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THE LUSIGNAN DYNASTY

THE LORDS of Lusignan could trace their association with the Latin East back to 1102 when Guy of Lusignan's great-grandfather, Hugh VI, fought at the battle of Ramla. In 1163, two generations later, Guy's father Hugh VIII, came from his native Poitou to Syria only to be captured by the Muslims in the following year. He never regained his freedom.[1] Hugh VIII had several sons. The eldest, also named Hugh, did not long survive him, but three of the others, Geoffrey, Aimery and Guy, all lived to acquire fame for their exploits in the East.[2] As members of the Poitevin nobility, the lords of Lusignan were from 1154 vassals of the kings of England, a connection that may help explain the support given Guy by King Richard at the time of the Third Crusade. In the twelfth century, however, the family was not conspicuous for its loyalty to the Plantagenets. Aimery, Geoffrey and Guy had all been involved in rebellions against Richard's father, King Henry II: Aimery in 1168, the others in 1173.[3] Aimery was the first to leave for the East. He must have gone soon after his rebellion, for by 1174 he was already a vassal of the young Baldwin IV. According to a tradition current in the mid-thirteenth century, his career was launched by King Amaury (1163–74) who was said to have ransomed him from captivity in Damascus.[4] In 1180 it was Aimery of Lusignan who persuaded Guy to come to Jerusalem.

In the period between the accession of Baldwin IV in 1174 and the battle of Hattin in 1187 Jerusalem was toubled both by the external threat from Saladin and by divisions among the Latin nobility. These divisions were caused and exacerbated by a constitutional situation that allowed a protracted struggle for power. When he came to the throne, Baldwin IV was a minor. He was also a

[1] For Hugh VI, Fulcher of Chartres, *Historia Hierosolymitana*, ed. H. Hagenmeyer (Heidelberg, 1913) pp. 437–9. For Hugh VIII, William of Tyre, *Chronicon*, ed. R. B. C. Huygens (Turnhout, 1986), pp. 873, 875; 'Epistolarum Volumen . . . ad Ludovicum VII', *RHF*, XVI, 62–3.

[2] S. Painter, 'The Lords of Lusignan in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries', *Speculum*, XXXII (1957), 40.

[3] Robert of Torigny, 'Chronicle', ed. R. Howlett, *Chronicles of the Reigns of Stephen, Henry II and Richard I* (RS 82, 1884–9), IV, 235, 257; *Gesta Regis*, I, 46.

[4] *RRH*, no. 518; Philip of Novara, p. 569; John of Ibelin, pp. 429–30.

leper. There would have to be a regency until he came of age; then a period of unforeseeable duration in which the debilitating effects of the disease rendered him progressively less able to govern; finally, with his death, an uncertain succession, since he would have no direct heir of his own. Baldwin's father, King Amaury, had married twice. On his accession in 1163 he had divorced his first wife, Agnes of Courtenay, the mother of Baldwin and his eldest child, Sibylla. His second wife was a Byzantine princess, Maria Comnena, and she bore him another daughter, Isabella. Both women survived their husband, and they and their daughters provided the foci for the opposing groups. Particularly close to Agnes were her brother, Joscelin titular count of Edessa and from 1176 seneschal of Jerusalem, Reynald of Châtillon, formerly prince of Antioch and now, by marriage, lord of Oultrejourdain, Eraclius, from 1180 patriarch of Jerusalem, and Gerard of Ridefort, from 1185 master of the Temple. Among those who eventually found themselves ranged against them were Balian of Ibelin, Maria Comnena's second husband, his brother Baldwin and Count Raymond III of Tripoli, husband of Eschiva of Bures, lady of Tiberias.

Shortly after the beginning of Baldwin's minority Raymond of Tripoli seized power. During his period as regent Sibylla, who at that time was regarded as heiress-presumptive to the throne, married William, marquis of Montferrat. This union, which should in due course have led to William's acceptance as king by right of his wife, apparently won widespread approval, but in 1177, only a few months after his marriage, he died. By now Agnes and her supporters were in control, and it was they who were faced with the task of finding a new husband for Sibylla. The task was far from easy. They approached the duke of Burgundy, but he was hesitant. Aimery of Lusignan thereupon suggested his brother Guy, who at that time was still in the West. He brought him to Jerusalem, and at Easter 1180 Guy and Sibylla were married. At about the same date Aimery became constable of the kingdom.[5]

The Lusignan brothers' meteoric rise to prominence only served to deepen the divisions. It seems that Baldwin IV's permission for the marriage to take place came about more as an attempt to forestall the possibility of Raymond determining whom Sibylla should marry than as a sign that Guy was regarded as an ideal candidate. Raymond was threatening to seize power again, and allegedly Baldwin of Ibelin entertained ambitions to have Sibylla as his bride. As the protégé of one faction, Guy inevitably incurred the resentment of the other. William of Tyre's remark that King Baldwin could have found someone of greater importance, wisdom and wealth than Guy to marry his sister suggests further grounds for the unpopularity of the match: although the Lusignans were

[5] For politics in Jerusalem in the 1170s and 1180s, Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 101–12; Richard, *The Latin Kingdom*, pp. 49–57, 164–74. Aimery became constable after the death of Humphrey of Toron in April 1179 (William of Tyre, p. 999) and before March 1181 (*RRH*, no. 601).

an influential family in Poitou, Guy, as a younger son, lacked the reserves that a powerful magnate could have brought to strengthen the Latin East against Saladin, and he also lacked the sort of reputation that would draw men from the West to serve with him in the field. He was no substitute for the marquis of Monteferrat or the duke of Burgundy.[6]

In 1183 Baldwin's leprosy forced him to give up his control of the government. Despite the misgivings of Guy's opponents who feared the consequences for the kingdom of his inexperience and foresaw their own eclipse by Agnes and her supporters, Guy was appointed the king's lieutenant. But within a few months Baldwin and Guy had quarrelled, and Guy had seriously lost face over his conduct during a campaign against Saladin. So strong was the current of opinion, that Baldwin was able to dismiss him and attempt to bar him from succeeding to the throne altogether. The king designated Sibylla's infant son by William of Montferrat, also named Baldwin, as his successor and had him crowned king immediately. Raymond of Tripoli was appointed regent for the rest of Baldwin IV's reign and for Baldwin V's minority. In the event Baldwin IV died in 1185 and Baldwin V in 1186. On the young king's death, however, thanks to decisive action by Joscelin of Edessa, Reynald of Châtillon and Gerard of Ridefort, Raymond was ousted from power. Sibylla was proclaimed queen, and she and Guy were anointed and crowned in Jerusalem. Raymond and his supporters toyed with the idea of proclaiming Sibylla's half-sister, Isabella, queen in opposition, but this scheme came to nothing when Isabella's husband, Humphrey of Toron, did homage to Guy as king. Reluctantly Guy's opponents submitted. Only Baldwin of Ibelin, who preferred voluntary exile in Antioch, and Raymond of Tripoli, who retired to Tiberias, remained unreconciled. But even greater fluctuations in fortune were in store. In the summer of 1187 Guy and Raymond came to terms; almost at once Saladin entered Galilee and on 4 July defeated the Christian army at Hattin. The consequences are well-known: Guy fell captive; his field-army was destroyed; the Muslims overran the Latin kingdom.

When in the summer of 1188 Guy was restored to freedom, he found that control of Tyre, the one city in his realm remaining in Christian hands, had been usurped by Conrad of Montferrat. Conrad's prompt action had saved Tyre from falling to Saladin in 1187, and he now had the support of the surviving members of Raymond of Tripoli's circle. Raymond himself and Baldwin of Ibelin were now both dead, and the leadership of their group had passed to Baldwin's brother Balian, his wife, Maria Comnena, Pagan lord of Haifa and Reynald lord of Sidon. But despite the ill-feeling that had attended him since his arrival in the East, despite the defeat at Hattin and the loss of Jerusalem, and despite the

[6] William of Tyre, p. 1007; *Ernoul*, pp. 48, 56–60. For Guy's position in the period leading up to Hattin, R. C. Smail, 'The Predicaments of Guy of Lusignan, 1183–87', *Outremer*, pp. 159–76.

months in captivity, Guy still enjoyed the loyalty of a substantial section of the community in the Latin East. Matters came to a head in 1189 when Guy arrived before Tyre with an army he had recruited in Tripoli. Conrad refused to recognize him as king and denied him entry.[7] Rather than try to force him to submit, Guy responded by going on to the offensive against the Muslims, thereby re-asserting his kingship, and, aided by the western crusaders who were now starting to arrive in the East, he began to besiege Acre. Had his efforts met with early success, his reputation would have been restored and Conrad's ascendancy in Tyre would have collapsed. As it happened, the siege dragged on inconclusively through 1190. The mortality due to disease in the Christian army was heavy. In the Autumn of 1190 Queen Sibylla and her two small daughters died. Guy's opponents seized their opportunity. Guy was the anointed king, but he derived his rights from his wife. Now that Sibylla was dead and there was no issue surviving from the marriage, it could be argued that his kingship had lapsed and that the throne should pass to Sibylla's next of kin, her half-sister Isabella. Isabella's marriage to Humphrey of Toron was thereupon dissolved, and she was married to Conrad. The faction led by her mother, Maria Comnena, and her step-father, Balian of Ibelin, accepted her as queen and did homage. Guy, however, refused to give way and continued to regard himself as the true king. He and his army persevered in the siege of Acre, while Conrad and his supporters held Tyre. The situation remained unchanged until the arrival of the kings of France and England the following year.[8]

The intense rivalry that already existed between King Richard of England and King Philip Augustus of France found ample scope for expression in the East. Both kings were determined to recover territory lost to the Muslims, and they also expected that, as commanders of powerful military contingents, they would have a hand in ordering the reconstituted Latin states. It was predictable that they should find themselves on opposing sides in the dispute over the throne. King Philip arrived in the East on 20 April 1191, and he at once made clear his sympathies for Conrad. Richard was slower to leave Sicily, where both he and Philip had wintered, and then, as we have seen, delayed in Cyprus. With Philip and Conrad joining in the siege of Acre, Guy's position was highly vulnerable. A successful assault would end with his opponents elbowing him aside and taking custody of the town for themselves; their assumption of power would thereby be assured, and Guy would lose all hope of retaining the throne. In what was evidently a desperate attempt to avoid this eventuality, Guy and a group of his leading supporters left the siege and sailed to meet Richard in Cyprus. Their purpose was to secure his support and speed his arrival in Syria. They had only limited success: when on 11 May they found the English king at Limassol, Richard took their homage, thus committing himself to their cause, and gave

[7] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 112–14. [8] *Ibid.*, pp. 114–16.

Guy a generous subsidy. But he was set on reducing Cyprus to submission and had Guy assist him in his campaign. Isaac Comnenus' decision to break off his negotiations with Richard was allegedly taken at the instance of one of Guy's Syrian enemies, Pagan of Haifa, who presumably was hoping that Isaac would delay Richard and so give Conrad and King Philip more time to capture Acre on their own.[9] It was not until 8 June, almost a month after Guy had first met him, that Richard arrived in Acre; he had not allowed himself to be hurried, but neither had Acre fallen in the meantime.

The events of the following months do not need to be recounted in detail. Acre fell on 12 July, and almost at once Philip returned home, having secured for Conrad both the revenues of Tyre (and the as yet Muslim-held Beirut and Sidon) and, on Guy's death, the expectancy of the crown for himself and his heirs by Isabella. Not content with this solution, Conrad and his followers plotted for control of Acre and Guy's total exclusion from power while Richard was away campaigning against the Muslims. Had it not been for the English king's continued backing, Guy's position would have crumbled completely. During the siege of Acre Gerard of Ridefort, Joscelin of Edessa and Patriarch Eraclius, his three most influential allies among the Syrian leaders, had all died. His only other supporters of any consequence in the East seem to have been his own brothers, Aimery the constable of Jerusalem and Geoffrey, who in 1191 was made count of Jaffa.[10] The death of Queen Sibylla could well have loosened the ties of loyalty between him and his Jerusalemite vassals, and his entourage may well have come to consist principally of his Poitevin retainers. The weakness of his position was illustrated early in 1192 when Conrad's party came near to seizing Acre; Conrad's efforts were thwarted by the spirited resistance of the Pisans, who inclined to Guy largely, it is assumed, because their rivals, the Genoese, supported his opponents, and then by the timely arrival of the king of England. Matters were brought to a head in April when news reached Richard which convinced him of the need to return to Europe. It was already apparent that the Christian forces were inadequate to recover Jerusalem. A gathering of the leaders of the crusade convened by Richard to discuss his departure came out strongly in the opinion that one man should rule all the lands of the kingdom of Jerusalem that were restored to Christian control, and that that man should be Conrad and not Guy.[11] Richard could appreciate the wisdom of this view. For him it would mean an abrupt change of policy and the end of the support for his protégé. But he was able to avoid putting himself in a false position: a completely

[9] Ambroise, lines 1701–34, 1832–41, 1969–2008; 'Itinerarium', pp. 195, 199, 201–2; *Gesta Regis*, II, 165–6.

[10] *Das Itinerarium peregrinorum*, ed. H. E. Mayer (Stuttgart, 1962), pp. 313–14, 307; 'Itinerarium', p. 235; *Gesta Regis*, II, 147.

[11] 'Itinerarium', pp. 321–3, 333–5; cf. Ambroise, lines 8601–36.

independent development had opened the way for Guy to be compensated handsomely.

On 4 April 1192 the Cypriots rose in rebellion against the Templars. The insurrection failed, but the Order was sufficiently shaken to return the island, for which it still owed 60,000 bezants, to King Richard. Thereafter events moved rapidly. Presumably Richard already knew that the Templars were giving up Cyprus when he decided to accept Conrad as king-designate. He gave Guy the opportunity to purchase the island for 100,000 bezants and allowed him two months in which to find 60,000 bezants as a down payment. Guy's chancellor, Peter of Angoulême, had no difficulty in raising the money from merchants in Tripoli in less than a month.[12]

Cyprus had become available at an opportune moment, but the struggle for power on the mainland was not over. On 28 April, even before Guy had taken possession of his new domain, Conrad was murdered. But any hopes Guy may have had of recovering his position were dashed, when, with unseemly haste, Conrad's widow, Queen Isabella, was married to the leading French crusader still in the East, Count Henry of Champagne. As a grandson of King Louis VII of France and his first wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, Henry was close kinsman of both Richard of England and Philip of France, and he enjoyed the full support of the English and the French leaders in the East as well as of Conrad's partisans among the Syrian baronage. Guy, however, refused to be content with Cyprus and became involved with the Pisans in a plot to seize Tyre. The details are obscure, but it would seem that this scheme had the result of souring his relations with Richard. Reportedly the king of England, who to begin with had not pressed Guy for a speedy payment of the 40,000 bezants he still owed, even went so far as to promise Henry of Champagne that he should have Cyprus as well as the Christian possessions in Palestine. This promise, if indeed it were ever made, was not fulfilled, although Richard did give Henry his rights to collect the balance outstanding on the sale of the island.[13]

In September 1192 the Christians and Muslims agreed on a truce, and early the following month Richard departed for the West. Guy had taken those of his followers who so wished to Cyprus, and their departure probably helped lower the tension between the political factions. But one other incident occurred that illustrates the continuing ill-will. Henry took reprisals on the Pisans for their part in the plot to seize Tyre, and when Aimery of Lusignan intervened on their behalf Henry imprisoned him. This action evoked protests from some prominent figures in the kingdom, and the upshot was that Henry released

[12] *Cont. Guillaume de Tyr*, pp. 137, 139.

[13] *Ibid.*, pp. 139, 143, 145, 151, 153. Guy's breach with Richard was noted by a contemporary Muslim observer. Lyons and Jackson, *Saladin*, p. 349.

Aimery, in return for relinquishing his office of constable of Jerusalem, and allowed him to join his brother in Cyprus.[14]

The twelve years that had elapsed between Guy's arrival in the East and his purchase of Cyprus had been marked by incessant factional disputes. In his settlement of the island, he naturally turned to his supporters during the previous years and raised them to positions of prominence. But, for the followers of Raymond of Tripoli, Conrad of Montferrat or Henry of Champagne, there was no place there at all. Towards Henry Guy was irreconcilable, and he continued to lay claim to the kingdom of Jerusalem until his death, which took place at about the end of 1194.[15] It is difficult to obtain a balanced view of his career since the narrative sources are violently partisan. It may be significant, however, that a well-informed English writer suggested that he was rather naïve in the midst of intrigue but praised him for his conduct of the siege of Acre, and that Saladin's Muslim biographer, Imad al-Dīn, mentioned his good administration in Cyprus.[16]

Guy of Lusignan had designated his brother Geoffrey as his successor in Cyprus, but Geoffrey, who had been one of the heroes of the Third Crusade, showed no interest. It seems that he preferred his Poitevin lands to either Cyprus or his county of Jaffa and returned home, probably in 1192. So Guy's vassals chose his other brother, Aimery, to be their lord.[17] As Aimery was Guy's elder brother, his accession was not strictly speaking a matter of hereditary right, but, with his long experience of the East, he was undoubtedly a sensible choice; indeed, he must have seemed the obvious choice.

Within three years of Guy's death, Aimery had two notable achievements to his credit: the establishment of a Latin ecclesiastical hierarchy and the elevation of Cyprus to a kingdom with himself as first king. Aimery's initiatives began in 1195 when he sent the archdeacon of Lattakia to the pope with letters concerning the future of the Church in the island. Pope Celestine III commissioned a plan to be drawn up, and in December 1196 he issued a bull formally inaugurating the Latin diocesan establishment. An archbishop of Nicosia was to have suffragans at Paphos, Limassol and Famagusta – an arrangement that was to last until the Turkish conquest in the sixteenth century. The first archbishop was Aimery's chancellor, and the first bishop of Paphos, his emissary of the previous year.[18] It

[14] *Cont. Guillaume de Tyr*, p. 159. 'Eracles' (p. 208) preserves what seems to be a garbled account of this incident.

[15] For his title, 'Guido per Dei gratiam in sancta civitate Iherusalem Latinorum rex VIII et Cipri dominus', Richard, 'L'abbaye cistercienne', p. 69. Cf. W. H. Rudt de Collenberg, 'Les Lusignan de Chypre', *EKEE*, X (1980), 93.

[16] 'Itinerarium', pp. 350–1; 'Imād al-Dīn, p. 377.

[17] *Cont. Guillaume de Tyr*, pp. 159, 161, 173; 'Eracles', pp. 192, 209.

[18] Hiestand, *Papsturkunden im Heiligen Lande*, nos. 173, 176, 181.

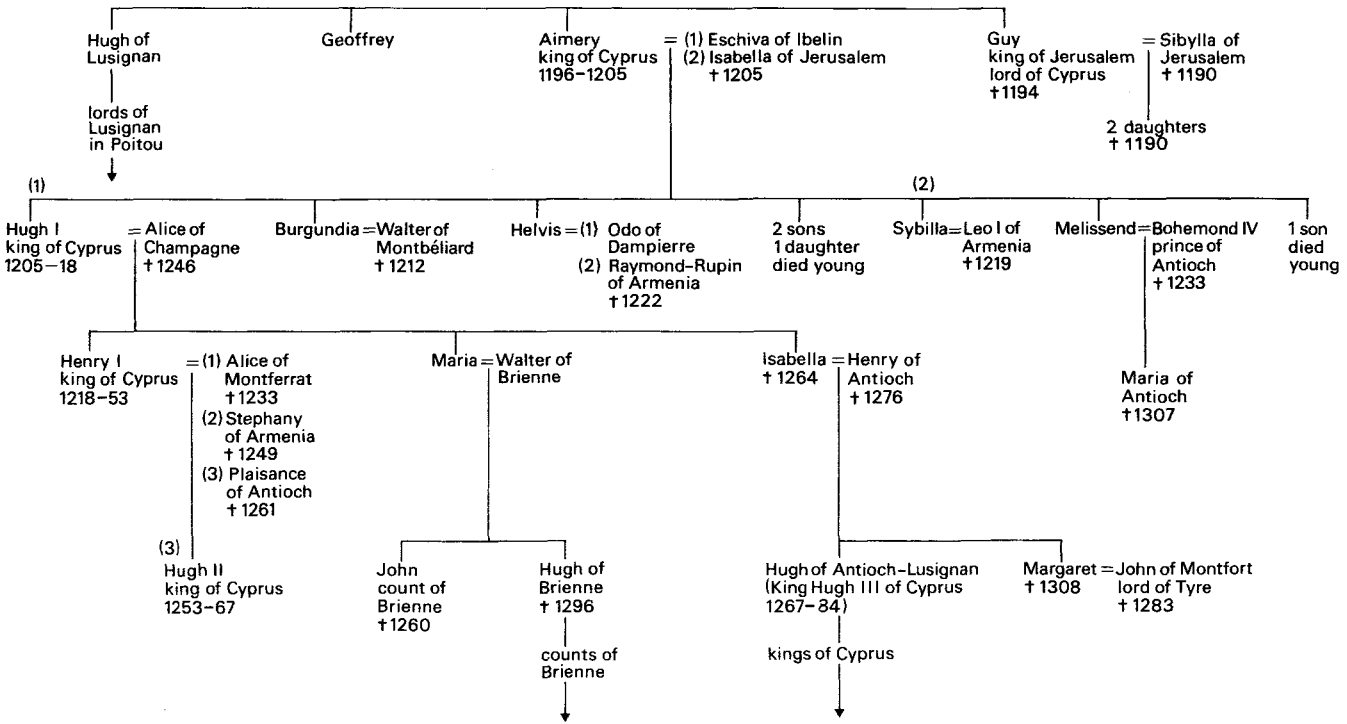

Figure 1 The Lusignan dynasty to 1267

is probable, as one writer hinted, that the creation of a Latin hierarchy was seen by contemporaries as a prerequisite for acquiring a crown.[19] Certainly the idea of a king, himself of the western rite but with no Latin bishops in his kingdom, would have been unthinkable, not least because he and his successors would have been in the unsatisfactory position of having to rely on visiting clergy or on the Greek bishops for their coronation.

Aimery's royal title was acquired from the western emperor, Henry VI of Hohenstaufen. In 1195 Henry had taken the Cross, and he was planning to lead a crusade to the East in 1197. He was an ambitious man. He had already conquered Sicily, and he intended, besides crusading in Syria, to bring Byzantium into subjection. The idea of Cyprus as a kingdom under imperial suzerainty fitted in well with his schemes.[20] For his part, Aimery had much to gain by the elevation of his island domain to the status of a kingdom, even if it did mean accepting Henry's overlordship. Possession of a crown would enhance his own prestige and help ensure that Cyprus would continue to be ruled by his descendants. Furthermore, the potential diplomatic advantages were considerable. Allegedly it was fear of a Byzantine attack on Cyprus that had prompted him to make overtures in the first place, and in Henry Aimery had found an ally who was unquestionably hostile to Constantinople. By becoming a king Aimery would also put an end to any idea that Cyprus might be regarded as a dependency of Jerusalem, perhaps a potent consideration in view of the poor relations that prevailed between the Lusignans and Henry of Champagne. Furthermore, the emperor's overlordship would in itself guarantee that when he arrived in the East in person he would not overturn the regime in Cyprus, even although it had been established under the auspices of his enemy, King Richard of England.

At about the same time as the archdeacon of Lattakia had set off to Rome to open negotiations with the pope for a Latin ecclesiastical hierarchy, Aimery had sent his vassal, Renier of Jubail, as his ambassador to the emperor. Henry agreed to his requests, took his homage as Aimery's proxy and dispatched the archbishops of Trani and Brindisi with the royal regalia. The archbishops appear to have arrived in Cyprus in April or May 1196, and Aimery may have styled himself king from that time. The actual coronation was postponed until 1197, as the emperor hoped to be present in person. But then rebellion in Sicily and illness delayed his departure, and eventually an advance party including the imperial chancellor, Conrad bishop of Hildesheim, left without him. It arrived in the East in September 1197, and Conrad crowned Aimery king of Cyprus.[21] In

[19] 'Eracles', p. 209. [20] Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West*, pp. 191–3.

[21] Hill, II, 48–9. The arrival of the archbishops of Trani and Brindisi is dated from a charter mentioning the presence of the former and giving trading concessions to Trani. Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 30. As printed, the text is corrupt, but the charter is nonetheless genuine. See *RRH*, no. 729. Aimery was described as king in papal letters dated December 1196 and January 1197. Hiestand, *Papsturkunden im Heiligen Lande*, nos. 176, 181.

East, even though it was not many years before new disputes and new alignments were to make their appearance. Furthermore, the admittedly ineffective defence of Jaffa was the first instance of a Lusignan ruler of Cyprus coming to the assistance of the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem.

On 10 September, within a few weeks of the reconciliation and shortly before the surrender of Jaffa to the Muslims, Henry of Champagne fell from a first floor window to his death. Once again Isabella, the heiress to Jerusalem, was a widow. The demand was immediately voiced that she should remarry and that her new husband, her fourth, should govern the kingdom. Some people wanted her to wed the seneschal of Jerusalem, Ralph of Tiberias, but they were overruled by others including the military Orders, the German crusaders who had arrived in the East shortly after Henry of Champagne's death and the chancellor of Jerusalem, Archbishop Joscius of Tyre, all of whom pressed for King Aimery whose wife, Eschiva of Ibelin, had recently died. His Cypriot resources would have made Aimery an attractive candidate in the eyes of those who were looking for someone who could bring reinforcements to the defence of the East, and the Germans doubtless favoured him since he was already ruling an imperial client-kingdom. The archbishop of Tyre appears to have negotiated the match, and it would seem that the couple were married or at least betrothed by mid-October. The choice of Aimery, we are told, was almost unanimous. Initially the patriarch of Jerusalem had scruples about the marriage's canonical validity, but he then appears to have withdrawn his objections, since it was he who conducted their coronation service. The new king of Cyprus was now king-consort of Jerusalem as well.[24]

Aimery of Lusignan ruled over Cyprus and the kingdom of Jerusalem until his death in April 1205. The two realms were linked only by the person of the monarch; otherwise they retained their separate identities and their own institutions. Each had its own High Court and its own chancery.[25] If the list of witnesses to the one surviving Cypriot royal charter issued by Aimery after he had acquired his second crown can be taken as a guide, he did not follow a policy of rewarding his Jerusalemite followers with fiefs and offices in his island kingdom.[26] On the other hand, he was prepared to use his Cypriot forces in the

[24] *Cont. Guillaume de Tyr*, pp. 193, 199; 'Eracles', pp. 220–4. For Joscius' role, the patriarch's changing attitude and the near unanimity in choice, *Die Register Innocenz' III*, II, 753, cf 662. Joscius was given an estate in Cyprus in November 1197, presumably in appreciation of his efforts. Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 606–7. For possible canonistic objections to the marriage, Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, p. 152.

[25] The only document which purports to show Aimery making a grant of Cypriot lands and trading concessions in the High Court of Jerusalem is a fabrication. H. E. Mayer, *Marseilles Levantehandel und ein akkonensisches Fälscheratelier des 13. Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen, 1972), pp. 43–9, 186–8.

[26] *RRH*, no. 780 (March 1201). There is only one witness to this charter who did not attest a charter issued by Aimery in 1197 (*RRH*, no. 737), and this man, Rostain Aymar, is not known to have been a vassal in the kingdom of Jerusalem.

military campaigns fought in the interests of Jerusalem. Cypriot knights and sergeants were present at the siege of Beirut in October 1197, and in 1204 the combined strength of Cyprus and Latin Syria participated in a naval raid on the coast of Egypt.[27] Aimery's rule, however, was for the most part a period of peace. The truce with the Muslims was renewed in July 1198 to last for five years and eight months. In the West yet another crusade was prepared, but the main part of the expedition never reached the East. Instead it diverted to Byzantium. The crusaders sacked Constantinople and set up the so-called Latin Empire in its ruins. We are not told how Aimery reacted to these events, although the sour comments of a later writer in the East suggest that they were viewed there with resentment and dismay. But on the expiry of the truce there was little conflict, the most notable engagement being the naval raid of 1204, and in September of that year the truce was again renewed, this time for six years.[28] Aimery's reign had been a time of consolidation. The Muslims had been held at bay and the Latin kingdom had achieved a new stability. The only incident to have endangered its internal tranquillity occurred when Aimery forced Ralph of Tiberias, his rival for the hand of Isabella, into exile after an attempt on the king's life in which he was alleged to have been implicated. Some of Ralph's fellow vassals in the kingdom of Jerusalem protested, but to no avail, and the affair seems to have had no lasting repercussions. Indeed, Aimery's reputation stood high among those later generations of lawyer-barons in whose eyes Ralph too was esteemed for his legal ability.[29]

Guy and Aimery of Lusignan had established permanent western rule in Cyprus, but, although they both occupied the throne of Jerusalem, they had failed to establish a Lusignan dynasty in the mainland kingdom as well. Aimery was father to the only son born to Queen Isabella, but the child predeceased him, dying in February 1205. Aimery himself died on 1 April of that year, and, when Isabella followed him to the grave shortly afterwards, the throne of Jerusalem passed to her eldest daughter, Maria, the child of her marriage to Conrad of Montferrat.[30] In Cyprus Aimery was succeeded by his son Hugh. Hugh was the only surviving son of his marriage to Eschiva of Ibelin and reigned from 1205 until his death in 1218. He was followed by his own only son, Henry I (1218–53), and then by Henry's son, Hugh II (1253–67). In 1267 the line of

[27] For 1197, 'Eracles', p. 224. For 1204, 'Gestes', p. 663; 'Annales de Terre Sainte', ed. R. Röhricht and G. Raynaud, *AOL*, II (1884), 435; Hill, II, 65 note 6.

[28] For the truces, Richard, *The Latin Kingdom*, pp. 207, 210, cf. p. 201. For an eastern comment on the Fourth Crusade, 'Gestes', p. 663.

[29] For this incident, Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 151–2, 156–9; G. A. Loud, 'The *Assise sur la Ligece* and Ralph of Tiberias', *CS*, pp. 206–10. For Aimery's later reputation, Philip of Novara, pp. 523, 544, 569–70; John of Ibelin, pp. 429–30.

[30] 'Anonymi Continuatio appendicis Roberti de Monte ad Sigebertum', *RHF*, XVIII, 342; 'Eracles', p. 305. Cf. Innocent III, vol. 215, col. 699.

Aimery's direct male descendants came to an end, and the succession passed to the son of one of Hugh I's daughters.

Henry I and the two Hughs were all minors at the time of their accession. Heirs, whether to fiefs or to the throne, came of age in the East at fifteen, but although the age of majority was comparatively low, no less than thirty-two out of the sixty-two years between the death of Aimery in 1205 and the death of Hugh II in 1267 were years of royal minority. It is hardly surprising therefore that none of these kings left a strong personal impression on the politics of the age. Hugh I was perhaps the ablest. A brief character-sketch by a near contemporary spoke of him being ready to embark on anything that might redound to his honour, being fond of the company of knights and being easily angered and stirred to violence.[31] Henry I was less than a year old when his father died, and his long minority was marked by worsening relations between his mother, the regent Philip of Ibelin and a group of knights opposed to Philip. As we shall see, this three-cornered struggle led eventually to a civil war which ended in 1233, the year after Henry came of age, with a complete victory for the Ibelin faction. For the next twenty years Henry ruled Cyprus without ever, it would seem, holding the limelight in the politics of the Latin East of his day. Hugh II, like his father, was only a few months old at his accession. The regency was held first by his mother, Plaisance of Antioch, and then after her death in 1261 by his cousin, another Hugh, who is known to historians as Hugh of Antioch-Lusignan. In 1267, still a minor, the young king died.

Hugh II's death without direct heirs contributed to what was an already complex dynastic dispute developing in the Latin East. Initially the dispute had concerned the kingdom of Jerusalem, and its background and wider implications will be considered later.[32] In 1267 there were two claimants to the Cypriot throne: the sons of Henry I's two sisters, Maria and Isabella. Maria, the elder sister, had married Count Walter of Brienne; Isabella, the younger sister, had married Henry of Antioch, the brother of of Prince Bohemond V of Antioch. Each couple had a son named Hugh: respectively Hugh of Brienne and Hugh of Antioch-Lusignan. Hugh of Antioch-Lusignan, the son of the younger sister, was older than Hugh of Brienne, the son of the elder sister. The question of which of them was the nearer heir of Hugh II had been debated earlier in the 1260s in the context of arguments over who should exercise the regency in the kingdom of Jerusalem. On that occasion the High Court of Jerusalem had come down on the side of Hugh of Antioch-Lusignan. In 1267, therefore, Hugh of Antioch-Lusignan was regent in Acre, and he was also regent in Cyprus where Hugh of Brienne had not previously asserted his claims. Not surprisingly it was Hugh of Antioch-Lusignan, the candidate already in effective control, who was recognized as king of Cyprus in preference to his cousin. He was crowned on

[31] 'Eracles', p. 360. [32] Below, pp. 89–90.

Christmas Day 1267 and reigned as King Hugh III. Rebuffed and frustrated, Hugh of Brienne departed for the West.[33] He took service with Charles of Anjou, Hugh III's most formidable enemy in Europe, and in about 1275, perhaps with Charles' assistance, he was trying to organize an army to win the island by force. However, he was unable to press his claim, and in 1289 he was attempting to sell his rights to the throne of Cyprus to King Alphonso III of Aragon.[34] Final echoes of the affair are heard in the early fourteenth century when the French publicist, Peter Dubois, suggested that the French monarchy should purchase the Brienne claim from Hugh's heir as a prelude to endowing a younger son of King Philip IV with the island, and in 1331 when rumours reached the pope that King Robert of Naples might be encouraging the Briennes to acquire the island.[35]

In 1268, with the execution of Conrad V of Hohenstaufen, the senior branch of the royal family of Jerusalem died out, and King Hugh III, as a descendant through his maternal grandmother of Queen Isabella and Henry of Champagne, mounted the throne of the mainland kingdom. Once again Cyprus and Jerusalem shared the same monarch, and henceforth the kings of Cyprus took their title from both kingdoms, even though the remaining Christian possessions on the Syrian littoral passed into Muslim control in 1291. By the late 1260s the kingdom of Jerusalem, or what was left of it, needed a period of strong and vigorous rule if Muslim encroachments were to be resisted. Hugh III saw the need and made a valiant effort to meet the threat, but he found himself incapable of uniting the various interests in Latin Syria behind him. In 1276 he despaired and retired to Cyprus. Part of the trouble was that his title to the throne of Jerusalem was in dispute. An unmarried cousin, Maria of Antioch, had also put forward a claim, and, like Hugh of Brienne, she too turned to Charles of Anjou, the king of Sicily. Charles bought her claim for himself, and, in 1277, after Hugh's departure, his officers took control in Acre.

Hugh III died in 1284. He was succeeded by his eldest surviving son, John, who in his turn died the following year, and then by his next son, Henry II, who reigned until 1324. In 1286 Henry regained control of Acre for the Lusignans – a success made possible by the rebellion of 1282 known as the Sicilian Vespers which had the effect of putting an end to the expansionist aims of the Sicilian Angevins. But in 1291 Acre and the other Christian-held ports were lost to the

[33] 'Gestes', p. 769; Ibn al-Furāt (*Ayyubids, Mamlukes and Crusaders: Selections from the Tārīkh al-Duwal wa'l Mulūk*, ed. and trans. U. and M. C. Lyons with historical introduction and notes by J. Riley-Smith (Cambridge, 1971), II, 129) indicates that he was in Cilicia at the time of Hugh II's death.

[34] Gregory X and John XXI, *Registres*, ed. J. Guiraud and L. Cadier (Paris, 1892–1960), no. 832; E. Lourie, 'An offer of the Suzerainty and Escheat of Cyprus to Alphonso III of Aragon by Hugh de Brienne in 1289', *EHR*, LXXXIV (1969), 101–3.

[35] Peter Dubois, 'Opinio cujusdam suadentis regi Francie ut regnum Jerosolimitanum et Cipri acquireret pro altero filiorum suorum, ac de invasione regni Egipti', ed. C.-V. Langlois in Peter Dubois, *De recuperatione Terre Sancte* (Paris, 1891), p. 140; N. Housley, 'Charles II of Naples and the Kingdom of Jerusalem', *Byzantion*, LIV (1984), 533.

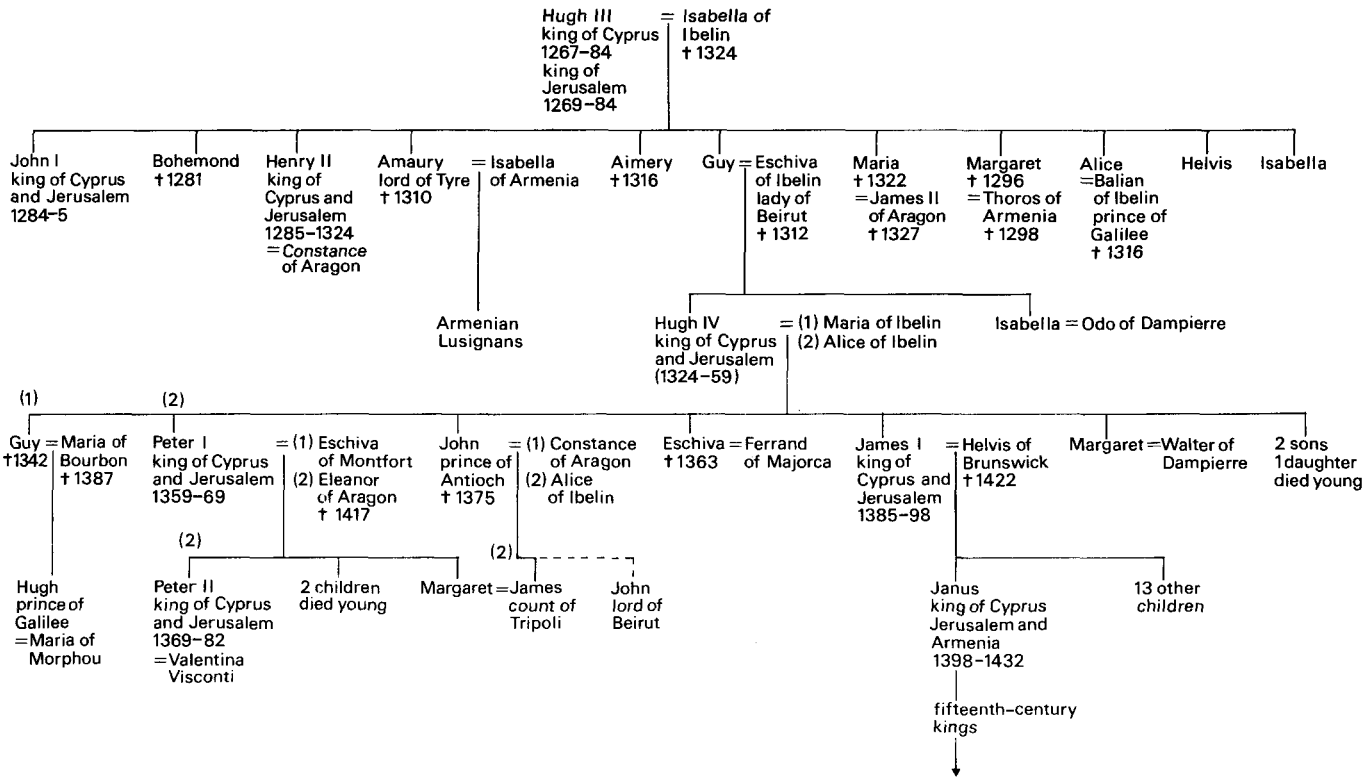

Figure 2 The Lusignan dynasty, 1267–1398

Muslims, and Henry and the bulk of the survivors retreated to Cyprus. Much of the rest of Henry's thirty-nine year reign – his was the longest of any of the Lusignan kings – is a dismal story of quarrels with the nobility, futile gestures of hostility towards the Muslims and inconsequential diplomacy. The king himself was frequently ill and was almost certainly impotent.[36] On his death the throne passed to his nephew, Hugh IV (1324–59). The accession of neither Hugh IV nor his son, Peter I (1359–69), passed unchallenged, but the reigns of these two kings are generally regarded as the period in which Lusignan Cyprus reached the apogee of its power and prosperity. Under Peter I the dynasty enjoyed a brief moment of military glory. But during the reign of his son and successor, Peter II (1369–82), the kingdom suffered a crippling invasion by the Genoese, who were to occupy Famagusta from 1373 until 1464. Thereafter political and economic decline proceeded apace. Under James I (1382–98) the dynasty acquired a third crown, that of Cilician Armenia – a purely titular honour since Cilicia itself had succumbed to Muslim invasion a few years earlier. In King Janus' reign (1398–1432) the Mamlūks invaded Cyprus from Egypt, causing considerable devastation and placing the island under tribute. After the death of John II in 1458, civil war broke out between the supporters of his heiress and those of his bastard son, James. James was eventually victorious and ruled until his death in 1473. His only legitimate son died in infancy the following year, and with his death the dynasty had all but ended.[37] James' widow, the Venetian noblewoman Catherine Cornaro, reigned in her own right under Venetian tutelage until in 1489 she was induced to abdicate and allow Venice to assume outright sovereignty. With her departure for the West that same year the Cypriot monarchy had ceased to exist.

[36] For Henry's ill-health, see for example Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 703, 704; 'Amadi', pp. 248–9, 254. There is little evidence for the widely repeated belief that he was an epileptic. But see Domenico Malipiero, 'Annali Veneti dall'anno 1457 al 1500', ed. A. Sagredo, *Archivio Storico Italiano*, VII (1843–4), 593. For his presumed impotency, Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 718; W. H. Rudt de Collenberg, 'Les dispenses matrimoniales accordées à l'Orient latin selon les registres du Vatican d'Honorius III à Clément VII (1223–1385)', *MEFR*, LXIX (1979), no. 88 (pp. 74–5).

[37] For other, illegitimate branches of the Lusignan family surviving in the 16th century, Rudt de Collenberg, 'Les Lusignan', pp. 240–67.