

JEANNE D'ALBRET

Letters from the Queen of Navarre  
with an *Ample Declaration*



*Edited and translated by*

KATHLEEN M. LEWELLYN, EMILY E. THOMPSON,  
AND COLETTE H. WINN

Iter Academic Press  
Toronto, Ontario

Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies  
Tempe, Arizona

2016

Iter Academic Press

Tel: 416/978-7074 Email: iter@utoronto.ca

Fax: 416/978-1668 Web: www.itergateway.org

Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies

Tel: 480/965-5900 Email: mrts@acmrs.org

Fax: 480/965-1681 Web: acmrs.org

© 2016 Iter, Inc. and the Arizona Board of Regents for Arizona State University.

All rights reserved.

Printed in Canada.

### Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, 1528-1572, author. | Llewellyn, Kathleen M., editor and translator. | Thompson, Emily E., editor and translator. | Winn, Colette H., editor and translator. | Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, 1528-1572. Ample déclaration.

Title: Jeanne d'Albret : letters from the Queen of Navarre with an ample declaration / edited and translated by Kathleen M. Llewellyn, Emily E. Thompson, and Collette H. Winn.

Other titles: Correspondence. English. | Ample déclaration.

Description: Tempe, Arizona : Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies ; Toronto, Ontario : Iter Academic Press, [2016] | Series: The other voice in early modern Europe ; 43 | Series: Medieval and renaissance texts and studies ; volume 490 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015042129 (print) | LCCN 2015047111 (ebook) | ISBN 9780866985451 (pbk. : alk. paper) | ISBN 9780866987172 ()

Subjects: LCSH: Jeanne d'Albret, Queen of Navarre, 1528-1572.--Correspondence | Queens--France--Correspondence. | France--Kings and rulers--Correspondence. | France--History--Charles IX, 1560-1574--Sources.

Classification: LCC DC112.J4 A3 2016 (print) | LCC DC112.J4 (ebook) | DDC 944/.028092--dc23

LC record available at <http://lccn.loc.gov/2015042129>

Cover illustration:

*Portrait de Jeanne d'Albret.* Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Cover design:

Maureen Morin, Information Technology Services, University of Toronto Libraries.

Typesetting and production:

Iter Academic Press.

## Introduction

---

In the sixteenth century, several European women played critical roles on the public stage. Foremost among these were Elizabeth I, queen of England (1558–1603) and Catherine de' Medici, queen consort (1547–1559) of King Henri II of France and later regent (1560–1563) for her young son, King Charles IX. Jeanne d'Albret, regnant queen of Navarre (1555–1572), may claim a place beside these women rulers. She identified with them through several shared experiences, presenting herself in a letter to Elizabeth I as one of “the nurturing Queens of His Church” (169) and reminding Catherine of a commonality that happened to be crucial to their exercise of power: “since then I have shared in the afflictions of widowhood” (162).<sup>1</sup> Moreover, like Elizabeth and Catherine, Jeanne was actively involved in the tumultuous events of the day. The circumstances of Jeanne's life, and the religious and political upheaval of the end of the sixteenth century, prompted her to write the *Ample Declaration* to justify her remarkable decision, in 1568, to join the forces defending the Protestant stronghold of La Rochelle. This unique text reveals how an exceptional woman understood and defined her political, familial and religious leadership.

### *A Woman of Strength and Power*

From the moment of her birth on November 16, 1528, Jeanne d'Albret lived an extraordinary life. She was born into royalty: her father, Henri II d'Albret (1503–1555) was king of Navarre, and her mother, Marguerite de Valois-Angoulême (1492–1549), also known as Marguerite de Navarre, was the sister of François I, king of France. Jeanne was destined to be queen of Navarre and became one of the leaders of the French Protestants.

Jeanne was exposed to reformist thinking from her early years. Although Marguerite de Navarre remained Catholic all her life, she was deeply influenced by the new religious ideas circulating in France on the eve of what would eventually be called the Reformation. Marguerite's religious beliefs were shaped by the reformist cleric Guillaume Briçonnet, Bishop of Meaux, and the evangelical humanist Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples. She encouraged reform within the Catholic Church and supported vernacular translations of sacred works. She also vehemently defended and protected a number of persecuted reformists.<sup>2</sup>

1. References to the *Ample Declaration* refer to our translation, based on the version included in the compilation, *Histoire de nostre temps, contenant un recueil des choses memorables passées et publiées pour le fait de la religion et estat de la France depuis l'edict de pacification du 23 jour de mars, jusqu'au present*, ed. Christophe Landré and Charles Martel (La Rochelle: [Barthelemy Berton], 1570).

2. For a study of the Reformist leanings of Marguerite de Navarre, see Patricia F. Cholakian and Rouben C. Cholakian, *Marguerite de Navarre: Mother of the Renaissance* (New York: Columbia University

## 2 Introduction

Jeanne's early years were spent in the Norman countryside, not often in her mother's company. However, Marguerite, who had received an exceptional education herself, provided one for her daughter as well.<sup>3</sup> Jeanne's health was always frail, but from childhood her spirit was vigorous and independent. Her will was so exceptionally strong, in fact, that she defied her parents and the king of France, François I, when they attempted to use her as a political pawn. When Jeanne was twelve years old François arranged a marriage between Jeanne and Guillaume de La Marck, duc de Clèves. The marriage was negotiated for political expediency, to buttress diplomatic relations between France and the Duchy of Clèves in the Rhine Valley. In an extraordinary gesture of defiance, Jeanne signed a *protestation* against the marriage. Despite Jeanne's objections—she had to be physically carried to the altar—the marriage was celebrated on June 14, 1541. Due to the bride's young age, the marriage was not consummated. Then, in 1543, the duc de Clèves betrayed François I when he renounced his alliance with France and entered into an alliance with Charles I of Spain. This betrayal so angered the French king that he sent a request to the Pope Paul III to annul the marriage. An annulment was obtained in 1545 on the grounds that the marriage had never been consummated and that it had taken place against Jeanne's protestations.

In 1548, Jeanne married Antoine de Bourbon, duc de Vendôme (1518–1562), head of the house of Bourbon. This marriage, too, was politically motivated, intended by Henri II, then king of France, to consolidate territories in the north and south of France. But this time Jeanne was delighted with her bridegroom because he was handsome, charming, and the first Prince of the Blood, by reason of his descent from King Louis IX. It was evidently a happy marriage for a time. Their son Henri (the future Henri IV of France) was born December 13, 1553, and their daughter, Catherine de Bourbon, was born February 7, 1559. The couple's first two sons died very young, as did a daughter.

Jeanne's father died in 1555, six years after her mother. Jeanne, then twenty-seven, succeeded him as queen of Navarre, Béarn, Basse-Navarre, and numerous fiefs of Guyenne. Jeanne argued forcefully and successfully to have her husband named joint sovereign, and Antoine was designated king of Navarre *jure uxoris* (by right of his wife).

One of the few early modern European women who were rulers in their own name, Jeanne was an effective and respected queen of her territories. She maintained a regular correspondence with two of these female rulers: Elizabeth I and

---

Press, 2006), 171–83.

3. Nancy Lyman Roelker maintains that "There is no doubt that Marguerite's daughter was given an education designed to implement the humanist ideal, that is, the development of both character and intellect through absorption of the classic writings which were the models for the Renaissance." Roelker, *Queen of Navarre, Jeanne d'Albret, 1528–1572* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1968), 32.

Catherine de' Medici. Three of Catherine's sons were successively king of France: François II (1559–1560), Charles IX (1560–1574), and Henri III (1574–1589). Catherine exercised such power during their reigns, sometimes as regent, other times as advisor, that the period has been called “the age of Catherine de' Medici.” Jeanne's own family included two strong women who also exercised significant political power. Louise de Savoie, mother of François I, served as the Regent of France in 1515, 1525–1526, and 1529, during periods of François's absence. Marguerite de Navarre, sister of François I and Jeanne's own mother, helped negotiate the Treaty of Cambrai, known as the Paix des Dames (the Ladies' Peace) between France and the Habsburg Holy Roman Empire. François, who was being held prisoner in Madrid, was released as a condition of this treaty.

### *Jeanne and the Reformation*

By the 1550s, Martin Luther, who had launched the Protestant Reformation in Europe, was already dead. John Calvin, a Frenchman by birth, had established a Protestant center in Geneva where he welcomed Huguenot refugees and trained Calvinist ministers. He maintained a regular correspondence with several leading noblemen and women in the French reformed movement. In 1557, pressed by evangelical noblemen in his territories, Jeanne's husband Antoine de Bourbon brought the Calvinist minister François Le Gay, Sieur de Boisnormand, from Geneva to Navarre, where he subsequently organized a number of Protestant churches. Three years later, Calvin sent Théodore de Bèze (1519–1605), his disciple and ultimately his successor, to Nérac, where the court of Navarre was residing. Bèze's initial mission was to obtain Antoine's commitment to the Reform. He did not succeed in this, for Antoine does not appear to have possessed any consistent religious conviction; the king of Navarre vacillated between Catholicism and the Reformed faith, apparently depending upon which seemed politically expedient at the time. However, during the three months that Bèze preached at their court in Nérac, he forged a close friendship with Jeanne. According to David Bryson, Bèze “did succeed in gaining Jeanne's devoted trust, and remained her mentor and respected ‘father’ until her death.”<sup>4</sup>

Jeanne's religious evolution was independent of that of her husband. It is difficult to trace the path of her conversion, judicious as she was about revealing herself because of perceived threats from France, Spain, and the Vatican. Whatever her initial motivations may have been, on Christmas 1560 she publicly renounced Catholicism and devoted the rest of her life to the advancement of the Reformed church.

4. David Bryson, *Queen Jeanne and the Promised Land: Dynasty, Homeland, Religion and Violence in Sixteenth-Century France* (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 111.

On the death in 1560 of the sixteen-year-old French king, François II, his ten-year-old brother Charles IX succeeded, but was too young to govern. Although Antoine sought the regency as first prince of the blood, Charles's mother, Catherine de' Medici, claimed the role of regent and Antoine was forced to settle for the position of lieutenant général of France.<sup>5</sup>

By this time the Reformation was gaining strength in France, particularly among nobles, and Calvin regarded Jeanne as the principal force for the advancement of the Reform in Béarn, Navarre, and Guyenne. In 1563 she decreed the Reformed church to be the official church in Béarn. While it is recognized today that many early modern European women participated in and advanced Protestant movements,<sup>6</sup> it was primarily high-ranking noblewomen who helped institutionalize Protestant reforms, and Jeanne was a prominent member of that small but powerful elite. Kirsi Stjerna remarks that "What is most striking in assessing her contribution to the Reformation is the particular effort [Jeanne] put into instilling the Reformation in her lands through legislation and institutional changes, as much as through sponsoring theological work."<sup>7</sup>

Jeanne worked tirelessly to allow and encourage the spread of the Reformed church in Guyenne. This resulted in her being accused and at times treated as a heretic, a spy, and a traitor to the crown by the Catholic Church. Pope Pius IV threatened her with excommunication in August 1563, and in September of that year, accused her of heresy and ordered her to appear in Rome before a tribunal. She was warned that if she did not appear for this examination, her property would be confiscated and "her lands would be forfeited to the first Catholic prince who could conquer them."<sup>8</sup>

The once happy marriage between Jeanne and Antoine had deteriorated over the years, not least because of Jeanne's adherence to and support of the Reformed church. In one particularly divisive episode, Jeanne was strongly criticized for not restraining or punishing the members of the Reformed church responsible for the iconoclastic violence that occurred in Vendôme in May 1562. Antoine was duc de Vendôme and the tombs of his ancestors were pillaged during this incident. Earlier in 1562, Antoine had installed their son at the French court, where he was raised and educated alongside the French royalty. Jeanne claimed

5. For more on the political and gender complexities of this situation see Katherine Crawford, *Perilous Performances: Gender and Regency in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

6. See Merry Wiesner-Hanks, "Protestant Movements," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Allyson M. Polska, Jane Couchman, and Katherine A. McIver (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2013), 129–48.

7. Kirsi Stjerna, *Women and the Reformation* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2009), 166.

8. Roland H. Bainton, *Women of the Reformation in France and England* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing House, 1973), 61.

that Antoine forced her to leave Paris and return to Pau, and leave her son behind. For the next five years, Henri was brought up under the supervision of Catherine de' Medici, to be used as a pawn like many royal children of the era, including his own mother, in the political and religious machinations of those in power. Antoine, meanwhile, was mortally wounded during the First War of Religion<sup>9</sup> while fighting on the Catholic side at the siege of Rouen, and died in November 1562. It was not, however, until 1567, after five years apart, that Jeanne was able to recover her son and bring him back to Navarre.

Until 1568, Jeanne favored peaceful measures of reform and tolerance for both Catholic and Protestant worship in her lands as well as a political neutrality that protected the French interests of her son. But when the Third War of Religion<sup>10</sup> broke out in August of that year, she could no longer concern herself solely with her own domains.

### *Shifting Alliances*

The year 1568 marked a profound change in Jeanne d'Albret's personal trajectory. It proved more significant in her life than either 1560 when she openly declared her Reformed faith or 1563 when she began to establish Calvinism in Béarn and Navarre. Examining history from this specific vantage point both provides a historical context for the *Ample Declaration* and aids readers in understanding the precise situation that motivated Jeanne to leave for La Rochelle, join Louis de Condé<sup>11</sup> and Gaspard de Coligny<sup>12</sup> in a civil war, and write.

Jeanne had inherited vast, rich lands from her parents. From her father's side, the kingdom of Navarre and the independent viscounty of Béarn were lands where the Salic Law was not applied and women could thus succeed to the throne. This gave Jeanne full sovereign power over these territories. Through her husband Antoine de Bourbon, Jeanne kept her father's lucrative governorship of Guyenne in the family. Upon Antoine's death, Charles IX respected the hereditary title and granted it to Jeanne's son Henri, only nine years old at the time. The combination of territories and hereditary honors constituted a strong economic base for

9. The first of a series of civil, religious wars in France between 1562 and 1598. The First War of Religion lasted from 1562 until 1563.

10. The Third War of Religion (1568–1570).

11. Louis de Bourbon (1530–1569), prince de Condé, son of Charles de Bourbon, duc de Vendôme, and Françoise d'Alençon, younger brother of Antoine de Bourbon and Jeanne's brother-in-law. He was general in Henri II's army and military leader of the Huguenots in the first decade of France's Wars of Religion. He was suspected to have been involved in the 1560 Conspiracy of Amboise. He was killed at the battle of Jarnac in 1569.

12. Gaspard II de Coligny (1519–1572), Protestant leader, nominated Amiral of France in 1552. His assassination on August 22, 1572 was immediately followed by the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre in Paris.

Jeanne and her children, and provided them with significant military potential. Their annual income compared favorably with those of the wealthiest nobles in France.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, the regional authority of Jeanne and her son put at her disposal a network of people who had traditionally served the Albrets for personal, geographic, economic and political reasons, people who might be counted on for defense and support in the future.<sup>14</sup>

The 1560s revealed, however, just how fragile these advantages were. Although her young son, Henri, was officially governor and lieutenant général of Guyenne as his grandfather and father had been, he was still a minor and held the titles in name only. Charles IX appointed as the king's lieutenant in Haute-Guyenne Blaise de Monluc, whose repression of Protestants and the open antagonism he displayed toward Jeanne clearly undermined Henri's titular authority. Jeanne repeatedly asked the king and queen mother to remove Monluc, but to no avail. Her request in 1568 that Henri assume an active role in supervising Guyenne before he reached majority was flatly refused. So despite the Albret's traditional control over Guyenne, the king of France had effectively intervened to acquire more direct control over this religiously divided region.

In 1567 and 1568, royal interference in Jeanne's sovereign lands, too, was worsening, as Charles IX protected nobles in Béarn and Navarre who rebelled against her, possibly even coaxing their rebellion. Alarmed by the official establishment of Protestantism and encouraged perhaps by the perceived weakness of a widowed queen with a young son, they challenged her political authority by organizing a revolt against Jeanne that prevented her from collecting the income from her lands. Even when Jeanne managed to restore peace, she was pressured by Charles IX to pardon the rebel leaders who thereby remained a threat to her.<sup>15</sup>

If the privileges derived from her father's family were undermined by the French king's interests, local rebellion, and the Pope's threat to declare her a heretic, Jeanne could still rely on her late husband's family to build a power base. After Antoine de Bourbon's death in 1562, Jeanne did not remarry, but rather deliberately cultivated her ties to the Bourbons. This was a useful alliance for Jeanne to exploit because the Bourbon brothers were princes of the blood. Like Jeanne, they were descendants of Louis IX, but unlike her, as men, they stood in

13. S. Amanda Eurich, *The Economics of Power: The Private Finances of the House of Foix-Navarre-Albret during the Religious Wars* (Kirksville, MO: Sixteenth Century Journal Publishers, 1994), xiii.

14. For an excellent discussion of the complex clientage system in early modern France, see Sharon Kettering, "Clientage during the French Wars of Religion," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 20, no. 2 (1989): 221–39, "Patronage and Kinship in Early Modern France," *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 2 (1989): 408–35 and "The Patronage Power of Early Modern French Noblewomen," *The Historical Journal* 32, no. 4 (1989): 817–41, as well as J. Russell Major, "Vertical Ties through Time," *French Historical Studies* 17, no. 4 (1992): 863–71.

15. See *Ample Declaration*, 201.

line for the throne of France. Her son Henri's rank and future prospects in France depended on his Bourbon identity.

Of the surviving members of this family, Jeanne chose to link herself most closely to Louis, Prince de Condé, the lay head of the family after Antoine's death and, along with Amiral Coligny, the leader of the Protestant movement in France. Jeanne strengthened ties to the Prince de Condé by evoking his role as uncle, and father surrogate, to her son Henri. The result of this decision, however, meant that Jeanne would share in all of Condé's fortunes—good and bad. Vying for power at court, Condé and the Guise brothers saw Catherine de' Medici and her young sons as political pawns. Several attempts were made by both camps over the years to isolate the royal family and thus control them better. Implicated in the Tumult of Amboise<sup>16</sup> in 1560 and accused of treason, Condé was nearly executed. The duc de Guise was more successful in 1562 when he “escorted” Catherine and Charles IX from Fontainebleau to his stronghold of Paris where he was already revered as a military and religious hero. The failure of Condé's attempt in September 1567 to kidnap the king and the queen mother at Meaux—an event known as the “Surprise de Meaux”—triggered the Second War of Religion.<sup>17</sup> The resulting resentment on the part of the king and the queen mother toward Condé inescapably led to a loss of favor for Jeanne as well. In August 1568, fearing retribution, Condé took refuge in La Rochelle and prepared once more for war.

Jeanne had a complex and multilayered relationship with the French royal family. Her overlapping genealogy and the adjacency of her lands to France had long guaranteed Jeanne a certain respect from the royal family. Catherine de' Medici maintained a close relationship with her through the First War of Religion, needing Jeanne as a buffer between France and Spain and as a respected Protestant leader to counterbalance the power of the Catholic Guise family at court. As long as Catherine and Charles IX pursued a policy of compromise between the religious partisans in France, Jeanne held a position of strength.

Many historians, however, see Condé's brazen Surprise de Meaux as a turning point in Catherine and Charles's attitude towards the French Protestants. Certainly their strategy towards Protestant nobles changed noticeably in November 1567 with the loss of the Connétable de Montmorency.<sup>18</sup> This member

16. The Tumult of Amboise, also referred to as the Amboise Conspiracy, was a failed attempt chiefly by minor Protestant nobles to kidnap François II at Amboise in March 1560 in order to remove him from the influence of his close advisors and in-laws, the Guise family. The conspiracy was uncovered beforehand and most of the participants were executed. The degree of Condé's involvement was contested then and is still a matter of historical debate today.

17. The Second War of Religion (1567–1568).

18. Anne de Montmorency (1493–1567), military leader, statesman, diplomat, named grand maître de France in 1526 and connétable de France in 1538.

of the Triumvirate,<sup>19</sup> though staunchly Catholic, had also been a mediating figure between the Bourbon and the Guise families before he was fatally wounded in the battle of Saint-Denis.<sup>20</sup> The king's brother Henri (the future Henri III), friendly with the Guise faction at the time, replaced Montmorency as commander of the French forces. Another indication of the hardening position towards the Protestants was the king's dismissal from his council in June 1568 of the Chancellor Michel de l'Hôpital who incarnated the moderate position of the Politiques.<sup>21</sup> At this point, Jeanne's best prospect for retaining any kind of political power and independence was to join forces with Condé and his network of support and trumpet the unjustly denied rights of the Bourbon princes of the blood.

### *Challenges and Opportunities*

Jeanne needed a strong ally, for she had a particularly dangerous enemy: Philip II, the King of Spain.<sup>22</sup> It was this powerful, neighboring monarch who in 1563 had pressured the Pope to excommunicate Jeanne and nullify her rights to govern Navarre. At that time, Catherine and Charles IX had intervened and defended Jeanne, but in 1568 Jeanne could no longer count on their support. Since 1566, Philip had engaged in a brutal repression of Protestants who were challenging his authority in the Netherlands. Jeanne's Navarre, sharing a border with Spain through the contested lands of Upper Navarre and sheltering a burgeoning Protestant state, became increasingly intolerable for Philip. She could expect only constant menace from the south and needed to seek a more secure base from which to exercise her sovereign power and fortify the Protestant cause.

The city of La Rochelle promised Jeanne this security as well as greater political agency in France's unfolding affairs. The strategic city had been taken over by its own Protestant-controlled municipal council in January 1568 and was in that same year conceded to the Protestants by Charles IX in the Edict of Longjumeau. As a fortified city in a Protestant-influenced area of France and moreover boasting a port allowing communication and trade with the Netherlands and England, La Rochelle offered Jeanne a safe refuge from which war could be successfully waged.

19. During the French Wars of Religion, Anne de Montmorency, François de Guise, and Jacques d'Albon de Saint-André, Catholic leaders who had previously been enemies, formed an alliance, disparagingly called the Triumvirate by Protestants.

20. Montmorency led the Catholic troops to victory just north of Paris in 1567, but was mortally wounded during this battle.

21. This term designates moderates who agreed with the politics of compromise supported by Michel de l'Hôpital.

22. Philip II (1527–1598), the only son of the Emperor Charles V and Isabella of Portugal, king of Spain (1555–1598). He remained uncompromisingly Catholic and defended the Catholic faith throughout the world Europe.

Even without fighting on the battlefield, Jeanne knew that she could be active by managing the finances of the Protestant party in the war to come.

Likewise, recent history could lead her to expect a role in the negotiations that would inevitably ensue. Negotiating peace would be completely in keeping with gender roles of the time. During the War of 1562–1563, Condé's first mother-in-law, Madeleine de Mailly, comtesse de Roye, was chosen by the party leaders to negotiate on their behalf with the German Protestant princes. She and her daughter Éléonore, the Princesse de Condé, also participated in the negotiations of the Edict of Amboise, which ended the war in March 1563. Another noblewoman, Jacqueline de Rohan, Marquise de Rothelin, Condé's second mother-in-law, assumed a similar role during the Second War of Religion.<sup>23</sup> When Catherine de' Medici tried to lure Jeanne to court in 1568 by asking her to help mediate between Protestants and Catholics, the queen mother was tempting her with a credible role fashioned to appeal to a woman conscious of her unique rank.<sup>24</sup> Although Jeanne no longer believed that Catherine and Charles IX would entrust her with these responsibilities in 1568, she knew that she would be central to diplomatic decision-making if she chose to join Condé and Coligny.

In Jeanne's case, as a reigning sovereign, her diplomatic role would, in fact, extend far beyond the negotiation of peace. Jeanne already had established diplomatic relations with Elizabeth I of England, a fellow Protestant queen. Although Elizabeth's religious sympathies were tempered by her political needs and her territorial ambitions in France, she remained a vital ally. Condé did not have the official status to negotiate with a foreign queen that Jeanne had, and he had been unsuccessful in securing Elizabeth's aid during the Second War of Religion. Jeanne would know that her requests were more likely to be honored. And indeed, she would acquire important loans and a certain degree of international legitimacy from Elizabeth I in the Third War of Religion.

### *Religious Promise and Pressure*

This overview of the personal, political, economic and military considerations that may have influenced Jeanne in 1568 does not imply that her religious motivations were any less pivotal. It is impossible to separate religious factors from other ones in the context in which Jeanne acted. Jeanne herself had little incentive to try to disentangle motivations that reinforced each other in 1568; her official court historian, Bordenave, cites Jeanne as stating that the attacks against her in 1568 "apparently committed against the Reformed religion, were in fact intended

23. Nancy Lyman Roelker, "The Appeal of Calvinism to French Noblewomen in the Sixteenth Century," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 2, no. 4 (1972): 402.

24. See *Ample Declaration*, 199–202.

to abolish the House of Bourbon,”<sup>25</sup> and this sentiment is echoed throughout the *Ample Declaration*.<sup>26</sup>

Jeanne was in regular communication with the leaders of the Protestant city-state of Geneva, requesting spiritual advice and practical support. Théodore de Bèze,<sup>27</sup> who had succeeded John Calvin in 1564, was French, too, and, like Jeanne, noble. He had played a central role in Catherine de’ Medici’s attempt to reconcile the religious differences between Protestants and Catholics at the 1560 Colloquy of Poissy and had served as a diplomat for the Protestant cause during the First War of Religion. Under his leadership in Geneva, the French situation remained a central concern.<sup>28</sup> Bèze’s direct political influence over the French Protestant nobles, however, diminished greatly during the Second War of Religion as Condé took over what he saw as his aristocratic purview. Coligny and Jeanne may have been more open to counsel from this trusted ally in Geneva, but no doubt shared Condé’s sense of political entitlement. Bèze did not have the resources to send troops or money to the French Protestants, but Jeanne continued to rely on his encouragement and spiritual guidance. And Bèze, like Calvin before him, maintained pressure on Jeanne to lead French Protestants by public example.

Religion and politics also overlapped in the relationships between Jeanne and those who depended on her in her sovereign lands. Although her traditional clientage network may have been shaken by 1568, as has been seen, bonds with others among her household members, local professionals, and fellow French noblemen had become tighter through the shared cause of defending the Reformed church. Jeanne could count on strengthened loyalty from nobles and non-nobles who already shared common economic and political interests and who were further united by religious beliefs. The number of people who entered Jeanne’s employment after her declaration of Protestant beliefs steadily increased until 1568 when she was forced to diminish her household and redirect her finances. The earlier growth suggests the formation of a Protestant community of mutual support centered around Jeanne. Members of her personal household and

25. Nicolas de Bordenave, *Histoire de Béarn et Navarre: 1517 à 1572*, ed. Paul Raymond (Paris: Mme Veuve Jules Renouard, 1873), 154: “fait[s] en aparence contre la religion réformée, estoit en effect pour abolir la maison de Bourbon.”

26. See, for example, *Ample Declaration*, 221 or Jeanne’s argumentation on pages 225–28.

27. Bèze (1519–1605) was a reformed theologian and French scholar who greatly contributed to the development of humanism and played a key role during the formative years of the Calvinist Reformation in both Geneva and France.

28. Robert M. Kingdon, *Geneva and the Consolidation of the French Protestant Movement, 1564–1572: A Contribution to the History of Congregationalism, Presbyterianism, and Calvinist Resistance Theory* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967), 13–14.

clients<sup>29</sup> who would follow her to La Rochelle became resources for the Protestant war effort.

Mutual support and protection were necessary in a climate of constant violence. Frustrated by the edicts and peace negotiations that ignored the aspirations of both Catholics and Protestants outside of the noble class, crowds were taking justice into their own hands. Evangelizing pastors and apocalypse-evoking priests fueled dangerous fears on both sides and could not be controlled politically. A Protestant mob in Nîmes, for example, massacred between twenty and ninety Catholics<sup>30</sup> during the Michelade of September 1567. And Catholics in Paris, fearing a Protestant attack on October 1, 1567, retaliated violently against remaining Protestant residents in what Barbara Diefendorf calls a “rehearsal”<sup>31</sup> for the the Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre. Aggravating these passions were food shortages that coincided with iconoclastic violence in the Netherlands in 1566. Developing, too, in 1567 and 1568 were local military confraternities, pious organizations that also sometimes served as Catholic militias targeting Protestants.<sup>32</sup> In the light of such violence, the return of war must have seemed inevitable.

The Protestant churches in France, however, were well poised to respond. Some had been in existence since at least 1555 and they were tightly organized around local consistories and a common set of structural principles agreed upon during the first national synod in Paris in 1559. Historians can only speculate about the numbers of practicing Protestants in France at this moment, but there is compelling evidence that ten percent of French adults may have been part of the Reformed church.<sup>33</sup> The founding documents from 1559, annual meetings of the synods, as well as more frequent ones of regional colloquies, kept these

29. Among these faithful friends and *serviteurs* who were engaged in the same religious cause, Jeanne could count many people in her household. Records from 1565 show that Jeanne had 242 people in her paid service, including people of such diverse skills and social rank as doctors, tailors, pastry cooks, stablehands, 13 *femmes de chambre* and 25 *valets de chambre*. Many of these people would maintain links with the Albret household over several generations. Faced with war and with the financial burden that it implied, a large percentage of these *serviteurs* were let go in 1568, but those who went with her became resources for the cause. Jeanne’s personal treasurer, Jean Bernard, for example, served simultaneously as the treasurer for the Calvinist war effort and others, like Victor Brodeau, served on her council. See J. Russell Major, “Noble Income, Inflation, and the Wars of Religion in France,” *American Historical Review* 86, no. 1 (1981): 38–39; Eurich, *The Economics of Power*, 204.

30. Sources agree that the victims were primarily men of the Church although they disagree on the number of people killed. See Allan Tulchin, *That Men Would Praise the Lord: The Triumph of Protestantism in Nîmes, 1530–1570* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 170–71.

31. Barbara B. Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 81.

32. Robert Harding, “The Mobilization of Confraternities against the Reformation in France,” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 11, no. 1 (1980): 85–107.

33. Mark Greengrass, *The French Reformation* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1987), 42–43.