

Opportunism & Duty: Gendered Perceptions of Women's Involvement in Crusade Negotiation and Mediation (1147–1254)

Gordon M. Reynolds

WRITING IN THE early fourteenth century, Jean de Joinville, a participant in the Seventh Crusade (1248–1254), recalled the dextrous manner in which Margaret of Provence handled the ransom of her husband, Louis IX of France (r. 1226–1270).¹ Louis had been taken captive by Egyptian forces in 1250 and could not (or would not) agree on the payment of any ransom but instead advised Margaret to pay it.² Margaret subsequently had to juggle her husband's ransom negotiations while convincing the remaining crusaders to stay and follow her direction. Her case has intrigued numerous commentators over the years; however her situation was by no means an isolated one during the crusades. Throughout the twelfth- and thirteenth-century crusades to the East, numerous women from a variety of social standings had leadership thrust upon them or used the opportunity that power-vacuum

1. While commenting on the composition of Joinville's work, Caroline Smith noted that "the crusade section of this text is entirely different in character and concerns than those that frame it." This indicates that Joinville's writings on the Seventh Crusade were written or based on writings he made during or not long after the events, which adds credence to the claims he asserts about Margaret.

See Caroline Smith, *Crusading in the Age of Joinville* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 58.

2. Jean de Joinville, "Livre des Saintes Paroles et des Bons Faiz Nostre Saint Roy Looys," in *Vie de Saint Louis*, ed. Jacques Monfrin (Paris: Garnier, 1995), 346, v. 342. Some historians completely pass over Margaret's involvement in these negotiations such as Jean Richard, *Saint Louis: Crusader King of France*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992), 130.

provided in order to lead negotiations, act as mediators between forces or as emissaries on diplomatic missions.

There are numerous significant examples of all of these forms of participation within chroniclers' writings detailing the events surrounding the fall of Jerusalem to Saladin, the sultan of Egypt and Syria (r. 1174–1193), in 1187.³ Saladin's capture of Jerusalem marks a watershed moment in crusade history. The holiest site in Christendom was lost, and the Kingdom of Jerusalem shattered. Yet while scholarship on the effects of this moment has yielded much on the violent political upheaval that took place, the social impact of Saladin's conquest, particularly for the women of the Latin East and their society's attitude toward gender, has not attracted the same level of attention. As Natasha Hodgson observes, "throughout successive generations of scholarly interest, the crusades have stayed firmly entrenched within the confines of military and religious history."⁴ Yet women were omnipresent on crusades, contributing to the movement as auxiliaries, pilgrims, leaders, as well as other occupations.⁵

There is not an overwhelming body of evidence that indicates women had significantly greater opportunities to lead negotiations in the Levant, compared to their contemporaries in western Europe. Their continuous presence in inter-crusader mediation, as shall be discussed, highlights the willingness of Frankish people, both new arrivals in the East and established settlers, to rely on women for this role. Yet, that is no excuse for the modern general narrative of women, gender, and especially

3. Numerous historians have looked upon the High Middle Ages, and the twelfth century in particular, as being a significant period in which women exerted political authority; for example, see Susan M. Johns, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth-Century Anglo-Norman Realm* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003); Theodore Evergates, "Aristocratic Women in the County of Champagne," in *Aristocratic Women in Medieval France*, ed. Theodore Evergates (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 74–110.

4. Natasha R. Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2007), 1.

5. Though not an investigation into the perspectives of gender or the flexibility of gender roles in the Middle Ages, Sabine Geldsetzer provides an in-depth analysis of the varied occupations that women filled while on crusade. Sabine Geldsetzer, *Frauen auf Kreuzzügen: 1096–1291* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2003).

crusade history to overlook the female contribution as participants in crusades.

This essay asserts that modern scholarship has not adequately investigated medieval chroniclers' references to female negotiators in the Frankish Levant, particularly during the later twelfth-century.⁶ In this context, I will treat negotiation as diplomatic exchanges between individuals acting of their own volition, using resources directly at their disposal. The following pages will also discuss women's involvement in numerous other types of diplomacy more commonly associated with their gender in the Middle Ages, such as their roles in mediation between parties, as well as in the surrender of territory.

Chronicles, predominantly written by clerical men and rife with the prejudices of those bound by vows of chastity, are particularly valuable for what they can reveal of their authors' societal perceptions.⁷ Margaret Labarge rightly cautioned: "too literal an acceptance of the masculine bias of most medieval thinkers is unfair [to their contemporary

6. Study of women as mediators within the wider medieval context has attracted a considerable level of scrutiny, and some individual crusader women, such as Eleanor of Aquitaine and the aforementioned Margaret of Provence, have been examined within that literature. For some examples, see Christian de Méridol, "La Femme et la paix dans la symbolique des décors à la fin de l'époque médiévale," in *Regards croisés sur l'oeuvre de Georges Duby: Femmes et féodalité*, ed. Annie Bleton-Ruget, Marcel Pacaut, and Michel Rubellin (Lyon: Presses Universitaires de Lyon, 2000), 197–211; Lois L. Huneycutt, "Intercession and the High Medieval Queen: The Esther Topos" in *Power of the Weak: Studies on Medieval Women*, ed. Jennifer Carpenter and Sally-Beth MacLean (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1995), 126–46; see also Nicolas Offenstadt, "Les Femmes et la paix à la fin du Moyen Age: Genre, discours, rites," in *Le Règlement des conflits au Moyen Age: XXXIe Congrès de la S.H.M.E.S., Angers, juin 2000*, Publications de la Sorbonne. Histoire ancienne et médiévale; 62 (Paris: Publications de la Sorbonne, 2001), 317–33.

7. Damien Kempf, "Towards a Textual Archaeology of the First Crusade," in *Writing the Early Crusades: Text, Transmission and Memory*, ed. Marcus Bull and Damien Kempf (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2014), 116. See also Chris Given-Wilson, *Chronicles: The Writing of History in Medieval England* (London: Carnegie Publishing, 2004), p. 3. For a discussion of the use of chronicles as a source for gender history, see Juliana Dresvina, and Nicholas Sparks, eds., *Authority and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Chronicles* (Newcastle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 2; Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land*.

society].”⁸ This means that there is a wider degree of interpretation of chroniclers’ thinking than in other types of historical documents, such as charters, something which modern historiography is yet to take into serious consideration of with regard to gender and crusading. It will be argued through the use of chronicles from Frankish Levantine, western European, Byzantine, and Muslim authors that in the crusaders’ ensuing scramble to regain a footing in the East after the fall of Jerusalem in 1187, their tolerance for people to deviate from strict gender roles increased.⁹

As a consequence, women were presented with an array of opportunities to assume a role normally associated with men, that of the negotiator.¹⁰ I shall explore the involvement of women in diplomacy from the Second Crusade (1147–1149) up to the Seventh (1248–1254)

8. Margaret Wade Labarge, *Women in Medieval Life: A Small Sound of the Trumpet* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1986), xi–xii.

9. Historians have been sceptical of the veracity of some claims by medieval Muslim authors who describe crusader women performing occupations not normally associated with their gender. Niall Christie summarized his concerns over the topic: “[there was an] over-arching assumption that women should be restricted to the domestic sphere . . . [so] suggesting that one’s enemies were unable to restrict their women to their appropriate gender roles was a way of questioning their masculinity and hence denigrating them.” Niall Christie, *Muslims and Crusaders: Christianity’s Wars in the Middle East, 1095–1382, From the Islamic Sources* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 83–84. See also Carole Hillenbrand, *The Crusades, Islamic Perspectives* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1999), 274. However, all the examples of Muslim descriptions of female negotiators in this essay have corroborating writings by Latin writers.

10. For information on women’s shift into the male dominated gender role of the warrior, see Rasa Mazeika, “‘Nowhere was the Fragility of their Sex Apparent’: Women Warriors in the Baltic Crusade Chronicles,” in *From Clermont to Jerusalem: The Crusades and Crusader Societies 1095–1500*, ed. Alan V. Murray, International Medieval Research 3 (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998), 229–48, doi:10.1484/M.IMR-EB.3.4791; Megan McLaughlin, “The Woman Warrior: Gender, Warfare and Society in Medieval Europe,” *Women’s Studies* 17, no. 1 (1990): 193–209; Patricia Skinner, “Halt! Be Men!: Sikelgaita of Salerno, Gender and the Norman Conquest of Southern Italy,” *Gender & History* 12, no. 3 (2000): 623–41, doi:10.1111/1468-0424.00203. For more information on masculinity and the crusades, see Natasha Hodgson, “Normans and Competing Masculinities on Crusade,” in *Crusading and Pilgrimages in the Norman World*, ed. Kathryn Hurlock and Paul Oldfield (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015), 195–214.

(the height of popularity for crusades to the East).¹¹ Notably, women negotiators in this period were not restricted to times of crisis or social upheaval. The various crusader factions in the Levant were also frequently in need of delegates to mediate between one another, and women often filled such postings. In cases of crusader-Muslim diplomacy, as Yvonne Friedman has remarked, “whether entered into by a state or a nonstate entity, peace-making was the prerogative of the king or local prince and thus, an aspect of his power, just as war making was.”¹² Building upon Friedman’s ideas, this essay argues that women displayed their own authority through their involvement in or direction of negotiations between crusader, Muslim, and Byzantine factions.

Crusader Women and Non-Latin Powers

Throughout the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, Latin chroniclers noted events where women were involved in diplomacy as a means to emphasize the individuals’ authority as respected voices. Odo de Deuil remarked on Eleanor of Aquitaine’s importance during the Second Crusade (1147–1149) in his narrative of how Byzantine nobles singled her out for correspondence.¹³ The German contingent of the crusade had

11. The study of women negotiators within a crusade context, particularly when they were contacting Muslim or Byzantine (Greek Orthodox) delegates, merits closer examination due to the religious connotations of their involvement. Yvonne Friedman has remarked that when discussing the negotiations of the crusaders and Muslims, one should not view this as opposing religious groups making peace. Yvonne Friedman, “Negotiations and Peace Treaties between Muslims and Crusaders in the Latin East,” *Common Knowledge* 21, no. 1 (January 2015): 84. However, contemporary Christians would likely have viewed any crusader representative as being, to some extent, a representative of Christianity. Women’s involvements in crusade negotiations were undertaken in dynamically different circumstances from what may be termed *secular* negotiations between fellow Latin Christians. As such, the topic ought to be differentiated from the wider scholarship on women mediators/negotiators during the Middle Ages.

12. Friedman, “Negotiations and Peace Treaties,” 84.

13. Odo was a participant in the Second Crusade and Louis VII of France’s (Eleanor’s husband) personal chaplain making him very well placed to know much about Eleanor’s role during the crusade. See Jerzy Pysiak, “Odo of Deuil,” *Encyclopedia of the Medieval Chronicle*, ed. Graeme Dunphy and Cristian Bratu,

already passed through Constantinople and had become embroiled in numerous skirmishes with the Byzantines, souring crusader-Byzantine relations.¹⁴ This was a very politically tense situation, yet during this time, Odo states, “occasionally the [Byzantine] empress wrote to the queen.”¹⁵ Any correspondence between the two factions would have been influential in mitigating tensions; though Odo omits any further information on what was said between these two women, it was clearly important enough for him to mention it (however no Greek sources mentions it).¹⁶ As John Parsons notes, medieval queens were well placed within the social hierarchy to “deal with others independently of

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14. As the Frankish contingent of the expedition passed through the city, many among their army wanted to attack the Byzantines to remove any threat. Odo summarized their attitudes toward the Byzantines: “Ob hoc iudicabantur non esse christiani, caedesque illorum ducebant pro nihilo et a praedis et rapinis difficilius poterant revocari” (Because of this they were judged not to be Christians, and the Franks considered killing them a matter of no importance and hence could with the more difficulty be restrained from pillage and plundering). Odo de Deuil, *De Profectione Ludovici VII in Orientem: The Journey of Louis VII to the East*, trans. Virginia Gingerick Berry (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), bk. 3, 56–57.

15. Odo de Deuil, 56. “Interdum imperatrix reginae scribebat” (Occasionally the empress wrote to the queen).

16. There is no mention of this correspondence in the Byzantine chronicler Niketas Choniates’s narrative; however he was born nearly a decade later in 1155. See Niketas Choniates, *O City of Byzantium: Annals of Niketas Choniates*, trans. Harry J. Magoulias (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1984). John Kinnamos [Joannes Cinnamus], a Byzantine chronicler and contemporary of the Second Crusade, also does not mention the exchange between the women, but he was far more concerned with documenting the activities of the German contingent of the crusade. See John Kinnamos [Joannes Cinnamus], *Deeds of John and Manuel Comnenus*, trans. Charles M. Brand (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976). Similarly, the anonymous Byzantine court poet for whom modern historians have invented the name Manganeios Prodromos, “barely alluded to” the French contingent at all. See Elizabeth Jeffreys and Michael Jeffreys, “The ‘Wild Beast from the West’: Immediate Literary Reactions in Byzantium to the Second Crusade,” in *The Crusades from the Perspective of Byzantium and the Muslim World*, ed. Angeliki Laiou and Roy Mottahedeh (Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks Research Library and Collection, 2001), 104.

institutions or offices.”¹⁷ The Byzantine empress who was communicating with Eleanor was Bertha of Sulzbach, a German noblewoman who had married Manuel I Comnenus in 1146.¹⁸ This is significant, because these are two Latin women corresponding on behalf of two different cultural factions. This may well have been the main reason that they were corresponding, whether of their own choice or because the leaders of their respective groups had pressured them into doing so. The importance of these talks is all the more likely as this event is one of few occasions that Odo mentions the presence of Eleanor during the Second Crusade. It is difficult to quantify what effect her correspondence had; nevertheless, this moment demonstrates the reliance that the factions of the Near East occasionally placed in women mediators during dire circumstances.

Not only did women help ease political tensions, they also participated in significant negotiations over territory. William of Tyre states that Manuel I Comnenus, after hearing that Joscelin II, count of Edessa, had been captured by Nur ad-Din in 1150, offered Joscelin’s wife Beatrice an annual stipend to support herself and her family if she surrendered to him the remaining territories in the County of Edessa still in her control.¹⁹ Beatrice took the offer, and William names six fortresses that were handed over to the Byzantines but admits there were, “possibly others.”²⁰ Robert Nicholson notes that the importance of King Baldwin III of Jerusalem in these negotiations cannot be understated. It was in Baldwin’s interest that a Byzantine ruler rather than the hostile Nur ad-Din controlled the area north of the Kingdom of Jerusalem.²¹

17. John Carmi Parsons, “The Queen’s Intercession in Thirteenth-Century England,” in Carpenter and MacLean, *Power of the Weak*, 147.

18. Otto of Freising and Rahewin, “Ottonis et Rahewini Gesta Frederici I. Imperatoris,” in *Scriptores Rerum Germanicarum*, ed. Georg Waitz and Bernhard Von Simson, vol. 46 (Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 1912), bk. 1, p. 37.

19. William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. Robert B. C. Huygens (Turnhout: Brepols, 1986), bk. 17, p. 781.

20. William of Tyre, bk. 17, p. 782. “Erant autem opida que a nostris adhuc possidebantur Turbessel, Hantab, Ravendel, Ranculat, Bile, Samosatium et fortasse alia quedam.”

21. Robert Lawrence Nicholson, *Jocelyn III and the Fall of the Crusader States: 1134–1199* (Leiden: Brill, 1973), 23.

However, Nicholson admits that the emperor's proposal "was concluded with the consent of countess Beatrice."²² It is clear that Beatrice was in a powerful enough legal and political position that Baldwin III could not circumvent her in these negotiations.

Eschiva of Bures, the countess of Tiberias, also organized the exchange of territory, though with far more agency than Beatrice. Despite being the heiress to the principality of Galilee, very little is known about Eschiva; there is even still debate as to who her parents were.²³ She has been recognized as a significant example of a woman who took command during a siege, commanding the defenders of Tiberias against Saladin's forces in 1187, yet very few scholars have explored in any depth the significance of her abilities in diplomacy.²⁴ The Lyon *Eracles* explains that Eschiva, under the assumption that her husband Raymond III of Tripoli and her children had been killed in the Battle of Hattin, agreed to surrender Tiberias's citadel to Saladin if he gave her and her retinue safe conduct to go to Tripoli.²⁵ One contemporary Muslim

22. Nicholson, 23.

23. Hans Eberhard Mayer, "The Crusader Principality of Galilee Between Saint-Omer and Bures-sur-Yvette," in *Itinéraires d'Orient: Hommages à Claude Caben*, ed. Raoul Curiel and Rika Gyselen (Leuven: Peeters Press, 1994), 163.

24. See Helen Jane Nicholson, "Women's Involvement in the Crusades," in *The Crusader World*, ed. Adrian Boas (London: Routledge, 2015), 59. Jean Richard does not mention her involvement at all in his discussion of the capture of Tiberias. Jean Richard, *The Crusades, c. 1071–c. 1291*, trans. Jean Birrell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 208.

25. William of Tyre wrote his chronicle up to the date 1184. His work was later translated into Old French and continuations added during the first half of the thirteenth century. These continuations are often collectively referred to as the *Eracles*, after the Byzantine emperor Heraclius as his reign is the first subject discussed by William. See Peter W. Edbury, ed. and trans., *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade: Sources in Translation* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 1998), iv. Anonymous, *La Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr (1184–1197)*, ed. Margaret Ruth Morgan, Documents Relatifs à l'Histoire des Croisades 14 (Paris: Librairie orientale P. Geuthner, 1982), 56, v. 44. "La dame de Tabarie, quant ele oï dire que le rei esteit pris et la crestienté desconfite, cuida que ses maris et ses enfans fussent perdus a cele desconfiture. Ele manda a Salahadin qu'ele feist recevoir Thabarie, et li donast fiance que ele peust aler a Triple." See also Edbury, "The Old French Continuation of William of Tyre, 1184–97," in *The Conquest of Jerusalem*, 48, v. 44.

source writing in the early thirteenth century, Ibn al-Athir (1160–1233), directly corroborates Eschiva's correspondence with Saladin. He recollects that "[Eschiva] sent requesting terms for herself, her children, her followers and her possessions. [Saladin] granted this and she left with everything."²⁶ Another contemporary, Beha ed-Din (1145–1234), claims that Saladin released as many as four thousand people from Tiberias following its surrender.²⁷ Determining the accuracy of figures in medieval texts is always problematic, especially in a case such as this where Beha was likely trying to emphasize the significance of Saladin's victory at Tiberias. However, if Beha's figures are accurate they further highlight the responsibility that lay with Eschiva to organize the exchange of the city for these people's freedom.

Eschiva's case presents strong evidence of a woman dealing directly with a Muslim ruler during the turmoil created by his incursions into crusader territories in 1187. Despite this, Eschiva was not negotiating with Saladin in the strictest sense of the word, as individuals with mutual respect organizing a truce or land exchange, but rather she was engaging in a dialogue over terms of surrender when conflict was imminent. In Beatrice's case, the County of Edessa was weak and had all but vanished, and in Eschiva's, her citadel was surrounded and the only relief force had been crushed in battle. The likelihood of complete defeat, in both cases, if the conflict continued would have sped up the negotiations and probably elevated the willingness of the men in the contingents of both women to follow their decisions.

There are examples of women taking part in diplomacy after conflicts

The contemporary anonymous English writer of the *Libellus de expugnatione Terrae Sanctae per Saladinum* gives a short summary of these events. See "Libellus de expugnatione Terrae Sanctae per Saladinum" in Ralph of Coggeshall, *Radulphi de Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (London: Longman, 1875), 228: "mandavit Saladinus ad comitissam et ad viros qui errant in arce Tyberiadis, ut castellum relinquerent, atque accepta securitate vitae quo vellent irent in pace. Qui et ita fecerunt, relicta civitate."

26. Ibn al-Athir, *The Chronicle of Ibn al-Athir for the Crusading Period from al-Kamil fi'l-Ta'rikh*. Part 2: *The Years 541–589/1146–1193: The Age of Nur al-Din and Saladin*, trans. Donald S. Richards (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 324.

27. Beha Ed-Din, *Saladin or What Befell Sultun Yusuf*, trans. Charles William Wilson (London: Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1897), 116.

had concluded, particularly in order to ransom their relatives who had been captured in the fighting during Saladin's 1187 invasion. As Keren Caspi-Reisfeld has written, "mainly aristocratic" women were involved in crusade diplomacy, and this is unsurprising given the resources that they had access to.²⁸ This is certainly true of individuals such as Queen Sibylla of Jerusalem (r. 1186–1190), who, after the fall of Jerusalem, also in 1187, asked Saladin to release her imprisoned husband (Guy de Lusignan, r. 1186–1192), to which "Saladin replied that he would do so gladly."²⁹ Yet there were women from the lesser nobility who played some role interceding with Saladin on behalf of captured relatives at this time as well. The *Eracles* recounts that after Jerusalem's fall, many wives and daughters of knights who had been captured in the battle of Hattin came to him. The author states: "they explained that he had their husbands and fathers in prison and that they had lost their lands, and they called on him for the sake of God to have mercy on them and give them counsel and aid."³⁰ This was a particularly successful plea as Saladin released all the knights in his custody and ordered that the women whose fathers and lords had been killed should be provided for

28. Keren Caspi-Reisfeld, "Women Warriors during the Crusades, 1095–1254," in *Gendering the Crusades*, ed. Susan B. Edgington and Sarah Lambert (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 95.

29. See Anonymous, *Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr*, 86, v. 75. "Salahadin li manda dire que volentiers le fereit delivrer." Similarly Stephanie of Milly (d. 1197) also bartered with Saladin after Jerusalem's fall in order to free her son Humphrey IV of Toron. However she was unsuccessful in fulfilling Saladin's terms, only gaining the "release [of her] possessions and those who attended her." Ibn al-Athir, *Chronicle*, 333. While discussing another occasion when Stephanie negotiated with Saladin, during the siege of Kerak in 1183, which had interrupted Stephanie's son's wedding, Natasha Hodgson commented, "to an extent this was a form of negotiation uniquely suited to the female role." Despite her gender, Stephanie was no stranger to mediation during conflict by the time of her son's ransom. See Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land*, 128.

30. Anonymous, *Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr*, 72, v. 58. "L'on li dist que eles esteient les femes et les filles des chevaliers qui furent mors et pris en la bataille. Il demanda que eles volient. Eles distrent que por Dieu eust merci d'eles, que il aveit lor mariz et lor peres en prison, et aveient lor terres predues, que por Dieu il meist conseil et aide en eles." Edbury, *Conquest of Jerusalem*, 64, v. 58.

in accordance with their social rank.³¹ Evidently class played a large part in this plea, as the author does specifically say that it was the family members of *chevaliers* who came to Saladin. Undoubtedly, women from any lesser social rung could not have hoped to gain any compensation or to secure the freedom of their male relatives.

At the time of the *Eracles's* composition in thirteenth-century France, Saladin had become renowned as a chivalrous and honorable warrior.³² It is possible that the author may have included the story of Saladin's release of captives to exemplify his merciful qualities. If the story that the *Eracles* recounts is a fabrication, then it is likely that it was Saladin's altruism that was intended as the striking part of the story for a contemporary medieval audience rather than the women seeking his counsel. This suggests that such an act was not necessarily that odd during the time of the *Eracles's* writing and may have been an action expected of women when their crusading kinsmen needed help.

Contemporary Muslim descriptions of Saladin's interactions with Frankish-Levantine women, as well as women on crusade, corroborate that he was particularly kind and approachable when dealing with them. Beha ed-Din recounts an occasion during the siege of Acre in 1191 (part of the conflicts directly caused by the weakening of the crusader states in 1187), when he witnessed the approach of a Frankish woman whose baby had been abducted from within the besiegers' camp. He recalls her meeting with Saladin: "she threw herself on her face upon the ground and began weeping and lamenting. When the Sultan heard the cause of her grief he was affected even to tears, and commanded the child to be brought."³³ Beha used this anecdote (more than once) very tactically to highlight Saladin's compassionate qualities.³⁴

Despite his political agenda, Beha's account does illustrate the ability of crusading women of a variety of social classes to engage with Muslim

31. Anonymous, *Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr*, 72, v. 58.

32. Matthew Strickland, *War and Chivalry: The Conduct and Perception of War in England and Normandy, 1066–1217* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 16; Jonathan Philips, *Holy Warriors: A Modern History of the Crusades* (London: Vintage, 2010), 136.

33. Beha Ed-Din, *Saladin*, 244.

34. Beha Ed-Din, *Saladin*, 41.

leaders. Yet it is possible that Saladin was unique in his interaction with crusader women as there are relatively few accounts of other Muslim leaders doing the same. This may further explain the large number of examples of Frankish women engaging in mediation and diplomacy during the time of Saladin's campaigns against the Kingdom of Jerusalem in the late twelfth century.

Another element of Saladin's character that set him apart from his contemporaries was that he struck up genuine friendships with the crusader women he communicated with. According to Ibn al-Athir, following Saladin's capture of Bourzey castle in 1188, he took the lord of Bourzey along with his wife and children and released them upon approaching Antioch.³⁵ Ibn al-Athir explains Saladin's clemency: "the wife of the lord of [Bourzey] was the sister-in-law of Bohemond [III], lord of Antioch. She was in correspondence with Saladin and exchanged gifts with him. She used to inform him of many significant matters. He freed these people for her sake."³⁶ This shows that the lady of Bourzey was in correspondence with Saladin over a significant period of time, that the two clearly had a close relationship, and that she was able to utilize this relationship during the turmoil caused by Saladin's campaigns. However, it does also suggest that despite the close correspondence between the two, the lady of Bourzey had no ability to quell Saladin's attack on her castle, or indeed his advance into wider crusader territory.

Nevertheless, female-led negotiation, with Muslims in particular, was not always well received by the Levantine Frankish population. This is evident in William of Tyre's chronicle. He notes that after the death of Bohemond II of Antioch (d. 1130) his wife, Alice of Antioch, decided to enter into negotiations with the Muslim leader Imad ad-Din Zengi (d. 1146) in order to secure her position as the leader of the county. William recounts that she sent a servant to deliver a white palfrey with silver trappings as a present to Zengi. Alice's plan did not come to fruition as the servant was captured by Baldwin II of Jerusalem and killed. William goes on to describe Alice's intentions as the "contemptible recklessness

35. Ibn al-Athir, *Chronicle*, 351–52.

36. Ibn al-Athir, 352.

of a crazy woman.”³⁷ It is hard to ascertain why William was so vitriolic toward Alice. It is unlikely that he was simply being misogynistic as Bohemond and Alice had one child, a daughter, and William states that all of Alice’s clandestine behavior was an attempt to “disinherit her daughter.”³⁸ Evidently the idea of a woman inheriting the principality was not the point that irked William. It is likely that he was incensed because Alice had dared to negotiate independently (and primarily) with a Muslim rather than a Christian leader.³⁹ This episode allows some insight into the negative perspectives William, a late twelfth-century Levantine Frankish writer, had of female-led negotiations with Muslims as well as the autonomy and agency that Alice demonstrated by engaging in diplomacy.⁴⁰

Women were frequently involved more passively in diplomatic negotiations, particularly through marriage. Odo de Deuil describes women being used as marriage partners to set alliances between the Byzantines and the participants of the Second Crusade. He states that in exchange for guides and for Byzantine markets to be opened to the crusaders, Manuel I Komnenos “demanded two things: a kinswoman of the king’s, who accompanied the queen, as wife for one of his nephews, and the homage of the barons for himself.”⁴¹ The demand for homage is very

37. William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 13, p. 624: “insanientis femine contempnentes proterviam.”

38. William of Tyre, bk. 13, 624: “exheredata filia.”

39. James Illston did note that there are no contemporary Muslim records of this peace treaty being offered, which does raise the question of whether this event was in fact manufactured or a mistake on William’s part. However William is generally regarded as a reliable source. See James M. Illston, “An Entirely Masculine Activity? Women and War in the High and Late Middle Ages Reconsidered” (master’s thesis, University of Canterbury, 2009), 67.

40. Distaste for a Christian leader opting to negotiate with Muslims rather than other Christians was not reserved for women. Hugh II of Jaffa was also regarded poorly by Christian chroniclers for his interactions with Muslim leaders and the employment of Muslim troops for his coup in 1134. See Christopher Tyerman, *God’s War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 206–9.

41. Odo de Deuil, *De Profectione*, bk. 4, p. 76–77. “Tandem quod caute distulerat per nuntios revelavit; et regis cognatam, quam regina secum habebat, cuidam nepoti suo coniugem sibi que baronem hominum requisivit (76)”

reminiscent of Alexios I's demands of the leaders of the First Crusade, and the use of a diplomatic marriage in this case would have helped ease tensions, as the Byzantines and pilgrims of the Second Crusade were often at odds, as explained earlier.⁴²

Jean de Joinville similarly states that in 1254 envoys came to Louis IX from the lord of Trebizond.⁴³ According to Jean, these envoys asked Louis to send a woman from his household to marry their lord.⁴⁴ The envoys were asking for a woman to be used to seal a diplomatic alliance between Louis and the empire of Trebizond. The significance of familial connections between Latins was clearly very strong as Louis's answer shows: "[Louis] suggested they might go to the emperor at Constantinople [Baldwin II Latin Emperor (r. 1228–1273)], the king's cousin, and ask him to provide them with a wife for their lord who would be of both the emperor's and the king's line."⁴⁵ It is likely, however, that Louis was just diplomatically evading sending any of his kinswomen to the empire of Trebizond, while politely expressing his support for Trebizond's rival, the Latin Empire of Constantinople.

Contemporary Latin attitudes toward political marriages between Christian women and Muslim men were often much more negative than toward marriages between Latins and Greek Orthodox Byzantines. This was often because members of neither faction would tolerate converting to the opposing religion in order to marry for diplomacy. An example of a proposed marriage between a Latin woman and a Muslim noble for diplomatic reasons can be seen when Richard I of England (r. 1189–1199), seeking a peace agreement, offered his sister, Joan of

42. For more information on these relations, see Jonathan Harris, *Byzantium and the Crusades*, 2nd ed. (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 102.

43. Jean de Joinville, "Livre," p. 498, v. 591. Trebizond was a Byzantine state that was founded after the fall of Constantinople in 1204 in the Fourth Crusade. See Caroline Smith, "Notes," in *Joinville and Villehardouin: Chronicles of the Crusades*, ed. and trans. Caroline Smith (London: Penguin Books, 2008), 377n5.

44. Joinville, "Livre," p. 498, v. 592.

45. Joinville, p. 498, v. 592. "Et le roy respondi que il n'en avoit nulles amenees d'outre mer ; et leur loa que il alassent en Constantinoble a l'empereour, qui estoit cousin le roy, et li requessent que il leur baillast une femme pour leur seigneur tele qui feust du lignage le roy et du sien." See also Smith, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 293, v. 592.

England, to Saladin's brother al-Adil, provided that al-Adil converted to Christianity.⁴⁶ However, as Ibn al-Athir notes, "when this became public knowledge, the priests, bishops and monks assembled before the king of England's sister and expressed their disapproval, so she refused to comply."⁴⁷ Ibn al-Athir makes no mention of al-Adil being asked to convert to Christianity and indicates that both al-Adil and Saladin consented to peace under the terms proposed by Richard. It is possible that both Saladin and al-Adil were convinced that the proposal would never come to fruition and merely pretended to consider it seriously. Yet, Yehoshua Frenkel has described how similar events were repeatedly portrayed in comparable ways in various later works of Islamic literature, and that this could indicate that numerous Muslims were "willing to accept the option of inter-communal marriage as a valid strategy to end hostilities."⁴⁸ Similarly, Christian authors such as Pierre Dubois would argue in the early fourteenth century that as a means of recapturing the Holy Land, Christian women should be married off to Muslims with the intention of converting them to Christianity.⁴⁹ However, this offers little insight into how the twelfth-century Frankish Levantine population viewed such arrangements.⁵⁰ Nor do many contemporary descriptions of arranged marriages offer any indication

46. See Anonymous, *Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr*, p. 151, v. 142. "Ice faiseit Salahadin porce que il douteit Seiffedin son frere, por ce que le rei Richart il avoit promis que se il voleit estre crestien, que il li donreit sa seror, icele qui avoit esté reyne de Sezile, a feme, et se icelui mariage se feisoit, il doutoit que il ne perdist toute sa conquete."

47. Ibn al-Athir, *Chronicle*, 392. Ambroise, a participant in the Third Crusade, offers a much shorter account of these events, but he states that the negotiations over the marriage broke off as Saladin refused to destroy Crac de Montreal as part of the alliance terms. See Ambroise, *The History of the Holy War: Ambroise's Estoire de la Guerre Sainte*, vol.1: *Text*, ed. Marianne Ailes and Malcolm Barber (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2003), p. 120, lines 7406–15.

48. Yehoshua Frenkel, "Muslim Responses to the Frankish Dominion in the Near East, 1098–1291," in *The Crusades and the Near East*, ed. Conor Kostick (London: Routledge, 2011), 31.

49. See Pierre Dubois, *De Recuperatione Terra Sancte: Traité de Politique Générale*, ed. Charles-Victor Langlois (Paris: Collection de Textes, 1891).

50. For more on crusader-Muslim marriages, see Hillenbrand, *The Crusades*, 350–51.

of the agency with which women organized them, or even consented to them.

Women and Inter-Crusader Relations

It is likely that women were able to independently negotiate with Byzantine and particularly Muslim powers in circumstances where the male leader (usually a husband) had become incapacitated rather than because their fellow crusaders had considerable faith in their capabilities as negotiators. There may have been a perception among the Levantine Franks that in leading negotiations with non-Latin entities, the leader was in some sense representing the Latin Christian faith. Under ideal circumstances, with an appropriately ranked male leader present, women were not considered optimum candidates to represent Latin Christianity.⁵¹ It is probable that Levantine Franks felt that women were more appropriate candidates as mediators between crusader factions than between Latin and non-Latin authorities. This seems plausible as women were key players in intercrusader diplomacy and frequently took center stage in political correspondence. However, women would have acted with less agency under these circumstances. Those who helped in negotiations between Latin powers in the Levant often did so at the express request of male leaders or as their representatives rather than acting on their own inclination as was more common with female negotiations with Muslim leaders.

There were women mediators between crusade leaders in the Levant. During the Seventh Crusade, Jean de Joinville states that, “while we were staying in Cyprus the empress of Constantinople sent word to me that she had come to Paphos, and that Erart of Brienne and I should go and fetch her.”⁵² The empress that Jean refers to was Marie of Brienne

51. For a discussion on the Knights Templar’s esteem for Saint Euphemia and the medieval male regard for the female religious, see Helen J. Nicholson, “The Head of St. Euphemia: Templar Devotion to Female Saints,” in Edgington and Lambert, *Gendering the Crusades*, 110.

52. Joinville, “Livre,” p. 226, v. 137. “En ce point que nous sejourname en Cypre me manda l’empereris de Constantinnoble que elle estoit arivee a Baphe, une cité de Cypre, et que je l’alasse querre et mon seigneur Erart de Brienne.” See also Smith,

(d. 1275), the wife of the Latin emperor Baldwin II.⁵³ Jean goes on to state that “the empress had come to ask for aid from the king for her husband, who had stayed in Constantinople . . . she took away a hundred or more duplicate letters . . . these letters bound us on oath to go to Constantinople should the king or legate wish to send 300 knights.”⁵⁴ Though ultimately unsuccessful in her bid to secure military aid for her husband, this event highlights a very significant diplomatic exchange between Louis IX and Baldwin II through Marie as the broker.⁵⁵

There are suggestions that Eleanor of Aquitaine similarly played a role as intermediary between Louis VII of France (r. 1131–1180) and Raymond of Poitiers, prince of Antioch (r. 1136–1149) during the Second Crusade. Contemporaries described Eleanor as being particularly astute. William of Tyre suggests that Raymond had considered Eleanor, his niece, to be a key player in the negotiations he would have with the French contingent of the Second Crusade, believing the crusaders could help to “expand the principality of Antioch.”⁵⁶ In currying favor with Louis, Raymond had sent him many gifts, but also “counted greatly on the interest of the

Joinville and Villehardouin, p. 179, v. 137.

53. Smith, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, p. 366, n. 14.

54. Joinville, “Livre”, p. 228, v. 139. “L’emperéis vint querre secours au roy pour son seigneur, qui estoit en Constantinnoble demourez, et pourchassa tant que elle emporta .c. paire de lettres et plus, que de moy que des autres amis qui la estoient, es quix lettres nous estoins tenus par nos sermens que se le roy ou le legaz vouloient envoier troiz cens chevaliers en Constantinnoble après ce que le roy seroit parti d’outre mer, que nous y estions tenu d’aler par nos seremens.” See also Smith, *Joinville and Villehardouin*, 179–80, v. 139.

55. See also Benjamin Hendrickx, “The Visit of Marie de Brienne to Cyprus in the Context of her Quest for Assistance to the Latin Empire of Constantinople,” in *Hē Kypros kai hoi Straurophories: Hoi anakoinoseis tou diethnous symposiou “He Kypros kai hoi Stauraphories,” Leukosia, 6–9 Septemvriou, 1994* [Cyprus and the Crusades: Papers given at the International Conference “Cyprus and the Crusades,” Nicosia, 6–9 September 1994], ed. Nicholas Coureas and Jonathan Riley-Smith (Nicosia: Society for the Study of the Crusades and the Latin East and Cyprus Research Centre, 1994), 59–67.

56. William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 16, p. 754. “Conceperat autem multo ante, audito eius adventu, quod per eius auxilium Antiochenum principatum ampliare posset.”

queen with the lord king, for she had been his inseparable companion.”⁵⁷ Clearly Eleanor’s proximity to Louis was a major factor in Raymond’s interest in using her to Antioch’s advantage. However, understanding Eleanor’s exact role in the politics that took place in Antioch is difficult. This is because many contemporary descriptions of her visit there include allegations that she had an illicit affair with Raymond.⁵⁸ What is clear however, is that Eleanor’s role as a mediator was not her own choice, but one that Raymond had counted on long before her arrival.

This is hardly a lone instance where a woman’s involvement in the politics of the crusades was shrouded in doubt and rumor. William of Tyre’s chronicle is one such document that highlights women’s involvement in inter-crusader politics in a very negative manner. However, this may have had more to do with personal disagreements than gender prejudices. William states that in 1182 Raymond III of Tripoli made a journey to visit his wife’s lands in Tiberias as well as King Baldwin IV of Jerusalem (r. 1174–1185) in his capital. William recounts that Baldwin was tricked into believing Raymond was going to do him some harm so he barred Raymond from entering the kingdom. According to William,

57. William of Tyre, bk. 16, p. 754. “Presumebat nichilominus et de regine apud dominum regem interventu, que eiusdem peregrinationis regi adhesionem comes indivisa.” See also William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, vol. 2, trans. Emily Atwater Babcock and August Charles Krey (New York: Octagon Books, 1976), bk. 16.27, p. 179.

58. For some examples, see William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 16, pp. 754–55; John of Salisbury, *Historia Pontificalis: Memoirs of the Papal Court*, ed. and trans. Marjorie Chibnall (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1956), 52–53. Although, as Jonathan Philips points out, these accounts were written in the 1170s and in 1164 respectively; Philips, *Holy Warriors*, 95. Eleanor’s suspected infidelity even gave rise to fantastical, and anachronistic, tales generations later that she attempted to run away with Saladin. See Minstrel of Reims, *Récits d’un ménestrel de Reims au treizième siècle*, ed. Natalis de Wailly (Paris: Librairie Renouard, 1876), p. 4, v. 7; “et elle oï parler de la bonteï et de la prouesse et dou sens et de largesce Solehadin, si l’en ama durement en son cuer; et li manda salut par un sien drugement; et bein seust il, se il pouoit tant faire que il l’en peust mener, elle le penroit à seigneur et relanqueroit sa loi.” It is not impossible that numerous contemporaries repeated the story of Eleanor’s supposed affair simply because it was a sensational story. Odo de Deuil, an eyewitness to the Second Crusade, makes no mention of such explicit rumours surrounding Eleanor while in Antioch. See Odo de Deuil, *De Profectione*.

among those who influenced Baldwin's course of action were "his mother [Agnes de Courtenay], a most grasping woman, utterly detestable to God."⁵⁹ It is evident by his terminology that William had a severe distaste for Agnes, most likely because of her influence on church appointments.⁶⁰ William was close to Baldwin IV and had tutored him since Baldwin's childhood. It is possible that William included Agnes in this narrative to alleviate some of Baldwin's culpability in causing the souring of relations between himself and Raymond. If Agnes was involved in this episode she was indirectly influencing diplomacy through her son. This is a case where a woman became involved in negotiations without any indication of the men involved expressly asking her to or her counsel being legally necessary.

William also describes an event where a woman was legally obliged to be present in negotiations. This arose when King Baldwin III of Jerusalem tried to overthrow his mother, queen Melisende. William states that in 1152 Baldwin demanded that his mother divide the kingdom with him, and, after a long negotiation, Baldwin was given numerous cities to control with Melisende remaining in charge of Jerusalem and Nablus as well as the hinterland supporting them.⁶¹ James Illston noted that despite the conflict between the two parties, Melisende must have been a potent negotiator as she "was able to emerge just a few years later in a position of relative power and freedom in Baldwin's government."⁶² Like Melisende, Isabella I of Jerusalem (d. 1205) also had to contest her

59. William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 22, p. 1019: "inter quos regis mater, mulier plane deo odibilis et in extorquendo importuna." See William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. 22.9, p. 460.

60. In 1180, Baldwin IV allowed his mother, Agnes of Courtenay, to have great influence over who the next patriarch of Jerusalem would be. The two contenders for the role were William of Tyre and Eraclius, archbishop of Caesarea. The *Eracles* states that Agnes had cajoled the canons in charge of electing the patriarch into choosing Eraclius because he was her lover. See Anonymous, *La Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr*, pp. 49–50, vv. 37–38. The author was likely not being so negative because a woman had such influence but rather because the *Eracles* is a continuation of William of Tyre's work and so was as bitter about the choice as William himself had been. William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 22, p. 1019.

61. William of Tyre, bk. 17, p. 778.

62. Illston, "An Entirely Masculine Activity?," 67.

right to rule, particularly immediately after the death of her husband, Conrad of Montferrat, in 1192. Ultimately, it was her legal right to rule that could not be totally circumvented by the barons who opposed her rather than her skill as a negotiator as is clear by their demands that Henry of Champagne, their elected leader, marry her: the kingdom was hers by “hereditary right.”⁶³

Jean de Joinville likewise describes an event in which a noblewoman was obliged to be present in discussions, when Louis IX negotiated with the mother of the future Prince Bohemond VI of Antioch, Luciana di Segni, over her regency. Bohemond had come to Louis with his mother to ask the two to come to an agreement whereby he would be put in full control of Antioch along with the funds and men necessary to build up the strength of the principality. Joinville states that “the king lent [Bohemond] a very sympathetic ear, and did all he could with [Luciana] so that she would furnish [Bohemond] with everything that the king could extract from her.”⁶⁴ The negotiations went in Bohemond’s favor, and he gained control of Antioch while still in his minority.⁶⁵ It is possible Joinville was insinuating that the principality of Antioch was performing poorly under the leadership of a woman. However, this narrative shows that Bohemond could in no way circumvent Luciana’s authority as he was “no more than sixteen years old,”⁶⁶ and his mother had been acting as regent in his minority. As such, Luciana had to be at the forefront of any negotiation over the future leadership of the principality.⁶⁷

These examples concerned the possession of cities; yet some women were involved in negotiations over the funding of crusade expeditions. This is clear in the *Eracles’s* account of Richard I’s negotiations with

63. “Elegerunt in principem et dominum . . . et viduam Marchisi duceret uxorem, cui regnum jure debebatur haereditario.” *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, ed. William Stubbs (London, 1864), 342–43.

64. Joinville, “Livre,” p. 457, v. 524. “Le roi lui prêta une oreille très favorable et fit tout ce qu’il pût auprès de sa mère pour que celle-ci lui fournisse tout ce que le roi put tirer d’elle.”

65. Joinville, 457, v. 524.

66. Joinville, “Livre,” p. 454, v. 522. “Son aage n’estoit pas de plus que .XVI. ans.”

67. Illston, “An Entirely Masculine Activity?,” 67.

his sister Joan over funding his expedition in the Third Crusade. The author writes that “King Richard, who was very devious and greedy, never stopped begging his sister to sell her dower and go with him on pilgrimage.”⁶⁸ In exchange Richard offered to reimburse her upon his return to England and to find her a suitable husband, to which Joan agreed. The *Eracles* states that during these discussions Richard was in fact participating in negotiations with King Tancred of Sicily (r. 1189–1194) over the sale of Joan’s inheritance.⁶⁹ The author’s insinuation is that Richard went over Joan’s head and merely consulted her as a formality. However, given the author’s previous spiteful description of Richard, it is probable that he was just writing these scandalous details to deprecate Richard further.⁷⁰ Joan may not have had an integral part in this funding negotiation, but evidently her participation in the dialogue was considered necessary for the transaction to be legitimate.⁷¹ This shows that women were considered to have a rightful place in politics, particularly when it concerned their own property (though, this was hardly unique to the Latin East). However, this did not necessarily apply

68. Anonymous, *La Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr*, p. 109, v. 107. “Le roi Richart, qui estoit mout engingnous et coveitous, depuis que il fu la arivé, il ne fina de proier sa seror et de requerre que ele deust vendre son doaire, et d’aler o lui en son pelerinage.” See Edbury, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 97, v. 107. See also Ambroise, *The History of the Holy War*, p. 17, lines. 1020–23. “E l’avoir veü e pesé, don’t il n’ad point al rei pesé, qui mult fu coveitus del prendre por el service Deu despendre.” The writer of the *Itinerarium* does not mention the ultimate use of the money. See *Itinerarium Peregrinorum et Gesta Regis Ricardi*, 169–70.

69. Anonymous, *La Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr*, p. 109, v. 107: “le rei ot grant joie de ce que sa seror li otreia que il vendist son doaire. De lors en avant traita il o le rei Tancre de la vente dou doaire sa seror.”

70. The *Eracles*’s narrative of these events is also naïve as Joan and her dower were being held by Tancred, and it was only after Richard captured Messina that he was able to negotiate the release of both her and her dower. See Ambroise, *The History of the Holy War*, pp. 14–17, lines. 830–1049.

71. Colette Bowie has said that “queens of Norman Sicily all received considerable dowers but in general did not play an important role in government, and in this regard [Joan] was unexceptional.” Colette Bowie, “To Have and Have Not: The Dower of Joanna Plantagenet, Queen of Sicily (1177–1189),” in *Queenship in the Mediterranean: Negotiating the Role of the Queen in the Medieval and Early Modern Eras*, ed. Elena Woodacre (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 35.

to their person, as women were often used in marriage alliances between crusaders, as they were with non-Latin leaders.

The practice of arranged marriages was by no means isolated to the Frankish Levant, but was a key means of solidifying relations among the Latin Levantine baronage as well as between themselves and nobles from Europe, as is clear from William of Tyre's chronicle. He was aghast at the motives of Baldwin IV of Jerusalem in marrying his sister, Sibylla, to Guy de Lusignan, "[as the king] might have found in the kingdom nobles of far greater importance, wisdom, and even wealth, both foreigners and natives, an alliance with any one of whom would have been of much greater advantage to the kingdom."⁷² In this remark, William admits that women were used to form alliances that would be most advantageous to their male relatives. It is hard to determine from William's statements whether Sibylla had much, if any, say in whom she married.

The use of women as a tool in marriage alliances between Latins is also evident in the *Eracles*. The author states that after Guy de Lusignan bought Cyprus in 1192 he needed Latin recruits to help him maintain his new lands. In securing the loyalty of many of the knights and sergeants recently dispossessed by Saladin, among other things, Guy "had them marry women on their arrival as befitted their station, and he provided for them out of his wealth so that those that married them would be well satisfied."⁷³ Numerous historians neglect to mention the involvement of these women in the Frankish settlement of Cyprus.⁷⁴ George

72. William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, bk. 22, p. 1007: "sorori maturat nuptias et quamvis nobiliores et prudentiores et ditiores etiam in regno tum de advenis, tum de indigenis posset reperiri, penes quos multo commodius quantum ad regni utilitatem illa posset locari." See also William of Tyre, *A History of Deeds Done Beyond the Sea*, bk. 22.1, p. 446.

73. Anonymous, *La Continuation de Guillaume de Tyr*, p. 139, v. 136. "Et fist marier les femes a lor avenant et ensi come il lor aferreit, et lor dona de son avoir, de quei cil qui les esposeient se tindrent apaié." See also Edbury, *The Conquest of Jerusalem and the Third Crusade*, p. 114, v. 136. It is likely that Guy believed that paying recruits or giving them fiefs would not be sufficient to gain their loyalties, rather he wanted them to have families and settle down in his new kingdom.

74. One of the few who does touch on women's influences in the Frankish control of Cyprus is Bernard Hamilton. Yet, he focuses on the period long after the initial settlement. See Bernard Hamilton, "Queen Alice of Cyprus," in *The Crusader World*, 230.

Hill's multivolume *History of Cyprus*, for example, goes into great detail concerning the social standing of the individuals who settled Cyprus and the fiefs and money they received from Guy, but Hill makes no mention of the women betrothed to them.⁷⁵ Similarly, many of Guy's recruits came from Armenia, and yet Jacob Ghazarian, who focused on Armenian-Latin integration in a recent study, neglects to discuss the women who helped cement the loyalties of Guy's recruits.⁷⁶

Given the high numbers of women involved in negotiations with non-Latin delegates around the late twelfth century, it would appear that the upheaval caused by the fall of Jerusalem and subsequent shrinking of the crusader states were important factors in giving women the opportunity to shift gender roles and participate in the dialogue of the crusades. It is significant that there is a distinct dearth of narrative evidence for female involvement in the wider political negotiations after the onset of the thirteenth century.⁷⁷ This too is most likely due to the decline of the crusader states after the events of 1187. The instances discussed in this essay, which took place in the 1200s, appear to be anomalous for the thirteenth century. That said, a lack of references to women mediators and negotiators does not constitute sufficient evidence for their non-existence, and the reasoning for their absence from chronicles of the period can only be speculative. This paper has not sought to position Frankish Levantine female agency as being radically different or divergent from that of western Christendom. Rather, it is clear that much of modern scholarship's models for female-led negotiation and mediation are perfectly applicable within the Levantine context despite contemporary chronicles' emphasis on the male martial culture and exploits of the crusader states.

University of Edinburgh

75. George Hill, *A History of Cyprus*, vol. 2: *The Frankish Period 1192-1432* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948, repr. 2010), 39-40.

76. Jacob G. Ghazarian, *The Armenian Kingdom in Cilicia During the Crusades: The Integration of Cilician Armenians with the Latins, 1080-1393* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2000), 143.

77. Oliver of Paderborn, "Historia Damiatina," in *Die Schriften des Kölner Domscholaster, Späteren Bischofs von Paderborn und Kardinal-Bischofs*, ed. Hermann Hoogeweg (Tubingen: Bibliothek des Litterarischen Vereins, 1894), 159-280.