X

THE KINGDOM OF CYPRUS 1291–1369

The steps taken at Acre in 1285 to overcome the Angevin party's opposition to the recognition of the Cypriote king Henry II as king of Jerusalem have been called "the one brilliant exploit of a long and

The standard bibliographical reference work is C. D. Cobham, Bibliography of Cyprus, (6th ed. by G. Jeffery, Nicosia, 1929). The sources in Cobham's Excerpta Cypria: Materials for a History of Cyprus (2nd ed., Cambridge, 1908) are complemented by T. A. H. Mogabgab's Supplementary Excerpts on Cyprus (3 parts, Nicosia, 1941–1945); see also L. de Mas Latrie, ed., Nouvelles preuves de l'histoire de Chypre (Bibliothèque de l'École deschartes, XXXII, XXXIV, XXXV; Paris, 1871–1874), which continues the collection of source materials in vols. II and III of his Histoire de l'île de Chypre sous le règne des... Lusignan (3 vols., Paris, 1852–1861).

Individual chroniclers include Badr-ad-Dīn al-'Ainī, "Account of the Conquest of Cyprus (1424-1426)," trans. M. M. Ziada and John L. LaMonte in Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves, VII (1939-1944), 241-264; Francesco Amadi and Diomedes Strambaldi, Chroniques de Chypre, ed. R. de Mas Latrie (Collection des documents inédits sur l'histoire de France, 2 vols., Paris, 1891-1893); Florio Bustron, Chronique de l'île de Chypre, ed. R. de Mas Latrie (ibid., Mélanges historiques, no. 5, Paris, 1886); Giorgio Bustron, Χρονικὸν Κύπρου, in K. N. Sathas, ed., Μεσαιωική Βιβλιοθήκη, ΙΙ (Venice, 1873); Khalīl az-Zāhirī, Zubdat kashf al-mamālik (ed. P. Ravaisse, Paris, 1894; extracts trans. in Mogabgab's and Mas Latrie's collections, cited above); Jean Froissart, Chroniques de France... (many editions and translations available); Gianfrancesco Loredano ("Henri Giblet") Historie de' re' Lusignani (Bologna, 1647; French trans., 2 vols., Paris, 1732); Estienne de Lusignan, Chorograffia et breve historia universale dell' isola de Cipro . . . (Bologna, 1573; French trans., Paris, 1580); Leontius Machaeras, Recital concerning the Sweet Land of Cyprus, entitled "Chronicle" (ed. and trans. R. M. Dawkins, 2 vols., Oxford, 1932); Guillaume de Machaut, La Prise d'Alexandrie ou chronique du roi Pierre Ier de Lusignan (ed. L. de Mas Latrie, Société de l'Orient latin, série historique, no. 1, Geneva, 1877); Philippe de Mézières, Songe du vieil pèlerin (portions publ. by L. de Mas Latrie in Histoire, II, 116 ff.); idem, Vita S. Petri Thomasii, in Acta Sanctorum (Jan. 29) and ed. J. Smet (Textus et studia historica Carmelitana, no. 2, Rome, 1954); Enguerran[d] de Monstrelet, Chronique (ed. L. Douet d'Arcq, 6 vols., Paris, 1857-1862); and Pero Tafur, Travels and Adventures, 1435-1439 (trans. M. Letts, London, 1926).

Modern historical treatments start with J. P. Reinhard, Vollständige Geschichte des Königreiches Cypern (2 vols., Erlangen, 1766-1768) and D. Jauna, Histoire génerale des roïaumes de Chypre... comprenant les croisades et... l'empire ottoman (2 vols., Leyden, 1785), followed by L. de Mas Latrie's Des Relations politiques et commerciales de l'Asie Mineure avec l'île de Chypre... (Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes, VI-VII = 2nd ser.,

otherwise unhappy reign." But over his kingdom of Jerusalem, of which he proved to be the last *de facto* sovereign, Henry's reign lasted only six years. From his succession to the throne of Cyprus as an epileptic boy of fourteen, on May 20, 1285, upon the premature death of his elder brother John I, until his own death in 1324 Henry's life was beset with troubles. The first major disaster he had to face was the fall of Acre on May 18, 1291.

This landmark in history denoted the end of Frankish rule in Syria, even though the Templars held out at Tortosa (Antaradus, now Ṭarṭūs) until August 3, at Château Pèlerin (Athlith) until August 14,

Other twentieth-century works of value include E. Oberhummer, Die Insel Cypern, I (Munich, 1903; no more publ.); K. J. Basmadjian, "Les Lusignans [sic] . . . au trône de la Petite Arménie," Journal asiatique, CLXVIII (= 10th ser., vol. VII; 1906), 520–524; J. Delaville Le Roulx, Les Hospitaliers en Terre Sainte et à Chypre (1100–1310) (Paris, 1904); J. Billioud, "De la Date de la perte de Chypre par la branche légitime des Lusignan (1464)," Le Moyen âge, XXXIV (= 2nd ser., vol. XXV, 1923), 66–71; M. M. Ziada, "The Mamluk Conquest of Cyprus in the Fifteenth Century," Bulletin of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Egypt, I-II (Cairo, 1933–1934); and Sir George Hill's magistral A History of Cyprus (4 vols., Cambridge, 1940–1952), vols. II and III. Since Sir Harry Luke's death, Basmadjian's tables have been superseded by those of Count W. H. Rüdt-Collenberg, The Rupenides, Hethumides, and Lusignans: the Structure of the Armeno-Cilician Dynastics (Lisbon, 1963). This chapter and the next were edited after the author's death by Harry W. Hazard.

I-II, 1844-1845) and Histoire de l'île de Chypre (cited above). Mas Latrie had previously published the first numismatic and sigillographic material, Notice sur les monnaies et les sceaux des rois de Chypre . . . (Bibliothèque de l'École des chartes, V, 1843-1844); other studies are those by E. de Rozière, "Numismatique des rois latins de Chypre," in L. F. J. de Saulcy, ed., Numismatique des croisades (Paris, 1847), pp. 73-112, Gustave Schlumberger, Numismatique de l'Orient latin (Paris, 1878, suppl. 1882; repr. Graz, 1954) and Sigillographie de l'Orient latin (with F. Chalandon and A. Blanchet, Paris, 1943). In 1869 E. Dulaurier's "Fin de règne de Léon V . . . d'Arménie" appeared in RHC, Arm., I; Karl Herquet published Charlotta von Lusignan und Caterina Cornaro, Königinnen von Cypern (Regensburg, 1870) and Cyprische Königsgestalten des Hauses Lusignan (Halle, 1881); between these appeared William Stubbs, The Medieval Kingdoms of Cyprus and Armenia (Oxford, 1878); Mas Latrie added L'Île de Chypre, sa situation présente et ses souvenirs du moyen-âge (Paris, 1879), "Généalogie des rois de Chypre de la maison de Lusignan," Archivio veneto, XXI (1881), 309-359 (chart at end), and "Histoire des archevêques latins de l'île de Chypre," Archives de l'Orient latin, II (1884), 207-328; later ecclesiastical studies are J. Hackett, History of the Orthodox Church of Cyprus... (A.D. 45-1878) (London, 1901) and L. Bréhier, L'Église et l'Orient au moyen âge (2nd ed., Paris, 1907). In 1886 there appeared I. J. Herzsohn's dissertation (Bonn) "Der Überfall Alexandriens durch Peter I. . . . aus einer arabischen Quelle . . . dargestellt." N. Iorga (Jorga) published Philippe de Mézières (1327-1405) et la croisade au XIVe siècle (Bibliothèque de l'École des hautes études, no. 110, Paris, 1896) and Notes et extraits pour servir à l'histoire des croisades au XVe siècle (3 vols. in Revue de l'Orient latin, IV-VIII, 1896-1901, and separately, Paris, 1899-1902; vols. IV-VI, Bucharest, 1915-1916). Art and architecture are treated in Camille Enlart, L'Art gothique et de la Renaissance en Chypre (2 vols., Paris, 1899) and more narrowly in Herbert F. Cook, The Portrait of Caterina Cornaro by Giorgione . . . (London, 1915).

^{1.} Stubbs, Mediaeval Kingdoms of Cyprus and Armenia, p. 28.

and on the islet of Ruad (Aradus), opposite Tortosa, until 1303.² It is true that the fall of Acre was a disaster to the crusading movement in general rather than to the kingdom of Cyprus in particular. No doubt the latter became somewhat congested, with the Templars and the Hospitallers, the ecclesiastics and baronage of Jerusalem, flocking to Cyprus together with the lesser refugees, who tended to be a drain on the island's resources. On the other hand, Cyprus was able to absorb a substantial part of the Syrian trade of Genoa and Venice, while its monarch, relieved of his mainland preoccupations as king of Jerusalem, could concentrate on the problems of his island realm, which were not wanting.

A futile attack by the galleys of pope Nicholas IV and king Henry on the Karamanian coast of Alaya ("Scandelore" or Candeloro) stung the Mamluk sultan al-Ashraf Khalīl into threatening that "Cyprus, Cyprus, Cyprus" should bear the brunt of his reprisals. This danger was removed by al-Ashraf's assassination in December 1293; and the growing Venetian and Genoese commercial activities in the island brought to it increasing wealth, though at the cost of the trading and other privileges which these republics exacted; those privileges were to become a canker that would eventually destroy the integrity of the kingdom. Meanwhile Genoa and Venice carried their mutual hostilities into Cypriote waters and even onto Cypriote soil, as when in 1294 a Venetian fleet destroyed the battlements of the Genoese fort at Limassol.

In 1300 Henry, in conjunction with the Templars and the Hospitallers, equipped an expedition against Egypt and Syria which accomplished little more than a series of marauding raids. Accompanying the expedition was one of the king's brothers, Amalric, titular lord of Tyre, who later in the same year was on Ruad at the head of a small force designed to take part with an army of Ghazan, the Persian Il-khan, in combined operations against the Saracens. The Mongols, who failed to arrive until February 1301, contented themselves with raiding northern Syria as far as Homs and then went home, whereupon Amalric and his men returned to Cyprus, their purpose unfulfilled.

It would have been better for Cyprus, and especially for king Henry, had Amalric never come back. For this disloyal prince, upon whom his brother had conferred the dignities (now purely nominal) of lord of Tyre and constable of the kingdom of Jerusalem, gradually

^{2.} René Grousset, Histoire des croisades et du royaume franc de Jérusalem, III (Paris, repr. 1948), 763; cf. vol. II of this work, p. 598.

formed the design of ousting Henry from power and taking his place, in effect if not in form. To this end he enlisted the support of another brother, Aimery, constable of Cyprus, many of the leading members of the powerful Ibelin clan including his (and Henry's) brother-in-law Balian of Ibelin, prince of Galilee, and Philip of Ibelin, count of Jaffa, the ill-fated last grand master of the Templars, Jacques de Molay, and a majority of the high court. Loyal to the king—although Ibelins—were his mother queen Isabel and her brother Philip, the seneschal, together with "many others who did not consent to this evil deed." Amalric was married to an Armenian princess, also named Isabel, daughter of Leon III and sister of Hetoum II, Toros III, and Ōshin, kings of Cilician Armenia, and he could count on the support of his Armenian connections on the mainland. Toros was doubly his brother-in-law, for he had married Margaret de Lusignan, a sister of Amalric and king Henry.

The reasons alleged for Henry's supersession were his malady, his apathy in the face of Saracen and Genoese aggression, his failure to support his relatives on the throne of Cilician Armenia against the Moslems, general maladministration, his inaccessibility to those seeking justice, and so on. But the overwhelming balance of opinion of the chroniclers and historians of Amalric's usurpation supports the king against his accusers; the evidence is convincing that Amalric was impelled by no loftier motives than personal ambition. If he contented himself with the titles of governor and regent (gubernator et rector) of Cyprus, it may well have been because he feared to alienate opinion at home and abroad (the papal curia, for example, was on Henry's side) by proceeding to the extreme lengths of deposing, and even putting to death, the anointed king.

By April 26, 1306, the plans of the lord of Tyre had come to maturity after six months of preparation. That evening the rebel leaders went to the palace, where the king was lying sick, and read to him a declaration to the effect that the barons, convinced that the public weal required the government to be taken out of his hands, had entrusted it to his brother Amalric as governor and regent; the declaration included an undertaking to meet all the king's needs from the revenues of the kingdom. Henry, who had hitherto disbelieved warnings of his brother's impending treachery, vigorously and indignantly protested but could do no more; the towns and castles were already in the hands of the usurper, whose men also took possession

^{3.} Hill, History of Cyprus, II, 217-218.

of the estates and revenues of the royal domain. Three days later the masters of the Temple and the Hospital appeared as mediators and embarked on negotiations, lasting as many weeks, for an agreement between the helpless king and his opponents. This agreement, assuring certain revenues to Henry, the queen-mother, and others, and an establishment for the king, was confirmed in 1307 by a charter, sealed (though never signed) by the king and approved by the high court. Amalric's *coup d'état* not only had been successful but had secured a measure of legality, obtained from the king under duress.

Despite this agreement the king's position steadily deteriorated: Amalric took every opportunity to remove Henry's friends to a safe distance, and early in 1308 extorted from him under threats against his personal liberty a written patent appointing the lord of Tyre governor of the kingdom for life. But Henry, deeply aggrieved at his ill-treatment, to which was now added the removal from his custody of his much-loved nephew (and eventual successor) Hugh, declined to accept the homage of those who had received from Amalric grants which involved feudal service to the crown, and his refusal caused embarrassment to the usurper. Amalric was further exasperated by fear that the expected *passagium* through Cyprus of participants in the new crusade ordered by pope Clement V and the king of France would reveal to the world the unsoundness of his position.

During 1309 he continued to put increasingly heavy pressure on the king to make full submission, but Henry refused to yield more than he had done already. Finally, at the end of January 1310, Amalric and his brother Aimery the constable forced their way at night into the king's chamber and, despite the vehement protests of the queen-mother-made, according to Amadi, in a mixture of French, Greek and Arabic-and of the king's sisters, put him on a horse (he refusing to touch the saddle-bow or take the reins) and sent him under escort to Famagusta. As he was being led away, Henry warned his brother that he would "last but a short time in the kingdom of Cyprus, having laid his foundations in bad ground." He was to prove a true prophet. A few days later Henry was transported to the Cilician port of Ayas (Lajazzo) and placed in the custody of Amalric's brother-in-law and supporter, the shifty Ōshin, king of Cilician Armenia. The queen-mother remained in Cyprus under close guard.

The next phase of this sorry story was inaugurated with the arrival in Cyprus early in March 1310 of a papal nuncio, canon Raymond de Pins, charged by the pope and the king of France with the task of reconciling Amalric and king Henry. The nuncio made it clear to Amalric that opinion in Europe was against him, but the lord of Tyre, while willing to increase the king's allowance and permit Henry, after agreeing to his conditions, to return to Cyprus, declared that he would never surrender the governorship. So the nuncio next proceeded to Cilicia to convey these terms to the king and actually induced him to accept them, an achievement rather difficult to understand after Henry's stubborn defense of his rights through four perilous years. The explanation may be that the close and harsh confinement to which he was being subjected in the Cilician fortress of Lampron had now caused him to abandon all hope.

At all events, by the end of March the nuncio was back in Cyprus with Henry's agreement and presented it to Amalric for confirmation. But the governor delayed affixing his signature, possibly owing to preoccupation with the arraignment of the Templars, which had already been initiated in Paris in 1307 and now opened, so far as the members of the order in Cyprus were concerned, in April 1310, a few days after the nuncio's return. He was destined never to sign it at all because on June 5 he was murdered in the palace by his favorite, Simon de Montolif, who then escaped from Nicosia, was believed to have made his way on board some ship, and was never heard of again. While the motives for this deed have remained obscure, they have not been traced to any organized conspiracy by adherents of the king, whom Amalric had been able either to banish or to keep in subjection.

Nevertheless, with the usurper dead, the loyalists lifted up their heads and, rallying round the queen, took immediate steps to recall the people's allegiance to their lawful ruler. The constable Aimery indeed, backed by the murdered man's widow Isabel, titular lady of Tyre, quickly secured from the high court the nomination as governor in Amalric's place. But he was unable to maintain himself for long in the face of the strong sentiment in Henry's favor that was manifested by the knights and the towns. Limassol and Paphos declared for Henry, and one Aygue de Bessan was chosen as captain of the army and lieutenant of the king for the whole of Cyprus.

Negotiations were now opened with king Ōshin to secure Henry's return from Cilicia. For by June 13 the king had been proclaimed in Nicosia; the chancery had returned to the palace; and the constable with his henchman the prince of Galilee had come to terms with the queen, in consideration of her undertaking to do her best to secure pardons or amnesties for those who made their submission. Through-

out the tortuous actions which followed on the part of the lady Isabel, the constable, the prince of Galilee, and their dwindling band of supporters, the queen-mother played a part of statesmanlike moderation so that Henry might return to a united rather than a divided kingdom.

These tortuous actions need not be described in detail. They amounted to delaying tactics on the part of Isabel, the constable, and the prince, aided and abetted by king Ōshin in Cilicia, in the hope that the situation might somehow be reversed in their favor or that, failing this, there might at least be assured the safety of Isabel and her children. But, although they contrived to postpone Henry's return for some weeks, they were unable ultimately to prevent it. By the beginning of August an agreement had been concluded with Ōshin providing for Henry's departure for Cyprus simultaneously with the return of the lady of Tyre and her children to Cilicia.

To the end there was bad faith on the part of the Armenians, who, after Isabel had actually landed at Ayas, tried to seize the boat in which Henry was being conveyed to his galley. The attempt was foiled by the vigilance of the Cypriotes, and the king, safely aboard, was visited by Isabel's son Hughet, who made his submission, offered his services, and was well received. Thereupon Isabel herself decided to follow suit and, "throwing herself at Henry's feet begged for pardon, assuring him that he would learn in time that her guilt was less than was imputed to her, and offering to swear allegiance. Then she opened a box and handed to Henry the crown, scepter, ring, and seals which her husband had seized from the Franciscans, with whom they had been deposited. She begged the king to punish the authors of her husband's death. The king replied briefly-for the fleet was ready to sail-accepting her excuse so far as she personally was concerned; but place and time were not suitable for him to receive her oath. He regretted that her husband had died with such a sin upon his soul, and promised to do his best to purchase his absolution."4 On August 27, 1310, after nearly seven months of exile and four years and four months of exclusion from the exercise of his authority, Henry landed at Famagusta, where his return was celebrated with three days of rejoicing. In Nicosia, where he was greeted "as though he had risen from the dead," the festivities were even more prolonged.

The period of Amalric's usurpation (1306–1310) saw two events of an importance in crusading history far transcending the confines of the kingdom of Cyprus. One was the inquisition by pope Clement V,

^{4.} Hill, History of Cyprus, II, 260.

acting at the instigation of Philip IV of France, into the affairs of the Knights Templar, which was to culminate in that order's dissolution in 1312; the other was the acquisition of the island of Rhodes by the Knights Hospitaller, operating from Cyprus, which had been their temporary headquarters since the fall of Acre.⁵

During the four years of his governorship Amalric struck coins of two distinctive types, both now of the greatest rarity. The earlier type retained Henry's name on the obverse, combined with Amalric's on the reverse, which bears the legend Amalricus Gubernator Cipri. The second type, reflecting the deterioration of Henry's position, omits all mention of him. The obverse bears the inscription Amalricus Tirensis Dominus Cipri Gubernator et Rector, surrounding the Lusignan lion in two concentric circles; on the reverse the words Ierusalem et Cipri Regis Filius encompass a shield impaling the arms of Jerusalem and Cyprus. The gros and demi-gros of the second type are from the artistic point of view among the handsomest examples of the Lusignan coinage.

Necessarily the first concern of the restored king Henry, thirty-nine years old on his return from dispossession and exile, was to secure the persons of Amalric's principal supporters. Some of these complied with his command to give themselves up, others had to be sought out: the king's brother Aimery the constable, Balian of Ibelin, titular prince of Galilee, Philip of Ibelin, titular count of Jaffa, with other disloyal knights, made submission and public confession of their treason and threw themselves on the royal mercy. They were not immediately put to death, although this might have proved a more clement fate: they were committed to rigorous confinement in the castles of Kyrenia and the more inaccessible Buffavento. The Ibelins perished in Kyrenia in 1316, the constable probably about the same time.

Toward his sister-in-law Isabel, the usurper Amalric's widow, on the other hand, Henry showed more leniency than was characteristic of the age. Nine weeks after his restoration he allowed her and three of her sons to reënter Cyprus and in the following year, 1311, to return with her family and household to Cilicia. She might have done better to remain where she was, for she ultimately met her death (in 1323) in an Armenian prison at the instance of the regent of her own country, Ōshin of Corycus.

Three major matters of external importance engaged Henry's attention after his restoration, in addition to the local one of striving to

^{5.} See above, pp. 278-283.

rehabilitate the economy of the royal domain and the kingdom in general, seriously dislocated by Amalric's intrusion. The war against the Saracens was of course an ever-present preoccupation of the rulers of Cyprus, however urgent might be their more immediate problems, even when no military or naval operations were in progress; and on crusading policy Henry's envoys presented to pope Clement V a reasoned statement recommending "Cyprus rather than Armenia as a base, Egypt rather than Armenia or Syria as the objective." Such had in fact been the opinion a little earlier of Edward I of England, who had ruled that Egypt must be the first point of attack, followed by Palestine and Constantinople in that order; and such was the policy to be adopted in due course by Henry's great-nephew Peter I.

The second matter concerned the arraignment of the Knights Templar. Their trial, resumed after a temporary interruption caused by Amalric's murder, resulted in their being cleared of the charges brought against them, an outcome unwelcome to pope Clement V, and still more so to his patron, Philip IV of France, who was intent on the order's dissolution. A new trial, ordered in 1311 to be held in Nicosia, produced the desired result; the properties of the Temple in Cyprus, including the historic commandery of Kolossi near Limassol, were allotted to the Knights Hospitaller.

A third difficulty involved the Genoese, already troublesome in the first period of Henry's reign not only by reason of the preponderating influence derived from their hold on the island's commerce but by the manner in which they made free of Cypriote territorial waters, and even the mainland of Cyprus, in their perennial hostile encounters with their rivals the Venetians. Now, in 1312, although Genoa was officially at peace with the kingdom, three Genoese galleys made a piratical raid on the district of Paphos, followed in 1316 by a more extended one with a force of eleven galleys. Henry had the spirit to retaliate by imprisoning all the Genoese of Nicosia and keeping them in confinement until 1320, when a truce between the two states was negotiated through the mediation of pope John XXII.

On the morning of March 31, 1324, Henry was found dead in his bed, after having been out hawking the previous day. Dante's reference to him in the *Paradiso* (XIX, 145–148),

In earnest of this day, e'en now are heard Wailings and groans in Famagosta's streets And Nicosia's, grudging at their beast Who keepeth even footing with the rest,

6. Hill, History of Cyprus, II, 278.

may reasonably be ascribed to anti-French prejudice. Henry, physically handicapped by his epilepsy, grossly ill-used by two of his brothers and their supporters among his own subjects, was for his day not a bad man and not a bad king; we may well feel able to accept the verdict that "as so often happens after an unquiet reign, he outlived all his enemies and died rather regretted than not... When he had been able to exercise independent authority he had used it well; he had welcomed the refugees from Acre and fortified Famagosta; he contributed largely to the judicial decisions which formed the supplement to the Assizes, and he established a strong judicature in Cyprus." One may commend the tenacity with which he endured his sufferings at the hands of his enemies, "which would have been remarkable even in one who was not the victim of physical infirmity." He had worn the crown of Cyprus for just under thirty-nine years.

Henry had married, in 1317, a Catalan princess, Constance, daughter of Frederick II, king of Sicily. He was probably impotent and the marriage was childless. He was therefore succeeded—since Amalric's sons were debarred on account of their father's treason—by his favorite nephew Hugh, son of his brother Guy, who had been constable of the kingdom until his death in 1302 or 1303, when he was followed in that office by the disloyal brother Aimery. The wise, patient, sorely tried queen-mother, Isabel of Ibelin, who had seen her family so bitterly and tragically torn asunder, survived king Henry by only a few weeks. His widow Constance married Leon V of Armenia.

Hugh IV and his consort, Alice of Ibelin, his second wife, were crowned as the sovereigns of Cyprus in Nicosia cathedral two weeks after the new king's accession; a month later the royal couple established the precedent of being crowned as sovereigns of the kingdom of Jerusalem in the cathedral of Famagusta, the city nearest to the lost mainland. The early years of the reign saw negotiations for treaties with Genoa and with Venice designed to stabilize the troubled relations between Cyprus and the two powerful and rival maritime republics, each with its close commercial interests in the kingdom. Other foreign cities and communities, such as Montpellier, Florence, and the Catalans, also developed their activities in this island so blessed by nature and geography; and it was toward the middle of the fourteenth century, that is to say in the time of Hugh IV, that Famagusta, its principal port—busy, wealthy, and cosmopolitan—attained its position of eminence among the échelles of the

^{7.} Stubbs, Mediaeval Kingdoms, p. 33.

^{8.} Hill, History of Cyprus, II, 284.

Levant. The Westphalian priest Ludolph of Suchem, visiting the island in 1349, is eloquent regarding the splendor of its nobles and its merchants. "In Cyprus," he says,

the princes, nobles, barons and knights are the richest in the world.... I knew a certain Count of Japhe [Jaffa] who had more than 500 hounds, and every two dogs have their own servant to guard and bathe and anoint them, for so must dogs be tended there. A certain nobleman has ten or eleven falconers with special pay and allowances.... Moreover there are very rich merchants, a thing not to be wondered at, for Cyprus is the farthest of Christian lands, so that all ships and all wares,... must needs come first from Cyprus, and in no wise can they pass it by, and pilgrims from every country journeying to the lands over sea must touch at Cyprus.

He speaks of the daughter of a citizen of Famagusta, the jewels of whose headdress at her betrothal were "more precious than all the ornaments of the queen of France."

Five years earlier an anonymous Englishman had broken in Cyprus his journey to the Holy Land. He, too, marvels at Famagusta's luxury: "there reside in it merchants of Venice, Genoa, Catalonia, and Saracens from the Soldan's dominions, dwelling in palaces which are there called *loggias*, living in the style of counts and barons; they have abundance of gold and silver." This observant traveler also outlines revealingly the characteristics of Hugh IV. The king, he says, "is a man of great kindness towards the gentle and of severity towards the perverse Greeks; nevertheless he rules the people of his realm with justice, without looking upon them too benignly." After an account of the monarch's delight in hunting the moufflon (the wild sheep of Cyprus), he continues: "the king is rightly called peaceful."

In his word "peaceful" he strikes the keynote of the reign, which differed from those of Hugh's predecessors and successors alike in its relative freedom from warlike operations. Hugh was above all a prudent ruler, who, while fully alive to the potential danger to his country from the Selchükid Turks, avoided (unlike his son and successor Peter I) unnecessary adventures. He agreed, it is true, to contribute six galleys to an expedition sent against the Selchükids in 1334 by a league in which Venice and France were the other partners, under the auspices of pope John XXII. An expedition

^{9.} Cobham, Excerpta Cypria, pp. 19 ff.

^{10.} The MS. of the record of this journey, preserved in Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, is published in the original Latin in G. Golubovich, ed., *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell' Oriente francescano*, IV (Quaracchi, 1923), 435–460. The passages relating to Cyprus are translated into English by Sir H. Luke in *Kypriaka Chronika*, II (1924), and republished by Mogabgab, *Supplementary Excerpts on Cyprus*, part II (1943).

planned by the same partners on a larger scale for the following year was rendered abortive by the preoccupation of Philip VI of France with a threatened invasion of his country by Edward III of England. But negotiations for a resumption of such activities were kept alive and resulted in the formation, in 1343, of a new league composed of the pope, the Hospitallers, Venice, and Cyprus. In 1344 the expedition dispatched by this alliance against the Selchükids captured the city of Smyrna, which remained in Christian hands until recaptured by Timur the Lame in 1402. Hugh took no personal part in this or any other campaign, but he continued to contribute in ships and money to the patrolling of the Turkish coasts. Under his cautious rule his kingdom reached the zenith of its prosperity as the exporter to the west of its valuable products such as barley, wine, cane sugar, silk, and cotton, and as an important entrepot for the stuffs and spices of the farther east.

Though king Hugh thus governed his realm with wisdom, his character can scarcely be called an attractive one. Even to members of his own family he was capable of showing sustained cruelty, as to his son-in-law Ferdinand of Majorca, whom he pursued with vindictive hatred. When his sons Peter and John, titular prince of Antioch, determined to travel to the west in defiance of their father's objections and succeeded in leaving the country with the help of an amenable knight, one John Lombard, Hugh had the knight hanged after the amputation of a hand and a foot. When the young princes were eventually caught off the coast of Sicily and brought back home, the incensed monarch incarcerated them in Kyrenia, where they remained until released at the pope's intercession. On the other hand, he was a patron of scholars and artists, and Boccaccio dedicated to him his *Genealogy of the Gods*, written at the king's request. 12

Hugh IV died in 1359 after a successful reign of thirty-five years. He had become reconciled with Peter, the eldest surviving son, whom he had caused to be crowned king of Cyprus in his own lifetime, in 1358. He took this step, no doubt, in the hope of avoiding a disputed succession, which nevertheless occurred. For the eldest of all his sons, Guy, titular prince of Galilee, had died in 1343, leaving a son Hugh, who claimed to be the rightful successor to his grandfather. In modern practice his claim would have been valid, and it was in fact supported by the pope and the king of France; Peter rejected it on

^{11.} See also above, pp. 294-308.

^{12.} See G. Boccaccio, Genealogie deorum gentilium libri, ed. V. Romano (2 vols., Bari, 1951), I, 1, and cf. II, 784-785.

the grounds that in accordance with the Assizes of Jerusalem a surviving son had the prior right over the son of a deceased elder brother. Later, young Hugh's claims were settled by a grant of a pension and, in 1365, the title prince of Galilee, and he became reconciled with his uncle, whom he accompanied on his western journeys and on the expedition against Alexandria.

Peter I was not only the most spectacular monarch of his house; he is one of the most spectacular figures in late medieval history. If his father had guided the Lusignan kingdom to material prosperity, the son brought it to the height of its reputation on the international stage. Devoted to the crusading ideal from the days before his first coronation and accession, when he bore the title of count of Tripoli, he became in pursuit of that ideal one of the most persistent knights-errant of his century. Brave and chivalrous, passionate and sensual, he not only could win the acclaim of a François Villon; he could inspire the personal devotion of a Peter Thomas, who is venerated as a saint by the Carmelites, and a Philip of Mézières. Until the final failure of his hopes, combined with domestic trouble, turned disappointment to despair and an idealist into a capricious and irresponsible tyrant, Peter had earned the approval of some of the leading spirits of his age. Jean Froissart, William of Machaut, and Philip of Mézières chronicle his remarkable activities; Petrarch and Chaucer award him praise.

Already by 1347, when still in his teens, the young count of Tripoli had founded his Order of the Sword as the embodiment of his compelling passion for the recovery of the holy places. He believed himself to have been divinely entrusted with this mission, in a vision vouchsafed to him in the mountain monastery of Stavrovouni near Larnaca, a shrine famous for the relic of a piece of the True Cross embedded in pieces of the crosses of the two thieves, which had been brought to it by the empress Helena. The motto he gave to his order was c'est pour loyauté maintenir, and the inspiration of its emblem was not only daily before him but daily before his subjects. For on his coinage he caused to be placed in his hand the sword instead of the scepter held by his predecessors and his successors; heraldically, too, it supported his arms.

Peter was just thirty years old on his accession and had already been married for six years to his second wife, Eleanor of Aragon, a princess of physical attractions but of a jealous and vindictive temper. The pair were crowned for the kingdom of Jerusalem in Famagusta by the papal legate Peter Thomas, who was to become the king's trusted adviser and devoted friend. The reign began with the usual complicated dealings with the Genoese and the Venetians, but its major interest here lies in the king's preoccupation with his intended crusade, his indefatigable efforts to bring it about, and his actual achievement. The achievement was ephemeral in its results, but that the ruler of a small island state of limited resources, situated on the very confines of the enemy's territories, should have been able to bring his plans for a crusade to any sort of fruition, and that moreover in the second half of the fourteenth century, was a remarkable tribute to his unflagging zeal, his persistence in the face of discouragement, and his sense of vocation. In the matter of the crusade he was a dedicated man.

His first stroke was accomplished quite early in his reign, when the citizens of the fortress of Corycus on the Karamanian coast, rightly doubting the ability of their own sovereigns of the tottering kingdom of Cilician Armenia to protect them against the Turks, offered their town to Peter. A similar offer made previously to Hugh IV had been declined by that cautious monarch, but Peter accepted with alacrity the gift of a valuable base on the mainland of Anatolia. It was to remain in the possession of the Cypriote kingdom until lost in 1448 under the feeble John II. Fortified by the control of this foothold, Peter's next objective was the important walled Turkish city of Adalia ("Satalia," now Antalya), against which he assembled at Famagusta an expedition whose vessels, great and small, numbered one hundred and twenty. It was an appreciable force and included four galleys contributed by the master of the Hospitallers, Roger de Pins, two by pope Innocent VI, every craft that Peter himself could muster, and several privateers. The operation was completely successful. Adalia was taken by storm on August 24, 1361, not to be recovered by the Turks until 1373, when Cyprus was, as we shall see, heavily embroiled with Genoa.

Now began Peter's most difficult task, one requiring the utmost efforts that diplomacy, persuasiveness, a handsome presence, and an engaging personality could jointly contribute. The task was to induce the rulers of the west to combine in launching a major crusade against the heart of the Saracen power, that is to say, an expedition compared with which the attacks hitherto made on the Turkish coast would amount to no more than preliminary skirmishes. In October 1362 the king sailed from Paphos accompanied by his young son and heir, the future Peter II; Hugh de Lusignan, his nephew and former competitor for the throne; Philip of Mézières (1327–1405), chancellor of the kingdom (who in his later years was to describe his

experiences in his Songe du vieil pèlerin); the legate, Peter Thomas; and a considerable retinue. It is to Peter's additional credit that he undertook his incessant journeys despite the sea-sickness from which he suffered acutely.

Landing in Venice, where, as next in Genoa, he spent some weeks, Peter then made for the papal court at Avignon. Here the party was warmly received by the new pope, Urban V, as by John II, king of France (but not, as often alleged, by the Danish monarch, Waldemar III). On April 12, 1363, a passagium generale was formally proclaimed by the pope, to be undertaken within two years under the command of the king of France. This all-important decision secured, and the pension of the young prince Hugh finally and satisfactorily settled, Peter and his following continued their way northward through Brabant and Flanders, being welcomed, notably in Brussels and Bruges, with lavish entertainment. In October they crossed the Channel to enlist the aid of the kings of England and Scotland. Jean Froissart, to whom we are primarily indebted for our detailed knowledge of Peter's wanderings, describes the king's visit to London, where he was well received by Edward III and queen Philippa. Edward gave him a ship named the Katharine; Philippa tendered him handsome presents; like royal visitors of a later age, he was entertained, according to a persistent tradition of the City of London, at a civic banquet, together with four brother kings. Edward offered his royal guest a tournament (for Peter excelled at jousting), but in the matter of the more serious business at hand excused himself from participating in the projected crusade on the ground of age, suggesting that this might be a task more suited to his sons. But he made it clear to the dismayed Peter that if he recovered his kingdom of Jerusalem, "he would be expected to hand over to Edward the Kingdom of Cyprus which Richard Lion Heart had given to his predecessor."13

In February 1364 the party returned to France, and in Angoulême Peter sought out Edward the Black Prince, who followed his father's example in giving an evasive answer to the appeal to take the cross. In May he was present at the funeral of his intended leader John II at St. Denis and twelve days later at the coronation of John's successor Charles V in Rheims. The pontifical mass on this occasion was sung to the music of William of Machaut (c. 1300–1377), the foremost French musician of his century and the poet who subsequently commemorated Peter's exploits in his epic La prise d'Alexandrie ou chronique du roi Pierre I de Lusignan.

^{13.} Hill, History of Cyprus, II, 326. On Waldemar see Iorga, Philippe de Mézières, pp. 162-163.

Hitherto Peter had been unable to meet the emperor, Charles IV. For this purpose he now made his way through Germany to Prague, where Charles was then in residence in the Hradčany. Here the visitor was received with all the traditional pomp of the Holy Roman empire and by processions of the entire clergy. But the emperor assured Peter that he was in no position to support his guest's plan without the aid of others; he proposed a conference between himself and Peter with king Casimir III of Poland (whose granddaughter Elizabeth the emperor had recently married) and king Louis I of Hungary to consider the possibility of combined action. Cracow was designated as the venue of the meeting, and Peter, unwilling to miss any opportunity to advance his plans, agreed to this lengthening of his already formidable itinerary. The conference was held as arranged and Peter gave a brilliant account of himself at the tourneys held in Cracow, as elsewhere, in his honor. But in other respects it produced little more than vague promises and expressions of good will. Somewhat disheartened, Peter now turned southwest to Vienna, to be received with distinction by duke Rudolph IV of Austria, and from Vienna made his way across the Alps back to Venice. He reached Venice in November 1364 and there continued to organize the collection of the force brought into being by his two years of arduous traveling and pleading. That a force had been promised and raised at all was due to his initiative and his impassioned advocacy at the courts of Christendom, but his odyssey had been a heavy drain on the financial resources of his little kingdom. He sailed for Rhodes, where the expedition was due to assemble, on June 27, 1365.

It will be remembered that Edward I of England had held that in any major operation against the Saracens, Egypt must be the first point of attack, a policy later endorsed in the memorial presented to pope Clement V by the envoys of Peter's great-uncle, the Cypriote king Henry II. The fleet gathered in Rhodes for the great assault numbered 165 vessels of all sizes, including 31 galleys, and to this total Cyprus had contributed no fewer than 108. Not yet, however, was its objective communicated to the armada as a whole. Peter shared the views of his great-uncle and the English king, and the objective he had decided upon was Alexandria, the greatest port of the Mamluk sultan's realm and the gateway to Cairo, his capital. It was one of the richest cities of the Mediterranean, a consideration of realistic importance to the leader of a heterogeneous body of men, of whom some, at all events, had been induced to join by the sordid lure of loot. But he felt it necessary to keep secret to the last possible moment plans that would not commend themselves to all his partners. Venice in particular was sensitive as regards antagonizing the sultan, as it was the republic's policy to keep on good terms with him in order to safeguard its commercial activities in his dominions. ¹⁴ That it supported Peter's crusade to the extent it did may have been out of gratitude for Peter's helpfulness in connection with a revolt against the Venetians in Crete.

Attempts had been made, not without success, to delude the enemy into expecting the attack to be made on the crusaders' traditional objective, the Syrian coast. Alexandria was therefore taken by surprise when the fleet entered its harbor on October 9. 1365. The sultan, Sha'ban, was a boy; the governor, who had been on the pilgrimage, was still on his way back; many of the townsfolk, taking the visit to be a friendly one, at first came out prepared to trade. An opening assault was partially successful, yet some of the invaders were in favor, even then, of abandoning an enterprise of which they had never wholly approved. It required all Peter's determination to induce the half-hearted among his followers to persevere with the attack. During hand-to-hand skirmishes the king nearly lost his life and had to fight his way out of a band of Saracens who had managed to surround him; his nephew Hugh also displayed conspicuous gallantry and won the title prince of Galilee on the field of battle. By October 10 the Christians were within the walls and the city, for the time being, was theirs, to be pillaged, laid waste, and finally burned. Defenders and townspeople were indiscriminately slaughtered, irrespective of age and sex. William of Machaut estimated the slain among the Saracen troops and the Alexandrians at twenty thousand, no doubt an exaggerated figure, but not exaggerated was the destruction. Alexandria was reduced almost to ashes; movable objects of loot filled seventy of the attacking ships; five thousand of the population were put on board others to be taken away as captives. Alexandria's sack, which continued for three days, was complete.

It was Peter's plan to strengthen the captured city's fortifications and to use it as the advanced base for the recapture of the Holy Land, ultimate goal of the crusade. But a council of war which now assembled to consider the next step was overwhelmingly in favor of evacuation, notwithstanding the king's pleas, backed by Philip of Mézières and the pope's legate, Peter Thomas, for holding fast. The majority argued successfully that the captured city would be un-

^{14.} The rulers of Venice must have known that the attack was to be made against Egypt, for they had exacted an undertaking from Peter not to land in the sultan's territories before the end of October, and complained bitterly that he had done so three weeks early.

tenable against the sultan's relieving army, already on the march, but many, particularly among the northern knights, were preoccupied with getting safely away with their loot. The decision was a bitter blow to Peter, turning his joy in victory to grief at its ephemeral result. Petrarch in a letter to Boccaccio¹⁵ well sums up the situation in the following words:

The conquest of Alexandria by the king of Cyprus, a great and memorable achievement, would have afforded a powerful basis for the increase of our religion had the spirit shown in its taking been equaled in the holding of it. He, indeed, it is reputed, was not lacking in it but rather his company, collected mainly from the transalpine races who always excel at the beginning rather than the end of things. These men, having followed a pious king not from piety but from greed, deserted him in the middle of his glorious undertaking, departing with their spoils to frustrate his pious vow while satisfying their own avarice.

Peter and his faithful followers were the last to return to their ships, embarking about October 16 as the sultan's troops from Cairo were actually entering the ravaged city. The retreating expedition sailed to Limassol and there dispersed, and Peter saw his kingdom again for the first time in three years, during which time his brother John, titular prince of Antioch, had exercised the regency. Philip of Mézières records that during the sad homecoming journey the legate composed an *oratio tragica* intended for the pope and the emperor; to Peter's loss and that of Cyprus this saintly man, the king's good genius, died in Famagusta the following January.

When the west became aware of what had happened in Alexandria, sympathy with Peter was such that the king of France, the count of Savoy, and famous warriors like Bertrand du Guesclin wished to take the cross so that they might help the king of Cyprus to retrieve the situation. These intentions were frustrated by the equivocal action of Venice, which, ever placing her oriental trade above other considerations, put about the false news that Peter had made his peace with the sultan.

Negotiations did indeed take place on pope Urban's advice between Peter and the sultan's powerful emir, Yelbogha al-Khaṣṣikī. Peter returned those of the Alexandrian captives whom the "transalpines" had not carried away into the west, and embassies were exchanged with fluctuating but in the end negative results. Meanwhile, his zeal not extinguished by his disappointments, he sent an expedition, foiled by a storm, against Beirut, relieved Corycus from an attack by the Turks, and secured Adalia against a discontented garrison. In

^{15.} Senilia, book VIII, ep. 8 (July 20, 1367); cf. Hill, History of Cyprus, II, 335, note 3.

September and October 1367 he carried out powerful raids—with an international force of 7,000 fighting men and some 150 ships—against Tripoli, Tortosa, and Valania on the Syrian coast, and against Ayas in Cilicia, the last-named in aid of Constantine V, the hard-pressed king of Armenia, who had arranged to meet him there but failed to keep the appointment.

Nevertheless Peter knew well that these operations, irritating though they were to the enemy, brought him little or no nearer to his primary goal, the recovery of the Holy Land. This, he realized, could be achieved only by another passagium generale, which meant that he would have to go once more on his travels if there were to be any hope of bringing such an undertaking into being. So again this sanguine, indefatigable knight-errant set out on his self-imposed task, which proved on this occasion to be a fruitless one. Traveling by way of Rhodes and Naples, where he was entertained respectively by the master Raymond Bérenger and queen Joanna, he reached Rome in the early spring of 1368, to learn that his friend and supporter, the pope, had come to the inevitable conclusion (forced upon him not only by the Venetians, who were bent upon making their peace with the sultan, but by the circumstances of the time) that an effective crusade in the then state of Christendom was out of the question; it seemed to have become an anachronism. Urban V had always wished Peter well—he would refer to him in the parlance of the time as an "athlete of Christ"-and the king was forced to admit that he was right. Reluctantly but inevitably he agreed to accept the mediation of Venice and of Genoa, and wrote to Cyprus to his brother the regent that on the advice of the pope and the two republics he had consented to peace if the sultan would accept his terms. A copy of these was enclosed in the letter to prince John. In the event, the negotiations broke down, but Peter learned of their failure only on his return to Cyprus.

In the meantime he began his preparations for the homeward journey, to be made from Venice. Traveling northward through Florence and Bologna, where he was in the company of Froissart (presenting to him twenty ducats on their parting at Ferrara), he reached Venice in August and sailed for Cyprus on September 23 with a suite of five hundred persons. Before leaving Italy he was offered by the barons of Cilician Armenia, and appears to have accepted, the crown of that distressed country, already once offered to him tentatively on his first voyage; at all events there exists a coin of his in the Armenian series.

When Peter reached home he was just thirty-nine years old and had

become one of the most acclaimed figures in Christendom. He was to live barely three more months, the most lamentable months of his life. For during his absence he had received reports not only of the unfaithfulness of his wife, queen Eleanor, with John of Morphou, titular count of Edessa ("Rochas"), but of Eleanor's ill-treatment of one of his two favorite mistresses, Joan l'Aleman, whom the queen had tried to cause to miscarry the king's child. It was a sad homecoming for the king, already suffering disappointment at the frustration of his plans, and that disappointment turned to bitterness when the barons of the high court refused him justice against the queen and John of Morphou. In clearing the couple they wished no doubt to save Eleanor's honor as well as to spare the island the wrath of Aragon-Catalonia, but equally to vex the king, whom they had grown to hate for his insistence on his costly wars and his alleged preference for the knights from the west. Peter for his part now became a capricious and cruel tyrant, imprisoning those who opposed his wishes in a tower which, in common with his daughter and a favorite mule, he called Margaret.

The end of this sorry tale is best told in the account by Leontius Machaeras of the last hour of Peter's life:

And on Wednesday the seventeenth of January 1369 after Christ very early all the knights in company with the prince [John] and his brother [James (I)] came to the king's lodging And they dismounted at the pavement and went up the stairs and went to the loggia with all those who had been at the prison. Then the prince knocks gently at the door. Of the ushers, it was the day of Gilet de Cornalie; he opened, and when the king's brothers went in, they all went in together. The king heard the stir and got up from the bed and says: "Who are these who have come?" The Lady Echive de Scandelion his mistress, who was sleeping with him, said to him: "Who can it be but your brothers?" And the lady covered herself with her coat and went out into the loggia and down into the between-room, where saddles for tournaments were stored; and they shut the trapdoor. When the prince saw that the Lady Echive who was at the king's side, had gone away, he went into the king's room, and greeted the king: and the constable did not go in, nor did the prince wish to go in, but the knights, who had another plan in their minds, forced him to go in. Then he says to the king: "Sir, a good day to you." And the king said to him "Good day to you, my good brother." And the prince said to him: "We worked all last night and have written down our opinion, and we have brought it to you for you to see." The king was naked in his shirt and wanted to dress, and he was ashamed to dress before his brother, and he says to him: "My princely brother, go outside for a little for me to dress, and I will look at what you have written." The prince went out. Then the Lord of Arsuf pushed in, holding in his hand a dagger like a little sword, as was usual at this time, and by him was Sir Henry de Giblet. And when the prince had gone out, the king put on his clothes to dress himself; and he had put on one sleeve (of his coat) and had turned his head to put on the other, when he sees the knights in his room: and he says to them: "Faithless traitors, what are you doing at this hour in my room, attacking me?" And there were there, Sir Philip d'Ibelin, the Lord of Arsuf, and Sir Henry de Giblet and Sir John de Gaurelle; these three went in at once and drew their swords and gave him each one of them three of four wounds: and the king cried out: "Help, mercy, for the love of God!" And immediately Sir John Gorap, the steward of the court, pushed his way in, and found him in a faint: and he draws his sword and cut off his head, saying: "You wished today to cut off my head, and I will cut off yours, and your threat shall fall upon your own self." And thus the knights came in one after the other, and they all laid their swords (upon him) because of their oath. "

Peter I had raised his island realm to the height of its reputation with friend and foe alike. The murder by an infuriated baronage of the outstanding Lusignan monarch and one of the most conspicuous figures of his age put a premature and pitiful end to a career of glorious promise not wholly unfulfilled. Chaucer is more generous to Peter than is Dante to his great-uncle Henry. His judgment in *The Monkes Tale* on the luckless monarch is kindly to his faults, does not withhold credit for his performance, and is alive to the significance of Cyprus, through Peter, to the western world:

O worthy Petro, king of Cypre, also,
That Alisaundre wan by heigh maistrye,
Ful many a hethen wroghtestow ful wo,
Of which thyn owene liges hadde envye,
And, for no thing but for thy chivalrye,
They in thy bedde han slayn thee by the morwe.
Thus can fortune hir wheel governe and gye,
And out of Ioye bringe men to sorwe.¹⁷

- 16. Machaeras, Recital (ed. and trans. Dawkins), pp. 264-269.
- 17. Walter W. Skeat, ed., The Complete Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, IV (Oxford, 1894), 256, lines 401-408.