9

CLIMACTERIC

PETER I was murdered on 16 January 1369. Later that same day his thirteen-year-old son was proclaimed king as Peter II. As the new monarch was too young to rule in his own right, it was necessary to appoint a regent, and the High Court immediately ratified the candidature of his uncle, John prince of Antioch.[1] On the basis of thirteenth-century precedents it could have been argued that the widowed queen-mother should have been chosen instead: in 1218 Alice of Champagne had become regent for the infant Henry I, and in 1253 it was Plaisance of Antioch who nominally at least held the reins of government for Hugh II. But in 1369 Eleanor of Aragon was passed over. What in effect had happened was that the regicides themselves had seized power. The prince evidently enjoyed the support of the overwhelming majority of the nobility and was to remain the dominant figure in the kingdom until 1373. For her part, Eleanor became the focus for opposition to the new regime, increasingly determined to seek vengeance on her husband's killers.

The chief problems facing the regent were how to end the war with the Muslims and the related question of how to get the royal finances back on an even keel. As we have seen, since 1367 the Cypriots had been keeping up their attacks on the Mamlūk coastline in the hope of extracting advantageous terms in a negotiated settlement. John continued this approach, sending raiding expeditions against Syrian and Egyptian ports in the summer of 1369 and then co-operating with the Venetians and Genoese in the initiative which eventually led to the treaty of 1370.[2] The return to peace would have led directly to a reduction in royal expenditure and at the same time facilitated the resumption of normal commercial activity and hence a revival in royal revenues from trade. John also adopted draconian measures to restore the royal domain. In the words of John Dardel,

> After the death of King Peter . . . the prince who held the government of the realm repossessed all the fiefs which King Peter, his brother, had given to foreigners and seized them and took their revenues . . .[3]

[1] John of Ibelin, pp. 3–6. [2] Above, pp. 170–1. [3] John Dardel, pp. 39–40.

The assertion that all the fiefs were taken back is an exaggeration – the Cornaro family, for example, retained their estate at Episkopi – but there is no doubt that the prince and his followers pursued a rigorous policy. Non-resident fief-holders were particularly vulnerable since failure to perform homage to the new king or his regent within a year and a day was grounds for forfeiture. Peter's favourite, Brémond of La Voulte, evidently lost his fiefs for this reason. In March 1371 and again in May he had the pope write to the prince asking for him to be permitted to defer the homage due to the young king for five years; in August the pope wrote once more, this time reporting Brémond's death and requesting that his son be allowed to inherit his fiefs and postpone homage. But to no avail: when we next hear of Brémond's estates, Polemidhia and Ayios Reginos, they were in the hands of the prince of Antioch's own sons.[4] Nor was Brémond alone in seeking papal help: other westerners with fiefs in Cyprus tried a similar course of action. The authorities also seized upon the failure to perform the service owed for fiefs or the absence of adequate legal title as pretexts for rescinding Peter I's alienations and so hounding the foreigners who had benefited from his largesse.[5]

But although the new rulers of Cyprus were able to repair some of the damage caused by Peter's extravagance, the murder gave rise to serious diplomatic problems. In particular, John was anxious to avoid papal displeasure and sent a canon of Nicosia cathedral named Bartholomew Escaface to report the late king's death to the pope. News of the erstwhile crusader's fate, however, had already reached Pope Urban, and the prince had to dispatch a second embassy, this time headed by the bishop of New Phocea, to turn aside his anger. The ambassadors arrived at the curia around the beginning of 1370. In a move reminiscent of the ploy tried by Amaury of Tyre in the first decade of the century, they apparently used the prospect of a Muslim invasion of Cyprus as a lever to gain grudging recognition for the prince's regime. The pope then wrote to John encouraging him to safeguard the kingdom and also telling him to proceed with the young king's coronation.[6]

It was not until the summer of 1370 that Queen Eleanor is reported to have taken steps to seek revenge on her husband's murderers and undermine the prince of Antioch's hold on the government. According to Leontios Makhairas, in the August of that year a notary and royal official named Nicholas of Naoun

[4] Gregory XI, *Lettres secrètes et curiales relatives à la France*, ed. L. Mirot *et al.* (Paris, 1935–57), no. 225; *idem*, *Lettres secrètes . . . les pays autres*, nos. 69, 265; Leontios Makhairas, §620. Cf. Richard, *Chypre sous les Lusignans*, p. 80. For the Cornaro, G. Luzzatto, 'Capitalismo coloniale nel trecento' in *Studi di storia economica veneziana* (Padua, 1954).

[5] Gregory XI, *Lettres secrètes . . . les pays autres*, nos. 352, 802–3, 897–8, 1004–5 (a fief granted by Hugh IV); John Dardel, pp. 37–41.

[6] For Bartholomew, Leontios Makhairas, §310. Leontios errs in stating that he received his canonry from the pope at this time: he had received it in 1365. Rudt de Collenberg, 'Etat et origine', p. 298 no. 120. For the bishop of New Phocea, *Annales ecclesiastici*, 1370, §13; Urban V, *Lettres secrètes*, nos. 3026, 3032; Jorga, *Philippe de Mézières*, pp. 400–1.

was denounced for writing letters on her behalf intended for the pope, the king of France and other western rulers demanding justice to be meted out on the regicides and calling on Genoa to send galleys to take Eleanor herself and her son to the West so that they could make their accusations at the papal court. The letters were intercepted; Nicholas was tortured and then executed, and a Genoese who was to have acted as courier was only saved thanks to the intervention of the *podestà*.[7] But although the prince may have prevented Eleanor appealing to the West in 1370, a series of letters from the new pope, Gregory XI, prove that information from sources hostile to his rule was nevertheless reaching the curia. In March 1371 Gregory wrote admonishing the young king and the prince to rule well, and telling the queen to care for her son.[8] But at the beginning of May he showed a much deeper concern for the political situation on the island by announcing that he was sending Bertrand Flote, a brother of the Hospital, and a second, unnamed knight to act as guardians for the king. At the same time he ordered the regent to arrange for Peter's coronation ceremony to go ahead and gave instructions for the castle at either Famagusta or Kyrenia to be assigned to the king for his safe keeping.[9] In June Gregory sent another batch of letters: Eleanor's father, Peter formerly count of Ribargoza and now a Franciscan friar, was on his way to Cyprus and the prince was to provide for expenses from the royal revenues; the Hospitallers of Rhodes were to assist Peter on his journey; the master of the Hospital, Raymond Berenger, was appointed papal nuncio and, together with Eleanor, her father, John of Antioch and John's brother James, was to work for the peaceful ordering of the kingdom.[10] Our sources provide no confirmation that Bertrand Flote, Raymond Berenger or Peter of Ribargoza actually visited Cyprus or played any part in the government, but the papal correspondence would make it seem that Eleanor or someone sympathetic towards her had been trying to get the pope to dismantle the prince's authority and had managed to give the impression that John might do away with his nephew and seize power for himself.

In December 1371 Peter II was declared to be of age, and the prince of Antioch formally surrendered the regency. Peter's coronation as king of Cyprus followed early in January in Nicosia.[11] Then on 10 October 1372, in keeping with the precedent set by his father and grandfather, he was crowned king of Jerusalem at Famagusta. It was this second coronation that occasioned the riot which was to have such devastating consequences. As Peter emerged from the cathedral for the start of the state procession back to the palace, representatives of the Venetian and Genoese communities stepped forward to perform their

[7] Leontios Makhairas, §§311–16.

[8] Gregory XI, *Lettres secrètes . . . les pays autres*, nos. 61–2, 66, cf. no. 63.

[9] *Ibid.*, nos. 133, 135, cf. nos. 128, 130, 132 bis, 132 ter, 134, 136.

[10] *Ibid.*, nos. 182, 184–6.

[11] Leontios Makhairas, §§319–24. For the date, Jorga, *Philippe de Mézières*, p. 406 note 5.

ceremonial service of leading the king's horse. There then followed a tussle for the privilege of taking hold of the right-hand side of the bridle, and the sight of this dispute led to a tumult in the crowd. The disorder was suppressed, and the king, his horse led by the prince of Antioch and the lord of Arsur, returned to the palace by a shortened route. There were fresh disturbances at the coronation banquet afterwards, and the violence spread throughout the city with the local inhabitants and the Venetians pursuing and killing many Genoese and destroying their property. Once order was restored, there were heated exchanges between the Genoese *podestà* who now demanded retribution and compensation and the royal officers. Peter was angered by the fact that the celebrations had been marred by rioting; he held the Genoese responsible, and he was not prepared to be conciliatory.[12]

The refusal of the Cypriots to give the Genoese demands a sympathetic hearing led directly to a section of the Genoese community evacuating the island and to the decision to exact reparations by force. Under Doge Dominic of Campofregoso, Genoa was taking a generally aggressive stance towards her neighbours, rivals and trading partners, and a few years later, in 1379–80 this assertiveness was to culminate in spectacular fashion in the naval blockade of her greatest competitor, Venice. Once news of the events in Famagusta reached the West, it was decided to raise a fleet to be commanded by the doge's brother, Peter, and paid for by a *maona*, a joint stock enterprise whose shareholders would be entitled to a proportion of the indemnity they hoped to impose.[13] According to Leontios Makhairas, in 1373, just before hostilities began in earnest, the Genoese were demanding the punishment of those responsible for killing their merchants or 50,000 florins instead; 100,000 florins as prescribed in the 1365 treaty for failing to maintain the security and privileges of their citizens in Cyprus; 100,000 florins compensation for loss or damage to property, and a further 100,000 for the expenses of the naval expedition under Damian Cattaneo which had sailed earlier that year ahead of the main fleet. In addition, they demanded a stronghold or castle where their merchants would live and do business since they no longer had any faith in the promises of security they had received in the past. This desire for a sovereign defensible enclave has been described as a manifestation of their 'fortress mentality'; they had just such fortresses at Caffa and Tana in the Black Sea, and in 1379 they even asked the English government to give them Southampton. From 1373 they had Famagusta.[14]

[12] For the fullest account, Leontios Makhairas, §§324–5, 328–40. Cf. Hill, II, 382–4.

[13] G. Petti Balbi, 'La maona di Cipro del 1373', *Rassegna storica della Liguria*, I (1974). Cf. Leontios Makhairas, §358.

[14] Leontios Makhairas, §§370, 372. For the 1365 penalty clause, Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 265. For the 'fortress mentality', B. Z. Kedar, *Merchants in Crisis: Genoese and Venetian Men of Affairs and the Fourteenth-Century Depression* (New Haven/London, 1976), p. 125.

Although Peter was now legally of age and had been crowned and anointed as king of Cyprus and Jerusalem, the prince of Antioch continued to dominate affairs. After the first coronation, a cleric named Guy of Nephin was sent on an embassy to the pope, and in June 1372 Gregory responded by congratulating Peter and once again encouraging him to rule well. At the same time he granted a series of indults to John and his wife at Guy's request – a clear sign that it was the former regent who had briefed Guy before his departure. This embassy seems to have reassured the pope that the government of Cyprus was in safe hands. In November the pope invited Peter to send ambassadors to Thebes to discuss a proposed Christian alliance against the Turks. The prince was told to make sure that Peter complied – further evidence that he was regarded as the power behind the throne.[15] Again, after the Famagusta riot it was John who took the lead in restoring order and upbraiding the Genoese *podestà*. His role in the affair was apparently echoed by the pope who in a letter written the following January to the patriarch of Grado voiced the opinion that the impending conflict was not the fault of the king but of the prince. A contemporary Genoese document adds currency to this contention, describing the war as being 'against the prince of Antioch and his followers'.[16]

Peter's coronation as king of Jerusalem seems also to have been the occasion for heightened ill-feeling between the prince and Queen Eleanor. According to Leontios Makhairas, Peter, at his mother's bidding, started granting fiefs to her supporters in the island, and the prince and the other vassals responded by getting him to issue a decree to the effect that no grant made before his twenty-fifth birthday would be valid. Needless to say, Eleanor was much chagrined by this turn of events which plainly illustrates the problem inherent in having a king who was legally of age but not old enough to adopt a sensible policy of his own and stand up to the blandishments of the relatives. Leontios subsequently accused the queen of encouraging the Genoese to invade Cyprus and avenge her husband's murderers. Allegedly she had her father, Peter of Ribargoza, go to the pope with letters calling for justice to be done on the late king's killers and seeking papal support for the planned invasion; she was also claiming that the prince of Antioch was still in control of the royal revenues and was keeping the king in penury.[17] It is difficult to know how much credence Leontios deserves – he was distinctly hostile to Eleanor – but there is independent evidence for Eleanor making contact with her father and the pope at this time. In February

[15] Gregory XI, *Lettres secrètes . . . les pays autres*, nos. 787–91, 1170, 1174; Rudt de Collenberg, 'Les grâces papales', pp. 236, 237, 243. For the proposed alliance, A. T. Luttrell, 'Gregory XI and the Turks, 1370–1378', *Orientalia Christiana Periodica*, XLVI (1980), 394–5.

[16] Leontios Makhairas, §§331, 332; Gregory XI, *Lettres secrètes . . . les pays autres*, no. 1408; P. Argenti, *The Occupation of Chios by the Genoese and their Administration of the Island, 1346–1566* (Cambridge, 1958), II, 104.

[17] Leontios Makhairas, §§327, 354–7. Eleanor is also said to have written to the king of Aragon and the queen of Naples.

1373 she sent John Lascaris Calopheros, an erstwhile favourite of Peter I who had suffered at the hands of the prince's regime, to the papal court with an oral message for her father; in August another of her emissaries, Alphonso Ferrand, was at the papal court with instructions to make contact with Peter of Ribargoza.[18]

The story of the four and a half years between the death of Peter I and the arrival of the Genoese invasion-fleet is thus one of political uncertainty with the prince of Antioch and the queen-mother contending for control. John of Antioch had much to fear if power passed to Eleanor; on the other hand, anxieties about the Aragonese crown and Catalan naval might probably prevented him from imprisoning her or sending her into exile.[19] John had seized power in a *coup d'état*, and in common with most usurpers he could not safely relinquish control and go into retirement. But the conflicts around the Cypriot throne had more than just a disruptive effect on internal politics: they also provided the Genoese with the opportunity to give what was essentially a punitive invasion some higher moral justification.

As soon as news of the events of October 1372 and Genoa's plans for reprisals became known, Pope Gregory began a series of attempts to head off the impending confrontation. In December he called on the Genoese to stop their preparations, and in the course of the next two months he tried unsuccessfully to arrange talks. A further initiative began at the end of May with the pope proposing the archbishop of Nicosia and the bishop of Famagusta as mediators, but this plan too seems to have come to nothing. In June Gregory told the queen of Sicily and the Hospitallers in Rhodes not to help the Genoese expedition by furnishing it with provisions, and at the end of that month he sent John Lascaris Calopheros to Genoa in a further effort at conciliation. At the same time he wrote to Peter II urging him to make peace.[20]

By then, however, events in the East had brought all-out war inexorably nearer. In February Peter ordered the arrest of Genoese shipping in Cypriot ports. At around the same time he and the prince of Antioch had sent the archbishop of Tarsus to Venice, but although the Venetians were sympathetic and were prepared to help seek a negotiated peace they were not prepared to offer Cyprus any military assistance.[21] Then in March the Genoese government dispatched seven galleys under the command of Damian Cattaneo with instructions to get the Cypriots to concede their demands or, failing that, to

[18] For John Lascaris, Gregory XI, *Lettres secrètes . . . les pays autres*, no. 1487; D. Jacoby, 'Jean Lascaris Calophéros, Chypre et la Morée, *Revue des études byzantines*, XXVI (1968), 193–5. For Alphonso, Rudt de Collenberg, 'Les grâces papales', p. 234; cf. Leontios Makhairas, §342.

[19] Cf. Leontios Makhairas, §255.

[20] Gregory XI, *Lettres secrètes . . . les pays autres*, nos. 1327–8, 1408, 1486, 1489, 1491, 1838, 1884, 1888–9, 1896–7, 1946–7, 1960.

[21] Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 359–60; 'Amadi', p. 439.

assess the island's military preparedness and send word back to Genoa so that the main fleet could be sent. Damian arrived off Famagusta at the end of April and opened negotiations. According to a Genoese source these broke down because the king's uncles and the other magnates, who, rather than the king, were governing the island, refused to accept Damian's terms. But Leontios Makhairas, who gives the fullest account of the war from a Cypriot perspective, reported that the Genoese had no serious intention of making peace and instead devoted most of their energies to creating difficulties about the hostages they required to guarantee the safety of their negotiators. On 12 May the Genoese began pillaging the gardens around Famagusta; they were fought off, and the Cypriots responded by interning all Genoese nationals still in the island.[22]

These events were quickly followed by the evacuation of the Anatolian port of Satalia, which had been captured by Peter I in 1361 and occupied ever since. Rather than risk letting it fall into the hands of Genoa, it was decided to return it to the Turks, especially since the garrison and the resources required for its upkeep could now be deployed in the defence of Cyprus itself. The transfer took place in mid-May, and the garrison, bringing away various icons and relics including a portrait of the Virgin Mary believed to have been painted by St Luke, managed to avoid two of Damian Cattaneo's galleys which had been sent to intercept it and landed at Kyrenia.[23]

In June the Hospitallers tried to mediate. The marshal of the Order came to Cyprus and succeeded in restarting talks between Damian Cattaneo and the government. But the Cypriots showed no inclination to pay the 350,000 ducats the Genoese were now demanding, still less agree to the cession of a fortress for the protection of their merchants; they did, however, indicate a willingness to accept papal arbitration.[24] The failure of these discussions marked the end of any possibility of a negotiated settlement. Nevertheless the pope, hamstrung by his distance from events which meant that he was out of touch with the pace of developments, continued in his hope that the Hospitallers might yet achieve a settlement, and as late as October he was trying to get the doge of Venice to arrange talks. During the summer of 1373 there were two Cypriot embassies in the West. Queen Eleanor's representative, Alphonso Ferrand, was with the pope in August; according to Leontios Makhairas, he bore letters to her father calling for retribution on the murderers of her husband. Shortly after the Famagusta affray the king had sent two knights, Renier Le Petit and William of Charny, to the pope to put the Cypriot version of events and persuade him to intervene as necessary on his behalf. Renier was still at the papal court in September and only set out to return to Cyprus at the beginning of October. In his response to

[22] Giorgio and Giovanni Stella, 'Annales Genuenses', ed. G. Petti Balbi, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, n. s. XVII, 2 (Bologna, 1975), 166; Leontios Makhairas, §§358–65, cf. §375.

[23] Leontios Makhairas, §§366–9. [24] *Ibid.*, §§370–4, 376.

Renier's embassy Gregory expressed his horror at the proposal to return Satalia to the Turks, explained how he had gone to considerable lengths to reach a settlement with Genoa and noted with apparent regret that Renier himself had no authority to treat for peace; his injunction that Peter should rely on the counsel of both his mother and the prince of Antioch demonstrates his failure to appreciate the political set-up in the island.[25]

With the breakdown of talks, Damian Cattaneo's galleys began depredations in earnest. They sailed from Famagusta along the south coast and round as far as the Bay of Morphou before returning to Limassol which they burnt. They then doubled back to Paphos where they captured the castle. There, assembling a motley force of foreigners – Bulgarians, non-Cypriot Greeks and Tartars – they dug themselves in. At the beginning of July the prince of Antioch brought up a force said to number a thousand men but was unable to dislodge them. Later his brother James tried to do the same, but withdrew on learning that the arrival of the main Genoese fleet was imminent.[26]

Peter of Campofregoso had thirty-six galleys under his command, not counting Damian Cattaneo's seven. According to the principal Genoese account of these events, he also had transport vessels and his army totalled over 14,000 men.[27] The fleet appeared off Famagusta at the beginning of October, and at once the Genoese set about trying to land their men and place the city under siege. The king immediately brought 2,000 levies from Nicosia to reinforce the garrison and engage the besiegers. On 3 October this relief column came into conflict with the Genoese who had already come ashore and was able to drive them back temporarily to their ships. Two days later James of Lusignan led a successful sortie and then, after rounding up some of the marauders, retired to Nicosia where he took charge.[28]

Despite these early successes, opinion seems to have gained ground among the Cypriot leadership that there would have to be a negotiated peace. Presumably it was realized that the Genoese were too powerful, and in any case their raiders were already at work destroying the countryside. But first adequate guarantees for the personal safety of the negotiators had to be agreed. The Genoese began by suggesting that the discussions could be held on board one of their galleys. They then proposed that the castle at Famagusta should be evacuated by its garrison and that the talks might take place there with only five negotiators and twelve men-at-arms present from each side. The castle, then as now, stood at the harbour entrance, and the Genoese could enter by the sea gate without having to pass through the city. This suggestion met with general assent. Leontios Makhairas mentioned that there were just four Cypriot nobles who were opposed on the grounds that the Genoese were not to be trusted. The king

[25] Gregory XI, *Lettres secrètesFrance*, no. 3089; *idem*, *Lettres secrètes . . . les pays autres*, nos. 2072–5, 2198–9, 2214–18, 2266. Leontios Makhairas, §§342, 352. For references to Alphonso's mission, see note 18. [26] Leontios Makhairas, §§377–82.

[27] Giorgio Stella, p. 167. Cf. Hill, II, 392 note 2. [28] Leontios Makhairas, §§383–9.

thereupon ordered James to join him at Famagusta, but he refused either to come – he pleaded illness – or to give his approval to the scheme to hold the talks in the castle. When the king repeated his order, James found himself forcibly prevented from leaving Nicosia by the local populace. Fear of the Genoese and fear of being left leaderless in the emergency had convinced the people that the continued presence of the king's uncle was essential for their own well-being.[29]

The preliminaries to the talks therefore went ahead in James' absence. John of Morphou, the man who at one time had been reputed to be the lover of Queen Eleanor, seems to have been the chief negotiator on the Cypriot side. According to Leontios Makhairas, he was corrupted by the Genoese by an offer to help his son-in-law, Hugh of Lusignan prince of Galilee, take over the kingdom. Hugh had been the rival claimant to the throne in 1359, and the Genoese now put it about that they had brought him with them in their fleet. John's task was to see to it that the negotiations could take place in Famagusta castle as proposed. So, aided by Raymond Babin, whom he won over by the prospect of a marriage alliance between their families, he persuaded the king's council to go ahead with the plan. The story as related by Leontios Makhairas then acquires an air of seeming inevitability: the castle was evacuated; the embassies arrived; the Genoese soldiers overpowered the Cypriots; their forces swarmed ashore and into the fortress, and John of Morphou and Raymond Babin were left 'sorry, just as Judas was sorry about Christ'.[30]

The next day Peter of Campofregoso and the other captains swore on the consecrated host at mass to guarantee the safety of the king and his lords as they negotiated a peace agreement. The king, his mother and the prince of Antioch then entered the castle, but in blatant violation of the oaths were taken prisoner. When Eleanor remonstrated she was told that she was being held in protective custody while the Genoese avenged the murder of Peter I as she had wished. Peter and Eleanor were put under house arrest, and the prince was kept in irons. The king, evidently at the bidding of the Genoese, then sent for his uncle James and his knights. Those of his vassals who answered his summons were likewise taken into custody. An attempt to prevent the invaders from occupying the whole of Famagusta proved futile. The citizens were plundered; many were killed. By way of giving colour to the assertion that they were in the island to take vengeance on the late king's murderers, the Genoese proceeded to have Philip of Ibelin lord of Arsur, Henry of Jubail and John of Gaurelle executed.[31]

[29] *Ibid.*, §§390–5. Leontios goes on to record events in Nicosia before relating the capture of Famagusta; almost certainly there is a considerable chronological overlap with §§397–409 referring to events subsequent to those described in §§410–22.

[30] *Ibid.*, §§410–15; 'Amadi', pp. 450–1 (filling a lacuna in Leontios' text). Hugh had been in the West since 1367, and there is no reason to believe that he was involved in the Genoese expedition. The idea that the Genoese were planning to put him on the throne may have been widely believed. Leontios Makhairas, §409.

[31] Giorgio Stella, p. 167; Leontios Makhairas, §§415–18, 420–23. For the date of the executions, Hill, II, 397 note 2.

From here on it is James of Lusignan, the future King James I, who holds centre-stage in the Cypriot accounts of the war, and there can be no doubt that Leontios Makhairas and later Cypriot writers preserve a version of events that was written up expressly to celebrate his exploits. It is hard to tell how far their narratives exaggerate his prowess, but the circumstantial details they contain would indicate that they were well-informed even if distinctly partisan, and, although they may have embellished particular episodes, there seems no reason to doubt their general accuracy.

These latest developments placed James in a dilemma. If he obeyed the king and came to Famagusta, he was likely to be imprisoned; if on the other hand he refused, he laid himself open to the charge that his continued absence was prolonging the hostilities, and sooner or later he might have to face the king's wrath. Nicosia itself, with its sprawling fortifications, could not hold out against a full-scale Genoese assault. James' quandary increased when he learnt that the Genoese, using royal letters, had tried to install a new castellan in Kyrenia. Eventually, on 18 November, the king managed to get a secret message to James to the effect that he should go to Kyrenia and take charge of its defence against the enemy. James gave orders for supplies to be sent to the garrison, and then at midnight on 21 November together with his wife, daughter and servants he slipped out of Nicosia and made for Kyrenia.[32] At some point around this time the prince of Antioch made good his escape from Famagusta thanks to the daring of one of his servants and managed to reach Kantara. He then went on to St Hilarion.[33]

These developments put an end to any Genoese hopes that they could simply dictate terms. The king's uncles now controlled the best defended points in the whole island, and, as the king reportedly told Peter of Campofregoso, they were every bit as powerful in the kingdom as he was. No settlement was possible while they were still in arms. The king was forced to order James to surrender Kyrenia. So that the garrison would comply, they decided to send Queen Eleanor with their forces to take charge for them. The queen's co-operation was secured by pointing out that James had been in the plot to kill her husband, but from Leontios Makhairas' narrative it would seem that by this stage in the war her thirst for vengeance was outweighed by the wish to thwart the Genoese and so preserve at least something of the kingdom for her son. So while Eleanor was setting off for Nicosia with the Genoese troops ostensibly with the intention of taking Kyrenia on their behalf, she and the king succeeded in getting instructions to James to take all necessary measures to guard his stronghold and the defile through the mountains below St Hilarion.[34]

[32] Leontios Makhairas, §§399–409.

[33] *Ibid.*, §§419, 425. The narrative seems to indicate that the escape took place soon after the capture of Famagusta castle, but the remark at the end of §419 linking the prince's presence at Kantara with James' presence in Kyrenia might suggest that it was later.

[34] *Ibid.*, §§425–30.

On 4 December the queen and the Genoese forces, which were said to number 300 horse and 400 foot, entered Nicosia. The royal officers made no attempt to resist their occupation, but there was considerable fighting two days later when the Genoese tried to disarm the local population. The next day James brought his troops up in a show of strength and was joined by a section of the Cypriot forces still in the city. There was fighting in the suburbs, and then James' men withdrew at Eleanor's insistence. Disorder ensued with the Cypriots pillaging Genoese property and the property of people accused of being Genoese sympathizers. The invaders thereupon called in reinforcements and ruthlessly crushed pockets of resistance. The capital was then given over to indiscriminate looting and slaughter. After that nothing much happened for several weeks. It would seem that the bulk of the population in the countryside remained strongly opposed to the Genoese, and that James was able to rely on popular support in his efforts to provision Kyrenia. If Leontios Makhairas is to be believed, there were various skirmishes in which the invaders generally came off worse, although when a knight named Peter of Cassi made an enterprising attempt to cut the Genoese supply-lines into Famagusta he and his men were betrayed by a peasant. More spectacular was James of Lusignan's attack on a wagon convoy taking valuables looted from Nicosia to the coast; the Cypriots recovered the spoils and killed almost all the escort.[35]

It was not until the early part of January that the Genoese were ready to complete their scheme of using Queen Eleanor to get James of Lusignan and Kyrenia castle into their power. The plan, however, seriously backfired. As their forces approached the top of the pass below St Hilarion, the queen spurred her mule forward and, breaking away from the main party, escaped to join her brother-in-law's men. The Genoese were then easily driven off.[36] They now concentrated their efforts on taking Kyrenia by siege. But things did not go at all as they would have hoped. It was only after a week of repeated attempts to force their way over the pass that they discovered an alternative route from Nicosia through the mountains. When they reached Kyrenia they found that the defenders were well supplied with Greek fire and were more than able to put up a spirited defence. Successive assaults were repulsed, and Leontios Makhairas, whose account is admittedly highly coloured – a relative of his served with distinction in the beleaguered garrison – claims that the Genoese suffered heavy losses. The prince's men in St Hilarion played their part by disrupting the enemy supply-lines. Towards the end of February there was an attempt to open negotiations, but at the beginning of March the siege was resumed once more with renewed ferocity.[37]

By then, however, both sides were ready for peace. It may be that tensions among his commanders coupled with the losses his forces had sustained helped

[35] *Ibid.*, §§432–58. [36] *Ibid.*, §§459–60. [37] *Ibid.*, §§464–99.

convince Peter of Campofregoso that the reduction of Kyrenia was not feasible. Despite the failure of an attempt at the recovery of Nicosia promoted by the queen, an armistice was agreed. The siege of Kyrenia was lifted on 15 March on the understanding that James of Lusignan would hand the fortress over to its former castellan, a Cypriot knight named Luke of Antiaume, and go into exile.[38] The Genoese admiral was nevertheless able to impose heavy terms. Cyprus was placed under an annual tribute of 40,000 florins and had to pay an indemnity to the *maona* of just over two million florins within twelve years. In addition 90,000 florins were to be paid to cover the expenses of the Genoese galleys, and all those Genoese who had suffered at the hands of the Cypriots between the day of Peter II's coronation as king of Jerusalem and the Genoese capture of Famagusta were to be compensated. As security for the payment of the indemnity, the Genoese were to occupy Famagusta and hold a number of prominent Cypriots hostage in Genoa.[39] The financial penalties were harsh to say the least. As for the hostages, it would seem that only the prince of Antioch's two sons were actually surrendered to the Genoese after the negotiations had commenced; the others were the prisoners of war captured earlier in the campaign. Altogether over seventy knights were taken into captivity, either to Genoa or to Chios, although not all were regarded as security for the money demanded from the crown: a number were simply held to ransom, while others were exiled for their complicity in the murder of Peter I; a few were taken to be married off to the daughters of high-ranking Genoese commanders.[40]

At the end of April the invasion fleet left for home. According to Leontios Makhairas, so great had been their losses that only twelve galleys were needed to bear away the Genoese and their prisoners as compared with the total of between forty and fifty that had come to the island the previous year. Admittedly the Genoese had left a garrison in Famagusta, and, as Leontios himself noted, some galleys had sailed for Genoa in December, but it is nonetheless clear that their casualties had been considerable.[41] At Rhodes they caught up with James of Lusignan. He had departed about a fortnight earlier to go into exile. His ship had

[38] *Ibid.*, §§500–24. For strife among the Genoese, §§519, 520.

[39] The treaty, dated 21 October 1374, is in *Liber Iurium*, II, 806–15. The terms were evidently agreed in March or April, and the delay in completing it is probably due to the need to refer to Genoa for approval. Other clauses specified that Peter of Cassi and Montolif of Verny, a knight who had been James of Lusignan's right-hand man at Kyrenia, should go into exile, and that the Hospitallers should occupy Buffavento. There is no evidence for this last stipulation being put into effect.

[40] For the prince's sons, Leontios Makhairas, §529. Two lists of hostages and exiles survive. Mas Latrie, 'Nouvelles preuves' (1873), pp. 80–4; Leontios Makhairas, §542. Most names appear on both lists, but Leontios' is clearly incomplete since in describing a subsequent escape-attempt from Genoa (§548) he mentioned additional knights, two of whom, Guy of Mimars and Raymond Viscount, appear on the other. For the ransoming of Leo of Lusignan, who had been taken captive at Famagusta, John Dardel, pp. 49–51. [41] Leontios Makhairas, §§484, 549.

been escorted into Rhodes harbour by two Genoese galleys which had made out that they were acting as a guard of honour. In fact it would seem that, notwithstanding the assurances that James would have a safe passage to go wherever he wished, the Genoese were determined to take him into their custody. At Rhodes he was received by the Hospitallers, but his departure was delayed owing to the death of his infant daughter. When the main Genoese fleet arrived, he tried to persuade the Order to give him sanctuary, but it refused, fearing retaliation. So it was that the future king of Cyprus who had led his people's resistance once King Peter had been captured and who had defied the Genoese from Kyrenia for more than three months, fell into the hands of his enemies to be carried off to Genoa and years of imprisonment.[42]

The war can be thought of either as the consummation of almost a century of bad relations between Genoa and the Lusignans or, more immediately, as retaliation for a particularly brutal attack on Genoese citizens and their property.[43] But however it is viewed, so far as Cyprus was concerned it had been a calamity. There is no way of knowing how many Cypriots had died or precisely how widespread the destruction and looting had been, but the island had been exposed to the horrors of foreign invasion for several months. Paphos and Limassol as well as Famagusta and Nicosia had been severely damaged. Some coastal areas and the rural communities along the main routes from Famagusta to the capital and in the vicinity of Kyrenia had evidently suffered badly.[44] The Genoese had employed several thousand troops, many of whom would have been hardened mercenaries with long experience of warfare elsewhere. The Cypriots also used foreign soldiers – Leontios Makhairas makes frequent reference to a force of Bulgars in their service – and it is highly likely that these men too would have had little regard for the property or sensibilities of the local population.[45] The invaders destroyed the personal wealth of nobles and merchants alike. Famagusta in particular seems to have been thoroughly ransacked, and it could well be that many of the local merchants lost their working capital and so were forced out of business for good.[46] There can be little doubt that the invasion served to aggravate Famagusta's economic decline. The Genoese occupation – they held the city notionally as security for the payment of the indemnity until 1383 and in outright sovereignty thereafter – in itself had the effect of deterring other merchants from the West from trading there. For

[42] *Ibid.*, §§512–13, 515, 518, 522–6, 528, 530, 533–41, 544–7.

[43] For the long-term hostility, Edbury, 'Cyprus and Genoa', pp. 109–26.

[44] For references to pillaging in rural areas, Leontios Makhairas, §§362, 377, 381.

[45] For the Bulgars, Leontios Makhairas, §§434, 446, 456, 460, 466, 468–9, 471, 483, 503–4, 552. Apparently they had been recruited by the Genoese and had then deserted. *Ibid.*, §427, cf. §§377–8. The prince of Antioch is said to have had mainland Greeks and Tartars as well as Bulgars in his service. *Ibid.* §509, cf. §377 where the Genoese are said to have troops from these same nations.

[46] *Ibid.*, §§96, 349, 422, 451–3.

example, in the spring of 1374 the Venetian authorities forbade their subjects to go there – an order not rescinded until 1378 – and their trade with Cyprus seems generally to have been slow to recover. In the 1390s a western traveller, Nicolo da Martoni, could give a vivid description of Famagusta in ruinous decay.[47]

King Peter was left with the task of trying to salvage what he could. Most of the knights who had given their backing to the prince of Antioch before the war were now dead or in prison in the West, and Queen Eleanor could now dominate the government. It was not long before she was able to bring about the prince's murder. Peter, however, gradually managed to free himself from his mother's tutelage, and eventually, in 1380, he had her shipped back to Aragon. He himself chose to rely on the counsel of the few remaining veterans of his father's reign, and from the end of 1375, in flagrant disregard of the terms of the 1374 treaty, he set about trying to dislodge the Genoese from Famagusta. Master at last in his own house, he showed greater ability and determination than he is usually credited with, but his efforts to recover the principal port of his kingdom by force were abandoned after his death in 1382.[48]

The truth was that the Lusignan kingdom could never be the same again. The royal dynasty survived for a further century, but its image was tarnished, its power weakened. The old nobility, many of whose members could trace their ancestry to the twelfth-century Latin states in Syria and the Holy Land, had also lost much of their pre-eminence. Some families survived to play a significant role in the fifteenth century, but they had to share their position as counsellors and servants of successive kings with newcomers to the aristocracy whose backgrounds differed widely from theirs. The events of 1373–4 and the taking of hostages contributed to the disappearance of a number of noble houses. It has been calculated that out of the forty-four families whose members were taken away, eighteen are not found in the island again. The most famous family whose demise was hastened by the war was the house of Ibelin. Since the thirteenth century the Ibelins had outstripped all others in power and influence, but the Genoese beheaded the last Ibelin lord of Arsur, and, with a certain Nicholas of Ibelin going as a hostage to Genoa in 1374 never to be heard of again, the last known male bearer of the family name passes from sight.[49]

The Genoese war spelled the end of prosperity. For the next fifty years the kings alternated between setting out deliberately to seize Famagusta by force and trying to appease Genoa by seeking to pay the tribute. In neither policy were they successful. The loss of trade and the drain of bullion attendant on this state

[47] Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 363–4; Racine, 'Note sur le trafic', pp. 318–19; Ashtor, *Levant Trade*, pp. 115, 120. For Martoni 'Relation de pèlerinage à Jérusalem de Nicolas de Martoni, notaire Italien', ed. L. Le Grand, *ROL*, III (1895), 628–32.

[48] For Peter's reign after the Genoese war, Hill, II, 413–30.

[49] W. H. Rudt de Collenberg, 'The Fate of Frankish Noble Families Settled in Cyprus', *CS*, p. 270. For Nicholas, *idem*, 'Les Ibelin', pp. 228–9.

of affairs were serious enough in themselves and were compounded by locusts and by outbreaks of plague which must have had the effect of lowering the resources of man-power in the island still further. Under these circumstances there was no way that Cyprus could play any positive role in the continuing conflict between Christianity and Islam, and in any case the main theatres of this struggle had by now moved away from the eastern end of the Mediterranean. Somehow the royal dynasty survived the Egyptian invasions of the 1420s and a civil war in the 1460s only to fall victim to Venetian colonial expansionism in the course of a dynastic crisis precipitated by the death of King James II in 1473. But although the last century of royal government was marked by political crisis and economic and military frailty, the period of almost 200 years before 1373 witnessed a remarkable degree of stability and prosperity, sufficient to make the kingdom of Cyprus stand out as one of the most successful western regimes established by the crusaders either in the Levant or in the former Byzantine lands around the Aegean. The settlement begun in the last decade of the twelfth century had proved durable, and the Lusignan dynasty had governed Cyprus during one of the most striking epochs in its history.