XI
THE KINGDOM OF CYPRUS
1369–1489

The murdered Peter I was succeeded on the throne of Cyprus by his only son, another Peter, then a lad of fourteen commonly known by the diminutive form of the name, Perrin. Of the new king’s two surviving uncles, John, titular prince of Antioch, was constable of Cyprus, while James was constable of Jerusalem and subsequently his nephew’s successor on the throne as James I. The former, as the elder, became regent of the kingdom, as he had been before when his brother had been absent from the realm. But until Peter II came to marry, the most powerful influence on him, as in the affairs of the kingdom at large, was that of his mother, queen Eleanor. This passionate and tenacious woman was actuated by a single motive, that of avenging, despite his (and her own) notorious infidelities, her husband’s murder; and she was prepared to employ for her purpose any instrument that came to hand. Her immediate objective in 1369 was to retain control over the young king.

In the first few months of the new reign the late king’s practice of raiding the Mamluk sultan’s dominions was maintained, and on July 10, 1369, Alexandria was once more entered by a Cypriote squadron, commanded by John of Morphou, titular count of Edessa (“Rochas”), who had taken part in the ephemeral capture of that city by Peter I in 1365. But in September of the following year peace between Cyprus, Genoa, and Venice on the one hand and the sultan on the other was agreed to in Famagusta, and a brief lull in warlike operations ensued, to be followed by hostilities of an entirely different kind. These were not only to overshadow and darken the remainder of the reign of Peter II; they were to compromise irremediably the kingdom’s very existence. They resulted from no crusading activities or aspirations; they arose from a cause as seemingly trivial as a dispute over protocol at one of the king’s coronations.

For bibliography, see preceding chapter.
Despite the regent’s endeavors, successful up to a point, to delay his nephew’s coronations, Peter II received the crown of Cyprus in the cathedral of Nicosia in January 1372, and in the following October that of Jerusalem—continuing the precedent set by his grandfather, Hugh IV, and followed by his father—in the cathedral of Famagusta, the Cypriote town geographically nearest to the lost kingdom. It had become the established practice, when the king mounted his horse on leaving the cathedral after the ceremony, for the representatives of Genoa and Venice to lead the king’s mount, one on either side, the Genoese on the right, the Venetian on the left. Between these two Italian communities in Famagusta, which were based on their respective loggias, there existed a chronic state of feud, and it required no great provocation for the tension between them to find an outlet in mutual violence. One such episode had occurred as recently as 1368, in the last year of Peter I, and the memory of it was therefore still fresh. But on this occasion the provocation, given the importance which the age attached to matters of international precedence, was anything but slight. The Venetian, perhaps deriving confidence from the presence in Famagusta of a more than normally large number of his compatriots, usurped the position of the Genoese by seizing the right-hand rein of the king’s bridle, and there ensued a bloody affray which was momentarily suppressed by the regent but broke out again with increased violence at the subsequent coronation banquet. The Genoese consul, a member of the great house of Doria, seems to have reacted very intemperately, even for an aggrieved party. He armed his nationals, who attacked the Venetians, and the regent’s forces had to intervene once more to restore order. To make matters worse, the people of Famagusta, who hated the privileged and arrogant Genoese, sided with the Venetians, sacked the shops and houses of the Genoese, killed a number of them, and destroyed their loggia.

Negotiations to compose the situation were now set on foot between the Cypriote authorities and the Genoese podestà and might have achieved a settlement but for three unforeseen factors. First, despite the release and pardon of the Genoese who had been arrested for their part in the disturbances, and despite royal proclamations to the effect that no one should injure a Genoese on pain of losing his right hand and that the Genoese in Cyprus should remain in the full enjoyment of their customary rights and privileges, a large number of the Genoese merchants of Famagusta left the island secretly with their treasure before the Cypriote authorities could stop them.
Secondly, the queen-mother saw in the situation a favorable opportunity to pursue her vendetta against those guilty of her husband’s murder, much of the responsibility for which she imputed to her brother-in-law the regent. In this cause she now prepared to enlist the aid of Genoa, to whom any additional excuse for forcible intervention in Cyprus was welcome, little recking that in so doing she might be undermining the foundations of her son’s kingdom. Thirdly, reports of the affair reached Genoa in forms so exaggerated as to destroy any prospect of moderation on the part of the republic.

The king and the regent, in the hope of averting Genoese reprisals, sent emissaries to pope Gregory XI at Avignon with a statement of their case. They did not know that queen Eleanor was appealing to the pope in the contrary sense through her father, the infante Peter of Aragon, since his wife’s death a Franciscan friar. Eleanor represented that, although her son had now been crowned, the regent John continued to withhold from him the control of the public revenues; she did not shrink from the unpatriotic course of begging Gregory to allow the Genoese to come to Cyprus to exact vengeance for the murder of Peter I and to establish the young king in his full powers. She can hardly have been unaware that these were matters of indifference to the Genoese, whose designs in and on Cyprus were not concerned with internal dynastic disputes within the Lusignan family.

The pope, to do him justice, besought the doge of Genoa, Dominic Campofregoso, to refrain from attacking a Christian country with which he should, on the contrary, be united against the “infidel.” Later, however, after hearing the representations of a Genoese embassy, he abandoned his original acceptance of the Cypriote contention that the Genoese were liable, under the treaty of 1365, to pay a fine of 100,000 ducats for breaking the peace. It is strange how a dispute originating in the act of a Venetian official should now have resolved itself into one exclusively between Genoa and Cyprus, with Venice completely aloof. Indeed, when in 1373 the king appealed for Venetian support against the imminent Genoese invasion, Venice, preoccupied with the war of Chioggia, professed herself unable to offer anything more substantial than sympathy.

A Genoese squadron of seven galleys sailed against Cyprus in March 1373, and appeared off Famagusta in May. There was some pretense by the Genoese of preliminary discussions on an ultimatum which their commander was to present, but they did not seriously pursue them; on May 12 the invaders attempted a night landing, which was
repelled. Even now the king behaved with remarkable forbearance, ordering, to the dismay of the people of Famagusta, that no one should attack the Genoese on pain of death. He hoped that the efforts for a peaceful solution which the pope was continuing to make might yet succeed, possibly reinforced by the support of the Knights Hospitaller of St. John at Rhodes, whose master, Raymond Bérenger, had been expressly forbidden by Gregory to help the Genoese. In June an emissary sent by Raymond to Cyprus to act as mediator obtained from the Genoese a clear statement of their terms. These comprised the surrender of those responsible for the Genoese casualties in the coronation day affray or a fine of 50,000 ducats, the payment of 100,000 ducats for the breach of the treaty of 1365, and the payment of two like sums for the losses of the Genoese merchants and for the costs of the expedition respectively. To these conditions was added perhaps the most onerous one of all: the cession of a stronghold in which the Genoese merchants would be able to live in safety.

Such terms were clearly unacceptable, and the Cypriotes had now to face the fact that they were at war with a powerful foe already on their soil. The Genoese ships circumnavigated the island on a raiding cruise, burnt Limassol, and took the castle of Paphos, which they held against a relieving expedition led by John, the king’s uncle. At the beginning of October the Genoese were reinforced by no fewer than thirty-six ships, more than five times the number composing the original expeditionary force. Hastily Nicosia was put into a state of defense and—this has a modern sound—a blackout was imposed and all males over fifteen were registered and assigned to definite duties; in twenty days of incessant labor the fortifications were strengthened and there were rigged up 133 fighting platforms for the crossbowmen and archers. This accomplished, the king, with his mother, his two uncles, and a force of some two thousand men made a forced march to Famagusta and, driving the Genoese back to their galleys, established themselves within the city. Here, however, they were invested and immobilized by a considerable part of the Genoese forces, which were estimated to total fourteen thousand men, until John, with the king’s consent, proposed a parley to the besiegers. The proposal was accepted, and it was agreed that a conference of five negotiators on each side, each party to be protected by twelve guards, should take place in the castle, which was situated on one of the corners of the sea side of the walled city. By a treacherous ruse, connivance in which has been attributed to John of Morphou, the Genoese took
advantage of the opening of the sea gate for the conference to swarm into the castle, and seized the king and his people. John of Antioch, helped by his cook, effected his escape in the disguise of a kitchen-boy, while the king’s younger uncle, James, had already made his way back to Nicosia in a previous, successful sortie. To these circumstances the royal uncles no doubt owed their lives, for the Genoese now beheaded, to the queen’s unbounded satisfaction, a number of the regicides, alleging that in so doing they were executing the judgment of the king. But the king was in truth far from being in a position to give directions to the Genoese; he himself was in a most perilous position, completely at the mercy of the Genoese admiral (and later doge), Peter Campofregoso, who forced him to write under duress a series of instructions to his uncles to act apparently in accordance with his wishes but in reality in accordance with those of the Genoese. He was no more than a helpless tool in the hands of the enemy. The queen played a complicated and equivocal part, sometimes appearing to pursue the interests of the invaders, sometimes the true interests of her son. But always she had before her the paramount aim of contriving the death of John of Antioch, and set her tortuous course accordingly.

His brother James, whose loyalty to his nephew was not in doubt, deemed it in the best interests of the kingdom to concentrate on holding the important northern fortress of Kyrenia, where he made a stand against assault by land and sea so successful as finally to bring the war to an end by leading the Genoese to agree to terms. In the meantime these had first looted, then occupied the inland capital, Nicosia, and were making free of the island in general except for the fortresses of St. Hilarion (“Dieudamour,” held by John of Antioch), Buffavento and Kantara in the northern range of mountains, and the city of Kyrenia itself. Yet by March 1374 something like stalemate had been reached. Although the Genoese had plundered the island bare and had contrived to possess themselves of a forced loan of one million ducats imposed on the kingdom by the king’s council to sustain its defense, they were finding the prolonged campaign a heavy drain on their resources. They decided, therefore, to take advantage of their favorable situation to impose a final settlement, to which end they now played their trump card, the control they exercised over the captive king, to its fullest advantage. Their most effective adversary in Cyprus was James, and him they determined to get into their power and to hold as a hostage in Genoa for the fulfillment of the terms they would impose on the kingdom. They
therefore forced Peter to send his uncle written orders to hand over his command at Kyrenia to the knight Luke d’Antiaume and to proceed to the west to protest—this was the pretext given—against what the Genoese had done in Cyprus. He was to take with him his wife, Heloise of Brunswick, and infant daughter. The orders did not mention that his destination was in fact a Genoese prison.

James had few illusions as to what was in store for him and, in complying with the king’s instructions, was at pains to exact an oath from Luke d’Antiaume and his men to hold Kyrenia for the king in the face of whatever commands they might receive to the contrary, for such commands could be extorted from the king under duress. He set sail in April 1374, but it was not until October 21 of that year that the peace treaty was signed in the royal palace of Nicosia. Its terms were onerous indeed. In the first place Cyprus was saddled with an annual tribute in perpetuity of 40,000 gold florins. Next, 90,000 gold florins were to be paid by December 1, that is, within less than six weeks, toward the upkeep of the Genoese forces in the island. An indemnity of no less than 2,012,400 gold florins, a deliberately crippling amount, was to be paid over a period of twelve years. Until this indemnity had been liquidated in full, Famagusta with its port and suburbs was to remain in the hands and under the jurisdiction of the Genoese, and then restored only if satisfactory security were forthcoming for the continued payment of the tribute of 40,000 florins. Nicosia and the other parts of the island in Genoese hands, other than Famagusta, would be returned to the king only when the 90,000 florins had been paid over. The Genoese were to live freely on the island under their own consul and in the enjoyment of all their former privileges. If any of the terms of the treaty should be contravened by the Cypriotes, Famagusta would pass completely into Genoese possession and the kingdom would be hypothecated. Meanwhile, as a guarantee of compliance, the king was to surrender his uncle James, the two sons of his uncle John, and a number of knights as hostages to be held in Genoa.

While the island was still prostrate under this disaster, the indefatigable queen Eleanor achieved her ambition. In 1375, the year following the peace, she inveigled John of Antioch from St. Hilarion to Nicosia, and at a banquet in the palace, in the very room in which Peter I had been murdered, suddenly uncovered a dish containing Peter’s bloodstained shirt. This was the signal for the death of the former regent.

It was now time for the king to marry. At the end of 1372, when
war with Genoa was looming, the emperor John V Palaeologus had made an abortive offer of the hand of his daughter Irene. But it was not until 1376 that Peter II was betrothed, to Valentina, daughter of Bernabò Visconti, lord of Milan, an alliance which resulted in the participation of Cyprus in the pact concluded in 1377 between Milan and Venice against Genoa, and in a desultory and ineffective Venetian attack on Famagusta in 1378. In the same year 1378 was celebrated the king’s marriage, which, although it was to remain childless save for a daughter who died in infancy, had one result of importance to the kingdom, the final departure from its shores of the fiery Spanish queen-mother. It was scarcely to be expected that a woman of Eleanor’s temperament would accommodate herself to the presence of a daughter-in-law, and soon the young queen persuaded her husband to send his mother back to her own country. Eleanor left Cyprus in 1380, but she survived until 1417, when she died in Barcelona.

Peter II died in 1382 at the early age of twenty-eight. He had become very obese; the lad who had begun his career as Perrin ended it with the unattractive sobriquet of Peter the Fat. On his coins he reverted to the practice of earlier reigns by holding the scepter in his right hand in place of the sword—emblem of his order of chivalry—borne by his father Peter I.

When the king’s uncle James set sail in April 1374 with his wife and infant daughter on the “mission to the west” trumped up by the Genoese, he was quickly overtaken by two Genoese galleys, which accompanied him, despite his protests, to his first port of call, Rhodes. Here his little daughter died, and here he remained until ten more Genoese galleys arrived with the hostages taken under the treaty, whereupon the fleet with its prisoners proceeded to Genoa. On arrival, contrary to the undertakings they had given and contrary to usage in such cases, the Genoese placed him in close confinement. His wife, it is true, was left at liberty but without means of support, so that she had to eke out a meager living with her needle. Later, possibly in reprisal for the abortive attack by Peter II and the Venetians on Famagusta in 1378, they increased the rigors of his imprisonment to the extent of hanging him in a cage in one of the towers of the prison with his feet in stocks, and placed him on a diet of bread and water, treatment generally reserved for the lowest and most desperate of malefactors. After a while he was released from the cage but still confined in the tower, where his dauntless wife was
permitted to join him. It was during this period of his imprisonment that Heloise gave birth to her eldest son, to whom—with singular magnanimity—the royal pair gave the name of Janus, the mythical founder of their country’s arch-enemy, Genoa, the place of their incarceration.

The death without issue of Peter II made his sole surviving uncle the lawful successor to the two crowns, but for the succession to become effective the approval of the high court, the whole body of the baronage, was still necessary. The high court duly confirmed the captive James in his rights and appointed a council of regency under the turcopoliyer John of Brie as regent to administer the kingdom pending the return of the new monarch. James and Heloise were conditionally set free and sent to Cyprus, but, by the time they reached Larnaca, two members of the council of regency, the brothers Perot and Wilmot de Montolif, had sought for their own purposes to have James’s recognition annulled in favor of Marietta, one of the two unmarried daughters of Peter I, on the plea that the conditions which Genoa would exact for his definitive release would place an intolerable burden on the kingdom. It was a specious plea, which for a while prevailed, and the luckless royal couple were not allowed to land. Later the high court thought better of the matter, reverted to its original decision, and proclaimed James king.

Genoa’s terms for James’s release, embodied before his departure in a new treaty of February 19, 1383 (that of 1374 having been broken by the Cypriote Venetian attack on Famagusta in 1378), were certainly harsh. They included the transfer—no longer merely the pledge—of Famagusta with a zone of two leagues around it, the pledging of Kyrenia, and the payment by the new king of 852,000 florins in instalments until 1394. All ships trading to Cyprus, except those coming from Turkey, were obliged to call at Famagusta. The two sons of John of Antioch and the knights held as hostages under the treaty of 1374 were allowed to return to Cyprus, but with great inhumanity the little prince Janus, now the heir apparent, was held in Genoa as a hostage for the punctual fulfillment of these conditions. James did not reach Cyprus until April 23, 1385, when he was accorded an enthusiastic welcome by the populace. In the following month he received the Cypriote crown in the cathedral of Nicosia; four years later he was crowned king of Jerusalem, again in Nicosia since Famagusta was in the possession of the Genoese. Shortly after his first coronation the Montolif brothers, who had already been placed under arrest by the regency, were executed.

After prolonged negotiations, continuing from 1386 to 1391, the
severity of the financial clauses of the Genoese treaty was to some degree mitigated, largely through the successful diplomacy of James’s admiral and plenipotentiary, Peter de Cafran. Prince Janus was now allowed to return to Cyprus, which he reached in October 1392. Even so, the king, in order to meet his obligations, had to impose on the country most drastic taxation, which diminished his earlier popularity. A severe outbreak of the plague in 1392 added to the country’s afflictions; on the other hand, the occupation of Genoa by France in 1396 reduced for a while the pressure from that quarter. In 1398 there was concluded between James and the French king, Charles VI, a treaty of friendship which gave the former at least a measure of moral support.

There was a close relationship, established by much intermarriage, between the Lusignan kings of Cyprus and the royal house of Armenia, the Hetoumids.1 Almost all the Hetoumids after Leon III (1269–1289) were descended through female lines from Aimeric of Lusignan, king of Jerusalem and Cyprus. Guy de Lusignan, grandson of Hugh III, became king as Constantine III (1342–1344). His nephew Leon VI, who was king of Cilician Armenia briefly in 1363–1364, was exiled, and ascended the throne for the second time in 1374, was also a Lusignan, being the illegitimate son of a grandson in the male line of Hugh III of Cyprus. The effective reign of the last de jure and de facto Armenian king was a brief one, for in 1375 Leon lost his sole remaining castle to the Mamluks and was taken into captivity in Cairo. When he died, an honored refugee, without issue in Paris in 1393, his second cousin James as next of kin assumed the crown of Armenia (which in 1368 had been offered to his brother Peter I, who accepted it and styled himself king, but never visited his new realm) in addition to the two he already wore. Thenceforth until the end of the kingdom he and his successors on the Cypriote throne styled themselves kings or queens of Jerusalem, Cyprus, and Armenia, and quartered the Armenian lion with their arms. It was, however, an empty dignity, for there was never again to be an independent Armenia of any sort until the proclamation of the Armenian Republic at Erivan on May 28, 1918.

James died, when still in middle age, in 1398, having had no fewer than eleven children by his queen, the devoted Heloise of Brunswick, who survived until 1422. Despite the vicissitudes, hardships, turmoils, and dangers by which his life had been beset, he left behind him a reputation for hospitality and for a love of architecture and

sport, especially hunting and falconry. There exists correspondence between him and Richard II of England, in which James informs Richard that all friends of his are welcome in Cyprus.

Janus, the king born in captivity, was about twenty-four years old when he succeeded his father. Fourteen months after his accession he received the three crowns in a combined ceremony in Nicosia cathedral, and before 1401 had married as his first wife Heloise, another daughter of Bernabò Visconti of Milan and sister of the queen of his cousin, Peter II. It was natural that the circumstances of his birth and upbringing should have implanted in the new ruler an obsession: to expel the Genoese intruders from the country and its principal port and to restore the integrity of his realm. And it was not, perhaps, to be wondered at that youthful zeal should have outrun discretion. He decided to attempt the capture of Famagusta with the assistance of a mercenary fleet of thirteen Catalan galleys, possibly with the secret coöperation or at least the connivance of the Genoese commander, one Antonio Guarco, who had stood sponsor for Janus at his christening in Genoa and was well disposed toward him. Contemporary interpretations of Guarco’s attitude and acts are contradictory. The Venetians alleged that Guarco was a rebel against his own government and—this not very convincingly—that Janus’s attack on Famagusta was directed not against Genoa but against the disloyal Guarco. Genoa manifested its belief by superseding Guarco and mobilizing a fleet under its famous and combative French governor, John le Meingre, marshal Bouicaut.

An attempt by Janus to enter Famagusta on Easter Sunday, 1402, was foiled, and the arrival in the autumn of an advance squadron of the Genoese fleet forced him to raise its siege for the time being. His efforts to enlist the active coöperation of Venice were unsuccessful; nevertheless, when the marshal himself sailed for Cyprus in April 1403, a strong Venetian naval force kept close watch on his movements. Since the king’s ill success had not caused him to lose heart, but rather had reinforced his determination to recover the key to his kingdom when an opportunity should recur, the marshal planned a general attack on the island. But the grand master of the Hospitallers, Philibert of Naillac, now intervened as mediator, as had his predecessor in the reign of Peter II, proceeded in person from Rhodes to Cyprus, and persuaded Janus to come to terms. A new treaty of peace and commerce between Genoa and Cyprus was signed in Nicosia on July 7, 1403; included among the parties were the Old and the New Mahone of Cyprus, those successive Genoese financial
corporations which financed and received the profits derived from the expeditions against the kingdom, and which were subsequently merged into the Bank of St. George. The terms continued the usual sordid extortion of the uttermost denier from long-suffering Cyprus. An indemnity of 150,000 ducats was imposed to cover the cost of the expedition, and as security for 80,000 ducats of this sum Janus had to pledge the property of himself and his successors. The balance was guaranteed by the crown jewels and plate, which were handed over to the grand master to be held in pawn by the Order of St. John.

The peace proved to be no more than a truce. Hostilities of an intermittent kind were resumed in 1404, and the combatants now began for the first time in the history of Cyprus to use cannon, which both sides obtained from Venice. A new treaty, with conditions of the usual type, was concluded in 1410. To add to the country’s miseries, the plague raged for a year from 1409, to be followed for the ensuing three years by invasions of locusts, which have continued intermittently to scourge the island into the twentieth century. About 1407 the king’s first wife died, and a more cheerful note is struck by his second marriage—by proxy in 1409, in person in 1411—to Charlotte of Bourbon, who bore him six children and died in 1422.

Another death must be chronicled before we come to the most humiliating event of the reign and the turning point of the later history of the Lusignan kingdom of Cyprus. The noble-minded Philip of Mézières, devoted follower, chancellor, and inspiration of Peter I, died in France in 1405 at the age of seventy-eight. “The old pilgrim,” as he called himself, had accompanied Peter I on his missions to the courts of the west and was present with him at the capture of Alexandria, the withdrawal from which was a bitter blow to him. Although he never returned to Cyprus after the murder of his sovereign and friend, he never abandoned his title of chancellor, nor did he ever abandon his dream of another crusade. In 1384, in his retirement in France, he devised a new order of chivalry, the Order of the Passion, intended, like Peter’s Order of the Sword, to give new life to the crusading spirit. Although he was by birth a Frenchman, history will always link this great idealist’s name with that of Cyprus.

Since the accord arrived at with Egypt in September 1370, in the second year of the reign of Peter II, Cyprus and the Mamluk sultanate had remained officially at peace. But there had been much unofficial raiding on both sides, less on the part of the Egyptians than on that of the Cypriotes, who carried out their forays not only with privateers but even with the king’s galleys. In November 1414,
sultan Shaikh al-Mu’ayyad reached an understanding with Janus to put an end to these irritations, and for about a decade the pact was observed. Then there were fresh provocations on the Cypriote side, to which the new sultan, Barsbey, replied with an effective raid on Limassol. Janus, in retaliation, light-heartedly launched a raid on the Syrian coast. This foolish act provoked, in 1425, an organized attack on Cyprus on the part of Barsbey, whose troops made ready in the first instance to invest Famagusta. But, according to the Moslem chroniclers (the Christians remaining silent on the subject), the Genoese governor assured the Moslems that he was their friend and hoisted the sultan’s flag over the castle. During the greater part of August the Moslems successfully, despite the opposition of the king’s forces, ravaged the south coast of the island between Larnaca and Limassol, sacking the former city and burning the latter. At the end of the month, having amassed an adequate quantity of prisoners and booty, they returned to Egypt. The sale of the prisoners took several days and fetched 18,800 dinars.2

This expedition revealed to Barsbey the weakness of the kingdom’s defenses and convinced him that a full-scale operation could be undertaken with success, although he was aware that Janus was now seeking to enlist what help he could from the Christian powers, even, in his plight, from Genoa. The Genoese replied that they would gladly have aided had circumstances made this possible. In effect, apparently, they were doing precisely the reverse and, notably through one Benedict Pallavicini, a Genoese merchant then in Egypt, were encouraging the sultan in his ambitions, hoping thereby to forestall any future attacks by the king on Famagusta.3 On July 1, 1426, a powerful expedition of some 180 vessels, carrying a force of cavalry and infantry estimated at a total of five thousand men, landed on the south coast of Cyprus, just west of the Akrotiri peninsula. On July 3 Janus left Nicosia for the south to meet it with a force of sixteen hundred knights and four thousand foot, and received a message from the invader (who that day had taken the newly repaired castle of Limassol), summoning him “to sit on the sultan’s carpet,” that is to say, to acknowledge Barsbey as his superior, and to discuss terms of surrender. The summons was ignored and the emissary who bore the message was tortured and put to death, according to some accounts by burning.4

On Friday, July 5, the king took up his position at Khirokitia, a small village and commandery of the Hospitallers in what is now the Larnaca district, and on the following Sunday, the disastrous 7th, the two armies came face to face. The Cypriote army was not in good shape. The commissariat arrangements were faulty; the soldiers were undisciplined; morale had been impaired by the news of the loss of Limassol. The Moslems were the first to attack, and after the initial major clash the king withdrew, preparatory to taking the offensive in his turn; but when the infantry saw another wave of enemy troops approaching, they took to flight. The king and a group of his knights, including his brother Henry, titular prince of Galilee, performed prodigies of valor in trying to rally their disorganized troops, but without avail. Janus's horse fell under him three times, and his second mount could not stand up to his weight, for he was a heavy man. It was at this moment that he was attacked by two foemen who did not know who he was. One of them wounded him in the face with a lance, whereupon he cried out in Arabic: "I am the king," while his identity was also made known by the Catalan knight Carceran Suarez, who had joined his service, was to share his captivity, and later was to become admiral and then constable of Cyprus; thereupon Janus was taken alive. The estimates of the number of Christians killed, among them Henry of Galilee, range from one to six thousand, and the rout of the army was complete. The king was removed to the coast with his feet tied together and sent by sea to Larnaca. A part of the insignificant Cypriote fleet, together with two pilgrim ships present, engaged the overwhelmingly superior enemy naval force, and the pilgrim ships were captured, the pilgrims meeting with a cruel fate, according to the Christian chroniclers. The captive king was then compelled on pain of death to order his galleys and other craft to withdraw.

Nicosia was aghast at the news of the disaster. Cardinal Hugh de Lusignan, archbishop of Nicosia, another of the king's brothers, realizing that it was impossible to defend the capital, sent the treasure to Kyrenia and then followed with members of the royal family. On July 11 the Mamluk commander, the emir Taghrīberdī al-Maḥmūdī, entered the defenseless city and took up his residence in the royal palace. Although the population were promised their safety and ordered to go about their business as usual, the sight of the riches in the palace and elsewhere was too much for the soldiery. Houses and churches were pillaged, men killed, women raped, the city put to the sack. The palace was destroyed by fire with many of

5. Al-'Aīnī places the responsibility for these acts on reinforcements under the emir
the records, and it was with great difficulty that Taghrīberdī himself was extricated from the flames. Worse would have befallen Nicosia but for the recall after three days of the expedition to Larnaca, for which reason, no doubt, Kyrenia was left alone. But the invaders drove thousands of captive men, women, and children to the coast and, when a week later they reembarked for home, took them as prisoners to Egypt. They also sacked the hill-top shrine of Stavrovouni, famous for its wonder-working cross.

Early in August Taghrīberdī made his triumphal entry into Cairo with his prisoners and booty. King Janus, bareheaded, barefoot, his feet shackled, his standard reversed and dragging on the ground before him, was made to ride bareback in the conqueror’s train and on several occasions to kiss the ground. Thereafter, the public humiliation over, his treatment improved, possibly because the sultan’s heart was touched by some verses addressed to him by the captive monarch, more probably by reason of the latter’s willingness to acquiesce in the sultan’s terms. These comprised a ransom of 200,000 ducats, half payable before release, an annual tribute of 5,000 ducats, and the acknowledgment of the sultan’s suzerainty.

Financially, these conditions imposed by a Moslem victor compared not unfavorably with the extortions habitually practised on Cyprus by Christian Genoa, but the recognition by the proud kingdom of the Lusignans of a Mamluk sultan as suzerain was a disgrace hard indeed to bear. Pope Martin V and the other Christian potentates and states, including the Knights Hospitaller and Venice, took counsel to help to find the ransom, while even the Genoese must have felt that they had overreached themselves in encouraging the sultan, for they were now profuse in their expressions of horror at the disaster and of their conviction that a repetition must at all costs be prevented. Thanks to the pope, who authorized the sale of indulgences for the purpose, and to other well-wishers, including a member of the Cypriote noble family of Podocatari, the king’s ransom was raised, while Martin also allocated monies from the church dues of Italy, Piedmont, and Savoy toward the ransom of the other Cypriote captives and ordered the English, French, and Spanish churches to contribute the hundredth penny of their revenues to the same purpose. A treaty was then signed between the sultan and Janus to establish the terms of the latter’s release, but it included a clause whereby the sultan bound himself to defend, in

Taghrīberdī, who arrived on July 12 and were unaware of the promise of safety given by Taghrīberdī. But he adds that “they committed wrong in doing all that as such things were unlawful after the proclamation of safety and security.”
certain eventualities, his “vicerey in Cyprus,” a galling reminder of Janus’s new and ignominious status.\(^6\)

Meanwhile in Nicosia and the country districts the temporary absence of authority produced a state of chaos in which brigandage flourished and no man’s life was safe. The Greek peasantry of the Mesaoria plain acclaimed one of their number, a certain Alexius, as “king” and set him up in the big village of Lefkoniko; an Italian condottiere named Sforza established himself at the other end of the island with some Spanish troops under his command. To stem the anarchy, the knights and burgesses acknowledged archbishop Hugh as regent, and control was reëstablished. Sforza was slain and the peasant “king” Alexius caught, although he was not hanged until May 12, 1427, the very day on which the liberated Janus touched at Paphos on his return home.

The unfortunate monarch had been in captivity for eight months before he came back, “may God disgrace him, to the seat of his appointment,” as al-’Aini has it with emphasis on the subordinate position now occupied by the king of Cyprus. His experiences and humiliations left their permanent mark on him, and Machaeras states that he never laughed again. Physically he was a large and powerful man, but in 1431 he suffered a stroke, which left him paralyzed until a second stroke killed him at the end of June of the following year, when he was about fifty-eight years old. Janus was a man of many good qualities and some scholarship, but he was impetuous and without foresight, too apt to be influenced by the last person he had seen. We read without surprise that he died poor.

John, titular prince of Antioch, Janus’s son and successor, was promptly acknowledged by the baronage, but, being only seventeen years of age, began his reign under the regency of his cousin Peter de Lusignan, titular count of Tripoli. (Peter was the son of Peter I’s daughter Marietta and of James, the son of the constable John of Antioch, brother of Peter I and James I.) His uncle, the experienced cardinal Hugh, who had governed Cyprus during Janus’s imprisonment in Egypt, was now out of the island as bishop of Palestrina and later of Tusculum (although retaining the see of Nicosia), but remained until his death in 1442 vigorously and effectively engaged in various diplomatic activities on behalf of his nephew’s realm, for which purpose the procuration to act abroad on behalf of the kingdom which Janus had given him on his return from Egypt was

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renewed by John II. The new king received the three crowns in Nicosia cathedral in August 1432, and one of the first acts of his government was to send an embassy to the sultan of Egypt to announce his accession and to acknowledge the political and financial obligations accepted by Janus. Intermittently during the early years of the reign there were rumors of another Egyptian expedition against Cyprus, but no such attack was launched.

It was belief in the substance of these rumors that now led Genoa to adopt a more friendly attitude in political matters, although on the financial plane she showed herself as exacting as ever toward the exhausted kingdom. Yet despite this slackening of political pressure John, with astonishing inconsequence, in 1441 made an unsuccessful attempt to capture Famagusta. In 1447 Genoa, feeling unable any longer to administer Famagusta directly, transferred the government of that dependency to the Office of the Bank of St. George. To Cyprus this change brought no advantage but rather the reverse, while with Venice the relations of the harassed kingdom were also by no means easy, although the questions at issue with the Venetians included no major canker like that of Famagusta.

On the Moslem front the situation was even more uneasy. In 1444 only the intervention of the Hospitallers prevented an invasion of the island by Lütfi Bey, the emir of Alaya ("Scandelore"), while the emir of Karaman, İbrahim, despite the continued good offices of the Hospital, was even less amenable. In 1448 Corycus on the Cilician coast fell into his hands, and with it Cyprus lost the last of the overseas territorial acquisitions of Peter I. Overshadowing these more immediate dangers was the ever-growing menace of the Ottoman Turks, soon to culminate in their capture of Constantinople.

Meanwhile, in July 1440, the young king's proxy marriage (1437) to Amadea (or Medea) of Montferrat was resolemnized; the bride, though a Latin, had the blood of the Palaeologi in her veins. Within a little more than two months of this wedding the bride was dead, together with most of her suite, and some of the accounts mention rumors of poison. Be that as it might, John proceeded in 1442 to marry a full-blooded Palaeologina in the person of Helena, daughter of Theodore II, despot of the Morea, and granddaughter of the Byzantine emperor Manuel II; this alliance resulted in a marked departure from the policy hitherto pursued by the Frankish rulers of Cyprus toward the church of their Orthodox subjects, as embodied in the Bulla Cypria of 1260.

A Greek princess would naturally resent the subjection of the Greek-speaking and Orthodox native population of Cyprus to the
foreign church of a foreign dynasty, and would use her influence to redress so far as she could the balance in favor of her Cypriote coreligionists. It was therefore unreasonable of Aeneas Sylvius Piccolomini (Pope Pius II) to ascribe to unrighteousness the fact that Helena was "hostile to the Latin rite and an enemy of the Roman church." When, however, he calls her "a skilled and shrewd woman, well versed in Greek duplicity," he is on surer ground, for she was all that and more. She was in fact an ambitious, unscrupulous, determined, and vindictive termagant, whose chronic ill health served only to exacerbate the violence of her disposition. When we read that in her passionate hatred of her husband's mistress Marietta (or Maria) of Patras, the mother of the future James II and a fellow Greek, she bit off her rival's nose, we are reminded of the days of queen Eleanor. Quickly and completely she dominated and intimidated her feeble, indolent, hedonistic, and self-indulgent husband, so much so that according to two chroniclers she actually obtained from the high court recognition as regent, and this despite the fact that John was at no time declared incapable of governing. She had brought to Cyprus in her train a number of greedy compatriots, including her foster-mother and the latter's son Thomas; and this Thomas she caused her husband to knight, endow with valuable estates, and appoint chamberlain of the kingdom.

John and Helena had two daughters, Cleopatra, who died in infancy, and the subsequent queen Charlotte, but no son; and it was inevitable that some eyes should turn towards James, the king's son by Marietta of Patras, then growing up a youth of outstanding parts: handsome, of good address, high-spirited, and determined. His father adored the lad, but Helena presciently saw in him a potential menace to the rights of succession of her daughter Charlotte. About 1453 John caused the thirteen-year-old boy to be elected to the vacant archbishopric of Nicosia and begged pope Nicholas V to confirm the appointment, being instigated, according to Aeneas Sylvius, by Helena, who hoped that by being side-tracked into a miter James would be disqualified from the crown. The pope's reply was a refusal, consistently maintained; nevertheless, the king placed his son in possession of the temporalities of the see and housed him, with his mother, now known as Komomytene ("the Crop-nosed"), in the

9. James was born in 1440 or 1441, Charlotte about 1443.
archiepiscopal palace. Probably James never received more than minor orders.10

Those who desired the ultimate succession of the young princess Charlotte were now concerned with the question of her marriage, and the choice of bridegroom (according to Genoese reports that of the queen against the wishes of the king) fell on John of Coimbra, grandson of John I, king of Portugal, who arrived in the island in 1456; on his marriage he received the titles of prince of Antioch and regent. If the Portuguese prince was indeed the queen’s candidate, he was to prove a disappointment to her, for he used such authority as he had to counteract her pro-Orthodox policy and the influence of her foster-brother, the chamberlain Thomas. At first he and his bride lived with the king and queen under the same roof, but the situation in the palace became so strained that he soon removed himself and Charlotte to the house of the ex-regent Peter of Tripoli, who was Charlotte’s godfather. In the summer of 1457, the year following his marriage, John of Coimbra died, poisoned, it was freely said, by his enemy the chamberlain with the connivance of the queen. Whatever may have been the truth with regard to these suspicions—and there can be no doubt that her son-in-law’s disappearance was more than welcome to Helena—they were certainly shared by Charlotte herself, who in her distress appealed to her half-brother James, for whom she seems originally to have entertained considerable affection. James, still no more than sixteen or seventeen years old, rose to the occasion with the precocious vigor that characterized him (although it may be doubted if he did so solely to oblige his half-sister), appeared in Thomas’s house with two Sicilian ruffians, and had the hated chamberlain dispatched by them before his eyes.

The king was now in a quandary for, much as he loved his son, he dared not face the wrath of the enraged queen if he left the murder of her foster-brother unpunished. So he deprived James of the revenues of the archiepiscopal see, and the young man found it opportune to leave the kingdom. He made his way to Rhodes, where the grand master, James of Milly, and the knights, at that time friendly to so prominent an opponent of the Greek queen although later to side actively with Charlotte against him, received him well and gave him shelter for some five or six months. At the end of this period James, accompanied by the Augustinian friar William Goneme, who was to remain his devoted adherent and to become for a time archbishop of Nicosia, returned to Cyprus with a flotilla of four vessels equipped in Rhodes. Landing secretly in Kyrenia, he and

his men forced their way into the capital, where they sacked the houses of the viscount of Nicosia, James Gurri, a supporter of the queen, and his brother Thomas, and slew the former. Taking their plunder with them, he and his followers then fortified themselves in the archbishop's palace.

The king could do no less in the face of this act of open aggression than to charge James before the high court, but this body, well aware of John's feelings toward his son which his fear of the queen forced him to conceal, accepted James's plea that he had attacked not the king but his own personal enemies and asked no more than to be allowed to serve the king in security and in the enjoyment of the archiepiscopal revenues which the king had given him. The court agreed to his reinstatement provided the men he had brought with him from Rhodes returned to their ships and left the island. This condition accepted and fulfilled, James appeared before the king, who took him to the queen's sickroom and for her benefit made a show of upbraiding him for his rebellious conduct. James then repaired to the archbishop's palace and not only took into favor the brother of the murdered viscount, Thomas Gurri, whose house he had looted, but placed him in charge of all his property.

In the midst of these violent happenings the question of Charlotte's remarriage was exercising the minds of the strife-torn court. The king's eldest sister, Anna, who bore a bad reputation for everything except her looks, had married Louis, count of Geneva, younger son of Amadeo VIII, duke of Savoy, whom (his elder brother having predeceased his father) he succeeded on the throne of that duchy. A proposal to marry this couple's younger son, another Louis, count of Geneva, to Charlotte had been mooted before Charlotte's betrothal to John of Coimbra, and was now revived. The proposal was strongly opposed by queen Helena on canonical grounds because of the Orthodox church's prohibition of the marriage of first cousins. But it was supported by the king, and also, with vigor, by the Genoese in Cyprus and their sympathizers there, because of the close relations subsisting between the duchy and the Genoese republic. Despite the protests of the queen, who on this occasion, at least, failed to get her way, the negotiations went forward and were still in progress when the constantly ailing Helena died on April 11, 1458. Nor did John II himself live to see the conclusion of the marriage, for on July 26 he followed his tempestuous wife to the grave, aged only forty-four.

Under John II the crown of Cyprus, which at times had shone with glory and was still to recover, through James II, a momentary flicker of its former luster, touched the nadir of its reputation. John has
state. Thus, after the king's funeral, she asked him to organize the
dispatch of a galley to the west to announce John's demise to the
Christian rulers. James agreed and set up a recruiting office for the
purpose in his palace, which his enemies promptly closed. This rebuff
was followed by another. James was making it a practice to visit the
queen each morning after he had heard mass in Hagia Sophia. One
doay, as he was about to enter the palace with his attendants, he was
stopped and informed that it was the order of the queen and the high
court that in future he must approach the palace alone. Indignant, he
sent a message to Charlotte to ask if this was indeed her order, and
received the oracular reply that once the high court had taken such a
decision it must be regarded as hers also.

Then followed the third and heaviest affront. As archbishop, or at
least as archbishop-elect, James expected to officiate at Charlotte's
coronation, due to take place after the customary forty days of
mournin for the late king. On the eve of the coronatation the
seneschal appeared before him with an order from the queen and the
high court confining him to his palace on the following day. Once
again, although deeply aggrieved, James acquiesced, saying that if
desired he was prepared to remove himself a distance of six miles
from the city. Charlotte was crowned by bishop Peter of Limassol,
but it was regarded as ominous that on her return from Hagia Sophia
to the palace her horse shied and the crown fell from her head.

These misunderstandings, if such they were, make a sorry story.
Clearly the lonely little orphaned and widowed queen had wanted to
be on terms of both family affection and political cooperation with
her only near relative; equally clearly, the high court were deter-
mined to prevent this. James's true feelings at the beginning of his
half-sister's brief, unhappy reign are less easy to fathom. After the
coronation, when relations between the two degenerated into an
open breach and James decided once more to withdraw from the
kingdom, he wrote the queen a letter which, if correctly given by
Florio Bustron, our only authority for it, afforded an explanation of
his conduct which was at least not inconsistent with the facts. He
stated that he had always wished to serve her but that she had
preferred to be guided by those who were his enemies and, if she
would but realize it, hers also. He was willing to continue peaceably as
archbishop in the enjoyment of her favor, but her evil counselors
were making this impossible. After continuing in this strain, he
concludes by assuring her that he will not cease to love her as a

13. In Latin postulatus, whence the appellation "Apostoles" by which James was com-
monly called by Greeks and many others, including the half-Greek, Greek-speaking Charlotte.
brother, and would do more for her honor than their joint enemies whose advice she was accepting.

The letter has not carried any more conviction with historians than it did (or was allowed to do) with the queen. Except in Venice, James had in the west what today would be called a “bad press.” The popes, with the exception of the Venetian Paul II (1464–1471), were strong partisans of Charlotte, as were now the Hospitallers. Genoa was his enemy. The fact that he chose (as we shall see) to seek support from the sultan of Egypt, the enemy of his faith, against his rightful queen, made anything he was to say in self-defense suspect to his contemporaries other than the Venetians. And indeed it may well be that he had decided from the very outset to supplant his half-sister as soon as he could, and that his immediate acknowledgment of her as queen, his early efforts to serve her, and his protestations of loyalty were all parts of a preconceived plan to mask his real aims. On the other hand it seems not beyond the bounds of possibility given James’s character—a strange blend of ungovernable violence with impulsive generosity more than bordering on quixotism (witness his attitude to Thomas Gurri)—that the better side of his nature might have prevailed had not the enmity of the high court driven him to rebellion and civil war.

James made his way with the faithful Goneme not to the west, as was supposed in Cyprus and as he maintained in an unsuccessful apologia submitted to Pius II in 1461 had been his original intention, but to Cairo, where his attractive and virile personality, handsome appearance, gallant bearing, and persuasive eloquence made a highly favorable impression upon sultan Inal and his court. He at once acknowledged the sultan’s suzerainty over Cyprus and sought his support to secure the kingdom on the ground, particularly convincing to a Moslem audience, that a male claimant to a throne must clearly take precedence over a female. In the meantime the anxiously awaited Louis of Savoy had at last arrived in Cyprus and on October 7, 1459, was married to Charlotte in Hagia Sophia and was crowned with the three crowns.14 He proved to be a poor creature, devout indeed but with a chilly manner and unhealthy, uninspiring, and unenterprising. He lacked all his wife’s determination and persistence; what was more disastrous, he had no qualities wherewith to counteract the powerful personal appeal of his rival, James.

Owing to Louis’s tardy appearance on the scene, James had been able to steal a march on the embassy which Charlotte now sent to the sultan with the usual tribute. To make matters worse, most of

the embassy members perished in Cairo of the plague, which neces-
sitated the dispatch of a supplementary mission. The latter pro-
ceeded to offer the sultan, apart from the recognition of his suzer-
ainty, the doubling of the tribute of 5,000 ducats, the reimburse-
ment of the sultan’s expenses on behalf of James, and an annual
pension to James of 10,000 ducats. Inal and his emirs were inclined,
despite their personal sympathy for James, to accept this offer, and a
day was appointed for the presentation to the queen through Peter
Podocataro, her envoy, of robes of honor, which would symbolize
her recognition on the part of the sultan. The resourceful Goneme
now saved the situation for the already despairing James by spending
the night before the ceremony in bribing the emirs. On the morrow,
as the robes were about to be presented, the Mamluk soldiery raised
an outcry against preference being given to a woman over a man,
placed on the shoulders of James, who was present, the robe inten-
tended for the queen, and shouted “Long live king James.” The
sultan accepted the situation and gave orders for a fleet to be
prepared to conduct James to his kingdom; Pius II makes the
unsupported statement that Inal’s decision was also influenced by
strong advice from the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II. Be that as it
might, sultan Inal was as good as his word, mobilizing a naval force
said to have consisted of eighty ships, great and small (which seems
large for such a purpose); by September 1460 James was again in
Cyprus, on this occasion as a successful invader and its master-to-be.

The news created consternation among the loyalists in Cyprus.
Charlotte and Louis, concentrating on the defense of Kyrenia as
constituting their lifeline to the west, fortified themselves in that
stronghold and perforce left Nicosia unprotected. Before the end of
the month the capital was in James’s hands, although he made no
headway with the siege of Kyrenia. An attempt by bishop Antonio
of Limassol to reconcile Charlotte and James having come to nought,
efforts were now set on foot in the west to organize relief for the
hard-pressed queen. Her cause was upheld especially by Pius II and
James of Milly, grand master of the Hospitallers, both of whom saw
in success for James yet another victory for the hosts of Islam, more
menacing than ever since the fall of Constantinople. The duke of
Savoy raised what money he could for the support of his son and
daughter-in-law, but nothing really effective came of all this. James
continued to extend his sway over the island (apart from Kyrenia),
even having the energy to spare for hostilities on another front by
embarking, in 1461, on a preliminary attack on Genoese Famagusta.

Charlotte, determined to leave no stone unturned, went to Rhodes,
probably at the beginning of 1461, obtained some ships, and returned to Kyrenia, but was again in Rhodes (where she was to spend a large part of the next thirteen years as the guest of the friendly Hospitallers) in May of the same year in the expectation of reinforcements wherewith to raise the siege and drive James out of the island. Her plans were held up by the illness, and the death in August, of her supporter, the grand master James of Milly. As his successor Peter Raymond Zacosta was then in Spain and the knights could undertake little without him, she decided to plead her cause in the west, first at the court of her well-wisher Pius II, then at that of her father-in-law, the duke of Savoy. Louis left Kyrenia shortly after his wife and followed her to Savoy. In Rome Charlotte was kindly received by the pope, who promised her a shipload of corn and wine and helped her on her northward journey, but said that she would have to rely on France and Savoy for troops. These, however, were not forthcoming, and in 1462 she returned to Rhodes “in worse condition,” as Louis subsequently complained to his brother, Amadeo IX, “than she left.” It is not clear whether she ever set foot in her kingdom again; the only tangible result of her indefatigable and courageous exertions was to prolong the resistance of Kyrenia until the autumn of 1464. 15 In other respects, too, the poor lady was dogged by misfortune, for in a pathetic letter written to her husband from Rhodes in September 1464, either just before the fall of Kyrenia or before the news had reached her, she says that “God wished in his mercy to console me with a dear son, but a malevolent fate has taken him from me.”16 After another desperate appeal for speedy help she ends her letter by saying that if this is not forthcoming, it would be better for them both to enter religious orders than to live shamefully on the charity of others.

Even before Kyrenia had fallen, the redoubtable James had, in January 1464, retaken Famagusta from the Genoese, so that with Kyrenia also in his hands a king of Cyprus was master of the whole island for the first time in ninety years. 17 Thenceforth Charlotte and Louis were no more than its de jure sovereigns, but it was not until 1485, long after both James II and James III—and Louis also—were dead, that the indomitable Charlotte finally abandoned hope and brought herself to resign her rights. As far back as 1462, before

15. Hill, History of Cyprus, III, 618–620, discusses the date in a lengthy note.
16. Charlotte’s only child, not otherwise mentioned, must have been stillborn or have died shortly after birth.
17. James II dated his reign from 1460, the year of his recognition as king by the sultan and his successful invasion of Cyprus from Egypt, but the loss of Kyrenia in 1464 marks the end of Charlotte’s de facto reign, with the loss of her last foothold.
18. He died, ineffective to the last, in 1482.
returning from Savoy to Rhodes, she had concluded with her father-in-law, duke Louis, and her aunt Anna, his duchess, an agreement which included certain dispositions regarding the succession to the Cypriote crown. Of these dispositions the one ultimately to become operative was the provision that if both Charlotte and Louis died without issue, the three crowns would revert to the duchess Anna, as the daughter of king Janus, and her heirs. On February 25, 1485, in Rome, where she had been living under the protection of popes Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII more or less regularly since 1475, except for the expedition to Egypt referred to below, Charlotte made formal cession of her crowns to the house of Savoy in the person of the then reigning duke, Anna’s grandson Charles I. 19 She retained the royal style for her lifetime but conceded its simultaneous use to duke Charles. It was by virtue of the agreements of 1462 and 1485 that the heads of the house of Savoy continued successively as dukes, kings of Sardinia, and kings of Italy to bear the titles of kings of Jerusalem, Cyprus, and Armenia until the abdication of Humbert II, last of the dynasty, in 1946.

Charlotte, who devoted the rest of her life and means to good works, died in Rome, apparently of some gouty trouble, on July 16, 1487, aged about forty-four, after a life of sorrow, fruitless wanderings, unflaggingly courageous and sanguine striving, and constant frustration. Innocent VIII gave her a royal funeral in St. Peter’s where her unadorned tomb may be seen to this day in the crypt, not far from that of Pius X. “A more pathetic figure than Charlotte’s never crossed the stage of Cypriote history. Married and widowed when she was barely fourteen, united again when she was but sixteen to a poor-spirited and ineffectual husband, despoiled by her own brother of everything when she was barely twenty, she fought tenaciously for her rights for over twenty years.” 20 Charlotte had her mother’s fixity of purpose without her mother’s unattractive qualities; throughout her troubled life her upright character shone with a clear light. As with her mother, her best language was Greek, which she spoke, according to Pius II, with “torrential” rapidity; her French was definitely shaky. Unlike her mother, however, she was a loyal adherent of the church of Rome and a devoted servant of the holy see. Both Charlotte and Louis struck coins, not jointly but in separate issues. Charlotte is the only Lusignan sovereign other than James II not to be represented on the silver coinage sitting crowned and sceptered on the banc royal; the obverse of her gros (and

19. Venice rejected the validity of this cession on the legalistic ground that the suzerain of Cyprus was the sultan of Egypt, who had legally bestowed the kingdom on James.

demi-gros) bears instead a crowned shield with her arms. The coins of Louis follow broadly the normal Lusignan pattern.

James’s expulsion of the Genoese from Famagusta while still contending with Charlotte for the crown was certainly an achievement of considerable magnitude. And it was no fault of his that the reintegration with the kingdom of its principal port and commercial center came too late to heal the wounds which this canker had been inflicting on the country in the course of the last three generations. Moreover, although he did not realize it, what Genoa had failed to accomplish in Cyprus was to be completed in full measure by Venice.

With James now fully in the saddle, consideration had to be given to the question of his marriage. Venice had not yet formulated her plan of finding him a Venetian queen but had already constituted herself his mentor in this as in other matters. In 1466 she suggested to him through his envoy, the invaluable Goneme, now archbishop of Nicosia, the princess Zoe (later Sophia), daughter of the ex-despot of the Morea, Thomas Palaeologus, and niece of the last Byzantine emperor, Constantine XI. Already in the reign of Pius II there had been talk of his marriage to this lady, but James would not take her without the pope’s recognition of himself as king and permission for his coronation, and these demands Pius, in his consistent championship of Charlotte as the lawful sovereign, flatly refused. It was not until the pontificate of Pius’s successor, the Venetian Paul II, who was prepared to be amenable to his country’s policy in Cyprus, that both James as king, and his nominee Goneme as archbishop, received papal recognition. 21 Nevertheless, the alliance with the Palaeologina again failed to materialize; and Zoe in the event marrying Ivan III, grand duke of Muscovy, brought the double-headed eagle of Byzantium as her dowry to the future empire of the Romanovs.

By 1467 we find James acknowledging himself as “the son of Venice,” and the relationship was soon to be converted into something less figurative. A branch of the distinguished Venetian patrician family of Cornaro (Corner, in the Venetian dialect) had long held an important Cypriote fief at Episcopi in the district of Limassol, while Mark Cornaro of the so-called Ca’ Grande branch of the family had been a party to Cypriote affairs in the reign of John II as Venetian envoy to the emir of Karaman, as well as in other matters, and was a personal friend of James. Mark’s brother Andrew, long resident in

21. But under Paul’s successors Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII, the Vatican reverted, as we have seen, to the support of Charlotte. Goneme’s recognition by Paul II came in 1467, although James had nominated him archbishop in 1460, when about to leave Egypt on his invasion of Cyprus. In 1456 the archiepiscopal see was granted in commendam to cardinal Isidore of Kiev.
Cyprus and originally a partisan of Charlotte, had gone over to James and been granted the dignity of auditor of the kingdom. It was Mark's daughter Catherine, the date of whose birth is given as April 30, 1454, whom the signoria now designated to share James's throne. It is interesting to note that Catherine, too, had Greek blood in her veins, for the maternal grandfather of her mother, Florence Crispò of Naxos, was John Comnenus, emperor of Trebizond. In July 1468 Catherine, being then in her fifteenth year, was married to James by proxy, the ceremony being held in Venice in the ducal palace with exceptional pomp and circumstance in the presence of the doge, Christopher Moro. The greatest possible importance was given to the event; the bride received from her gratified country the surname of "Veneta" and was formally adopted as "the daughter of St. Mark." No such distinction had previously been accorded, and its grant evoked from the Savoyard bishop Louis of Turin the sardonic comment that he had not known the Evangelist to have been married. With almost indecent haste her compatriots at once styled Catherine queen of Cyprus and gave her precedence as such.

It was not, however, with the object of honoring her "daughter" with yet another title that Venice went to the length of legally adopting Catherine; there was much more behind the step than this. It was done because, if Catherine were to survive both James and any heir they might have—an improbable contingency, it might be supposed, but the one that actually occurred—it could be claimed that the rights of Catherine as "daughter of Venice" passed at her death by law to the republic.22 It was therefore with genuine alarm that the signoria became aware before long that the prize, pursued with such ingenious forethought, might yet elude their grasp. For Ferdinand I of Naples and Sicily, no friend of Venice, now appeared on the Cypriote scene, seeking to detach James from what may already be described as Venetian tutelage by the offer of a bride from his own house. Venice reacted with energy and speed. In the summer of 1469 she dispatched a special envoy to James in the person of one Dominic Gradengo to remonstrate, to exhort, and even to warn. For included in the envoy's representations was the veiled threat that if James failed to proceed with the marriage Venice might yet find herself obliged to consider the restoration of Charlotte, then conveniently at hand in Rhodes. Gradengo up to a point was highly successful. He had arrived in Nicosia in September; on October 4, on behalf of doge Christopher Moro, who had invested him in anticipation with the necessary powers, he formally took James II and his

22. For the legal aspect of this point cf. Hill, History of Cyprus, III, 635.
kingdom under the protection of the republic, which bound itself to defend him and his descendants, his subjects, and his territory, against all states except his suzerain, the sultan of Egypt. Venetian goods in Cyprus were made duty free.

Even so, it was not until 1472 that James sent galleys to Venice to fetch his bride. Catherine, eighteen and by all accounts plump and comely, was escorted to her ship by doge Nicholas Tron and sailed for Cyprus in November. She was married on arrival in Famagusta and subsequently crowned in Nicosia. But if the preliminaries to her wedding were protracted, her actual married life was brief. At the end of the following June or the beginning of July, James was out hunting near Famagusta with the queen’s uncle Andrew and her cousin Mark Bembo when sudden and violent pains with dysenteric symptoms compelled him to abandon the chase. During the next few days the affliction grew steadily worse, and on July 6 he died, in the thirty-third year of his age according to the epitaph subsequently set up by Catherine. His anxiously awaited posthumous heir was born one month and twenty-two days later, on August 28.

James’s abrupt death at so early an age and at the height of his exceptional physical vigor naturally gave rise to the suspicion of poison, a suspicion directed to more than one quarter. Venice had an obvious motive, since James’s disappearance was the first and most important stage in the elimination of his dynasty (now hanging on the single, slight thread of Catherine’s unborn child) and the reversion of the kingdom to the republic. Secondly, the king’s numerous immoralities and the violence of his conduct had, as in the case of his great-great-uncle Peter I, gravely affronted a considerable number of his subjects. A third hypothesis, emanating from Venetian sources, which implicated Charlotte and her supporters, is not to be taken seriously. As regards the former two the motive, indeed, was there but proof is absent.

The dying king was able before he expired to make a will, in which he bequeathed the crown and lordship over Cyprus to Catherine and made the child she was expecting his heir. If the child should die, the inheritance was to pass to his natural children Eugene, John, and Charlotte (or Charla) in that order, and, failing them, to his nearest relative of the house of Lusignan.23 He referred to a great treasure

23. This was James’s second cousin Charles or Clarion de Lusignan, grandson of the Henry of Galilee who fell at Khirkitat. Clarion, who never swerved from his loyalty to Charlotte, for which reason James deprived him of twenty-four estates, represented the only surviving legitimate branch of this once-numerous family and would according to modern practice have been the next heir to the throne after Charlotte. He was the great-grandfather of James de Lusignan, the historian, who became a Dominican and is better known as Estienne de Lusignan, his name in religion.
which he had laboriously amassed, and he directed that the slaves manning his galleys should be freed, “car ie les ay assez tourmenté.” He appointed a council of regency of seven nobles, including the queen’s uncle Andrew, but two of the members were Catalans and members of the Spanish party now growing in influence at court in opposition to the designs of Venice.

James was a prince of some power, who owed his achievements to outstanding personal qualities, a forceful and resolute character, already manifested in his teens, a persuasive eloquence, a charm of manner that could win affection, and an impetuous generosity. The other side of his nature reveals an equally impetuous violence and the capacity to inspire not only love but hatred. He seems to have observed loyally his obligations to the sultans of Egypt, who had helped him to win his crown. But he seems to have been lacking in perception as to whither his dependence on Venice was leading the kingdom. He was an exceptionally fine horseman, and it may be this accomplishment that led him, alone of the Lusignan kings, to be represented on horseback on his attractive silver gros. His demi-gros, showing his head crowned, is also unique as the only example of portraiture in the Lusignan coinage.

Catherine was allowed to succeed peacefully and on August 28, as has been said, gave birth to a son in Famagusta, which she had not left since her husband’s last illness. In September the child was baptized with his father’s name and acclaimed as James III, and a few weeks later underwent some form of coronation. According to Lusignan the infant was produced in public on important occasions and made to signify that the council of regency were acting in his name by the raising of his hand in assent to their measures. But two days or so before his first birthday the little James III died, and although once more there was talk of poison and suspicion again fell upon both Venice and the supporters of Charlotte, there seems no reason to believe that the baby did not die a natural death. Catherine, in a letter to the doge, Nicholas Marcello, writes that he succumbed to a fever, and elsewhere she complains bitterly that she would not have lost him if she had not been forced to remain in Famagusta. Nevertheless, the child’s death was another windfall for Venice, since the legitimate line of the illegitimate James II was now extinct.

25. This city can be unpleasantly hot in the summer months and in those days was also unhealthy at that season of the year.
26. There exists a silver gros struck during the brief joint reign of Catherine and James III, bearing the names of both.
Brief as was the titular reign of the infant king, it witnessed one event important intrinsically and even more so in its consequences, the narration of which must be preceded by a word about the Catalan party at the Cypriote court and its objectives. The leaders of this party in the government were the regents John Tafur, titular count of Tripoli, and John Pérez Fabregues, titular count of Jaffa and count of Karpass, together with the latter’s brother Louis Pérez Fabregues, an ardent supporter of James II whose appointment to the archbishopric of Nicosia (resigned by Goneme in 1469) not even the opposition of Venice had been able to prevent. A third regent of Spanish origin, Peter Davila, while suspect to Venice, probably without justification, was trusted by Catherine, who made him constable. John Pérez de Fabregues died in October 1473, and the leadership of the party passed to his brother the archbishop. The party aimed at the prevention of the kingdom’s absorption by Venice and therefore at the maintenance of its independent existence, and they looked to Ferdinand of Naples to direct their policy. This monarch’s first scheme was to marry his natural son Alonzo to Charla, natural daughter of James II, a proposal which had actually secured James’s approval before he died. It also secured the approval of Charlotte, who, after the contract for the marriage had been made (much against Catherine’s wishes) in November 1473, following the murders to be related below, actually adopted Alonzo and sent him to Egypt, where she hoped to induce Sultan Ka’itbey to place her and the young couple in possession of the island. She herself followed him to Cairo in 1478, bravely risking threatened interception by Venetian galleys. The scheme was wrecked by Charla’s death in 1480 at the age of twelve in Padua, where she and her brothers Eugene and John were being held in Venetian custody. To that extent, therefore, there was fusion between the interests of the Catalans and those of the supporters of Charlotte, a fusion which was dissolved when Ferdinand proceeded after Charla’s death to entertain the idea of marrying Alonzo to the widowed Catherine.

To return to the events in Cyprus in 1473, the Catalans decided that the principal local obstacles to the success of their plans were the queen’s uncle Andrew and certain other Venetian members of her entourage. On November 13 the archbishop and his supporters, including the Sicilian Rizzo di Marino, who was one of the regents and chamberlain, appeared armed in Famagusta. Rizzo killed Andrew Cornaro with his own hand and attempted to stab the queen’s physician, one Gabriel Gentile, in her very chamber and in her presence, actually finishing him off outside; a companion dispatched
Catherine’s cousin Mark Bembo. The Catalans then assumed complete control of the queen, taking, according to a Venetian account, her treasure-chest, jewels, and seal-ring and going to the length, according to a report made to the duke of Milan, of removing the infant James III from his mother’s custody to that of his grandmother, Marietta of Patras. 27 But they failed to secure Kyrenia and the northern castles.

Venice took characteristically energetic measures to redress the situation, in the first instance by means of instructions to her captain-general at sea, Peter Mocenigo, 28 then operating against the Ottoman sultan off the Karamanian coast. By the time Mocenigo arrived in Cyprus at the beginning of February 1474, to help the queen and to re-establish Venetian hegemony, the Catalan coup had collapsed and its leaders, including the archbishop and Rizzo, had escaped in a Neapolitan galley. But Venice was determined to take this opportunity to establish her control over the kingdom once and for all, subject only to the Egyptian tribute; 29 for she did not wish to see her dispositions, present and future, against the Turks embarrassed by possible disagreement with the Mamluks. In March 1474, after receiving reports from Mocenigo, the senate appointed two Venetian nobles as “counselors” to the queen, and another Venetian as provveditore, to have supreme command of the troops. These three Venetian officials were in effect to govern Cyprus on behalf of Venice, leaving to the queen no more than the nominal dignity and the mere appearance of taking a part in the affairs of state. It was laid down that the counselors were always to reside wherever the queen might be. It was also decided that the castle and city of Famagusta were to be garrisoned by Venetian forces.

When the news of the death of James III reached Venice, the senate, possibly realizing something of Catherine’s distress, the incessant difficulties since her accession, and her humiliating position in the face of her own subjects, sent her father, Mark Cornaro, to be with her and to act unofficially as her adviser in conjunction and in harmony with the official trio. From Catherine’s point of view, if not perhaps from that of the republic, the step was a helpful one, for the counselors had been interpreting their instructions all too literally. In two confidential letters to the doge Catherine complained that she

27. Marietta of Patras, together with the three bastard children of her son James II, was removed to Venetian territory in 1476. She died in 1503 at what must have been an advanced age, seeing that James was born about 1440.
28. He became doge at the end of 1474.
29. Venice saw to it that the tribute was paid, at least intermittently.
was not allowed by them to take even ten ducats from her own revenues; not allowed to receive letters addressed to her by her subjects or others, nor to send letters, except with their approval; and not allowed to dine or to hear mass in public, but had to have her meals alone in her chamber served by two maids and to hear mass in a room, unseen; and that she had been grossly abused, brow-beaten, and threatened if she demurred at signing a document of which she disapproved.

From supplementary instructions now sent by Venice to the counselors and repeated in 1479, we learn that they had been in the habit of placing so harsh a construction on their orders as actually to insist on living in the queen’s apartments, and that this practice of theirs was to cease. Catherine was in fact a prisoner in all but name and the counselors her warders; if the Catalans had chastised her with whips, her own compatriots chastised her with scorpions. Here was indeed a contrast with the honors showered by the republic on its “daughter” at her betrothal, and the daughter was finding her treatment a heavy strain on her genuine love for her mother country. She never ceases to protest that she has always been a good Venetian.

Not unnaturally there was friction between Mark and the counselors, and Mark returned to Venice. Thenceforth, what remained of Catherine’s so-called reign was an anticlimax from the point of view of the kingdom, for it was merely the prelude to Venetian annexation. Two factors decided the republic not to allow Catherine to live out her life in Cyprus in the enjoyment of her nominal sovereignty. Venice had continued to tolerate the island’s make-believe independence after the death of James III solely because of its anxiety not to disturb relations with Egypt. Now, however, the growing menace of the Turks on the one hand, and on the other king Ferdinand’s plan to marry Catherine to his son Alonzo, a plan which the signoria suspected Catherine of favoring, induced the Venetians to accelerate their moves. The Ottoman threat required that Cyprus should be placed in a proper state of defense, which could best be done under direct Venetian rule, while, were Catherine really to marry Alonzo, there was danger that Cyprus might slip at the last moment from the Venetian into the Neapolitan orbit. At the end of October 1488, the council of ten ordered Francis Priuli, then captain-general, to Cyprus to persuade the queen to leave the island and return to Venice, where she would be treated as a queen and assured the continuance of her existing civil list of 8,000 ducats. This she was to be urged to do for the sake of Cyprus, so that the island could be made safe from the Turks. Priuli was further instructed that should Catherine refuse, she
was to be warned that she would incur the signoria's displeasure and be regarded as a rebel; in the last resort, she was to be removed by force. As an afterthought the council, preferring not to use extreme measures if these could be avoided, sent Catherine's brother George after Priuli to reinforce the captain-general's official persuasions. For if Catherine were to prove contumacious, the result would be disastrous for the Cornari, and it appears that this argument finally induced the bitterly reluctant queen to accept the ultimatum. "Are not my lords of Venice content," she asked, "to have their island when I am dead, that they would deprive me thus soon of what my husband left me?"

No time was lost by the Venetians in implementing the assent thus wrung from the queen. With somewhat heartless cynicism they staged, on February 26, 1489, a ceremony in Famagusta whereat the queen was made to hand to the captain-general the standard of St. Mark to be flown thenceforth in place of her own; "and thus," wrote cardinal Peter Bembo, her kinsman, "was the kingdom of Cyprus reduced to a province." When Catherine arrived in Venice the following June, her reception matched in splendor the functions attending her betrothal and her departure for Cyprus as a bride. The republic now granted its "daughter" the little lordship of Asolo at the foot of the Dolomites, where the former queen spent her time pleasantly enough as a patron of art and of scholars of the Renaissance. She died in Venice on July 9, 1510, aged fifty-six.

Catherine had not Charlotte's depth of character, nor was her lot on the whole, despite the sorrows, loneliness, and mortifications of her fifteen years of widowhood in Cyprus, as tragic as that of her consistently ill-starred sister-in-law and rival. Nor, again, were the rights for which she put up such struggle as she could to be compared in weight with those for which Charlotte fought with such admirable tenacity of purpose. Yet Catherine was of a kindly, affectionate, and—fortunately for herself—forgiving disposition, and she contrived in very unpropitious circumstances to render herself genuinely loved by her subjects. When the time came for her to make her final, compulsory exit from her kingdom, she effected it with dignity and a good grace.

The recorded history of medieval Cyprus is concerned mainly with an intruding ruling house and caste alien in blood, religion, and language to the people of the country, and with the rulers' dynastic quarrels, their diplomacy, their international relationships, and their wars, as well as with the designs upon the island of foreign powers in
the Moslem east and, even more, in the Christian west. We hear little
enough, except in parentheses, so to speak, of the Cypriotes them-
selves and of how they fared under their foreign rulers and feudal
lords; in the minds of the western chroniclers they seemed scarcely
to exist. It was taken for granted that the peasantry, who were
largely synonymous with the Cypriote people,\textsuperscript{30} were there to
produce the crops and their share—in manpower and taxes—of the
sinews of war, but without any say in the country’s affairs. Indeed,
the lowest of the three classes into which they were divided consisted
of serfs. On the ecclesiastical side we know more, for the records
contain full details of the subjection of the ancient autocephalous
church of Cyprus to the Latin church of its rulers.

While it is unlikely that the Cypriote peasantry under the Lusignan
kingdom were politically worse off, despite their passive role, than
the peasantry of other Near Eastern countries during the same
period, it is not surprising that by the end of the Venetian occupa-
tion they had come to conceive, albeit more on religious than
political grounds, a profound hatred of the Latin xenocracy. Venice,
it is true, maintained as the basis of the island’s legal system the
Assizes of Jerusalem, to which the people were accustomed, and
caused them to be translated from French into the Venetian dialect
by the chronicler Florio Bustron.\textsuperscript{31} But when in 1571 the Turks
displaced the Venetians they would be welcomed by the Cypriotes as
liberators from the detested Latin yoke. It was the barrier of religion
rather than that of language that prevented any fusion between the
Cypriote people and the French and other Latin stocks in Cyprus
during all the centuries of their presence beside them. That the
language difficulty had to some extent, at least, been overcome in
the later period of Lusignan rule we may infer from the statement of
the Cypriote chronicler Leontius Machaeras that “we write both
French and Greek in such a way that no one in the world can say
what our language is.” But the two churches—the intruding and
dispossessing, the indigenous and dispossessed—stood rigidly apart.

The status and dignity of a kingdom conferred on Cyprus by the
Lusignan dynasty were slow to disappear. When Peter Bembo wrote
of Catherine’s abdication ceremony that a kingdom was thus reduced
to a province, he stated a fact but not the theory. Venice took very

\textsuperscript{30} Only a few Cypriote families, prominent among them the Podocataros, the Syraklet-
kos, and the Sozomenos, made their way into the nobility of the kingdom, and they were
probably descended from the old Byzantine aristocracy.

\textsuperscript{31} F. Bustron’s original holograph translation, made at the direction of doge Andrew
Gritti and “the illustrious lords rectors of this kingdom of Cyprus” in 1531, was in the
possession of the late author of this chapter.
seriously the circumstance that she was now possessed of a kingdom, and on the strength of that circumstance claimed and exacted a higher diplomatic precedence than she had enjoyed before. And such had been the island’s international prestige under the Lusignan kings that it would continue to be dignified unofficially with the royal style long after the Lusignans—and the Venetians, too, for that matter—had vanished from the scene.

32. E.g. from the pope, the Porte, and Bavaria.
33. Consular officers of several continental European states prolonged even into the nineteenth century the habit of heading their dispatches dal Regno di Cipro (“from the kingdom of Cyprus”): H. C. Luke, *Cyprus under the Turks* (Oxford, 1921), p. 3.