

(Re)constructing Aristocratic Religious Identities in 15th Century Cyprus*

In a well-known letter from the year 1368, Pope Urban V wrote to the Cypriot archbishop and among other things complained about the women of Cyprus, saying that »a great part of noble and plebeian women of the aforesaid city (Nicosia), attacking the Catholic faith they orally profess with ways and deeds contrary to it, frequent the churches of the Greeks and schismatics [...]«¹. The pope advised the archbishop strongly to forbid such doings and punish those who transgressed the rules of the Latin Church. This often-cited incident of inter-religious contact provides a good insight into the religious situation on Cyprus at the time. At the end of the 14th century, the island was a religiously and culturally extremely hybrid space². Cyprus, until the end of the 12th century a Byzantine province, had been conquered by Richard the Lionheart in the course of the Third Crusade in 1191 and subsequently been turned into a new kingdom by the family of the Lusignans, who ruled the island for almost three centuries until it was officially taken over by the Venetians in 1489. Under Lusignan rule, Cyprus became a »Latin« island: a Latin Church hierarchy was set up, and in the course of the 13th century, the Latin Church established at least nominal control over the Greek Church and later over some of the Oriental Churches present on the island. Officially they became part of the Latin Church and – at least from a Latin perspective – constituted only different rites in the same church, subordinate to the Latin hierarchy³. Members of the ruling class, the king's liegemen, had to be of the Latin rite⁴. But at the same time, and parallel to conflicts between the church hierarchies, contacts between the various religious rites on the island developed. Research in the last years has

shown many forms of religious contacts, quite apart from noble women visiting Greek churches. For example, Latins ordered icons from Greek painters and donated money and estates to Greek monasteries. Religious processions were held conjointly by various rites. Greek clerics and lay persons worked in Latin religious foundations and concluded commercial transactions with the Latin Church. Greek churches took over Latin architectural elements. By the 14th century, the Lusignan kings and queens of Cyprus were well known for their protection of Greek monasteries and churches⁵. This is not to say that there were no separate religious identities any more, or that the various religious communities always lived together harmoniously. In some cases, prejudices and conscious insistence on the own religious traditions are to be found⁶, as we shall see later. But it shows that the religious situation on the island was not always clear cut, and that it offered differing possibilities to construct religious identities.

It is in this culturally and religiously hybrid situation that the present analysis is situated. We will ask how a particular segment of the population, the aristocracy, coped with this multifaceted context. At the beginning of Lusignan rule, the new kings had invited settlers from the Levant and Western France to join them on the island. Some of them became members of the nobility in the new state, ruling over a population foreign to them. At that time, the nobility was comprised by families with a knightly status, who were the king's liegemen and married exclusively within their own group⁷. But this group underwent changes through contacts with the population on the island. From the end of the 14th century in particular, it partly opened up to social ascendants from the

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1 *Quotque magna pars nobilium et plebeiarum mulierum de civitate prefata, fidem catholicam quam voce profitentur contrariis moribus et operibus impugnando, Grecorum et schismaticorum frequentant ecclesias [...]* Schabel, *Cartulary* 313 (nr. 131). – Translation from Schabel, *Synodicum Nicosiense* 371-372. – The pope had been informed about this matter by King Peter I of Cyprus.
2 Schabel, *Religion* 182. – The term »hybrid« is used here generally to denote a mix of different (cultural) elements. For discussions of the term, s. among others Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns* 197-203. – Burke, *Cultural Hybridity*. – Borgolte/Schneidmüller, *Hybride Kulturen*. – Burkhardt et al., *Hybridisierung* 469-

472. – Religion is seen as one sector of human culture, culture itself denoting the various results of the human being's dialectic and creative interaction with the world and his environment according to Barzen et al., *Kontakt* 195-197.

3 Coureas, *Latin Church II*, 425. S. also 474-482 for the more or less successful attempts at subjecting the various Oriental Churches reaching into the 14th century. – Schabel, *Religion* 171. 201-204.

4 Edbury, *Franks* 77-80.

5 There are a number of works on this subject. Mersch, *Shared Spaces* 467-476 and Coureas, *Latin Church II*, 435-459 as well as Schabel, *Religion* 157-160. 182 give overviews of the research as well as contributing new ideas. – S. also Grivaud, *Pèlerinages grecs*. – Grivaud, *Les Lusignans patrons*. – Weyl Carr, *Art in the Court*.

6 In contrast to the emphasis placed on peaceful cohabitation in many recent studies, p. e. Chotzakoglou, *Holy Virgin*, reminds the reader that there were also conflicts and mistrust especially between the Orthodox and Latin communities.

7 Edbury, *Franks* 77-80.

Greek and Syrian Cypriot⁸ population of the island. These families had been working in the royal administration for quite some time, and came to comprise a new aristocratic group on the island⁹. Some of these families even managed the ascent into the highest echelons of the nobility, obtaining knighthood, fiefs and highest state offices¹⁰. Moreover, in the course of the 15th century, newcomers from Western Europe, such as Catalans, Italians and families from France, migrated to Cyprus and became part of the nobility¹¹. At the same time, probably due to a series of events such as a devastating war with Genoa 1372-4, outbreaks of the plague, and the Mamluk invasion of 1426¹², more than half of the old and well established Frankish noble families disappear from Cypriot sources¹³. Thus, in the 15th century, the ruling class of Cyprus was comprised of various groups of people, some of them from old noble families with a privileged legal status, others social ascendants who comprised their own group and only partly integrated into the old nobility, and again others who had only recently immigrated from Western Europe. They had different cultural backgrounds, and lived in a multi-cultural and multi-religious context, which was nevertheless officially governed by the Latin Church. It is the aim of this paper to assess how members of the aristocracy in the 15th century lived their religious lives and constructed their religious identities in the tension between a hybrid religious context on the one hand and a strict religious hierarchy on the other. How did individuals with various backgrounds represent and negotiate their religious identities in their everyday lives and in various social contexts?

Methodological reflections

Before attempting to answer these questions, it is necessary to clarify how the term *identity* will be used. A great deal of

research has been done on the question of identity over the last century, and it is, of course, not possible to expand on it here. Suffice it to say that as a consequence of the linguistic and cultural turns and the arrival of postmodernism in the 1980s, identity studies increasingly focused on the fragmentation and multiplicity of identities within a single individual, but also within groups, as opposed to a more stable view of identity as a consistent concept of self, which had hitherto been favoured¹⁴. Various new research concepts were proposed. The present paper will follow the approach pursued by Stuart Hall's much read work »Who Needs Identity?« from 1996. It focuses on the construction of identity as the result of an individual's identification with a certain discourse within a given moment. This identification can vary depending on the context and the choice of discourses involved¹⁵. Refining this position, it has been stressed that it is not the discourse itself that forms identity, but that people themselves form their identities by choosing, negotiating and »speaking into shape« various discourses¹⁶. Matching this concept from a psychological perspective, Richard Ryan and Edward Deci have recently explained that individuals develop identities by accepting roles in order to help them secure a sense of relatedness and belonging. Thus, a person can have multiple identities, depending on the various contexts to which they relate, and not just one identity consisting of everything they believe themselves to be¹⁷.

For the analysis of aristocratic religious identities in 15th century Cyprus, this means that we will examine identity construction by the aristocracy in the limited context of religious faith and the various discourses this context entails. Rather than trying to define who »had« which faith, we will analyse how members of the aristocracy constructed their religious identities in a given moment by choosing from the various possibilities of identification with a certain religious rite, and if and how these identifications changed in different

8 The term »Greek Cypriot« is not used in its modern sense here. As Nicolaou-Konnari, *Ethnic names*, esp. 260-262, has shown, 15th-century Cyprus developed a concept of *Kypriotis*, meaning all the subjects of the Lusignan kingdom. On the other hand, the Orthodox population often designated themselves as *Rhomaioi* in the religious sense, as seen for example in the chronicle of Machairas, *Exegesis* § 579. 599. The sources of the Latin Church call them *Greci*, see p.e. above n. 2. – Cf. also Pahlitzsch, *Graeci und Suriani*, esp. 14-15, for the parallel use of the term in Palestine. As the term *Rhomaioi* usually denotes all Byzantine subjects and would therefore be a bit confusing, and the term *Kypriotis* definitely included the Greek speaking population, in this study *Greek Cypriot* will denote the Greek speaking, originally Byzantine-Orthodox population now subject to the Lusignan kings. Parallel to this concept, *Syrian Cypriots* will denote the descendants of the Oriental Christians who had come to Cyprus from the Levant, mostly in the aftermath of the fall of Acre in 1291, and by the 15th century had been living in Cyprus long enough to be seen as Cypriots by their contemporaries, see p.e. Boustronios, *Diegesis* 10. – For the origins of the Syrian Cypriots, s. Jacoby, *Famagusta* 150-151.

9 The ascent of these families before the 15th century has been studied by Nicolaou-Konnari in her Ph.D. thesis »The encounter of Greeks and Franks in Cyprus in the late 12th and 13th centuries: phenomena of acculturation and ethnic awareness«, especially 295-300. – S. also Nicolaou-Konnari, *Greeks*. – Beihammer, *Griechische Briefe*. – Grivaud, *ordine della secreta* 533-536 has studied the case of the Bustron family and calls them the »noblesse d'office«.

10 We will differentiate here between aristocracy and nobility using a definition which among others has been formulated by Timothy Reuter and David Crouch (using older models, such as Marc Bloch): According to this definition, the aristocracy is a social group which is characterised by great political and economic

influence, and the members of which normally transfer their wealth and access to power to their descendants, albeit without possessing a special legal status which separates them from the rest of society. A nobility, in contrast, possesses such legal privileges, confirming its political and economic influence on a legal basis. Therefore, a nobility can even be part of the aristocracy in a given society, but not vice versa. (Reuter, *Medieval Nobility* 178-179. – Crouch, *Birth of Nobility* 2). In Cyprus, the nobility had originally been separated from the rest of the population by the liegemen's privileges to be judged by their own court, the so-called Haute Court. These legal privileges were still maintained in the 15th century, but with the ascending Greek and Syrian Cypriot families a new group became powerful, forming a new aristocratic group, and only some of those families were integrated into the nobility. – Cf. Nicolaou-Konnari, *Greeks* 58-59.

11 Edbury, *Cypriot Society* 29-30. 34. – S. also below, pages 16-21.

12 Edbury, *Cypriot Society* 21-22. 33. – Grivaud, *Entrelacs* 28-29.

13 There has been some discussion about the changes in the Cypriot aristocracy in the course of the 15th century, some historians postulating the percentage of old families disappearing and new families joining the nobility to be huge, others seeing change on a much lesser scale (s. Richard, *Culture franque*. – Edbury, *Cypriot Society* 29-30. 34. – Grivaud, *Entrelacs* 29-33. – Rudt de Collenberg, *Dome kai proeleuse*. – Arbel, *Cypriot Nobility*. – Kyrris, *Cypriot Identity* 568-571). The number of about half of the old families disappearing from the sources is a result of the research for my Ph.D. thesis.

14 Wetherell, *Field of Identity Studies* 13-15.

15 Hall, *Who Needs Identity?* 5-6.

16 Wetherell, *Field of Identity Studies* 17.

17 Ryan, *Multiple Identities* 226-227.

moments of life. How did they negotiate the affiliation with various rites and the corresponding discourses in the hierarchized context between the Latin and the Greek Churches? How did, for example, members of the Greek and Syrian Cypriot families live and represent their religious identities? In which context and for which audience did they construct their religious identities, and why? In the following, their religious identities shall be examined on the personal level where it is possible, using documents such as testaments for the interpretation. Where there are no such documents to be found, recourse will be had from other sources such as papal registers and tombstones. For the sake of clarity, and as a person's background did have an influence on their religious lives to a certain extent, the individual cases will be grouped according to their cultural backgrounds: old families, who had been established as nobles in Cyprus before the end of the 14th century, Syrian and Greek Cypriot families, and newcomers from Western Europe¹⁸. But it should be said that in these groups, and even in one and the same family, differing solutions for the question of religion and religious identity existed. As one of the established families, the Lusignans will be analysed first, but as the focus of the paper is on the »average« aristocracy, we will limit the remarks on them to the necessary outlines.

Aristocratic religious identities – case studies

The Lusignan family

As the royal family, the Lusignans were obviously not only part of the nobility, but may also have served as examples for other nobles' conduct in religious questions. At the same time, they are a special case, as they were public figures and even more than for other noble individuals, the construction and representation of their religious identities would have been strongly intertwined with politics.

As a ruling family in a state which was recognized by the papacy and other Western kingdoms, the Lusignans obviously firstly adhered to the Latin faith. The kings were normally crowned by the Latin archbishop, and Latin friars and clerics were often members of their council throughout the 14th century¹⁹. The Lusignan family burial site was the Dominican monastery, which was adjacent to the royal palace and after some building activities even became an integral part of it in the time of Peter II (r. 1369-1382)²⁰. At the same time, it has been convincingly shown that the Lusignans successfully

styled themselves as protectors of the Greek Church and its institutions²¹. In some cases, the dynasty protected the Greek clergy against the claims of Latin clerics, aiming to convert them or induce their stricter subjection to the Latin Church. It has been stated that the aim of this policy was social peace among the various population groups on the island, as an active oppression of the Greek Church would have furthered social unrest²². Gilles Grivaud has gone even further in stating that from the middle of the 14th century on, the Lusignans not only protected other religious groups, but even promoted certain local cults. Thus they played an important part in the development of a mixed religious tradition located somewhere between the existing churches, and thus also of a new, inclusive local religious identity. Such was for example the case with the cults of St. Mamas and the cross of Tochni²³. Grivaud's work also shows that the kings at the end of the 14th and the beginning of the 15th century continued this policy. In either 1400 or 1406, King Janus granted the little known Greek monastery of the Priests two more priests, and in 1406 he reduced its taxes²⁴. In 1411, he actually filed a petition with the papacy to officially recognize a particular office for the Cypriot Saint Hilarion, whom the Latins had begun to venerate in the 13th century²⁵. In 1412, his mother Helvis of Brunswick donated an estate to the Greek Kykkos monastery in the Troodos Mountains²⁶. In 1432, the Greek bishop of Nicosia²⁷ was one of the many godparents to the newly born Jacqua de Lusignan, the daughter of Janus' cousin Peter de Lusignan. Thus, also in the 15th century, the Lusignans styled themselves as the rulers and protectors of various religious traditions on the island, not only the Latin one. And the baptism indicates that this mixed concept of religious identity may even have penetrated into the more private dimensions of their lives.

In the traditional view of 20th century scholarship, Queen Helena Palaiologina, married to King John II in 1442, turned this development into an explicit strengthening of the Greek Church. Daughter of the Morean despot Theodore II Palaiologos and the Italian princess Cleopa Malatesta, she herself came from a hybrid religious and cultural background. However, she was described as a perfidious Greek by Enea Silvio Piccolomini (later pope Pius II), who said she favoured the Greek Church and fought against the Latin Church and the »Latin« nobles. More recent research, especially by Jean Richard and Christina Kaoulla, has convincingly shown that this picture is not at all accurate. Although Helena probably adhered to the Greek rite herself, and did for example support the Greek Mangana monastery in Nicosia, there is

18 As the city of Famagusta was occupied by the Genoese between 1374 and 1464 as a consequence of the Cypriot-Genoese war 1372-1374, it did not belong to the kingdom of Cyprus at that time. Therefore I have not considered sources on religious matters concerning this city.

19 Schabel, Religion 180.

20 Schabel, Inquisition 123-124.

21 Schabel, Religion 181. – Grivaud, Les Lusignans patrons 258-260.

22 Schabel, Religion 179. Schabel himself points out that the nobles' and the crown's missing cooperation with the Latin Church probably also had a very

practical reason: they wanted to keep their revenues for themselves instead of paying tithes and were not interested in either avoiding marriages with near relatives or having their morals reformed by the Latin Church.

23 Grivaud, Les Lusignans patrons 262-269.

24 Darrouzès, Obituaire 31. 35. – Cf. Grivaud, Les Lusignans patrons 260-261.

25 Rudt de Collenberg, Schisme 695. – For the saint's veneration in the Latin Church in the 13th century, s. Schabel, Synodicum Nicosiense 170-173.

26 Grivaud, Les Lusignans patrons 259-260.

no evidence on her side for any hostile politics against the Latin Church and clergy²⁸. Still, her marriage into the Lusignan family shows how far hybrid religious identities were a normal and acceptable phenomenon for the royal family at the time.

While the construction and representation of a mixed local religious identity thus seems to be constant between the 14th and 15th centuries, the Lusignans' relationship to the Latin Church underwent some changes, which were mostly caused by Church political events. Between 1378 and 1417, the Great papal schism rocked the foundations of the Latin Church and influenced Church politics even in Cyprus. Avignonese and Roman popes in the following years both appointed archbishops to Cyprus, but the Lusignan kings James I and Janus used the chaos induced by the schism for their own ends. They took possession of the Cypriot archbishopric, which had been governed by foreign archbishops until then. From the late 1380s on, it was managed by an administrator chosen by the crown, and there are various hints that the crown benefited from the tithes, even if the extent of this appropriation is not clear²⁹. In 1411, Janus chose his brother Hugh as administrator, and after the end of the schism he was appointed archbishop. After Hugh's death in 1442 there were some struggles between the crown and the papacy concerning candidates for the see, and in 1451 King John II again appointed his own candidate, his bastard son James (later James II), who was never acknowledged by the papacy³⁰. While this appropriation of the Latin archbishopric³¹ was initially a financial and political affair, one might ask how far it led to a more intensive identification of the royal family with their »own« Latin church on the island, matching the promotion of their »own« local cults³².

This difficulty of separating identity construction and politics obviously also applies to the very personal level of identity construction. It is, for example, difficult to say whether Janus promoted the cult of St. Hilarion for purely political reasons or if he actually did have a special relationship with the saint himself. But in the end, this question is of minor relevance for this paper, as it is the royal family's representation which counted for society. Even so, differences in personal identity construction can of course be seen within the royal family: while for example Agnes de Lusignan, one of Janus' sisters, was considered a pious Latin Christian and was even invited by the Latin monastery of Wunstorpen to become their new abbess³³, James II did nothing to fulfill the image of a good

Christian ruler, even though he was the designated archbishop of Nicosia³⁴.

Altogether, however, the Lusignan family was very much part of a continually developing, mixed local religious tradition, constructing and representing royal religious identity as protectors of both the Greek Churches and monasteries and the new local cults. On the other hand, the 15th century saw an active appropriation of the Latin Church on their part, which sometimes entailed conflict with the papacy, but at the same time must have intensified the family's relationship with the Latin Church on the island, making them an active part of Latin religious tradition, too.

Established families

The identification with the Latin Church as well as with local religious traditions in a generally hybrid religious space seems to have been true for members of the established noble families, too, although sources are rather scarce for the 15th century. However, there are some indications. In 1368 pope Urban V not only complained about the above-mentioned noble women visiting Greek and Oriental churches, but also about nobles celebrating masses and baptisms as well as marriages in their own houses, a custom not unusual for the Greeks³⁵. Probably at the beginning of the 15th century, a member of the Greek monastery of the Priests in the diocese of Paphos mentioned above took note of a donation in the monastery's synaxary. He stated that a certain *archon ho mensyr Tzouan te Mtoulif* (ὁ ἀρχων ὁ μενσυρ Τζουάν τε Μτουληφ) and his wife had given the monastery a millstone for the benefit of their souls³⁶. The *archon*, a term designating a member of the ruling class, must have been a member of the well-known Montolive family, who obviously had a relationship with the monastery strong enough to make this donation. Thus, nobles' religious identities at least in some families seem to have continued to be rather hybrid.

At the same time, other sources shed light on nobles' relationships to the Latin Church. Two of the highest statesmen of their times, Jean de Brié at the end of the 14th century, and Jacques de Fleury in the middle of the 15th century, had Latin priests sing masses for them privately every day. At the end of his life, Jean de Brié even left the cathedral church in Nicosia his immovable property in the capital, in order for them to rent out the houses. From the income, the houses

27 Mas Latrie, Documents Nouveaux 367.

28 Richard, Culture franque 400-404. – Kaoulla, Queen Helena. – Ganchou, Rébellion 114-115. – For Piccolomini's statements, s. Pii secundi commentarii 176.

29 The appropriation of the archbishopric by the crown is examined by Ritter in a forthcoming essay. – Cf. also Kaoulla, Queen Elena 133-134, and Documenta Conciliorum Constantiensis IV no. 548. 762-763: In 1415, John XXIII was accused of being responsible for the Latin Church's devastating situation on Cyprus. One of the charges was that the crown appropriated church tithes.

30 Rudt de Collenberg, Le royaume 80-81. – Cf. Kaoulla, Queen Helena 131-132.

31 Cf. Schabel, Religion 183.

32 The fact that especially in the second half of the 15th century, many members of Syrian or Greek Cypriot noble families entered the Latin clergy (s. below) may have been part of this development.

33 Mas Latrie, Documents Nouveaux 367-369. – Mas Latrie, Histoire III 18, n.1.

34 For James II and his many exploits, s. Hill, History III 621-656.

35 Schabel, Synodicum Nicosiense 371. – Cf. also Mersch, Shared Spaces 469.

36 Darrouzès, Obituaire 39.

were to be maintained and the remaining money was to be used to pay a priest to sing masses for Jean de Brié's and his wife's souls³⁷. Thus, the prevailing hybridity did not impede intensive relationships between nobles and the Latin Church. On the other hand, these relationships cannot be interpreted as exclusive: the example of the royal family shows that both phenomena could stand side by side.

The nobles' ties with the Latin Church and Western European religious customs can be further analysed by two source types rendering quantitative rather than qualitative information. The first are the nobles' tombstones. Most of the surviving tombstones date from the end of the 14th century, but there are also some from the 15th century. The great majority of the slabs stem from either the cathedral church St. Sophia, the Augustinian church, St. Mary of Tortosa, or the anonymous church which today is the Arab Achmet-mosque, and which probably was the Carmelite church, all located in Nicosia³⁸. Even if their quality varies, the style of all the slabs is without exception typically Western European, as found mainly in France and England at the time³⁹. They generally depict the deceased as a knight or lady in a standing position with the inscription engraved in French around the image⁴⁰. The tombstones themselves and their location in various Latin churches indicate that many nobles chose to be buried in a typical Latin style, representing themselves as faithful Latin Christians at the moment of death.

The second source-type is papal registers. They may tell us something about the nobles' relationship with the papacy, as they document petitions for papal privileges such as absolution of sins at the point of death, and appointments to church offices. Wilpertus Rudt de Collenberg registered far fewer requests for absolution at the point of death for the end of the 14th and the entire 15th century compared to the numbers from the beginning to the middle of the 14th century: between 1323 and 1374, 255 absolutions were issued to Cypriot nobles, while between 1378 and 1467 Collenberg has found only 24 absolutions. But he also mentions that most of the 255 dispensations were issued after the great plague in 1347 and should be seen as a pious reaction directly related to it⁴¹. Therefore the declining numbers in the 15th century should not be interpreted as a sign for a less pious Latin noble

society. In the years of the great papal schism (1378-1417) it is very difficult to make any reliable statements as to the relationship between the Latin Church and the noble families of Cyprus. There are far fewer petitions for papal privileges in that time, especially in the 1390s. But this was connected with Lusignan papal policy, which changed affiliation from Avignon to Rome and back again between the 1380s and 1400 and appropriated the episcopal sees, as has been seen above. The only thing of interest is that some nobles acquired marriage dispensations from the Avignonese pope Clement VII in 1387 and 1390, at a time when the crown of Cyprus probably at least officially tended to Rome⁴².

In contrast to the numbers of petitions during the schism, appointments to church offices in the course of the 15th century reveal some interesting information concerning the religious culture of the established noble families on Cyprus. As has been observed for the 14th century⁴³, in the 15th century there are also very few members of these families to be found among the clergy on Cyprus: only seven persons are registered in Rudt de Collenberg's lists as having entered the service of the Latin Church between 1378 and 1470. Those who did, achieved quite high offices. For example Guy de Nephim, member of an old family, even if not of the first families of the kingdom, was archdeacon of Famagusta in 1385. Jacques de Margat, treasurer of Famagusta and canon in Nicosia in 1406, had risen to papal collector and ambassador to the curia in 1426. Jean Petit was appointed archbishop of Tarsus by the supplication of King Janus in 1407. And Galeusius de Montolive first appears in the registers as archdeacon of Nicosia in 1428, to be appointed bishop of Lemesos and later archbishop of Cyprus. From the 1440s on, some members of the de Nores-family are known as clergymen, James de Nores becoming bishop of Limassol in 1442⁴⁴.

Even if we assume that not all Cypriot clergymen would probably appear in the papal registers (or, indeed, have been found by Rudt de Collenberg), the small numbers of clergymen from old Cypriot noble families is noteworthy, especially as they had good career possibilities. Only the Montolive and the Nores-families show a family tradition of entering the clergy⁴⁵. Interestingly, many of the petitions for papal privileges in these years, apart from those by the royal family, also

37 For Jean de Brié, s. Mas Latrie, *Histoire* II 396-400. – For Jacques de Fleury, s. Ganchou, *Rébellion* 110-112. Ganchou postulates that Jacques' Latin piety made him anti-Orthodox, and argues that his marriage with the Orthodox Zoe Cantacuzene was probably forced onto him. Considering the religious ties which for example members of the Lusignan family maintained to various religious institutions at the same time, I am not convinced of this interpretation. – Thierry Ganchou has also found the testament of Jacques de Cafran, an important statesman from an old Cypriot family who died in the 1440s, in the State Archive of Genoa. Once it is edited it will be very interesting to see whether this document offers any clues as to his religious life; s. Ganchou, *Rébellion* 113 and n. 42.

38 See the collection of Cypriot medieval tombstones edited by Imhaus, *Lacrimae*, especially 5-78. 153. 155. 160. 162 et al. – For the identification of the Arab-Achmet mosque with the Carmelite church, s. Coureas/Grivaud/Schabel, *Frankish and Venetian Nicosia* 191-192.

39 Carbonell-Lamothe, *Étude stylistique* 177-178. 180.

40 See p. e. Imhaus, *Lacrimae* 6. 88. 93. 139. 149.

41 Wilpertus Rudt de Collenberg is known to have made many mistakes in his lists of sources on the Cypriot nobility. I have been able to verify some of the indications in his »Études de prosopographie«, which cover the period between 1378 and the 1470s, in the Vatican Archives. About ninety percent of these samples have proven correct. I have not been able to control the information on the 14th century, but the grand scale of numbers of petitions (many more petitions in the 14th than in the 15th century) should be certain enough. – For the numbers between 1323 and 1374, s. Rudt de Collenberg, *Dispenses matrimoniales* 45-46. – For the privileges between 1378 and 1460, s. Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 525-541. – In 1467 Queen Charlotte attained full absolution for her and her many followers. I have stopped counting before that date, as they would change the picture dramatically.

42 Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 526. – The crown's siding with the various popes is analysed by Ritter in a forthcoming paper.

43 Coureas, *Latin Church* II 181.

44 Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 525-527. 531-533. 535.

45 For their family traditions, s. Coureas, *Latin Church* II 212.

come from those two clans⁴⁶. Thus, only very few families and individuals of the old aristocracy show an active involvement and perhaps also identification with the Latin Church and the papacy in particular.

So, all in all, we may assume that nobles continued to construct their religious identities in the hybrid space between the Churches. They cultivated relationships to Greek Church institutions, even if we do not know how far spread this phenomenon was. At the same time, they sometimes had intensive relationships with the Latin Church, and they cared to represent themselves as good Latin Christians at the time of death, but do not seem to have been too interested in serving the Latin Church and thus further identifying with it. Thus, the attitude of nobles of established families does not seem to have changed substantially compared to former times.

Syrian and Greek Cypriot families

The case was very different with members of the newly ascended Syrian and Greek Cypriot families. These families had been working in the royal administration for a long time, and in the course of the 15th century some of them attained even the highest state offices. Some families were integrated into the old nobility by attaining knighthood and fiefs, others remained in a grey zone, whose status in relation to the nobility is not clear, and perhaps was not clear to the contemporaries, either. It seems that eventually all of the families who managed the last step of social ascension and integrated into the nobility converted to the Latin rite. None of the individuals of noble status can be shown to have officially adhered to either the Greek or one of the Oriental churches, while many explicitly belonged to the Latin rite. Some families appear regularly in the papal registers or elsewhere as Latins from the second half of the 15th century on, such as the Podocataro, the Chimi, Salah, Sincritico and Urri⁴⁷. For others, like the Billy family, we do not have any information. There are two cases which are a bit unclear in this respect. Rudt de Collenberg insists that a certain Greek Cypriot named Nicholas Podocataro was one of king James I's counsellors between 1385 and 1398. His affiliation is not completely clear, but he seems to have been of the Greek rite. But whether his office as the

king's counsellor meant he was seen as noble, is not clear. John Podocataro, whom Rudt de Collenberg mentions as Nicholas' son, also most probably adhered to the Greek rite⁴⁸. He is called *nobilis*⁴⁹ in the inscription lists of the University of Padua, where his sons were enlisted⁵⁰, but it is uncertain whether he was considered as such in Cyprus. Apart from these examples, the great quantity of individuals adhering to the Latin rite amid the Syrian and Greek ascending families strongly suggests that in order to belong to the very highest echelons of Cypriot society, it was necessary to adhere to the Latin rite. The question is how this official affiliation was conceived and lived.

Hugo Podocataro's testament, which was edited by Wilpertus Rudt de Collenberg in 1993⁵¹, is an invaluable source for an individual case in this respect. Hugo was the son of John Podocataro mentioned above. He is perhaps identical with John, a rich merchant mentioned by the Machairas chronicle in 1426. Among other things, this John seems to have been responsible for supplying the king's army with wine⁵². The Podocataro family, who became one of the most important Cypriot noble families in the 16th century, is first attested in the sources in 1367, when one Michael Apodicator was *apautour* (tenant) of the estate of Vavla⁵³. From the end of the 14th century on, this family seems to have undergone a rapid process of social ascension which culminated in the generation of Hugo and his siblings, who made the very last step into the high nobility of Cyprus by being awarded knighthood and fiefs by the crown. Hugo himself must have been knighted before 1451, when he is called *miles* in the papal registers⁵⁴. He had studied at the University of Padua around 1439⁵⁵ and became an important statesman in the 1440s and 1450s, sent on various missions to Western Europe by King John II. He was ambassador at the Roman curia in 1443, 1447, 1451, 1453 and 1454⁵⁶. His brother Peter, who had attained a fief from the crown in 1435, also went on various embassies⁵⁷. Another brother, Ludovico, probably the most well-known member of the family, made a successful career in the Latin Church, and later in his life worked as Alexander VI's secretary and even became cardinal in 1500⁵⁸.

In 1452 Hugo made his testament, which he wrote himself in Italian. The autograph of the testament has been preserved

46 Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 538. 540-541.

47 For the Podocataro family, s. below. – For the Chimi, s. Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 543: Jacobus Chimi attained the privilege of full absolution on 7.5.1469, and was thus definitely a member of the Latin Church. Alice Chimi was buried in the St. Sophia in the second half of the 15th century, s. Imhaus, *Lacrimae Cypriae* 41. – For the Salah, s. Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 535: Babin Salah attained full absolution on 24.3.1447, and 541: Jacob Salah attained the full absolution as one of Charlotte de Lusignan's *familiares* on 18.5.1467. – For the Sincritico family, s. Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 542: Elena also attained full absolution on 18.5.1467. – For the Urri, s. Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 537: Giacomo Urri was procurator at the curia for his relative Nicholas on 6.7.1451, who became canon in Nicosia after his relative Odet Urri; *ibidem* 541-542: Petrus and Johanna Urri attained full absolution on 18.5.1467.

48 For the question of John's religious affiliation, s. below p. 12. For Nicholas as James' counsellor, s. Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 135. Unfor-

tunately, Collenberg does not state his sources either for Nicholas' office or the postulation that he was John's father.

49 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 137.

50 Bliznyuk, *Educational Foundation* 134.

51 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro*.

52 Machairas, *Exegese* § 661. 678. – S. also Nicolaou-Konnari, *Greeks* 52.

53 Richard, *Documents Chypriotes* 80. – S. also Nicolaou-Konnari, *Encounters* 298.

54 Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 537.

55 Bliznyuk, *Educational Foundation* 134.

56 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 139-141.

57 Peter acquired the *prasteio* (a little village, normally part of a *casale*, an estate) of Tragovuni as fief on 3.12.1435. S. MCC, PDC 2669.2, fol. 29^v. – For the embassies s. Imhaus, *Lacrimae* 374.

58 Parlato, *Memorie romane* 69-70.

in the Venetian state archives⁵⁹. Hugo begins his testament with the usual *formulae* concerning the uncertainty of the moment of death and the will of the testator to order his affairs which we also find in other Latin Christian testaments of the time⁶⁰: *Io Hugo Podochator testador predito, sano di mente et intelto havendo nella memoria el divin iudicio che cadaun persona el fin di soa vita ignora, qual et quando esser debe et a cadaun conven che mora non essendo cossa piu certa che la morte [...]*⁶¹. It continues with the standard phrase that the testator recommends his soul to God, the Virgin Mary and all the celestial court. So far he could be just any Latin Christian. But then it becomes interesting. He requests to be buried in the Greek women's monastery of *Le Femene*⁶² in Nicosia, in his father's grave. He leaves the monastery 50 *besants*, 25 to be given to the nuns who are each supposed to say 25 Paternoster and 25 Ave Maria for his soul, and 25 *besants* for the decoration of the church. Then he continues that, as he was married *in francho*, the Latin cathedral church of St. Sophia might refuse a Greek burial (*forse la giesia cathedrale fara difficulta a lasarmi sopellir in grego ut supra*⁶³), and requests all his relatives, testamentary executors and even the king and queen to intervene with the archbishop (or whoever should be in charge of the Latin church⁶⁴) on his behalf. He requests them to pay 200 *besants* for the dispensation, and if that is not enough, even up to 30 ducats⁶⁵. If the dispensation should be denied, he desires to be buried in the Augustinian church, at the top of the stairs leading to the great altar or near the grave of St. Nicholas of Tolentino⁶⁶.

This leaves us with the very interesting information that Hugo Podocataro had married his – presumably also Greek Cypriot – wife Theodora Melissini⁶⁷ according to the Latin rite, a procedure which would presuppose an official affiliation with said rite. This affiliation was probably quite new, as Hugo's father was buried in the above-mentioned Greek women's monastery of *Le Femene*, and one of Hugo's aunts was a nun of the Greek rite⁶⁸. Thus, at the representative moment of marriage, Hugo had taken care to belong to the Latin

Church. But when it comes to the central and very personal matter of burial, he wants to be buried with his father in an Orthodox monastery. The matter is so important to him that he is willing to spend quite a large sum of money on attaining this goal, and even begs for the intercession of the royal couple. Thus, in spite of being an official member of the Latin Church, he has retained an important emotional relationship with his Orthodox heritage, which becomes important for his identity at the moment of death. His relationship to the Greek church is also illustrated by the fact that he knows at least two Greek nuns personally: he bequeaths 25 *besants* each to Deramera and Magdalini, whom he calls his aunt's *compagne* (companions), requesting them to say 25 Paternosters and Ave Marias for eight consecutive days⁶⁹.

Apart from these personal ties he also relates to the Augustinian church, his second choice of burial, and to the cathedral church of St. Sophia. To both he bequeaths 150 *besants* a year. In return, they are supposed to sing a mass for him every day and celebrate an *aniversal / aniversario* every year on the anniversary of his death. Finally, he requests that if the »small new house«, originally willed to his second son Janus, should by any chance not be inherited by this son nor wanted by any of the deceased's brothers, it should be sold and ten ducats of the proceedings be given to his brother's chapel of the Cross⁷⁰ each year, while the rest is supposed to go to the Dominicans who should sing masses for his soul like the Augustinians. Thus, he leaves money to a number of Latin institutions. The monastery of *Le Femene* in its turn is given 70 *besants* for singing a mass two times a week and celebrating a *mnimosino* on the anniversary of his death. The money is supposed to be taken from the income accruing from the salt lake in Limassol⁷¹. The instructions show that he is part of both traditions, complying with the usual rituals for the dead in both churches, and using the familiar vocabulary of *aniversario* on the Latin and *mnimosino* on the Orthodox side for memorial services on the anniversary of a deceased's death.

It is difficult to tell what Hugo's emotional relationship with the Latin Church may have been. His affiliation with

59 See Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 142. It is clear from the document that Hugo actually did write it himself, as a look at the testament in the Venetian State Archives has confirmed.

60 See p. e. Berenger Albi's testament in Mas Latrie, *Nouvelles Preuves* II 26-27.

61 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 143.

62 This Greek monastery is mentioned in various sources. According to Florio Bustron, it was situated on or near the street of the Syrians in Nicosia (Bustron, *Historia* 238). It is also mentioned in some of the documents from the *Livre des remembrances* in 1468 (Richard, *Remembrances* 110. 124) and in a document from 1454 published by Cathérine Otten-Froux (Otten-Froux, *Investissements financiers* 128), which informs us that it was dedicated to St. Mary.

63 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 143.

64 In 1451, John II's bastard son James had just been appointed to the archbishopric, but had not been confirmed by the pope, s. above p. 6.

65 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 143: [...] *voglio dian al dito superiore et giesia per el quarto bisanti dusero et tanto piu quanto alor parera condecante per fin ducati XXX et non piu*. In a later passage Hugo equates ten ducats to 15 *besants* (ibidem 146), but this exchange rate does not make any sense. Perhaps Rudt de Collenberg has misread the text here. From other sources, we know that in 1423, one ducat was worth about 6 *besants*, in 1468 about seven. If we take the latter measure, 30 ducats would be about 210 *besants*, which is not much more than the first sum. But probably paying in

golden ducats would in itself have given the payment more prestige and thus a better value. For the money rates, s. Richard, *Documents Chypristes* 18.

66 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 143-144. Nicholas of Tolentino lived in Italy in the 13th century and was thus a recent saint in Hugo's times. He was known for his great charity, strict asceticism and untiring pastoral care, and venerated especially as helper in times of need. – Cf. Zumkeller, *Nikolaus v. Tolentino* 868-869.

67 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 145. Cf. Bliznyuk, *Genuesen* nr. 84.

68 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 148. It could of course be possible that John Podocataro had been buried in a Greek monastery although he had been part of the Latin Church in his lifetime, just as Hugo projected for himself, but the fact that his sister Chiramarina was a Greek nun suggests that both were actually of the Greek rite.

69 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 148. It is not totally clear from the testament whether Chiramarina and her companions were nuns at *Le Femene*, but it seems a reasonable suggestion.

70 Obviously one of Hugo's brothers disposed of a private chapel dedicated to the Holy Cross. The Podocataros probably had a special relationship to the Cross, as their connection with the monastery of the Holy Cross (Stavrovouni) in the 16th century indicates. – S. Mas Latrie, *Documents Nouveaux* 589-590.

71 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 144 and 146.

it seems to have been primarily politically and socially motivated. The wedding in the Latin Church may have served social ascension and his embassies to the curia were first of all a political affair. But his request to be buried in the Augustine church near St. Nicholas of Tolentino suggests that he might have had a special affiliation with this saint, and his other instructions show that he knew the Latin Church and its proceedings well. There is no hint that he might have had a negative attitude toward the Latin Church, or even have identified only with the Greek Church, as Rudt de Collenberg has suggested⁷².

Other members of his family delved even further into Latin religious identity, as they decided to actively serve the Latin Church. The most distinguished was of course the above mentioned cardinal Ludovico Podocataro. But other family members also joined the ranks of the Latin clergy. In 1443, George Podocataro received canonries in Nicosia and Paphos. In 1451, another George, perhaps the same person, who was cantor in Nicosia, was appointed protonotaire, probably in Nicosia. This seems to be Hugo's brother, as he mentions *a fratello Zorzo lo prothonotario* in his testament⁷³. In 1464 a certain Carolus (perhaps Hugo's other brother Carlo?) became canon in Nicosia and Paphos as well as cantor in the latter town, and treasurer of Famagusta in 1468 or 1469⁷⁴. Undoubtedly the service in the Latin Church itself must have meant at least a certain degree of identification with it. At the same time, it granted the persons in question an income. Later, the association with cardinal Ludovico, who was so close to the popes, must have been another stimulus to use Latin religious identity for the benefit of the family. A papal privilege from 14th of May 1472 illustrates that the family very consciously represented themselves as Latins, probably in order to gain acceptance both with Cypriot noble society and the papacy. The document states that Philipp Podocataro along with his relatives James and Janus, the sons of his relative Peter Podocataro, and Zofredo, the son of Jean Babin (who had married Maria, Hugo's sister) had requested permission to build Latin churches on their respective *casalia* (estates) and to pay priests or friars to celebrate Latin masses there. Their reasoning is highly interesting: They argued that unfortunately there were too few Latin churches in the countryside but on the other hand many Greek, Armenian, Jacobite and even schismatic churches. This afforded them, good Christians living according to the Latin rite, great displeasure⁷⁵. This is an argumentation which one would

expect for example from Latin Church officials coming from outside Cyprus or the papacy itself, and it is interesting that this originally Greek Cypriot family appropriated such a sort of discourse. They even went as far as suggesting taking over Armenian, Greek or other church buildings which they call »heretic«, and turning them into Latin ones as an alternative to building new churches on their *casalia*⁷⁶. This would most certainly not have increased the family's popularity amongst the local population, so the benefit of installing these Latin churches must have been considerable. This is also illustrated by the fact that the churches were to be built at the family's own expense and later to be endowed with proceeds from their tithes as well as additional family donations⁷⁷. The Podocataros put a lot of effort into this new Latin identity, styling themselves »more Latin than the Latins«, many of whom probably simply visited the Greek and Oriental churches in the countryside. The profit in terms of social prestige with their fellow nobles and perhaps with the papacy itself must have been worth it. So it seems that, at least in this family, Latin identity was used as a strong social marker in order to underline their separation from other elements of society. It is worth noting that this still worked in the 1470s, when a little later in 1485 Felix Faber in his travel diary would complain that he had witnessed the shocking event of one and the same priest first celebrating the Latin mass and then the Greek one⁷⁸. This again shows that the context and audience of identity representations have to be taken into account⁷⁹ – while on the everyday level, the different rites were administered by one priest in personal union, the identity a rite entailed might still be highly important on the level of social politics.

Other Syrian and Greek Cypriot families may have used their newly acquired Latin identities in a similar manner. Especially from the 1440s on, many of them are to be found as Latin clerics in the papal registers. Not all of these families attained membership in the high nobility, but they belonged to the same circle of families which had already served the Lusignans in the financial administration for some time. In 1444 for example, Isaach Abrae de Mima became a canon in Paphos. In 1445, Paul Bustron was installed as abbot of the St. Mary monastery of Episcopi⁸⁰. As late as 1451, the Urri family, tightly interrelated with the Podocataros, appears for the first time. Nicholas Urri became canon in Nicosia, and this canonry, among others, seems to have belonged to his relative Odet Urri before him⁸¹. In the same year, Andrea Audeth was consecrated bishop of Tortosa. Until then he had occu-

72 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 160-161.

73 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 146.

74 Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 534. 537. 540. 543.

75 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 173: [...] *nulle latine sed tantummodo grecorum armeniorum et iacobitarum et quorundam etiam schismaticorum ecclesie reperiuntur, ex quo dicto Philippo eiusque consortibus huiusmodi aliisque Christi fidelibus latinis et catholico more viventibus ad displicentiam cedit non modicum* [...].

76 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 174: [...] *in quolibet ex casalibus predictis unam parochialem ecclesiam cum officiniis et ornamentis necessariis*

de bonis propriis de novo erigere vel grecorum seu armeniorum aut aliorum non latinorum eretis (sic!) in latinas mutare [...].

77 Rudt de Collenberg, *Les premiers Podocataro* 174: [...] *et cuilibet ipsarum viginti ducatos pro redditibus annuis ex fructibus decimalibus qui in dictis casalibus et pertinenciis eorum colliguntur pro perpetuis dotibus earum. Ita tamen quod Philippus et [...] consortes [...] pro qualibet ecclesiarum de bonis propriis addere et in augmentum dotis huiusmodi assignare teneantur* [...].

78 *Fratris Felicis* I 177.

79 Cf. Mersch, *Shared Spaces* 463.

80 Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 534 (nr. 134). 535 (nr. 139).

81 Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 537 (nr. 158).

pied the important post of archdeacon in Nicosia⁸². Jacques Zebach, Philipp and Perrinus Urri, a certain Franciscus de Leya (probably Laiazzo), and John Bustron all received canonries in one of the Cypriot dioceses in the years between 1458 and 1470⁸³. We cannot prove that these persons followed an active strategy of representing their »Latinized religious identity« in order to attain social ascendance. But the correlation between holding church offices and social ascendance in some of these families such as the Urri, the Zebach and the Bustron families is striking.

At the same time, other individuals of this ascending group opted for other possibilities. In 1451, for example, a certain Paulinus Zacharias, one of Queen Helena Palaiologina's followers, used the possibility of papal privileges quite differently from the afore mentioned cases. He and his sons were awarded the privilege of conducting marriages and burials in the Greek rite, although he had been married to Latin women twice⁸⁴. In spite of his two mixed marriages he seems to have been intent on retaining his Greek traditions. The chronicler Machairas, also a member of this ascending group, very clearly criticised conversions from one rite to the other and maintained the opinion that everyone should stick to their own tradition⁸⁵. It is to be expected that there were others who would have thought in the same way. Albeit, maintaining one's own tradition did not exclude good relationships to other church communities: Andrea Audeth's uncles, for example, who belonged to the Jacobite church, also left money to a number of other church institutions, from the Greek and Latin to the Armenian and Maronite churches⁸⁶. Their example also illustrates that the lines between different choices in religious identity construction were not clearly cut in circles and families. In one and the same family, there could be individuals who converted to the Latin rite and others who maintained their traditional identities. Whether maintaining original religious traditions prevented the ascension into the highest parts of the nobility, cannot be conclusively proven, but the number of Latinized individuals in highest offices suggests so.

Western Newcomers

The information on the religious identities of noble Western newcomers living in Cyprus is indeed very individual. Three testaments which shed light on the religious sentiments of their testators shortly before their deaths have survived, from Berenger Albi, a Frenchman from the Vivarais, Antonio da

Bergamo, who in some sources is treated as a Venetian citizen, and his wife, Pinadeben de Ferrara.

Berenger Albi wrote his testament in 1411. The text tells us that he was related to the Gregorii or Grégoire family from the region between the Gévaudan and the Vivarais, now in the *départements* Lozère and Ardèche in the south of France⁸⁷. He had important connections in Cyprus as early as the 1370s. Berenger Gregorii, who was probably his great uncle, had been abbot of a monastery in the diocese Rieux near Toulouse, before becoming dean in Nicosia in 1363, only to be installed as archbishop of Cyprus in 1376⁸⁸. Two of Berenger Albi's uncles were also important clerics in Cyprus in his time: Berenger Gregorii (not to be confused with the archbishop Berenger) was abbot of the Benedictine monastery of the Holy Cross (Stavrovouni), and Peter was dean at St. Sophia. We cannot tell when Berenger himself came from France. But the testament suggests that he did actually migrate from France to Cyprus and did not grow up on the island. Firstly, he had substantial property in France, which he calls *paternalem hereditatem meam*⁸⁹. And he is mentioned as »in civitate Nicosie morans⁹⁰«, a phrase which is only used for non-Cypriots living on the island.

At the time his will was made, Berenger was King Janus' *maitre de l'hotel* (head of the royal household), thus holding an important office. Both his children were connected with important Cypriot noble families: his son Raymond was married to Bella Tibériade, his daughter Marguerite to Jean de Verny⁹¹. Both families had been established on Cyprus for a long time. The testament informs us that Berenger's own possessions on Cyprus were to be inherited by his son Raymond, while his fiefs from the crown were passed on to Marguerite. His substantial estates in France on the other hand were to go to one of his nephews⁹². Berenger's children do not seem to have been interested in inheriting – and upholding – the estates in France. This points to an intensive and successful integration into Cypriot noble society on the social level. The religious sphere offers rather a different picture.

The testament starts off with the usual *formulae* about the instability of life and the uncertainty of the hour of death, followed by instructions about the funeral. Berenger desired to be buried in St. Sophia, in the grave of his uncles Berenger and Peter Gregorii. He bestows 300 *besants* on St. Sophia for the priests to take part in his funeral procession and to sing masses for his soul for nine days, as well as 100 *besants* to each of the Mendicant orders to do the same. The priests of St. Sophia are also supposed to sing special masses for another nine days at the end of the year and to establish a

82 Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 536 (nr. 154).

83 Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 538 (nr. 173). 539 (nr. 188). 540 (nrs. 192. 199). 541 (nrs. 205-206).

84 Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 537.

85 See p. e. Machairas, *Exegesis* § 579.

86 Richard, Audeth 112-115. 118-122.

87 Mas Latrie, *Nouvelles Preuves* II 29.

88 *Prosopographisches Lexikon der Paläologenzeit* 21578. – Rudt de Collenberg, *Schisme* 680.

89 Mas Latrie, *Nouvelles Preuves* II 29.

90 Mas Latrie, *Nouvelles Preuves* II 27.

91 For Raymond, s. Rudt de Collenberg, *Études* 527. – For Marguerite, s. Mas Latrie, *Nouvelles Preuves* II 29.

92 Mas Latrie, *Nouvelles Preuves* II 28-29.

daily mass for his and his wife's soul. This last point is to be executed *secundum usus patriae*⁹³. This could just mean the customs of the country, i.e. Cyprus, but perhaps he refers to his own *patria* France here. In this case, Berenger would have explicitly related his instructions to the customs of his homeland France. His attachment to explicitly Latin »French« religious customs and life is mirrored by his circle of acquaintances. The persons who appear to have been important to him at the moment of death can be discerned from the testament. They are mostly foreign clerics. His own family, of course, must have been an important factor for his socialization: apart from his previously mentioned uncles, a cousin called Guillermo was a Benedictine prior, although the institution remains unclear. Berenger named this cousin as the executor of his testament along with the bishop of Paphos, Bertrand de Cadoanie, who was from the diocese of Nimes in France, and had been appointed to the bishopric of Paphos in 1408, thus a recent newcomer himself⁹⁴. Most of the testament's witnesses were also Latin clerics. Some, like Jean de Laneva from the diocese of Castres in the Midi region in France, and brother Agoy de Lozaco, prior of the Hospitallers, are certainly foreigners. Others, like Jean Trecomessac and Peter Lamee, are only designated by their dioceses in Cyprus and we therefore cannot be sure about their origin. But they definitely do not belong to any known Cypriot families. Lay witnesses were Guliermo de Cosessage, who is called *catalano*, a »noble soldier of the king« named Nano de Florencia, and Durando Laurencii⁹⁵, all of whom are otherwise unknown to Cypriot sources.

If we assume that at least some of these individuals were called to witness the testament because they entertained a special relationship with the testator, we can say that Berenger Albi, at least in the hour of death, seems to have related mostly to other foreigners from the same Latin clerical milieu as his family moved in. In any case, he seems to have perceived his religious identity as expressly »French« Latin. Whether this conscious identification with French customs was a protective reaction to the hybrid religious atmosphere

on the island and thus more than mere nostalgia, is of course impossible to say.

The other two extant testaments by foreigners modify this picture a bit. They are closely interrelated, since they are from Antonio de Bergamo and his wife Pinadeben de Ferrara. Antonio, who originated from Bergamo in Italy, is first attested on Cyprus in 1368, when he seems to have been sent as an ambassador for Peter I to Egypt. In 1378 he witnessed the contract between Cyprus, Venice and Milan against the city state of Genoa. In the contract, he appears as *doctor artium et medicinae* and as a Venetian citizen⁹⁶. He made quite a career in Cyprus, occupying the post of *camerarius* at the time of his death in 1393⁹⁷. His wife Pinadeben, also from Italy, still lived in Cyprus in 1406, when she made her last will⁹⁸. Antonio's daughter Bertolina was married to a certain Robert, who came from the well-known Cypriot Morphou family⁹⁹. Thus, as in Berenger Albi's case, Antonio and his family had quite successfully integrated into Cypriot noble society.

Religiously, it is more difficult to garner information about Antonio than about Berenger, as we do not have his whole testament, but only a list of receipts concerning payments which were made on account of his testament. The list is kept today in the Venetian State Archives and has not yet been edited¹⁰⁰. The receipts obviously do not allow us to reconstruct the whole testament. But they do show that Antonio left 25 *besants* to each of the four mendicant orders, rather little compared to the sum left by Berenger. Furthermore, he bequeathed 50 *besants* to a Franciscan nun called Bella Peligrina and to the king's confessor, Simon de Aretio, both of whom seem to have been, like himself, from Italy. He also left money to be given to the poor, as there are two receipts which concern sums spent for marriages of the needy. According to the receipts, the testament's executors again were two Italians, Thomas de Zenariis from Padua, who also played an important role in the Cypriot High Court at the time, and Clemens de Aretio.

From other sources, we know that Antonio was canon of Paphos before getting married¹⁰¹. Perhaps understandably,

93 Mas Latrie, *Nouvelles Preuves* II 28. For the daily masses, s. 27-28.

94 Mas Latrie, *Nouvelles Preuves* II 28: *Item, eligo comersarios meos reverendum in Christo patrem et dominum, dominum Bertrandum de Cadoanie, miseratione divina episcopum Paphensem, et venerabilem dominum Guillerum Gregorii, priorem prioratus Chameteriarum, ordinis sancti Benedicti, concebrinum meum germanum* [...]. Mas Latrie commented on *Chameteriarum* that the word was not very well legible, and thought it could mean *Cherinarum* – »Keryneia«. Cf. *ibidem* 28, n. 2. Chris Schabel has suggested in personal communication that it could also be an error for *Cemeterii*, which could mean a Benedictine priory of Nicosia. – For Bertrand de Cadoanie, s. Rudt de Collenberg, *Schisme* 644 and 690.

95 Mas Latrie, *Nouvelles Preuves* II 30. – Rudt de Collenberg, *Schisme* 634-635, n. 34, is convinced that Guillermo de Cosesage and Durando Laurencii were related to Berenger Albi, probably because they witnessed his testament. But his only source for this is the testament itself, which mentions no kinship relations between the three. – Rudt de Collenberg, *Schisme* 654, n. 81 mentions a P. de Casasage who was procurator for the Catalan patriarch of Jerusalem in 1419, and who could have been Guillermo's relative.

96 For his embassy in 1368, s. Machaut, *Capture* 127-129. – For the contract 1378, s. Mas Latrie, *Histoire* II 372.

97 Mas Latrie, *Histoire* II 420. – Machairas, *Exegese* § 625. – Imhaus, *Lacrimae* 75-76. – The post of *camerarius* or *chamberlain* is rather ambiguous, as there were two posts for which both terms were used synonymously. Rey states that in the kingdom of Jerusalem, one had the task of caring for the king's private rooms and introducing liegemen in the king's presence, the other was responsible for the crown's finances (Rey, *Familles de Ducange* 629). In Cyprus we also find both offices (see p. e. Mas Latrie, *Histoire* II 291). It seems probable that Antonio was responsible for the crown's finances, as Machairas reports that he pressed money from the population together with the king (Machairas, *Exegese* § 625).

98 Mas Latrie, *Nouvelles Preuves* II 22-24.

99 See ASV, *Cancellaria inferiore*. Notai b. 56, 3.

100 ASV, *Cancellaria inferiore*. Notai b. 56, 3. Three other payment receipts in *Cancellaria inferiore*. Notai b. 53, 10 replicate documents from the list. The same applies to another receipt in *Cancellaria inferiore*. Notai b. 22, 19. I have been able to see the documents in the Venetian Archives mentioned here thanks to a scholarship at the Deutsches Studienzentrum in Venedig in 2015 and 2016.

101 Mas Latrie, *Histoire* II 372.

this is not mentioned on his tombstone, where he is called *famosus magister [...] et m'dicus dns antonius d'Perquamo regno cipri camrarius [...]*¹⁰². His career as a statesman was definitely more important than his service in the church by the time he died. Antonio was buried in the Arab Achmet mosque. Almost all the tombstones of Venetian citizens from that time which are found in Cyprus come from this church¹⁰³. This could point to a special relationship between the Venetians and the church. Perhaps Antonio was buried there because he had been a Venetian citizen. All these snippets tell us that Antonio must have been a regular member of the Latin church, and in his younger years even a member of the clergy. But his relationship with the church does not seem to have been as intense as that of Berenger, although, of course, we cannot know how much money he left to other churches that are not documented in the receipts. The personal relationships we can see on this religious level seem to have been mostly to other foreigners from Italy. His burial place also points to a special relationship with a church connected with his homeland, Venice.

This special connection can be seen more clearly in the documents concerning his wife Pinadeben's testament. Two surviving documents shed light on her last will. On 26 April 1406, Pinadeben made her last testament¹⁰⁴. In it, she refers to a commission given to Thomas de Zenariis which she had had drawn up a year earlier on 27 September 1405. This document, unedited until now, is to be found among the documents of Pietro de Yspania, the notary who recorded the legacy, again in the Venetian State Archives¹⁰⁵.

The 1406 testament was drawn up in French. As far as religious matters are concerned, it informs us that Pinadeben wanted to be buried in the Corpus Christi chapel in the burgh of Keryneia¹⁰⁶, where she lived. She left the chapel 50 *besants* for its expenses. She also left five *besants* each to two local clerics, one Marc of Beyruth, who was prior of Keryneia, and one Pierre, priest of the »chapele de Sainct Jorge du Donjon«¹⁰⁷. She then remarks that she wants Thomas de Zenariis to act according to the commission she had assigned to him earlier concerning a chapel in Venice.

This commission from 1405 states that Pinadeben had originally made her testament in July 1404, and had left half of the money which she had invested in Venice to Thomas de Zenariis, while the other half was supposed to go to her second husband Nicolo de Assono. She had inherited this money from her first husband Antonio. But in 1405 she decided that the whole sum should instead be used for the erection of an altar and a little chapel in a church either in Venice or in Padua, for the commemoration of her husband Antonio's and her own soul. She explicitly states that her present hus-

band Nicolo agrees to this idea and that she trusts Thomas de Zenariis as an honest person (*confidens de legalitate et bonitate dicti domini Thome de Zenariis*) to execute her will. She wants the altar to be dedicated to St Anthony of Vienne and a picture of her husband and herself to be painted on it (*et ibi vult quod depingatur ymago dicti magistri Anthonij quondam maritj suj et sua*). A priest shall celebrate a mass for their souls every day. Half of the money left after the task has been accomplished shall go to Thomas de Zenariis, and the other to Nicolo de Assono¹⁰⁸.

Thus, Pinadeben still seems to have had a strong relationship with her homeland. She was willing to spend a great deal of money and even disinherit related parties in order to build a chapel for her first husband and herself in Venice or Padua. The undertaking is supposed to be executed by a fellow countryman who must have been a friend of the family, as he had already been the executor for Antonio's testament. At the same time, Pinadeben seems to have had good relations with the local churches in Keryneia, where she lived. Not only does she want to be buried there, but she also leaves money to two specific priests, even if it is only a small sum.

Antonio's and Pinadeben's testaments show them to have been in contact with local Latin clerics, although they were certainly not as well integrated into the foreign Latin clerical milieu on Cyprus as Berenger Albi was. More importantly, they had strong emotional and relational ties to Italy.

All in all, these individual cases indicate that the degree of integration into the Latin religious milieu on Cyprus amongst newcomers differed according to their origin and their family ties. There are no indications for contact with Greek religious institutions, which of course does not necessarily mean that they did not have any. All the individuals shown have a tendency to cling to the customs, places and persons of their homeland in common, a fact that in the circumstances seems very plausible.

Conclusion

The kaleidoscope of sources presented allows a glimpse of the various ways in which Cypriot nobles from different backgrounds constructed and represented their religious identities in the 15th century. In the tension between the hierarchy of the churches where the Latin Church took pride of place, and close every-day contact between various religious traditions, members of the aristocracy found different solutions for living their religious lives. These depended on their goals and interests as much as their cultural background. The royal family continued its promotion of a mixed local religious

102 Imhaus, *Lacrimae* 75.

103 See Imhaus, *Lacrimae* 70. 72. 75.

104 Mas Latrie, *Nouvelles Preuves* II 22-24.

105 ASV, *Cancelleria inferiore*. Notai b. 101, 9.

106 We do not know anything else about this church.

107 Mas Latrie, *Nouvelles Preuves* II 25. – According to Tassos Papacostas and Thomas Kaffenberger in personal communication, this is probably the originally Byzantine chapel within the North-Western walls of Kyreneia castle.

108 ASV, *Cancelleria inferiore*. Notai b. 101, 9.

tradition, protecting Greek churches and monasteries and fostering local cults on the one hand and trying to gain more influence over the Latin Church on the other hand, thus appropriating various religious traditions and making them their own. In this way, they presented themselves successfully as the element uniting the whole society. Unfortunately, it is not really possible to discern to which extent the old noble families followed this royal example. From the few preserved sources it is evident that nobles had relationships to the Latin Church as well as to Orthodox Church institutions, although it is not clear how far spread this second phenomenon was. Remarkably, the established nobles were evidently not interested in active service in the Latin Church. This sector was rather monopolized by some ascending Syrian and Greek Cypriot families, who seem to have actively presented themselves as Latin Christians on the official level, using this

religious identity as a means for their social aspirations. Nevertheless, perhaps even more than the established families, they lived their everyday lives in an extremely hybrid religious space, which they negotiated accordingly. Other individuals in this group decided against a changing of rites, and thus perhaps also against further social ascension, although they still moved in hybrid contexts. The tendency of upholding original religious traditions and constructing one's identity around them can be seen even more strongly in the few documents concerning nobles who had only recently migrated to Cyprus. Whether this was a reaction to the hybrid space in which they found themselves, or just a re-enforcement of their own identity in a foreign land, is not clear. But it illustrates once more that a simple and unifying solution for the question of identity construction, especially in culturally hybrid spaces, does not exist.

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