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Deliberative Rhetoric in the Twelfth Century: Women, the *Ars Dictaminis*, and International Diplomatic Relations

Preface

Eleanor of Aquitaine was born in 1122 as the Duchess of Aquitaine apparent. Aquitaine, a province of what is today France had vast economic potential, heavily developed resources, and numerous commercial links to ongoing trade with the Middle East via the French monarchs of Jerusalem and extensive Templar presence (Kelly 4). Additionally, the nobility of Aquitaine had sustained a rich tradition of lay literacy, virtually uninterrupted since the Carolingian empire (Thompson 129). Due to the extremely valuable economic and cultural resources in Aquitaine at that time, Eleanor became first Queen of France; and after divorcing Louis VII on grounds of consanguinity, she became Queen of England when she married Henry II (Kelly 91-96). Both the France of her youth and the Court of Henry II were hotbeds of intellectual and cultural activity. Due to certain political and diplomatic machinations between her and her dynastic progeny who opposed to Henry's interests, Eleanor was made a virtual prisoner of Henry II, at odds over both sexual and political decisions (189-200). As a result, Eleanor resided at Fontevrault Abbey for over a decade. Upon the death of Henry II, Eleanor acted for a time as regent of England during the captivity of Richard the Lionhearted, and engaged in domestic and international political and diplomatic activity to secure his release (311-312). Eleanor has popularly figured in Annals and Chronicles from her own period and, as recently as 2010, in contemporary stories about the legend of Robin Hood. She is referred to in the histories of Shakespeare, and was played by Katharine Hepburn in a dramatization of the period entitled *The*

Lion in Winter. She is a figure who has been the subject of enormous biographical and scholarly inquiry, and about whom there is significant controversy. She died at Fontevrault in 1204, where she was also buried (387).

I encountered the subject of Eleanor's letter to Pope Celestine III while reading for pleasure, in a popular history of the Third Crusade entitled *Warriors of God* by historian James Reston, Jr. I was at that time attempting to fill my own lack of knowledge about rhetoric in the Middle Ages. This dissertation is a result of that initial inquiry, made to determine why Eleanor of Aquitaine was unaccounted for as a gendered rhetorical figure in history, and the history of rhetoric. This is particularly puzzling, since very short orations by Elizabeth I have been anthologized in collections of women's rhetorics, such as *Available Means* edited by Ritchie and Ronald (49). This prospectus will analyze the apparent absence of Eleanor's rhetorical activity and writing in the intellectual, rhetorical, and historical context of her time, to underscore her importance for illuminating rhetorical history, and her significance to rhetoric and diplomacy in the Middle Ages generally.

Introduction and Prospectus Overview

The Middle Ages are often mischaracterized as a period where the rhetorical tradition underwent a period of decay, fragmentation and generalized dilapidation. As Georgiana Donavan put it, the rhetoric of the Middle Ages "is typically introduced as a wrongheaded excursion away from classical principles" (51). This pernicious characterization began, arguably, with Brian Vickers' general survey of the history of rhetoric. Vickers wrote in *In Defense of Rhetoric* under the heading "Medieval Fragmentation,"

Externally, the classical texts had survived in a damaged and haphazard state;

internally, readers atomized what had been transmitted to fit their own needs . . .

Whereas, in Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, as in the classical tradition generally, the distinction of the three types of oratory- judicial, deliberative, and demonstrative – depended on an external social context . . . in Boethius . . . the three kinds of oratory are now defined according to ethical criteria, independent of the place or time (220 – 222)

These generalizations have only been perpetuated and reiterated as recently as 1994, in an article by Peter Munz, who wrote

In ancient times, among the Greeks and the Romans, rhetoric was considered to be of great importance because there was no other way to iron out the clash of opinions. In the Middle Ages people attributed importance to rhetoric ... because they were courteous to antiquity. They had authoritative books to decide issues, and for people who could not read there were authoritative clergy (122).

The Middle Ages are subject to hasty generalization because they are frequently glossed as a single continuous and monolithic period of no intellectual development, where there were no periods of significant social change, and therefore no need for innovations in rhetorical practice. This is a significantly uninformed perspective, and has extended to the belief that there was no need for a deliberative rhetoric at any period between the years 400 and 1400 C.E. Similarly, the view of the Middle Ages as one monolithic period of stagnation lends itself to generalizations about the status of rhetorical education and literacy of huge groups of people, among them, women and secular authorities, who are often lumped into a category of non-literacy. The generalizations result in a disciplinary *lacunae* that excludes the possibility of study of sub-genres of rhetoric, particularly the deliberative rhetorical genre. But as James J. Murphy pointed

out, when he opened up the field of medieval rhetorical scholarship in 1974, and in so doing explained that the *Ars Dictaminis* deserves further study because it might illustrate “the complex medieval relations between concepts of language and the social uses of language” (268). One of the little-studied areas of rhetoric in the Middle Ages is the complex nature of deliberative rhetorical traditions and their respective uses, particularly in relation to the *Ars Dictaminis*.

Martin Camargo has incisively dissected the problems with the generalities prevailing about rhetoric in the Middle Ages. He wrote, “After Murphy’s *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, it was no longer possible to dismiss medieval rhetoric as merely stylistic ornament or merely letter-writing” (27). There has been a growing realization that “classical rhetoric, like medieval rhetoric ... permeated a broader range of social practices than those enumerated in the treatises” (22). One prime example of deliberative rhetoric, which included secular institutions and previously excluded groups, is the oral and written rhetorical activity of Eleanor of Aquitaine.

If one were to operate on the scholarly assumptions of Vickers and Munz, there would be every reason to assume the absence of a deliberative rhetoric in the Middle Ages. However, it has been acknowledged that up until the fifteenth century, before the profusion of embassy-structures, diplomatic relations existed squarely the province of the *ars dictaminis* (Witt 3). This species of rhetoric was, in fact, often in the deliberative genre in the twelfth century, and its practice, both written and oral, admitted women under compelling circumstances. Thus, both the apparent historical absence of women in deliberative international processes of peace and war in the Middle Ages, and the absence of a field of study in deliberative rhetoric in the Middle Ages, generally, are both results of pernicious generalizations in history generally that are re-inscribed in the history of rhetoric.

Similarly, the role of women in the rhetorical tradition, in both practice and historical fact, have been the subject of generalizations that are an outgrowth of a lack of documentary evidence – compounded by the fact that few have done the extremely dirty archival work requisite with their recovery. Cheryl Glenn and many other scholars in the past two decades have called for a re-envisioning of the history of rhetoric to include the immense contributions of women to rhetoric and written discourse. In *Rhetoric Retold*, Glenn provided a lens into medieval rhetorical practices of women, contextualizing her discussion largely in religious terms, discussing “women’s visionary or mystical writings” as acceptable literary avenues of “literacy and communication in a medieval world that otherwise discouraged women’s academic literacy” (Glenn 93). Professor Glenn’s contributions are of paramount importance, but using a wholly ecclesiastical lens, she tells only part of the history of women’s rhetorical activity in the Middle Ages. Extant records of rhetorical activity by women, notably noblewomen, must be restored to women, just as the rhetorical lives of noble women in the Middle Ages must be restored to rhetorical history. I begin by acknowledging that I elaborate on Professor Glenn’s rich contributions, to the extent that I expand on her observation that “rich and noblewomen” constituted a special status of women. These noblewomen lived ‘in the space between the letter and the spirit’” of a repressive system (76).

It is useful to illustrate that in the midst of the twelfth century, Eleanor of Aquitaine has not been previously studied as a gendered figure in rhetorical history in the Middle Ages. Eleanor’s importance to rhetorical history can be primarily evidenced by her political and diplomatic, generally oral, intercessions in the affairs of medieval states and figures. But documentary evidence exists to establish Eleanor’s importance to rhetorical history, and the history of written discourse, in the form of her existing textual rhetorical artifacts, particularly in

the context of her *dictaminal* diplomatic writings following the incarceration of her son by the agents of Phillip Augustus. These have become conceptually clouded by modern historians due to revisionary assumptions about the nature of rhetoric in the twelfth century and its literate practices. Beginning in the twentieth century, scholars began their analysis of the letters and charters of Eleanor of Aquitaine by simply assuming that Eleanor was for some reason incapable of composing the rhetorical artifacts bearing her name; this is generally stated and restated either because she was a woman, or because many monarchs of that era were illiterate, or because German scholarship in the mid-nineteenth century found that many existing letters were mere rhetorical exercises by medieval rhetoricians. These assumptions represent a misunderstanding of the complex *techne*s at work in written rhetorical production in the twelfth century. These presumptions are framed by scholars who attempt to eliminate Eleanor as a rhetorical actor in the eyes of historians, and by extension historians of rhetoric. This dissertation's central purpose is an argument using the narrow example of Eleanor's letter to show how we can better understand the *Ars Dictaminis* tradition, particularly as it elucidates deliberative rhetorical practices through diplomacy in the twelfth century, and how these practices can illuminate medieval rhetorical practices and women in that tradition. Eleanor of Aquitaine defies pernicious generalizations about women's roles in civic, deliberative, diplomatic rhetoric in the Middle Ages. Her biographical details and the facts attending the period in which her writing can be contextualized illustrate how misconceptions about the twelfth century, the literate collaborative *techne*s of her time, and her unique literate and rhetorical educational origins defy easy generalization.

Giles Constable has argued a connection between diplomacy and rhetoric some time ago, when he concluded a general survey of court clerk's activity, "The diplomat or diplomatist knew how to write and present documents. The history of letters, and of those who wrote them, thus

merges into the history of ... diplomacy and forms an important chapter in the development of government ... in the Middle Ages” (46). While this was intended as a general observation, this argument will demonstrate that this was the case, particularly in the case of Eleanor of Aquitaine. Eleanor engaged in deliberative rhetorical practice, which, as Sophie Menache explained, represented “The *written message* ... as the most concrete media of the cultural elite. ... Whether in the form of a book, a pamphlet, or a letter, the written text gradually became an integral part of everyday existence among the cultural elite ... for giving thoughts a concrete and more ordered expression” (13). By Eleanor’s time, “the widespread use of correspondence ... among the ruling class [had] acquired the weight of information exchange, due to the nature of the medieval government system” (16).

Accordingly, this project will set forth an argument that addresses the problem of our relative lack of knowledge about women and the rhetorical tradition in the twelfth century, and the role of deliberative rhetoric in diplomatic relations prior to 1300. This prospectus will address a review of existing scholarship about women and rhetoric in the twelfth century, deliberative rhetoric in the Middle Ages, and the rhetorical practice of diplomatic relations in the Middle Ages. It will then summarize the thesis and relevant questions that this project will attempt to answer that constitute a genuine lack of knowledge in the field. Finally, this document will outline the structure of the chapters of the prospective dissertation, and the sources likely to be used as a starting point for further research. I will also offer bibliographies and a timeline.

Review of Existing Literature

Classical Rhetorical Theory in the Twelfth Century

Central to any inquiry about the *dictaminal* tradition and Eleanor of Aquitaine, must be an inquiry about the time in which she lived. The twelfth century was unique in the Medieval

Period, and a period for which many generalizations about medieval culture and rhetorical practice do not hold true. In the context of diplomatic communication, Malcolm Richardson has concluded that the diplomatic practices of the medieval period, prior to the reign of King John in the thirteenth century, may have been far more sophisticated than previously believed (19). The twelfth century has been described by John O. Ward as a unique crossroads of literacy where ecclesiastical control of written communication was significantly loosened, and literacy was opened to a variety of people and multiple classes. This bears directly on the likelihood that Eleanor of Aquitaine may have not only been literate in the vernacular, but in Latin, for socio-political reasons discussed in the sections that follow. Whether Eleanor of Aquitaine was highly literate, in a conventional sense, there can be little doubt, with her being a typical embodiment of the highest twelfth century renaissance values and literacies, and the recipient of the highest forms of literate education since childhood. It might be useful in this context to restate Ward's colorful depiction of this brief period of literacy in the "dark ages" to contextualize and underscore the case of Eleanor of Aquitaine as an illustrative example of noblewomen in rhetoric in the Middle Ages:

Persons from nonliterate backgrounds were thrust into literacy; persons used to oral modes of communication were confronted with texts in which charismatic orators found new and vital "authority"; persons with uncertain social connections and status found themselves thrust by their precocious grasp of new techniques vital to the archival, textual age into close proximity with socially better connected (but textually less trained or gifted) persons; people found themselves seduced from the world of primogeniture, *militia*, feudal marriage, lineage, and sword-and-horsemanship into a new world offering new kinds of dominance, mastery and power, a world in which –

as Abelard put it – tournaments were conducted with written words, texts, and *rationes* rather than with horses, swords, and heraldry (Ward 1990 131)

The likelihood, therefore, that women, and particularly noblewomen, previously without access to Latin literacy except through the monastic systems, participated in literate practice, is probably – as in the case of Eleanor of Aquitaine.

One theoretical “lens” for examining the twelfth century as the temporal locus of this analysis is assisted by D.H. Green, whose writings are pivotal for understanding imperial and royal social relationships and their relation to other powers. Eleanor of Aquitaine’s letter represents a rhetorical artifact for international, diplomatic, and deliberative persuasion in the twelfth century. The letter’s relationship to the oral-literate nexus in the developing West stands at the center of the tradition of diplomatic practice. Green has noted that by the time of Eleanor’s letter to Celestine, in France, lay literacy had become an expectation for any person of station, and even Wodehouse acknowledges the long tradition of literacy in Aquitaine predating this expectation (284). The primary documents that are most relevant to *dictaminal* practice in the twelfth century can be found in the writings of John of Salisbury, Thierry of Chartres, and Peter of Blois. To this end, I will briefly summarize the secondary sources necessary to establish the theoretical contexts.

A review of the existing literature must necessarily ground any analysis with John O. Ward’s findings, that we must revise generalities in existing histories of rhetoric that state that the need for deliberative rhetoric ended with the Roman world. Ward has spent enormous scholarly energies arguing that a deliberative, Ciceronian rhetoric continued to be vital and useful in the Middle Ages, and has fully proven that such generalities about its disuse “should now be revised” (Ward a 21). Ward has pointed out that the long medieval tradition of

“Ciceronian rhetoric reached maturity in the twelfth century A.D.”, the century of such rhetorical luminaries as Heloise and Eleanor of Aquitaine. The “intellectual and political climate not only stimulated the renewed study of Cicero’s rhetorical juvenalia but also gave birth to systematized instruction in . . . letter-writing” (24). Ward attributes the renewed interest in classical Roman rhetorical theory to the “many-sidedness” of the twelfth century, such as a new perspective on the nature of the self and the overarching concern with the increasing ambiguity of the nature of “truth” (19- 25).

Ward has further illuminated the changes for secular nobility in the twelfth century, prefiguring his discussion by citing changes within, specifically, the mentalities of the French cultural elite in the twelfth century, particularly in regard to the secular self (Ward 2006 citing Bond, 58). Ward builds on his position, stating

It is clear that a major function of the medieval general rhetorical curriculum was the support of intercommunal and international political relations at the highest levels. The grouping of texts within manuscripts indicates strongly that later medieval and especially Italian study of the *Ad Herennium* was seen as a prerequisite or co-requisite for specialist training in *dictamen* and epistolography (Ward 1995 293)

Thus, Ward highlights that the education of the nobility in the twelfth century was to enable activity in international political relations, but in addition, underscores that women were not excluded at this time in general rhetorical education. In subsequent writings, Ward goes on to explain the nature of women’s written and rhetorical practice, and particularly noble women, and their admission to rhetorical education in this period.

Women and Rhetoric in the Twelfth Century

John O. Ward has amplified his analysis of the very real and specialized participation of the nobility of Medieval Europe to extend to women, similarly, in his essay "Women and Latin Rhetoric from Hrotvist to Hildegard". Ward uses a very narrow definition, first, to qualify his findings, by saying that what he means by women "in" rhetoric is meant to mean "medieval rhetors, or women who taught the rhetorical art, or else women who practiced it from a learned base" (122). While one might take issue with Ward's narrow definition of rhetorical activity practiced by women, it is clear that Eleanor of Aquitaine can be shown to fall into the latter category, and is not accounted for in Ward's essay, presumably in the company of many other women. He does account for Eleanor's twelfth century peer, Heloise, and points out her relevance to "epistolary theory in general" (125). The suggestion of Ward opens doors to both epistolary theory and classical rhetorical theory as relevant to an analysis of Eleanor's letter.

In John O. Ward's essay, "The Young Heloise and Latin Rhetoric," he picks up his reasoning where he left off in previous works, and extends his proofs to discussions of women in the twelfth century, extrapolating by analogy from the rhetorical education of Heloise in the early part of the century. "Women came to share in [the] developments" governing the period of rapid social change in the twelfth century (58). Beginning in the late eleventh century, there was a "startling rise in the visibility of women who demanded an educational and literary culture in which they could participate" (58). While the geographical "focus" of these changes was in France, the language or medium of exchange was Latin. Ward points out that Heloise, a contemporary of the young Eleanor, had access at the same time, and in the same place – Paris, which was an "intense intellectual urban environment," the Paris of Abelard and Bernard of Clairvaux – the latter a personal acquaintance of Eleanor (58). Heloise, a similarly-situated noblewoman to Eleanor, was admitted to literate and rhetorical education through a system of

private instruction, and illustrates the likely means of education which Eleanor received.

Education was aided by the immense outgrowth in the number of female monastic communities between the years 1100 and 1175, and Eleanor, as a patroness of a number of them, and eventually, a long-term resident, likewise had access to their attendant educational opportunities before her authorship of the letter (60).

Thus, women were involved in the literate revolution of the twelfth century, especially women at the highest levels of society. It bears inquiry what the nature of rhetorical training was for those social strata – and thereby for women in Eleanor’s social strata. Ward has examined this, following his extensive study of the massive activity whose scope was Ciceronian commentary from the period, and examined “the content of the teaching tradition of rhetoric and the needs of the contemporary consumer,” one of whom was very likely Eleanor of Aquitaine. It is of note that this is all the more likely given Eleanor’s extensive, personal, lifelong contact with a circle of intellectuals who studied and practiced rhetoric. Eleanor was either proximally or personally close to figures beginning with Peter Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux, Thierry of Chartres, John of Salisbury, Peter of Blois, and numerous others, all of whom had passing relationships or were intricately bound to the life of the court of her first and her second husband. Ward has concluded that the scholion and commentary traditions in evidence from the twelfth century can suggest nothing but that the regularity and repetition between all the existing glosses and commentaries suggests they were being produced for “a real audience with real communication needs” (Ward 1995 270). Additionally, it serves to thoroughly disprove that “classical rhetorical theory had little relevance to the conditions of life and culture of the Middle Ages” (271). Ward proceeds to cite a laundry list of scholars who have made this pernicious generality (including Vickers, cited previously). Ward puts a nail in the coffin of the reasoning

undergirding the previous scholarship about the Middle Ages, stating that just as it is necessary “to banish the notion that ancient rhetorical theory and practice was monolithic and unvarying in its contexts and emphases,” it becomes just as “necessary to discard the view that medieval rhetorical theory and practice fragmented these emphases and lacked these contexts” (272). This is because the rhetorical thinkers of the twelfth century, many of whom were known to Eleanor and her court, believed that rhetoric was a “controlling, shaping factor in social arrangements” including the belief that it had value “wherever people had to be persuaded ... [and] Medieval society . . . was full of such opportunities” (276). Evidence of this can be found in John of Salisbury’s *Metalogikon*, when he writes:

Who are the most prosperous and wealthy among our fellow citizens? Who are the most powerful and successful in all their enterprises? Is it not the eloquent?
(1.7)

Why, then, the neglect of Eleanor as a gendered participant in the history of rhetoric? In terms of Eleanor’s literate activities during her lifetime, her legacy has been problematized in a historical context by inquiries representing the authorial identity of her scribes. It is further complicated by a pernicious generalization that women in the Middle Ages, including the twelfth century, were not admitted to literacy or given a rhetorical education. In fact, the true exclusion of women from literacy found its cultural apex in the thirteenth century, and not before. Because most official charters and other documents were by custom composed in Latin, often the literate activities of the nobility were the result of collective action by members of their court, and their rhetorical acts were communicated through the offices of assistants. This “problem” of Eleanor as author is one which should be of little concern; literary production in the Middle Ages was often, by necessity, a *techne* which is only made problematic by our very recent conceptions of

rhetorical practice and authorial property, which Cheryl Glenn has also pointed out. To produce a lasting document complete with seals and other tokens of authority, often a group of individuals with multiple duties and literacies were utilized. No less, medieval noblewomen utilized devices such as sealing and witnessing to encode their rhetorical intent, authorship, or ultimate review of approval. The literate activity of Eleanor bears inquiry – as relevant to the history of the rhetorical activities of women generally in the high Middle Ages.

This project will demonstrate that certain pernicious generalizations about the literacy or rhetorical knowledge of women, and particularly noble women, in the twelfth century need to be revised. The significance of Eleanor's letter in relation to the essentially deliberative tradition of diplomacy, and therefore deliberative rhetoric, in the Middle Ages places her squarely in the *ars dictaminis* tradition. This would rebut Bizzell and Herzberg's general assertion that, "in a largely illiterate society, official letters were often the only record of laws or commercial transactions and hence had legal standing," but would bear out their assertion that "The person who could compose letters had access to considerable political power" (444). As Cheryl Glenn has pointed out, "Given the high level of illiteracy, rulers often dictated their letters to scribes who arranged for the letters to be read aloud in the persona of the composer" (89). Glenn describes a *techne* of composition typical of the Middle Ages, that while it may include multiple parties acting in concert to compose a "writing," such a practice could easily result in confusion with our modern notions of authority, property, and Romantic ideas of composition as a private, asocial act. It is possible that this was the *techne* undertaken by Eleanor of Aquitaine and her subordinates, and has led to the confusion that has resulted in her exclusion from rhetorical history; but it is just as likely based on the scholarly findings of Ward, that her letter was significantly more likely an invention of her own.

Further evidence is found in Jeffrey Kittay's analysis of how the idea of "writing" was radically changed in the Middle Ages, describing how official charters and other documents did not fully betray the rhetorical intent of the author, but remained simply material artifacts "remaining only evidentiary" in this case of rhetorical agency and intent (211). Scribal culture has also been discussed extensively by Denise A. Troll. Scribes, and their ilk, were typically copyists more in the tradition of heavy manufacturers, with extensive materials and complex practices whose chief aim was accuracy. As Troll has pointed out, Alcuin himself established constraints on scribes, and if Eleanor in fact employed any, it would indicate they often had no measure of creative input in their written textual production, and were often themselves illiterate. Troll cites this as a condition of orality in medieval culture, following Ong (102). Thus, if a scribe or Latin secretary took Eleanor's dictation, it was another significant *techné* representing the complex literacies of the Middle Ages - if, in fact, the twelfth century was typical of the Middle Ages *at all*. But more pertinently, the dismissal of Eleanor of Aquitaine as simply "illiterate" betrays our two-dimensional contemporary definition of literacy. This argument, when using the term literacy, follows Shirley Wilson Logan's seemingly simple proposition that broadly applies to the Middle Ages, when she wrote, "Literacy is the broader term, the ground upon which literacy develops. Some manifestation of literacy, then, is implicated in one's rhetorical abilities" (4). In addition, Cheryl Glenn has pointed out the complex *technes* implicated with not merely women's literacy in the Middle Ages, but all literacy, which took place in a host of participants at the nexus of orality and literacy.

Similarly, Judith Green has thoroughly documented female defiance of traditional gender roles in the Anglo-Norman aristocracy, and literate and rhetorical activity cannot be logically excluded. Women sometimes declared and conducted wars in the twelfth century and the

centuries before, and new rules of succession meant that “women appeared more conspicuously as wives and heiresses” (Martindale cited in Green 59). Part of this was the new ability for aristocratic women to transmit land among “political elites” (60). Being an heiress to land raised Eleanor’s status, like similar women of her century, above mere nobility of birth, as she had inherited the extremely valuable duchy of Aquitaine, perhaps second only to Anjou in France in terms of its economic productivity. That Eleanor was central to the history of, and rhetorical history of, the twelfth century is likewise related to the rhetorical power of her culturally-transmitted feminine role that typified the time, as “Women were counters to be used in political bargains, in concluding alliances, in ending hostilities” (60). Despite the frequent characterization of Eleanor being oppressed in her marriage, she retained the right to transmit Aquitaine to her heir, and as such retained great power in the affairs of the Angevin dynasty before and after the death of Henry II, if not in matters of international diplomatic relations.

Diplomatic Activity as Deliberative Rhetoric

By the year 1405, Christine de Pisan, writing her rhetorical counsel in the *The Book of the Treasure of the City of Ladies*, pointed out that by the Late Middle Ages, there was a broad cultural awareness that noble women were frequent participants in diplomatic (and therefore rhetorical) activities in the preceding centuries. She wrote, “the good princess will always be the means of peace as far as she can be, just as good Queen Blanche, mother of St. Louis, formerly was, who in this manner always exerted herself to make peace between the king and the barons” (547). She concludes that women are ideally suited to this, and “in particular ought to attend to this business” because of natural defects of their male counterparts, giving voice, perhaps, to when female nobility were used in matters of peace. Pisan does not mention Eleanor of Aquitaine, likely because she was just as intimately involved in war and internecine combat as

she was diplomatic relations, which was not atypical of women in the Middle Ages, either.

Giles Constable argued a connection between diplomacy and rhetoric some time ago, when he concluded a general survey of court clerk's activity, "The diplomat or diplomatist knew how to write and present documents. The history of letters, and of those who wrote them, thus merges into the history of ... diplomacy and forms an important chapter in the development of government ... in the Middle Ages" (46). While this was intended as a general observation, this argument will demonstrate that this was the case, particularly for Eleanor of Aquitaine.

This dissertation will illustrate that *dictaminal* documents were a species of deliberative persuasion that were essentially Ciceronian in character, following Ward. Aristotle defines deliberative rhetoric as when a "political orator offers counsel" and who "does not deal with all things, but only with such as may or may not take place . . . matters, namely, that ultimately depend on ourselves and which we have it in our power to set going" (1359a31 – 1359a39). Aristotle argued that deliberative rhetoric concerned itself with the inquiry of whether a course of action might be useful or harmful. Aristotle's "five topics" of deliberative discourse include ways and means, peace and war, national defense, import and export, and legislation. While these subjects are, in some respect, relevant to Athenian democracy specifically, and later, to Republican politics, it is a recurrent mistake both in history and the history of rhetoric to confuse deliberative decision-making with democratic, Republican, or other representative forms of government solely. In fact, people in the Middle Ages made collective decisions without pure democracy or republican representation, which in itself, during the Roman republic, largely amounted to an aristocratic governance. In the Middle Ages, after the rather arbitrary year 1000 (in fact, there were clearly deliberative assemblies as early as the period of Charlemagne in the mid-eighth-century) political decisions of peace, war, and diplomatic strategy were conducted in

writing, and generally via chanceries and the developing genre of the letter.

To account for previous scholarship connecting international communication with the *ars dictaminis*, Les Perelman has demonstrated the connection between the rise of the Papal Chancery and the administration of the chancery, and later papal reign, of Pope Gelasius II, which coincided with the outset of the first crusade (102). Murphy, in *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, begins his discussion by stating that “The very multiplicity of ranks and orders in an emerging feudal society had the effect of increasing the number of relationships – both social and legal – which came to be reflected in writing in one way or the other” (199). His treatise concludes the section on the *dictaminal* tradition by stating that the *Ars Dictaminis* deserves further study because it might illustrate “the complex medieval between concepts of language and the social uses of language” (268). This dissertation proposes to do just that. Camargo, additionally, has cited the performative and social nature of letter-writing, but largely identified its uses as administrative (86). In the context of the growth of medieval literacy, Clanchy discusses the bad practice of viewing the period between the mid-eleventh century and the early fourteenth century as a linear bridge between illiteracy and literacy. He explains, that there is no such thing as an “inevitable line of progress from illiteracy to literacy and, by implication, from barbarism to civilization” (Clanchy 20). However, the development of literacy and civilization is embodied in the civilizing effect of the rise of literacy in the twelfth century, particularly as embodied in the beginnings of diplomatic *dictaminal* documents. The approach in this argument to the *dictaminis* tradition is an expansion on, and follows, the state of current scholarship reflecting studies in medieval literacy and orality, rhetorical studies of the socio-political causes and effects of the *dictaminal* tradition, current scholarship on the revolution in the written word

associated with the twelfth century, and women's relationship to literate rhetoric in the Middle Ages generally.

To further amplify the work of Camargo and Perelman, Kristie Fleckenstein has recently connected the *Ars Dictaminis* in the late Middle Ages with the practice of courteousness and display, but more importantly reinforced the connection between civic and participatory engagement in a stratified society that this rhetorical medieval genre represents (111). Fleckenstein connected letter-writing to being “seen, heard, and heeded as ethically appealing in political, social, and legal arenas” and connected it with “civic engagement” (112). It can be demonstrated that, based on very real socio-political and factual proofs, letters written even at the beginning of the formulation and proliferation of *dictaminal* rhetorics were fueled by the social and political continuum that existed between the emergence of the imperial reconfiguration of Western Europe in the 8th century and the flowering of literacy in the twelfth century. For many years, the Middle Ages were considered a low ebb of civic and public rhetoric, but it can be demonstrated that the socio-cultural elite of the twelfth century fueled an increasing demand for a means of delivery, a genre, and a rhetoric for transmitting written political and diplomatic demands due to prevailing international and political pressures. Moreover, women, and particularly aristocratic women, in this case Eleanor of Aquitaine, were pivotal in their participation in, and expansion of, a public, civic, and literate rhetorical tradition. This is particularly true of the twelfth century.

John O. Ward has emphasized how the evidence of commentaries in the eleventh and twelfth Centuries created textual and rhetorical culture modeled on the Ciceronian tradition, manifesting in the sophisticated commentaries in those works. This commentary tradition shaped rhetorical culture in the twelfth century, which shaped the education and rhetorical

activities of women in that period. Ward states that "the twelfth century placed a new emphasis upon complete flexibility of discourse in the major communication language of the day" (Ward 2006 37). The "intellectual and political climate not only stimulated the renewed study of Cicero's rhetorical juvenilia but also gave birth to systematised instruction . . . [in] letter-writing, and document composition" (24). Thus, the most mature expression of Latin rhetoric in the Middle Ages spanned the period "between Lawrence of Amalfi and the Fourth Lateran Council (A.D. 1215)" – a period in which the life of Eleanor of Aquitaine falls squarely (25).

To further illuminate the centrality of *dictaminal* composition to the political nature of the period, Fleckenstein has summarized that literacy-based demands upon the ruling elite of Europe led to the standardization of the letter-writing genre (113). However, the standardization of the genre can be demonstrated to be a framework of rules in which argument and persuasion could flourish in the literate revolution of twelfth century, particularly in the context of political operation and international diplomacy. Camargo has pointed out that medieval letter writing existed at the nexus of orality and literacy in the Middle Ages, and Fleckenstein has further established that the tradition is, at its root, civic, public and performative (25). These innovations were an outgrowth of rapid social and international changes for which the long internal peace of Europe was the breeding ground in the twelfth century. All of these illustrate a need on a variety of levels for the *dictaminal* genre to operate for a variety of compelling reasons and for a variety of uses. What has not been made explicit in previous literature on this subject is the letter genre as one that was deliberative in the context of international relations.

Eleanor's rhetorical activity was, on multiple occasions throughout her life, diplomatic activity, directly relating to the balance of power within her dynastic familial network, and in relation to other sovereigns outside of that network. In the context of international relations,

which naturally involved *dictaminal* writings and readings, This is because, “The distinction between public and private was extremely difficult to draw in the Middle Ages” (Queller 11). This is particularly sticky when a third-party *legato* (from the Latin root *legatere*, to read) is also charged with a speaking part in negotiations, often used interchangeably with the term *nuncio* (from the Latin, *nuntio/nutiere*, to announce.) It is clear that the role of ambassadorial relations involved the intersection of the oral and literate forms of communications from the interchangeability of the Latin terms ascribed to an ambassadorial role that are at the heart of oral-literacy in the twelfth century and the *Ars Dictaminis*. As Queller explains, “The basic function of a *nuncius* was to communicate a message” (13). In earlier, preliterate eras, the *nuncio* could customarily appear with a letter conveying a patent introduction, that bestowed the ethos of the communicator on the ambassador, to induce trust that he would accurately repeat an oral message; but as international relations grew in magnitude and complexity, writing became completely necessary to convey the full effect of the rhetor. Similar to the spirit of Eleanor’s letter, as we shall see, “one of the important uses of *nuncii* was to summon careless or disloyal allies to the performance of their obligations” (18). Two major players in this story of rhetorical and diplomatic interactions, Richard Couer de Lion and Emperor Philip Augustus, sent *nuncio* to one another before the outbreak of their personal hostilities, before Richard went on crusade – a key point in our story. The *nuncius* functioned, in the words of Queller, as a “living letter” throughout the twelfth century (23). If Eleanor’s letter was entrusted to a *nuncius*, however, the historical record remains silent; but the silence of the historical record might indicate, given the veiled threats contained in the *dictaminal* artifact, that it was delivered and heard. In any case, the idea of ambassadorial relations being indistinguishable from rhetorical activity is also

betrayed by the fact that “orator” eventually was considered a synonymous term with “ambassador” in the Middle Ages.

Contemporary study of diplomatic theory and practice has finally come to reconcile Western medieval diplomatic practice with the inherent problems associated with defining diplomacy in an era before diplomats. This definitional problem is that in modern terms, “diplomacy” implies the definition of diplomats. By modern definition, there weren’t any diplomats: there were all levels of diplomatic couriers charged with everything from delivery of a document to the oral delivery of a written document, respectively, *cursors* and *nuncii*. Similarly, there were no embassy structures before 1400 utilized by international powers. To problematize this further, there simply were no nations during this period, and certainly not nations with fixed borders and national charters, and so on. But the historical fact remains that diplomatic transactions did occur, and have been typified as follows most recently by Karsten Ploger, who defines medieval diplomatic activity as typologically characterized by the presence of activities with 1) Mediation, 2) Representation, and 3) communication (16). In sum, diplomatic activity was rhetorical activity mediated by technological and representational processes between people in power.

The essential link between future rhetorical practice, and a categorizable typology of diplomatic *missi* that became standardized in the thirteenth century were probably present in the late twelfth century as well. Although Chaplais has identified a distinct proliferation in the rhetorical purposes of diplomatic letters after that time, Richardson and others have noted that diplomatic practice in the twelfth century and before was probably far more sophisticated than we previously believed. In general, all letters between powers were generally described as *littere missile*, but fell into distinct subcategories. *Littere congratulatory* functioned as a

performative rhetoric to congratulate, and thereby reassure allies or neutral powers there existed no new enmity between parties on accession to a throne; occasionally, they served the rhetorical purpose of being an initiation of more positive diplomatic relations. Others functioned apologetically, so called *littere de excusacione*, to convey apologies or, rhetorically speaking, to prevent one party from believing that another intended to promote more hostile relations. *Nuncii* frequently carried *littere reccomendatorie*, which largely conveyed the ethos of the sender upon the deliverer or for a distinct purpose, *in augmentum status*, for an individual's advancement with allied powers. Still others, given more treatment by Chaplais, performed more broad rhetorical functions, with many sub-categories: "the letters of credence (*littere de credencia*), defiance (*littere diffidacionis*), and of request (*littere requisitorie*)" (Chaplais 93). It is into these latter two categories, which could often function in combination, that Eleanor's letter falls, as there were no insular genres or rules for insular types of discourse that had developed in her time.

Having visited the implications for the rhetoric of the textual artifact at hand, complicated it with its implications for the history of the *Ars Dictaminis* tradition in rhetoric, addressed the practice by contextualizing it against the historical and socio-political background, one thing remains, and that is to explore the implications of the letter in the context of Medieval diplomatic practice and its implications for all of the above. In an age when Western Europe and its elite dreamed of unity through empire, it is of note that Harold Innis, in *Empire and Communication*, identified a compulsion through written mediums to tailor communication to address control of both spatial and temporal demands (34). This has implications for the transition in orality-literacy in the central Middle Ages, the role of women in rhetoric at that time, and the *Ars Dictaminis* tradition in general. The section will function, also, to further dispel doubts about the

authenticity of Eleanor's discourse. Sophie Menache has recently argued forcefully that it was the "medieval ruling classes" who "had the strongest imperative to develop a communication system," following Clanchy's reasoning that internal administrative demands in a largely illiterate populace spurred a desire to "manipulate large masses of people" (11). Thus, the fact that Eleanor's letter embodies a significant and typical example of international diplomatic *dictaminal* rhetoric can be shown as Menache likens similar privileged Latin discourse in the Central Middle Ages to an imperial language which acted "not always concomitant with the needs of much of the local population" (11). Menache, like Innis, identifies time as a vital feature to medieval communication, involving significant lapses in both time of delivery and in the distortion of information over time and distance (12). This is directly related to the use of the privileged discourse of Latin being a medium that might insure the precision of the arguments in diplomatic communication, and keep those not initiated into the privileged discourse out of sensitive affairs (12).

Eleanor of Aquitaine and the Letter to Celestine III

I first note that the rhetorical activities of Eleanor of Aquitaine are not limited in any sense to existing writing, but because of the expectations of this prospectus to its audience, I will only advise that I have an extensive catalogue of rhetorical-diplomatic activities of which I will give full account. That said, it is necessary to give background regarding the life, literate practices, and rhetorical activities found in the biographical material extant regarding Eleanor of Aquitaine.

Born in 1124, Eleanor of Aquitaine was married at the age of thirteen to Louis VII of France. Her marriage and subsequent travels to Palestine in the company of the Second Crusade were followed by divorce from Louis on grounds of consanguinity, and she remarried King

Henry II (then Henry of Anjou) in 1152, when she was aged 28. From 1152 to 1173, she bore several children, but after a falling-out with Henry, was accused of assisting her sons in a “revolt” against Henry because of his refusal to share actual power with his heirs. As a result of this, and arguably, a complex of other social, sexual and cultural conflicts, she remained the virtual prisoner of Henry II until 1189. After Henry’s death, and her release from captivity, as Brown notes “Eleanor demonstrated what energy, constructive and destructive, she had stored up” (5). However, this is not where her rhetorical activities, as we must assume, began, and her rhetorical activities certainly preceded, and precipitated, her imprisonment. If rhetoric is “the manipulation of [human] beliefs for political ends....the basic function of rhetoric [is] the use of words by human agents to form attitudes or to induce actions in other human agents” (Burke 41). If we accept this definition of rhetoric, then we can assemble the evidence for Eleanor of Aquitaine’s recurring significance to rhetoric in the twelfth century.

Beginning in a chronologically linear fashion, we know that in Eleanor’s early years, her ancestral court was a center of literate practice and has been described as “the seat of Western European culture” (Meade 21). Fairness compels me to note, however, that Meade’s discussion of her education may be wholly speculative. What cannot be disputed is that literate practice and patronage were a central preoccupation, both practical and economic, of her family’s court in Aquitaine, which was traditionally a region of France with a rich history of both Latin and vernacular literacy since the time of Charlemagne. Eleanor, from the textual evidence we possess, grew up believing that political affairs, as demonstrated by courtly practice, were not restricted to men, and her first political act was at age 8, when “in July 1129 ... she, along with her brothers and parents, witnessed a charter” (24). Eleanor’s subsequent rhetorical acts were political and administrative in nature, as Henry I placed her in control of the Duchy of Aquitaine

in 1168 (Wheeler 12). By 1173 “the English king’s family was conspiring against him... Eleanor played an essential part in her son’s rebellion and may have inspired it” (13). Whatever her part in the rebellion, her role was rhetorical in nature, and it would have regrettable consequences for her. Susan M. Johns in her book, *Noblewomen, Aristocracy and Power in the Twelfth century Anglo Norman Realm*, accounts for a multitude of examples of women’s activities that are representative of literate or alternative literate and rhetorical practices. She explains that the high nobility, such as Eleanor, “exerted power and influence through patronage. They were involved in the production and patronage of the written word not in only a personal/spiritual context, through personal letters and charters,” and other forms of persuasive communication by directing writings, listening to written writings, approval of the contents of those writings, and demonstrating this approval through the collectively produced documents indicating their rhetorical intent. They might direct the authorship, authorize, sign, or seal forms of persuasive, often diplomatic or familial communications to prevent civil war themselves, and sealing, signing, approving and sending individual to deliver them. Noblewomen also expressed their rhetorical civic engagement by that most persuasive form of communication – economic incentives and contributions to ideological and ecclesiastical institutions they believed in, through essentially rhetorical acts of patronage (36).

After Henry II’s death in 1189, Eleanor’s documented rhetorical activity began in earnest. Eleanor embraced her newfound freedom by touring England, “ordering the release of many whom her husband had imprisoned” (Brown 14). She ordered all free men to pledge fealty to her son, Richard Coeur de Lion, and in fact administered England in his absence. When Richard’s brother John was attempting unlawful bids for power in England in the vacuum of Richard’s monarchical authority, Eleanor brought the upstart prince to heel through swift

rhetorical action, informing him through her justiciars that if his antics continued, they would “seize his lands and fortresses and take them into the king’s hand” (Richardson 202). Eleanor also paid Richard’s ransom when he was imprisoned by Philip Augustus after the Third Crusade, and lobbied both in writing with persuasive rhetoric with Pope Celestine III, and orally with lesser nobles. Additionally, after the death of Richard, she issued numerous charters which had the force of law of any monarch.

Finally, the events that precipitated the letters to Pope Celestine III are worth considering to understand the significance and power of Eleanor’s rhetoric, if only to understand the rhetorical features of Eleanor’s bold moves in the work itself. When Eleanor’s son, Richard Coeur de Lion, was in transit from the Third Crusade, he had negotiated an uneasy truce with Sala’hadin. Richard was hunted by the Holy Roman Emperor Philip Augustus, acting through Henry VI, both of whom had taken umbrage at a complex of perceived slights against their persons and nations in previous years by Richard. Richard was taken hostage in contravention of all norms of the day and laws of sovereigns; in fact, the abduction of Richard was a monstrous crime against every law and custom imaginable to the medieval mind, contravening both the Law of the Church and the Truce of God. The Emperor demanded a literal “king’s ransom” for Richard’s return: enter Eleanor of Aquitaine. Dealing swiftly and rhetorically with this crisis, she introduces herself in the letter to the Pope as Queen of the English.

The case-study section of this dissertation will, by necessity, include a translation of the full text of Eleanor’s Latin diplomatic letter to Celestine and contain extensive textual analysis. Without fully restating the contents of these notable artifacts of Eleanor’s powers of discursive written persuasion, certain passages bear repeating. Her most reliable biographer, Amy Kelly, notes that this period of crisis was also punctuated with other rhetorical activity, such as journeys

to solicit help and “multifarious interviews” (311). This period of crisis resulted in a flurry of rhetorical activity for Eleanor of Aquitaine. It is of note that even in 1950, when the provenance of this letter was in some doubt due to the earlier scholarship of Lees, Kelly perceptively stated that “[Eleanor] may have employed clerks to put her ideas into impeccable Latin, but the sentiments bear the marks of authenticity” (311). What is not in doubt is that Eleanor of Aquitaine was not one of a host of illiterate or semi-literate monarchs typical of an earlier age, and never had a scriptorium or rhetorician in her employ according to most historical evidence.

Her letter, as translated by Kelly, reads in part:

What afflicts the church and excites the murmur of the people and diminishes their esteem for you, is that, in spite of the tears and lamentations of whole provinces, you have not sent a single *nuncio* (312)

As illustrated above, this passage particularly reveals Eleanor’s rhetorical preeminence; in this section of the letter, she uses rhetoric to critique the Pope himself for not engaging in the proper socio-political activity. In sum, she asks, why was a diplomat, who was in essence a rhetorician, not sent to castigate a monarch or state a civic position to her opponent? Eleanor critiques Papal inaction at a rhetorical level, and argues that this lack of action by Celestine has damaged his ethos.

The kings and princes of the earth have conspired against my son, the anointed of The Lord. One keeps him in chains while another ravages his lands... Three times you have promised to send *legates* and they have not been sent (312).

Similarly, Eleanor invokes and critiques the Papal inaction and uses speaker and reader interchangeably, illustrating her rhetorical and diplomatic prowess. In this writing, Eleanor

shows herself as centrally concerned with the rhetorical acts which the Papal authorities have in their power to effect.

It can also be illustrated that Eleanor uses a serious and potent threat that haunted the papacy of her time which had recent precedents, to move the Pope to action. Aquitaine itself had nearly promoted a schism in the Church in recent history, which culminated in the murder of Thomas A' Becket. The very real departure of Aquitaine, and now, England, from the ranks of the faithful was no hollow threat, and she makes use of this without any compunctions when she writes,

Recall when Frederick of Germany, the author and promoter of the great schism, gave his allegiance to that apostate Octavian against the rightful Pope, Alexander, and the Kings of France and England were beset by legates now for one, now for other, how King Henry, my husband and the father of [Richard Coeur de Lion], grieving to see the tunic of Christ longer divided, was first to give allegiance to Alexander, and how he with prudent counsels brought the King of the Franks to a similar allegiance, and thus the ship of Saint Peter, threatened with certain shipwreck, was brought to a safe harbor ... But I declare to you that the day foretold by the Apostle is not far distant. The fateful moment is at hand when the tunic of Christ shall be rent again....[and] the Catholic unity dissolved (312)

Here, we see, whether acting alone or in concert in a complex *techne* of literary production typical of the times, evidence for Eleanor of Aquitaine's extensive rhetorical arsenal and complex compositional *technes* and written rhetorical methodologies associated with power in the twelfth century.

Conclusion

The history of rhetoric is incomplete without Eleanor of Aquitaine's inclusion as a woman working in that tradition, a woman who centrally demonstrates the evolution of the *dictaminal* tradition, its relation to deliberative rhetoric in the Middle Ages, the unique period of the twelfth century, and the relationship of diplomatic practice to all the foregoing.

Project Summary

I believe my study can contribute to an expanded understanding of no less than five specific areas, and answering them might all result to a better understanding of our medieval inheritances in the history of rhetoric. First, this study will assist in dispelling the prevailing notion that medieval people had no need for deliberative rhetoric. Second, it will dispel the prevailing idea that only monastically-centered women participated in rhetorical activities and discourse. Third, this project will place Eleanor of Aquitaine in a similar class with Aspasia and other female rhetoricians who traditionally have not been accounted for in the historiographic latitude of our field. Fourth, it will illuminate some previously unresearched aspects of the medieval *Ars Dictaminis* tradition, specifically in examining a case study in the form of Eleanor's missive to Celestine III. Fifth, and finally, this project will illuminate an area of woeful oversight in the field of history in general, in that it will provide insight into the diplomatic communication process that was in development before 1300.

Methods and Methodology

The three primary methods or methodologies that inform this dissertation will be archival historical research, translation, and textual analysis. Method, in the context of this project, is a "technique for gathering evidence," which in this study is archival (Harding 2). Methodology is the "theory and analysis of how research does and should proceed," which in this dissertation will be through textual analysis and translation (3). My historical assumption for interpreting the

letter of Eleanor of Aquitaine will be first to set a theoretical context, then contextualize instances of her rhetorical activity in light of the social, political, military, and economic circumstances of her time. Without examining the exigencies and personalities surrounding her statements, little or no textual interpretation of her rhetoric is possible. Accordingly, my underlying methods for textual analysis are centrally historical and rhetorical. Following Kirsch and Rohan's archival theories, I will attempt to analyze the text as a site of research, using the space, time and location of the place "where historical subjects live," both temporally and geographically (2). After I address the context of the period, the archival material itself will be analyzed textually using the very rhetorics and rhetorical concepts that were in use in Eleanor's day. Logically, translation must be a part of this project, because many of the primary and secondary materials have never been fully translated and published, including the letter to Celestine III. The methodological assumptions governing translation that advise my methods are Steiner's, as he wrote in *After Babel*, that translation is not a science, but a hermeneutic act that constitutes "an exact art" (91).

Operating on these methodological assumptions, the questions this dissertation seeks to answer are manifold. First, how was the tradition of the *ars dictaminis* related to the tradition of deliberative rhetoric? This can be methodologically investigated by applying governing principles found in rhetorics from the twelfth century and exploring their relationship to classical rhetorical and theoretical texts in wide circulation, and then using historical and rhetorical analysis to examine the letter itself. How were women, then, relevant to this tradition? This will be explored by historical and archival evidence found in a variety of primary and secondary documents concerning women, diplomacy, and the history of international relations in the twelfth century. Another question this dissertation seeks to answer is what examples exist, and what

they can teach us about diplomatic practice before 1300 and the attendant rhetorical theory, practice, and genres associated with it. The question will be explored by archival research on diplomatic *dictaminal* documents surviving from the twelfth century, and Eleanor's letter in the sweep of those documents. Further, this dissertation will ask what unique conditions in the twelfth century lent themselves to these attendant practices. This dissertation will use historical, textual, and archival materials from primary and secondary original and scholarly sources to explain this. Similarly, the implications for current trends in scholarship in the rhetorical tradition in terms of the history of rhetoric and the history of ideas generally will be dealt with in the same manner. Finally, the implications for the history of women as active participants in that tradition will be addressed, as well as how our must histories be re-written to account for those gendered presences. Using Glenn's theory that Eleanor of Aquitaine was a rhetorical actor whose gender factored into her historical position as a rhetorical actor, in association with historical and archival methodologies, this project will attempt to shed light on these questions. Finally, the chapter that features the translation and analysis of the rhetorical structure of Eleanor of Aquitaine's letter will explore the structure and strategies common to deliberative rhetoric and classical rhetorical theory, particularly as embodied in the *Rhetorica Ad Herrenium* and *De Inventione*. An open question about the structure of the letter is whether it follows the five part structure of *captatio benevolentiae*, *exordium*, *refutatio*, *conclusio*, and similar devices. Further, there is a question of what forms of logical argumentation Eleanor utilizes given the gendered constraints of her day. Additionally, there will be a form of comparative methodology implemented based on the diplomatics exemplified by Pierre Chaplais, in his comparative analysis of diplomacy documents existing prior to the thirteenth century, particularly those addressed to popes from monarchs. For the benefit of the reader, I should briefly explain that

the study known as *diplomatics* is distinct from diplomacy: diplomatics are heuristic rules governing the examination of documents for their provenance and authenticity.

A Statement of the Problems:

1. Rhetoric in the Middle Ages is “is typically introduced as a wrongheaded excursion away from classical principles,” and characterized as a period where classical rhetorical theory was neglected.
2. The Middle Ages, generally, are subject to hasty generalization because they are frequently glossed as a single continuous and monolithic period of no intellectual development, where there were no periods of significant social change.
3. Women as rhetorical actors in the Middle Ages are accordingly subject to generalizations about the status of rhetorical education and literacy - namely, that they had none, outside of monastic education.
4. Diplomacy in the Middle Ages, before the year 1300, is a subject that has simply not been treated.
5. Deliberative rhetoric is similarly ignored or simply discounted as nonexistent in this period.
6. The *Ars Dictaminis* as a species of rhetoric has not been examined for its deliberative uses, accordingly.
7. Eleanor of Aquitaine personally has been subject to historical dismissal and exclusion in the history of women in rhetoric accordingly.

A Statement of the Arguments:

1. In the Twelfth Century, according to Ward, “Ciceronian rhetoric reached maturity”, the century of such rhetorical luminaries as Heloise and Eleanor of Aquitaine. The “intellectual and political climate not only stimulated the renewed study of Cicero’s rhetorical juvenalia but also gave birth to systematized instruction in . . . letter-writing” (24).
2. The Twelfth Century was the high water mark, historically speaking, of textual and rhetorical culture in the Middle Ages, a unique crossroads of literacy where ecclesiastical control of written communication was significantly loosened, and literacy was opened to a variety of people and multiple classes. Stock and Ward demonstrate that rhetoric and the formation of textual hermeneutic communities were historically grounded in this unique period.
3. “Women came to share in [the] developments” governing the period of rapid social change in the twelfth century (58). Beginning in the late eleventh century, there was a “startling rise in the visibility of women who demanded an educational and literary culture in which they could participate” (58).
4. Diplomacy was personal between monarchs, lords, and foreign “others” in the Middle Ages, and required extensive training of the nobility due to exigencies such as the Crusades, The Peace and Truce of God, the crisis of Lordship, and other collective problems.
5. Such collective problems required collective decision making for matters of war, peace, commerce, mutual aid, and other matters. Hence, deliberative rhetoric was a

- viable and vital form of rhetoric in the Middle Ages, which shot through multiple institutions on multiple levels.
6. The means of mediation for representative negotiation and decision-making was the *Ars Dictaminis*.
 7. *Eleanor of Aquitaine was part of this training and practice, and her missi is prima facie evidence of this, and argues for all of the above.*

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