

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-45837-5 - The Kingdom of Cyprus and the Crusades, 1191-1374

Peter W. Edbury

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THE ISLAND of Cyprus was conquered from its Byzantine ruler by Richard I of England in 1191 during the Third Crusade, and remained under western rule until the Ottoman conquest of 1570–1. From the 1190s until the 1470s the island was a kingdom governed by members of the Lusignan family. The Lusignans, who hailed from Poitou in western France, imposed a new, European landowning class and a Catholic ecclesiastical hierarchy upon the indigenous Greek population. Nevertheless, their regime provided long periods of political stability and, until the late fourteenth century, a considerable period of prosperity. In the thirteenth century the island was closely linked to the Latin states in Syria and the Holy Land by political, social and economic ties and, with the fall of the last Christian strongholds to the Muslims in 1291, it became the most easterly outpost of Latin Christendom in the Mediterranean.

This new study, which is based on original research, traces the fortunes of Cyprus under its royal dynasty and its role in the crusades and in the confrontation of Christian and Muslim in the near East until the 1370s when it was severely weakened in a war with Genoa. It is both a major contribution to the history of the crusades in the Levant and the only scholarly study of medieval Cyprus currently available.

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For my parents

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PREFACE



IN 1841 the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres announced an essay competition on the 'history of Cyprus under the rule of the princes of the house of Lusignan'. What was wanted was not a simple narrative but 'a more accurate account of events with some discussion of the geography, laws and customs and of the religious, political and civil institutions of the kingdom'. In the event the prize was shared. One of the winners was Count Louis de Mas Latrie, a French aristocrat who subsequently, in the course of the following half century, proceeded to lay the foundations of all modern research into Cyprus in the period of the crusades. Mas Latrie died in 1897 after a varied and prolific career. But there were few who followed in his footsteps, and it was not until the 1940s that the most appreciable English contribution to the subject appeared. This was Sir George Hill's four-volume *History of Cyprus* which covered the island's history from prehistoric times to the British colonial administration. Volumes II and III, which deal with Lusignan and Venetian Cyprus, are notable for their careful scholarship and in general have stood the test of time better than the others. However, in recent years it has been another Frenchman, Professor Jean Richard, who has donned Mas Latrie's mantle and, through a series of articles and editions of sources, has greatly enriched our knowledge of the island's history in the later middle ages. Richard has blazed the trail for what can now be clearly seen as a revival of academic endeavour. I would single out three scholars in particular: Count W. H. Rudt de Collenberg, who has laboured long in the archives of the Vatican in the furtherance of his prosopographical enquiries; Dr D. M. Metcalf, who has made substantial advances in investigating Lusignan numismatics and monetary history, and Dr Benjamin Arbel, whose work on Cyprus under Venetian rule promises to overturn many long-held assumptions.

Since the 1950s there has been an upsurge in research into the crusading movement. Our knowledge of the kingdom of Jerusalem has been considerably enhanced, not least by a succession of major studies by British scholars. But no one since Hill, whose book for all its merits is now showing its age and in any case has long been unobtainable, has attempted a general reappraisal of the history of Cyprus under the Lusignans in the light of recent scholarship. The

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present contribution is intended to go some way towards filling this gap. My emphasis is on the political history of Cyprus within the context of the crusading endeavours in the eastern Mediterranean. I had originally planned to include chapters on the social and economic fabric of the kingdom, but after much heart-searching I decided that such topics would be better dealt with elsewhere. In any case I am not at all sure that in the 1990s people will want to read academic monographs from cover to cover if they are much over two hundred pages long! Nevertheless I have tried to satisfy the terms of reference set by the Académie des Inscriptions all those years ago, even if the end-result is a century and a half too late for consideration by that august body.

One scholar more than any other has me in his debt. Professor Jonathan Riley-Smith was the man who first introduced me to the study of the crusades when I was a student at St Andrews University, and his friendship and encouragement ever since have been of immense value. My researches into Cypriot history began as far back as 1969 when, under Jonathan's direction, I was preparing my undergraduate dissertation, and over the years he has patiently chivvied me along when other concerns have threatened to prevent my work on Cyprus ever seeing its way into print. There are many other scholars who at different times have helped me in one way or another. It is a matter of great sadness that neither Dr L. H. Butler nor Dr R. C. Smail are living to see this work come to fruition, but on a happier note I am pleased to be able to thank the four historians referred to at the end of the opening paragraph, Jean Richard, W. H. Rudt de Collenberg, Michael Metcalf and Benjamin Arbel, all of whom have been most generous in sharing their opinions with me. I have also profited from the wisdom of, among others, Bernard Hamilton, Robert Irwin, David Luscombe, Tony Luttrell and Christopher Tyerman, while at the same time I have been most fortunate to have had the benefit of the company of David Bates and Clive Knowles as colleagues here in Cardiff. The British Academy gave me some most welcome financial support to enable me to further my research, and my thanks go also to the Governing Body of Christ Church, Oxford. As for the dedicatees, they alone know how much I owe them.

P.W.E.
Cardiff, 1990

ABBREVIATIONS



<i>Annales ESC</i>	<i>Annales Économies Sociétés Civilisations.</i>
AOL	<i>Archives de l'Orient latin.</i>
BEC	<i>Bibliothèque de l'École des Chartes.</i>
BEFAR	Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome.
BF	<i>Byzantinische Forschungen.</i>
BIHR	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.</i>
CS	<i>Crusade and Settlement.</i> Edited by P. W. Edbury, Cardiff, 1985.
CSFS	Collana storica di fonti e studi. General editor G. Pistarino. Genoa, 1969–
DOP	<i>Dumbarton Oaks Papers.</i>
DVL	<i>Diplomatarium Veneto-Levantinum.</i> Edited by G. M. Thomas and R. Predelli. 2 vols. Venice, 1880–99.
EHR	<i>English Historical Review.</i>
EKEE	<i>Ἐπετερίς τοῦ Κέντρου Ἐπιστημονικῶν Ἐρευνῶν.</i>
Hill	G. Hill, <i>A History of Cyprus.</i> 4 vols. Cambridge, 1940–52.
HC	<i>A History of the Crusades.</i> General editor K. M. Setton. 6 vols. Philadelphia and Madison, 1955–89.
MAHEFR	<i>Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'École française de Rome.</i>
MEFR	<i>Mélanges de l'École française de Rome.</i>
Outremer	<i>Outremer: Studies in the History of the Crusading Kingdom of Jerusalem.</i> Edited by B. Z. Kedar, H. E. Mayer and R. C. Smail. Jerusalem, 1982.
PAPS	<i>Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society.</i>
PBSR	<i>Papers of the British School at Rome.</i>
PL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Latina.</i> Edited by J. P. Migne. 217 vols. Paris, 1844–64.
Potthast	<i>Regesta pontificum Romanorum inde ab anno post Christo nato 1198 ad annum 1304.</i> Compiled by A. Potthast. 2 vols. Berlin, 1874–5.

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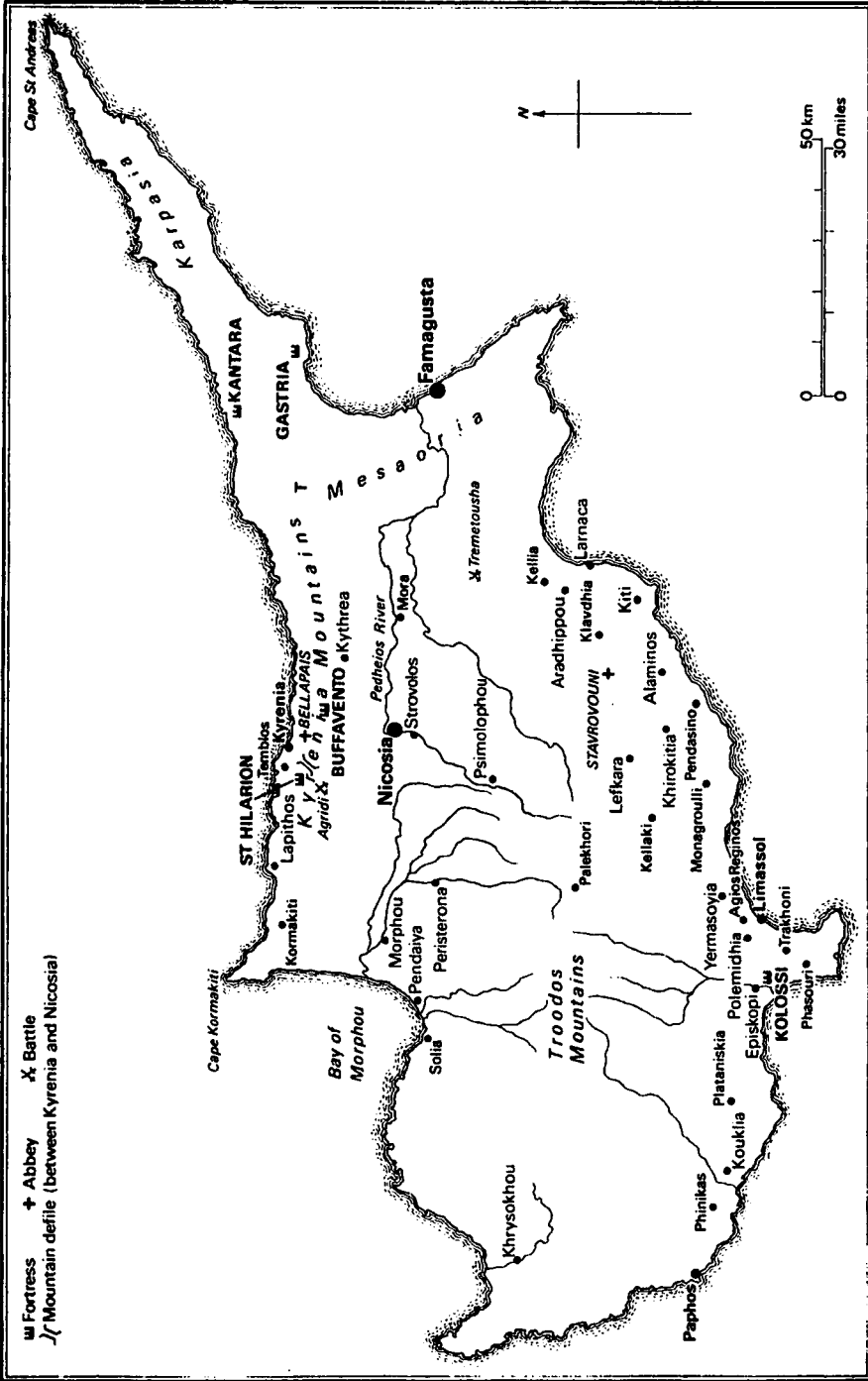
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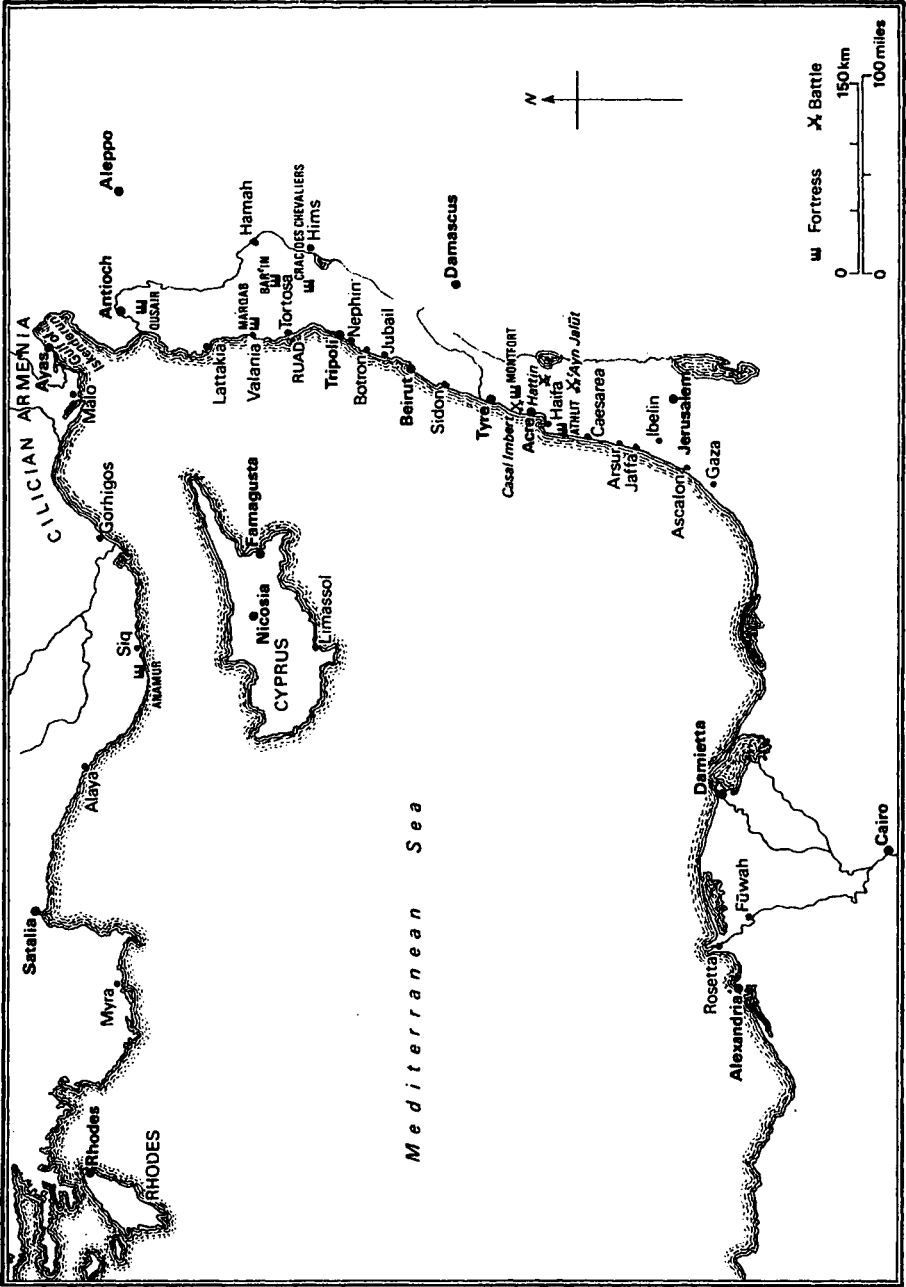
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PPTS	Palestine Pilgrims Text Society. 13 vols. London, 1896-1907.
RHC	<i>Recueil des historiens des croisades</i> . 16 vols. Paris, 1841-1906.
<i>Arm.</i>	<i>RHC Documents arméniens</i> . 2 vols. 1869-1906.
<i>Lois</i>	<i>RHC Lois. Les assises de Jérusalem</i> . 2 vols. 1841-3.
<i>Oc.</i>	<i>RHC Historiens occidentaux</i> . 5 vols. 1844-95.
RHF	<i>Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France</i> . Edited by M. Bouquet <i>et al.</i> 24 vols. Paris, 1737-1904.
ROL	<i>Revue de l'Orient latin</i> .
RRH	<i>Regesta Regni Hierosolymitani (1097-1291)</i> . Compiled by R. Röhrich. Innsbruck, 1893. <i>Additamentum</i> . 1904.
RS	<i>Rerum Britannicarum Medii Aevi Scriptores (Rolls Series)</i> . 251 vols. London, 1858-96.
Setton, <i>PL</i>	K. M. Setton, <i>The Papacy and the Levant (1204-1571)</i> . 4 vols. Philadelphia, 1976-84.
ZDPV	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästinavereins</i> .



Map 1 Cyprus



Map 2 The eastern Mediterranean