

Women in the Royal Succession of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem (1099–1291)*

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»During this time Baldwin, king of Jerusalem, died, leaving a daughter of marriageable age (for he lacked a son) as heir to the kingdom, which was deservedly divided against itself, forsaken on account of its sins, and despised by the pagans, since it had passed into the hands of a girl, in what was no good omen for government. For each of the foremost men of the kingdom desired to become ruler and wanted to secure the girl and the royal inheritance by marriage – to himself, if he lacked a wife, to his son, if he was married, or to a kinsman, if he had no son of his own; this caused the greatest ill-will among them, which led to the destruction of the kingdom. Yet she, spurning the natives of the realm, took up with Guy, count of Ascalon, a new arrival of elegant appearance and proven courage, and, with the approval of both the patriarch and the knights of the Temple, took him as her husband and conferred the kingdom on him«¹).

*) Dates given in parentheses in this essay relate to the reigns of the individuals as kings or queens of Jerusalem. For ease of reference, royal documents issued in the kingdom of Jerusalem will be given according to their number in: *Die Urkunden der lateinischen Könige von Jerusalem*, ed. Hans Eberhard MAYER, 4 vols. (MGH Diplomata Regum Latinorum Hierosolymitanorum), Hanover 2010 (cited henceforth as D/DDJerus.), as well as those in the calendared forms given in: *Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani (MXCVII–MCCXCI)*, ed. Reinhold RÖHRICHT, 2 vols., Innsbruck 1893–1904 (cited henceforth as RRH), which has been widely used in earlier scholarship.

1) Die Chronik Ottos von St. Blasien und die Marbacher Annalen, ed. and transl. Franz-Josef SCHMALE (Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters. Freiherr vom Stein-Gedächtnisausgabe 18a), Darmstadt 1998, p. 82: *His temporibus Baldewinus rex Hierosolimorum moriens filiam nubilem – nam filio carebat – regni reliquit heredem, quod merito in se ipsum divisum peccatis exigentibus desolandum et a paganis conculandum erat, quia in manus puelle non bono omine regendum devenerat. Nam principum ipsius regni quisque regnare gestiens eandem puellam cum regno hereditario sibi, si coniugio carebat, vel filio, si coniugatus, vel proximo, filio carens, iungi desiderabat, hacque de causa maxima inter eos conflata invidia regum dedit exicio. Ipsa autem spretis indigenis Widonem comitem Ascalonem, advenam videlicet elegantis forme spectateque fortitudinis virum, ascivit eumque regno induens favente patriarcha necnon militibus Templi sibi matrimonium coniunxit.*

The words of the German chronicler Otto of St. Blasien give a moralising but misleading account of the political situation in the kingdom of Jerusalem on the death of the leper-king Baldwin IV in 1185. The unnamed heiress whose behaviour is censured was not the king's daughter, but his elder sister Sibyl. She had first been married as early as 1176, to William Longsword, marquis of Montferrat, with whom she had a son, Baldwin V (d. 1186). It was this younger Baldwin who was first crowned as heir to the leper-king, and it was only on his death while still a child that Sibyl succeeded to the throne along with her second husband, Guy of Lusignan. Sibyl had married Guy in 1180 with the approval of Baldwin IV, who granted him the county of Ascalon, but one gains a quite different sense of Sibyl's motivation and actions from the account of Otto of St. Blasien. As well as omitting any mention of the young Baldwin V, Otto rearranges the chronology and circumstances of Sibyl's second marriage in order to give the impression of a wanton woman who, suddenly freed from the constraints imposed by her royal kinsman, brings dissension on the kingdom through a pernicious union of her own choosing. Writing with the knowledge of the disastrous defeat of the Franks of Jerusalem by Saladin at the battle of Hattin in 1187, the monk of St. Blasien identifies Queen Sibyl's wilful choice of husband as the cause of all dissent and factionalism in the realm, echoing the biblical words about the fate of a kingdom divided against itself²). Otto's tendentious interpretation of the recent history of the Latin East was typical of the misogynist views often found in monastic environments, but it is likely that it was reinforced by political conditions in those kingdoms with which he would have been more familiar. The elective character of the kingship of Germany effectively excluded hereditary succession, and thus prevented the appearance of women as rulers in their own right. In France good fortune and a series of healthy marriage partners produced an unbroken succession of male heirs in the Capetian dynasty over a period of three and a half centuries until the deaths of King Louis X and his infant son John in the early fourteenth century³). It is scarcely surprising that the German chronicler saw the accession of a woman in Jerusalem as an offence against the natural order, which ultimately led directly to the downfall of the kingdom.

2) On the chronology, cf. Thomas VOGTHERR, *Die Regierungsdaten der lateinischen Könige von Jerusalem*, in: *Zeitschrift des Deutschen Palästina-Vereins* 110 (1994), pp. 51–81 (here 64–70). On factionalism in the kingdom, Peter W. EDBURY, *Propaganda and Faction in the Kingdom of Jerusalem. The Background to Hattin*, in: *Crusaders and Muslims in Twelfth-Century Syria*, ed. Maya SHATZMILLER (*The Medieval Mediterranean* 1), Leiden 1993, pp. 173–189. The Biblical allusion is closest to Luke 11.17 and Matthew 12.25.

3) Heinrich MITTEIS, *Die deutsche Königswahl. Ihre Rechtsgrundlagen bis zur Goldenen Bulle*, Brno/Munich/Vienna 1944; Bernd KANOWSKI, *The Impact of Lineage and Family Connections on Succession in Medieval Germany's Elective Kingdom*, in: *Making and Breaking the Rules. Succession in Medieval Europe, c. 1000 – c. 1600/Établir et abolir les normes. La succession dans l'Europe médiévale, vers 1000 – vers 1600*, ed. Frédérique LACHAUD/Michael PENMAN (*Histoires de famille. La parenté au Moyen Âge*, 9), Turnhout 2008, pp. 13–22.

In contrast to the kingdoms of the West, the occurrence of female rulers was surprisingly frequent on the farthest eastern frontier of Latin Christendom (see Table 1). The first three rulers of the kingdom of Jerusalem were all men who had arrived with the First Crusade in 1099, but the second generation saw the first case of female succession in 1131 in the person of Queen Melisende, who ruled for over thirty years, first with her husband, then as sole monarch, and then jointly with her elder son until he excluded her from government. After the reigns of her two sons and her only grandson, the death of Melisende's infant great-grandson Baldwin V in 1186 was followed by a series of four ruling queens in three generations. Melisende's granddaughters, the two half-sisters Sibyl (or Sibylla) and Isabella I, had a total of six husbands between them, four of whom served as ruling consorts. Their reigns coincided with a highly turbulent period in the kingdom's history, extending from the defeat of the Christian forces at the battle of Hattin in 1187 and the conquest of the Frankish states by the Muslim leader Saladin, through the events of the Third Crusade and the eventual restitution of a smaller, largely coastal strip of Frankish territory by the end of the twelfth century. The short reigns of Isabella I's daughter Maria and her granddaughter Isabella II demonstrated the fragility of the succession; both women lived only long enough for each of them to marry and produce a single heir. From 1228 until the extinction of the kingdom in 1291 all the monarchs were men, but a constitutional peculiarity of the Latin kingdom meant that during this period it was possible for women to exercise power – at least in name – as regents for under-age or absentee monarchs⁴).

This essay aims to give an outline of the succession and rule of women in the kingdom of Jerusalem, while concentrating on three main aspects of queenship. Why were cases of

4) On the ruling kings and queens of Jerusalem and their consorts, cf. especially: Alan V. MURRAY, *The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem. A Dynastic History, 1099–1125* (*Prosopographica et Genealogica* 4), Oxford 2000; Bernard HAMILTON, *Women in the Crusader States. The Queens of Jerusalem*, in: *Medieval Women*, ed. Derek BAKER (*Studies in Church History. Subsidia* 1), Oxford 1978, pp. 143–174; Hans Eberhard MAYER, *Studies in the History of Queen Melisende*, in: *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 26 (1972), pp. 95–182; Bernard HAMILTON, *The Leper King and his Heirs. Baldwin IV and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem*, Cambridge 2000; Sarah LAMBERT, *Queen or Consort. Rulership and Politics in the Latin East, 1118–1228*, in: *Queens and Queenship in Medieval Europe. Proceedings of a Conference Held at Kings College London, April 1995*, ed. Anne DUGGAN, Woodbridge 1997, pp. 153–169; Bernard HAMILTON, *King Consorts of Jerusalem and their Entourages from the West from 1186 to 1250*, in: *Die Kreuzfahrerstaaten als multikulturelle Gesellschaft. Einwanderer und Minderheiten im 12. und 13. Jahrhundert*, ed. Hans Eberhard MAYER (*Schriften des Historischen Kollegs. Kolloquien* 37), Munich 1997, pp. 13–24; Svetlana LUCHITZKY, *Ad succurendum. Wie starben die Könige von Jerusalem?*, in: *Mediaevistik. Internationale Zeitschrift für interdisziplinäre Mittelalterforschung* 22 (2009), pp. 49–82; 23 (2010), pp. 105–114; Peter W. EDBURY, *John of Ibelin and the Kingdom of Jerusalem*, Woodbridge 1997; Deborah GERISH, *Ancestors and Predecessors. Royal Continuity and Identity in the First Kingdom of Jerusalem*, in: *Anglo-Norman Studies XX. Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1997*, ed. Christopher HARPER-BILL, Woodbridge 1998, pp. 127–159; Guy PERRY, *John of Brienne. King of Jerusalem, Emperor of Constantinople, c. 1175–1237*, Cambridge 2013.

female succession so frequent in comparison with Western Christendom as a whole, and what were the circumstances in which women obtained the throne? What factors determined the choice of husbands for heiresses or reigning queens? And finally, to what extent were they regarded as rulers in their own right, or were they merely seen as transmitting rule to their husbands or male heirs?⁵⁾

I. MALE AND FEMALE RULERS IN THE KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM

In terms of the responsibilities and expectations placed upon a ruler, the geopolitical and constitutional realities of a kingdom situated at the most easterly edge of Latin Christendom were anything but propitious for female rule. A monarch not only exercised executive powers, but also had to function personally as military leader to a far greater extent than was expected of any monarch in the West. The principalities of Outremer were surrounded by hostile Muslim powers on their northern, eastern and southern frontiers, and their rulers had to be prepared at any time to march into battle to defend their own dominions or those of their allies; while the military obligations of vassals in the West were coming to be restricted by custom to forty days' service in the year, holders of fiefs in Palestine were liable for unrestricted service in the defence of the kingdom⁶⁾. The inability of female rulers to wage war in person greatly circumscribed their freedom of action in political terms, while their absence from this fundamental monarchic activity reduced the visibility of both queens regnant and female consorts in the narratives of the period⁷⁾.

This phenomenon is particularly noticeable in the principal source for the twelfth-century kingdom, the great chronicle of William, archbishop of Tyre, which is structured according to the reigns of the kings of Jerusalem up to the year 1186⁸⁾. Thus, while begin-

5) For the last idea, cf. especially Lois HUNEYDUTT, *Female Succession and the Language of Power*, in: *Medieval Queenship*, ed. John Carmi PARSONS, Stroud 1994, pp. 189–201.

6) The contemporary term »Outremer«, meaning literally »(the land) beyond the sea« is used in this essay to describe the four Latin states in the Levant (Jerusalem, Tripoli, Antioch and Edessa), in preference to »Crusader States« which is often found in scholarship (cf. German *Kreuzfahrerstaaten*). The latter designation is unsatisfactory as a general description, since it suggests that their populations were made up of crusaders, whereas few Frankish settlers after the first generation were crusaders in the canonical sense of having taken a crusade vow. It thus seems more helpful to avoid this term, not least in order to underline the important distinction between Frankish settlers and crusaders from the West, which often had a wider significance in the politics of the Holy Land after the mid-twelfth century.

7) HAMILTON, *Women* (as n. 4), p. 143; Deborah GERISH, *Holy War, Royal Wives, and Equivocation in Twelfth-Century Jerusalem*, in: *Noble Ideals and Bloody Realities. Warfare in the Middle Ages*, ed. Niall CHRISTIE/Maya YAZIGI, Leiden 2006, pp. 119–144.

8) William of Tyre, *Willelmi Tyrensis archiepiscopi Chronicon*, ed. R. B. C. HUYGENS (CC Cont. Med. 63, 63 A), Turnhout 1986 (to facilitate use of other editions and translations of this work, references

ning his account of the joint reign of Queen Melisende and her husband Fulk of Anjou in 1131, William starts by describing the latter's physical appearance and character, going on to describe his mental abilities, ancestry and personal history before his arrival in the Holy Land. Fulk's right to the throne of Jerusalem derived solely through his marriage to Melisende, the eldest daughter of King Baldwin II, but at this point we learn nothing of Melisende's personal appearance, character or education. It is her husband and consort, rather than the queen herself, whom William places firmly within his chosen organising structure of a line of male rulers of the kingdom, stretching from the illustrious Godfrey of Bouillon, elected as ruler by the victorious crusaders in 1099, to Baldwin IV, who occupied the throne during William's own lifetime, even though it was Melisende who provided the crucial genealogical link with the founding generation⁹).

The continual warfare that beset the kingdom affected the health of several of its kings, whether through the cumulative effects of campaigning, exposure to health hazards, or both. Baldwin I died while returning from an expedition to Egypt either of a disease contracted there or from the effects of a previous wound sustained in battle. Both Baldwin III and his brother Amalric contracted illnesses while leading their armies, dying at the ages of thirty-three and thirty-eight respectively, while the leper-king Baldwin IV, whose health was undoubtedly made worse by the effects of repeated campaigns, failed to reach his twenty-fourth birthday. The deaths of the latter two kings led to the succession of minors, while in the thirteenth century the acquisition of the crown first by the Hohenstaufen dynasty and then by the Lusignan rulers of Cyprus produced a series of absentee monarchs. Two other kings (Baldwin II and Guy of Lusignan) spent periods in Muslim imprisonment after being captured in battle.

In Western Europe the minority, captivity or other absence of a monarch was often the occasion for the powers of regency to be vested in a queen consort or a queen mother; one thinks of energetic women such as Agnes of Poitou and Blanche of Castile acting as regents for their sons Henry IV of Germany and Louis IX of France. In Jerusalem, by contrast, such transfers of power were anything but automatic, since regents had to be as active as the monarchs they replaced. Thus during the eighteen-month captivity of King Baldwin II in northern Syria in 1123–1124 there was evidently no question of the regency being conferred on the queen, and executive power was granted to the constable, Eustace Granarius¹⁰). Baldwin IV and Baldwin V both came to the throne as minors, yet although their mothers were alive and healthy it was male relatives who were appointed as regents for them¹¹). Even those royal women who succeeded in asserting their rights to the regen-

will be given to books and chapters as well as to pages). Peter W. EDBURY/John Gordon ROWE, *William of Tyre. Historian of the Latin East*, Cambridge 1988, pp. 61–84.

9) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XIV, 1, pp. 631–633.

10) MURRAY, *Crusader Kingdom* (as n. 4), pp. 135–146.

11) Miles of Plancy and subsequently Count Raymond III of Tripoli for Baldwin IV; Raymond III for Baldwin V: cf. HAMILTON, *Leper King* (as n. 4), pp. 84–90, 205–210.

cy through the High Court of the kingdom in the thirteenth were obliged to appoint male lieutenants to exercise executive authority on their behalf.

While the government of women as regents was problematic, the proportion of five queens regnant out of a total of sixteen rulers (31 per cent) is especially striking if we compare the kingdom of Jerusalem with the rest of Latin Christendom. According to Armin Wolf, between the years 1100 and 1600 there were twenty reigning queens in seventeen kingdoms of mainland Europe. While he gave no figures for male rulers over the same period, he calculated that out of exactly one hundred cases of monarchic succession between 1350 and 1450, only 12 per cent of new rulers were women. Since his data shows a far greater proportion of reigning queens during the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries compared with the earlier period, it is likely that the overall proportion of cases of female rulership over the entire 500 years under discussion in Wolf's essay would be even lower than this¹². While it was accepted in most hereditary monarchies that the succession could be transmitted *through* the female line, there was in practice often a great resistance to the prospect of female rule in person, even if the putative queen was already married. In England, where the traditional Anglo-Saxon monarchy had been replaced by a newer form of continental kingship as a result of the Norman Conquest of 1066, the prospect of the succession of Henry I's daughter Matilda the Empress and her husband Geoffrey of Anjou in 1128 meant that her cousin Stephen of Blois was able to seize the throne with the support or approbation of large sections of the Anglo-Norman ruling classes¹³. In 1195 the Scottish magnates forced King William the Lion to recognise his brother David, earl of Huntingdon, as heir in preference to his own daughter Margaret. Over a century later, King Robert I of Scotland accepted the rights of his brother Edward and Edward's future male heirs in preference to those of his own daughter Marjorie¹⁴.

In his monumental history of the crusades, Sir Steven Runciman made the somewhat throwaway remark that among the immigrant Frankish population in Outremer »infant mortality was high, especially among the boys«, although he cited no evidence for this assertion¹⁵. The issue of infant mortality in the Middle Ages as a whole is problematic, given that children who died in infancy were not always recorded in the surviving sources, but we can at least examine the relative frequency of the sexes of children born to the ruling monarchs. King Baldwin IV contracted leprosy while still a child and was thus unable to marry, while his nephew Baldwin V died before reaching adulthood. The remaining ten male rulers and five queens regnant produced at least thirty-four children, of whom twenty-one (almost 62 per cent) were female. Even if we consider that several of the fe-

12) Armin WOLF, *Reigning Queens in Medieval Europe. When, Where, and Why*, in: *Medieval Queenship*, ed. John Carmi PARSONS, Stroud 1994, pp. 169–188.

13) David CROUCH, *The Reign of King Stephen, 1135–1154*, Harlow 2000.

14) Michael PENMAN, *Diffinizione successionis ad regnum Scottorum*. Royal Succession in Scotland in the Later Middle Ages, in: *Making and Breaking the Rules* (as n. 3), pp. 43–60.

15) Steven RUNCIMAN, *A History of the Crusades*, 3 vols., Cambridge 1952–1956, vol. 1, p. 324.

male children died in infancy, this constitutes a higher than normal sex ratio in favour of females (see Table 2). Yet, while there was a greater pool of females than males within the ruling dynasties, it was the distribution of the sexes within each generation which was the crucial factor in determining the succession of women. Two monarchs (Baldwin II and Maria) produced only female heirs; three others (Amalric, Sibyl and Isabella I) each produced a single male heir (Baldwin IV, Baldwin V and Amalric the Young), whose own early deaths without heirs meant that the succession would pass to a female relative.

While the first three rulers of the kingdom of Jerusalem were men, their examples serve to illuminate some of the particular factors which influenced the situation of queens regnant and queens consort in Outremer. All three came to the East with the First Crusade. Godfrey of Bouillon (1099–1100) was still unmarried by the time of his death in 1100. His younger brother Baldwin I (1100–1118) had been accompanied on crusade by his wife, the Norman Godehild of Tosny, who died of the rigours of the journey before she could produce any children¹⁶. Both Baldwin I and his cousin Baldwin II succeeded in turn to the county of Edessa (mod. Şanlıurfa, Turkey) in Upper Mesopotamia before becoming kings of Jerusalem in 1100 and 1118 respectively, a responsibility which meant that both were under the expectation to marry and produce heirs. However, the relatively small numbers of women who accompanied the crusade from Europe meant that there were few potential marriage partners of appropriate social status available for the Frankish rulers among the immigrant Western population in the East, and in the early period of the settlement it was an impractical and time-consuming business to fetch wives from the West¹⁷. Thus while they were still counts of Edessa, both Baldwin I and Baldwin II found wives among the aristocracy of the Armenian lordships situated to the north of the new Frankish principalities. Since many of the Armenian lords adhered to the Chalcedonian faith professed by the Greek Orthodox (Melkite) church rather than the beliefs of the separated Armenian Orthodox church, this policy ensured that the Franks could contract alliances with regional powers through marriage partners who were of appropriate social standing and in communion with the Latin church¹⁸.

16) RUNCIMAN, *History* (as n. 15), vol. 1, pp. 147, 200–201, claims that during the crusade Baldwin and Godehild had children »who did not survive«. In fact no sources give any indication of such children and it is likely that Runciman's interpretation derives from a faulty understanding of the term *familia* which was used in the sense of »household« by the chronicler William of Tyre, who refers to *dominum Baldvini, ducis fratrem, cum uxore et familia*. William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), II, 2, p. 164. Baldwin I had no children by either of his subsequent two marriages.

17) Jonathan RILEY-SMITH, *The First Crusaders, 1095–1131*, Cambridge 1997; Alan V. MURRAY, *Sex, Death and the Problem of Single Women in the Armies of the First Crusade*, in: *Shipping, Trade and Crusade in the Medieval Mediterranean. Studies in Honour of John Pryor*, ed. Ruthy GERTWAGEN/Elizabeth JEFFREYS, Farnham 2012, pp. 255–277.

18) Viada A. ARUTYUNOVA-FIDANYAN, *The Ethno-Confessional Self-Awareness of Armenian Chalcedonians*, in: *Revue des études arméniennes* n. s. 21 (1988–1989), pp. 345–363; James H. FORSE, *Armenians and the First Crusade*, in: *Journal of Medieval History* 17 (1991), pp. 13–22; MURRAY, *Crusader Kingdom*

II. GOVERNMENT BETWEEN HUSBAND AND SON: MELISENDE (1131–1162)

Since Godfrey of Bouillon and Baldwin I died without children, the throne passed to male heirs in both cases, and it was only with the third monarch, Baldwin II of Bourcq (1118–1131), that the question of female succession arose for the first time. He and his wife Morfia, an Armenian, had four daughters, but the position of the new dynasty was by no means secure¹⁹. Baldwin II had been accepted as king by the majority of the kingdom's magnates in preference to the designated heir, the late king's elder brother Count Eustace III of Boulogne. In 1124 or 1125 a dissident faction within the nobility, tired of the kingdom's constant military involvement in northern Syria, made an abortive attempt to exploit the king's capture by the Turks by replacing him with Count Charles the Good of Flanders. Even after he was released from captivity there was still a possibility that another such attempt might be made on behalf of the comital family of Boulogne²⁰. To secure his lineage Baldwin II would need to find a husband for his eldest daughter, Melisende, who would sire an heir and eventually exercise executive and military command as king consort. The king and his advisors selected Fulk V, count of Anjou, who married Melisende in 1129. After the death of Baldwin II, Fulk and Melisende were anointed and crowned on the Feast of Exaltation of the Cross (14 September) in 1131. The reign of Melisende has been treated in magisterial fashion by Mayer, whose conclusions are founded in an exhaustive, forensic study of the documents issued during her reign, while additional aspects have been clarified by scholars such as Hamilton and others. There are, however, some issues which deserve closer examination in connection with the nature of female rulership.

The first concerns the age of Melisende at the time of her betrothal. Baldwin had married his Armenian wife, Morfia, in 1103. William of Tyre relates that Melisende and her younger sisters Alice and Hodierna were born while their father was still count of Edessa,

(as n. 4), p. 182; Natasha HODGSON, Conflict and Cohabitation. Marriage and Diplomacy between Latins and Cilician Armenians, c. 1097–1253, in: *The Crusades and the Near East. Cultural Histories*, ed. Conor KOSTICK, London 2011, pp. 83–106. William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), X, 24, p. 482 relates that the father-in-law of Baldwin II, Gabriel of Malatya, was »Armenian by birth, language and habit, but Greek [i.e. Melkite] in faith« (*Erat autem predictus Gabriel natione, lingua et habitu Armenius, fide tamen Graecus*). 19) On the origins and heritage of Baldwin II, cf.: Pascal SABOURIN, Baudoin [sic] de Bourcq, crois , comte d'Edesse, roi de J rusalem, in: *Revue historique ardennaise* 31 (1996), pp. 3–15; Jean-No l MATTHIEU, Sur les comtesses de Rethel au XIe si cle. Contribution   l'histoire des comtes de Rethel et des comtes de Porcien, in: *Revue historique ardennaise* 32 (1997), pp. 3–19; Alan V. MURRAY, Kingship, Identity and Name-Giving in the Family of Baldwin of Bourcq, in: *Knighthoods of Christ. Essays on the History of the Crusades and the Knights Templar*, presented to Malcolm Barber, ed. Norman HOUSLEY, Aldershot 2007, pp. 27–38.

20) Alan V. MURRAY, Baldwin II and His Nobles. Baronial Factionalism and Dissent in the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1118–1134, in: *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 38 (1994), pp. 60–85; MURRAY, *Crusader Kingdom* (as n. 2), pp. 132–146.

while the fourth daughter, Yveta, was born after Baldwin's accession to the throne of Jerusalem, that is in 1118. Hiestand and Mayer have reconstructed the birthdates of the sisters to argue that Melisende was born in or after 1109. However, it can be argued that given the necessity of Baldwin II to produce an heir as soon as possible after his marriage, and the evident fertility of the couple, it is more likely that their first child would have been born relatively early on in the period we have identified, that is in 1104 or soon after²¹). That would mean that Melisende may have been as old as twenty-four when she was betrothed to Fulk, which was relatively advanced for the time, especially since there are no indications of any previous engagements. Even if we accept the median date of 1109, this would mean that Melisende was around nineteen at the time of her engagement, an age when most Western princesses had been married or at least betrothed. A possible explanation would be that even after his accession to the throne of Jerusalem in 1118, Baldwin II still had hopes of siring a son. Until that event occurred, Melisende would remain the heir apparent, and the king may well have been unwilling to marry her off too cheaply in view of that status; equally, potential husbands of the requisite rank were probably unwilling to commit to marriage as long as there was the prospect of a male heir who might still displace Melisende in the succession.

If it had been imperative to ensure the succession of a male in preference to Melisende, there is no reason why another adult relative of the king could not have been designated as heir instead of her at some point during Baldwin II's reign. The king's brother Gervase was count of Rethel, a *pagus* situated on the north-eastern periphery of the kingdom of France. Gervase's son Ither is known to have visited Jerusalem in 1128, as is attested by the appearance of the name *Gwitterius sororius regis* as a witness to a royal charter issued in that year²²). Since the marriage negotiations with Fulk were in progress by this time, it is possible that Ither's visit was connected with family business. The decision to exclude Gervase, Ither and other members of the comital family of Rethel from the succession

21) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), X, 24, p. 482; XII, 4, p. 551; Rudolf HIESTAND, *Chronologisches zur Geschichte des Königreiches Jerusalem um 1130*, in: DA 26 (1970), pp. 220–229; Hans Eberhard MAYER, *Bistümer, Klöster und Stifte im Königreich Jerusalem* (MGH Schriften 26), Stuttgart 1977, pp. 249–257. While Alice and Hodierna were married into the ruling families of Antioch and Tripoli respectively, Yveta became abbess of Bethany. Mayer suggests that this disposition was made since, as the only *porphyrogeneta* among the four daughters, Yveta presented a potential threat to the claim of Melisende. However, there is no evidence that the predominantly Byzantine custom of porphyrogeniture was a consideration in the succession of the Latin states at this time. A more pragmatic consideration against the notion that Yveta's status as *porphyrogeneta* gave her a better claim to the throne than Melisende, is that given her extreme youth it would be several years before she could be married, a circumstance which could only endanger the security of the realm.

22) DJerus. no. 105 (RRH no. 121); Alan V. MURRAY, *Dynastic Continuity or Dynastic Change? The Accession of Baldwin II and the Nobility of the Kingdom of Jerusalem*, in: *Medieval Prosopography* 13 (1992), pp. 1–28 (for genealogical table of the Rethel dynasty); MURRAY, *Crusader Kingdom* (as n. 4), p. 130.

in Jerusalem seems to be an early expression of a principle that only heirs actually resident in the East would be considered, even if this meant privileging females over more distantly located males. On agreeing to marry Melisende, Fulk had made over his counties in France to his son Geoffrey and after coming to Palestine would presumably have no further interest in Anjou.

The precise constitutional settlement for the time after Baldwin II's death has been subject to some debate. In his most detailed discussion of the issue, Mayer argued that during their initial negotiations Baldwin II and his magnates promised Fulk that he would replace Melisende as sole heir to the kingdom, but that in 1131 the king unilaterally changed the terms of the succession to vest it in a joint rule (*Samtherrschaft*) of Melisende, Fulk and their young son Baldwin III, who had been born the previous year²³. William of Tyre's formulation that Fulk was originally offered »the expectation of the kingdom after the death of the king« (*cum spe regni post regis obitum*) does not necessarily *exclude* the rights of Melisende in it; the pattern for subsequent male consorts was that most of them were granted the royal title. Mayer's main evidence that Melisende was initially demoted in status is that a charter issued by Baldwin II (probably issued in 1130/1131) no longer names her as heir to the kingdom (*haeres regni*) as previous documents had done, but only as *filia mea*²⁴. This seems to place an undue significance on a single, undated document. Similarly, William of Tyre's description of how Baldwin II committed the care of the kingdom with full power to his daughter, son-in-law and grandson can be perfectly understood as a final confirmation of an existing, recognised constitutional settlement rather than a sudden deathbed alteration, particularly one that was supposedly made without the agreement of the magnates²⁵. A final argument against a tripartite *Samtherrschaft* from 1131 onwards is that the young Baldwin III was not anointed and crowned along with his parents on their accession; this did not happen until he reached the age of thirteen in 1143. It would have been perfectly possible to have the child crowned along with his parents in 1131²⁶.

Royal documents issued from 1131 were at first issued in the name of Fulk as king, with the consent of Melisende, who is usually described as *regina* as well as the wife of Fulk²⁷. From 1138 the consent of the young Baldwin III is also added, suggesting that from a relatively young age he was being associated in the business of government, but

23) MAYER, *Studies* (as n. 4), pp. 98–99; MAYER, *Geschichte der Kreuzzüge*, Stuttgart¹⁰2005, p. 109.

24) DJerus. no. 124 (RRH no. 137).

25) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XIII, 28, p. 625: *Ibique accitis filia et genero pueroque Balduino iam bimulo, coram positis domino patriarcha et ecclesiarum prelates et de principibus nonnullis, qui forte aderant, regni curam et plenam eis tradidit potestatem, more pii principis paterna eis benedictione indulta.*

26) Thus the infant Baldwin V was crowned during the lifetime of his uncle Baldwin IV: VOGTHERR, *Regierungsdaten* (as n. 1), pp. 61, 67.

27) DDJerus. nos. 131, 132 (RRH no. 163), 134, 135 (RRH no. 164), 137, 138 (RRH no. 174).

that he was not yet regarded as co-equal with his parents²⁸). Fulk was considerably older than his wife, and unlike several later royal consorts he had governed a polity comprising several counties in France for many decades. We know almost nothing of Melisende's upbringing and education, but it is likely that she had greater experience of the world around her than most subsequent princesses of the kingdom. One striking feature is her transcultural heritage. Her Frankish father and Armenian mother can hardly have known more than a few words of each other's languages at the time they married, but it would certainly have been in the interests of her parents for Melisende to learn both tongues. It is thus quite possible that as she grew up, like other bilingual children of predominantly monolingual parents, Melisende served as a linguistic intermediary between her father on the one hand, and her mother and other maternal relatives on the other. She was certainly older than most young women of her class at the time of her marriage, and had seen more of the world, having lived in the Franco-Armenian county of Edessa as well as Palestine. Finally, from around the time that she was explicitly recognised as her father's successor she began to be associated with him in charters, suggesting that by this time at the latest she was being inducted into the business of government²⁹).

It is thus likely that both Fulk and Melisende were keenly aware of their own rights and responsibilities as monarchs, and that these conceptions of rulership were not necessarily in harmony. Soon after his accession, Fulk began to award key offices of state to newcomers, many of them from his own part of western central France. This change was resented by the older established nobility whose origins lay in the Low Countries, northern France, Normandy and Lotharingia³⁰). It is probably going too far to claim that nobles of legitimist sentiment feared that Fulk planned to depose his own son by Melisende and replace him with one of his elder sons by an earlier marriage³¹). Yet there was sufficient concern among the legitimist nobles to produce a revolt aimed at restraining Fulk's action. Its leader was Melisende's cousin Hugh of Le Puiset, count of Jaffa, whom William of Tyre accuses of having been too intimate with the queen, thus arousing Fulk's wrath³²). These sometimes elliptical remarks have often been mistakenly interpreted by earlier scholarship as implying some kind of illicit love affair, but in fact at the time Hugh was the queen's closest adult male relative, and his revolt was aimed at safeguarding

28) DDJerus. nos. 139 (RRH no. 181), 141 (RRH no. 179), 146 (RRH no. 210).

29) DDJerus. nos. 100, 105 (RRH no. 121), 124 (RRH no. 137); HIESTAND, *Chronologisches* (as n. 21), pp. 220–229. On the county of Edessa as a Franco-Armenian polity, cf. Christopher MACEVITT, *The Crusades and the Christian World of the East. Rough Tolerance*, Philadelphia 2008.

30) Hans Eberhard MAYER, *Angevins versus Normans. The New Men of King Fulk of Jerusalem*, in: *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 133 (1989), pp. 1–25.

31) MAYER, *Studies* (as n. 4), pp. 107–110. This demonstrable legitimist sentiment is another reason why it is unlikely that the magnates would have agreed to Melisende's rights being set aside in favour of Fulk as sole heir at the time of their marriage.

32) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XIV, 15–18, pp. 651–656.

the rights of the dynasty³³). Even though Hugh was forced to leave the kingdom for a period, the sentiment that he represented produced a new settlement between king and queen, in which Fulk was obliged to defer to his wife to a far greater degree than in the past, so much so that William of Tyre describes his attitude as »uxorious«; a concrete example of the new relationship was the fact that when Melisende's sister Alice seized the regency of Antioch, going against dispositions made by Fulk when he had been accepted as regent there, the king took his wife's advice not to make an attempt to remove her. The reconciliation between Fulk and Melisende produced fruit in the form of their second son, Amalric, born in 1136.

The key period of Melisende's life as ruler followed the death of her husband in November 1143. At Christmas she and Baldwin III were crowned; Baldwin was also anointed, Melisende having already received unction in 1131. The most complete royal documents surviving from this time were issued in the joint names of Baldwin as king and Melisende as queen³⁴). Despite the potentially precarious situation of a single woman ruling with an under-age heir, no regent was appointed; Melisende effectively ruled as sole monarch.

Her experience of government, which must have grown during her husband's absences on campaign in the north of Outremer, evidently countered any potential objections to the lack of any male regent, as indicated by William of Tyre, who described her as »a most prudent woman with much experience in almost all secular matters, entirely overcoming the condition of the female sex«. He went on to explain how these abilities combined with her son's youth to justify her rule: »As her son was still under age, she ruled the kingdom with such diligence and looked after it with such wisdom that she could be said to have equalled her ancestors in these respects. As long as her son was willing to be governed by her counsel, the people enjoyed much desired peace and the affairs of the realm prospered«³⁵).

Soon after the death of Fulk, the queen made new appointments in the royal household and chancery. The Angevin chancellor Elias was transferred to the bishopric of Tiberias and replaced by a new incumbent, Ralph³⁶). The most important appointment,

33) MAYER, *Studies* (as n. 4), pp. 102–112; MURRAY, *Baldwin II* (as n. 20).

34) DDJerus. nos. 212 (RRH no. 227), 214 (RRH no. 244), 215 (RRH no. 240), 216 (RRH no. 245), 175 (RRH no. 256), 177 (RRH no. 262).

35) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XVI, 3, p. 717: *Erat autem mater mulier prudentissima, plenam pene in omnibus secularibus negociis habens experimentiam, sexus feminei plane vincens conditionem, ita ut manum mitteret ad fortia et optimorum principum magnificentiam niteretur emulari et eorum studia passu non inferiore sectari. Regnum enim, filio adhuc infra puberes annos constituto, tanta rexit industria, tanto procuravit moderamine, ut progenitores suos in ea parte equare merito diceretur; cuius quamdiu regi voluit consilio filius, optata tranquillitate gavisus est populus et prospero cursu regni procedebant negocia.*

36) Hans Eberhard MAYER, *Die Kanzlei der lateinischen Könige von Jerusalem*, 2 vols. (MGH Schriften 40, 1–2), Hannover 1996, vol. 1, pp. 77–80.

however, was that of Manasses of Hierges, one of her kinsmen from the Ardennes, as constable. Since the constable had charge of the army of the kingdom if the king was under-age or otherwise incapacitated, this appointment overcame Melisende's main handicap in the business of government, that is her inability to lead the army in the field³⁷. She had the support of key magnates, notably Philip, lord of Nablus, Elinard, lord of Tiberias, and Rohard, viscount of Jerusalem³⁸. Most of all she enjoyed the favour of the church, not least as a result of her acts of patronage. She founded a double monastery at Bethany, where her youngest sister became the second abbess. The reconstruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was also completed during her period of sole rule, and must have been at least partially financed from crown resources³⁹.

The main feature which distinguishes Melisende's status is that she remained unmarried after the death of her husband. William of Tyre was quite critical of Melisende's niece Constance, princess of Antioch, for her refusal to remarry after the death of her husband, Raymond of Poitiers⁴⁰. However, he gives no indication of any expectation that Melisende herself might be expected to marry, even though such a move might have strengthened her position. William's judgement can partly be explained by the fact that Melisende's younger son Amalric, who took his mother's side during the struggle with Baldwin III, was his patron in the writing of his history. Just as important was William's understanding of the history of the kingdom. The chronicler was painfully aware of the dangers posed by the unification of the Egypt and Muslim Syria by Saladin. He was apt to despair of the future of the Frankish states in his own time and complained about the calibre of its defenders. Melisende may have broken his ideal pattern of able male rulers, but she constituted a direct genealogical link to the virtuous first generation of crusaders and settlers. Depending on how we calculate her date of birth, the queen may have still been of child-bearing age on her husband's death, but a marriage was unattractive to most potential suitors given that she already had given birth to two male heirs. However, her decision to remain unmarried seems to have been largely her own. In the person of the constable Manasses of Hierges, the queen in effect had a substitute husband who could function as principal military commander with her authority. She had no further

37) Hans Eberhard 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.

38) MAYER, *Studies* (as n. 4), pp. 117–120.

39) Amnon LINDER, »Like Purest Gold Resplendent«. The Fiftieth Anniversary of the Liberation of Jerusalem, in: *Crusades* 8 (2009), pp. 31–51; Helen A. GAUDETTE, The Spending Power of a Crusader Queen. Melisende of Jerusalem, in: *Women and Wealth in Late Medieval Europe*, ed. Theresa EAREN-FIGHT, New York 2010, pp. 135–148. Gaudette discusses the foundation of Bethany as well as the construction of a covered market in the city of Jerusalem. However, I would argue that the construction of the castle of Bethgibelin must have been a project of Fulk's even though it required the consent of Melisende as it was financed by the crown.

40) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XVII, 18, pp. 785–786.

need to produce heirs, and even as the young Baldwin III grew impatient of his mother's tutelage, she proceeded to build up his brother Amalric as a counterweight, granting him the important county of Jaffa-Ascalon.

Melisende's status as ruling queen was one that she was reluctant to give up, and she excluded Baldwin III from government even after he came of age and started to take part in military campaigns. Eventually the growing animosity between Melisende and Baldwin led to a division of the kingdom and its governmental apparatus, and ultimately to civil war which resulted in the queen's exclusion from government, although she was able to retain control of a major portion of the royal domain around Nablus⁴¹. William of Tyre regards her as a model ruler, blaming the dispute with Baldwin III solely on the arrogance of Manasses and unnamed individuals who urged the young king to free himself from the tutelage of his mother⁴².

Melisende probably became infirm in 1159 and died on 11 September 1162. The arrangements for her burial (which must have been subject to the approval of Baldwin III) demonstrate how her status was presented to posterity as being different from that of her male predecessors. Godfrey of Bouillon, Baldwin I, Baldwin II and Fulk had all been buried in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, the traditional site of Christ's burial and resurrection, which remained the burial place for the Latin kings until 1186. Unlike her male predecessors, the queen was buried in the monastery of St Mary of Jehosaphat outside the walls of Jerusalem, where her mother, Morfia, had been laid to rest⁴³. This religious house was undoubtedly a high-status foundation, traditionally regarded as the site of the tomb of Virgin Mary. However, Melisende's burial there alongside the one queen consort who had died in Jerusalem up to that point associated her with a more female and maternal identity rather than that of her male predecessors.

III. A LIFE AS HEIRESS, A SHORT REIGN AS QUEEN: SIBYL (1186–1190)

The selection of Fulk of Anjou as a husband for Melisende set a pattern for princesses who were expected to inherit the throne: the ruler of Jerusalem would commission a search in the heartlands of the West for a consort who would be well-connected and experienced in government and other worldly affairs; he should have status and important family connections, ideally belonging to one of the greater comital or ducal families of the kingdom of France, where the Franks of Jerusalem had their strongest Western links; if possible, he should command financial or military resources which could be placed at the disposal of the kingdom.

41) MAYER, *Studies* (as n. 4), pp. 136–182.

42) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XVII, 13, pp. 777–778.

43) *Ibid.*, XVIII, 32, p. 858; DJerus. no. 109 (RRH no. 137a).

The question of marriage partners for heiresses came to be a major issue during the reign of Melisende's second son Amalric, who succeeded his brother Baldwin III in 1163. Amalric had originally married Agnes of Courtenay, the sister of Joscelin III, titular count of Edessa, but as a condition of his accession to the throne the nobility and higher clergy forced him to separate from her. The reason advanced for this by William of Tyre was the consanguinity of the two partners, yet in his own research he could only establish a fairly distant relationship, which could certainly have been taken care of by a church dispensation. As Hamilton has convincingly argued, neither the charge of consanguinity nor that of bigamy advanced by Mayer is satisfactory, and it is more likely that the real objection related to the character or ambition of Agnes⁴⁴. In 1167 Amalric married a Byzantine princess, Maria Komnene, by whom he had two daughters, but the agreement concluded with his magnates in 1163 expressly recognised the legitimacy of his two children by Agnes, Sibyl and Baldwin (IV), who were to »have full right of succession to the inheritance of their father«⁴⁵.

This is the first generation of the royal family of whom we know anything concerning formal arrangements for their education, but we should remember that it was only the second generation of children who had actually been born to a reigning monarch. Sibyl and her half-sister Isabella, the surviving daughter of Amalric and Maria Komnene, were educated away from the royal court at the abbey of Bethany, whose abbess was their great-aunt Yveta. By contrast, at the age of nine the boy Baldwin was entrusted to William of Tyre for instruction in the liberal arts⁴⁶. It was William who first noticed the symptoms of leprosy in the young Baldwin, and the growing recognition that he would be unable to marry and produce an heir, and would probably die young, meant that a huge importance was placed in the fate of his sister and half-sister, as it became clear that the succession would need to be transferred by one or other of them and their future

44) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XIX, 4, pp. 868–870; Bernard HAMILTON, *The Titular Nobility of the Latin East. The Case of Agnes of Courtenay*, in: *Crusade and Settlement*, ed. Peter W. EDBURY, Cardiff 1985, pp. 197–203; HAMILTON, *Women* (as n. 4), pp. 159–163; HAMILTON, *Leper King* (as n. 4), pp. 24–26. A thirteenth-century genealogy contained in the text known as the ›Lignages d'Outremer‹ states that Agnes was engaged to Hugh of Ibelin at the time Amalric married her. Mayer has argued that Agnes and Hugh were actually married, and this was the grounds for the annulment: Hans Eberhard MAYER, *Die Legitimität Balduins IV. von Jerusalem und das Testament der Agnes von Courtenay*, in: *HJb* 108 (1988), pp. 63–89; Hans Eberhard MAYER, *The Beginnings of King Amalric of Jerusalem*, in: *The Horns of Hattin. Proceedings of the Second Conference of the Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East, Jerusalem and Haifa, 2–6 July 1987*, ed. Benjamin Z. KEDAR, Jerusalem 1992, pp. 121–135. William of Tyre states that Agnes married Hugh after the annulment of her marriage to Amalric, and it is quite possible that the ›Lignages‹ confused two separate events, as they did in several other cases.

45) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XIX, 4, pp. 868–870: *ut qui ex ambobus nati erant legitimi haberentur et in bona paterna successionis plenum ius obtinerent.*

46) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XXI, 1–2, pp. 961–963.

husbands⁴⁷). In the event the two sisters were to be married for a total of six times, in circumstances in which their respective mothers played significant roles.

In 1169 Amalric sent Frederick of Namur, archbishop of Tyre, to select a husband for Sibyl, and negotiated her betrothal to Stephen, count of Sancerre, a younger son of Thibaud II, count of Blois and Chartres. Stephen arrived in the Holy Land in 1171, but departed again the same year without fulfilling the marriage engagement⁴⁸). The reasons for his refusal are unclear, but given the length of the negotiations which had preceded it, they must have been fairly weighty. It is difficult to say how far Baldwin's leprosy was public knowledge by this time, although it is likely that Amalric knew of the diagnosis of the physicians who had treated him, and presumably, Stephen would need to be told if he was to marry into the family. However, this in itself was not necessarily a barrier, since Baldwin's condition would mean that Stephen would not only have to act as regent, but would in all likelihood become king consort himself.

Hamilton argues that Stephen may have rejected Amalric's recognition of Byzantine overlordship in 1171, yet one must question whether a diplomatic move that was intended to secure substantial military assistance for the kingdom was really so unacceptable⁴⁹). However, there may have been another reason. While the legitimacy of Sibyl and Baldwin IV had been proclaimed in 1163, in such cases there was always a possibility that the stigma of illegitimacy might be subsequently revived in the event of a dispute, while the leprosy which affected Baldwin might be interpreted as a divine punishment which pointed to an illegitimate status. By contrast, there could be no doubt about the validity of Amalric's marriage to Maria Komnene or about the legitimacy of any children of that union. Its only surviving issue, the future Queen Isabella I, was born between November 1171 and September 1172⁵⁰). The *Itinerarium Peregrinorum*, an English narrative written around the time of the Third Crusade, relates that she had a sister who died at a young age, and the ordering implies that this was the first born child⁵¹). At the time of Stephen of Sancerre's sojourn in the kingdom this child may already have been born, or Queen Maria may have been pregnant with Isabella. In that case it is possible that Stephen was

47) HAMILTON, *Leper King* (as n. 4), pp. 27–30; Piers MITCHELL, *An Evaluation of the Leprosy of King Baldwin IV of Jerusalem in the Context of the Medieval World*, Appendix to HAMILTON, *Leper King*, pp. 245–258.

48) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XX, 25, pp. 946–947; Hans Eberhard MAYER, *Frederick of Laroche, Bishop of Acre and Archbishop of Tyre*, in: *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte* 22 (1993), pp. 59–72.

49) HAMILTON, *Leper King* (as n. 4), p. 31.

50) *Ibid.*, p. 31 n. 47.

51) *Das Itinerarium peregrinorum. Eine zeitgenössische englische Chronik zum dritten Kreuzzug in ursprünglicher Gestalt*, ed. Hans Eberhard MAYER (MGH Schriften 18), Stuttgart 1962, p. 336.

unwilling to contract a marriage with Sibyl after the appearance of another heir who might be regarded as having a better claim to the throne⁵²).

King Baldwin IV came of age in 1176 and later that year Sibyl was married to William Longsword, marquis of Montferrat in Lombardy, who was chosen not least because of his exalted connections with both Frederick Barbarossa and Louis VII of France⁵³). However, William died after only three months, leaving his wife pregnant with a son, who was later crowned as Baldwin V. From this time Sibyl is mentioned in some royal charters as giving consent to acts of her brother, which would seem to indicate her place in the succession, although these do not mention her son⁵⁴). After Count Philip of Flanders arrived in the Holy Land as a crusader in late 1177, he proposed that Sibyl and Isabella should be married to Robert and Philip, sons of the advocate of Béthune. Propriety may not have permitted Sibyl to marry so soon after the death of her husband, or the proposal may have been rejected because Philip was unwilling to accept the regency of the kingdom.

Philip's plans came to nothing, and eventually negotiations were started for a new marriage with Hugh III, duke of Burgundy, but before he could travel to the East, Sibyl had been married in circumstances which can only be described as panic. In 1180 the rulers of the two surviving northern states of Outremer, Bohemund III of Antioch and Raymond III of Tripoli, arrived suddenly in the kingdom of Jerusalem, leading Baldwin IV to fear that they were planning a coup d'état; both men were descended from younger sisters of Queen Melisende and thus had potential claims to the throne. By this time the king's freedom of action had been severely reduced by his terrible disease, and so he needed to find an adult leader who could take over his own duties as military commander, and who after his own death – which could not be far away – would protect the rights of his heirs. Baldwin IV also had to prevent any action that might see Sibyl being forcibly married to a candidate chosen by the plotters, and so she was quickly married to Guy of Lusignan, a fairly recent immigrant to the kingdom. Guy was a vassal of Henry II of England in Poitou, and thus offered a potentially useful connection, but he was of lesser status than the candidates who had been considered for Sibyl's hand before this point. The unseemly speed of this action can be seen in the fact that the marriage was celebrated during Easter Week, contrary to established precedent. Later that same year Baldwin's half-sister Isabella was married to the nobleman Humphrey IV, lord of Toron, presumably to prevent her being employed in any schemes to displace Sibyl and Guy⁵⁵).

52) A pregnancy, rather than the existence of another female heir, probably constitutes the more likely of the two possibilities, since if the queen gave birth to a boy, he might have been considered as taking precedence over Sibyl.

53) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XXI, 13, pp. 979–980.

54) DDJerus. nos. 396, 402 (RRH no. 559a), 413 (RRH no. 587), 419.

55) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XXI, 14–15, XXII, 1, pp. 1007–1008; HAMILTON, *Leper King* (as n. 4), pp. 124–131, 217–22.

The hasty action of Baldwin IV at Easter 1180 forestalled the immediate political threat from Bohemund and Raymond, but in the longer term it caused greater problems for the king. He appointed Guy as his regent, but the Poitevin's conduct of the defence of the realm was regarded as so inadequate and aroused so much opposition that the king was obliged to remove him from office⁵⁶. Baldwin himself eventually came to agree with this assessment, and his poor opinion of Guy can be seen in the arrangements which the king put in place for the time after his death, which are significant precisely because they were contrary to the precedent set in the case of his own grandparents Melisende and Fulk. Now, neither Sibyl nor Guy was to be crowned; the throne was to pass directly to Sibyl's infant son Baldwin V, while Raymond of Tripoli, not long before considered as the main threat to the dynasty, was to act as regent. Thus the documents issued in the name of the young king give the consent of Raymond as *procurator regni* and his uncle the seneschal Joscelin, without mentioning his parents⁵⁷.

The deaths of Baldwin IV in 1185 and of his infant nephew a year later brought the issue of the succession to a head at a time when the entire security of the kingdom faced its greatest threat of invasion from Saladin. Many of the magnates held that Guy, having proved a poor regent, was unsuitable material as king, but no significant body of opinion contested the legitimist principle that Sibyl was the closest heir to the kingdom. Sibyl and Guy by this time had children of their own, but they were daughters; if one of them had been a son then clearly the succession could have been handed on to him directly in the same way that it had been given directly to the late Baldwin V. From the admittedly sketchy source material we gain the impression of a real affection of Sibyl for her husband, and the circumstances of her coronation show her taking an active public role in asserting solidarity with her husband. The Old French continuation of the chronicle of William of Tyre (often referred to by the name ›Eracles‹) indicates that she and her supporters attempted to conciliate the opposition by agreeing that she alone, and not Guy, would be crowned⁵⁸. Bernard Hamilton has convincingly argued that Sibyl agreed to divorce Guy on condition that their children would be regarded as legitimate, that Guy should be allowed to keep the county of Jaffa-Ascalon, and that she should be permitted to choose a new husband herself. It was the third point that was crucial. Sibyl, Guy and their support-

56) In particular, Guy was criticised by a section of the nobility for failing to take offensive action against an invasion of the kingdom by Saladin in 1183. Cf. R. C. SMAIL, *The Predicaments of Guy of Lusignan, 1183–87*, in: *Outremer. Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem presented to Joshua Prawer*, ed. Benjamin Z. KEDAR/Hans Eberhard MAYER/R. C. SMAIL, Jerusalem 1982, pp. 159–176.

57) Clearly the precedent was not exact, as Baldwin V was not Guy's son, but there was no constitutional reason why Guy could not have been crowned and functioned as Baldwin V's protector, especially as it could reasonably be expected that he and Sibyl would produce additional heirs. For Raymond's title as regent, cf. DDJerus. nos. 451 (RRH no. 643), 452 (RRH no. 644), 454 (RRH no. 657).

58) *La Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr (1184–1197)*, ed. Margaret Ruth MORGAN (*Documents relatifs à l'histoire des croisades 14*), Paris 1982, pp. 32–33.

ers clearly recognised that there was nothing in these conditions that prevented her from marrying Guy a second time⁵⁹).

In the event, a quite remarkable coronation ceremony was held, in the city of Jerusalem whose gates were closed to prevent the entry of Raymond of Tripoli and other members of the nobility who were implacably opposed to the prospect of Guy as king. Eraclius, the Latin patriarch of Jerusalem, crowned Sibyl and then offered her another crown, inviting her to give it to »such a man as could govern her kingdom«. Sibyl immediately turned to Guy of Lusignan, saying, in the words of the ›Eraclius‹ chronicle: »Sire, come up and receive this crown, for I do not know where better I can bestow it« (*Sire, venés avant et recevés ceste corone. Car je ne sai ou je la puisse miaus employer*)⁶⁰). Roger of Howden gives a purported speech in which Sibyl cited scripture to support her assertion that as long as Guy was alive she could not have another legal husband. This is a rather dramatic construction of events, but it does correctly recognise that the agitation for Sibyl's divorce had been purely political and could not be justified on religious grounds⁶¹.

Behind such descriptions one can recognise something that can best be described by the German word »Inszenierung«: a premeditated demonstrative action carried out according to an agreed plan. It was unthinkable that Sibyl would choose anyone as king except Guy, and her action in crowning her husband was clearly not a spontaneous act of her own, but could only have been executed with the agreement of the patriarch, who was one of her main supporters. Sibyl must have been in her late twenties by this time and was evidently comfortable in the political arena. Even though the clever scheme which secured the crown for Guy must have been worked out in conjunction with the patriarch and other supporters, her confident and resolute behaviour during the coronation ceremony were crucial to the successful execution of the plan.

The reaction of the opposition to the coronation of Guy demonstrates how female rulers remained crucial to the constitutional principles of succession, even if they (and in some cases their husbands) presented obstacles to it. There is considerable evidence that from 1186 Raymond of Tripoli was aiming to gain control of the kingdom; he was descended from a daughter of Baldwin II and was known as a competent administrator. However, the prevailing constitutional thinking preferred a candidate who was as closely

59) HAMILTON, Leper King (as n. 4), pp. 218–221.

60) La Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr (as n. 58), p. 33: Chronique d'Ernoult et de Bernard le Trésorier, ed. Louis DE MAS LATRIE, Paris 1871, pp. 133–134; Benjamin Z. KEDAR, The Patriarch Eraclius, in: Outremer (as n. 56), pp. 177–204.

61) Roger of Howden, Gesta Regis Henrici Secundi, ed. William STUBBS, 2 vols. (Rolls Series. Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores [49, 1–2]), London 1867, vol. 1, pp. 358–359; Roger of Howden, Chronica, ed. William STUBBS, 4 vols. (Rolls Series. Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores [51, 1–4]), London 1868–1871, vol. 2, pp. 315–316; Helen J. NICHOLSON, *La roine preude femme et bonne dame*. Queen Sibyl of Jerusalem (1186–1190) in History and Legend, 1186–1300, in: Haskins Society Journal. Studies in Medieval History 15 for 2004 (2006), pp. 110–124, here p. 117.

related as possible to the last monarch, and once Raymond and his allies learned of Sibyl's coronation of her husband, their immediate reaction was to try to crown an alternative royal couple: Sibyl's half-sister Isabella and her husband Humphrey IV of Toron. This plan had some merits, since there could be no doubt about Isabella's legitimacy or the validity of her marriage. However, Raymond's scheme collapsed when Humphrey simply refused to co-operate and deserted to join Sibyl and Guy.

One question which has been little considered is why Isabella had been married to Humphrey of Toron in the first place. He was admittedly one of a circle of some two dozen holders of lordships in the kingdom, but was by no means the most powerful or prestigious among them, and was still young and inexperienced. The couple were married in 1183 but were first betrothed in 1180. We must remember that at this time Isabella could be considered as having important prospects in the succession, which can be seen in dispositions agreed by Baldwin IV on his death-bed in 1185. By this time the king had no faith in Guy of Lusignan's ability to act as regent, and so he proposed to confer the regency on Raymond of Tripoli until the infant Baldwin V should come of age. Raymond agreed on condition that he was not required to have charge of the heir in person, to avoid any accusations of complicity if the boy were to die. In the event of Baldwin V's death, Raymond argued, a commission consisting of the pope, the Holy Roman emperor and the kings of France and England should adjudicate as to whether Sibyl or Isabella should succeed to the throne, a condition which shows a change in the relative status of the two sisters. Up to this point, Sibyl had always been considered as the next heir after Baldwin IV and her own infant son. But the fact that her rights were regarded as being no better than her sister's is certainly a reflection of continuing doubts about the validity of her parents' marriage⁶².

Thus in 1180 Isabella represented a viable means by which the succession could be transmitted to an opposition candidate for the throne and it is likely, as Hamilton has argued, that her betrothal was intended to prevent the conspirators from using her in their schemes⁶³. From the perspective of Baldwin IV and his advisors, the Antiochene and Tripolitan dynasties were thus unacceptable as marriage partners for her, but Isabella could still have been married to a high-ranking individual from the West or Byzantium, or to another nobleman within the kingdom, especially since her betrothal was not undertaken in as hurried a fashion as Sibyl's marriage. Why, then, was she married to Humphrey of all people?

After the accession of Baldwin IV in 1174 his mother Agnes of Courtenay returned to the court and began to exert a significant influence in government. Isabella's mother, Maria Komnene, who had married the nobleman Balian of Ibelin, was excluded from the court. As a condition of his marriage Humphrey was obliged to surrender his lordships

62) *La Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr* (as n. 58), p. 20.

63) HAMILTON, *Leper King* (as n. 4), pp. 217–222.

of Toron and Châteauneuf to the king's mother in exchange for money-fiefs⁶⁴). This was hardly the most fitting provision for Isabella; previously marriage partners for royal princesses had been sought from high-status dynasties from the West or from the other principalities of Outremer, not from the nobility of the kingdom itself.

We can go further than merely accepting that the marriage of Isabella and Humphrey was simply intended to place Isabella beyond the reach of Raymond of Tripoli and his allies; rather, it would seem that she was married off to a relatively unambitious figure who was then further diminished in status and power by means of an enforced exchange of fiefs. It is easy to discern the hand of Agnes of Courtenay in these actions, whose main motivation must have been to reduce the possibility that Isabella might present a threat to her own daughter Sibyl⁶⁵).

Only a year after the coronation of Sibyl and Guy the forces of the kingdom were defeated by Saladin at the battle of Hattin, after which most of the kingdom was lost to the Muslims. While Guy languished in captivity for another year, the queen assumed command of the city of Jerusalem along with her old ally Patriarch Eraclius, and then after being obliged to surrender she left the city and was eventually reunited with her husband after his release at the island of Ruad (mod. Arwād, Syria) off Tortosa. The description of their meeting in the ›Itinerarium peregrinorum‹ as well as her decision to join her husband in besieging the city of Acre, rather than seeking safety for herself and her children in the West, indicate a real affection for her husband as well as a determination to maintain their rights which is reminiscent of the resolute behaviour she had demonstrated at her coronation in 1186. It is scarcely surprising that it was her resourcefulness and fidelity which seem to characterise her depiction in later sources, sometimes in a highly romantic manner⁶⁶).

64) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XX, 5, p. 1012.

65) Humphrey was also the heir to the lordship of Transjordan, held by his mother, Stephanie of Milly. However, in a parallel action in 1177 Baldwin IV awarded the hand of Stephanie to Reynald of Châtillon, another ally of Agnes and her brother the Seneschal Joscelin: Hans Eberhard MAYER, *Die Kreuzfahrerherrschaft Montréal (Šöbak). Jordanien im 12. Jahrhundert (Abhandlungen des Deutschen Palästinavereins 14)*, Wiesbaden 1990, p. 238.

66) *Itinerarium peregrinorum* (as n. 51), pp. 264, 268: *Hic in occursum regis regina procedit; miscentur oscula, nectuntur amplexus, suas leticia lacrimas elicit, et casus, quos incidisse dolens, evasisse letantur*; NICHOLSON, *Queen Sibyl* (as n. 61), pp. 115–124.

IV. A QUEEN AND FOUR CONSORTS: ISABELLA I (1190–1205)

Sibyl and her two surviving daughters perished in the insanitary conditions of the camp established by the Third Crusade during the siege of the city of Acre⁶⁷. This turn of fate was regarded by many among both the Franks of Outremer and the Western crusaders in Palestine as removing Guy's right to the throne. Guy could claim that he was still the crowned king, but he now had the major disadvantage that he could no longer produce a legitimate heir to the throne. A strong party among the Frankish nobility and the crusaders wished to give the crown to Conrad of Montferrat, a younger brother of the William Longsword who had married Princess Sibyl in 1176, mainly because Conrad had shown himself to be a competent military leader during the defence of the city of Tyre against Saladin's forces. However, according to legitimist thinking, the only way this could be properly validated was for Conrad to be married to Isabella, the next heir to the kingdom. Such a marriage could be expected to produce an heir, but it would entail Isabella agreeing to divorce her husband, Humphrey of Toron. Isabella's mother, Maria Komnene, prevailed upon her to do this; the ›Eracles‹ chronicle claims that Maria's actions were instigated by Conrad, but the queen mother had her own motives. She had every reason to regard the marriage to Humphrey as being unworthy of the status of her daughter, and she certainly resented the fact that he had failed to act when he had been given the chance to gain the crown with the backing of Raymond of Tripoli only four years before. Even the pro-English (and therefore pro-Lusignan) author of the ›Itinerarium Regis Ricardi‹ relates that Humphrey was »more like a woman than a man«, with a gentle manner and a stammer⁶⁸.

Isabella was reluctant to separate from Humphrey; the ›Eracles‹ claims that although she loved her husband, she was persuaded by her mother that »so long as she was his wife, she could have neither honour nor her father's kingdom«⁶⁹. To support an annulment of the marriage Maria Komnene stated to the ecclesiastical authorities that Isabella had been betrothed at the age of eight. This seems to have been true, but no objections on this basis had been raised at the time; the marriage had not been solemnised until 1183, and both the original marriage and its later annulment show how the authorities

67) La Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr (as n. 58), p. 105: *En celle saison fu morte la reyne Seville et ses .ij. filles, Alis et Marie.*

68) Ibid., pp. 105–107; *Itinerarium peregrinorum* (as n. 51), p. 352: *Enfridus ipse obtentu coniugis spem regni conceperat, vir femine quam viro proprior, gestu mollis, sermone fractus [...].*

69) La Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr (as n. 58), p. 105: *Ele ne se vost consentir, porce que ele ameit Hanfrei son mari. Dont il enuia a sa mere, et par maintes fois li amonesta et li mostra raison qu'ele ne poeit ester dame dou reiaume se ele ne se partist de Hanffrei, et li remembra la mauvaistié que Hanfrei aveit faite. Quant le conte de Triple et les autres barons qui esteient a Naples le vostrent coroner a rei et ele a reyne, il s'en foï et ala en Jerusalem, et cria merci et fist homage a la reyne, et dist que maugré sien le voleit l'on faire rei. Et tant com ele sereit sa feme ne poeit ele aveir honor, ne le reiaume son pere.*

played rather fast and loose when the future of the kingdom was at stake⁷⁰). Maria thus – at least in her estimation – gained redress for the poor marriage made for her daughter during the period of influence of the rival queen mother, Agnes of Courtenay. Maria was trying to secure the crown for Isabella and the future for her dynasty, even in spite of her daughter's own wishes.

Conrad of Montferrat (1191–1192) was assassinated before he could be crowned, leaving Isabella pregnant. A new candidate for the throne was found in the person of the crusader Henry II, count of Champagne (1192–1197), who had come to the Holy Land with the Third Crusade and was acceptable to both the kings of France and England. Most of the Franks and crusaders believed that Henry's claim would only be regarded as valid if he married Conrad's widow, through whom the throne had been transmitted. However, he initially objected on the grounds that if she bore a male child, this boy would inherit the kingdom; as Henry is reputed to have said, »I shall be encumbered with the lady at a time when I can no longer return to Champagne« (*je seroie encombré de la dame, et d'autre part je puis aler en Champaigne*)⁷¹). Henry's situation most closely resembled that of Guy of Lusignan, and he must have been aware that Guy had been effectively deposed after having failed to produce a male heir of his own. Henry did not regard the birth of a *female* heir as problematic; he could marry her to a husband of his own choosing once he had been accepted as king, and he could expect to sire a son of his own. Henry only agreed to the marriage after being promised compensation by King Richard I of England, who was effectively functioning as overall leader of the Christians in Outremer. The horror of a constitutional vacuum can be seen in the fact that the wedding took place only a week after the murder of the marquis. Indeed, the speed of events was so great that the author of the »Eracles« believed that the time interval was even shorter; as he puts it laconically: »On Tuesday the marquis was killed, and on Thursday Isabella was married to Count Henry« (*le mardi fu tué le marquis, et le jueves fu mariee Ysabel au conte Henri*)⁷²).

Conrad's child was Maria, born in 1192, known as »la Marquise« from the ancestral title of her father's family in Montferrat. Isabella bore three daughters (Alice, Margaret and Philippa) to Henry of Champagne. Henry died as the result of an accidental fall in 1197, and a new match for Isabella – and ruler for the kingdom – was found in the person of Aimery of Lusignan, brother of Guy and ruler of Cyprus, to whom she bore a son and two daughters (Amalric, Sibyl and Melisende)⁷³). The rapid remarriages of Isabella were

70) Ibid., pp. 104–105.

71) Ibid., p. 142.

72) Ibid., pp. 144–145. The actual date of the marriage was 24 November 1190 (a Saturday): VOGTHERR, *Regierungsdaten* (as n. 1), p. 71.

73) *Les Lignages d'Outremer*, in: *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades. Lois*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1841–1843), vol. 2, p. 444: *La reyne Ysabeau espousa puis Henri le conte de Champagne, et orrent trois filles: Aalis et Marguerite et Phelippe. Et elle espousa le rei Heymeri et ot un fiz et deus filles: Amauri et Sebille et Meli-*

clearly intended to legitimate the claims of each new husband and to produce heirs to the kingdom, but they also brought forth objections on the part of the papacy. In 1199 Pope Innocent III wrote to the clergy of the kingdom of León regarding an incestuous marriage contracted by the king, Alfonso IX, with Berengaria of Castile. In his letter Innocent describes how God will quickly punish sins in order to discourage those who might be tempted to sin themselves, citing the example of a woman in the East who had been incestuously joined to two men. The identities of these personages become clear when the pope explains how the marquis Conrad, who had first married the queen of Jerusalem *per incestum*, and then Henry, count of Champagne, were punished by God, one by the sword, and the other by the fall which killed him⁷⁴). Strictly speaking, Isabella's marriages should have been described as bigamous rather than incestuous, since her first husband Humphrey was still alive. What is stranger than the terminology employed, however, is that even before this, Innocent had already written to Aimery to congratulate him on his coronation as king of Jerusalem, while at the same time urging the Templars and Hospitallers to assist him in the defence of Cyprus⁷⁵). By contrast, he reprimanded the patriarch of Jerusalem for having previously opposed the coronation⁷⁶). The explanation for this apparently contradictory behaviour is that Humphrey IV of Toron had died in 1198. This meant that while the pope may have regarded Isabella's marriages to Conrad and Henry as invalid, he had no further objection to the marriage with Aimery. However, when Innocent wished to criticise incest in the case of the king of León a year later, he still wanted to use the deaths of Conrad and Henry as an appropriate example of divine punishment in cases where the church's teachings on marriage had been disregarded.

A single surviving document of Conrad of Montferrat titles him as elected king of Jerusalem, but this and another jointly issued charter refer to his wife as »daughter of King

cent. Margaret seems not to have survived childhood. For Alice and Philippa, cf. PERRY, John of Brienne (as n. 4), pp. 37–41.

74) Die Register Innocenz' III., 2. Pontifikatsjahr, 1199/1200, ed. Othmar HAGENEDER/Werner MALE-CZEK/Alfred A. STRNAD (Publikationen des Historischen Instituts beim Österreichischen Kulturinstitut in Rom, 2. Abt. Quellen, 1. Reihe, vol. 2), Vienna 1979, no. 72, pp. 128–129: *Sane in Oriente una duobus fuit incestuose coniuncta, in Occidente vero unus sibi duas presumpsit iungere per incestum [...] Volens autem Deus maius peccatum vindicare celeriter et a similibus alios detertere, tam C(onradum), quondam marchionem, qui [...] regine Ier(oso)limitane prius adheserat per incestum, gladio, quam Henr(icum), quondam Campanie comitem, qui ei et in culpa quodammodo et in pena successit, precipio, utrumque vero morte imprevisa, peremit.* I owe this reference to Mr Roland Potts, formerly of the University of Leeds.

75) Die Register Innocenz' III., 1. Pontifikatsjahr, 1198/1199, ed. Othmar HAGENEDER/Anton HAIDACHER (Publikationen des Historischen Instituts beim Österreichischen Kulturinstitut in Rom, 2. Abt. Quellen, 1. Reihe, vol. 1), Graz/Cologne 1964, no. 437, pp. 660–661, no. 438, pp. 661–662.

76) Register Innocenz' III., 1. Pontifikatsjahr (as n. 75), no. 518, pp. 752–773.

Amalric⁷⁷). Henry of Champagne was never crowned during his five-year reign, and used the titles of count palatine of Troyes and »lord of the land of Jerusalem«, but the intitulations and consent formulas relating to his wife continue to name her as *domina* and daughter of Amalric⁷⁸). Precisely the same formula is used in documents issued by Isabella and her fourth husband, Aimery of Lusignan, with *domina* being replaced by *regina* after her formal coronation as queen of Jerusalem and Cyprus in 1198⁷⁹). This intitulation can be partially explained by the circumstances that only Isabella's final consort was actually crowned as king of Jerusalem, but it also publicly marked her vital place in the legal transmission of the succession by stressing her unimpeachable descent from King Amalric.

V. IN THE SHADOW OF FATHER AND HUSBAND: MARIA »LA MARQUISE«
AND ISABELLA II (1205 – 1228)

Isabella I and Aimery of Lusignan evidently worked out a scheme by which the queen's three daughters by Henry of Champagne were to marry the three sons of Aimery by his previous marriage. In the immediate term this would not have affected the succession to Jerusalem, which was initially vested in the young Amalric (also known as Amaurion), the single son of Isabella and Aimery. However, the deaths of all three in 1205 meant that the succession reverted to Maria, Isabella's daughter by Conrad of Montferrat (1205 – 1212); by contrast the kingdom of Cyprus passed to Hugh, Aimery's son by his previous wife. The barons of the now much reduced kingdom of Jerusalem chose as regent John of Ibelin, the so-called »Old Lord« of Beirut, who was the son of Maria Komnene and her second husband, Balian of Ibelin⁸⁰). In 1206 John and Maria Komnene agreed that Maria la Marquise could be married to Peter II, king of Aragon, who would have made a high-status match and a valuable international connection for the kingdom, but the king was unable to secure an annulment of his existing marriage from Pope Innocent III⁸¹). Maria reached her majority in 1210 and in the same year she was married to a Champenois no-

77) DDJerus. nos. 529 (RRH no. 703): *domna Isabella quondam illustris Aimalrici regis Ierosolimitani filia*; 530 (RRH no. 705): *Conradus [...] per dei gratiam rex Ierosolimorum electus et domna Isabella uxor mea, illustris quondam regis Aimalrici filia*.

78) DDJerus. nos. 568 (RRH no. 713): *assensu et voluntate domne Ysabelle regis Amalrici filie*; 569: *assensu et voluntate Isabelle uxoris mee, illustrisque regis Amalrici filia*; also no. 570 (RRH no. 707), 571 (RRH no. 717), 572 (RRH no. 709), 573 (RRH no. 710), 575 (RRH no. 716), 576 (RRH no. 720), 577 (RRH no. 722a), 579 (RRH no. 721), 580 (RRH no. 722), 582 (RRH no. 727).

79) *Domina* and *regis Amalrici filia*: DDJerus. nos. 609 (RRH no. 733), 610 (RRH no. 740b), 611 (RRH no. 744), 613 (RRH no. 747); *regina* and *regis Amalrici filia*: DDJerus. nos. 612 (RRH no. 743), 614 (RRH no. 746), 620 (RRH no. 774), 621 (RRH no. 776).

80) EDBURY, John of Ibelin (as n. 4), pp. 30–31.

81) DJerus. no. 645.

bleman, John of Brienne. John was a son of Erard II, count of Brienne, and a younger brother of Erard's successor, Walter III, who had died in 1205. As the counts of Brienne were vassals of the counts of Champagne, it is difficult to understand at first glance why the queen of Jerusalem should have been given in marriage to a French nobleman who had a much lower status than the consorts who had been selected for heiresses in the past, with the exception of Guy of Lusignan who, as we have seen, was chosen in haste. From the perspective of the court of Jerusalem, the motivation seems to have been to strengthen links with Champagne which dated from the time of Count Palatine Henry. However, the Brienne marriage was also bound up with claims to the county of Champagne itself. The two surviving daughters of Isabella and Henry of Champagne, Alice and Philippa, constituted a potential threat to the claims of the infant Thibaud IV, count of Champagne, who was nominally John's overlord. It is likely that John was canvassed as a husband for Maria by Blanche of Navarre, the widow of Thibaud III and regent of Champagne, since it would give him control of the persons of Alice and Philippa and thus allow him to give them away in marriage so that they could not assert claims against their cousin Thibaud. The Brienne marriage was also supported by King Philip Augustus of France as well as by John's cousin Walter of Montbéliard, the regent of Cyprus⁸². Eventually Alice was married to King Hugh I of Cyprus, thus transmitting the claim which in 1268 brought the regency of Jerusalem, and then on the death of Conradin, its crown, to his grandson King Hugh III (Hugh I in the Jerusalem numbering).

John of Brienne and Maria were married and crowned shortly after he arrived in Palestine in 1210, but Maria died after only two years, leaving as her successor their young daughter Isabella II, sometimes known as Yolanda (1212–1228). An opposition faction among the nobility around the Ibelin family regarded John's kingship as having ended, so that at most he could only act as regent for his daughter. However, most regencies up to this point had been for minors whose fathers had died, and as Perry argues, it was a novel situation to have a recognised but under-age heir to the kingdom whose father was a crowned king. Subsequently John evidently regarded himself not as regent, but as the properly crowned king, and this situation seems to have been accepted by a majority among the nobility⁸³.

82) EDBURY, John of Ibelin (as n. 4), pp. 31–32; GUY PERRY, »Scandalia ... tam in oriente quam in occidente«. The Briennes in East and West, 1213–1221, in: *Crusades 10* (2011) pp. 63–77; PERRY, John of Brienne (as n. 4), pp. 40–50.

83) JONATHAN RILEY-SMITH, *The Feudal Nobility and the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1174–1277*, London 1973, p. 167; PERRY, John of Brienne (as n. 4), pp. 51–88. The earliest of John's documents mention the consent of Maria, but after her death he is titled alone as king of Jerusalem until Isabella's consent is first given in 1221: DDJerus. nos. 626 (RRH no. 853), 629 (RRH no. 855), 630 (RRH no. 857), 632 (RRH no. 898), 633 (RRH no. 899), 635 (RRH no. 892), 638 (RRH no. 930), 639 (RRH no. 934), 640 (RRH no. 940).

Isabella's position as heiress made her a highly attractive match for Frederick II, the Holy Roman emperor, in 1223, as it offered him the chance to obtain another kingdom; this alliance was also supported by the papacy, which was keen to persuade the emperor to undertake a new crusade. On his marriage in 1225 Frederick simply displaced John as king, and aimed to continue to rule after Isabella died, shortly after giving birth to their son Conrad, who remained the legal but absentee king of Jerusalem until 1254. The shortness of the lives of Maria and Isabella II is probably the main reason why we have minimal evidence of any involvement in government. Maria was pregnant for a significant part of her short reign, while Isabella II was marginalised by her husband. After being crowned at Acre in 1225 she was brought to Brindisi where she married Frederick. While the emperor immediately claimed the title of king of Jerusalem, Isabella was obliged to remain in the kingdom of Sicily, rather than accompanying her husband when he finally travelled to Palestine, so that she was effectively cut off from her family and allies in the East⁸⁴. One wonders if the minimal freedom of action accorded to Isabella may have owed something to Frederick's awareness of the tensions between his own parents Henry VI and Constance over the government of the kingdom of Sicily and Constance's rights in it⁸⁵.

The reigns of Isabella II's son Conrad IV of Germany (1228–1254) and her grandson Conradin (1254–1268), both of whom were absentee monarchs, offer us a final view of a different kind of female rulership in the kingdom of Jerusalem. By this time, the main political weapon of the barons of Jerusalem was their own and their jurists' knowledge of legal precedent, which they attempted to exploit to their own advantage and the detriment of the crown. They developed the principle of the *plus dreit heir*, that is the idea that the right to exercise any regency belonged to the monarch's closest relative in the East. Since that relative might easily be a woman, the acceptance of this principle produced a series of famous legal cases in which female descendants claimed the office of regent, now generally known by the Old French term *bailli*. The first of these female regents was Alice, daughter of Isabella I and Henry of Champagne, who was put forward as *bailli* for Conrad IV of Germany, on the grounds that the authority of Frederick as his regent ended when Conrad attained his majority. A more bizarre situation emerged in 1258, when an assembly chose King Hugh II of Cyprus as *bailli* for the absent and under-age Conradin, as he was held to be that king's closest relative; yet as Hugh was himself under age his mother, Plaisance of Antioch, was required to act as regent for him. Plaisance was already regent of Cyprus, and obviously considered influential enough to contemplate

84) Eduard WINKELMANN, *Kaiser Friedrich II.*, 1: 1218–1228, Leipzig 1889, pp. 243–245, 273, 329–330; Wolfgang STÜRNER, *Der Kreuzzug Friedrichs II.*, in: *Stauferzeit – Zeit der Kreuzzüge*, ed. Karl-Heinz RUESS (Schriften zur staufischen Geschichte und Kunst 29), Göttingen 2011, pp. 144–163.

85) Tobias WELLMER, *Staufische Heiratspolitik im europäischen Kontext*, in: *Die Staufer und Italien. Drei Innovationsregionen im mittelalterlichen Europa*, ed. Alfrid WIECZOREK/Bernd SCHNEIDMÜLLER/Stefan WEINFURTNER, 2 vols., Mannheim 2010, vol. 1: *Essays*, pp. 97–106.

marrying a son of Henry III of England⁸⁶). Female claimants who were actually powerless could still transmit important claims, even by non-biological means, as in the case of Maria of Antioch, a granddaughter of Isabella I, who in 1268 unsuccessfully claimed the regency for Conrad against King Hugh III of Cyprus⁸⁷). She was nevertheless able to have her claim recognised by the papacy and proceeded to sell her rights to Charles of Anjou, king of Naples, a transaction which provided the legal basis for Charles's attempt to seize control of the much diminished kingdom in 1278⁸⁸).

VI. CONCLUSIONS

The strenuous demands made on rulers on the eastern periphery of Latin Christendom might have been expected to favour male rulership to the exclusion of females to an even greater extent than in mainland Europe. However, in the entire history of the kingdom of Jerusalem it was a relatively rare event that an adult king was succeeded by a healthy, adult male kinsman who had an undisputed claim to the throne and who was actually resident in Palestine. The five queens regnant represented a higher proportion of the rulers of Jerusalem than ruling queens did among the monarchs of the West, at a time when the succession of a daughter was by no means a universally accepted legal principle. In contrast to many Western monarchies, the validity of female rulership in Jerusalem was embedded within the constitutional structure of the kingdom from an early stage. Several of the early monarchs had by no means uncontested titles to rule, and the recognition of female succession was an important means of building legitimation for the ruling dynasty and avoiding disputes. In the constitutional *tabula rasa* of Outremer, where the early Frankish principalities lacked established political traditions and precedents, the succession of women was rapidly accepted not only as an alternative possibility to male rulership, but as an essential means by which rights could and should be transmitted to male rulers, even though this principle often produced considerable practical problems in ensuring effective executive and military leadership, arrangements to cope with minorities, and even on occasion difficulties with the church authorities. Queens had a crucial constitutional importance, but their role as transmitters of royal power meant that most of them were usually married at a very early age and remarried where necessary. Isabella I seems to have dutifully accepted three new husbands in the course of eight years so that the succession and the government of the realm might be secured. Like Maria la Marquise and

86) EDBURY, John of Ibelin (as n. 4), pp. 58–59, 78–93.

87) Peter W. EDBURY, The Disputed Regency of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1264/6 and 1268, in: Camden Miscellany 27 (Camden Fourth Series 22), London 1979, pp. 1–48.

88) Cronaca del Templare di Tiro (1243–1314). La Caduta degli Stati Crociate nel racconto di un testimone oculare, ed. Laura MINERVINI, Naples 2000, pp. 136–137.

Isabella II, she also must have spent a high proportion of her reign in a state of pregnancy. These circumstances seem to have greatly limited the political freedom of action of the queens regnant, and we can only catch glimpses of them – as in the case of Sibyl – acting on the wider political stage.

Of all the queens, only Melisende can be regarded as having functioned as a truly independent ruler, not least because of the freedom of action accorded to her in the period between the death of her husband and the majority of her son. The real test case for the parameters of Melisende's power and authority as queen is not to be found in her relationship with her husband, but in that with Baldwin III. It was likely that there would always be legitimist support for the queen if her husband ever attempted to sideline her completely, but it is questionable whether it would necessarily support Melisende against her son; it was her determination to rule independently even after her son came of age, and the extent of support she secured from the church and nobility that made her a remarkable queen. It is no wonder that William of Tyre concluded his account of her reign with a judgement which praised her as a ruler who transcended the perceived limitations of women in government: »Melisende, a woman with wisdom and discretion beyond those of the female sex, had ruled the kingdom with good governance for thirty years and more during the lifetime of her husband and the reign of her son, surpassing the strength of women«⁸⁹.

SUMMARY: WOMEN IN THE ROYAL SUCCESSION OF THE LATIN KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM

The geopolitical circumstances in the principalities of Outremer in the period 1099–1291 were far from favourable for female rule. Surrounded by largely hostile Muslim powers, their rulers not only exercised executive power, but repeatedly were obliged to lead their armies in person to a far greater extent than the kingdoms of the West. Nevertheless, the ruling dynasties of the kingdom of Jerusalem produced a greater proportion of female than male children, and as a result of often premature deaths of kings, royal princesses frequently had a crucial political status as heiress to the kingdom and in some cases as queens regnant. The five ruling queens of Jerusalem represented a higher proportion of rulers of the kingdom than in most contemporaneous monarchies of the West, at a time when the succession of daughters was by no means a universally accepted legal principle. Because the kingdom possessed only shallow constitutional foundations, the succession of women was accepted not only as an alternative possibility to male rulership, but as an essential means by which rights could be transmitted to male rulers, even though this

89) William of Tyre, *Chronicon* (as n. 8), XVIII, 27, p. 850: *Interea domina Milissendis regina, mulier provida et supra sexum discreta femineum, que regnum tam vivente marito quam regnante filio congruo moderamine annis triginta et amplius, vires transcendens femineas, rexerat.*

principle often produced considerable practical problems in ensuring effective executive and military leadership, arrangements to cope with minorities, and on occasion difficulties with the church authorities. This role as transmitters of royal power meant that most queens were usually married at a very early age and obliged to remarry where necessary. This phenomenon was especially noticeable in the turbulent period following the loss of much of the kingdom to Saladin in 1187, when the heiress Isabella I dutifully married three times within a period of only eight years in order to provide uncontested claims for each of the men whom the magnates of the kingdom believed was best suited to govern it. The exception to this pattern was the life and reign of Queen Melisende after the death of her husband, Fulk of Anjou. Having secured the succession by producing two male children, and enjoying widespread support among both church and nobility, she was able to avoid remarrying and acted as an independent ruler for almost three decades.

VII. TABLE I: RULERS OF THE KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM (SIMPLIFIED)

underlined = queen regnant; **bold** = female regent; *italics* = male consort of queen regnant

Note: the variation in dates of reigns reflects divergent contemporary opinions about when these ended.

Godfrey of Bouillon	1099–1100
Baldwin I	1100–1118
Baldwin II	1118–1131
<u>Melisende</u>	1131–1162
<i>Fulk of Anjou</i>	1131–1143
Baldwin III	1143–1163
Amalric	1163–1174
Baldwin IV	1174–1185
Baldwin V	1183–1186
<u>Sibyl</u>	1186–1190
<i>Guy of Lusignan</i>	1186–1190/1192
<u>Isabella I</u>	1190–1205
<i>Conrad I (of Montferrat)</i>	1190–1192
<i>Henry I (of Champagne)</i>	1192–1197
<i>Aimery of Lusignan</i>	1198–1205
<u>Maria la Marquise</u>	1205–1212
<i>John of Brienne</i>	1210–1225
<u>Isabella II</u>	1212–1228
<i>Frederick (II), emperor</i>	1225–1228/1250
Conrad II (IV of Germany)	1228–1254
Alice of Champagne (Cyprus)	1242–1246
Conrad III (Conradin)	1254–1268
Plaisance of Antioch	1258–1261
Isabella of Lusignan	1261–1263
Hugh I (III of Cyprus)	1268–1284
Henry II (also Cyprus)	1285–1291/1324

VIII. TABLE 2: CHILDREN BORN TO RULERS OF JERUSALEM (1099–1291)

M = male F = female

Ruler	M	F	names
Godfrey of Bouillon (unmarried)	-	-	
Baldwin I = (a) Godehilde of Tosny (b) ›Arda‹ of Armenia (c) Adelaide of Sicily	-	-	
Baldwin II = Morfia of Armenia	-	4	Melisende, Alice, Hodierna, Yveta
Melisende = Fulk of Anjou	2	-	Baldwin III, Amalric
Baldwin III = Theodora	-	-	
Amalric = (a) Agnes of Courtenay (b) Maria Komnene	1	3	Sibyl ^(a) , Baldwin IV ^(a) N ^(b) , Isabella I ^(b)
Baldwin IV (unmarried)	-	-	
Baldwin V (died young, unmarried)	-	-	
Sibyl = (a) William of Montferrat (b) Guy of Lusignan	1	2	Baldwin V ^(a) , Alice ^(b) , Maria ^(b)
Isabella I = (a) Humphrey of Toron (b) Conrad I of Montferrat (c) Henry I of Champagne (d) Aimery of Lusignan	1	6	- Maria ^(b) Alice ^(c) , Margaret ^(c) , Philippa ^(c) Amalric ^(d) , Sibyl ^(d) , Melisende ^(d)
Maria la Marquise = John (I) of Brienne	-	1	Isabella II
Isabella II (Yolande) = Frederick II	1	-	Conrad II
Conrad II (IV of Germany)	1	-	Conrad III
Conrad III (Conradin) (unmarried)	-	-	
Hugh I (III of Cyprus) = Isabella of Ibelin	6	5	John II, Bohemund, Henry II, Amalric, Aimery, Guy, Maria, Margaret, Alice, Helvis, Isabella
John II	-	-	
Henry II	-	-	
Totals by sex	13	21	
Percentages	38 %	62 %	