4

THE HOUSE OF IBELIN

THE IBELIN family was the most prominent noble house in Cyprus during the centuries of Lusignan rule. Its pre-twelfth-century origins are unknown: a tradition found in an early fourteenth-century source linked the family with the viscounts of Chartres, but this claim cannot stand critical scrutiny, and onomastic evidence points to a presumably less exalted Italian background, perhaps in Pisa or Sardinia.[1] The founder of the Ibelins' fortunes in the East was a certain Barisan or Balian 'the Elder', who by the second decade of the twelfth century had become castellan of Jaffa. In the early 1140s King Fulk granted him the castle and lordship of Ibelin (the modern Yavne) to hold as a fief in the county of Jaffa. Marriage to an heiress brought Barisan another important fief in the same county, the lordship of Ramla, and thereafter he and his descendants were numbered among the leading barons in the kingdom of Jerusalem. In the next generation Barisan's three sons, Hugh, Baldwin and Balian, came to the fore. Balian advanced the family's standing still further when in 1177 he married Maria Comnena, the widow of King Amaury of Jerusalem and the mother of the future Queen Isabella I (1192–1205).[2] So by the end of the twelfth century, with Balian's two sons by Maria the half-brothers of the then queen, the Ibelins' lasting pre-eminence in the kingdom of Jerusalem was assured. It was during the first half of the thirteenth century that they achieved a comparable position in Cyprus, and the story of their rise provides a unifying theme in the island's history during the reign of Hugh I, the minority of his son, Henry, and the civil war of 1229–33.

The Ibelins had not figured among the original Latin settlers of Cyprus. In the period before the Christian defeat at Hattin and the loss of Jerusalem the two surviving brothers, Balian and Baldwin, had been noted opponents of the Lusignans, although in 1186 they were helpless to prevent the *coup d'état* that

[1] J. Richard, 'Un évêque d'Orient latin au XIVe siècle: Guy d'Ibelin, O.P., évêque de Limassol, et l'inventaire de ses biens (1367)', *MAHEFR*, LIX (1949), 98–9. W. H. Rudt de Collenberg ('Les premiers Ibelins', *Le moyen âge*, LXXI (1965), 473–4) suggested an origin in Norman Sicily.

[2] For the twelfth-century genealogy, H. E. Mayer, 'Carving up Crusaders: the Early Ibelins and Ramlas', *Outremer*. For the origins of the Ibelin lordships, S. Tibble, *Monarchy and Lordships in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, 1099–1291* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 43–6.

brought Guy of Lusignan to power. Rather than come to terms with the new regime, Baldwin chose exile in Antioch and apparently remained there until his death.[3] After Hattin Balian continued his opposition to Guy and joined forces with Conrad of Montferrat. In 1190, as a ploy to deny Guy his rights as king, he took the lead in marrying Maria Comnena's daughter Isabella, who was now heiress-presumptive to the throne of Jerusalem, to Conrad. Balian ended his days in about 1193 as a leading vassal of Henry of Champagne.[4] With records such as these it is scarcely surprising that evidence for members of the Ibelin family accompanying Guy of Lusignan to Cyprus and receiving lands there after his acquisition of the island is altogether lacking.

After the deaths of Guy of Lusignan and Balian of Ibelin the way stood open for an improvement in relations between the two families. In Cyprus Guy's successor, his brother Aimery, had as wife Eschiva, the daughter of Baldwin of Ibelin. The circumstances and date of their marriage are unknown, but this union meant that the Ibelins were close kinsmen of the new dynasty. Eschiva of Ibelin had died in the mid-1190s, and in 1197 Aimery married Queen Isabella of Jerusalem. This marriage also furthered his connections with the Ibelin family, since John and Philip of Ibelin, the sons of Balian, were Isabella's uterine half-brothers. But Aimery's attitude towards his brothers-in-law is difficult to assess, and it may well be that he was less than friendly. Not only were they the sons of two of his former leading opponents, but John of Ibelin had received the post of constable of Jerusalem from Henry of Champagne after Aimery himself had been forced to relinquish it.[5] In 1198 John, who at the time can have been aged no more than twenty, was one of those lords who tried to oppose Aimery when the king exiled Ralph of Tiberias.[6] Towards the end of Aimery's reign John resigned his office of constable in exchange for the lordship of Beirut, which, if we are to believe words attributed to him many years later, was 'totally destroyed, so much so that the Templars and Hospitallers and all the barons of Syria had refused it'.[7] In the long term the exchange worked to John's advantage, but it is possible that at the time Beirut was seen as inadequate compensation for the constableship which Aimery then presented to his new favourite and son-in-law, Walter of Montbéliard. But whether or not the Ibelin brothers enjoyed amicable relations with the king, it remains true that there is no indication whatever for Aimery establishing John or Philip of Ibelin – his first wife's cousins and his second wife's half-brothers – in Cyprus.

The Ibelins might have lacked wealth or influence in Aimery's island realm, but

[3] Baldwin was living in Antioch in June 1187. *Cont. Guillaume de Tyr*, p. 44, cf. pp. 33–5; *RRH*, no. 649.

[4] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 109–11, 114–15. Balian is last known in May 1193. *RRH*, no. 713.

[5] *Cont. Guillaume de Tyr*, pp. 159, 161.

[6] Above, p. 34.

[7] 'Gestes', pp. 678–9. The evidence for persistent ill-feeling between John and Aimery is not conclusive. John later expressed his respect for Aimery's expertise as a jurist. Philip of Novara, pp. 515, 544.

the same month Henry died. His crusade ground to a halt, and early in 1198 those crusaders who had reached Syria returned home. The empire plunged into an extended period of civil war, and for almost three decades Henry's successors were unable to intervene in the East or make their suzerainty over Cyprus effective. Aimery had obtained his crown, but the hoped-for alliance against Byzantium was still-born.

Aimery's fears of a Byzantine *revanche* were genuine, but, although threats were made, no campaign was ever launched.[22] On the other hand, there was no mistaking the inevitability of Muslim expeditions against the truncated Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem once the truce expired in 1196. It was almost certainly this danger that led Henry of Champagne's vassals to urge an accommodation with Aimery. As individuals they may well have had other reasons for wanting an end to the ill-feeling that prevailed: some, such as the Bethsan family who were specifically mentioned as working for a *rapprochement*, had interests in both kingdoms, and several of the leading figures in the Latin Kingdom were related to Aimery's first wife, Eschiva of Ibelin, and so could have had family reasons for wishing to heal the split. In 1197 Henry was persuaded to visit Aimery in Cyprus; the two rulers were formally reconciled, and they then forged an alliance, the basis of which was that Aimery's three sons by Eschiva were to marry Henry's three daughters. The accounts of the terms are somewhat confused, but it seems that the dowries were to consist of Jaffa, which was to be put into Aimery's custody immediately, and the remission by Henry of the balance still owed to him for the purchase of Cyprus in 1192. Even before the two rulers had parted, news reached them that a Muslim invasion was beginning. Aimery sent Reynald Barlais with a small force to take seisin of Jaffa, which, as the most southerly outpost of the kingdom of Jerusalem, was known to be an object for attack. He had done well out of the deal: he had secured the cancellation of his debt to Henry and had thereby ended any lingering claim Henry may have had on Cyprus; it is possible that at the same time he was restored to the office of constable of Jerusalem; he had also obtained Jaffa, although in the event his garrison was unable to resist the Muslim siege and the town was lost; above all, he had secured recognition from the most powerful of the other Christian rulers in the East for his position as king of an independent kingdom. The marriage agreements, however, did not work out as expected.[23] All the children were still too young to be married immediately, and two of Aimery's sons and one of Henry's daughters died in childhood. But eventually, in 1210, Hugh, Aimery's sole surviving son, married Henry's daughter, Alice. The importance of the 1197 reconciliation deserves to be stressed: it marked the end of the faction fighting that had bedevilled Latin Syrian politics since Guy of Lusignan's arrival in the

[22] Above, p. 11.

[23] *Cont. Guillaume de Tyr*, pp. 177, 191, 193; 'Eracles', pp. 208–9, 218–19, 308–9. The possibility that Aimery recovered the office of constable as part of the agreement is suggested by his use of the title in a document of November 1197. Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 606.

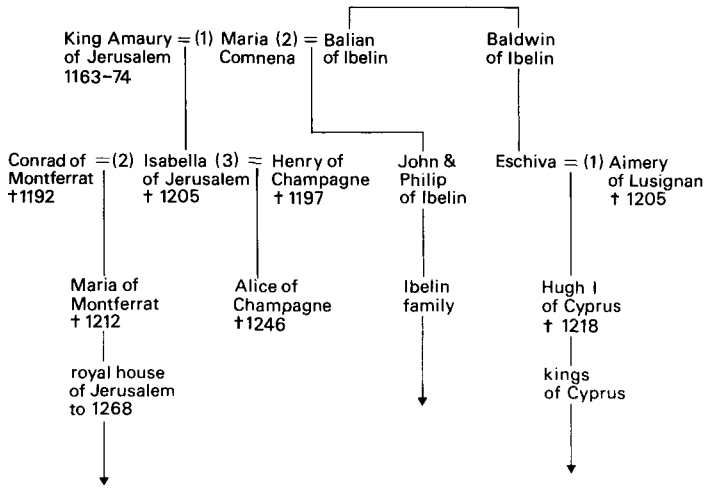

Figure 3 The relationship of John and Philip of Ibelin to the royal families of Jerusalem and Cyprus.
Note: After the death of Eschiva of Ibelin, Aimery of Lusignan married Isabella of Jerusalem whose fourth husband he was. Hugh I of Cyprus married Alice of Champagne

in the kingdom of Jerusalem they attained the highest possible position short of the throne itself. When in April 1205 Aimery died, Queen Isabella accepted John of Ibelin as her vassals' choice to rule on her behalf as her lieutenant. He continued to govern after her death later that same year and held power until the arrival of John of Brienne in 1210 to marry the new queen, Maria of Montferrat.[8]

In Cyprus it was a man of very different background who assumed control in 1205. Walter of Montbéliard was the second son of Amé of Montfaucon, count of Montbéliard, and had spent his early life in the West. In 1199 he had taken the Cross in response to the preaching of the Fourth Crusade, but in the spring of 1201 he left the main body of crusaders to join his kinsman Walter of Brienne to pursue ambitions in southern Italy. It would appear that it was only then that he came to the East. King Aimery gave him his daughter Burgundia in marriage and made him constable of Jerusalem. Although the date of his arrival cannot be fixed precisely, at the time of the king's death he cannot have been living in the East for more than two or three years.[9]

[8] 'Eracles', p. 305. J. L. La Monte, 'John d'Ibelin: The Old Lord of Beirut, 1177–1236', *Byzantion*, XII (1937), 424–5.

[9] Geoffrey de Villehardouin, *La Conquête de Constantinople*, ed. E. Faral (5th edn Paris, 1973), I, 6, 35; 'Eracles', pp. 234–5, 316; J. Longnon, *Les Compagnons de Villehardouin* (Geneva, 1978), pp. 20–1. It is not known whether Walter had visited the East before the Fourth Crusade, but the marriage and grant of the constableship cannot have been before October 1200 since the office was then held by John of Ibelin. *RRH*, no. 776.

Hugh, Aimery's sole surviving son, would have been aged nine at the time of his father's death. Later in the thirteenth century elaborate rules for determining who should exercise the regency during a minority and what powers the regent should wield were evolved in the Latin East, but in 1205 it is likely that ideas about what to do in such circumstances were still fluid. This was the first occasion on which there had been a royal minority in Cyprus, and precedents from Jerusalem were limited. But some aspects of the future customs were already being followed. In 1174 Raymond of Tripoli had argued that he should be regent for the young Baldwin IV because he was the nearest relative of the royal line present in the East.[10] In 1205 more or less the same principle was applied. Hugh's nearest relative – indeed at the time the heiress to the throne – was his sister Burgundia, and it was her husband, Walter of Montbéliard, who acquired the regency. On the other hand, a later rule, and one that had already found expression in the arrangements for the minority of BaldwinV agreed in 1183, that the regent who was himself the next heir to the throne should not have the custody of the person of the minor, was not observed in 1205: Walter had custody of both the kingdom and the king.[11]

There can be no doubt that Walter of Montbéliard was vigorous and ambitious. The most important port on the southern coast of Asia Minor was Satalia (the present-day Antalya), and, with the collapse of Greek power in the area after the destruction of the Byzantine empire by the Fourth Crusade, various interests sought to gain possession. The new Latin regime in Constantinople granted it to the Templars, and the Order obtained confirmation of this benefaction from both the papal legate in the East and Pope Innocent III.[12] But Satalia lay far beyond the area the crusaders controlled, and this grant, which thus conveyed no more than theoretical rights, availed the Templars nothing. By 1207 possession of the city was disputed between the Seljuk sultan of Rūm and the actual occupant, an Italo-Greek freebooter named Aldobrandino. When the Seljuks besieged him, Aldobrandino appealed to Cyprus for aid. Walter mounted what appears to have been a major expedition and succeeded in driving off the attackers. Exactly what happened next is unclear, but the Greeks in Satalia evidently turned against Walter and called in the Turks to expel the Cypriot forces. It can only be assumed that the regent had tried to use the opportunity to seize the place for himself.[13] Later in the thirteenth century it was believed that Walter had also attempted to win another piece of Byzantine territory, the island of Rhodes.[14] Control of Satalia and Rhodes would have meant control of an essential trade route in the eastern Mediterranean, since it would have established Cypriot rule in all the major ports of call between Crete and northern Syria. Had Walter achieved this objective, the economic and strategic advantages would have been considerable and his own

[10] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 102, 185–6. Baldwin's sister Sibylla was a closer relative, but she would have been ruled out as a woman and an unmarried one at that.

[11] 'Eracles', p. 305. Cf. Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 38, 108, 187.

[12] Innocent III, vol. 215, cols. 1019–20. [13] Hill, II, 74–5.

[14] 'Document relatif au service militaire', *RHC Lois*, II, 428.

political position would have been considerably strengthened. But success eluded him.

Walter also tried to enhance his standing by the creation of a nexus of marriage alliances. But here again his achievements fell short of his intentions. It would seem that he married his wife's sister, Helvis of Lusignan, to one of his own kinsmen, Odo of Dampierre. But although Odo later claimed that the marriage had been consummated, the couple were separated, and Helvis then married the Armenian prince, Raymond Rupen.[15] A marriage of far greater importance was that of King Hugh I to Alice of Champagne. As already mentioned, in 1197 Aimery of Lusignan and Henry of Champagne had agreed that Aimery's sons should marry Henry's daughters, but one of Henry's daughters and all but one of Aimery's sons died in childhood. In 1206, at Walter's request, the pope wrote to the patriarch of Jerusalem instructing him to look into the accounts of the 1197 agreement that had reached him, and, especially if it was to the advantage of the Latin East, to see to it that the proposed union be implemented.[16] At the time Alice was heiress to the throne of Jerusalem – she was a half-sister of Queen Maria of Montferrat – and it may well be that, in pressing for the marriage, Walter was hoping to extend his own influence to the Holy Land. There were other interests that could see advantages in the marriage of Alice and Hugh. Alice had a claim to her father's lands in France, and Blanche of Navarre, the countess of Champagne and mother of the infant Count Thibaut IV, was keen that she should be married in the East in the hope that she would thus be less likely to come to Europe and assert her rights. In 1207 Blanche sent out a representative who in effect bribed Alice's guardians, her uncles John and Philip of Ibelin, to give effect to the 1197 agreement.[17] But the Ibelins may have needed no persuasion. If Walter imagined he could benefit by the marriage of his ward to Alice, so might they in their turn hope for advantage from the marriage of their ward to Hugh. And so it turned out, for the Ibelins were to acquire considerable influence in Cyprus, thanks in part it may be assumed to their kinship with Hugh's queen, while the union did Walter no good whatever in Jerusalem. The marriage took place in 1210. In what is the first recorded instance of their having set foot in the island, John and Philip conducted their niece to Cyprus for her wedding.[18]

[15] Innocent III, vol. 216, cols. 466–7 (October 1211). Odo had complained to the pope about the break-up of his marriage and his wife's illicit union with Raymond Rupen. It looks as if Walter had promoted the match, and then, when he fell from power, Helvis married elsewhere. For the kinship of the Dampierre and Montbéliard families, 'Lignages', p. 455 note 3.

[16] Innocent III, vol. 215, cols. 829–30.

[17] *Thesaurus novus anecdotorum*, ed. E. Martène and U. Durand (Paris, 1717), I, cols. 806–7. Cf. Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, I, 175–7.

[18] 'Eracles', 308–9. There is some confusion as to the date of the marriage, but 'Eracles' indicates that it was just before the expiry of the Muslim truce in September 1210 and the arrival of John of Brienne. 'Annales' (p. 436) and 'Gestes' (p. 664) place the marriage in 1211. 1208, a date frequently cited, is unwarranted.

Hugh's marriage to Alice was the first of a rapid series of events that transformed the politics of the Latin East. In September 1210 the Muslim truce came to an end. In the same month John of Brienne arrived to marry Maria of Montferrat, the young queen of Jerusalem. Ironically this marriage, in which Walter of Montbéliard is not known to have had any hand, did work to his advantage; John was his cousin and provided a refuge for him after his fall from power in Cyprus. September 1210 also witnessed King Hugh's majority; the immediate aftermath of this milestone in his career was dramatic:

> It came to pass that when King Hugh came of age, Walter of Montbéliard, who had been regent for six years, surrendered his regency. As soon as he had done this, Hugh called him to account and said that he would require him to hand over the treasure that his father, King Aimery, had left – at least 200,000 white bezants, money which Walter had held – and to pay the 40,000 white bezants that he (Hugh) had spent during the regency owing to the hardship he had inflicted on him. For he should have been provided for out of his own as becomes a king and certainly not as becomes a boy, such was the state of deprivation in which he had been kept. Walter of Montbéliard said he would seek counsel and would reply next day. When he had gone back to his house, people came and told him that the king was being advised to break with him and seize as much of his goods as he could find. Walter believed this report, and so, when night fell, he, his wife and his household got up, and, carrying off as much gold and silver as they could, they went to a castle belonging to the Templars called Gastria and from there sought boats and a galley from Tripoli. The prince (Bohemond IV of Antioch-Tripoli), who loved him greatly, sent them to him. He embarked his horses and equipment, assembled his men, and set off for Acre where he found his nephew, his sister's son, King John, who received him with great joy. It was said that he had carried off at least 200,000 Saracen bezants, money that he had had from his regency of Cyprus over and above the considerable expenses he had incurred. And it could well be so, for he kept a good forty knights in his service for a whole year, and then he incurred very great expense when he went to take Satalia and even then it was the same as before. From King John he only had the 5,000 bezants for his surrender of the office of constable. For King Aimery had given it to him as well as extensive lands in Cyprus at the same time as he gave him his daughter Burgundia.[19]

It is possible to raise objections to this story – for example, the kinship between John and Walter is wrongly stated – and in any case the details of the charges are not independently attested. But stories of regents using their office to line their own pockets or of guardians keeping their wards short of funds are perfectly credible. Walter's own version of the incident as retailed to Pope Innocent III was that Hugh 'had expelled him from the kingdom and confiscated his lands without the judgement of his court'.[20] Unfortunately we are denied Walter's

[19] 'Eracles', pp. 315–16.

[20] Innocent III, vol. 216, col. 466. In the late 1220s Walter's daughter and heiress had substantial estates in Cyprus, and so presumably his estates were later restored. 'Eracles', p. 376.

explanation of why Hugh should have done this to him. For one account to claim that he fled while the other asserted that he was expelled can be dismissed simply as the result of special pleading. That Walter should have fled or should have been forced into exile at all is evidence not so much for the truth of the allegations made against him as for the fact that he can have had little or no support in the island; either by his personality or by his policies he must have alienated the other leading figures in Cyprus.

It is open to question whether Hugh, newly entered into his inheritance at the age of fifteen, would have had the capacity to determine his political actions for himself. There is no direct evidence that he was dominated by his advisers, but it is unlikely that he would have been able to act without them. Exactly who had been advising him to break with Walter and seize his property is not recorded, but a small group of royal privileges surviving from the period immediately after these events preserves the names of some twelve of Hugh's vassals who were in attendance at the court at that time.[21] The overwhelming majority were either men who had been prominent in Cyprus since the 1190s or members of families long settled in the Latin East. For example, the same four head each list: Walter of Caesarea, Aimery of Rivet, Reynald of Soissons and Walter of Bethsan. Of these the two Walters, though not previously known as members of the Cypriot High Court, were sprung from families that had held lordships in the kingdom of Jerusalem since early in the twelfth century, while Aimery and Reynald had careers in the island stretching back at least as far as the accession of King Aimery.[22] If, as seems probable, it was these men and men like them who had engineered Walter of Montbéliard's fall, the inference would be that what had taken place was a reaction against an interloper from the West by the older nobility.

Whatever the precise circumstances of Walter's fall from power in Cyprus, the incident had wide-ranging repercussions. Walter was able to embarrass Hugh by complaining to Pope Innocent III about his own treatment and also about an irregularly conducted episcopal election in Cyprus – a complaint which eventually brought the king a sharp papal rebuke.[23] In Syria John of Brienne welcomed Walter, and from 1210 until his death, apparently in 1212, he was active in raiding Muslim territory on John's behalf.[24] The beginning of Hugh I's personal rule was accompanied by a reversal of Walter's policies with regard to Cypriot foreign relations. Instead of continuing to try to win Satalia by force,

[21] *RRH*, nos. 844, 846; P. W. Edbury, 'The "Cartulaire de Manosque": A Grant to the Templars in Latin Syria and a Charter of King Hugh I of Cyprus', *BIHR*, LI (1978), 175.

[22] J. L. La Monte, 'The Lords of Caesarea in the Period of the Crusades', *Speculum*, XXII (1947), 154–5; La Monte and Downs, 'Lords of Bethsan', pp. 63–6. For Aimery and Reynald, *RRH*, no. 737 (1197). Aimery is first found in Cyprus in 1194. Richard, 'L'abbaye cistercienne', p. 69.

[23] Innocent III, vol. 216, cols. 466, 494. At the same time Odo of Dampierre complained about the break-up of his marriage. [24] Hill, II, 77 and note 4.

Hugh negotiated a commercial agreement with its ruler, the Seljuk sultan of Rūm, guaranteeing the safety of both Turks and Cypriots engaged in trade between Cyprus and the ports under the sultan's control on the southern coast of Anatolia.[25] In the northern parts of the Latin states in Syria, Prince Bohemond IV of Antioch-Tripoli, supported by the Templars, was engaged in a war over the succession to Antioch with Leo of Armenia and his grand-nephew, Raymond Rupen, who in their turn enjoyed the support of the Hospitallers. As the passage describing his exile proves, Walter had been on good terms with both Bohemond and the Templars. Hugh favoured their opponents. In 1210, presumably immediately after Walter's fall, Hugh married two of his sisters to Leo and Raymond Rupen, clear evidence for where his sympathies lay in this struggle.[26] With the Hospitallers, Hugh seems to have had particularly close relations: in 1210, at the beginning of his personal rule, he confirmed and extended their rights and possessions in Cyprus: in 1214 he sent a Cypriot force to join them in an expedition in Syria, and on his death in 1218, presumably in accordance with his own wishes, he was buried in a Hospitaller church.[27]

The accession of John of Brienne to the throne of Jerusalem and the welcome he afforded his cousin, Walter of Montbéliard, marked the beginning of a new period of tension between Jerusalem and Cyprus. The earliest clear evidence for strained relations dates to early 1213 when the pope wrote to Hugh accusing him of helping rebels against John's authority and maltreating and imprisoning a group of his vassals who had taken refuge in Cyprus while escaping from some Muslim shipping.[28] As the preparations for the Fifth Crusade (1217–21) proceeded, the pope became more anxious that the Christians in the East should end their differences, and in 1215 or 1216 he wrote to both Hugh and King Leo of Armenia telling them to make peace with King John and hold ships in readiness for the Crusade.[29] By the time the first crusaders arrived (September and October 1217), Hugh and John were sufficiently reconciled for Hugh to bring a Cypriot

[25] C. Cahen, 'Le commerce anatolien au début du XIIIe siècle' in *Mélanges d'histoire du moyen âge dédiés à la mémoire de Louis Halphen* (Paris, 1951), pp. 93–4.

[26] Hill, II, 76. Helvis of Lusignan had married Raymond Rupin as early as September 1210. Rudt de Collenberg, 'Les Lusignan', pp. 98–9. Hugh I's support for the Armenians against Bohemond would seem to be a return to his father's policy. 'Eracles', p. 314.

[27] *Cartulaire général de l'Ordre des Hospitaliers de St-Jean de Jérusalem*, ed. J. Delaville Le Roulx (Paris, 1894–1906), no. 1354; Edbury 'Manosque', p. 175. For the 1214 campaign, C. Cahen, *La Syrie du Nord à l'époque des croisades et la principauté franque d'Antioche* (Paris, 1940), pp. 620–1. For Hugh's burial, 'Eracles', p. 325; 'Amadi', p. 104.

[28] Innocent III, vol. 216, cols. 736–7. The leading figure among the group that sought refuge in Cyprus was a relative of John designated in the papal letter by his initial as 'O'. Odo of Montbéliard, a nephew of Walter and John's first cousin once removed, is the only known relative of John in the East with this initial. (Odo was Walter's nephew and not his son as frequently stated. 'Lignages', p. 455 note 3.)

[29] Potthast, nos. 5178–9. The letters are undated but belong to the period 22 February 1215–6 July 1216.

force including a number of his leading vassals to join an expedition into Galilee. Then disputes arose between John of Brienne on the one hand and Hugh and King Andrew of Hungary on the other. Towards the end of 1217 Andrew decided to go home. Whether Hugh was intending to abandon the crusade at the same time is not clear; he accompanied Andrew as far as Tripoli, and there at the beginning of 1218 he died.[30]

It was against this background of diplomatic re-alignment and strained relations between the kingdoms of Cyprus and Jerusalem, that the Ibelins came to prominence in Cyprus. Unfortunately it is not possible to trace their rise in detail. We can be certain that the family had not been numbered among the first settlers in the 1190s; we know that Hugh I and his wife were both closely related to John of Ibelin, lord of Beirut, and his brother Philip; we also know that in September 1217 the brothers took precedence over all the other liegemen when for the first time they are named in a surviving document issued in the Cypriot High Court. In October 1217 they were listed among the participants in the opening campaign of the Fifth Crusade in such a way as to leave no doubt that they were included in the Cypriot contingent.[31] But although the sources do not allow us to chart the growth of the Ibelins' association with Cyprus before 1217, it is possible to suggest a context for this development.

From 1205 to 1210 John of Beirut was regent of the kingdom of Jerusalem; he rounded off his tenure of that office by attending John of Brienne's coronation at Tyre in October 1210. His younger brother, Philip, seems also to have enjoyed a certain prominence during this period and was entrusted with the defence of Acre while the other magnates were away at the coronation.[32] The evidence of the surviving royal diplomas shows that the brothers then withdrew from public life. John of Beirut never appears in any formal document emanating from the king's chancery during John's reign; Philip appears in only one, in 1211.[33] In other words, they were not in regular attendance on the king, and it may be that their apparent disappearance from the royal entourage is to be explained as the result of a quarrel with King John.

Support for this view is to be found in a group of papal letters dated January 1213 which speak of unnamed rebels against John's authority receiving encouragement from King Hugh. What the rebellion amounted to is not known since the episode found no echo in the narrative sources for the period. But we can glimpse its pretext. John of Brienne's wife, Maria of Montferrat, had died in 1212, and, as the information that had reached the pope made clear, once the queen was dead some people had challenged John's continuing authority.[34] The

[30] Hill, II, 82. [31] *RRH*, no, 900, cf. no. 903; 'Eracles', p. 322.
[32] 'Eracles', pp. 311–12. For Philip, *RRH*, nos. 812, 823, 841a.
[33] *RRH*, no. 853. *RRH*, no. 855 is a forgery. Mayer, *Marseilles Levantehandel*, pp. 189–91, cf. pp. 50–55, 113–15. [34] Innocent III, vol. 216, cols. 736–9.

situation was not unlike that of 1190. Then Guy of Lusignan had been faced by a party who claimed that with the death of his wife, Sibylla of Jerusalem, his own power should lapse.[35] The difference was that, unlike Guy and Sibylla, John and Maria had a surviving child of their marriage – the future Queen Isabella II – and in fact John continued to rule as king-regent for his daughter until her marriage in 1225. King Hugh's support for John's opponents is understandable. If in 1212 John of Brienne had stood down from the throne, the regents for his daughter, the child-heiress to Jerusalem, would presumably have been her next heir, her aunt Alice of Champagne, and her husband, the king of Cyprus. It is not too far-fetched to suggest that the Ibelin brothers figured prominently among the disaffected nobles. In 1190 it had been their parents, Balian of Ibelin and Maria Comnena, who had led the assault on Guy's rights to rule, and it could well be that memories of their attitude and reasoning had passed to their sons. If these suppositions are correct, then it would seem that Hugh I and the Ibelins were making common cause against John of Brienne, and it can be assumed that, when the opposition movement in the kingdom of Jerusalem failed, the Ibelins either entered Hugh's service in Cyprus or, if they were already his vassals, transferred their allegiance more fully.[36]

Hugh I died on 10 January 1218.[37] His son and heir, Henry I, was aged eight months, and his long minority can be seen as falling into two parts: ten years of growing tension followed by five years of civil war. Whereas the problem for understanding the politics of Hugh I's reign is lack of sources, for Henry I's minority the difficulty is not so much the shortage of materials as the bias they exhibit in favour of the Ibelins. Both the principal narratives, 'L'Estoire de Eracles' and the memoirs of Philip of Novara, were written from their standpoint. Philip of Novara was particularly notable for the partisanship of his writings. He was a vassal of the Ibelins, and his account of Cypriot history in the years 1218–33, much the fullest that has survived, is both a panegyric of his successive lords, John of Beirut and his eldest son Balian, and a vehicle for boasting about the role that he himself played in the events described. Philip was

[35] Above, p. 26.

[36] Quite likely a key figure in these years was the Ibelins' brother-in-law, Walter of Caesarea, the husband of their sister Margaret and the son of Juliana, lady of Caesarea. In the 1190s and 1200s he was an active member of the High Court of Jerusalem but from 1210 was in regular attendance on King Hugh. *RRH*, nos. 721, 722a, 740b, 746, 812, 844, 846, 896, 900, 903; 'Eracles', p. 322. There is good reason to suppose that there was antipathy between him and King John over his inheritance of Caesarea. His mother lived until the mid-1210s when Walter was probably aged about forty. For much of his adult life, Caesarea was controlled by his stepfather, Aymar of Laron, a close adherent of the king. Not only was Walter being kept waiting for his inheritance longer than was usual, but he had to watch Aymar burdening the lordship with debt. Then, after his mother's death, he evidently had difficulty in obtaining possession of his inheritance; he had still not gained custody of Caesarea itself at the time of its destruction by the Muslims in 1219. La Monte, 'Caesarea', pp. 153–4; Tibble, *Monarchy and Lordships*, pp. 125–8.

[37] 'Gestes', p. 670; 'Eracles', p. 325; 'Amadi', p. 104.

obviously conscious of the need for his narrative to entertain; its style resembled that of a prose romance with heroes cast in conventional mould and the villains lampooned in the guise of characters out of *fabliaux*. As a result his interpretation of events and the details of his information must be treated with a considerable degree of circumspection.[38] There is no anti-Ibelin chronicle that can be used as a counter-balance to Philip's work, and even the non-narrative sources such as formal documents and letters are more useful for building up a picture of events from the Ibelin side than for illustrating the activities of their opponents.

Hugh was survived by his widow, Alice of Champagne, and by his three children: the infant Henry I and two young daughters, Maria and Isabella. The immediate task in 1218 was to make orderly arrangements for the regency. Three versions of what was done at that time have been preserved. According to the anonymous author of the relevant section of 'L'Estoire de Eracles', Alice the queen-mother received homage as regent from the Cypriot vassals and then appointed Philip of Ibelin her lieutenant, enjoining the vassals to obey him until Henry I should come of age. Philip of Novara also related how Alice received homage as regent and claimed that the vassals then urged her to appoint Philip as her lieutenant in accordance with the wishes Hugh I was said to have expressed on his death-bed; Philip then governed while Alice enjoyed the profits from the royal revenues. From papal letters of February 1226 it would seem that Pope Honorius III had been told that the nobles, barons, knights and people of Cyprus had chosen Philip of Ibelin to be regent, and that since the death of Hugh he had ruled with Alice and would continue to do so until either Henry came of age or Alice made a suitable marriage. In each case these accounts reflect subsequent developments, but it is nevertheless possible to see the principles that lay behind the decisions taken in 1218. Just as the wardship of the fiefs of minor heirs was exercised by a surviving parent, so the regency of the kingdom for an under-age king passed, as in this case, to his mother. So Alice was accepted as regent. But the idea that a woman should herself exercise royal power in the kingdom was unacceptable, and so she appointed Philip to govern on her behalf.[39]

By about 1223 or 1224 Philip and Alice had quarrelled.[40] Alice resolved to get

[38] For Philip's history, G. Paris, 'Les mémoires de Philippe de Novare', *ROL*, IX (1902); C. Kohler, introduction to 'Les Gestes des Chiprois', *RHC Arm.*, II, pp. ccxxviii-ccxxix; Philip of Novara, *The Wars of Frederick II against the Ibelins in Syria and Cyprus*, trans. J. L. La Monte (New York, 1936), pp. 3–21; J. Bromiley, 'Philip of Novara's Account of the War between Frederick II of Hohenstaufen and the Ibelins', *Journal of Medieval History*, III (1977). The difficulty in using Philip's work is aggravated by textual problems. The 'Chronique d'Amadi' includes an Italian translation of what was apparently a better version of the text with details lacking in the unique French ms.

[39] 'Eracles', pp. 360–1; 'Gestes', p. 670; Honorius III, *Regesta*, ed. P. Pressutti (Rome, 1888–95), nos. 5824–5.

[40] Hill's explanation for the quarrel (II, 88) is ill-founded. The chronology of the mid-1220s is confused. See La Monte, 'John d'Ibelin', p. 426 note 7; Hill, II, 88 note 3.

rid of him, but he was too firmly entrenched to be ousted easily. So the queen-mother then went to Tripoli where she married Bohemond, the son and eventual successor of Prince Bohemond IV. In 1205 the regency had been awarded to the husband of Burgundia of Lusignan, the member of the royal family closest to the throne. There was thus a precedent for investing the consort of a female relative of a minor king with effective control, and Alice evidently hoped that the Cypriots would allow her to install Bohemond as governor of Cyprus in place of Philip. The 1226 papal letter certainly envisaged just such an eventuality. But Bohemond was not acceptable. According to Philip of Novara, the Cypriot vassals were unanimous in opposing him on the grounds that they feared for the safety of their young king should he fall into Bohemond's clutches. In other words, they stood by Philip of Ibelin. The pope then reduced Bohemond's chances of taking power in the island still further by ordering an enquiry into the allegation that his marriage was inadmissible in canon law since he and Alice were too closely related to each other. Bohemond's father, Bohemond IV, had long been at odds with the papacy, and Pope Honorius would have been reluctant to countenance the growth of Tripolitan influence in Cyprus.[41]

There is no direct evidence that Alice ever attempted to get formal acceptance for Bohemond from the Cypriots; reaction to the news of her marriage perhaps convinced her that such a move was bound to end in failure. She therefore tried a different tack. Philip was her appointee; she would simply announce that she had dismissed him and tell the Cypriots to receive his replacement. Her choice was Aimery Barlais, a Cypriot knight known for his opposition to the Ibelins. But Philip of Ibelin's grip on the situation was sufficient to thwart Aimery's appointment. Neither of the two accounts of this episode questioned the fact that Alice was the lawful regent and Philip her lieutenant, and so it might be supposed that legally he was removable at will. But one source recorded that Philip rejected Aimery on the grounds that he himself had been appointed for the duration of Henry's minority, while the other, which stated that Philip had actually resigned at this point, claimed that Aimery found the Cypriots solidly behind the Ibelins and withdrew leaving Philip in control. But was his appointment in 1218 intended to last for the whole of the minority? It is impossible to be sure. Alice evidently thought not. Philip's refusal to bow to Alice's wishes and stand down could well have put the legitimacy of his rule in doubt in the eyes of all but his most loyal supporters, and it is arguable that the vassals had put themselves in the wrong by refusing to acknowledge Alice's nominee.[42] At the beginning of 1226 the pope issued a series of letters designed to bolster the Ibelin regime: Philip was told to exercise his office for the good of the

[41] 'Gestes', p. 673; 'Eracles', p. 361; Honorius III, no. 5593. Cf. Rudt de Collenberg, 'Dispenses matrimoniales', pp. 86–7 and notes 73–4 (p. 92) (also noting a papal prohibition on Alice's proposed marriage to William of Dampierre in 1223).

[42] 'Gestes.', p. 673; 'Eracles', pp. 361–2; Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 192–3.

young king and the kingdom; the military Orders and the Cypriots were told to support Philip and King Henry; the king was placed under papal protection and commended to the emperor Frederick II and others, and the archbishop of Nicosia was instructed to publish Bohemond IV's excommunication. It is not altogether clear whether these letters were intended to strengthen Cypriot opposition to Bohemond of Tripoli or were an endorsement of the refusal to accept Aimery Barlais, but undoubtedly they would have boosted the morale of the Ibelins and their supporters and helped give Philip's position an appearance of legality.[43]

Philip of Ibelin died in 1227 or 1228.[44] His brother John, who until then had divided his time between helping Philip in Cyprus and building up his own lordship of Beirut, thereupon assumed control of the government of the island. By what authority he could do so we are not told. He was scarcely likely to have been appointed by Alice. Philip had at least been properly installed, even if he had then clung to office against the wishes of the regent. But John's right to govern can have followed from nothing more than the acclamation of the vassals of his own party in the island. To his enemies he must have seemed a usurper, maintaining himself and his followers in opposition to the lawful authority, Alice and her lieutenant-designate, Aimery Barlais. So, when in July 1228 the suzerain of the kingdom of Cyprus, the emperor Frederick II, arrived in the East, he found a situation in which the queen-mother, Alice of Champagne, had lost control, and in which power rested with a man whose entitlement to rule was dubious.

Frederick II's intervention in the Latin East in 1228 and 1229 acted as a catalyst which had the effect of transforming existing rivalries in Cyprus into a full-scale civil war. These rivalries had come to the surface in the years since the death of Hugh I. As Philip and John of Ibelin hung on to office, so opposition towards them had hardened. The sources for the period 1218–33, with their stress on the achievements of the Ibelins and their party, allow us to identify only a handful of their opponents. The nucleus of the opposition comprised a group of five knights, who were to become known as the five *baillis* – so called because in 1229 Frederick farmed the regency or *bailliage* of Cyprus to them jointly: Aimery Barlais, Amaury of Bethsan, Hugh of Jubail, William of Rivet and Gauvain of Cheneché. Other members of their party included Philip Chenard and Bertram and Hugh Porcelet.[45] Philip of Novara tried to make out that Aimery Barlais and

[43] Honorius III, nos. 5808, 5813, 5822, 5824–5, 5828, 5829.

[44] For the date, Hill, II, 91 note 4.

[45] 'Gestes', pp. 672, 676, 684; 'Amadi', p. 175. Apart from these eight, another seven names are recorded: Hugh *Zaboc*, Hugh of Mare, and Reynald Chamberlain ('Amadi', p. 175); Humphrey of Monaigre ('Gestes', p. 713); Baldwin of Belleme ('Eracles', pp. 361–2), and two deserters from the Ibelins, *Denises* and Martin Rousseau ('Gestes', pp. 701, 720).

his associates were no more than a troublesome pressure-group, who for military strength in the civil war were dependent on mercenaries and the Hohenstaufen forces from the West. However, at one point in his narrative of the events of 1232 he let slip the information that at that time the five *baillis* had the support of eighty Cypriot knights – evidently a significant proportion of the total.[46] It is also clear that the leaders were substantial figures. Aimery Barlais, Gauvain of Cheneché and William of Rivet had been attending the Cypriot High Court and witnessing formal documents issued there as early as 1220,[47] and in the previous generation the fathers of Aimery Barlais, Amaury of Bethsan, William of Rivet and Hugh of Jubail had been prominent royal counsellors.[48]

The leaders of this faction formed a tight-knit group. Philip of Novara, who claimed that the five *baillis* swore together to oppose the Ibelins at some point in the mid-1220s, drew attention to ties of kinship linking on the one hand Aimery Barlais and Amaury of Bethsan and on the other William of Rivet and Gauvain of Cheneché.[49] In fact the web of family connections spread far wider: Gauvain was the uterine half-brother of Philip Chenard; Hugh Porcelet's brother Bertram was Aimery Barlais' step-father; Hugh of Jubail was married to their sister, Maria Porcelet, and Amaury of Bethsan was the son of yet another member of the Porcelet family.[50] These relationships undoubtedly served to give added cohesion to their party. In addition, several of these men shared links with the county of Tripoli. Hugh of Jubail was the grandson of William II, lord of Jubail; Hugh's father, besides being a member of the Cypriot High Court, had been a man of some consequence in Tripoli, and it was there that Hugh and his descendants were to live after the end of the civil war. Bertram and Hugh Porcelet came from a well-established Tripolitan family, and, like Hugh of Jubail, Bertram took part in the affairs of the county.[51] Bertram's stepson, Aimery Barlais, had married the heiress of the former lord of Marqab, and through her had the substantial rent paid by the Hospitallers from their revenues in Tripoli in exchange for the castle and lordship.[52]

There can be little doubt that personal animosity born of victimization at the

[46] *Ibid.*, p. 703. Eighty knights may have represented as much as a third of the nobility. Richard, *Latin Kingdom*, p. 312 note 13 (p. 436).

[47] *RRH*, nos. 912, 929, 938.

[48] Respectively, Reynald Barlais, Walter of Bethsan, Aimery of Rivet and Bertrand of Jubail. Below, p. 55.

[49] 'Gestes', p. 672; cf. p. 694. Aimery and Amaury were first cousins once removed. 'Lignages', p. 463; F. Chandon de Briailles, 'Lignages d'Outre-Mer, les seigneurs de Margat', *Syria*, XXV (1946–8), 246 ('Renaud' in the last line of note 5 is a misprint for 'Aimery'). Gauvain and William's brother James had married two sisters. 'Lignages', pp. 457, 461; cf. *RRH*, no. 938.

[50] 'Gestes', pp. 694, 719; 'Lignages', pp. 458, 463; J. Richard, 'Le comté de Tripoli dans les chartes du fonds des Porcellet', *BEC*, CXXX (1972), 352–3.

[51] Rey, 'Seigneurs de Giblet', pp. 410–12; Richard, 'Le comté de Tripoli', pp. 348–66 *passim*.

[52] Chandon de Briailles, 'Margat', pp. 244–6; J. Riley-Smith, *The Knights of St John in Jerusalem and Cyprus c.1050–1310* (London, 1967), p. 68.

hands of the Ibelins played an important part in stimulating opposition. In the mid-1220s both Aimery Barlais and Gauvain of Cheneché became involved in violent incidents with retainers of Philip or John of Ibelin that led to periods of exile. As recounted by Philip of Novara, it was the Ibelins' opponent who was at fault in each case, but allowance should be made for his bias, and his version of events leaves room for alternative constructions to be placed upon them. A knight named William of La Tour accused Gauvain of wounding him; the two men fought a judicial duel in which William evidently got the better of his adversary; Gauvain went into exile complaining that William would not have dared bring the action had the Ibelins not been maintaining him. Whether or not the accusation against Gauvain was true – and it may be noted that for the case to have come to a duel he must have been prepared to deny the charge under oath – his allegations of maintenance suggest that he believed that he had not had a fair hearing and that the court under the presidency of Philip of Ibelin was less than impartial.[53]

Aimery Barlais' recorded scrapes with the Ibelins began when he attacked and seriously wounded a knight in Philip of Ibelin's retinue. It was all John of Beirut could do to rescue Aimery from his brother's wrath and protect him from immediate reprisals. Aimery spent the winter in exile in Tripoli, and then, at John's insistence, Philip reluctantly agreed to pardon him. As told by Philip of Novara, the story is designed to illustrate John of Beirut's magnanimity, and Aimery, as his foil, is shown as a dishonourable and undeserving coward. But leaving aside the literary and propagandist aspects of the account, it is clear that immediately after the deed was committed Aimery was in physical danger from Philip of Ibelin, and, irrespective of the merits of the case, the grudgingly extracted pardon was hardly likely to have reassured him. The next stage in Aimery's relations with the Ibelins followed when Alice of Champagne attempted to appoint him her lieutenant. According to Philip of Novara, Aimery found he could get no support, and, rebuffed by stern speeches from Philip of Ibelin and a retainer and kinsman of the Ibelins named Anseau of Brie, who formally accused him of breaking faith and challenged him to defend himself, he retired once again to Tripoli. Not only had Aimery been humiliated, the refusal of the Ibelins to accept him as Alice's nominee would have seemed to some people at least an illegal act only made possible by their tight hold on power in the island. Another pro-Ibelin source added a significant detail that illustrates the nature of their control: a knight by the name of Baldwin of Belleme had had the temerity on this occasion to deny Philip's rights and speak up for Alice as the only legitimate regent; Philip's supporters thereupon set on him, and he was mortally wounded. The conclusion is unavoidable: the Ibelins were prepared to use illegal and violent means to maintain their control of the government; a man

[53] 'Gestes', p. 674.

as important as Aimery Barlais was humiliated and obliged to go into exile; a lesser man was the victim of lynch law. Further loss of face was in store for Aimery. Philip of Novara related that he pinned his hopes for revenge on the emperor Frederick; according to Philip, Aimery returned to Cyprus and to clear his name challenged Anseau of Brie to a judicial duel in the expectation that before the battle could take place, Frederick would have arrived and put an end to the matter. Aimery apparently reasoned that the Ibelins would be overawed and that he himself would emerge high in Frederick's esteem for his persistence and courage in resisting the Ibelin regime. But Frederick did not come when expected – his sailing scheduled for the autumn of 1227 was postponed – and the battle had to go ahead. Aimery was defeated, and John of Beirut and Walter of Caesarea had to intervene to save his life. Whether or not we accept the aspersions cast on Aimery's motivation, Philip's account makes it seem that Aimery, having set himself up in opposition to the Ibelins, had been utterly discredited.[54]

According to Philip of Novara, 'My lord Philip of Ibelin governed the land extremely well and in peace, and he did much that was good, honourable, true and generous . . . '[55] As a verdict on the decade 1218–27, these words clearly require modification: political violence had made its appearance; the legitimacy of the regime had been put in doubt. The author's adulation for his heroes brought him into difficulty when he had to explain why anyone who had enjoyed the benefits of their rule should want to oppose them. He informed his readers that the hostility of the five *baillis* resulted from 'the foolishness and pride that often stem from wealth and leisure'.[56] This sententiousness is plainly unhelpful. We have seen that the leading opponents of the Ibelins had close family ties with one another; that several shared a common background in Tripoli, and that at least two of the most prominent had been humiliated and forced into exile. Maybe they began their opposition out of loyalty to Alice of Champagne when she quarrelled with Philip of Ibelin. Alice and her husband, the future Bohemond V, appear to have remained in Tripoli after their marriage, and it is likely that they fostered relations with Cypriot knights with Tripolitan connections in an attempt to build up an opposition party in the island. But evidence specifically linking Alice to the five *baillis* is limited: Aimery Barlais was her candidate to replace Philip, and William of Rivet may have acted on her behalf at the papal court in the wrangle over the legality of her marriage to Bohemond.[57] But even if the anti-Ibelin faction first took shape as a group of men who supported Alice, their loyalty to her was not lasting. After 1228 they were

[54] *Ibid.*, pp. 672–4, 675–6; cf. 'Eracles', pp. 361–2. 'Amadi' (pp. 122–3) preserves an apparently superior version of Philip's account of the duel. [55] 'Gestes', p. 670. [56] *Ibid.*, p. 672.

[57] Honorius III, no. 6272, cf. no. 6271. William and his colleague, an Antiochene cleric, persuaded the pope to withdraw his commission to investigate the consanguinity between Bohemond and Alice from the archbishop of Nicosia.

totally committed to the emperor whose policy was not only to supplant the Ibelins but also to disregard the queen-mother's rights to hold the regency.

A glance at the antecedents of the five *baillis* reveals what must have been a potent underlying cause of their disaffection. Aimery Barlais was the son of Reynald Barlais, the Poitevin companion of Guy of Lusignan who unsuccessfully defended Jaffa on behalf of King Aimery in 1197. William of Rivet's father was almost certainly Aimery of Rivet, one of the earliest known settlers in Cyprus in the 1190s and seneschal of Cyprus from 1197 until some time after 1210.[58] Amaury of Bethsan was the son of Walter of Bethsan, prominent in the 1210s, and nephew of two other members of the family who were living in the island in the 1190s.[59] Gauvain of Cheneché must surely have been a son or close relative of the 'Galganus' of Cheneché who, though he cannot be shown to have settled in Cyprus, may well have done so as he had been permanently in attendance on Guy of Lusignan during and after the siege of Acre (1189–92).[60] Only Hugh of Jubail, whose father, Bertrand, is first found in the island in 1217,[61] may not have been a member of a family which had been in Cyprus or in the service of the Lusignans from as far back as the 1190s. But all five were second generation vassals of the Cypriot crown. Perhaps it may not be too fanciful to suggest that, with the possible exception of Hugh of Jubail, they were conscious of traditions of service to the Lusignan rulers of Cyprus in their families stretching back much further than was true of the Ibelin family. At a time when the Ibelins were still the bitter foes of the Lusignans, their fathers had been high in the latter's counsels. Now, as they themselves achieved manhood, they had seen members of the family that they had been brought up to think of as the enemies of their lord establish themselves in Cyprus and rapidly acquire an almost unassailable position of power. What is more, much of the influence, the patronage and the favour that their fathers, as leading vassals of earlier rulers of Cyprus, would have enjoyed was being denied them. The Ibelins had displaced them as the leaders of Cypriot noble society.

To his contemporaries, as to modern scholars, the emperor Frederick II was a controversial figure. Whatever view is taken of his reign as a whole, the words of one modern historian admirably sum up his intervention in the Latin East:

> on his crusade and in his relations with the kingdoms of Cyprus and Jerusalem one is faced by a man who had a strong will and was capable of ruthless and arbitrary acts, but was motivated by conservative ideas, determined to enjoy what he took to be established imperial or royal rights . . . [62]

[58] For Aimery, *RRH*, nos. 723, 729, 737, 780, 844, 846; Richard, 'L'abbaye cistercienne', p. 69.
[59] *RRH*, nos. 723, 729, 844, 846, 900, 912, 938; 'Eracles', p. 322; 'Lignages', p. 463.
[60] *RRH*, nos. 683–4, 690, 693, 697–8, 701–2.
[61] *Ibid.*, no. 896. Cf. 'Gestes', p. 685. Renier of Jubail, Aimery's ambassador to Henry VI in 1195, was no relation. [62] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, p. 160.

Frederick had taken the Cross in 1215. It had been expected that he would participate in the Fifth Crusade, but he made repeated postponements, and after the capitulation of the Christian army and the surrender of Damietta in 1221 his plans were shelved. In 1225 he renewed his vows and organized an expedition timed to begin in the autumn of 1227. At the last moment he turned back, and it was not until May 1228 that he eventually set sail. But by 1228 his interest in Cyprus came a long way behind interest in the kingdom of Jerusalem. For whereas in Cyprus he had inherited rights of suzerainty, in Jerusalem he was now father to the heir to the throne. In 1225 Frederick had married Queen Isabella II of Jerusalem, the daughter of John of Brienne. The following year he sent one of his most trusted Italian officers to Acre to take charge there on his behalf. Then, shortly before he was due to leave for the East, the queen died having just given birth to a son named Conrad.

In 1196 Frederick's father, Henry VI, had established Cyprus as a kingdom under his suzerainty, but the turmoil in Germany and Italy during the two decades after his death meant that Frederick can have had little thought of asserting his rights over the island before the 1220s. As suzerain Frederick now claimed that the regency necessitated by Henry's minority should be his, that the king and the vassals owed him homage,[63] and that the profits from the royal revenues during the minority belonged to him. His demand for the regency posed problems arising from a conflict between the customs of the Western Empire and of the Latin East: while in parts of the West it was normal for the lord to hold the wardship of the lands of a minor heir, in the East it was the next of kin who exercised this right.[64] In 1205 and 1218 the young king's relatives had taken charge without, so far as is known, making reference to the emperor, but at some point during the 1220s Frederick wrote to Alice of Champagne asserting his claims and telling her that she held the regency on his behalf and at his pleasure.[65] But for as long as Frederick was far away in Europe, he could be ignored by the authorities in Cyprus. It was only when he turned up in the East with a crusading army that his demands had to be taken seriously.

In July 1228, when Frederick first set foot in Cyprus, he was already predisposed to regard the Ibelin regime in the island with hostility. He accepted that John of Beirut was the effective ruler, but, no doubt anxious to maintain an adequate supply of funds for himself during his crusade, he demanded that John render account for the previous ten years of Henry I's minority and hand over the profits. Evidently there were none. An Italian Ghibelline writer hints that the Ibelins were guilty of peculation. John's own explanation as recorded by Philip of Novara was that his brother Philip had merely run the day-to-day affairs and

[63] 'Eracles', p. 367.

[64] A later jurist in Latin Syria allowed the lord rights of wardship only if there was no parent or relative qualified to exercise it. James of Ibelin, 'Livre de Jacques d'Ibelin', *RHC Lois*, I, 461.

[65] 'Gestes', p. 672.

that the profits had gone to the regent, Alice of Champagne, who had spent them as she wished. In view of the tension between Alice and the Ibelins during the years immediately before Frederick's arrival, this explanation might be thought disingenuous. Indeed, the fact that Philip of Novara repeated on no less than three occasions that Alice had had the money may in itself suggest that he was suspiciously over-anxious to rebut charges that the Ibelins had lined their own pockets during this period.[66]

But finance was only one of the issues that concerned the emperor. In 1225 the Ibelins had the young king crowned without giving Frederick prior notification. The emperor was enraged at what in his eyes was a flagrant disregard for his authority over the island.[67] However, it is not necessarily true that the Ibelins intended the coronation as a deliberate snub; it is equally likely that they wanted to avoid criticism nearer home if they delayed. But Frederick's distrust of their regime may have dated from that time, and his attitude towards them was no doubt reinforced by the activities of their Cypriot opponents. Gauvain of Cheneché, in exile after his clash with William of La Tour, took service with the emperor some time before the beginning of 1226. William of Rivet seems to have made contact with Frederick when he visited the papal court in 1227. Aimery Barlais, we are told, based his hopes for a political recovery on the emperor in the expectation that he would put an end to the Ibelin ascendancy, and he and his supporters wrote letters and in 1228 even went part of the way by sea to meet him in their attempts to secure his good will. They were not to be disappointed.[68]

The arrival of Frederick II placed John of Beirut in a dilemma. He would have been well aware that the emperor was less than friendly, and the temptation to keep out of his way and refuse to co-operate must have been strong. On the other hand, Frederick was generally welcomed by the Latins in the East, and John may not have anticipated much support outside his immediate circle if he resisted. Nor could he risk giving the impression that he wanted to prevent the recovery of the Holy Land by his own non-co-operation. Furthermore, Frederick's military resources were large enough to compel respect. John's only hope was to attempt to work as fully as possible in collaboration with the emperor in the hope that in return Frederick would not undermine his position. So when, shortly after his arrival, Frederick summoned John to join him at a banquet in Limassol and bring his sons, his friends and the young King Henry as well, John rejected the advice of those who feared that this was a trick to get them all into the emperor's power and complied. As described by Philip of Novara, the banquet formed a spectacular back-drop for a highly dramatic incident. During the meal the

[66] *Ibid.*, pp. 669, 670, 678–9; 'Breve chronicon de rebus siculis', ed. J. L. A. Huillard-Bréholles in *Historia diplomatica Frederici secundi* (Paris, 1852–61), I, 900.

[67] 'Gestes', p. 672. For the date, Hill, II, 90 note 5.

[68] For Gauvain, *RRH*, nos. 974–5; 'Gestes', pp. 674, 675. For William, Honorius III, nos. 6271–2. For Aimery, 'Gestes', pp. 673–4, 675–6.

Cypriots were surrounded by the emperor's men-at-arms. Then Frederick made his demands: John must surrender his lordship of Beirut on the grounds that he held it illegally, and he must hand over the profits from the Cypriot regency for the period since the death of King Hugh I. John stood his ground: his title to Beirut was good, and he would answer for it in the proper place, the High Court of Jerusalem; by Cypriot custom the regent of Cyprus was Queen Alice: she had had the profits of the regency, and John was prepared to defend his own conduct in the Cypriot High Court. He had answered bravely, but his gamble had failed. Any hope he may have had that the emperor would respond favourably to his apparent willingness to co-operate had proved unfounded. Frederick's demands had been too great. Called to render account and faced by the threatened loss of his Syrian lordship, John had had to defend himself if he was to prevent his total ruination. But in defending himself he necessarily antagonized the emperor irrevocably. Frederick made John surrender two of his sons and have twenty leading Cypriot vassals pledge themselves and their possessions as security for his appearance before the High Court of Jerusalem.[69]

John of Beirut had at least retained his own liberty. The next morning, or at nightfall – the sources differ – he and his supporters rode off to Nicosia. He provisioned the castle of St Hilarion, where he sent the wives and children of his men, and he had the rest of his men-at-arms and his horses brought over from Syria. After some delay Frederick followed him. He was accompanied by the Ibelins' Cypriot opponents and a number of Latin Syrian nobles including the prince of Antioch, who had with him a force of sixty knights as well as sergeants and footmen. In mid-August the emperor's party occupied Nicosia while John shut himself up in St Hilarion. Philip of Novara tried hard to make out that John was acting with the utmost propriety by taking care not to take up arms against the emperor, the suzerain of the kingdom of Cyprus, in person, but he was unable to conceal the fact that John had embarked on what amounted to armed resistance. Frederick evidently decided that it would be unwise to try to besiege St Hilarion, and at the beginning of September the two antagonists came to an agreement. In practical terms John had lost. He had secured the release of his sons, and the knights were freed from their pledges for his appearance in court, but these were almost the only concessions Frederick granted. A compromise was worked out over the regency: the emperor took the fealty of the Cypriots in his capacity as suzerain, accepting the argument that having done homage to Alice as regent they would be breaking faith if forced to do homage to himself. But he saw to it that he was to have the all-important profits from the royal revenues. The young king was to have nominal control of the fortresses in the island, and Cypriot liegemen were to have custody of them until he came of age.

[69] 'Gestes', pp. 676–80; 'Eracles', pp. 367–8. The sources differ as to which of John's sons the emperor held.

But here again Frederick had outmanoeuvred John of Beirut, for Henry was obliged to appoint castellans from among Frederick's allies in Cyprus. John of Beirut was promised that he should not be deprived of anything that was his without judgement of the High Courts of Cyprus or Jerusalem, but he had to accompany Frederick to Syria and serve him, together with his men, for as long as he remained there. Two of his sons, Balian and John, were, it would seem, kept under the emperor's direct surveillance.[70]

Frederick had ended Ibelin rule in Cyprus, at least for the time being. But fortunately for John and his supporters, the following months saw an abrupt change in the emperor's fortunes. Shortly before his departure for the East he had been excommunicated by the pope who disapproved of his Italian policies and the postponement of his crusade in 1227. News of his excommunication turned many leading members of the Latin Syrian community including the patriarch of Jerusalem against him. By his patronage of the Teutonic Knights he then alienated the Templars and Hospitallers. By his high-handed actions in confiscating or withholding fiefs, he provoked hostility from the nobility – hostility so determined that in at least two instances he had to back down. His treaty of February 1229 with the ruler of Egypt, al-Kamil, restored Jerusalem to Christian control but did nothing to ingratiate him with the growing number of his detractors. Then news from Europe that the former king of Jerusalem, John of Brienne, was invading his lands at the head of a papal army made it imperative that he return home The Syrian Franks were still recalcitrant, and by the time Frederick left the Holy Land in May 1229 the political standing of his most prominent opponent in the East, John of Beirut, was high.[71]

Aimery Barlais and his associates had not gained control in Cyprus directly after the collapse of John's power in the summer of 1228. At some point during the following winter Frederick sent Count Stephen, one of his trusted western officers, with a force of Italians to take charge in the island on his behalf. Count Stephen then seized the Cypriot castles, thereby breaking the agreement between Frederick and John of Beirut that the strongpoints should be held by Cypriot liegemen until King Henry's majority. According to Philip of Novara, the wives and children of the pro-Ibelin knights whom Frederick had made accompany him to Syria went in fear for their safety; some took refuge in religious foundations; others fled to northern Syria.[72] But towards the end of his stay in

[70] 'Gestes', pp. 680–2; 'Eracles', pp. 368–9; 'Breve chronicon de rebus siculis', p. 900. Frederick had arrived in Cyprus on 21 July, moved to Nicosia on 17 August and left on 2 September. The banquet at Limassol was clearly soon after his arrival, and his departure followed close on the settlement. John's defiance in St Hilarion cannot therefore have lasted for more than ten days.

[71] J. Riley-Smith, 'The Assise Sur La Ligece and the Commune of Acre', *Traditio*, XXVII (1971), 191–4; *idem*, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 165–73; T. C. Van Cleave, *The Emperor Frederick II of Hohenstaufen. Immutator Mundi* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 215–28.

[72] 'Gestes', pp. 682–3. For Count Stephen's identity, p. 682 note c.

Acre the emperor arranged to farm the regency of Cyprus to a consortium consisting of Aimery Barlais and his four leading companions. They were to hold it jointly for three years, at the end of which Henry would come of age, in return for a payment to the emperor's representatives in Syria of 10,000 silver marks. Frederick's western officers were to retain custody of the castles until the money was handed over. The five *baillis*, as they were now known, were given a force of western mercenaries whom they undertook to pay, and, according to Philip of Novara, they were made to swear that, far from allowing the Ibelins to return to the island, they would dispossess them. On his way back to Europe Frederick stopped at Limassol where he handed over the young king, whom he married to Alice, a daughter of his Piedmontese vassal William of Montferrat, and delivered custody of the island to the five *baillis*.[73]

The emperor had left the *baillis* in a difficult position. To obtain effective control they had to find the money, but a rapacious policy would have added to their unpopularity. The Ibelins and their dependants who had either been deprived of their fiefs or feared dispossession were opposed to them, and John of Beirut's power-base in Syria remained intact. The *baillis* seem to have tried to do the best they could under the circumstances. Philip of Novara described how they made a clumsy attempt to persuade him to join them – a mixture of cajolery and intimidation. The clear implication of his story was that he himself had been able to remain in Cyprus up to that time and had not been dispossessed. But other evidence suggests that knights in John of Ibelin's company may have lost their lands: Klavdhia, which had belonged to an Ibelin adherent named John of Mimars and which in June 1229 the *baillis* gave to the emperor's most dependable allies in the East, the Teutonic Knights, was almost certainly part of their spoils. Aimery Barlais and his associates had been told to destroy the Ibelin party in Cyprus completely; if the Ibelins were to recover anything in the island, they in their turn would have to overthrow the five *baillis*.[74]

The stage was set for the opening of hostilities. In little over a month after Frederick's departure the Ibelins, spurred on by news of the sequestration of their fiefs and the plight of their womenfolk, set sail from Acre and landed at the Templar fort of Gastria to the north of Famagusta. From there they marched on Nicosia. On 14 July battle was joined outside the capital. As recorded by Philip of Novara, the chief feature of the engagement was the deeds of prowess performed by John of Beirut, his sons and their kinsman, Anseau of Brie. The constable, Walter of Caesarea, and Gerard of Montagu, the nephew of the

[73] *Ibid.*, p. 684; 'Eracles', p. 375. For Alice's relationship to the Hohenstaufen and to the other members of the Montferrat family connected with the East, see the table in T. S. R. Boase, *Kingdoms and Strongholds of the Crusaders* (London, 1971), pp. 250–1.

[74] 'Gestes', pp. 684–6; 'Eracles', p. 376. For John of Mimars and Klavdhia, *Tabulae ordinis Theutonici*, ed. E. Strehlke (Berlin, 1869), p. 56; *RRH*, no. 1049. The Mimars were vassals of the Ibelins.

archbishop of Nicosia, were among the slain, but despite these losses victory went to the Ibelins. The *baillis* escaped from the field of battle and defended themselves in the fortresses of Kyrenia, St Hilarion and Kantara. Kyrenia soon fell, but Kantara, defended by Gauvain of Cheneché and then, after his death during the siege, by Philip Chenard, and St Hilarion, where the other *baillis* held the king, resisted for about ten months, capitulating in April or May 1230.[75]

John of Beirut had won the first round of the civil war, but it remained highly likely that the emperor would return or would send further troops to the East. Apparently the defenders of St Hilarion and Kantara had waited to see whether relief from Europe would arrive in the spring of 1230 before surrendering.[76] Fear of renewed imperial interference in Cyprus may have lain behind the policy of conciliation that John now pursued towards his defeated opponents. He offered the emperor's garrison at Kyrenia generous terms to induce it to capitulate and paid a high price to get it off Cypriot soil. After the surrender of St Hilarion and Kantara, Aimery Barlais and his followers were made to swear not to oppose the Ibelins ever again, but otherwise they were not penalized. They kept their fiefs and, although some of their partisans refused to lay aside their bitterness, John of Beirut and his sons, so we are told, went out of their way to treat them with honour and respect.[77] John was clearly conscious of his own vulnerability. He had overthrown the emperor's officers in Cyprus and expelled his garrisons. For ten months he had besieged a castle containing the king, and, although pro-Ibelin apologists could claim that Henry was virtually the prisoner of the *baillis*, an alternative view would have been that John had taken up arms against the person of his monarch. No amount of appealing to due judicial process, as in 1228, would dissuade Frederick from treating John as a traitor and a rebel if and when he could re-assert his suzerainty in the island or gain effective control of the kingdom of Jerusalem where John and several of his supporters also had fiefs.

After the surrender of St Hilarion and Kantara, Ibelin ascendancy in Cyprus survived unchallenged for over a year. It was not until the autumn of 1231 that the emperor was able to set about restoring his control in the East. He appointed the imperial marshal, Richard Filangieri, to take overall charge on his behalf, although it is not entirely clear whether he intended him to act as his lieutenant in Cyprus.[78] A substantial army sailed from Europe with Richard following. News of its coming brought John of Beirut hurrying from Syria, and he and the forces at his disposal took up positions in Cyprus to prevent the imperial troops from landing. The emperor's spokesman demanded that King Henry should expel John of Beirut together with his sons and other relatives from the island. These demands were rejected, and John, in what he presumably intended as a

[75] 'Gestes', pp. 688–95; 'Eracles', pp. 376–7; Hill, II, 103–6. For the date of the battle and the length of the siege, Hill, II, 104 note 1, 106 note 1.

[76] 'Eracles', p. 377. They also sought help in Armenia where William of Rivet died. 'Gestes', p. 694.

[77] 'Gestes', pp. 690, 694–5, 699–700. [78] 'Amadi' (p. 147) asserts that he did.

conciliatory gesture, offered once more to defend himself against any charges in the Cypriot High Court. The imperial fleet then departed for Syria and made for John's lordship of Beirut. The army occupied the town of Beirut and was already intent on besieging the citadel when Richard Filangieri arrived. There can be little doubt that he had instructions from Frederick to crush Ibelin power in the East and to do so by whatever means necessary.[79]

The decision to attack John in Syria rather than in Cyprus may have been prompted by the belief that John's position was weaker there. In 1229 Frederick had left two Syrian nobles, Balian of Sidon and Garnier L'Aleman, to act as his deputies in Acre. Their close associate was the constable of Jerusalem and nephew of the former regent of Cyprus, Odo of Montbéliard. Before 1225 all three had been counsellors of John of Brienne to whom both Balian and Odo were related by marriage. In view of King John's long estrangement from the Ibelins, it may well be that they felt no particular call to make common cause with John of Beirut in his opposition to the emperor. At the time of Richard Filangieri's arrival they had between them been serving Frederick in a vice-regal capacity for much of the period since 1225.[80] Richard now expected these men to work with him, even although he had been sent to supersede them as the emperor's lieutenants in Syria. But his behaviour, while not driving them directly into alliance with John of Beirut, had the effect of alienating them. His army was attempting to dispossess a liege man of his fief without prior judgement of the High Court; he then had Tyre, the second most important royal city in the kingdom, occupied on his behalf, and only after that did he go to Acre where he convened the High Court and presented his letters of appointment. It would appear that the Latin Syrian nobles accepted him as the emperor's lieutenant in the kingdom, but, according to an admittedly pro-Ibelin source, Balian of Sidon delivered a strongly worded protest against his illegal attack on Beirut. Undaunted, Richard Filangieri pressed on with the siege, and, when two knights who had been sent to Balian of Sidon and the other nobles in Acre arrived at Beirut to see what was going on, they found that the imperial troops were unmoved by Balian's stance. What happened next was that the Ibelin sympathizers in Acre formed themselves into a sworn association consisting of both feudatories and burgesses with the aim of resisting Richard Filangieri and preventing him from extending his control over the rest of the kingdom. This movement developed within the framework of a pre-existing confraternity, the Confraternity of St Andrew, and came to be known as the Commune of Acre.[81]

[79] 'Gestes', pp. 700–1; 'Eracles', pp. 385–8.

[80] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 166–73 *passim*. Odo was related to John of Brienne through John's mother; Balian was married to John's niece. W. H. Rudt de Collenberg (Rüdt-Collenberg), *The Rupenides, Hethumides and Lusignans: The Structure of the Armeno-Cilician Dynasties* (Paris, 1963), table IX(B); above, note 28.

[81] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 175–82.

John of Beirut's reaction to events in Syria was predictable: he would use his Cypriot resources to raise the siege of Beirut. Two accounts survive of the scene in the High Court of Cyprus at which he received promises of assistance. In one John's request for help was couched in terms of a formal feudal petition to his lord, King Henry: his fief was under attack; Henry should bring his feudal host to its defence. But this version of what was said fails to convince. Henry was not yet of age, and so it is difficult to see how he could summon his host, and in any case he was under no formal obligation to come to John's aid since Beirut was not held from him but from the king of Jerusalem. According to Philip of Novara, the author of the other account, John made an impassioned appeal to the king and his fellow vassals 'as my brothers and dear friends' to come to his aid. Philip gave no reference to the notion of feudal obligation, but while he may have preserved the gist of the speech made on that occasion, he had clearly embellished it in line with his literary affectations with the result that this account too is of questionable value. Both writers agree that the king and all the Cypriot vassals, whether friendly towards John of Beirut or not, were induced to accompany his expedition. But the recorded behaviour of John's opponents provides a further reason for not accepting either account at face value. Aimery Barlais and his followers wanted to oppose him but dared not do so; they tried to wriggle out of going; they deserted at the earliest opportunity, and they claimed that, as King Henry was a minor and in someone else's control, their prime loyalty lay with the emperor as overlord. The picture is of a situation in which John of Beirut had used his preponderant power in the island to compel even his enemies to join him. There may have been a formal request as a propagandist exercise, but the reality was that neither the Cypriot vassals nor the king had any choice but to fall in with his wishes. Moreover, John was so determined to stake his position in Cyprus on the successful outcome of his campaign that he almost denuded Cyprus of his supporters.[82]

The expedition began early in 1232 and met with one setback after another. Getting the army from Nicosia to Famagusta was hard because of the weather. At Famagusta the Cypriots were held up for an appreciable length of time owing to storms. As soon as the fleet reached the coast of Syria, Aimery Barlais and some eighty supporters deserted – John of Beirut's attempts to conciliate them had failed. A number of ships were then wrecked on the coast at Botron with the loss of the army's tents, and this reverse was followed by further desertions. John then turned to Acre for support, where he apparently invoked an interpretation of the law known as the *Assise sur la ligece* that allowed the peers of a vassal who had been deprived of his fief without a judgement in his lord's court to take violent action if necessary to re-instate him. But despite strenuous efforts by his nephew, John lord of Caesarea, only forty-three knights

[82] 'Gestes', pp. 701–2, 703; 'Eracles', pp. 392–3.

responded, while Balian of Sidon, Odo of Montbéliard and a number of other leading members of the Latin community tried to negotiate for peace. John was unable, moreover, to raise the siege; he managed to get supplies of provisions and reinforcements through the blockade, but he evidently lacked the strength to risk a pitched battle or force the emperor's men to withdraw. So he abandoned the attempt and went back to Acre.[83] At this point his fortunes changed. John's presence in Acre brought a new vitality to the Commune which elected him its mayor, and it then achieved a notable success in seizing the imperial ships that were wintering there. At the same time John enlisted the support of the Genoese who had their own quarrel with the emperor, and with their help he was able to mount an attack on Tyre. Richard Filangieri thereupon raised the siege of Beirut. But the Ibelin re-occupation of John's principal city in Syria was followed by a set-back in which the Cypriot troops guarding the main route from Tyre to Acre were taken unawares and defeated by Filangieri's men at Casal Imbert. This defeat, the military significance of which seems to have been exaggerated by the principal narratives of the period, coincided with the coming of age of the king of Cyprus, Henry I.[84]

After Casal Imbert a political stalemate that was to last for about ten years developed in Syria: Richard Filangieri held Tyre, and his opponents, among whom were now numbered Odo of Montbéliard and Balian of Sidon, held Acre.[85] The main theatre of action shifted to Cyprus. At about the time of John of Beirut's unsuccessful attempt to regain Beirut, Aimery Barlais and his followers had returned to the island and seized control. They found few Ibelin supporters to resist them: the *bailli* of the *secrète*, Arneis of Jubail, and the castellan, Philip of Caffran, held St Hilarion, while Guinart of Conches and Balian of Ibelin's wife, Eschiva of Montbéliard, defended themselves in the nearby castle of Buffavento. Aimery Barlais occupied the rest of the island and laid siege to St Hilarion. After his victory at Casal Imbert, Richard Filangieri evidently believed he had the Ibelins contained in Acre, and, leaving a garrison in Tyre, brought the majority of his forces to Cyprus to help reduce the two remaining strongholds. But he may well have overestimated the straits to which his enemies were reduced. Balian of Ibelin had now re-occupied Beirut, and the Ibelin party retained control of Acre and the costal cities to the south. Thanks partly to the sacrifices made by his nephews, John of Caesarea and John the son of Philip of Ibelin, in selling lands to the military Orders, John of Beirut was able to re-equip his army and arrange for it to be transported back to Cyprus. It would appear that the shipping consisted of the imperial vessels seized in Acre

[83] 'Gestes', pp. 702–6; 'Eracles', pp. 393–5; Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 182–3. News of John of Beirut's failure to raise the siege of Beirut led to the suspension of negotiations with Bohemond IV of Antioch for an alliance to be cemented by the marriage of one of his sons to a sister of King Henry. 'Gestes', pp. 706–7.

[84] 'Gestes', pp. 707–10; 'Eracles', pp. 395–8.

[85] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 199–209.

and manned by local seamen, to whom King Henry now gave fiefs which were to be burdened with naval services, together with Genoese ships acquired by promises of commercial concessions in Cyprus to Genoa.[86]

The fleet set sail from Acre at the end of May and after calling at Sidon disembarked on the rocky islets that protect the harbour at Famagusta. Famagusta itself was seized in a surprise attack by night, and the imperial garrison withdrew to Nicosia. The Genoese were duly rewarded with the trading privileges which henceforth were to form the basis of their rights in the island. John of Beirut's forces then advanced to Nicosia and prepared to raise the siege of St Hilarion. This castle guarded the defile through the mountains separating Kyrenia from Nicosia, and on 15 June at the southern end of this pass near the villiage of Agridi (Aghirda) the Ibelin army encountered the enemy. The imperial forces had the advantage of being able to charge downhill, but the Ibelins' tactics and strategy were superior. Their cavalry appears to have been better disciplined and more effectively deployed, and their foot-soldiers gave able support in killing or capturing any knight who became unhorsed. In the end Richard Filangieri and some of the survivors fled back to Kyrenia, while others were cut off and scattered. The Ibelins had won the battle and could bring relief to their supporters in St Hilarion.[87]

The civil war in Cyprus now moved into its final phase. Imperial supporters still held Kyrenia. At first the Ibelin investment was inadequate owing to their inability to blockade the castle from the sea, and the defenders were free to come and go in their attempts to find reinforcements. It was only with the appearance of a new Genoese fleet and a formal military alliance with Genoa in December 1232 that the castle could be fully besieged by both land and sea. Resistance continued until sometime after Easter 1233. Eventually the commander, Philip Chenard, surrendered on terms: the garrison was to go free to Syria, and there was to be an exchange of prisoners. The war in Cyprus was over; the Ibelin victory was complete.[88]

With the surrender of Kyrenia Cyprus entered an extended period of internal peace. Now that Henry I had come of age, Frederick had lost his chief pretext for intervening as suzerain in the affairs of the island, and his preoccupations with Italian politics and relations with the papacy prevented him from sending any further expeditions to the East. In 1242 the Ibelins and their allies expelled

[86] 'Gestes', pp. 707, 710–12; 'Eracles', pp. 398–9. For the Ibelins selling properties to the Hospitallers, *RRH*, nos. 1036, 1036a.

[87] 'Gestes', pp. 712–17, 718; 'Eracles', pp. 400–1. For the Genoese privilege, dated 10 June 1232, Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 51–6.

[88] 'Gestes', pp. 717–21, 724; 'Eracles', pp. 401–2. For the text of the Genoese alliance, Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 56–8. Although the treaty is dated December 1233, the indiction would point to 1232 as the correct year. P. W. Edbury, 'Cyprus and Genoa:The Origins of the War of 1373–1374', *Πρακτικα τοῦ Δευτέρου Διεθνοῦς Κυπριοκλογικοῦ Συνεδρίου*, II, (Nicosia, 1986), 110 note 9.

Frederick's garrison from Tyre, thereby depriving him of his one remaining stronghold in Syria. The final seal was placed on the repudiation of the emperor's overlordship in Cyprus when in 1247 Pope Innocent IV formally absolved Henry from any oaths he may have sworn to Frederick.[89] No more is heard of Cyprus as a client-kingdom of the Western Empire.

Even before the siege of Kyrenia was over, King Henry had convened the High Court to pass judgement on those Cypriot knights who were at war with him. All who had taken up arms against his authority since he came of age were deprived of their fiefs and banned from the kingdom. At the head of the list stood the names of Aimery Barlais, Amaury of Bethsan, Hugh of Jubail and Philip Chenard.[90] Some of the vanquished subsequently made their way to Apulia where the emperor took them into his service; Philip Chenard in particular had a distinguished career there.[91] Hugh of Jubail and Aimery Barlais remained in Syria. By an ironic change of fortune one of Aimery's sons married John of Beirut's great-granddaughter and for a while in the years around 1280 would have had custody of the lordship of Beirut.[92] Gauvain of Cheneché and William of Rivet had both died before Henry's majority, and their heirs escaped dispossession. Gauvain's descendants, however, were sentenced to live in exile from Cyprus. Later in the thirteenth century his fiefs passed to the Ibelin family when Balian of Arsur, a grandson of John of Beirut, married Gauvain's granddaughter.[93] In most cases, however, the families of the defeated party were disinherited. Indeed, the civil war seems to have stimulated a change in the law concerning forfeitures: Philip of Novara made the observation that before the war children already born to men who were sentenced to dispossession could succeed to their fathers' fiefs, but afterwards this ceased to be so.[94]

The war had been costly. Admittedly the list of Cypriot nobles known to have died in the fighting is short: Walter of Caesarea and Gerard of Montagu in the battle of Nicosia in 1229; Gauvain of Cheneché at the siege of Kantara; Anseau

[89] Innocent IV, *Registres*, ed. E. Berger (Paris, 1881–1921), no. 2441.

[90] 'Gestes', p. 719; 'Amadi', pp. 174–5.

[91] E. Bertaux, 'Les Français d'outre-mer en Apulie et en Epire au temps des Hohenstaufen d'Italie', *Revue historique*, LXXXV (1904).

[92] 'Lignages', pp. 449, 468; W. H. Rudt de Collenberg, 'Les Ibelin aux XIIIe et XIVe siècles', *EKEE*, IX (1977–9), 136–7.

[93] 'Gestes', pp. 694, 695; 'Amadi', p. 175; 'Lignages', pp. 449, 457; Rudt de Collenberg, 'Les Ibelin', p. 143. Two of John of Beirut's sons, Baldwin and Guy, married respectively Alice of Bethsan and Philippa Barlais, the daughters of two of the *baillis*. 'Lignages', p. 449; Rudt de Collenberg, 'Les Ibelin', pp. 158, 178. It is not known when these marriages took place. They may belong to the period of attempted reconciliation in 1230–1, but, if they were later, it could be that Baldwin and Guy were expecting to gain possession of their fathers-in-law's fiefs. In 1247 a marriage dispensation was issued for a grandson of John of Beirut to marry a member of the Rivet family 'ad sedendas discordias et contrahendas amicitias'. Rudt de Collenberg, 'Dispenses matrimoniales', pp. 58–9 no. 5.

[94] Philip of Novara, p. 498.

of Brie, mortally wounded at the siege of Kyrenia in 1233.[95] But loss of life during the civil war nevertheless appears to have been considerable. The battle of Nicosia was a bloody affair, and although sixty knights of Richard Filangieri's imperial army were said to have been killed at Agridi as against only one in the Ibelin army, there is evidence that the death toll among the Cypriots during the siege of Kyrenia was high.[96] It is difficult to assess the cost in terms of damage to property and loss of wealth. Large areas of the island would have escaped, but the area around Kyrenia and St Hilarion must have suffered during the sieges, and we read of wanton destruction elsewhere, in particular at Kythrea where the mills were wrecked in 1232. Philip of Novara made much of the outrages committed by the emperor's supporters against the civilian population, but it is uncertain how much allowance should be made for exaggeration.[97] Normal government crumbled under the impact of war, and even after Henry had come of age and had gained the upper hand at the battle of Agridi, it is clear that his control of the whole island was uncertain. Thus, when in December 1232 during the siege of Kyrenia King Henry and the Ibelins made an alliance with the Genoese, they did so not as the rulers of an independent kingdom but as a group of named individuals; the treaty was between the Genoese representative and about fifty men of whom the king was one.[98] The breakdown of recognizable central control that this implied is further illustrated by an incident in 1231 in which thirteen Greek monks were martyred for refusing to conform to western practices concerning the eucharist. The government was normally careful to protect the indigenous church from attack by over-zealous Latin clerics, and it is doubtless significant that this, the only recorded atrocity of its kind, took place at a time of civil war when the authorities were otherwise preoccupied.[99]

Quite apart from the cost of the war in terms of loss of life, damage to property and social dislocation, it is apparent that the strain on the resources of the crown was heavy. Philip of Novara noted that at the end of the war King Henry was poor; he owed his men for their fief-rents and their provisions, and he was still faced with claims for unpaid debts dating from the time of his minority.[100] At the same time tithes went unpaid, and after the war Henry found himself obliged to alienate royal lands to the archbishop of Nicosia in compensation.[101] The closing stages of the war seem to have been particularly

[95] 'Gestes', pp. 689, 694, 718, 720; 'Eracles', pp. 376, 377, 402–3. Henry I's bride, Alice of Monteferrat, died in Kyrenia during the siege of 1232–3.

[96] 'Gestes', pp. 689, 716–17, 719, 721; 'Eracles', p. 401.

[97] 'Gestes', pp. 683, 684, 686, 710–11, 714, 718.

[98] Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 56–8. For the date, above, note 88.

[99] Hill, III, 1049–51; Gill, 'Tribulations of the Greek Church in Cyprus', pp. 79–80.

[100] Philip of Novara, pp. 515–16; cf. John of Ibelin, pp. 383–4. The case of Philip of Jubail described by John of Ibelin (p. 236) is probably further evidence for non-payment of fief-rents at this period.

[101] Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, III, 631, 633–6; 'A Register of the Cartulary of the Cathedral of Santa Sophia of Nicosia', ed. J. L. La Monte, *Byzantion*, V (1930), nos. 30–4, 39–40, 42.

difficult. Whereas in 1229 John of Beirut was able to bear the cost of hiring mercenaries and equipping the fleet for the expedition that led to his triumph at the battle of Nicosia, in 1232 King Henry had to buy support with promises of fiefs. He evidently possessed no ready money and so was having to dissipate his domain. Genoese assistance was obtained at the cost of giving Genoa important commercial and legal franchises. At the siege of Kyrenia expenditure on the wages of the foot soldiers and on the ships involved in the blockade was high, and the king was forced to levy some form of *taille* to maintain the siege. The forfeitures taken from Aimery Barlais and his party had to be regranted immediately as rewards for loyalty.[102]

Why then did the Ibelins win? There can be little doubt that John of Beirut enjoyed genuine popularity and through his network of kinsmen and clients could command the loyalty of a substantial section of the knighthood of both Cyprus and Jerusalem. He seems also to have won the confidence of his great-nephew, the young king of Cyprus. The resources at the Ibelins' disposal consisted of their lands and revenues in Cyprus as well as of their lordships in the kingdom of Jerusalem. Walter of Caesarea and then his son John held the lordship of Caesarea; Philip of Ibelin and his son John, the future jurist and count of Jaffa, also had lands in Syria. John of Beirut himself had fiefs at Acre and held the lordship of Arsur as well as Beirut. In the 1220s he was developing the commercial potential of the port of Beirut, and he had been issuing his own coins there; indeed, it may well be that his lordship in effect slipped out of the *mouvance* of the kings of Jerusalem at this period.[103] Furthermore, because the Ibelins had controlled the kingdom of Cyprus during Henry's minority, especially since the rupture with Alice of Champagne, they would have controlled the sources of royal patronage and so could strengthen their own position accordingly. John of Beirut thus had widespread support and extensive financial assets. In the later stages of the war he could also turn to the Genoese who were prepared to make common cause with him against the emperor. However considerable the opposition may have been within Cyprus, there can be no question that his opponents there were in a minority and had far less wealth to sustain their efforts. Admittedly there is no means of measuring the value of the Ibelins' Cypriot fiefs against those of Aimery Barlais and his associates, but it is likely that the latter's resources in Syria were tiny by comparison. What Aimery Barlais' party did have was imperial support, but this proved inadequate. In 1229 the Emperor Frederick installed the five *baillis* in power and then left them with insufficient military muscle. They were incapable of warding off an Ibelin recovery. In 1232 Aimery Barlais enjoyed the backing of Richard Filangieri and his forces but suffered defeat nonetheless. The imperial

[102] 'Gestes', pp. 688, 711–12, 719, 721; 'Eracles', p. 399.

[103] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 66, 76–8; Metcalf, *Coinage of the Crusades*, pp. 25–6 and plate 7.

army that arrived in the East in the autumn of 1231 held the upper hand at first – John of Beirut was unable to raise the siege of Beirut for several months and suffered defeat at Casal Imbert – but after the defeat at Agridi Richard Filangieri received no more reinforcements from the West and was clearly at a disadvantage.

It is impossible to arrive at any satisfactory appreciation of the relative size of the military forces involved in the war. Various figures were recorded: for example, Philip of Novara claimed to have commanded 150 men at the battle of Nicosia; the Ibelin forces at the siege of St Hilarion were said to have been organized in three shifts, each of a hundred knights serving one month on and two off; one set of figures for Richard Filangieri's total forces in 1231 was 600 knights, 100 mounted squires, 700 foot soldiers and 3,000 armed marines; when the Ibelins returned to Cyprus in May 1232, their forces numbered 233 mounted men, whereas their opponents' cavalry was estimated at 2,000.[104] The Ibelins won two pitched battles in Cyprus, Nicosia (1229) and Agridi (1232), and sustained three lengthy sieges, St Hilarion and Kantara (1229–30) and Kyrenia (1232–3). How far the victories in battle resulted from superior numbers and how far from superior generalship is unclear. At Nicosia clouds of dust proved a problem, but we are not told whether either side derived any advantage from them. At Agridi the imperialists seem to have been poorly commanded, but the fact that they made a strategic withdrawal at the coming of the Ibelins rather than going out to meet them may tell against the impression given by Philip of Novara that the Ibelins were seriously outnumbered. The sieges placed far greater strain on the Ibelins' ability to organize their forces. In the winter of 1229–30 the effectiveness of the siege of St Hilarion was impaired because too many men on the Ibelin side had gone home, and at Kyrenia the problem lay in finding and paying for the naval support necessary to blockade the castle from the sea.[105]

The surrender of Kyrenia marked the culmination of the rise of the Ibelin family in Cyprus. Whenever possible they had sought to surround their actions with a cloak of legalism, but much of their behaviour, especially at moments of greatest threat, had been violent and high-handed. The refusal to allow the appointment of Aimery Barlais as Alice of Champagne's lieutenant, the lynching of Baldwin of Belleme, John of Beirut's armed defence of St Hilarion against the emperor in 1228, and the use of war to overthrow the acknowledged suzerain's duly appointed officers provide ample evidence that beneath this cloak, and despite the efforts of Philip of Novara to conceal the fact, the Ibelins were determined to maintain their ascendancy by any means at their disposal. It is true that many of

[104] 'Gestes', pp. 686, 689, 692, 700, 712. 'Eracles' (pp. 385–6) gives Filangieri's forces as 300 knights and 200 crossbowmen and mounted sergeants. [105] 'Gestes, pp. 689–95, 712–21.

their acts were in response to opponents who were prepared to use equally violent or illegal means to dislodge them from their positions of power, but it is also true that on occasion the Ibelins gratuitously defied convention and legality and employed violent means to further their ambitions. A good example of this sort of behaviour is provided by the circumstances surrounding the marriage of John of Beirut's eldest son, Balian. In about 1230 Balian had married Eschiva of Montbéliard. Eschiva was the daughter of Walter of Montbéliard, the regent in the 1200s, and widow of Gerard of Montagu, killed in 1229. One contemporary writer noted that she had 'grant terre en Chypre': in marrying her Balian was clearly making a 'good marriage'. But the couple were related within the prohibited degrees, and the marriage was contracted *clandestine*. Consequently the archbishop of Nicosia excommunicated the couple. But far from leading to their separation, the excommunication resulted in the archbishop being hounded from his see and taking refuge in Acre. The episode nevertheless ended with a dispensation for the marriage to be legitimized. Balian had secured a rich widow, defied canon law, intimidated the archbishop and got his own way. Significantly, his vassal and apologist, Philip of Novara, made only a single, oblique reference to the affair.[106]

After 1233 the Ibelins were firmly entrenched, and there was no one to challenge them. Their supremacy within the ranks of the Cypriot nobility was to last until the third quarter of the fourteenth century when the remaining branches of the family each failed in the male line. John of Beirut had five sons of whom four lived to have descendants of their own: Balian, who succeeded to Beirut, held fiefs in both Cyprus and Jerusalem; his brother John, who was given the lordship of Arsur as part of a family pact on the death of his father in 1236, may not have had any lands in Cyprus, but the other brothers, Baldwin later seneschal of Cyprus and Guy later constable, seem to have had interests exclusively in the island. Philip of Ibelin's son John, later count of Jaffa, held extensive estates in both kingdoms. As the Christian possessions in Syria were lost to the Muslims, so the interests of all five branches of the family (the four descended from John of Beirut and the one descended from Philip) came to be concentrated in Cyprus. Members of the family were invariably to be found numbered among the kings' counsellors and intimates. Between the 1240s and the 1290s all the constables of Cyprus were Ibelins, and the family supplied all the seneschals of Cyprus until the 1360s. Hugh III, Hugh IV and also Hugh IV's father and one of his sons married into the family, thereby renewing the already close ties of kinship between the Ibelins and the reigning dynasty in succeeding generations.

The precise nature of the relationship between the kings of Cyprus and the

[106] Mas Latrie, *Histoire*, II, 62–3, III, 629–30; 'Gestes', p. 715; 'Eracles', p. 376; Rudt de Collenberg, 'Dispenses matrimoniales', pp. 58–9 no. 2 and note 2 (p. 88).

Ibelins after 1233 is open to differing interpretations. It is possible to see the Ibelins as over-mighty subjects attempting to dominate the crown, or alternatively as loyal counsellors and close kinsmen to whom kings would turn as a matter of course for advice and service. The history of the years before 1233 might lead one to suppose that the Ibelins were out to establish themselves as 'mayors of the palace', intent on controlling and exploiting the crown for their own advantage. In fact the political developments in Cyprus during the remainder of the thirteenth century make it look as if the second alternative – that the Ibelins were loyal counsellors – was nearer the truth. There is no record of any differences between the Ibelins and Henry I, although unquestionably they took the lead in his council and at the High Court. Balian of Ibelin and then his brother Guy held the office of constable; Baldwin became seneschal and in 1247 was entrusted with command of the Cypriot contingent defending Ascalon; Guy and Baldwin led the Cypriot troops on St Louis' crusade to Damietta in 1248.[107] But although Henry may have been a pliant king, and although in the 1240s and 1250s the Ibelins took full advantage of royal weakness in the kingdom of Jerusalem to enhance their wealth and power there, there is no evidence to suggest that they set about dismantling royal authority in Cyprus.[108] The circumstances under which Henry I appointed Baldwin and Guy as seneschal and constable of Cyprus – both appointments seem to date to the mid-1240s – are a matter for speculation; perhaps their promotions coincided with other grants Henry seems to have made in his efforts to secure control of Acre as regent for the absentee Hohenstaufen king of Jerusalem.[109] But any suggestion that these offices were extorted from the king as the price of political assistance is at best unproven, and Guy of Ibelin was evidently a worthy occupant of the constableship. Joinville, who met him during St Louis' crusade, described him as 'one of the most accomplished knights I have ever seen' – high praise indeed from a seneschal of Champagne and intimate of the king of France![110]

The pattern of intermarriage with the Lusignans certainly does not suggest that the Ibelins were manipulating the ruling dynasty for their own ends. Apart from the marriage of Aimery of Lusignan and Eschiva of Ibelin back in the twelfth century, the earliest example of a marriage between an Ibelin and a member of the royal family was in or soon after 1255; the fact that the man concerned was the future Hugh III is of little immediate significance since at that date his accession to the throne would not have been thought likely. At the time of his death in 1267, Hugh II was betrothed to the lady of Beirut, but otherwise there are no further examples of intermarriage between the two houses until

[107] Rudt de Collenberg, 'Les Ibelin', pp. 130, 157–8, 177–8.

[108] After the seige of Kyrenia John of Beirut intervened in the Cypriot High Court to protect the crown from a procedural innovation which, had it been established, would have strengthened the position of the vassals against the king. Philip of Novara, pp. 515–16; John of Ibelin, pp. 383–4.

[109] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp.214–15. [110] Joinville, p. 119.

1291 when the pope issued a dispensation for a great-granddaughter of John of Beirut to marry a younger son of Hugh III.[111] In the question of appointments to high office it can be shown that although the Ibelins monopolized the seneschalcy and constableship, these offices did not become hereditary in any one branch of the family, and so the kings were not limited in their choice of appointees. The comparative absence of constitutional crises and the lack of more positive evidence for a systematic exploitation of the royal resources to enhance still further the family's standing provide an adequate indication that the relationship of the Ibelins to successive kings was normally that of faithful vassals enjoying the rewards that royal patronage would bring them.

As the descendants of John of Beirut and his brother Philip proliferated, the unity that had been a powerful Ibelin attribute began to weaken. The first major conflict in which members of the family found themselves ranged on opposing sides was the War of St Sabas which broke out in Acre in the 1250s between the rival Italian communes.[112] In Cyprus it was as late as 1306 that tensions within the family first emerge clearly in our sources. King Henry II had been relying on the counsel of his maternal uncle, the seneschal Philip of Ibelin, to the exclusion of his other vassals, and, for a variety of reasons of which this was one, Henry's brother Amaury with the support of the overwhelming majority of the nobility including all the other members of the Ibelin family seized control of the government. But in the course of the next few years some of the Ibelins went over to the king with the result that when Henry was restored to power in 1310 and took reprisals on his enemies, it was only the descendants of Baldwin the Seneschal and Philip of Ibelin the regent who suffered.[113]

The earliest unmistakable instance of a member of the Ibelin family attempting to thwart Lusignan power dates from 1271. In that year James of Ibelin, the son of John count of Jaffa, acted as spokesman for the Cypriot knights who were trying to claim that they did not owe military service in Syria. James, as will be seen, failed in his efforts on their behalf, but towards the end of his speech he made a claim that serves as evidence more for his family's self-esteem than for his historical accuracy or the strength of his case: '. . . the men of the kingdom of Cyprus have more often served the house of Ibelin outside the kingdom than they have the king or his ancestors . . .'[114] Nothing could be more

[111] Rudt de Collenberg, 'Dispenses matrimoniales', pp. 58–61 nos. 8, 9, 18b (cf. 18a).

[112] Riley-Smith, *Feudal Nobility*, pp. 215–17; H. E. Mayer, 'Ibelin *versus* Ibelin: The Struggle for the Regency of Jerusalem, 1253–1258', *PAPS*, CXXII (1978), 48–51. Mayer's attempt (pp. 31ff.) to demonstrate that John of Ibelin lord of Arsur was at odds with the other members of his family from the early 1230s is not convincing. P. W. Edbury, 'John of Ibelin's Title to the County of Jaffa and Ascalon', *EHR*, XCVIII (1983), 130–3. Cf. Mayer's rejoinder, 'John of Jaffa, his Opponents and his Fiefs', *PAPS*, CXXVIII (1984), 135–9.

[113] Below pp. 130–1. A certain Balian of Ibelin 'Mal guarnito' or 'Malgarny' whose place on the Ibelin family tree is unknown supported the king in 1306. 'Amadi', p. 252.

[114] 'Document relatif au service militaire', p. 434. Below pp. 92–3.

natural than that the Ibelins should take pride in their achievements and pre-eminence, and it was this pride that at some point before the opening years of the fourteenth century led to the fabrication of the spurious pedigree which asserted their descent from the viscounts of Chartres.[115]

[115] The claim is found in the version of the 'Lignages' (p. 448) which belongs to the first decade of the fourteenth century. P. W. Edbury, 'The Ibelin Counts of Jaffa: A Previously Unknown Passage from the "Lignages d'Outremer"', *EHR*, LXXXIX (1974), 604–5.