

KINGSHIP AND GOVERNMENT



THE SOCIAL and political system which operated in Lusignan Cyprus derived both from the island's Byzantine past and also from the concepts and institutions introduced by the new rulers after 1192. The monarchy remained essentially western in its outlook and attributes. What is known of the coronation ritual shows that the dynasty subscribed to ideas of kingship which belonged firmly within the European tradition.¹ At its inception, and theoretically until 1247, the kingdom existed as a dependency of the western empire, and Aimery, the first of the kings, was invested with a sceptre and diadem supplied by his suzerain, the Hohenstaufen Henry VI.² It is unfortunate that no crown jewels or insignia survive, but the royal seals and, from the early fourteenth century, the depiction of the monarch on the silver *gros* underline the distinctively European ethos of authority.³ It is true that until the late thirteenth century the kings were represented on their bezants in Greek fashion wearing the chlamys or loros, although this is probably more a sign of their conservatism in maintaining an imitative coinage based on a Byzantine type familiar at the time of the conquest than a symbol of their concept of royalty. In any case the garments shown on these coins are not so very different from those seemingly being worn by some twelfth-century kings of Jerusalem on their seals.⁴ The kings used the title 'rex', even when writing in Greek to the emperor at Nicaea, and made no attempt to adopt Byzantine formularies in their diplomatic correspondence. Their diplomas too conformed to the sub-Carolingian, western tradition of the private charter current in Latin Syria: unlike the kings Cilician Armenia, whose royal title had also been conferred by the western emperor in the 1190s, the Lusignans did not issue Byzantine-style chrysobulls.⁵ There is thus no suggestion that they

¹ There is no pontifical from Cyprus giving a coronation *ordo*, but see H. E. Mayer, 'Das Pontifikale von Tyrus und die Krönung der lateinischen Könige von Jerusalem', *DOP*, XXI (1967), 222–4; Florio Bustron, pp. 282–7. ² Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, I, 127; II, 31.

³ G. Schlumberger et al., *Sigillographie de l'Orient latin* (Paris, 1943), pp. 143–52; Richard, *Chypre sous les Lusignans*, plate IV; Metcalf, *Coinage of the Crusades*, plates 19–27.

⁴ Metcalf, *Coinage of the Crusades*, pp. 51–3; cf. Mayer, 'Pontifikale', plates 3–4.

⁵ J. Richard, 'La diplomatie royale dans les royaumes d'Arménie et de Chypre (xii^e–xv^e siècles)', *BEC*, CXLIV (1986), 73–4, 76, 83 (citing a letter to John Vatatzes in which Henry I used the title *ρῆξ*).

projected themselves as the successors to the rebel emperor Isaac Comnenus, and, although they exercised various rights which they had inherited from the Greeks, they did not see their authority primarily in Byzantine terms.

The dynasty's insistence on western as opposed to Byzantine ceremonial is further illustrated by the appointment of the traditional grand sergeants: the seneschal, constable, marshal, chamberlain and butler. In the twelfth century these offices had been introduced from Europe into the Latin East, and a Cypriot seneschal, constable and marshal all made their appearance as early as the 1190s.⁶ The first known chamberlain of Cyprus is recorded in 1218, but there is no evidence for the presence of a butler until 1328.⁷ In the fourteenth century Hugh IV revived the posts of seneschal, constable, marshal and butler of Jerusalem; a chamberlain of Jerusalem appeared in 1360, and when in 1394 James I was crowned king of the now defunct Armenian kingdom on the death of his distant kinsman, Leo VI, he appointed Cypriot knights as marshal and chamberlain of Armenia. From the early thirteenth century the seneschals and constables came from the higher nobility or from the royal house itself, while the holders of the other sergeancies were almost always knights from well-established families.⁸ But whereas in certain instances in Latin Syria and commonly in the West these posts became hereditary, in no case in Cyprus was their tenure heritable until the late fifteenth century.⁹

There is no doubt that prestige and honour accrued to the occupants of these positions and that the grand sergeants had a major part to play in the pageantry and solemnities of royal government. But it is worth asking whether their offices only carried with them duties on formal occasions or if they also involved vital tasks in the day-to-day running of the kingdom. Writing in the 1260s about the kingdom of Jerusalem, John of Ibelin count of Jaffa described in detail the ceremonial role of the seneschal, constable, marshal and chamberlain on the day of the king's coronation and, in the case of the seneschal and the chamberlain, at other formal crown wearings, before giving an account of their administrative and military functions.¹⁰ Most interesting is his account of the duties of the seneschal. According to John the seneschal was responsible for overseeing all royal *baillis* and *escrivains*, except those of the royal household, and for supervising their financial returns; for letting at farm the sources of royal

⁶ Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 599, 607.

⁷ *Liber Iurium*, I, 625; Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 140, 144.

⁸ For the Cypriot grand sergeants and the fourteenth-century grand sergeants of Jerusalem and Armenia, P. W. Edbury, 'The Feudal Nobility of Cyprus, 1192-1400' (unpublished PhD thesis, St Andrews University, 1974), pp. 414-48.

⁹ For the hereditary chamberlains of Jerusalem and constables of Tripoli, L. de Mas Latrie, 'Le fief de la Chamberlainie et les chambellans de Jérusalem', *BEC*, XLIII (1882), 651-2; J. Richard, *Le comté de Tripoli sous la dynastie toulousaine (1102-1187)* (Paris, 1945), pp. 49-50. For hereditary constables and marshals of Cyprus from the 1470s, C. du Fresne du Cange, *Les familles d'Outremer*, ed. E. G. Rey (Paris, 1869) pp. 682-3, 688-9.

¹⁰ John of Ibelin, pp. 407-14, cf. p. 31.

income; for provisioning castles and appointing officers below the rank of castellan; for presiding at the High Court in the absence of the king or his deputy; normally he would be at the king's side in battle, and he took charge of the king's share of the spoils of war. Perhaps as an afterthought John concluded by mentioning that the seneschal's responsibilities included authorizing the payment of assignments and other disbursements from the *secrète*. But Cypriot evidence offers no corroboration for the seneschal exercising the major administrative role that John had described. For example, in the fourteenth century it was the *bailli* of the *secrète* to whom the *escrivains* of the *cour des bourgeois* rendered account and who transmitted royal instructions to royal *baillis* throughout the island,¹¹ and there is nothing to suggest that the *bailli* of the *secrète* was himself held answerable to the seneschal. On the other hand, the seneschal did preside at the High Court in the absence of the monarch, although the evidence does not say much for his effectiveness in this role: in 1324 on the death of Henry II and in 1369 on the death of Peter I the High Court met to give its formal recognition to the new king, but on neither occasion could the seneschal be present and the vassals had to choose one of their own number who, as acting-seneschal, could conduct the business before them.¹²

The duties of the constable as described by John of Jaffa were basically those of commander-in-chief: when the king went on campaign the constable was under his direction, but otherwise he could be called upon to lead the army himself. He had power to decide who should be summoned to perform military service, and he had a court which took cognizance of military discipline and matters such as disputed claims over pay. There are a number of instances on which the constable can be seen acting as a commander: for example, Walter of Caesarea led the Cypriots at Damietta during the Fifth Crusade, and Guy of Ibelin shared the command with his brother during St Louis' expedition to Egypt.¹³ But our sources, other than the legal treatises, tell little about the constable's military jurisdiction, although his control over the hiring of mercenaries is attested in 1369.¹⁴ The marshal's functions consisted in the main of assisting the constable and acting as his deputy; he had jurisdiction over squires and special responsibilities for horses, and he held his office from the constable by feudal tenure. Here too evidence to illustrate the routine exercise of his duties is lacking, although there is no doubt that the marshals regularly

¹¹ 'Abrégé des Assises', p. 243; DVL, I, 199.

¹² 'Documents relatifs à la successibilité', pp. 419-20; John of Ibelin, p. 3 (where the printed text at line 6 should read, '... dou seneschau dou royaume de chipre'; Cod. Vat. lat. 4789 fo. 19 col. 1). In 1324 the office may have been vacant. In 1369 the seneschal, James of Lusignan, was in Famagusta. Leontios Makhairas, §283.

¹³ 'Eracles', pp. 339-40; Joinville, pp. 95, 119, 121, 125-6.

¹⁴ 'Le Livre au Roi', RHC Lois, I, 615-16; John of Ibelin, pp. 209-11, 212; 'Bans et Ordonnances', p. 379. For evidence from 1367 that the constable was empowered to take purveyances for supplying the army, Richard, 'Un évêque', pp. 118, 131-3.

participated in military expeditions: Simon of Montolif, for example, is known to have been killed at the siege of Acre in 1291, and John of Morphou served with distinction at Alexandria in 1365.¹⁵

The chamberlain administered the act of homage owed to the king by his vassals. He was entitled to a fee for this service, which at the beginning of Peter II's reign amounted to ten bezants.¹⁶ However, it is not altogether clear whether this duty had always been his exclusive prerogative: two thirteenth-century writers, Geoffrey Le Tor and James of Ibelin, seem to indicate that the ceremony could be conducted by any liege man.¹⁷ None of the legal treatises mentioned the duties of the fifth grand sergeant, the butler. It would appear that in Jerusalem, where the office-holder normally took the title of *pincerna*, the post had fallen into disuse by the end of the twelfth century.¹⁸ In Cyprus *boutelerii* of both Cyprus and Jerusalem first appear in the fourteenth century, early in the reign of Hugh IV, and it is likely that the king had revived these posts at the time of his accession.¹⁹ There is no reason to suppose that their holders ever had anything more than a ceremonial role.

One way of gauging the extent to which these offices played an essential part in the kingdom's routine administration is to see whether they were allowed to remain vacant for any appreciable periods. In the case of the fourteenth-century grand sergeants of Jerusalem a clear pattern is discernible. Henry II seems not to have made any appointments between 1291 and his death in 1324; Hugh IV, Peter I, Peter II, and also James I appointed men to fill these positions at their accession, and then, as one by one their appointees died, they left the offices unfilled.²⁰ The implication is clear: the grand sergeants performed their ceremonial function at the coronation and otherwise did nothing. On the other hand, the start of a new reign was not the only occasion on which kings filled vacant Cypriot grand sergeanties. For example, Henry I replaced Balian lord of Beirut as constable of Cyprus with Balian's brother Guy after his death in 1246,

¹⁵ 'Livre au Roi', pp. 613–14, 615–16; John of Ibelin, pp. 212, 410–14. For 1291, 'Lignages', p. 463. For 1365, William of Machaut, p. 74; cf. Leontios Makhairas, §§119, 163, 190, 200, 285. For the constable and marshal's military jurisdiction in the West, M. H. Keen, *The Laws of War in the Late Middle Ages* (London, 1965), pp. 26–8.

¹⁶ Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 425; John of Ibelin, p. 414, cf. p. 400.

¹⁷ Geoffrey Le Tor, 'Livre de Geoffrey le Tort', *RHC Lois*, I, 445; James of Ibelin, p. 454 (but note the variant reading specifying the role of the chamberlain).

¹⁸ The last reference is dated 1186. *RRH*, no. 657.

¹⁹ Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 140, 144; *DVL*, I, 210, 214.

²⁰ The only possible exceptions date from Peter I's reign. According to Leontios Makhairas, Peter appointed his brother James constable of Jerusalem in succession to James of Ibelin (§119). Leontios (§104) also states that Peter appointed John Viscount marshal of Jerusalem in 1360, although later in the reign Simon Tenoury is found with this office. Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 254; John of Ibelin, p. 6. But Leontios is frequently mistaken about these appointments, and it is possible that James of Lusignan was appointed at the time of Peter II's coronation and that neither James of Ibelin nor John Viscount held office.

and on Balian of Ibelin's death in 1302 Henry II appointed his brother Philip of Ibelin to be seneschal.²¹ Henry II had at least four constables during his reign and Hugh IV at least two.²² The chief problem is that the evidence is so patchy. Thus although the documentary materials for the period are relatively plentiful and the post of constable remained filled, there is no evidence for there being a seneschal, marshal or chamberlain of Cyprus between Henry I's majority in 1232 and the year 1247. It is therefore by no means certain that kings always replaced vacated Cypriot sergeanties, and the picture is obscured still further by the dearth of sources for the third quarter of the thirteenth century and the likelihood that no appointments could be made during the long royal minorities which occupied so much of the island's history between 1205 and the accession of Hugh III in 1267. The eminence of many of the appointees and the absence of concrete evidence to illustrate the routine duties of their office raise further difficulties in assessing their role. Did Philip of Ibelin acquire his dominance in the reign of Henry II because he held the post of seneschal or because he was the king's uncle? Did John prince of Antioch play a major part in the campaigns of the 1360s because he was constable or because as brother of the king he naturally had a place as one of the greatest lords in the kingdom?

At best therefore we have to be content with a hypothesis. It is possible that under Guy of Lusignan, Aimery, and Hugh I the grand sergeanties carried onerous responsibilities and that the constable continued to fulfil his military duties long afterwards, but later in the thirteenth century and more definitely in the fourteenth appointments to these offices became more a matter of honouring men who were either members of the royal family, leading magnates or already prominent as royal counsellors. The existence of grand sergeants is not therefore a pointer to the structure of royal administration; their significance lies rather in what they have to say about contemporary notions of monarchy. The kings needed the traditional officers of state for the same reason that they used conventional iconography and maintained the long-established rituals on great occasions: they wanted to be seen as monarchs in a time-honoured mould that placed them firmly in the European tradition of kingship and gave them the right to be treated as equals by the other kings in Latin Christendom. In surrounding themselves with specially selected vassals who would perform the ritual acts of service that belonged with their offices they were not just conferring distinction on the individuals concerned but were basking in the reflected glory of men who by blood, prowess or service would in their turn add lustre to the crown.

²¹ For Balian of Beirut, *RRH*, nos. 1071, 1078, 1092. For Guy of Ibelin, *Layettes du Trésor des Chartes*, ed. A. Teulet *et al.* (Paris, 1863–1909), no. 3648. For Balian and Philip of Ibelin, 'Gestes', p. 857; 'Amadi', 238.

²² Baldwin of Ibelin, Guy of Lusignan, Aimery of Lusignan, and Hugh, later Hugh IV; Humphrey of Montfort, Guy of Lusignan, and probably John prince of Antioch.

As kings of Cyprus the Lusignans took the lead in both peace and war, acted as the guardians of justice and equity, accepted their duty as the protectors of their people, possessed a wide range of prerogatives and, in consequence of their wealth and pre-eminence, controlled the most extensive network of patronage in their island realm. As *chef seigneurs* they took homage and fealty from their vassals and so stood in a special relationship to all the major secular landholders from whose ranks they drew many of their counsellors, military commanders and officials. They were careful to retain the major towns as part of their domain, and at no point did they grant any significant fortification in the island to a vassal to be held as a part of his fief. Commercial taxation and defence thus remained royal monopolies, and the financial and military advantages that resulted meant that, except under extraordinary circumstances as in 1310, armed insurrection could never be a serious proposition. Hand in hand with royal control of towns and fortifications went royal control over the administration of justice. In striking contrast to the situation in both the kingdom of Jerusalem and in Frankish Greece, there was no privatization of judicial authority with the result that no Cypriot vassal ever acquired legal franchises such as the right to try criminal cases for which the penalty would be death or mutilation. The only inroads into the kings' control of justice came about as a result of the privileges granted to the Genoese and Venetian communities and meant that their nationals were justiciable by their own officers. The kings also seem to have retained rights over public roads – what Philip of Novara referred to as 'vaselico', a term which is to be understood as his rendering of the Byzantine *βασιλική γῆ* and which another legal writer translated as 'chemin reau' – and one implication of this would presumably have been that landowners could not levy tolls on the traffic on major highways crossing their estates.²³ The production of salt, notably at the salines near the modern town of Larnaca, remained a royal monopoly, as did the minting of coins. In contrast to the situation in Latin Syria where in the thirteenth century an array of western coinage circulated alongside the local issues, in Cyprus the authorities ensured that the silver currency in daily use came from their own mints.²⁴ Taken together these royal prerogatives clearly point to the Lusignans inheriting and adapting much of the substance and concept of Byzantine public authority.

But like all western monarchs the kings remained limited by convention and precedent as well as by practical considerations, and their capacity to act depended to a considerable extent on the advice and co-operation of their leading men. Peter I's violation of feudal custom was a principal element in the

²³ Philip of Novara, p. 533; J. Prawer, *Crusader Institutions* (Oxford, 1980), p. 166.

²⁴ For salt, Richard, 'La révolution', p. 113. For the absence of foreign coins, Metcalf, 'A Decline', pp. 264–5; cf. *idem*, *Coinage of the Crusades*, pp. 91–3.

events leading to his assassination in 1369, and it is noteworthy that on that occasion the vassals considered making him renew his coronation oaths; they were no doubt thinking primarily of the promise to abide by the law and customs of the kingdom that he would have made at the start of his reign. The *ordonnance* issued directly after Peter's death laid down that in future the king could not declare war, make peace or recruit more than a hundred men-at-arms without 'the assent of all the vassals or the greater part of them', but although kings doubtless discussed military policy with their chosen counsellors there is nothing to suggest that hitherto they had been under any obligation to gain the approval of their liegemen as a whole. At the same time it was asserted that there could be no taxation or financial impositions without the vassals' agreement, and here, by contrast, the document's wording clearly implies that their consent to extraordinary taxation had hitherto been normal.²⁵ It is worth noting, however, that in 1369 there was no suggestion that consent to military policy or taxation should be sought beyond the comparatively restricted circle of the royal vassals: participation from the 'Third Estate' had no place in the system of governance. Although the urban population could be called together at times of particular gravity, such meetings seem to have been organized on a purely *ad hoc* basis and showed no sign of developing the characteristics of communal government or of providing the framework for the regular involvement of the populace in representative institutions.²⁶

All royal vassals had access to the High Court. This remained the king's court *par excellence*, the highest tribunal in the realm, and it was here that a wide variety of his judicial and governmental business was transacted and received its validation. The law, customs and procedures of the court had been imported from Jerusalem at the time of the Latin settlement of Cyprus. The king, advised by his men, who were thereby fulfilling their formal obligation to provide *consilium*, normally presided in person. Questions of royal succession and regency were determined in the High Court; all matters concerning fiefs and fiefholders came within its competence; it was the forum in which the feudatories could engage in litigation, and it was there that they gave assent to the alienation of royal lands and to diplomatic treaties. It also had legislative powers: in 1311, for example, the High Court gave its approval to a measure which sought to resolve the legal difficulties arising from the interruption of normal royal government caused by the usurpation of Amaury of Tyre, and in 1312 it passed an *assise* (apparently re-enacted in 1355) which dealt with an assortment of matters including ownership of strayed falcons, dogs and horses.²⁷

²⁵ 'Bans et Ordonnances', pp. 378–9.

²⁶ B. Arbel, 'Urban Assemblies and Town Councils in Frankish and Venetian Cyprus', *Πρακτικά του Δευτέρου Διεθνούς Κυπριολογικού Συνεδρίου*, II, (Nicosia, 1986), 204–5.

²⁷ Perrat, 'Un diplomate gascon', pp. 82–3; Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 423; 'Ban et ordonnances', pp. 368–70, 373–7.

The line between enactments agreed in the High Court which had the effect of changing the law and administrative instructions which the king could issue to his officials on his own authority could be a fine one. In 1300 Henry II empowered the viscount of Nicosia to change the procedures for arraigning criminals before the *cour des bourgeois*, but the viscount and the jurors of his court refused to accept the new measures on the grounds that they contravened the *assises* and *usages* which they had sworn to apply. Eventually there was a showdown: the viscount was dismissed and the oath to be taken by his successors and the jurors amended to include an undertaking to accept the king's 'special commandment' even if it seemed at variance with the customs and usages of the kingdom. Had the viscount been required to enforce a new *assise* issued in the High Court with the consent of the liegemen there would have been no argument; his objection was to Henry in effect changing the law by decree. This episode is a useful reminder that the king could and did act independently of the High Court in his dealings with his own administrators. What seems extraordinary was that the viscount should have risked his own position by turning the matter into an issue of principle.²⁸

Although there is a wealth of information on the judicial procedures applicable in the High Court, not much is known about the overall structure of its workings. How far litigation was separated from what might be loosely described as government business is unclear. Nor do we know how well attended the court was, although it is probably safe to assume that the greatest lords and those closest to the king took a dominant role and that kings normally met little opposition. On one occasion in the 1230s, however, a large number of vassals complaining about the arrears in paying their fief-rents confronted King Henry I.²⁹ In the fifteenth century just two vassals, who together with the king as president constituted a quorum, witnessed the High Court's written *acta*; how many others would have been present when the business itself was transacted is unrecorded.³⁰ There is also a question mark over the frequency of its meetings and its adequacy as a court where the vassals could gain redress. In 1306 there were complaints about delays of up to twenty years, and in 1369 it was laid down that the court should meet at least once a month so that people could be given a hearing. But at the end of the fourteenth century the celebrated Lusignan apologist, Philip of Mézières, could nevertheless hold up the Cypriot judicial system as a model of equitable and speedy justice.³¹

²⁸ 'Abrégé des Assises', pp. 320–3; cf. 'Bans et Ordonnances', pp. 370–1.

²⁹ Philip of Novara, pp. 515–16; John of Ibelin, pp. 383–4.

³⁰ See, for example, Richard, *Chypre sous les Lusignan*, pp. 139–57 *passim*; *Le Livre des remembrances de la secrète du royaume de Chypre (1468–1469)* ed. J. Richard and T. Papadopoulos (Nicosia, 1983), nos. 145–85.

³¹ 'Texte officiel', p. 536; 'Bans et Ordonnances', p. 379; Philip of Mézières, *Le Songe du Vieil Pelerin*, 1, 487.

The High Court provided a formal setting for kings to speak with their liegemen, but kings also took advice less formally from whomever they might choose to consult. For their part the leading men in the kingdom expected to gain their monarch's ear. A major complaint against Henry II was that he relied exclusively on the counsel of his uncle, Philip of Ibelin, and his disregard of his other vassals prompted the charge in 1306 that he had allowed various abuses to continue 'sans nul conseil, sauve le conseil de volonté'. Taking proper advice was sensible; royal wilfulness was not.³² Out of the practice of informal consultation grew the royal Council. Its origins are necessarily obscure. Speaking in 1271 James of Ibelin provided an early reference to royal counsellors: in 1248 Henry I had summoned his vassals to serve on St Louis' crusade to Damietta; they, however, refused to answer the summons on the grounds that it went beyond their feudal obligations, but the king and those who were counselling him, so James alleged, prevented the court from taking the opportunity to make a ruling on the issue.³³ In his legal treatise, written in 1276, James made a more specific allusion to the Council: it was treasonable to betray its secrets.³⁴ However, it is not until the fourteenth century that references to the Council or to royal counsellors become frequent. In 1311 the king and his Council discussed a memorandum to be sent to the pope on the subject of the recovery of the Holy Land, and in the reigns of Peter I and Peter II the 'lords of the Council' are regularly mentioned advising the monarch on military and diplomatic matters.³⁵ Only a scattering of individuals are specifically described as counsellors in the surviving sources: among them members of the royal family such as John of Lusignan lord of Beirut in 1395; knights such as Hugh Beduin, Thomas of Picquigny and Simon of Montolif in 1328, John Beduin in 1344 and Peter of Caffran in 1390; clergy such as the Franciscan Aimery, later bishop of Paphos, in 1315; and foreigners such as Giustino dei Giustini in 1328 or the physician Guido da Bagnolo in 1365.³⁶ It has to be assumed that the Council met behind closed doors, that its composition varied according to circumstances, and that no one had a place there as of right. Those members of the Council who were liegemen would probably have taken a prominent role in expediting royal business in the High Court, but there is nothing to suggest that the Council came to acquire any of the High Court's juridical functions.

For the thirteenth century information is sparse on the subject of the royal central administration and its personnel. On the one hand it is possible to piece

³² 'Texte officiel', p. 536; 'Gestes', p. 857.

³³ 'Document relatif au service militaire', p. 432.

³⁴ James of Ibelin, p. 459. Cf. Philip of Novara, p. 487. For the confidentiality of Council business, see also 'Bans et Ordonnances', p. 371.

³⁵ Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 119; John Dardel, p. 44; Leontios Makhairas, §§123, 182, 192, 411 (*ἀρχοντες τῆς βουλῆς του*), cf. §§373, 390.

³⁶ Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 266, 420, 428; III, 705; DVL, I, 210; Clement VI, *Lettres closes* . . . France, no. 833.

together a partial sequence of chancellors of the kingdom, and on the other there is a single isolated reference to a *bailli* of the *secrète* – Arneis of Jubail, who is mentioned as holding that office in Philip of Novara's narrative of the events of 1231.³⁷ As earlier in the kingdom of Jerusalem, the chancellor's duties involved drafting the king's formal *acta* and diplomatic correspondence. It was a post which required that its holder should be able to express the king's wishes with legal precision. All the known chancellors before 1300 were Latin clergy, beneficed in one or other of the cathedrals on the island: in the 1190s Alan, archdeacon of Lydda and first archbishop of Nicosia; in the time of Hugh I Ralph, archdeacon of Nicosia; under Henry I a canon of Nicosia named Bonvassal of Aude; Peter bishop of Paphos under Hugh III, and then Henry of Jubail, archdeacon of Nicosia, who had already taken office by 1289 and is last found in 1330.³⁸ But in the fourteenth century the pattern changed. After Henry of Jubail no chancellors are known until the appointment of Uomobuono of Mantua, a royal physician, at the beginning of Peter I's reign. Another layman, Philip of Mézières who had taken office by March 1363, soon followed.³⁹ After Peter's murder Philip lived in the West while remaining nominally chancellor of Cyprus, and, although a vice-chancellor is mentioned in documents from the mid-1370s,⁴⁰ no other chancellor of the kingdom is known until after the middle of the fifteenth century. Henry of Jubail too stayed away from the island for several years, and his chequered career must have prevented him from performing his functions as chancellor regularly. At the end of his life he was definitely delegating his duties.⁴¹

The fact that royal business could proceed without the presence of a chancellor for years at a time would suggest that the office had become something of a sinecure, and it is clear that in practice the task of drawing up the king's legal documents passed at some point, probably during the reign of Henry II, into the hands of laymen whom the kings employed because they were qualified as notaries. In 1328 John *de Galiana*, 'publicus imperiali auctoritate notarius et nunc ipsius domini regis cancellarie scriba publicus', was drafting royal documents. The following year we find Stephen of Cyprus, 'publicus imperiali auctoritate notarius et iudex ordinarius' – elsewhere he is described as

³⁷ 'Gestes', p. 710.

³⁸ Richard, 'La diplomatie royale', p. 77. For the earliest reference to Henry of Jubail as chancellor, Nicholas IV, no. 1013.

³⁹ Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 230, 249. For Uomobuono, see also Leontios Makhairas, §§100 and note 233. Cf. *I libri commemoriali*, II, 281.

⁴⁰ Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 781 note 1, cf. p. 778 note 2; Gregory XI, *Lettres secrètes . . . les pays autres*, no. 2073.

⁴¹ Henry was at the papal court between 1308 and 1313 unsuccessfully seeking recognition as archbishop of Nicosia. *Reg. Clementis V*, nos. 8013, 9815; *I Testamenti di cardinali del ducento*, ed. A. Paravicini Bagliani (Rome, 1980), p. 445. Twice in the 1280s and 1290s he had been under sentence of excommunication, and on a previous visit to the papal curia in the mid-1300s he had been imprisoned. Nicholas IV, no. 1013; Boniface VIII, no. 1317; *Reg. Clementis V*, appendices pp. 353–4, cf. no. 9815. For his delegation of duties, Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 164.

a ‘notary of the lord king’ – acting in the same capacity, and at the end of the fourteenth century king’s chancellors as distinct from chancellors of the kingdom were preparing the king’s legal *acta*: Odo Benedict, ‘sacre majestatis Jerusalem et Cypri regie cancellarius’, in 1389, and Manuel *de Valente*, ‘imperiali auctoritate notarius et . . . domini regis cancellarius’ in 1395.⁴² Like the famous twelfth-century chancellor of Jerusalem, William of Tyre, the clerics who held office as chancellor in the thirteenth century had probably received some legal training. But the subsequent use of notaries who were laymen nevertheless suggests a greater professionalism in the royal secretariat. It may also imply that the kings had less opportunity to secure ecclesiastical benefices for their servants. The last fourteenth-century chancellor, Philip of Mézières, was a knight who is not known to have studied law.⁴³ Maybe he owed his position to the king’s desire to have him in his service as a counsellor, diplomat and propagandist and had little part in the routine business of his office.

In the fourteenth century if not earlier, the chancery came to acquire a judicial function – that of scrutinizing petitions presented to the king. From 1324 there is a reference to a Venetian merchant being allowed to apply to the chancery and the *cour des bourgeois* for redress; the precise circumstances are unclear, but presumably as a foreigner he would not have had access to the High Court, and although he could sue in the *cour des bourgeois* it may be that his case raised questions which went beyond its competence; a petition to the king, or rather to the chancery, might thus provide the only prospect of satisfaction.⁴⁴ The employment of western-trained lawyers and the appearance of a ‘protonotary of the royal chancery of Cyprus’ in 1378 and then of a certain Thomas *de Zenariis* of Padua, ‘legum doctor, judex cancellarie regni Cipri’, who remained active in the island for several years after 1398, strongly suggests that petitioners may have had their cases considered in the light of Roman Law precepts rather than in line with Cypriot and Latin Syrian custom.⁴⁵

The kings needed men like Thomas *de Zenariis* who had received a thorough training in civil law in western Europe. Their expertise was indispensable in the legal aspects of international diplomacy, and some rose high as royal counsellors. Although Cypriots such as Bartholomew of Conches, ‘publicus apostolica auctoritate notarius’, and Philip Chappe, ‘utriusque juris professor’, did go to the West to study law,⁴⁶ the kings frequently recruited foreigners. Although a ‘Magister Petrus Vuasco’ and a ‘Magister Bernardus medicus’ are found in the king’s entourage as far back as 1195, the first of these European-trained lawyers whose career can be traced in any detail was Giustino dei

⁴² *Ibid.*, II, 142, 158, 164, 418, 429; Richard, ‘La diplomatie royale’, pp. 78–9.

⁴³ Jorga, *Philippe de Mézières*, p. 27. ⁴⁴ DVL, I, 199.

⁴⁵ Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 372, 441, 495; ‘Nouvelles preuves’ (1874), p. 120.

⁴⁶ For Bartholomew (1315), ‘Nouvelles preuves’ (1873), p. 64. For Philip (1319), John XXII, *Lettres communes*, no. 9950.

Giustini, a native of Città di Castello, who was acting as a secretary to Henry II in 1309. From then until about 1342 'Justinus de Justinis, jurisperitus, consiliarius regis' remained in regular attendance on both Henry and Hugh IV.⁴⁷ In the 1360s and 1370s the Lombard knight, James of St Michael, 'in legibus doctor' evidently occupied a similar role as a prominent royal servant and legal adviser, eventually becoming vice-chancellor of the kingdom.⁴⁸ Two other legal specialists, both of whom acquired the title of 'judex' of the lord king and so were perhaps precursors of Thomas *de Zenariis* as chancery judges, were Matteo dei Pasquali who served Hugh IV during the first half of his reign and Domenico Rodolfi of Bologna who appears in 1360.⁴⁹ But irrespective of whether they held a formal position in government or simply belonged in the king's entourage, these lawyers were obviously greatly valued. And not only lawyers. As has been seen, Peter I made his Italian physician, Uomobuono of Mantua, chancellor, and another physician, Guido da Bagnolo of Reggio, served him as a counsellor and diplomat.⁵⁰

The *secrète* was the king's central financial office where the farmers of the royal estates and the viscounts and other royal officials rendered account. From its receipts were disbursed pensions and annuities and other items of government expenditure. It seems to have had an extensive archive, which included details of fief-rents, information about rights of *restor* and registers of title to property and royal debts.⁵¹ Physical control of the personnel and records of the *secrète* was seen as essential: thus in 1306 Amaury of Tyre had it moved from the royal palace to his own residence, and on the king's restoration in 1310 it was transferred back again.⁵² The name would seem to indicate that it was descended from the Byzantine *σέκρετον* but the paucity of materials for its workings during

⁴⁷ Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 141–2, 150, 158, 162, 164, 167, 179, 202, III, 705; 'Nouvelles preuves' (1873), p. 64; DVL, I, 210–11, 214; *I libri memoriali*, I, 111, II, 69; 'Amadi', p. 310. For the *magistri* of 1195, Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 599.

⁴⁸ For his origin, 'Amadi', p. 479. For other references, *Biblioteca bio-bibliografica della Terra Santa e dell'Oriente francescano*, ed. G. Golubovich (Quarrachi, 1906–27), v, 165; Gregory XI, *Lettres secrètes . . . les pays autres*, nos. 2073, 3616, 3652; Philip of Mézières, *St Peter Thomas*, p. 169; Leontios Makhairas, §§147, 333–5, 500, 515, 524.

⁴⁹ Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 158, 162, 164, 179, 230, III, 725; Richard, *Chypre sous les Lusignans*, p. 58 note 2.

⁵⁰ Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 249, 254, 255, 265, 266, 302; R. Livi, 'Guido da Bagnolo, medico de re di Cipro', *Atti e memorie della R. deputazione di Storia Patria per le provincie Modenesi*, ser. 5, XI, (1918).

⁵¹ Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 148, 154, 163, 184, 423–5; 'Texte officiel', pp. 538–9; Gregory XI, *Lettres secrètes . . . autres que la France*, no. 128; Richard, *Chypre sous les Lusignans*, pp. 79, 103; Philip of Novara, pp. 511, 550; 'Bans et Ordonnances', pp. 369, 372; 'Abrégé des Assises', pp. 241, 243, 255, 287; Leontios Makhairas, §§157, 402, (Dawkins errs in translating *σύγκριτον* as 'chancery'); 'Amadi', p. 495. for the *secrète* in the fifteenth century *Le Livre des remembrances*, introduction *passim*.

⁵² 'Amadi', pp. 249, 252, 346, 348. By the 1370s it seems to have had its own premises. Leontios Makhairas, §454.

the first century of Lusignan rule means that it is impossible to be certain how far continuity from the previous regime had been maintained at the time of the Latin conquest.⁵³ There does, however, appear to have been a tradition for the office to be staffed by Greeks, although it is not until 1318 that an *escrivain*, George Capadoca, is actually mentioned by name. When in the fifteenth century evidence becomes more plentiful, it is found that all the *secrète* officials except the *bailli* had names that betray their Greek or Syrian origin.⁵⁴

The head of the *secrète*, the *bailli*, was a Latin, and until well into the fifteenth century this office was normally held by a knight. The list of *baillis*, however, is fragmentary: after Arneis of Jubail, *bailli* in 1231, there is no recorded occupant of the post until Thomas of Picquigny in 1301. Hugh Beduin was *bailli* in 1314, and James of Fleury in 1315; Thomas of Picquigny had returned to office by 1318 and remained there until at least as late as 1338. Under Peter I the post was held by John Tenoury (1360) and then Nicholas *Catellus* (1362) and under Peter II by Thomas of Montolif (1372–83).⁵⁵ The title was sometimes embellished. Philip of Novara speaks of the ‘grant bailli’ of the *secrète*, and in the late fourteenth century Renier of Sclar is described as ‘secrete regie Cipri capitaneus et ballivus’.⁵⁶ But although the chancery came to be staffed by western-trained lawyers, many of them from Europe, it would seem that the *secrète* remained the preserve of Cypriots. The *escrivains* were recruited from a group of families who can be thought of as forming a professional civil service. On one occasion Leontios Makhairas mentions a grand chancellor (καυτζιλέρης μέγας) of the *secrète* who was a notary (1370) and on another a judge (νομόκριτος) of the *secrète* (1432), but except for these two stray references there is no sign that professional lawyers featured among its personnel.⁵⁷

Although it is clear that the organs of central government did not remain static during the centuries of Lusignan rule, the surviving evidence allows at best a partial insight into how the system worked. Philip of Novara and the other legal writers of the mid-thirteenth century describe the High Court at length and refer to the *cour des bourgeois*, but they make no reference to what were presumably

⁵³ Note, however, that Leontios Makhairas uses the form σύγκριτον rather than σέκρετον.

⁵⁴ Richard, ‘Psimolofo’, pp. 124, 140; *idem*, *Chypre sous les Lusignans*, p. 12; *Le Livre des remembrances*, pp. xiii–xiv.

⁵⁵ Thomas of Picquigny: ‘Bans et Ordonnances’, p. 365. Hugh: Martínez Ferrando, *Jaime II*, II, 101, 107. James: ‘Nouvelles preuves’ (1873), p. 64. Thomas of Picquigny again: Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 150, 158, 162, 167, 178; *DVL*, I, 210, 214; *I libri commemoriali*, II, 54, 69; John XXII, *Lettres secrètes*, no. 2003; John XXII, *Lettres communes*, no. 43150; Richard, ‘Psimolofo’, p. 140; ‘Amadi’, p. 401. John: *DVL*, II, 64. Nicholas: Livi, ‘Guido da Bagnolo’, p. 54. Thomas of Montolif: Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 396; Gregory XI, *Lettres secrètes . . . les pays autres*, no. 849.

⁵⁶ Philip of Novara, p. 511; Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 420. Cf. Leontios Makhairas, §599; ‘Amadi’, p. 490 (‘capitanio de la secreta’).

⁵⁷ Leontios Makhairas, §§311, 704; *Le Livre des remembrances*, p. xii.

later developments: the hearing of petitions in the chancery and the operation of the court or office of the auditor. The earliest references to the auditor date to the early fourteenth century and suggest that he was a judicial officer who among other things kept records of debts.⁵⁸ It may be that his primary responsibilities lay in examining petitions presented to the king in the light of traditional Cypriot customary law. If so, his function would have paralleled that of the chancery judges who took cognizance of petitions to the king and applied Roman Law principles. The first auditor who can be identified was a knight named Thomas of Montolif whose earliest appearance is in a document of 1355. He remained in office until at least 1373 when the pope addressed him as 'auditor generalis causarum regni Cipri'.⁵⁹ Thomas had a distinguished career as a royal servant and diplomat; in 1372 he was rewarded with the post of butler of Jerusalem and at about the same time became *bailli* of the *secrète*.⁶⁰ He was clearly an expert in the law and procedures of the High Court. In 1369 he acted as John prince of Antioch's procurator at the hearing at which John received recognition as regent, and then in 1372 he performed a similar duty when he made the formal request for Peter II to be deemed to have come of age. He also became a member of the commission set up in 1369 to prepare an official version of John of Jaffa's legal treatise.⁶¹ Later auditors similarly were prominent vassals: John Gorap and then Alnard of Soissons held office in the closing years of the fourteenth century and among other occupants of the office in the fifteenth were James of Fleury and Janus of Montolif.⁶²

Pleas concerning liegemen would have been heard in the High Court and petitions to the crown might have been examined by the chancery judges or by the auditor, but normally the tribunal in which civil and criminal proceedings were conducted was the *cour des bourgeois*. The court comprised a body of assessors or jurors drawn from the local Latin burgess population presided over by a knight who held the title of viscount or *bailli*.⁶³ At the close of the thirteenth century there were viscounts at Nicosia and Famagusta and *baillis* elsewhere as at Limassol,⁶⁴ but from early in the fourteenth century a pattern emerged in

⁵⁸ *Notai Genovesi* (CFFS 43), p. 195 (1307); 'Bans et Ordonnances', p. 369 (1311).

⁵⁹ 'Bans et Ordonnances', p. 377; Gregory XI, *Lettres secrètes . . . les pays autres*, no. 2073, cf. no. 849.

⁶⁰ Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 233; Leontios Makhairas, §§108, 147, 326. For Thomas as *bailli* of the *secrète* above note 55. It is often difficult to distinguish him from a namesake who was also prominent at this time.

⁶¹ John of Ibelin, pp. 5–6; Leontios Makhairas, §320.

⁶² Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 420, 428; DVL, II, 181, 219; Leontios Makhairas, §620; Richard, *Chypre sous les Lusignans*, pp. 128–9.

⁶³ For a fourteenth-century description, 'Abrégé des Assises', pp. 236–44 *et passim*.

⁶⁴ For the viscount of Famagusta, 'Actes passés à Famagouste de 1299 à 1301 par devant le notaire génois Lamberto di Sambuceto', ed. C. Desimoni, AOL, II, (1884), no. 114 (1300); 'Gestes', p. 866. For a *bailli* of Limassol in the 1290s, *Procès des Templiers*, ed. M. Michelet (Paris, 1841–51), II, 223.

which a viscount held office at Nicosia and *baillis* functioned in Famagusta, Limassol, Paphos and Karpasia.⁶⁵ The business before the *cour des bourgeois* ranged from witnessing property transactions to administering criminal justice. The court's procedures and the functions of its officers clearly derived from those of Latin Syria, so much so that the mid-thirteenth-century *Livre des assises de la cour des bourgeois* which described the law as it had operated in Acre was still being copied in Cyprus in the fourteenth century. The responsibilities of the viscounts or *baillis* included collecting urban rents owed to the crown and maintaining public order. In their police duties they were assisted by a *muhtasib* who had under him a force of sergeants.⁶⁶ Their competence, however, was not all-embracing: jurisdiction over commercial matters, in particular in connection with foreign trade, belonged in the hands of the *bailli* of the *commerchium*,⁶⁷ and for disputes involving members of the Syrian population there was also the *cour des Suriens* presided over, as in the kingdom of Jerusalem, by a *rais* who was a knight.⁶⁸ The provincial *baillis* are also found with responsibilities for defence. At Famagusta the posts of viscount or *bailli* on the one hand and of captain or castellan on the other seem to have been differentiated at the start of the fourteenth century but had evidently been merged by the early 1370s.⁶⁹ At Kyrenia early fifteenth-century evidence shows that by then the castellan also acted as the president of the *cour des bourgeois*.⁷⁰

Towards the end of the fourteenth century there appears to have been a considerable reorganization of local government with the division of the island into twelve districts each under a royal officer known as a captain or *chevetaine*, but it is not possible to pin-point the precise date for this reform. The *chevetaines* were much concerned with collecting taxes and other royal revenues, and Professor Richard has suggested that their introduction may be linked with the switch from a policy of letting the royal estates at farm to direct exploitation by the crown which he dates to the reign of Peter II.⁷¹ Until then it would appear that kings had normally farmed the revenues of the lands which comprised the royal domain and so, at least in the countryside, they did not possess a large revenue-gathering bureaucracy. There is evidence too that initially they farmed their urban revenues. In 1199 King Aimery accepted a proffer of 28,050 white bezants in return for the right to levy commercial

⁶⁵ 'Bans et Ordonnances', pp. 377–8. Cf. Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 170.

⁶⁶ Prawer, *Crusader Institutions*, pp. 290–1, 369.

⁶⁷ *Documenti sulle relazioni delle città toscane*, pp. 123–4; Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, *La pratica della mercatura*, ed. A. Evans (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), p. 89.

⁶⁸ J. Richard, 'La cour des Syriens de Famagouste d'après un texte de 1448', *BF*, XII, (1987), 383–8. Cf. Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 89–91.

⁶⁹ Richard, 'La cour des Syriens', p. 389; cf. 'Amadi', p. 250. Leontios Makhairas, §361.

⁷⁰ 'Nouvelles preuves' (1874), pp. 120–1. ⁷¹ *Le Livre des remembrances*, pp. xxi–xxiii.

taxation in Limassol for two years; in the 1360s, however, these revenues were being collected by *secrète* officials.⁷²

Peter I's warfare in the 1360s and then the crippling financial burdens which resulted from the Genoese War in the 1370s resulted in various measures being taken to increase royal income, and the introduction of the twelve *chevetaines* has to be seen as an administrative change designed to make the collection of dues demanded by the crown more efficient. But exactly how the new forms of taxation were organized is not made clear, nor is there any information as to how the *testagium* or poll tax, introduced or at least extended at the end of the thirteenth century, had been administered. Leontios Makhairas relates that early in the 1360s Peter I had entrusted a burgess named John of Stathia (or Castia) with responsibilities for collecting the revenues from irregular taxes and undischarged crown debts. It would seem that John held office as the king's *camerarius*, the head of the chamber or financial section of the royal household, and that what was happening was that the king was channelling extraordinary revenues through there and so bypassing the *secrète*.⁷³ Peter also created or expanded a department known as the *office des enquestes* whose duties evidently included ferreting out moneys owed to the crown. As the protests made directly after his murder make clear, the activities of its officers were deeply resented.⁷⁴ After 1369 it is likely that the administration of extraordinary taxation came under the aegis of a financial officer known as the collector or *πράχτορας*. A Greek, Nicholas Bili, who appears in the mid-1370s is the only named occupant of this post before 1400, although a precursor may have been John of Plessia, described as 'bailivus talie' in a document of 1329.⁷⁵ By the mid-fifteenth century the collector's duties seem to have been merged with those of the *bailli* of the *secrète*, and from then on the occupants of the combined post came from the non-Frankish, civil-service families.⁷⁶

Royal government in Cyprus owed much to its Greek inheritance. The kings' continued control of the organs of justice is commensurate with the Byzantine concept of the state, while the farming of sources of royal revenue could well have been a feature of Cypriot administration before the Latin conquest. But it is equally clear that the Byzantine features of government were adapted to suit the needs and traditions of the new ruling class, and that, at least in the fourteenth

⁷² RRH, no. 755a; Richard, *Chypre sous les Lusignans*, p. 78, cf. pp. 64–5.

⁷³ Leontios Makhairas, §§157, 215. Leontios errs in stating that John was made chamberlain of the kingdom, a post then held by Peter Malocello. ⁷⁴ Richard, 'La révolution', pp. 111–15.

⁷⁵ Leontios Makhairas, §§88, 445, 563 and note, 693; Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 158.

⁷⁶ Philip Salah, *bailli* of the *secrète* from about 1448, is described on one occasion as 'pretoris nostre secrete regalis', and Philip Ceba, *bailli* in 1468 is referred to as *πράκτορις* (a variant on *πράχτορας*, the form preferred by Leontios). Richard, *Chypre sous les Lusignans*, p. 141 note 1; *Le Livre des remembrances*, p. xii.

century when the evidence becomes relatively plentiful, innovations and reforms in response to changing circumstances and external influences were being carried through. The Lusignans' ability to adapt the administrative infrastructure of their kingdom must have counted much towards their survival in the face of growing difficulties after the mid-fourteenth century. On the other hand, the kings were of necessity conservative in their concept of regality, and they were ably served and supported by an equally conservative nobility. Vassals played an indispensable role in government, as counsellors, administrators, military commanders and envoys, and there can be no doubt that the successful interdependence of the king and his nobles contributed much to the stability of the regime. The presence of sound administrative traditions and the existence of an articulate and co-operative nobility meant that the royal house could and did survive the minorities of the thirteenth century and the dangerous dynastic crises of the fourteenth.