situated between Salamanca and Arévalo,⁸⁸ and in 1116, added the lordship of a region that included eleven villages south of Toro.⁸⁹ The next year, 1117, Urraca granted them lordship of the town of Fresno el Viejo, located between Salamanca and Medina.⁹⁰ All of these grants fell in the region of Extremadura, located near the Portuguese border, providing the queen with military support in a region claimed by her half-sister, Teresa (d. 1130), who had ambitions to rule the entire kingdom of León-Castilla. Urraca's usual notary did not draft the

⁸⁵ C. Barquero Goñi, 'Los hospitalarios y la monarquía castellano-leonesa (siglos XII–XIII)', *Archivos Leoneses*, 97–98 (1995), p. 54. The Hospitallers gained papal approval in 1113.

⁸⁶ J.V. Mantellanes Merchán and E. Rodríguez-Picavea Matilla, 'Las órdenes militares en las etapas castellanas del Camino de Santiago', in *El Camino de Santiago: La hospitalidad monástica y las peregrinaciones* (Salamanca, 1992), pp. 343–63.

⁸⁷ A. Forey, *The Military Orders: From the Twelfth to the Early Fourteenth Centuries* (London, 2005); Mantellanes Merchán and Rodríguez-Picavea Matilla, 'Las órdenes militares en las etapas castellanas del Camino de Santiago', pp. 343–63; M. Barber, *The New Knighthood: A History of the Order of the Temple* (Cambridge, 1994).

⁸⁸ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la reina Urraca*, no. 60; Ruiz Albi, *La reina doña Urraca*, pp. 434–435. See also, C. Barquero Goñi, 'Los hospitalarios y la monarquía castellano-leonesa (siglos XII–XIII)', *Archivos leoneses* 97–98 (1995), pp. 53–119.

⁸⁹ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la reina Urraca*, no. 95; Ruiz Albi, *La reina doña Urraca*, pp. 471–473.

⁹⁰ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la reina Urraca*, no. 115. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca*, p. 169 dated this donation to 1122.

1113 donation; instead, it was a ‘Magister Petrus’, most likely a Hospitaller responsible for all the charters Urraca wrote for his order.⁹¹ This departure from Urraca’s usual practice may be a sign of her willingness to allow the new order to use her charters to express their novel spirituality, with which the queen was eager to be associated. The Hospitallers’ foothold in Extremadura was wise; it was a largely unpopulated region, and their strong presence could protect Urraca’s rule from the Portuguese threat and ensure safe passage for pilgrims travelling through the region. Additionally, it was politically astute to develop a military order in her kingdom that would be loyal to her, particularly in light of the fact that she fought a civil war with her former husband. Urraca sought to bolster her power in any way possible, and the Hospitallers could help.

Patronage of the Hospitallers was not the only way Urraca symbolically brought the Holy Land to Iberia; she participated in patronage focused on the Holy Sepulcher, as well. Although the documentary evidence is thinner than that for the Hospitallers, pilgrims to the Holy Land brought their devotion back with them, and in the second half of the eleventh century, churches throughout Western Europe were dedicated to the Holy Sepulcher; some were architecturally based on the original in Jerusalem, and some paid it tribute. This devotion existed in León, as well: a mountain hospice in the San Isidoro pass between Asturias and León was dedicated to the Holy Sepulcher, as was a church in the city of León founded by Urraca herself.⁹² Unfortunately, there is no charter record documenting Urraca’s foundation of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in León. There is a document issued by Theobald, the chaplain of the church of St. Martin of León, who donated the church of the Holy Sepulcher of León to that of Jerusalem in 1122. Theobald provides the history of the church,

‘which Queen Urraca of the *Hispanias*, for the remission of her sins and for the soul of her father King Alfonso, ordered to be constructed with the name and in honor of the Holy Sepulcher for the burial of pilgrims or other men who ask to be buried there’.⁹³

In founding a church of the Holy Sepulcher in the city of León, Urraca added a new element to the construction of sacred space in her kingdom. She helped bring León to the Holy Land and the Holy Land to León, and in doing so responded to the new social realities of the time. She continued the tradition of innovation inherited from her father and

⁹¹ Ruiz Albi, *La reina doña Urraca*, pp. 214–15.

⁹² J.M. Fernández Picón, ‘La Orden del Santo Sepulcro de Jerusalén en la ciudad de León’, *Tierras de León*, 79–80 (1990), pp. 175–79.

⁹³ J.M. Mínguez Fernández and M. Herrero de la Fuente, eds., *Collección diplomática del monasterio de Sahagún* (7 vols, León, 1976), 5:104–05, no. 1374: *Quam VRRAKA Yspaniarum regina pro remissione suorum peccatorum, et pro anima patris sui Adefonsi regis mandavit mihi construere in nomine et honore Sancti Sepulcri ad sepultorum peregrinorum uel aliorum hominum qui ibi sepeliri pertierint.*

grandfather but added new traditions in ways specific to her status as queen regnant.

Although she was the daughter-in-law of the king of Jerusalem, Matilda did not participate in the widespread trend of Jerusalem-related patronage. Even her husband, Geoffrey, Count of Anjou and son of King Fulk, showed little such devotion. Fulk's rise to royal authority in Jerusalem brought prestige to his family and established an Angevin presence in the Holy Land, but it was not an advantage Geoffrey often used. Geoffrey, now count of Anjou, Maine, and Touraine, acknowledged his father's elevation in his charters by styling himself as 'son of the King Fulk of Jerusalem'.⁹⁴ Although this was not part of Geoffrey's formal title, it did reflect his status as the son of a king. Jerusalem would remain a part of his public identity until the death of his father in 1143.⁹⁵ Matilda remained focused primarily on her efforts to win the crown of England, and the struggles of civil war kept her from participating in Jerusalem-based devotion.

Geoffrey's political interests were not focused on the Holy Land but on securing Normandy. Fulk himself began Geoffrey's political career in Northern France when he negotiated his heir's marriage to Matilda, heiress of the Anglo-Norman realm, in 1128.⁹⁶ Fulk renounced his lordship of Anjou to leave for the Holy Land in 1129, leaving the teenaged Geoffrey as Count; he spent the remainder of his life attempting to consolidate his rule over his wife's inheritance, dying in 1151 as Duke of Normandy, in addition to his other titles.⁹⁷

While there is no evidence that the Matilda was in contact with her father-in-law, there are indications that Geoffrey remained in limited contact with the Latin East during the period of his father's rule as king of Jerusalem. An embassy from Jerusalem with a representative from the *Templum Domini* arrived in Anjou between 1135–1137, when Matilda still resided in her husband's lands. The prior of the *Templum Domini*, Geoffrey, sent a letter to 'the most illustrious Count Geoffrey of Anjou' (*Gaufrido illustrissimo Andegavensium comiti*) asking him to help the letter's bearer, a canon of the church.⁹⁸ The brief letter's aim was to secure

⁹⁴ Among the extant sources, Geoffrey Plantagenet first made use of his father's status as king of Jerusalem when he confirmed one of Fulk's donations to the abbey of Tiron in 1132. See L. Merlet, ed., *Cartulaire de l'abbaye de La Sainte-Trinité de Tiron* (2 vols, Chartres, 1883), no. 165: *Ego Goffredus, comes Andecavensis, donum quod pater meus Fulcho, qui nunc est in Jerusalem rex, concessit.*

⁹⁵ By July of 1133, Geoffrey began to use the title '*Goffridus... Andegavorum comes, Fulchonis regis Ierosolimitanorum filius*', and would continue to do so until he became the duke of Normandy in 1144. For examples of this trend, see J. Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109–1151: Foulque de Jerusalem et Geoffroi Plantagenet* (Paris), pp. 377–80, 385–6, 391–6, nos. 46–7, 53–4, 61–4.

⁹⁶ See Chapter One.

⁹⁷ For Geoffrey's activities with regard to the conquest of Normandy, see Chartrou, *L'Anjou de 1109–1151*, pp. 51–6; J. Gillingham, *The Angevin Empire* (London, 2001), pp. 12–17; On the struggle to secure Henry's position as heir of England and Normandy, see W.L. Warren, *Henry II* (Berkeley, 1973), pp. 12–53.

⁹⁸ A copy of the letter survives in P. Marchegay, ed., *Cartulaire de l'abbaye du Ronceray d'Angers* (Paris and Angers, 1900), no. 388, and is reprinted in R. Hierstand, 'Gaufridus abbas Templi Domini: an underestimated

Angevin aid for the rebuilding of the *Templum Domini*. It stands to reason that Fulk was aware of the embassy, the letter, and its fundraising purpose. The prior, Geoffrey, was one of Fulk's key supporters and had the king's consent to his appointment as abbot of the *Templum* in 1137.⁹⁹

The sources do not reveal any further information regarding this embassy or Geoffrey's reply, but he showed support for his father in the Holy Land on other occasions. Near the end of 1135, he arbitrated a settlement between Sulpice II of Amboise and his younger brother, Hugh II of Amboise. The conflict concerned their authority over their family's lands, and Geoffrey resolved it in favor of Sulpice, prompting Hugh II to take the cross and depart for Jerusalem.¹⁰⁰ The dispute over the honor of Amboise came at a crucial time for both the Holy Land and the Anglo-Norman lands. Geoffrey reached a settlement shortly before Henry I's death, and when word of his death and Stephen of Blois' usurpation of the English throne reached Geoffrey, it was crucial that he resolve all Angevin conflict before turning his attention to claiming Normandy. In Jerusalem, the realm was in upheaval over the crisis with Hugh of Jaffa, who was subsequently exiled in 1134.¹⁰¹ His banishment left several castellanies vacant, allowing Hugh of Amboise to benefit. The latter was awarded as castellan of Hebron shortly after arriving in the Holy Land.¹⁰² Hugh of Amboise's relocation to the Holy Land is the only known instance of Geoffrey of Anjou sending one of his own vassals to the Kingdom of Jerusalem, presumably to supply his father with more Angevin supporters.

Against this background, there is only one link between Matilda and Jerusalem-related piety: a grant to the Knights Templar at Cowley in England for the forest rights at Shotover.¹⁰³ This followed a wider program of neutralizing Stephen's patronage by regranteeing one of his earlier acts of beneficence, as she had done with monastic patronage. The struggle for Christian dominance in the Latin East was superseded by the need to establish dominance of her own rule in England. Therefore, her lack of outspoken support for such a cause seems reasonable. There is little doubt that, had her efforts in gaining the crown been successful,

figure in the early history of the kingdom of Jerusalem', in *The Experience of Crusading*, vol. 2, ed. P. Edbury and J. Philips (Cambridge, 2003), p. 58.

⁹⁹ Hierstand, 'Gaufridus abbas Templi Domini: an underestimated figure in the early history of the kingdom of Jerusalem', p. 54.

¹⁰⁰ L. Halphen and R. Poupardin, eds., 'Gesta Ambaziensium Dominorum', in *Chroniques des comtes d'Anjou et des seigneurs D'Amboise* (Paris, 1913), pp. 119–20.

¹⁰¹ See Chapter Two, Section ii.

¹⁰² On the succession of Hugh II of Amboise as castellan of Hebron, see H.E. Mayer, 'Angevins versus Normans: The New Men of King Fulk of Jerusalem', *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 133 (1989), pp. 17–8; H.E. Mayer, 'Die Herrschaftsbildung in Gebrun', *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, 101 (1985), pp. 68–71.

¹⁰³ Davis, Davis, and Cronne, eds., *Regesta regum Anglo-Normannorum, 1066–1154*, vol. iii, p. 633, dated between 1149 and 1152; Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 132.

Matilda's patronage would have looked quite different, and, perhaps, she too would have turned her sights eastward and promoted devotion to Jerusalem as Urraca did in Iberia.

Western medieval society was particularly concerned with Jerusalem-related piety during the twelfth century, and interestingly, only Melisende and Urraca's narratives demonstrate a concentrated effort to reflect this spiritual trend. Naturally, as queen of Jerusalem, Melisende enthusiastically supported developments related to the promotion or safeguarding of her kingdom, which faced persistent danger from its Muslim neighbors. In the same vein, Urraca of León-Castilla understood the Muslim threat within her own kingdom. However, because Spaniards were forbidden to crusade in the Holy Land, Urraca strategically supported related trends in her own kingdom. As patronesses, both Urraca and Melisende took advantage of the growing power and reach of military orders. The decision to support the Hospitallers in the 1130s fell to both Melisende and Fulk, and it follows that, after Fulk's death in 1143, Melisende continued to give them nearly unrestricted support in their cause. Obtaining the loyalty and support of a far-reaching, wealthy, and connected group of highly trained military leaders benefitted queens regnant who could not participate in battle. In a way, Melisende and Urraca's decision to promote military orders provides evidence that they themselves were intelligent commanders. Matilda does not have a strong record of Jerusalem-based piety or patronage, despite being the daughter-in-law of Jerusalem's king; however, her political drama in England restricted her actions and spending to only what was necessary to win the war. Thus although promoting her connection to the kings of Jerusalem might have given her reign some legitimacy and grandeur, she needed only the legitimacy of being Henry's heir to resonate with her would-be subjects. It is likely that, in Matilda's case, Jerusalem-based piety would have followed a successful bid for the throne. For Urraca and Melisende, however, as queens regnant, it was beneficial to support the cultural and spiritual trend towards Jerusalem-related acts.

iv. Urban development

Not all patronage was limited to churches, monasteries, and religious institutions. For Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda, each supported causes that contributed to urban development within their kingdoms in distinct ways. The acts of patronage these royal heiresses performed highlight a variety of circumstances in the interplay between their role as de facto queen regnant and the charitable tasks normally performed by the queen consort. Both Melisende and Urraca used urban development to solve civic problems and promote their kingdoms. Matilda, however, supported urban development only after her retirement in Normandy,

following an example set by her mother in England. By commissioning aspects of urban development, the townspeople would benefit and hopefully offer their support to the crown. However, the monarchy also benefited from the growth of towns through tolls and customs.

It was to the benefit of Urraca's rule and kingdom to foster growth of towns to promote peace in her realm and support her rule, and also to profit from tolls and customs that came with urban expansion. Under Urraca's rule, the pilgrimage trend expanded and grew in popularity in ways that persist through to the present. With the intention of opening religious spaces to the public and promoting the Camino de Santiago within her kingdom, Urraca encouraged urban development in key cities such as León by supporting the creation of pilgrimage destinations. She understood that pilgrims would bring wealth and trade to her kingdom and leave with tales of miracles that would draw more travelers.¹⁰⁴

Urraca made seven donations to pilgrims' hospitals with the intention of encouraging pilgrimage in her realm. The language of the charters indicates the dangers of pilgrimage in twelfth-century Iberia, and Urraca's donations for 'pilgrims and the poor' imply that the two categories were interchangeable.¹⁰⁵ She made special provisions to care for burials of pilgrims who perished along the way at the church of the Holy Sepulcher in León, a city where a great deal of work focused on pilgrimage in her realm occurred.¹⁰⁶ A donation to the hospital of Valdetallada, meanwhile, aimed to protect pilgrims from thieves.¹⁰⁷ Urraca donated to another hospital named for the Holy Sepulcher in the mountain pass of San Isidoro del Puerto to protect pilgrims 'because in that pass many pilgrims and travelers used to die of cold'.¹⁰⁸ She paid careful attention to the well-being of pilgrims travelling through León-Castilla, holding two councils, one at León in 1114 and another at Santiago de Compostela in 1124, that focused on pilgrims' and merchants' welfare.¹⁰⁹ In light of these actions, Urraca's patronage and support of military orders within her kingdom, such as the Hospitallers, gain increased importance.¹¹⁰ Their role of keeping pilgrims safe aligns with a broader policy of promoting pilgrimage within León-Castilla and one way to do that was to ensure protection for travelers.

¹⁰⁴ See the studies of E. Cohen, 'In the Name of God and Profit: The Pilgrimage Industry in Southern France in the Late Middle Ages', Ph.D. dissertation, Brown University, 1976, and 'Roads and Pilgrimage: A Study of Economic Interaction', *Studi Medievali* 21 (1980), pp. 321–341. For the interaction of monasticism and pilgrimage, see also C. Rudolph, *The 'Things of Greater Importance', Bernard of Clairvaux's Apologia and the Medieval Attitude towards Art*, London, 1990.

¹⁰⁵ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la reina Urraca*, no. 54; Ruiz Albi, *La reina doña Urraca*, pp. 426–27.

¹⁰⁶ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la reina Urraca*, no. 168.

¹⁰⁷ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la reina Urraca*, no. 188.

¹⁰⁸ Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la reina Urraca*, no. 129; Ruiz Albi, *La reina doña Urraca*, pp. 514–15: *quoniam in illo portu multi peregrini et uiatores moriebantur frigore*.

¹⁰⁹ L. Martínez García, 'El albergue de los viajeros: del hospedaje monástico a la posada urbana', in *IV Semana de Estudios Medievales, Nájera, 2–6 agosto 1991* (Logroño, 1994), p. 76.

¹¹⁰ See Section iii for information on military orders.

The explosion of pilgrimage occurred during Urraca's reign, and, as ruling queen, she capitalized on this new devotional trend, which is clearly visible in the city of León. During her reign, the Leonese church and monastery of San Isidoro underwent a major renovation and construction process. According to Therese Martin, Urraca was largely responsible for this pivotal chapter in the history of the space.¹¹¹ Urraca funded an expansion of San Isidoro to change its function from a monastery and royal chapel to a pilgrimage site; her plan to open it to pilgrims helped develop the devotional cult of St. Isidore of Seville. Urraca wisely capitalized on León's central location on one of the main routes to Santiago de Compostela. Her aunt, the *infanta* Urraca of Zamora, initially planned a redesign of San Isidoro.¹¹² Martin shows that Queen Urraca, however, created a radically new design aimed at providing easier access to Isidore's relics.¹¹³ Venerating Isidore became the focus at San Isidoro as he had a more widely known story than Pelayo, one of the other titular saints of the church, and, furthermore, all of his relics were in León. John the Baptist, another titular saint, had relics spread across all of Europe and the Latin East. The role of San Isidoro as a pilgrimage site was carefully and consciously constructed.

Urraca's involvement with urban development within León-Castilla mirrors that of Melisende of Jerusalem. Both ruling queens enacted programs that would enhance their roles as rulers by providing better living conditions for their subjects and, in particular, protection of those subjects within towns. Urraca realized and welcomed the increasing trend of pilgrimage within her kingdom and capitalized on it. With these actions, Urraca assumed the responsibilities of a ruler, not that of a queen consort. While wealthy women could certainly make a mark on urban development, as is the case with Matilda, these bold actions were those of queens regnant. For Urraca, her policy of opening religious spaces and providing protections to pilgrims served to stimulate piety, wealth, development, and cultural or political significance for her kingdom. This policy is that of a ruler and is unrelated to her gender.

One additional avenue of support for Melisende, which she achieved through urban development, came from the townspeople of Jerusalem. At the height of the conflict for

¹¹¹ Martin, *Queen as King*, pp.96–152.

¹¹² Martin, *Queen as King*, pp. 62–95.

¹¹³ Martin, *Queen as King*, p. 111. See also O.K. Werckmeister, 'Cluny III and the Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela', *Gesta* 27 (1988), pp. 103–112, esp. p. 103, who argued that the similarities between the plan of the pilgrimage churches and that of Cluny III meant that the church 'was designed either in order to serve in some way as a starting sanctuary for rites connected with the send-off on the pilgrimage, or in order to attract a mass audience to the monastic office on its own terms.' T. Lyman, 'The Politics of Selective Eclecticism: Monastic Architecture, Pilgrimage Churches, and "Resistance to Cluny"', *Gesta* 27 (1988), pp. 83–92, underlined the difference between rural monastic churches and urban pilgrimage sites.

authority against Baldwin III in April 1152, Melisende commissioned the completion of construction of a street, ‘*ad perficiendam ruam novam in Iherusalem de suo concesserunt*’.¹¹⁴ Mayer believes the donation and confirmation were her attempt to ‘woo’ the city and Patriarch Fulcher.¹¹⁵ Both her sons, Baldwin III and Amalric, consented to the charter, indicating a possible reconciliation between mother and son. Melisende found funding for the street from the Holy Sepulcher by exchanging several villages for a shop, previously owned by a certain ‘William the bastard’, and a stake in his two money-changing tables, which she and Fulk had granted to the church in 1138. The income from the tables and shop was sufficient to finance the completion of the street, which soon became known as the Street of Bad Cooking, or *Malquisinat*, as food vendors set up businesses along it, selling bread and hot meals to the incoming pilgrims. Running alongside this street were two parallel roads Melisende may also have commissioned around the same time, the Street of Herbs and the Covered Street. Melisende clearly spent generously on these streets; they were wide and featured relatively spacious shops and airshafts to let light and air in and keep smoke from cooking fires out. Furthermore, stone vaulting provided protection from the rain.¹¹⁶ Carved inscriptions extant on the arches of *Malquisinat* connect it to the Abbey of St. Anne, where Melisende’s youngest sister, Ivetta, had spent the majority of her childhood, read ‘SCA ANNA’. Although there is no evidence linking St. Anne’s to profits from the rents of *Malquisinat*, it is possible Melisende made this provision.¹¹⁷

Melisende financed the completion of *Malquisinat* to solve an urgent problem for her city. By the middle of the twelfth century, the number of pilgrims visiting Jerusalem from the West to pray at its holy places and shrine churches had grown rapidly. They congregated in throngs all over the city’s streets, and there was a desperate need for vendors of cooked food, as the pilgrims had no place to prepare their own. Melisende’s construction of this street was a strategic move because it demonstrated her capacity to effectively govern the city, solve its problems, and improve the lives of its inhabitants.

Similarly, Matilda participated in the urban development of areas near where she lived in retirement in Normandy. She instituted little urban development in England largely because all her effort in terms of money and politics was directed towards defeating Stephen. Instead, as a widow largely retired from political life, Matilda’s contributions to projects demonstrate

¹¹⁴ Röhrich, ed., *Regesta regni Hierosolymitani*, no. 278.

¹¹⁵ Mayer, ‘Studies in the History of Queen Melisende of Jerusalem’, p. 167.

¹¹⁶ A.J. Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades: Society, landscape and art in the Holy Land under Frankish rule* (New York, 2001), p. 147.

¹¹⁷ Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades*, p. 147.

a more intimate connection to the people and spaces that received her largesse. Her contemporaries Urraca and Melisende remained powerful throughout much of their lives, which resulted in greater demonstrations of agency. The lack of involvement in urban development in England sharply contrasts with that in Normandy, especially in its capital, Rouen, where Matilda funded construction of a stone bridge.

The decision to replace and improve the bridge may have been inspired by Matilda's mother in England. Decades earlier, Queen Matilda (d. 1118) had undertaken the construction and maintenance of two bridges from London into Essex, including an arched bridge over the Lea known as the Bow Bridge and several other bridges linking London to the surrounding rural areas.¹¹⁸ These bridges provided safer passage over a dangerous river crossing, which may have contributed to her popular reputation in these regions. Her mother's popularity in England, especially in London, differs significantly from that of her daughter, the Empress. However, it is important to remember that London and its surrounding areas were where Stephen and his queen were strongest. It can be argued that Matilda's actions regarding the stone bridge in Rouen were motivated by an aim similar to her mother's, to curry support with its townspeople. Rouen continued to grow in size, power, and importance during the central middle ages, and ensuring a positive perspective of Matilda and her son could only be to their benefit. The bridgeworks constituted an acceptable form of patronage for a wealthy widow to undertake, regardless of any potential political goal.

After she retired to Normandy and following her widowhood, Matilda primarily resided near Rouen, close to the priory at Bec, as discussed above. In the mid-1140s, Geoffrey of Anjou had restored the wooden bridge into the city, which had been damaged by fire and fighting during its capture. The bridge was of vital strategic importance because it connected the city to the suburb of Saint-Sever over the Ile de la Roquette. It was thanks to Matilda that the wooden bridge was replaced with a stone version.¹¹⁹ Additionally, Matilda bequeathed a considerable allowance upon her death towards the completion of the bridge. Known as the Pont Mathilde, the stone bridge survived into the sixteenth century.¹²⁰

As royal heiresses, Urraca of León-Castilla, Melisende of Jerusalem, and the Empress Matilda used patronage to further their political goals as ruling queens. Urraca and Melisende

¹¹⁸ Chibnall, *The Empress Matilda*, p. 152 n. 52; L. Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland: A Study of Queenship* (Woodbridge, 2003), pp. 114–5.

¹¹⁹ D. Bates, 'Rouen from 900 to 1204: from Scandinavian settlement to Angevin "capital"', in J. Stafford, ed., *Medieval Art, architecture and archaeology at Rouen* (London, 1993), p. 5; E.J. Kealey, *Medieval Medicus: A Social History of Anglo-Norman Medicine* (Baltimore, 1981), p. 20. Chibnall, *Empress Matilda*, p. 152; Y. Fache, *Histoire des Ponts de Rouen et de sa Région* (Luneray, 1985), pp. 22–28.

¹²⁰ Fache, *Histoire des Ponts de Rouen et de sa Région*, pp. 22–28.

were both successful in becoming queens regnant and, as such, their acts of patronage reveal a variation of their mothers' actions as consorts with the political motivations of their fathers. Melisende used patronage of urban development as a tool to entreat the townspeople to her case in the conflict against her son, Baldwin III. Urraca took advantage of the wave of pilgrims that flocked to Iberia en route to Santiago and found ways of promoting their efforts and enriching her kingdom. Matilda, by contrast, only contributed to the urban development of Rouen after her retirement and widowhood. Her active years in England were tumultuous and required her patronage to focus on only what was essential to furthering her cause. Only later, when she had retired, did she have the available funds and time to devote to other causes. Furthermore, her choice to build a stone bridge evokes the memory of her mother, who was greatly loved and respected as a consort, and it was during this chapter of Matilda's life that she gained support as a queen mother. This type of patronage most clearly demonstrates the limitations of female rulership.

Conclusion

Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda had the support of co-rulers and male deputies who could perform the male-gendered tasks of government. If these royal heiresses did not participate in battle, they had time available to them that kings did not. During this 'spare' time, each used patronage in various ways to further her political goals as queen regnant, or in Matilda's case, as an aspiring ruler. Usually, queens consort were responsible for similar acts of patronage. Therefore, in certain ways, each heiress reverted to patterns of patronage she had observed from her mother and other queens consort, but because of these women's unusual status, their actions take on a greater significance. Normally, acts of patronage needed to be confirmed by kings, but in these cases, Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda functioned independently from male oversight. Their acts of generosity have a second meaning: not only were they meant to foster piety and support the inhabitants of their kingdoms, but they also advanced their rules as independent ruling queens as their fathers had once done. Although kings and lords have also left a remarkable record of patronage, the actions of these aspiring queens regnant were nuanced and reveal aspects of kingly and queenly patronage. As royal heiresses, these women were highly aware of their positions within their dynasties, and these were precarious in a patriarchal society. Patronage provided a societally acceptable avenue to demonstrate female power. Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda exploited and capitalized on forms of patronage normally reserved for queens consort, using this female form of power brokering to establish networks of alliances and promote their rules, combining both male and female forms of patronage.

Conclusion

This dissertation analyses the structural and contingent aspects of the careers of three royal heiresses, Queens Urraca of León-Castilla (r. 1109–1126), Melisende of Jerusalem (r. 1131–1153), and Empress Matilda of England and Normandy (b. 1102–d. 1167). The unique situations of their birth meant that, as royal heiresses, they stood to inherit their fathers' kingdoms. In the cases of Urraca and Matilda, they became heiresses only after the deaths of younger brothers, whereas Melisende was the oldest of four daughters, and her inheritance was, in retrospect, inevitable. The rarity of female royal succession produced challenges to their authority that would force these heiresses to respond in certain ways, whether entering an undesired marriage or sharing power with male co-rulers. On the frontiers of Christendom, both Urraca and Melisende succeeded their fathers, Alfonso VI and Baldwin II, respectively, to become queens regnant. Both dynasties were relatively young, having been established only two or three generations earlier. Matilda was also an heiress of a young dynasty; the Anglo-Normans had come to royal power only two generations earlier with the triumph of her grandfather, William the Conqueror, in 1066. However, Matilda differs from her contemporaries because she ultimately failed to secure her succession to the English throne despite nine years of constant campaigning in England against her cousin, Stephen. In their efforts to gain the throne—and in the cases of Urraca and Melisende, keep it—these heiresses set themselves apart from other royal or aristocratic women. By utilizing the comparative method, certain conclusions about female royal power can be reached. This study explored features of female rulership over five chapters with the objective of understanding how a royal heiress might succeed or fail to gain the throne, maintain it, and preserve it for future generations.

Chapter One, 'Gaining the throne and marriage', demonstrated the near-exclusive male role in arranging marriages through four analytical themes. First, the heiress' father decided whom his daughter should marry. All three fathers wanted to find their daughters a suitable husband who might rule by right of their wife upon their inheritance. Women were excluded from various arenas of society in the twelfth century by nature of their gender, and a male co-ruler was necessary for the continuation of the dynasty and to fulfill certain duties of rulership. In each of the three cases, the royal heiress was excluded from the decision-making process. Additionally, each of the heiress' fathers had faced problematic successions earlier in their lives, and they were keenly aware of the dangers their daughters confronted with female royal succession. The choice of husband aimed to allay these fears. The closely interlinked diplomatic nature of the marriage negotiations between Matilda to Geoffrey of Anjou and

Melisende to Fulk of Anjou in 1127 and 1129, respectively was investigated. Scholars have claimed that the three Jerusalem embassies sent to Western Europe in 1127 all shared the same goals. However, this work showed that they were three separate diplomatic missions, each with their own distinct goal, but that surely overlapped. The third section detailed the process by which the marriage negotiations resulted in contracts. This section once again demonstrated the exclusion of the heiress from the marriage process; furthermore, there was no record of any female influence, whether from a mother or stepmother. The final section discussed how marriage impacted aristocratic heiresses, whose marriages were both politically motivated and lacked their involvement. This exclusively male process differed greatly by region. The Spanish marriage between Urraca and Alfonso I el Batallador of Aragón in 1109 produced a written contract carefully laying out the limitations and provisions of their union, which proves that having a strict contract did not guarantee success. In fact, such a contract might have undermined it. Compared to Matilda and Melisende, a verbal agreement allowed for flexibility, as demonstrated by Melisende's marriage to Fulk. While Fulk may have been promised sole rule of Jerusalem by right of his wife during the marriage negotiations, when the moment of succession arrived in 1131, Baldwin II designated the crown as a triumvirate of royal rule split between Fulk, Melisende, and their son, Baldwin III. However, the unifying feature of the marriage negotiation process was that incentivizing the bridegroom in favor of the union required the king to finalize his decision and proclaim his daughter as his heir. This formal recognition occurred in conjunction with the marriage process, paving the way for a royal heiress to become a queen regnant with a military husband at her side.

Chapter Two, 'Co-rule with husbands', explored the difficulties of sharing power between a queen regnant and her spouse, or in Matilda's case, an aspiring queen regnant, through four analytical angles. It began by examining the effect the husband had on a royal heiress' chances of becoming a queen regnant. Each husband, namely El Batallador, Fulk, and Geoffrey, was received by his wife's magnates in differing ways, demonstrating the varied cultural experiences that informed these royal heiresses' lives. In Spain, the older members of her father's court supported Urraca's union to Alfonso el Batallador, but many within the wider kingdom opposed marriage to a neighboring king who often rivaled Leonese interests. This animosity, combined with Urraca's own displeasure with El Batallador, provided the opportunity for her to assert her own independence and authority separate from her husband with the support of powerful magnates. In Jerusalem, Fulk was a familiar character to the crusading lords because of time he had previously spent in the Holy Land. However, he was nevertheless an outsider from Anjou along with a large retinue of Angevin supporters. His

military prowess filled a need within the kingdom and ensured Melisende's uncontested succession. In contrast, Matilda and Geoffrey's marriage solved a problem that existed at the time of their union: neutralizing a common threat. From the perspective of Normandy, the marriage alliance secured the cooperation with a neighbor who was usually a rival and an enemy. However, eight years passed between the couple's marriage and Henry I's death in 1135, and by that time, the rival who had inspired the marriage had died, and the reason for the marriage thus no longer existed. By that point, Matilda had borne two sons, had a third on the way, and was inextricably tied to Geoffrey. Matilda's second marriage proves that what seemed a solution to an immediate problem at the time of the wedding could have negative consequences in the future; Geoffrey's position as Matilda's husband likely harmed her chances of becoming a ruling queen due to animosity between the Anglo-Norman lords and their Angevin rivals. Second, the period of co-rule with husbands came with its own set of conflicts and problems. Both Urraca and Melisende faced trouble within their marriages. Urraca's short-lived marriage to El Batallador was problematic and ultimately led to the dissolution of the marriage and her independent rule of León-Castilla. Conversely, early in his marriage, Fulk attempted to rule without the involvement of his wife. Melisende's response prevented Fulk from exercising unfettered control. Nonetheless, of all three cases, their marriage produced the only true co-rule between husband and wife, exhibiting the model that each of the heiress' fathers had likely envisioned. As for a co-rule in England and Normandy, Geoffrey and Matilda approached the issue from different angles. As a realm divided by a body of water, each partner focused on a different arena as they struggled to claim Matilda's inheritance. The third section examined elements of teamwork and attempts at sharing of power, and then drew comparisons to aristocratic heiresses and the impingement on female authority by husbands on lands they held by their own right. By examining these three royal heiresses comparatively, it is apparent that sharing power between husband and wife was not without problems. To actually gain the throne, a royal heiress needed the support of a male co-ruler, but the experiment of female rulership in the twelfth century shows that female authority could persevere.

In Chapter Three, 'Ruling alone', four analytical themes explored what happens to female rule without the help of a male co-ruler. First, because a woman was excluded from the military aspects of rulership due to her gender, a queen regnant needed one or more male deputies to perform this crucial role, and she needed powerful male allies to support her rule. As queens regnant, Urraca and Melisende each depended on a combination of secular and religious allies, including deputies to lead troops into battle and archbishops to promote their authority. Matilda, in contrast, lacked broad episcopal support and depended largely on the

support of secular lords in her struggle against Stephen in England. While she had a close, personal relationship with the monks of Bec in Normandy, their support lacked the influence and power in England to help Matilda claim the throne. Second, as vulnerable royal heiresses, it was vital that these women prove their dynastic legitimacy. Third, each royal heiress faced a threat to her rule. In addition to a problematic husband, Urraca had to confront civil unrest across her kingdom as a result of the war that broke out on the Iberian Peninsula after the separation of Urraca and El Batallador. Melisende attempted to maintain her position of authority in her kingdom in the presence of the crusader leaders, all kings, who came to the Holy Land for the Second Crusade. Matilda, meanwhile, famously fought against her cousin for the inheritance of England, with many supporting him as the claimant instead of the child of the previous king who had been designated heiress. The problems Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda faced display the limitations and vulnerabilities of female rule. Finally, in the fourth section of this chapter, on aristocratic heiresses, the analysis revealed a distinction between royal and aristocratic heiresses. When an aristocratic heiress was widowed, she was soon remarried so that she would not rule her lands alone. Royal heiresses who became queens regnant were able to benefit from the absence of their husbands, whether from death or annulment, to establish an independent rule. Whereas the remarriage of an aristocratic heiress enabled the continued protection of a land holding, the remarriage of a royal heiress could cause dynastic problems if she had more children from a different father.

Chapter Four, 'Co-rule with sons', explored the careful balancing act between mother and son as a queen regnant or royal heiress simultaneously promoted her son's future inheritance and safeguarded her own authority from the threat inherent in having a male heir. First, one method heiresses used to promote their sons while distancing themselves was that used by Urraca, who permitted her son Alfonso VII to be crowned; however, she was absent from the ceremony, creating ambiguity about her son's status. This placated his supporters and associated her reign with male rule without actually ceding power. In contrast, Melisende reinforced her authority as queen regnant by celebrating another coronation after Fulk's death in 1147. This marked the beginning of her independent rule. However, when Baldwin III came of age and wanted power without the yoke of a co-rule with his mother, he managed to have his third coronation in 1152. The strategy Melisende employed in 1147 was then coopted by her son in 1152 and marked her retirement. By contrast, as an heiress who never became queen regnant, Matilda began fiercely promoting her son, Henry, only after she retired from the English conflict in 1148. She was present for his investiture of Normandy in 1150 but not when he was crowned Henry II of England. She never experienced the straightforward co-rule that her father might have imagined. Next, the second section

explored issues of sharing power and conflict with sons. Urraca kept her son, Alfonso VII, sidelined and used him as a tool against her rival, El Batallador. Melisende similarly kept her son out of power during his youth; however, as an adult male, Baldwin III asserted his claim to rule and used coronation to force his mother out. One typical avenue for power medieval royal women might enjoy was regency, and the third section features an analysis of how a royal heiress might participate in the administration of her son's kingdom after retirement. As a regnant who kept her son from exercising power during her lifetime, Urraca did not perform duties of this nature. In contrast, both Melisende and Matilda came to the aid of their sons after their retirement from political life. Despite earlier conflict in the case of Melisende of Jerusalem and Baldwin III, she remained a trusted advisor for her son, proving that familial loyalty and dynastic promotion could outweigh previous disputes.

In Chapter Five, 'Queens regnant as queens consort', there were four ways in which these exceptional women utilized traditional female aristocratic roles for their political gain. First, one of the most important roles of a royal or aristocratic woman was religious or monastic patronage. Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda participated in this tradition but combined these typically female forms of patronage with strongly political goals. Urraca and Melisende, as queens regnant, both followed the examples of their mothers by supporting religious institutions, but they did not require a king's confirmation for their acts. Furthermore, supporting these institutions also strengthened bonds with religious allies. They used religious patronage to exploit and legitimize their positions. Dynastic memory was another typically feminine concern, and the royal heiresses combined the traditional female behavior of commemorating their dynasties with a ruling agenda. By patronizing existing spaces with a connection to their families, they created new traditions that would endure for generations. As queens regnant, both Melisende and Urraca created new traditions of pilgrimage and religious experience through the practice of dynastic commemoration. Matilda, drawing upon the flourishing literary movements in northern Europe, supported the production of written family histories, glorifying her ancestors and making the case for her descendants' legitimacy. Third, the cultural milieu of the twelfth century celebrated the establishment of a Christian kingdom in the Holy Land, inspiring Jerusalem-related acts throughout Europe and in the Latin East. As queen of Jerusalem, it naturally fell to Melisende to promote her kingdom, and one way she did so was to foster the growth of military orders such as the Hospitallers and Templars. Both Urraca and Melisende supported military orders in their kingdoms, evidencing keen political skill because these groups could provide the military leadership that they could not. Fourth, in addition to the support of religious patronage, women also actively participated in financing urban development. Although other

royal and aristocratic women financed civic projects, Urraca and Melisende used urban development to solve problems and promote their kingdoms. Both Jerusalem and Spain hosted great pilgrimage sites that brought crowds of foreigners to their lands. By transforming the landscape of their realms, they solved problems townspeople faced with the intention of keeping the peace.

In this Conclusion, thus far, the main findings of each chapter have been summarized. It is now important to show that further new insights can be identified by analyzing themes across chapters. In one way or another, most of these revolve around the issue of the women's gender. Although royal heiresses had the potential to access authority most other medieval women could not, when it came to arranging marriages, female voices were excluded from the discussion. Finding a male co-ruler was the first step in the process of female royal inheritance, and ironically though not unpredictably, these heiresses were barred from participating. In two of the three cases, husbands were found in neighboring kingdoms or counties, which, in retrospect, brought its own set of disadvantages: familiar neighbors were well versed in the rivalries and factions of the Anglo-Norman or Spanish realms, but they also brought pre-existing problems. The choice of an agreed-upon outsider in Jerusalem provided a clean slate for the Holy Land's first queen regnant. Of the three case studies, only Melisende's marriage to Fulk produced the kind of successful co-rule that was deemed ideal for female succession; therefore, this model of spouse selection was successful. Additionally, the timing of events, from designation as heiress, to wedding a co-ruler, to the death of the father, could have a monumental influence on the success or failure of female royal inheritance. The decision of the candidate for co-ruler might have made sense at the time of the marriage, but if too much time elapsed between the wedding and the moment of inheritance, it might prove fatal to an heiress' cause, as was the case for Matilda. She varied from her contemporaries, Urraca and Melisende, because she never became queen regnant. Urraca and Melisende's ability to profit from controversy and conflict established the greater freedom an heiress could have if successful.

In the event that a queen regnant ruled without the influence of a male co-ruler, the conflicts she faced took on a gendered response from her adversaries. Despite having sole control of royal authority, both Melisende and Urraca dealt with issues unique to their sex, which revealed the limitations of female rule. Although kings also faced inevitable conflict in their rules, queens regnant had different hurdles to overcome on account of their gender. Despite having sole control over royal authority, royal heiresses were still limited by their sex. Additionally, as queens regnant, Urraca and Melisende were required to play a careful game of ensuring the continuation of their line by promoting their heirs without ever ceding power

to them; Matilda, however, did not have to play this game because of her failure to gain the crown. Accordingly, she could promote her son without any hindrance. The case of Melisende of Jerusalem proves an important theory about female rulership, however. A co-rule with a son is an ineffective model because, while sharing power with a male child might give credibility to a royal heiress, once the son reaches his majority, his claim supersedes his mother's. By examining these three royal heiresses comparatively, it is clear that the most effective model for female rulership was Urraca's, a woman who had no male co-ruler. Without the yoke of male co-rulership, she was free to make her own decisions and rule with few limitations.

Gender played a significant role in the analysis of Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda. Another unifying feature of the lives of these heiresses was their required role of motherhood. As in any reign, it was vital to ensure a smooth succession after the rulers' deaths, and this applied to these women, as well. In the cases of queens consort, bearing children was the principle role. For these royal heiresses, it is of some note that each produced a son before their fathers' deaths. The unique set of circumstances in each case meant that few additional children came after the deaths of their fathers, with one key exception. Urraca, who bore no children from her second marriage to El Batallador, took a lover and bore him two illegitimate children. Her children by Pedro González de Lara (d. 1130) drew little negative attention at the time, although later chroniclers would vilify Urraca's behavior. Given that there was no contemporary criticism of their queen regnant, having two children out of wedlock reveals the security of her position on the throne. Royal illegitimate children were not an uncommon occurrence for kings, but they were a remarkable rarity for queens regnant. Her lover served as her deputy, and, rather than elevate his position by marriage, she chose instead to keep him at an inferior level to protect her own position as regnant. Her rule was dependent on men performing duties she could not on the basis of her gender, but she was wise to keep them subordinate to her own position. Being female was their Achilles' heel, and their adversaries took advantage of this because these heiresses could be accused of behaving like men. Many aspects of their rule were gendered; they had to delegate typically male duties to their deputies, or to their husbands or sons. When these women channeled their fathers, as Urraca was wont to do, it drew sharp censure. It was far more acceptable for aspiring queens regnant to emulate their mothers. For example, when Matilda tried to imitate her former husband or her father in London in 1141, her adversaries accused her of behaving like a man.

Some of the most interesting conclusions come from the final chapter because it examines how these extraordinary women behaved in conventional ways. Because each utilized deputies to perform male duties, such as leading troops in battle, they had 'free time'

to fill; interestingly, they occupied it with typically female activities. Although they performed patronage similar to that of their mothers, their actions assumed a political light as they established their positions as ruling queens. However, they merged queenly and kingly forms of patronage to demonstrate a blended record of patronage, tailored to their unique statuses as queens regnant. Preserving dynastic memory was usually the job of the queen consort, and it was uncommon for the ruler to perform such duties. Presumably because they had 'free time', they followed in the footsteps of their mothers while also transforming traditions and creating new ones. Furthermore, these actions created systems of female agency for their descendants. The types of patronage that Melisende and Urraca performed also mirror their successes in becoming queens regnant. Their ability to create, transform, and support various institutions bolstered their positions, while Matilda's patronage lacked the political nuance of her contemporaries. While in England from 1139–1148, Matilda's patronage was purposeful and designed to weaken Stephen's position while elevating her own. It was only after she retired to Normandy in 1148 that her patronage became recognizably like her mother's.

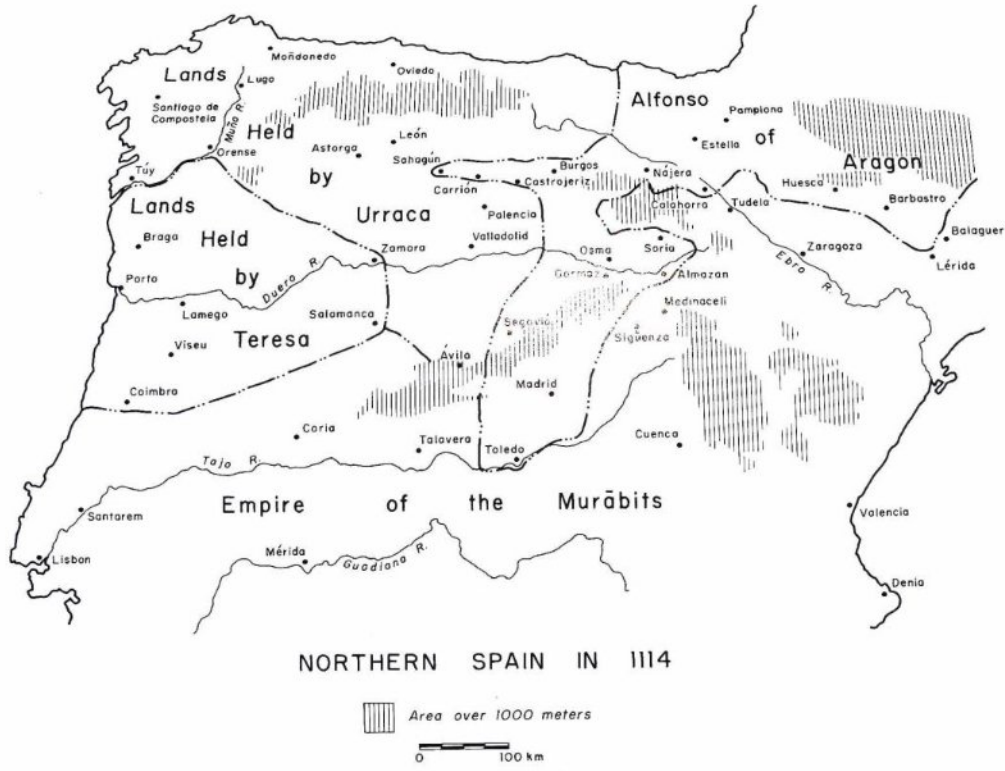
Finally, in drawing comparisons between royal and aristocratic heiresses, it is notable that, although aristocratic heiresses enjoyed power and privilege uncommon for medieval women, what was permissible for a royal heiress was not for her aristocratic counterpart. In instances where an aristocratic heiress attempted to assert her own authority, as was the case with Alice of Antioch and her daughter Constance, their attempt at power was halted. Although Melisende and her sister, Alice, had much in common, Melisende's actions were deemed permissible because of her elevated status as queen regnant, and it mirrored other examples throughout Europe. The conclusion to be drawn from this comparison is that royal authority changed the perception of female authority and independence. This restriction on female authority makes the successes of Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda that much more noteworthy.

The time limitations of doctoral research have constrained the scope of this study to include only the most relevant comparisons. However, future research could expand the range of this thesis. The field of medieval Spanish women has largely been understudied. Considerable work on Spanish aristocratic women and, indeed, other royal women has not yet been carried out. The parameters of this study did not permit the time necessary to develop this research and propose it for comparison. To date, no such study exists concerning Teresa of Portugal, Urraca's younger half-sister, who, along with her husband, Henry of Portugal, attempted to thwart Urraca's position as queen regnant early in her reign. The omission of Teresa in this comparative study was a necessary disappointment that will hopefully be

rectified in the future. One forthcoming study could perhaps impact this dissertation: Ellie Woodacre's work on Petronilla of Aragón in the late twelfth century. Furthermore, in an expanded study, it would perhaps be fruitful to consider evidence from Byzantine heiresses. Given that it is culturally different from those of the Holy Land, England, and Spain, it is unlikely that the Byzantine model of female power informed the lives and careers of Melisende, Urraca, and Matilda. In a broader study, however, the Byzantine experience might demonstrate interesting comparisons. Exploring other forms of co-rule in addition to co-ruling with husband and sons could be compelling; for example, Tamar of Georgia (r. 1184–1213) was designated and crowned co-ruler with her father, George III (r. 1156–1184).

Studying Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda comparatively helps to understand the experiment of female royal power in the twelfth century and the structural and contingent problems such rulers faced. According to medieval gender norms, women were primarily responsible for bearing and raising children and could not act as military leaders. When women were designated as royal heiresses, they had to overcome these limitations, and they did so by finding appropriate deputies and performing politically nuanced expressions of female behavior, such as careful patronage. The contingent aspects of their queenships were informed by the cultural differences between the Iberian Peninsula, the Holy Land, and the Anglo-Norman realm, which impacted events in ways that would both help and harm these royal heiresses in specific ways. The vision of co-rulership proposed by each heiress' father shows that medieval society was unwelcoming of female authority. Interestingly, though, Urraca was the only queen regnant to rule alone for nearly the entirety of her reign, and hers was the most successful of the three case studies. The experiment of female royal rulership in the twelfth century was an attempt to solve a problem for which there were no written rules. Over the course of Urraca, Melisende, and Matilda's lives, they explored what they could achieve and pushed the boundaries of customary behavior. There was no example for these royal heiresses to follow, and they were the pioneers of female rulership. Their solution to problems exemplifies the ways in which women were limited by their sex but also how they could use their gender to their benefit in order to strengthen their position.

Appendix A



B. Reilly, *The Kingdom of León-Castilla under Queen Urraca, 1109–1126* (Princeton, 1982).

Appendix B

Charter no. 1 to the Church of Santa María de León¹:

1109, 22 July

[*Christus*] ANTIQVA SANCTORVM PATRVM INSTITVCIO TERRENIS PRECIPIT REGIBVS VT ECCLESIAS DEI EDIFICENT ET AMPLIFICENT, / et pro posse suo honorare non cessent sicut sacra testatur scriptura dicens “Qui domum Dei hedificat, semedipsum edificat”. Huic Domini uoci aliquantulum obtemperare cupiens, ego Urraka, Dei nutu totius Yspanie regina, beate / memorie catholici imperatoris domni Adefonsi Constancieque regine filia, huic aecclesiae sanctissime Dei genitricis et semper uirginis Marie sedi, scilicet Legionensi cui aui et proai mei plurima exhibuerunt beneficia, et sanctissime memorie pater meus / exhibuit non minora, kartulam tota mentis intencione facio, et tam regia monasteria cum omnibus uillulis suis que ibi uidentur esse testata, quam etiam uillas a regibus meis scilicet antecessoribus ibi datas, siue ab aliis nobelium filiis, uel / ab omnibus hominibus qui ibi suas pro Deo et pro suis animabus dederunt hereditates, de rausso, et homicidio, et fossataria, et ab omni calumnia regali, uel sagionali pro animabus parentum meorum et pro remedio anime mee liberas esse perpetuo / tempore precipio, tali scilicet conuentione, ut eodem modo sint in omnibus moribus sub iure Sancte Marie honorate, sicut uille et monasteria Sancti Pelagii sunt. Hanc itaque ingenuitatem uel honorem quam huic pontificali sedi et monasteriis / et uillulis suis facio, propter amorem Domini nostril Ihesu Christi, sic eam esse liberam concedo in omnibus que modo possidet, quam in omnibus que Deo donante usque ad finem mundi deinceps adquisierit. Quod si aliquis homo Sancte Marie nodum de hereditate / regis fregerit, nullam aliam calumniam sufferat, sed duplet quod inde secum tulerit. Et neque maiorinus noster, neque ullus qui honorem nostrum tenuerit, accipiat uocem uel manu positam super hominem Sancte Marie. Hereditates autem et homines cuiuslibet ministerii sint, / tam de nostro regalengo quam etiam ex alia parte et omnia que ad obitum regis domni Fredinandi, et ad obitum patris mei regis domni Adefonsi sub iure Sancte Marie actenus permanserunt, semper iam ibi sint, et nullo modo inde auferantur. Quod si / aliquis homo aduersus hanc nostrum serenissimam iussionem contrarius extiterit, perpetua damnetur excommunicatione et habeat partem et societatem cum Datan et Abiron, cum Simone Mago, cum Iuda quoque, atque Nerone, cum diabolo et angelis eius et pereat in eternum, amen / et pontifici huic ecclesie persoluat auri talenta mille. Presens quoque kartula legitime condita, in cunctis plenum obtineat firmitatis robur.

¹ C. Monterde Albiac, ed., *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca de Castilla y León (1109–1126)* (Zaragoza, 1996), p. no.1.

Facta kartula, Domino disponente, noto die XI^o kalendas augusti, sub era I^a C^a XL^a VII^a./

Sub Christi nomine ego Vrraka Domini institutione totius Yspanie regina nobilissimi imperatoris domni Adefonsi Constancieque regine filia, hanc kartam confirm [*Signo*: VRRAKA]. /

Ego Adefonsus eiusdem regine filius, gratia Dei Hyspanie imperator, quod mater mea fecit confirm [*Signo*].

Sancia, filia supradicti nobilissimi regis, et Elisabet regine, hoc factum domine et sororis mee confirm [*Signo*]/

Geloira eiusdem imperatoris et regine filia hanc legitimam kartulam tota mentis intentione confirmo [*Signo*].

[*Col. a*] Bernardus Dei gratia Toletanus archiepiscopus et sancte romane Ecclesie legatus; conf. [*Signo*]; Mauricius Bragarensis archiepiscopus conf.; Petrus Dei nutu huius ecclesie Legionensis episcopus conf. [*Signo*]; Didacus Compostelle ecclesie episcopus conf.; Pelagius Ouetensium episcopus conf.; Pelagius Astoricensis episcopus conf.; Petrus Palentine ecclesie episcopus conf.; Petrus Oximensis episcopus conf.; Geronimus Salamantine ecclesie episcopus conf.; Petrus Lucensis episcopus conf.; Adefonsus Tudensis episcopus conf.; Petrus Menduniensium episcopus conf.

[*Col. b*] Petrus Ansuriz Carrionensium comes conf. [*Signo*]; Gumez Gunzaluiz Castellorum comes conf. [*Signo*]; Rudericus Munioni Asturiensium comes conf. [*Signo*]; Froila Didaci Legionensium comes conf. [*Signo*]; Petrus Froilaz Gallecie comes conf. [*Signo*]; Suarius Ueremudiz consul Gallecie conf. [*Signo*].

[*Col. c*] Aluarus Faniz Toletule dux conf. [*Signo*]; Munio Guterriz maiordomus palatii conf. [*Signo*]; Petrus Gunzaluiz armiger regine conf. [*Signo*]; Fernandus Gunzaluiz conf. [*Signo*]; Adefonsus Telliz conf. [*Signo*]; Tellus Telliz conf. [*Signo*]; Fernandus Telliz conf.

[*Col. d*] Domnus Didacus abbas Sancti Facundi conf. [*Signo*]; Christoforus abbas Sancti Petri Esloncie conf.; Didacus abbas Sancti Claudii conf.; Petrus capellanus regine conf.; Fernandus Petriz regine clericus conf.; Rinaldus regine clericus conf.; Petrus Pelaiz eiusdem curie clericus conf.

[*Col. e*] Qui presentes fuerunt, Petrus testis; Dominicus testis; Martinus testis.

[*Col. f*] Didacus Zarraquiniz uillicus regine in Legione conf. [*Signo*]; Didacus Didaci eiusdem regine uillicus conf. [*Signo*]; Pelagius Michaeli abbas Sancti Pelagii conf. [*Signo*]; Martinus Ordoniz uillicus Sanctae Marie conf. [*Signo*]; Didacus Aluitiz egonomus regine conf. [*Signo*]; Petrus Garciaz prepositus canonice Sancte Marie et archidiaconus cum omnibus canonicis Sancti Isidori toto mentis affectu conf. [*Ocho Signos*].

Iohannes Roderici supradicte regine clericus scripsit [*Signo*: IOHANNE]
Ciprianus petrides, regis notarius, conf. et signum regis impresit [*Signo*].

Charter no. 39 to the Cathedral of Lugo²:

1112, 18 May

[*Christus*] Sub nomine omnipotentis Dei et ob honorem precelse regine domine Marie uirginis cuius sacre relique et uenerandum nomen Lucensem incolunt urbem ubi a Deo crebra miracula mirabiliter atque innumera assidue fiunt. / Ego imperatrix Ispanie domna Urraka per presentis textum seriei offero huic sacratissimo altari uillas et familias quas infra terminos ipsius urbis ex regia successione abeo, Cauleo, Uarzena, Piniario et quicquid in Robora ex regia possession / uidetur aberi, tam ereditates quam regias quascunque infra ipsos terminos abeo familias ab integro. Eo nimirum tenore ut amodo reddant loco eidem quicquid palatino imperio ex more reddere cogebantur ab omni nostra seruitute liberi et excussi. / Nunc autem domina et regina Ihesu Christi mater Maria rogo ut acceptabilem abeas hanc licet paruam oblationem ac deferas mea suspiria et lacrimas et gemitus ante conspectum diuine maiestatis quatinus pia tua intercessio auxilietur mihi ad inquirendum / regnum et pacifice possidendum patris mei et sis mihi clipeus et protection in hoc seculo et in die tremendi iudicii. Et accipio de gazofilatio beate Marie marcas argenti C^m. de sacratis ornamentis altaris eiusdem Uirginis ut reddam donatiua militibus meis pro quibus omnibus / et uillam de Gonterici cum supradictis hereditatibus presente loco beate Marie per huius scripture testum concedo et uniuersam regiam familiam pertinentem ad me quecunque in cauto Lucensis sedis abitat siue ad abitandum uenerit ad futurum. / Si uero quod absit quislibet hoc quod ego facio uiolare temptauerit quicquid petierit duplatum componat et scriptura stabilis / abeat et inconuulsa permaneat imperpetuum. /

Factum sub era I^a. C^a. L^a, XV^o kalendas iunii. Ego iam dicta imperatrix domna V[rraka] conf. [*Signo*: VRRAKA]...

[*Col. a*] Histi sunt testes qui presentes fuerunt Petrus, Pelagius, Suarius; Petrus Dei gratia Lucensis episcopus conf. [*Signo*]; Pelagius archidiaconus conf. [*Signo*]; Nunnio archidiaconus conf.; Bernardus archidiaconus conf. [*Signo*]; Vistrarius archidiaconus conf.

[*Col. b*] Ouecus consul conf.; Ero Armentariz conf.; Iohannes Ramiri conf.; Anfonus Telli conf.

[*Col. c*] Petrus commes Gallicie conf.; Rudericus Ueile conf.; Munio Pelagii conf.; Osorius Ueremudi conf.; Didacus Petri conf.; Veremudus Petri conf.

² Monterde Albiac, *Diplomatario de la Reina Urraca*, no. 39.

Pelagius Lucensis notauit [*Signo*].

Martinus ecclesie Beati Iacobi canonicus et eo tempore regine domne Urrake curialis notarius hanc scripturam quam iussione regine fieri mandauit conf. [*Signo*: MARTINVS].

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